

A Look at U.S. Ports of Immigration in the 19th and Early 20th Centuries

Presented by Kim Alberg

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The CORNER PIECES of Today's Presentation:

- The FRAME – Setting the Stage
- The BIG PICTURE- Waves of Immigration and Factors of Change
- The DETAIL PIECES – The Ports of Call and Their Records
- The CHALLENGES – Next Steps and Workarounds

The Frame: POP QUIZ (Answers)

1. While there were more than 70 federal immigration stations in the U.S. in the 19th and early 20th centuries, nearly 2/3 of the immigrants entering the U.S. during this time period entered through either Ellis Island or its predecessor, Castle Garden/Castle Clinton.
2. As late as the 2000 USFC, German ancestry still had a major presence across the U.S.
3. More than a preference for a particular PORT, the TIME/DATE of immigration often determined an immigrant ancestor's port of entry.

Sites & Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ "Census-2000-Data-Top-US-Ancestries-by-State." <i>Wikimedia Commons</i>, 25 Mar. 2024, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Census-2000-Data-Top-US-Ancestries-by-County.svg . Accessed 15 Jun. 2024
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The Big Picture: EARLY IMMIGRATION TRENDS- 1500-1820

- Earliest ports = St. Augustine FL, Jamestown VA, Newport RI
- Earliest arrivals (from Carmack's *A Genealogist's Guide to Discovering Your Immigrant & Ethnic Ancestors: How to Find and Record Your Unique Heritage*) = Spanish, French, English, Dutch, Germans, Welsh, Finns, Scots, Scots-Irish. During this window, more than 380,000 enslaved Africans were also transported to North America, but few records document their arrival. The *Ancestry Learning Hub* article cited below provides two links to slave manifests and records of enslaved people in 18th century America.
- Immigration declines from the time of the Revolutionary War to the end of this period; Philadelphia emerges as the largest port of immigration in the 18th century and is especially popular with early German and Irish immigrants.
- Key Dates: (1818) A regular, "packet service" begins operation between NYC and Liverpool. (1819) The Steerage Act of 1819 ushers in the era of mandatory Customs Passenger Lists, handed by the ship's officer to the port's customs agent. In the 1880s, immigration responsibilities shift from state to federal control; after this transition, these lists are just called Passenger Lists.

Sites & Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ Carmack, Sharon DeBartolo. <i>A Genealogist's Guide to Discovering Your Immigrant & Ethnic Ancestors: How to Find and Record Your Unique Heritage</i>. Betterway Books, 2000. ✿ "Immigration in the 1600s and 1700s." <i>Ancestry Family History Learning Hub</i>, 15 Nov. 2023, www.ancestry.com/c/family-history-learning-hub/1600s-1700s-immigration . Accessed 15 Jun. 2024.
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The Big Picture: IMMIGRATION WAVE #1- 1820-1880

- Largest ports = New York (#1 from here out), Baltimore, Boston, New Orleans, and Philadelphia.
- Immigrant arrivals (largely from Northern and Western Europe) = Catholic Irish, Norwegians, Swedes, Danes, Germans, Chinese, Japanese, French Canadians
- 1820-1870 – over 7.5 million immigrants come to the United States – more than the entire U.S. population in 1810! About 1/3 of all U.S. immigrants come from Ireland with almost another 1/3 emigrating from the individual states that became Germany.
- Immigrants come for freedom, land (Homestead Act, Westward Expansion), jobs (Industrial Revolution, canal and railroad work), and to reunite with family, leaving economic hardship, famine, political unrest, conscription, and natural disasters.
- Key Dates: (1855) Castle Garden/Clinton opens as 1st U.S. immigration inspection station. (1864) Immigration Act of 1864 passed to replenish the workforce depleted by the Civil War. It allows employers to enter one-year labor contracts with immigrants, pledging their wages against the cost of their immigration. (1875) Legislation passed that prohibits the immigration of criminals and prostitutes (Page Act). The subsequent Supreme Court case begins shifting immigration control from the states to the federal government.

Sites & Sources	<p>✿ "U.S. Immigration in the 1800s." <i>Ancestry Family History Learning Hub</i>, www.ancestry.com/c/family-history-learning-hub/1800-us-immigration . Accessed 15 Jun. 2024.</p> <p>✿ Bergquist, James M. "Trail of the American Immigrant: 19th Century." <i>Daily Life through History</i>, ABC-CLIO, 2024, https://dailylife-abc-clio.com.mcpl.idm.oclc.org/Search/Display/1380889 . Accessed 15 June 2024. <An MCPL/MGC login is required to access this article></p>
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The Big Picture: IMMIGRATION WAVE #2- 1880-1920

- Immigrant arrivals (largely from Southern, Eastern, and Central Europe) = Italians, Poles, Austrians, Czechs, Slovaks, Yugoslavs, Romanians, Russians, Hungarians, Armenians, Greeks, Arabs, Jews, Japanese
- Among the 20 million immigrants during this wave are 2 million Jews and around 4 million Italians, including many “Birds of Passage” who repeatedly travel back and forth to Italy.
- Key Dates: (1882) Chinese Exclusion Act becomes the 1st legislation to exclude a national group. (1891) U.S. Office of Immigration is formed and given charge of nearly all immigration matters. (1910) Angel Island Immigration Station opens in San Francisco.

