

[Tracing Immigrant Origins](#)

(Reads well on-line from the link cited above)

Tracing ones ancestors as they immigrated to the United States can be a challenge. Immigrants came by ship, by rail, in wagons, on horses, and on foot. Strongly recommend you research your USA relatives first to obtain preliminary information of where they immigrated from. USA marriage, death, obituaries, and naturalization records are but a few of the types of records that can render information about learning specifically where to start researching your European roots. Fortunately, there are a host of research resources available that can make this family history endeavor easier to conduct. There are two "must peruse" websites for initiating original research on tracing immigrant origins. There are a lot of excellent resources with supporting documents found on both **Family Search.Org** for both information and resources and **The Family History Guide** for on-line tutorials with exercises.

FamilySearch.org has some excellent resources to peruse to provide you with links to these resources along with further insight of why they are pertinent.

Tracing Immigrant Origins Wiki Topics



News and Events

- FamilySearch has a [NY arrival index](#)
- [Volunteer to index](#) migration records

Part 1. General

- [Introduction](#)
- [Search Strategies](#)

Part 2. [Country of Arrival](#)

Country of Arrival [Search Tactics](#)

Country of Arrival [Record Finder](#)

Country of Arrival [Record Types](#)

- [Archives/Libraries](#)
- [Biography](#)
- [Business Records](#)
- [Cemeteries](#)
- [Census](#)
- [Military Records](#)
- [Naturalization](#)
- [Newspapers](#)
- [Obituaries](#)
- [Pensions](#)

- [Church Records](#)
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- [Genealogy](#)
- [History](#)
- [Immigration](#)
- [Land & Property](#)
- [Periodicals](#)
- [Probate Records](#)
- [Societies](#)
- [Vital Records](#)
- [Voting Registers](#)

Part 3. [Country of Origin](#)

[Country of Origin Search Tactics](#)

[Country of Origin Record Finder](#)

[Country of Origin Record Types](#)

- [Census](#)
- [Church Records](#)
- [Civil Registration](#)
- [Court Records](#)
- [Directories](#)
- [Emigration](#)
- [Genealogy](#)
- [History](#)
- [Land & Property](#)
- [Military Records](#)
- [Names Personal](#)
- [Newspapers](#)
- [Periodicals](#)
- [Population](#)
- [Probate Records](#)
- [Societies](#)
- [Surname Distribution](#)
- [Maps](#)
- [Taxation](#)
- [Vital Records](#)

For Further Reading

The FamilySearch moderator for Tracing Immigrants
Origin is [GoAncestry](#)

Value. These Wiki pages introduce the principles, search strategies, and record types you can use to identify an immigrant ancestor's original hometown. These principles apply to almost any country. Finding an immigrant ancestor's place of origin is the key to finding earlier generations of the family. It provides access to many family history resources in that home area. Once you know a former place of residence or a birthplace, you may be able to add more generations to your pedigree. [Read more of the Introduction.](#)

Research Sequence. The best approach is to start searching records created in the immigrant's new country, especially if you know little about the person. Only rarely is it better to use country-of-origin records first.

Key Immigration Links

- [Hamburg Passenger Lists](#) how to use the lists and indexes
- [Germans from Russia](#) research strategies, and record types
- [Ancestry.com](#) (\$) passengers, naturalizations, convicts, passports, border crossings, ship images, crew lists, colonists, and aliens
- [FrancoGen](#) links to early French Canadian immigration sources
- [Tracing Family History: Canada Immigration and Citizenship Genealogy Guide](#) has links to other resources.

Featured content[[edit source](#)]

Country of Arrival Obituaries. Obituaries are an excellent source of biographical information about immigrants. In addition to names and death dates, you can learn about surviving family members, church affiliations, spouses, parents, occupations, burial places, and hometowns in the old country. Even if a place of origin is not given, an obituary may provide additional research clues, such as the date or ship of immigration or traveling companions. Much of this information cannot be found in other sources. For many immigrants, an obituary is the only “biographical sketch” ever written about them.

