

Passenger List Research

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Since the mid-1500s millions of immigrants have been coming to the United States. Finding more information about the long journey to this country can add intriguing and revealing elements to your genealogy research. *They came in ships: a guide to finding your immigrant ancestor's arrival record* by John P. Colletta (2002) provides a good overview of the search process and can be found in **aisle 6A**.

Before searching passenger lists, it is helpful to know one or more of the following:

- When your ancestor came over.
- From which port they departed.
- At what port they arrived.

Some historical facts about Passenger Lists:

- Although there were many ports in the United States, there were five major ports where most immigration traffic tended to arrive: Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New Orleans. Philadelphia was the most popular of these ports during the Colonial Era, with New York emerging as the next most popular by 1850.
- *Colonial era arrivals:* Most Colonial Era arrivals are not formally documented on any passenger list. However, there are many other published resources and ways to search for colonial era ancestors: church records, local histories, land records, and freemen lists are just a few.
- 1819: The first year Congress required ships' masters to file a list of arriving passengers with U.S. customs officers at U.S. ports of entry. Passenger information included: name, age, gender, occupation, country of origin, and destination country. Unfortunately, many of these early lists do not include the town from which the immigrants left.
- 1882: Federal legislation required separate lists for immigrants.
- 1891: The Immigration Act of 1891 established a Superintendent of Immigration (which later became the Immigration Bureau) and also more regulations over the control of passenger lists including their creation, distribution, and retention. It also became required by law to report the last residence of the alien. Almost all Immigrant Passenger list after 1891 are indexed.
- 1893: Forms standardized to include immigrant's marital status, last place of residence, destination city, and names and addresses of relatives they planned to meet in the U.S.

- 1906 Naturalization Act with 1907 Amendments: required the additional documentation of a place of birth and physical description, including race.
- There are many U.S. passenger lists that were destroyed or lost and simply no longer exist. The National Archives has preserved a large amount, but not all. Fortunately, there are many private publishers and organizations working together to create indexes from what abstracts may exist and provide published resources in some form to provide access to these records. If there is a more specific situation that you are trying to research please ask a Special Collections staff member for help.

Passenger List Resources in Special Collections

Most of our passenger list indexes and resources can be found in aisle **10 A** in our passenger list and immigration area. There are a few indexes that may not be in that particular section. If there is an index you are looking for that is not in that section, please a Special Collections staff member for help.

Early passenger lists, bibliographies, and general indexes.

- *Filby's Passenger and Immigration Lists Index : a Guide to Published Arrival Records of Passengers who came to the United States and Canada in the Seventeenth, Eighteenth, and Nineteenth Centuries, including Passenger and Immigration Lists Index, Supplements 1982 – current.* This is a good source for checking passenger lists before 1820.
- *Passenger and Immigration Lists Bibliography, 1538-1900: Being a Guide to Published Lists of Arrivals in the United States and Canada.*
- *A Bibliography of Ship Passenger Lists, 1538-1825; Being a Guide to Published Lists of Early Immigrants to North America.*
- *Passenger Arrivals at the Port of Baltimore, 1820-1834; from Customs Passenger Lists.*
- *Ship Passenger Lists, National and New England 1600-1825.*
- *Ship Passenger Lists, New York and New Jersey 1600-1825.*
- *Passenger Arrivals at the Port of New York, 1820-1829 : from customs passenger lists.*
- *Passenger Arrivals at the Port of New York, 1830-1832 : from customs passenger lists.*
- *Nova Scotia Immigrants to 1867.*
- *Ship Passenger Lists: Pennsylvania and Delaware 1641-1825.*
- *Emigrants to Pennsylvania, 1641-1819; a Consolidation of Ship Passenger Lists from the Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography.*
- *Pennsylvania German Pioneers: a publication of the original lists of arrivals in the port of Philadelphia from 1727 to 1808.*
- *Passenger Arrivals at the Port of Philadelphia, 1800-1819: the Philadelphia Baggage Lists.*

