

Proving Your Immigrant Ancestor with Ancestry

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You've got immigrant ancestors – Ancestry has answers! From 1607 to 1957, Ancestry has 350 years of records that can identify your immigrants. From passenger lists to naturalization records and from family histories to passports, your immigrants are likely on Ancestry. Virtually every American has many immigrant ancestors and the vast majority of them can be identified in records documenting their arrival here. It's never been easier to find those arrival records. There are new sources, strategies, tools and techniques to uncover more of your family's hidden history, including that often elusive information about their home town in the old world.

DISCUSSION OUTLINE

Nature of North American Immigration

Record Keeping for Immigrants

Ancestry's "Immigration & Travel" Collection

Six categories, 521 databases
Indexes (Abstracts) and images: Online!
Passenger and Immigration Lists Index

Colonial Sources (up to 1820)

Lists not required of native colonists
Scattered and incomplete
German arrivals
Early settlers/pioneers; Freeman; Headrights

Passenger Lists (1820 to 1957)

Customs Lists (1820-1890s)

Federal laws
Bureau of Customs management
Pre-printed forms, filled out on ship
Quarterly abstracts
Extant records filmed by National Archives; most originals given to Balch Institute Castle Garden, 1855-1891 (New York) and other ports

Immigration Lists (1890s+)

Federal control of lists and of ports (effective date varies by port)
Lists acquired by National Archives (after 1935) and microfilmed
Ellis Island lists (NYC, 1892-1897, 1900-1954)
Dozens of other 20th century ports, including airports: At Ancestry!

Other Records of Arrivals

Crew Lists (102 databases)
Canadian Passenger Lists, 1865-1935 (plus 42 more)
U.S. Border Crossings, from Mexico; to & from Canada, 1895-1965
U.S. Passport Applications, 1795-1925
Naturalization Records, 1840-1957 (162 databases)

Printed Lists (Books and Articles)

Nature of published sources (pre- and post 1820)
Passenger and Immigration Lists Index
Virtually all now available online (248 databases)

Emigration Sources: England, Germany and more

UK Incoming Passenger Lists, 1878-1960
Hamburg Passenger Lists, 1850-1934 (departures)
Australian Passenger Arrival Lists

Public Member Trees as a Source for Immigrants

Other genealogists share your immigrant! Find out what they know
Immigrants: 28 million English; 14 million Germans; 7 million Irish; 2 million Italians

Cautions for Using Online Abstracts & Images Passenger Lists

Beyond the question of survival of the original lists to index, there are other questions:
How well could the indexers/abstractors read the foreign names on the lists?
Were some names missed or overlooked by bored indexers?
Do I know the actual spelling of the family's name as it appears on the lists?
Do I have enough information to recognize family members in the index?

Not Quite Every Record

Passports post 1925
Galveston, Texas, reconstructed lists (130,000)

PRINT RESOURCES

Colletta, John P. *They Came in Ships*. 3rd ed. Salt Lake City: Ancestry, 2002.

Filby, P. William, ed. *Passenger and Immigration Lists Bibliography 1538-1900: Being a Guide to Published Lists of Arrivals* Second edition. Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1988.

Meyerink, Kory L. and Loretta Dennis Szucs. "Immigration: Finding Immigrant Origins," Chapter 9 in *The Source: A Guidebook of American Genealogy*, 3rd ed. Loretta Dennis Szucs and Sandra Hargreaves Luebking, eds., Salt Lake City: Ancestry, 2006.

Tepper, Michael. *American Passenger Arrival Records: A Guide to the Records of Immigrants Arriving at American Ports by Sail and Steam*. Baltimore: Genealogical Pub. Co., 1988

Select Major Ancestry Immigration Databases

| <i>Database</i> | <i>Years</i> | <i>Names</i> |
|--|--------------------|--------------|
| U.S. and Canada, Passenger and Immigration Lists Index | | 5,444,446 |
| Atlantic Ports | | |
| Atlantic, Gulf port arrivals | 1820-1873, 93-1959 | 909,749 |
| Baltimore | 1820-1964 | 2,001,537 |
| Massachusetts (Boston) | 1820-1963 | 6,850,802 |
| New York State Arrivals | 1917-1967 | 9,439,440 |
| New York City Arrivals | 1820-1957 | 82,920,847 |
| Pennsylvania (Philadelphia) | 1800-1962 | 2,156,349 |
| Irish Immigrants to NY | 1846-1851 | 602,753 |
| Southern Ports | | |
| New Orleans | 1813-1963 | 4,288,331 |
| Florida | 1898-1963 | 8,390,606 |
| Texas | 1893-1963 | 1,027,707 |
| Other Ports | | |
| California Passenger & Crew | 1882-1959 | 5,871,013 |
| Washington Passenger & Crew | 1882-1965 | 3,577,120 |
| Honolulu, Hawaii | 1900-1959 | 7,580,485 |
| Australia Immigrant Lists | 1826-1922 | 8,436,409 |
| UK Outward Passenger Lists | 1890-1960 | 23,768,544 |
| Naturalization Sources | | |
| U.S. Naturalization Indexes | 1900-1965 | 5,924,469 |
| Illinois Federal National Records | 1856-1991 | 4,252,176 |
| Mass. State & Federal Records | 1798-1950 | 3,113,455 |

Other Free Online Sources for U.S. Passenger Lists

Ancestry includes most of these same lists, but their different search routines might be useful.

Ellis Island Records <http://www.libertyellisfoundation.org> 22 million+ arrivals, 1892-1924

Castle Garden <http://castlegarden.org> 12 million New York arrivals from 1820-1897

Immigrant Ship Transcribers Guild <http://www.immigrantships.net> 17,000+ passenger lists

Olive Tree Genealogy <http://www.olivetreegenealogy.com/ships/index.shtml> 2,500+ ships lists

National Archives > Access to Archival Databases > Genealogy > Passenger Lists

<http://aad.archives.gov/aad/index.jsp> Irish, German, Italian and Russian arrivals databases

The Ships List <http://www.theshipslist.com>

Hundreds of transcribed lists and related information; heavy Canadian focus

Texas Seaport Museum Immigration Database 1844-1949: Galveston, 130,000 immigrants

<http://www.galvestonhistory.org/attractions/maritime-heritage/galveston-immigration-database>

Content Chronology: American Passenger Lists

The following content was required or typical on U.S. passenger arrival lists after the date indicated:

Before 1820: [Primarily just Philadelphia]

- Port of departure and arrival
- Name of immigrant (usually just males over 16)

Added in 1820:

- Names of all passengers
- Age and sex
- Nationality (Country of allegiance)
- Country of destination
- Occupation (or calling)
- Very few (maybe 10%) include a town of origin

Added in 1882:

- Native country (rather than country of allegiance)
- Intended local destination (such as the state)

Added in 1891:

- Last Residence (not always the town)

Added in 1893 (among several other items):

- Marital status
- Previous U.S. residence, if any
- If joining a relative, that person's name, address, and relationship
- Amount of money (at least \$30 was required)
- Final destination in U.S. (State, city or town)
- Condition of health
- Social detriments: including history of prison, poorhouse, insanity, polygamy

Added in 1903:

- Race of each immigrant
- City or town of last permanent residence
- Whether joining a friend (if a relative was part of 1893 list)

Added in 1906 (with 1907 amendments):

- >>Place of birth (country and city or town)
- Height in feet and inches
- Complexion
- Color of hair and eyes
- Marks of identification
- Name and address of nearest relative in country whence alien came

Added in 1917:

- Able to read: what language
- Purpose of coming to U.S.