



Immigration: Ports of Entry



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Three waves of US immigration (1607-1819) / (1820-1890) / (1891-1957) were impacted by laws at the State and then, Federal level.

1607 - 1819 Most records are recorded in books & periodicals:

www.AlexanderStreet.com – Thousands of personal narratives, diaries, pamphlets, letters, and oral histories of North American Immigrants

Diaries & Journals & Voyage accounts: www.TheShipslist.com

<https://www.packrat-pro.com/ships/shiplist.htm> Early 1600's

arrivals that includes the names of 7,100 families on 290 ships

www.AmericanAncestors.org The Great Migration Project of New England Immigrants from 1620 – 1640 - NEHGS

<https://archive.org/> (Internet Archive) Digitized books *Original Lists Persons of Quality 1600 – 1700* by John Camden Hotten

<https://www.hathitrust.org/> Digitized books *Pennsylvania German Pioneers 1727 – 1808* by Ralph Strassburger

<https://researchworks.oclc.org/archivegrid/> "Passenger Lists"

www.Ancestry.com Databases such as *New World Immigrants Vol. 1 & 2 / Passengers to America / British Aliens in the United States during the War of 1812 / England, Alien Arrivals, 1810 - 1811, 1826 - 1869*

1820 - 1890 United States Customs recorded passengers

The Steerage Act of 1819 regulated the transport of passengers in ships arriving from foreign ports to create passenger lists.

Therefore, these lists from 1820 on *may contain* the following details:

- Name / Age / Year of Arrival / Place of Arrival / Names, ages, and relationships of accompanying passengers

1891 - 1957 Bureau of Immigration created Federal oversight

Uniform lists recorded more information of genealogical value such as:

Whether in the US before /If joining a relative, their name and address/

Final destination / Occupation / Who paid for their passage to the US

Be creative in your research and investigate all ports of arrival:

Where did they board? Look at a map for all potential departure points.

The biggest port of entry is New York especially after 1825 and the opening of the Erie Canal. Over time the New York Port was called the Wharfs of Manhattan, Castle Garden, Barge Office, and Ellis Island.

Over 70% of immigrants arrived through New York and Ellis Island processed were steerage passengers. However, also consider expanding a search for the ports of Baltimore, Boston, Philadelphia, New Orleans, Providence, Galveston, El Paso, Laredo, Brownsville, Key West, San Francisco, New Bedford and Portland-Falmouth, and Passamaquoddy.

Did they depart at one point and then, change ships at another port?

- Such as Hamburg, Germany > Liverpool, England > United States

Search by Ethnicity or Nationality (Finnish, Slovak, Spanish, etc....)

Until 1895, border crossings from Canada to the US were not formally recorded at all. And starting in 1903, immigrants who entered the US from Mexico were recorded.

Crossing information is available www.Ancestry.com such as:

- 1) Canadian Passenger Lists, 1865 - 1935
- 2) US Border Crossing from Canada to US 1895-1960
- 3) Mexico Border Crossings 1895-1964
- 4) Mexico, European Immigrants to USA 1921-1931

Review the Library and Archives Canada immigration databases at <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/Pages/home.aspx>

Clues on immigration details:

United States Federal Census key questions:

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| 1820 - 1840: | Number of individuals in household “foreigners” |
| 1850: | Place of Birth |
| 1870: | Male Citizens of U.S. of 21 years of age and upwards |
| 1880 - 1940: | Parent’s birth place |
| 1900 - 1950: | Immigration information (Noted by these codes) |

A = Alien / PA = in Process / NA = Naturalized

1920: Date of Naturalization

State Census <http://www.researchguides.net/census/state.htm>

Voter Lists <https://www.theancestorhunt.com/voter-lists.html>

WWI Draft Registrations- Men, US & foreign born between 1872-1900

Declarations of Intent and Naturalization Petitions

Newspaper articles, obituaries & county histories about an immigrant

Passport Applications 1795 - 1925

After 1917, check the front "List of US Citizens" on passenger lists

Websites to make focused searches:

- 1) <https://stevemorse.org/> One stop shop for many ports
- 2) *"Passenger and Immigration Lists Index, 1500's – 1900's"* by William Filby indexed www.Ancestry.com
- 3) <https://www.germanroots.com/> Not just German
- 4) <https://immigrantships.net/> Crowdsourced
- 5) <https://www.genesearch.com/ports.html> Joe Beine websites
- 6) <http://www.passengerlists.de/> Bremen Passenger Lists
- 7) <https://apertus.rlp.de/> Rhineland Palatinate State Archives
- 8) www.Ancestry.com UK and Ireland, Outward Passenger Lists 1890-1960 & UK and Ireland, Incoming Passenger Lists, 1878-1960
- 9) www.FamilySearch.org Database: US Germans to America Index 1850 - 1897
- 10) www.Ancestry.com & www.FamilySearch.org
Databases: Port of Hamburg (Direct and Indirect Indexes)
- 11) www.FamilySearch.org "Kluber" Index from Germany 1850-1871

12) www.MyHeritage.com / www.FamilySearch.org Search with a relationship – like sister, cousin, brother-in-law, etc.

13) <https://www.genealogycenter.info/persi/> Periodical Source Index search using Keywords – Passenger, Immigrant, Migration, etc.

Search and request registry files on <https://www.uscis.gov/history-and-genealogy/genealogy/requesting-records> first “legalization program” authorized by Congress.

The law and program allowed immigrants subject to the Certificate of Arrival requirement for naturalization to have a record of their original arrival created after-the-fact when no arrival record could be found. Though dating after 1929, the records actually relate to immigrant arrivals occurring many years before. The initial Registry Program applied to immigrants who arrived before July 1, 1921. Later, as time passed, Congress moved the ending date progressively forward. Registry Files from 1929 to 1944 ***generally relates to immigrant arrivals between June 29, 1906 and July 1, 1924.***

There are about 250,000 files that consist of 4 biographical pages that contain applications, testimony, evidence, correspondence, and a photo. A search request of the index is \$ 65.00 and then \$ 65.00 for the record itself.

Points to ponder:

Research the descendants and collateral members of the immigrant’s FAN club (Friends, Associates and Neighbors)

Always look at the original document, not just the index

Research common names first, since they are likely correctly indexed

Reference Books, Charts, Forms & Articles:

<https://www.archives.gov/research/genealogy/charts-forms>

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

Bayor, Ronald H. (2016) *Encountering Ellis Island: How Europeans Immigrants Entered America*, Baltimore, MD

Colletta, John P. Ph.D. (2002) *They Came in Ships: A Guide to Finding Your Immigrant Ancestor's Arrival Record*, 3rd Edition, Orem, UT

Daniels, Roger (1990) *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life*, 2nd Edition, New York, NY

Dennis Szucs, Loretta & Hargreaves Luebking, Sandra eds., (2006) *The Source: A Guidebook of American Genealogy*, Provo, UT

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Harlow, Alvin F. (1947) *The Road of the Century: The Story of the New York Central*, New York, NY

Houghton, Gillian (2015) *Ellis Island: A Primary Source History of an Immigrant's Arrival in America*, New York, NY

Novatny, Ann (1971) *Strangers at the Door: Ellis Island, Castle Garden and the Great Migration to America*, Riverside, CT

Powell, John (2005) *Encyclopedia of North American Immigration*, New York, NY