



Immigrant Origins: Making the Connection to Your Homeland

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Emigration = act of leaving a place, Example: Hamburg Passenger Lists

Immigration = act of entering a place, Example: New York Passenger Lists

What do you know about your ancestor and their arrival?

- What was their full name?
- Were there any name changes?
- When and where were they born?
- Who are their relatives?
- Friends or neighbors from their native land?
- Have you checked Family and Home Sources?
- What was their religion?
- What was their ethnic background?
- Date of arrival and departure?
- Port of arrival and departure?
- What was the name of the ship?
- Did they speak English?
- What was their final destination?
- Why did they come to America?

U.S. Resource Checklist

- Compiled Genealogies and Pedigrees
- Census Records – 1850-1880, 1900-1940
- Land Records/Homestead Records
- Court Documents
- Religious Records
- Vital Records/Social Security Records
- Military Records
- Employment or Insurance Records
- City Directories
- Obituaries/Cemeteries/Funeral Homes
- Newspapers/Periodicals
- Ethnic Guidebooks
- Library and Archive Collections
- Societies

It is important to keep in mind that information varies by record, record type, time period, locality, who recorded the information, and the purpose the information was recorded for. It is vitally important to obtain as much qualifying information as possible especially when there are conflicts.

Useful Weblinks

- Ancestry.com – www.ancestry.com
- FamilySearch – www.familysearch.org
- Ellis Island – www.ellisland.org
- Immigration History Research Center - <https://cla.umn.edu/ihr>
- National Archives and Records Administration - <https://www.archives.gov/research/immigration>
- USCIS Genealogy - <https://www.uscis.gov/genealogy>

FAN Club/Collateral and Cluster Research:

https://www.familytreemagazine.com/articles/genealogy_research_strategies/cluster-collateral-research-find-ancestors/

Timelines:

Timelines can help you organize your research and determine patterns in an ancestor's life – including movement. Coupling this with historical movement and migration

<https://www.familysearch.org/blog/en/timelines-plot-ancestors-life/>

Migration Maps and History:

[https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United_States_Reconstructing_Ancestral_Migration_Routes_\(National_Institute\)](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United_States_Reconstructing_Ancestral_Migration_Routes_(National_Institute))

https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/govbeat/wp/2014/04/18/ethnic-america-mapped-your-countys-biggest-ancestral-populations/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.9363a5

Surname distribution maps:

Surname distribution maps can be used to determine a possible location of a family surname in the country of origins, particularly for Europe, across time and especially with less common surnames.

https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Surname_Distribution_Maps

Additional Reading

Colletta, John Philip, *They Came in Ships: a Guide to Finding Your Immigrant Ancestor's Arrival Record* 3rd rev. ed., Salt Lake City: Ancestry Publishing, 2002

Luebking, Sandra H. and Loretto Dennis Szucs, eds. "Immigration: Finding your Immigrant Origins." Chapter 13 in *The Source: A Guidebook of American Genealogy* 3rd rev. ed., Salt Lake City: Ancestry Publishing, 2007.

https://wiki.rootsweb.com/wiki/index.php/Overview_of_Immigration_Research

Szucs, Loretto Dennis. *They Became Americans: Finding Naturalization Records and Ethnic Origins*. Salt Lake City: Ancestry Publishing, 1998.

The Melting Pot of America: Tracing Your Immigrant Ancestors:

<https://www.familysearch.org/blog/en/melting-pot-america-tracing-immigrant-ancestors/>

Brief Timeline of Immigration History to the United States

18 th /early 19 th	Relatively free and open immigration to the U.S.
1790	First naturalization act – minimum of 2 years residence
1795	Second naturalization act- minimum of 5 years residency
1875	Supreme Court declares regulation of immigration a federal responsibility
1882	Chinese Exclusion Act
1885/87	Alien Contract Labor laws
1891	Immigration Act- federal government assumed responsibility for inspecting, processing, rejecting immigrants to the US
1892	Ellis Island opened and began to collect arrival lists, formerly a responsibility of US Customs Service since 1820
1895	Law promoting “Office of Immigration” to “Bureau of Immigration”
1906	Basic Naturalization act signed
1913	Became independent “Bureau of Naturalization”
1917	Act requiring immigrants be able to read and write in native language. Implementation of literacy tests and medical exams at port of departure.
1918	Passports required by Presidential Proclamation
1921/24	US implements immigration quotas
1924	US Border Control created
1933	Bureau of Immigration and Bureau of Naturalization combined into one agency known as Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS)
1940	Nationality Act
1945	War Brides Act
1948	Displaced Persons Act
1953	Refugee Relief Act

For more information a PDF file entitled “Overview of INS History” is found here:
<http://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/History%20and%20Genealogy/Our%20History/INS%20History/INSHistory.pdf>