Did you know?[[edit source](#)]

- [Huguenots](#) (French Protestants) settled [Florida](#) in 1564, 43 years before [Jamestown](#).
- The [Statue of Liberty](#) was a gift from [France](#) to the [United States](#).
- [More people](#) have come from [Italy](#) and [Germany](#) to America than from any other nations.
- More immigrants arrived at [Philadelphia](#) than at [New York City](#) prior to 1800.
- More than 3/4 of American colonists arrived as [indentured servants](#), [convicts](#) or [slaves](#).
- The U.S. National Archives has both [Canadian](#) and [Mexican](#) border crossing records.
- Library and Archives Canada has [border crossing records](#) of Americans into Canada.
- Some American colonists had their [last will and testament sent back to England](#) for probate.
- Up to 90 percent of [Irish](#) and [Greek](#) immigrants [went back home](#) from America.

Other external links[[edit source](#)]

General

- [What Passenger Lists Are Online](#) overview of United States and International links, and which ones require payment.

Passenger lists and/or indexes

- [One-Step All New York](#) Stephen P. Morse's excellent search tool for ALL 1820-1957 New York City passenger arrivals
- [One-Step Ellis Island](#) explains Stephen P. Morse's various excellent search tools for 1892-1924 New York City arrivals
- [One-Step Castle Garden](#) links to Stephen P. Morse's various excellent search tools for 1855-1891 New York City arrivals
- [Ellis Island Record Search](#) Ellis Island's site including search index 1892-1924, manifest images, history, photos and more
- [Castle Garden](#) index of New York City passenger arrivals 1820-1913 (no images)
- [Immigrant Ships Transcriber's Guild](#) transcripts and index of over 10,000 ships' passenger lists
- [Immigrant Servants Database](#) indexes indentured servants who came to the colonies
- [Immigrant Ancestors Project](#) (BYU) indexing efforts focusing on France, Germany, England, Ireland, Italy, and Spain
- [Immigration History Research Center](#) (Univ of Minn.) research on international migration, archives to document immigrant and refugee life
- [WorldVitalRecords](#) over 40 million names in over 100 immigration and travel databases
- [Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society immigrant records](#) English and Russian HIAS arrival cards since 1909 copies for a fee

National Archives collections

- [Library and Archives Canada](#) 15 Canadian immigrant name indexes, passenger lists before 1865, 1865-1935, ocean arrivals 1919-1924, border entries 1919-1924, after 1935, immigrants from Russia, British home children orphan immigrants, passports, and citizenship papers
- [U.S. National Archives](#) ship passenger arrival records and land border entries 1800-1819, 1820-1959, links to immigration databases

Other resources likely to list immigrants

- [BLM-GLO Land Patent Index](#) search homesteads, and other land records by state, applicant's name, or land description
- [Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System](#) about 1/10 of Union soldiers were recent immigrants; some military records may give hometown

Immigrant heritage societies

- [American Historical Society of Germans from Russia](#) chapters, contact info, conventions, contribute to their database, news, products, research materials, services, and village lists
- [Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center](#) at Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois studies of Swedish immigration to North America, the communities the immigrants established, and the role the immigrants and their descendants have played in American life

A wiki article describing an online collection is found at

- [New York, Northern Arrival Manifests](#) shows over 1 million cards in [Soundex](#) order for passengers arriving **north** of New York City in New York State at Buffalo, Lewiston, Niagra Falls, Rochester, Hogansburg, Malone, Morristown, Nyando, Ogdensburg, Rooseveltown, and Waddington.