- *Rhode Island Passenger Lists: Port of Providence, 1798-1808; 1820-1872, Port of Bristol and Warren, 1820-1871: Compiled from United States Custom House Papers.*
- *San Francisco Ship Passenger Lists.*
- *Ship Passenger Lists: the South, 1538-1825.*
- *Passenger Arrivals at the Port of Charleston, 1820-1829.*
- *Ships Passenger Lists, Port of Galveston, Texas, 1846-1871.*
- *The Complete Book of Emigrants in Bondage, 1614-1775 and Supplement to The Complete Book of Emigrants in Bondage, 1614-1775.*
- *Morton Allan Directory of European Steamship Arrivals 1890-1930.*
- *American Passenger Arrival Records: a Guide to the Records of Immigrants Arriving at American Ports by Sail and Steam.*
- *American Colonists in English Records; a Guide to Direct References in Authentic Records, Passenger Lists not in "Hotteu," etc., etc., etc.*
- *Passengers to America: a Consolidation of Ship Passenger Lists from the New England Historical and Genealogical Register.*
- *Immigrants to the Middle Colonies: a Consolidation of Ship Passenger Lists and Associated Data from the New York Genealogical and Biographical Record.*
- *New World Immigrants: a Consolidation of Ship Passenger Lists and Associated Data from Periodical Literature.*
- *Index to Mennonite Immigrants on United States Passenger Lists, 1872-1904.*

Passenger lists by country of origin

- *Antwerp Emigration Index.*
- *Czech Immigration Passenger Lists v.4. New York Passenger Lists, 1847-1869 -- v.5. New York Passenger Lists, 1870-1880 -- v.6. New York Passenger Lists, 1881-1886 -- v.7. New York Passenger Lists, 1887-1896 -- v.8. Baltimore Passenger Lists, 1834-1879 -- v.9. Baltimore Passenger Lists, 1880-1899.*
- *Germans to America: Lists of Passengers Arriving at U.S. ports, Series I and II.*
- *German immigrants: Lists of Passengers Bound from Bremen to New York, 1863-1867, with Places of Origin.*
- *German Immigrant: Lists of Passengers Bound from Bremen to New York, 1868-1871, with Places of Origin.*
- *From Bremen to America in 1850: Fourteen Rare Emigrant Ship Lists.*
- *Passenger Lists from Ireland.*
- *Ships from Ireland to Early America, 1623-1850.*
- *The Famine Immigrants: Lists of Irish Immigrants Arriving at the Port of New York, 1846-1851.*
- *Irish Passenger Lists, 1847-1871: Lists of Passengers Sailing from Londonderry to America on Ships of J & J Cooke Line and the McCorkell Line.*
- *Hardwicke Papers Irish Passenger Lists 1803-1806: Lists of Passengers Sailing from Ireland to America / Extracted from the Hardwicke Papers.*
- *Port of Derry Ship List from J. & J. Cooke's Line, 1847-1849.*
- *Italians to America: Lists of Passengers Arriving at U.S. Ports, 1880-1899.*

Additional Resources

- *Immigrant and Passenger Arrivals: a select catalog of National Archives microfilm publications.* This publication provides lists of U.S. Customs passenger arrival lists on microfilm from 1820-1957 for New York and major Atlantic, Gulf Coast, and Pacific ports (see specific years that are covered for specific ports in publication). Most ports also have indexes covering these time periods. The Akron-Summit County Public Library is unable to borrow these microfilmed records but you may order them through your local branch of *The Church of Latter-Day Saints Family History Center Library*:

106 East Howe Road

Tallmadge, Ohio

330-630-3365 (call for hours available)

www.familysearch.org

(They do not respond to inquiries by mail because of the limited staff.)

- *Ellis Island: tracing your family history through America's gateway* by Lorretto Dennis Szucs (2000) **aisle 6A.**
- *The Family Tree guide to finding your Ellis Island ancestors* by Sharon DeBartolo Carmack (2005) **aisle 6A.**
- We also have many other very interesting books about the Ellis Island experience in other divisions of our library, from children's books to fiction novels to the history of the island.

Electronic Sources

- *Stephen P. Morse:* Stephen Morse has created an overwhelming amount of web pages that will link you to many passenger list resources, links to find pictures of ships, and much much more <http://www.stevemorse.org/>.
- *Cyndi's List:* Cyndi's list is a website that provides numerous links to resources on the web, including passenger lists, www.cyndislist.com/ships.htm.
- *Ellis Island:* This database covers ships that arrived into the New York port at Ellis Island from 1892 to 1954 <http://www.ellisland.org/>.
- *Castle Garden:* Castle Garden was the fore runner of Ellis Island and operated from 1830 until 1892. This database allows you to search passenger records for this New York port <http://www.castlegarden.org/>.
- *Ancestry Library Edition:* This database has a limited immigration collection and does have some passenger lists available online.