

Migration from the Netherlands to Illinois

Name	Migration Date	From	To
Pieter Englebert Lott (1626-1704)	1652	Ruinenvold, Drenthe, Dutch Republic	Flatbush, Kings Co, New York
Abraham Lott (1674-1766)	1697	Flatbush, Long Island, New York	Jamaica, Queens, New York
Abraham Lott (1700-1766)	1727	Jamaica, Queens, New York	Readington, Hunterdon, New Jersey Harlington, Somerset, New Jersey Millstone, Mercer, New Jersey
Abraham Lott (1760-1828)	1820	Millstone, Mercer, New Jersey	Lyndonville, Orleans County, New York
John R. Lott (1795-1840)	1821 1828	Charleston, Montgomery County, New York	Perinton, Monroe, New York Plymouth, Wayne, Michigan
Catherine Jane Johnson (1798-1891?) (wife of John Lott)	1817 1821 1828 1842 1851? 1865 1870	Monmouth, New Jersey	Northampton, Montgomery, New York Perinton, Monroe, New York Plymouth, Wayne, Michigan Gaines, Orleans, New York Alaiedon, Ingham, Michigan Burlington, Kane, Illinois (Possibly Plymouth, Wayne, Michigan)

Pieter Englebert Lott (1626–1704): From Ruinerwold to Flatbush

Pieter Englebert Lott was born in 1626 in Ruinerwold, a small agricultural village in the province of Drenthe, in northeastern Netherlands. Drenthe in the early seventeenth century stood in sharp contrast to the prosperous mercantile cities of Holland. It was a sparsely populated, rural region marked by sandy soil, peat bogs, and modest farming operations. Economic opportunity was limited, and most families relied on small-scale agriculture, peat cutting, and livestock to survive.

Land in Drenthe was finite and increasingly fragmented by inheritance customs that divided farms among heirs. For younger sons especially, the prospect of acquiring sufficient land to establish an independent household was uncertain. While life in Drenthe was relatively stable and free from the religious violence seen elsewhere in Europe, it offered few avenues for advancement. Pieter and his brother came of age at a time when remaining in the village often meant lifelong dependence on marginal land or tenancy.

Dutch Awareness of Overseas Opportunity

By the time Pieter reached adulthood, the Dutch Republic was deeply engaged in overseas expansion. The success of the Dutch West India Company and the growth of Dutch settlements in North America made emigration a familiar and increasingly practical idea, even in rural provinces. News of opportunities abroad circulated through churches, markets, and returning travelers. Colonization was not framed as conquest, but as settlement—an extension of Dutch society across the Atlantic.

For ordinary farmers, this message resonated strongly. New Netherland was promoted as a place where Dutch families could acquire land, live under Dutch law, worship freely in the Dutch Reformed tradition, and recreate the communal life they knew at home. For men like Pieter, colonial expansion was not an abstract national ambition but a tangible opportunity to secure land and stability for future generations.

Migration to New Netherland and Settlement in Flatbush

In 1652, Pieter Englebert Lott emigrated to New Netherland, settling in Flatbush (now Brooklyn) on Long Island. Significantly, this was the same year Flatbush—then known as Midwout—was formally established as a Dutch agricultural village. Pieter’s arrival placed him among the earliest settlers of a carefully planned community designed to support permanent family settlement rather than transient trade.

Flatbush offered surveyed farmland, legal protections under Dutch civil law, and a cohesive social structure centered on the Dutch Reformed Church. These features closely mirrored rural Dutch life, easing the transition for immigrant families. For Pieter, the move represented not a break from his past, but a continuation of it under more favorable conditions.

Land Ownership, Church Membership, and Public Service

On 25 January 1662, Pieter obtained a patent for twenty-four morgens¹ of land in Flatbush, confirming his status as a freeholder. His property appears repeatedly in colonial records and maps, including a 1681 map filed with the Secretary of State at Albany, which places his farm on the west side of the highway to the ferry. Earlier records indicate that this parcel, known as Lot Number 9, had been conveyed in 1653 to “Bartel Lot and Pieter Lott,” underscoring his early and lasting presence in the town’s landholding structure.

¹ Each morgen is about 2 acres.

Pieter and his wife were members of the Dutch Reformed Church by 1677, a key marker of social integration and respectability within Dutch communities. His standing extended beyond private life: he served as a magistrate in Flatbush in 1656 and again in 1673, positions that reflected the trust placed in him by both neighbors and colonial authorities.

Adaptation and Enduring Legacy

Pieter's name appears on Governor Thomas Dongan's patent for Flatbush in 1685, and in 1687 he took the oath of allegiance to the English crown following the transition from Dutch to English rule. Like many Dutch settlers, he adapted pragmatically to political change while remaining rooted in a community that retained its Dutch character for decades.

Pieter Englebert Lott lived in Flatbush until his death in 1704. His life illustrates a broader pattern of Dutch migration: men from modest rural backgrounds who, informed by a culture aware of overseas opportunity, chose emigration as a rational response to economic constraint. In Flatbush, Pieter transformed that choice into permanence, anchoring the Lott family in America through land ownership, civic service, and deep community ties.

Abraham Lott (1674-1766)

Abraham Lott was born in 1674 in Flatbush, Kings County, New York, into a family already well established through the landholding and civic leadership of his father, Pieter Englebert Lott. Benefiting from this foundation, Abraham's life reflects the opportunities available to second-generation colonial New Yorkers in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

In the early part of his life, Abraham undertook several voyages to the West Indies. These journeys were almost certainly commercial trading ventures rather than exploration or military service. During this period, New York was deeply integrated into Atlantic trade networks supplying Caribbean sugar plantations with foodstuffs, lumber, and livestock, and receiving sugar, molasses, and rum in return. Participation in this trade allowed men like Abraham to accumulate capital, establish commercial connections, and elevate their social standing. The profits from such voyages often provided the means for later land acquisition and long-term prosperity.