Tracing Immigrant Origins

Part 1:	Introduction · Migration Search Strategies
Part 2: Country of Arrival	Search Tactics · Record Finder · Record Types: Archives and Libraries · Biography · Business Records · Cemeteries · Census · Church Records · Court Records · Genealogy · History · Immigration · Land and Property · Military Records · Naturalization · Newspapers · Obituaries · Pensions · Periodicals · Probate Records · Societies · Vital Records · Voting Registers
Part 3: Country of Origin	Search Tactics · Record Finder · Record Types: Census · Church Records · Civil Registration · Court Records · Directories · Emigration · Genealogy · History · Land and Property · Military Records · Names Personal · Newspapers · Periodicals · Population · Probate Records · Societies · Surname Distribution Maps · Taxation · For Further Reading

The Family History Guide

The Family History Guide, <https://www.thefhguide.com/project-9-united-statesd1.html>, provides a more sequential process of learning Step-by-step “how to” research tutorials for tracing immigration records from vital records. It is organized I many levels with specific offerings in a rather clear and concise format. I particularly like its infrastructure of topics for each level of tutorials. The **Explore various types of U.S. immigration records** tutorial that I like very much is located at <https://www.thefhguide.com/project-9-united-statesd1.html#goal-d1>

These three tutorials with exercises consist of:

- *Learn about immigration and emigration records.*
- *Learn about tracing your immigrant ancestors.*
- *Explore immigration resources.*

Next page displays these excellent tutorials.

Goal D1: Explore various types of U.S. immigration records.

Vault

Immigration and naturalization records can provide information clues for ancestors when they arrive in the U.S., as well as for their countries of origin.


Choices

A Learn about immigration and emigration records.

1. Get an introduction to U.S. immigration.

 PS—U.S. Immigration and Emigration | AC—Overview of Immigration Research

2. Understand the basics of U.S. immigration and emigration in these articles.

 AC—Finding Your Immigrant Ancestors | BR—Immigration and Naturalization



3. Learn more about U.S. Immigration records.

 PS—Immigration Records—1825 | PS—U.S. Immigration and Emigration Class Handout—1825

4. Learn how to find immigration records and passenger lists.

 AR—How To Find Immigration Records & Passenger Lists

5. Learn about immigration records at the National Archives.

 National Archives—Immigration Records
 Immigration records at the National Archives—1224

6. Learn about how Social Security numbers were used for immigrants.

 CF—Social Security and Your Immigrant Ancestors

Exercises

B Learn about tracing your immigrant ancestors.

Summary

1. Get tips on finding your immigrant ancestors in these videos.

 AC—Finding Your Immigrant Ancestors—25:07 | PS—Proven Ways To Find Your Immigrant Ancestors—30:50

2. Read this article on tracing immigrant origins.

 PS—Tracing Immigrant Origins

3. Learn about approaches to immigration research.

 L2S—Finding Your Immigrant Ancestor | AC—Overview of Immigration Research

4. Establish an immigration timeline.

 GC—Establish an immigration timeline

5. Here are some additional tips for tracking your immigrant ancestors.

 PS—5 Online Tips to Help You Find Your Immigrant Ancestors



Exercises

C Explore immigration resources.

Summary

1. Learn about ethnic immigration sources in the article.

 GC—Resources for Ethnic Genealogy

2. Learn about sources for tracing immigrants.

 AC—American Sources for Documenting Immigrants

3. Learn about tracing immigrants who returned to their home countries.

 GC—Immigrants Who Returned Home | FMP—Immigrant Ancestors Who Changed their Minds

4. Use the RootsWeb message boards to read or post questions about U.S. immigration.

5. Explore the Books We Own site for books about U.S. immigration that can be checked out or researched for you by others.



Vault

Below is a master list of links to even more fully explore for immigration records through vital records.

A: U.S. Records 1: Records 2: Location & Geo. 3: Regions / States **B: Vital Records** 1: Vital Rec. 2: Birth 3: Adoption 4: Marriage 5: Death, Obits 6: Cemetery **C: Census** 1: Records 2: By Decades **D: Immigration** 1: Records 2: Nat. / Passenger 3: Other **E: Military** 1: Records 2: By Conflict **F: Other Records** 1: Religious, Misc. 2: Property 3: Court 4: News. 5: Arch. / Lib. 6: Help Open Choices Close Choices