

Research Latin America Genealogical Resources on the Internet

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Introduction

The first immigration to Latin-America starts with Christopher Columbus when he "discovered" the New World on August 3, 1492 and kept flowing with a considerable number of slaves from Africa on the years afterward. With themselves the Europeans brought their religion, their languages and their customs. In Latin America, the majority of immigrants came from Southern Europe, and therefore the predominant religious influence has been Roman Catholic, rather than Protestant. The languages of these new immigrants were Spanish and Portuguese, and the basic political institutions, Mediterranean.

The "Colonos" settled in around all the Caribbean, while they finish the conquest of the "New World". The conquest of these lands was done in the name of the Iberian rulers, and the conquered people accepted the economy and the political and social systems of the conqueror. Few other Europeans, beside the Spanish and the Portuguese were encouraged to emigrate to Latin America.

Latter in time the Dutch and English started to navigate to the Caribbean Island, and many communities flourished under Dutch and English control in the Caribbean, Central, and South America.

Once the Latin-American countries had gained their independence, the new republics, bent on transforming their colonial past, first only in theory and then in practice, modified their immigration systems radically opening the sluices of the New Continent to admit European newcomers.

However, it was not until 1870, about 50 years after independence, that a really open immigration policy began in the Latin American countries. This open immigration brought millions to South America, changing the population from 23,163,000 in 1850, to 231,070,000 in 1980. This overwhelming increase in numbers was caused by the natural growth of the population, but also by the large numbers of immigrants that were attracted to South America.¹

What to look for?

A person may leave different traces during his life while doing all day to day regular activities. Genealogical research consists of trying to find out those traces to obtain as much information as possible about this person and the life of his family. These traces are usually made up of registrations in public offices, publications of social events and activities in the community. Some common documents you must try to obtain are the following:

¹ [South American Immigration: Argentina](http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1990/1/90.01.06.x.html) by Wanda A. Velez.
<http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1990/1/90.01.06.x.html>

- Birth / Marriage / Death records
- Immigration records
- Voter lists
- Inheritance successions
- Publications in telephone directories
- Obituaries
- Tombstones (Cemeteries records)

What to look for on a website?

Internet is today one of the fastest, easiest and abundant sources of information, and because of that we need to be aware of the information we can find there:

- Classifieds
- Links
- Collaborators
- Obituaries
- Directories
- Events
- Contact-us / Forums

Spanish - Portuguese 101

One of the biggest problems you may encounter when trying to research Latin America sources may be de language. Besides Brazil - they speak Portuguese - and some islands of the Caribbean where they speak Dutch, Patua (a mix of languages with Dutch and French base) and other very local languages, in all other countries the official language is Spanish.

Although we are speaking here of a general "Spanish" you must remember that every country has their own slang's and specific words to designate same things in different countries.

A very useful tool is also Google translator (http://www.google.com/language_tools?hl=en) were you can simply type or paste a text to be translated, or copy the complete URL of the site and you will be able to navigate it in English with no problem. Another tool you have is the automatic translation site imTranslator (<http://translation.imtranslator.net>) where you can paste a text up to 500 characters and get a pretty decent translation.

Most of websites today are translated in English and Spanish, but just in case, here is a list of the most basic words you may need in your research:

English	Spanish	Portuguese
First Name	Nombre	Nome
Last Name	Apellido	Sobrenome
ID Number	Cédula, Número de identidad	Carnet de identidad
Address	Dirección	Endereço
Telephone	Teléfono	Telefone
Search	Consultar, Buscar	Pesquisa
Archive	Archivo	Arquivo
Contact us	Contactenos	Fale conosco

Sources and Resources

There are many websites that keep records from different countries in Latina America. You can find lists of people by country or by any specific criteria in the most uncommon places.

Almost every country has their own genealogy society and many of them have history societies according to the place where the people emigrate from; like the Italian, Jewish or German genealogy societies.

Some of them you can find very easy by going to Google (<http://www.google.com>) and searching for the name of the country + "Genealogy society" or the variant in Spanish "sociedad de genealogia".

Every country has Newspapers online as well as phone directories, but you have to go beyond the basics and try to find the small communities and local resources in every country as well as the official and governmental records.

Links

CaribeGenealogia	http://es.groups.yahoo.com/group/CaribeGenealogia/
Peru National Library	http://genealogia.perucultural.org.pe/
The Society for Irish Latin American Studies	http://www.irlandeses.org/
Instituto Argentino de Ciencias Genealogía	http://www.genealogia.org.ar/
Venezuela Genealogía	http://www.geocities.com/venezuela_genealogia/
Anillo de Genealogía Hispana	http://www.elanillo.com/
Genealogica.net	http://www.genealogica.net/
Ecuador Genealogía	http://groups.msn.com/EcuadorGenealogia/
Asociación de Genealogía Hispana	http://www.hispagen.es/
Gen _ Centroamérica	http://es.groups.yahoo.com/group/Gen_CentroAmerica/
Mis Apellidos	http://www.misapellidos.com/
Distrito Genealogia	http://www.telepolis.com/comunidades/genealogia/
Correos de Genealogía Argentina	http://ar.groups.yahoo.com/group/ArgenGen/
Asociación de Genealogía Judía de Argentina	http://www.agja.org.ar/
Apellidos Italianos	http://www.apellidositalianos.com.ar/
Bolivia Genealogía	http://es.groups.yahoo.com/group/BoliviaGenealogia/
Gen-Minas	http://gen-minas.vilabol.uol.com.br/
Ecuador Genealogía	http://www.ecuadorgenealogia.com/
Ministerio de Migraciones	http://www.migraciones.gov.ar/
Archivo General de la Nación	http://www.archivo.gov.ar/
WorldGenPortal	http://www.dieminger.com/genealogy/default_eng.asp
Ecuador Genealogía	http://espanol.groups.yahoo.com/group/EcuadorGenealogia/