Around 1697, Abraham migrated from Flatbush to Jamaica, Queens County, an area then experiencing agricultural and economic expansion. As land in Flatbush became increasingly subdivided, Jamaica offered larger and more affordable tracts, along with excellent access to coastal trade routes and markets in Manhattan. This move reflects a strategic decision to combine farming, trade, and investment, positioning Abraham for both economic growth and public influence.

Over time, Abraham became a substantial landowner, managing farms, livestock, and agricultural equipment, as reflected in the detailed provisions of his will.

Abraham Lott (1700–c. 1765)

Abraham Lott appears in the historical record as a farmer and landholder whose life followed the westward movement of land-seeking families from Long Island into central New Jersey during the

early eighteenth century. He migrated from Jamaica to Readington in 1727, part of a broader pattern of relocation driven by the search for affordable and productive farmland. At the time, land in Queens County had become increasingly subdivided and expensive, while New Jersey offered larger tracts suitable for establishing or expanding family farms.

Over the following years, Abraham continued moving within New Jersey, settling successively in Harlingen and later in Millstone. This sequence of relocations reflects a common agricultural strategy. Farmers often moved incrementally as new lands opened, selling earlier holdings to acquire larger or more fertile parcels farther west. Such movement was typical in the Raritan Valley and surrounding regions, where settlement advanced steadily during the first half of the eighteenth century.

The frequency of Abraham Lott's land transactions suggests a man focused on farming and land improvement. His pattern of settlement aligns with Dutch- and Dutch-descended families who extended established kinship and religious networks from Long Island into New Jersey, maintaining rural livelihoods centered on agriculture, livestock, and family labor.

Abraham Lott (1760–1828)

Abraham Lott was born in 1760, likely in Millstone, into a long-established Dutch-descended family rooted in central New Jersey. He was one of twin sons born to the Lott family during the colonial period and came of age during the years leading up to the American Revolution. As a member of the first post-Revolutionary generation, Abraham's adult life reflects the broader patterns of migration and settlement that shaped early New York State.

Revolutionary War Service of Abraham Lott and Family

Abraham Lott belonged to a family deeply involved in Revolutionary War service in New Jersey. His father, Captain Cornelius Lott, commanded militia units in Somerset County and is well documented as an officer in the New Jersey forces. Abraham served alongside his twin brother, John Lott, who later provided detailed sworn testimony in his Revolutionary War pension application. According to that application and corroborating militia registers, John and Abraham were baptized together in 1760 in the Harlingen Dutch Reformed Church in Somerset County, New Jersey, and both served in local militia companies during the war. Muster rolls and official registers place Abraham Lott, John Lott, and Cornelius Lott in the same county and regimental context, reflecting a common practice of family-based military service. While John Lott survived to apply for a federal pension in the 1830s, Abraham died earlier and left no pension file of his own.

Migration from New Jersey to New York

Following the close of the Revolutionary War, Abraham joined many young families who left the increasingly settled lands of New Jersey in search of opportunity farther north. By 1790, Abraham Lott was living in Mohawk, as evidenced by the federal census of that year. His appearance there within a large household suggests an initial settlement among extended family or kin, a common strategy for newly arrived settlers establishing themselves in frontier regions.

Within a few years, Abraham relocated locally within Montgomery County and established a permanent homestead in Charleston. This move marked the beginning of a long period of stability that would define the remainder of his life.

Family Life and Residence in Charleston

By the late 1780s, Abraham was married and raising a family in Charleston. The births of his children between 1788 and 1795 all occurred there, confirming Charleston as the center of his domestic and economic life.

Later Years and Westward Expansion of the Family

During the 1810s and 1820s, Abraham's adult children began to participate in the next phase of westward movement, relocating to newly opened lands in western New York, including Orleans County and the area around Lyndonville. This expansion followed the War of 1812 and reflected a generational pattern rather than an abrupt relocation by Abraham himself.

Adulthood in a Time of Expansion

In 1820, Abraham and his wife relocated northward to Lyndonville, in Orleans County with his son, William.² This region was part of the post-Revolutionary expansion into western and northern New York, encouraged by improved transportation routes and the availability of affordable farmland. The movement from New Jersey to upstate New York mirrors a well-documented migration stream of Dutch and New England families seeking new agricultural opportunity.

Life in Upstate New York

Orleans County in the early 19th century was still a developing frontier. Settlers there cleared land, built farms, and established new communities, often replicating the agricultural lifestyles they had known farther south. Abraham's move to Lyndonville suggests that he pursued farming or landholding.

Abraham's wife, Sarah, died shortly after arriving in Lyndonville and is buried in the Lott Family Cemetery. Abraham lived out the remainder of his life in this region and died on 4 October 1828. His burial there indicates permanent settlement rather than temporary relocation, marking a full generational shift from colonial New Jersey to early New York State.

John Lott (1795-1840) and Catherine Jane Johnson (1798-1891)

John Lott never made it to Illinois, but his daughter, Lydia Helen Hardy, and his wife, Catherine, did. Therefore, I have developed Biographical Sketches for John and Catherine to show how the Lott family made that final move from the Netherlands to Illinois.

[John and Catherine's lives are described in the Biographical Sketches.]

² The date Abraham moved to Orleans County is calculated at 1820 because he appears in the 1820 Montgomery census and his wife died in Orleans in 1820.