Sites & Sources	<p>✿ “1900s U.S. Immigration.” <i>Ancestry Family History Learning Hub</i>, www.ancestry.com/c/family-history-learning-hub/us-immigration . Accessed 15 Jun. 2024.</p> <p>✿ "History of Angel Island Immigration Station." <i>Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation</i>, 2024, www.aiisf.org/history . Accessed 15 Jun. 2024.</p> <p>✿ Rohlf, Katelyn. "Birds of Passage: Making Sense of Italian Ancestors Who Made Multiple Trips In and Out of America." <i>New York Genealogical and Biographical Society</i>, 30 Jan. 2023, https://www.newyorkfamilyhistory.org/blog/birds-passage-making-sense-italian-ancestors-who-made-multiple-trips-and-out-america#:~:text=Birds%20of%20passage%2C%20who%20were,dozen%20trips%20across%20the%20Atlantic . Accessed 15 Jun. 2024.</p>
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The Big Picture: IMMIGRATION WAVE #3- 1920-1940

- Immigrant arrivals = Germans, Italians, Poles, Czechs, British (English, Scots, Welsh), Irish, Canadians, Mexicans, and refugees from Nazi Germany
- Migration to/from the homeland is most common during the early part of this wave but drops off due to the Great Depression and World War II.
- Key Date: (1924) Immigration Act of 1924 establishes annual quotas by nationality. These quotas *favor* immigrants from Northern/Western European countries, *limit* immigration from Southern/Central/Eastern Europe, and *deny* immigrants from Asia (except for the Philippines – a U.S. territory).

The Detail Pieces: MAJOR U.S. PORTS- 1820-1920

Note: Sources vary on the number of immigrants entering through each port. The statistics that follow were found in W. Daniel Quillen's *Mastering Immigration & Naturalization Records*.

- Based solely on the numbers of immigrants entering the U.S. through each port, the five major ports of arrival during this immigration window were New York (nearly 24 million), Boston (2 million), Baltimore (1.5 million), Philadelphia (1.24 million), New Orleans (710,000), and San Francisco (500,000) with New York Harbor – Castle Garden + Ellis Island – serving as the port of entry for nearly 2/3 of the 35 million immigrants who arrived during this 100 year window.
- Immigration was, of course, not limited to these 5 major ports. During these years, immigrants also entered the U.S. through an additional 96 ports – along the Great Lakes and Atlantic, Pacific, and Gulf coasts. Many also made land crossings at Canadian and Mexican border “ports”. NARA is a good place to start your search for digitized water and land passenger arrival records from 1800-1982. (Link provided on p. 7 of this handout)
- Some ships stopped in multiple ports, dropping off some passengers in one port before transporting others to the next. Examples include stops in New Orleans on the way to Galveston and – for many Irish immigrants – stops in Canadian ports before continuing to Boston, New York, etc. These “via points” skew port totals a bit, but more importantly, they indicate your research may need to extend to additional ports of entry.

Sites & Sources	☼ Quillen, W. Daniel. <i>Mastering Immigration & Naturalization Records</i> . 3rd ed., Cold Spring Press, 2015. p. 30.
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The Detail Pieces: PORT OF NEW YORK

Note: Significant numbers of all nationalities entered the U.S. through the Port of New York.

- New York's ascension to #1 was largely due to the business ties they maintained with Great Britain (even after the War of 1812) and to transportation changes that offered the possibility of work on the canals and railroads while also opening the “west” to immigrants who entered through New York Harbor.
- Key Dates: (1818) A “packet service” opens between NY and Liverpool, providing regular scheduled trips between the two cities. (1825) After eight years of construction, the Erie Canal begins operation. (1855) Castle Garden Emigrant Depot opens, offering services like free baggage transfers, currency exchange, information, and letter writing and mail services. 8.2 million immigrants enter the U.S. through Castle Garden over the next 35 years – 75% of all immigrants to the U.S. during that window – before it is closed in 1890, and (1892) Ellis Island Immigration Station opens to take its place. <Note: Immigrants arriving in New York Harbor from 1890-1892 were processed at the barge office while the Ellis Island facility was being completed.>

Sites & Sources	☼ "New York Passenger Lists." <i>NARA (Catalog)</i> , https://eservices.archives.gov/orderonline/start.swe . Accessed 19 Jun. 2024. <Note: Select the “Microfilm” button and enter “New York Passenger Lists”> “Port of New York” continued →
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ "New York Immigration Records Online." <i>New York Genealogical and Biographical Society</i>, www.newyorkfamilyhistory.org/subject-guide/new-york-immigration-records-online#:~:text=The%20Ellis%20Island%20Foundation%20has,Island)%2C%201820%2D1957. Accessed 15 Jun. 2024. ✿ "Connect with Your Heritage." <i>The Statue of Liberty - Ellis Island Foundation, Inc.</i>, www.statueofliberty.org/discover/passenger-ship-search/ . Accessed 15 Jun. 2024.
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The Detail Pieces: PORT OF BOSTON

Unless noted, the “principal nationalities” listed in the rest of this section were taken from an *Ancestry.com Learning Center* article entitled, “Major U.S. Immigration Ports” (see link below). These alphabetical lists are not sequenced by number of immigrants or chronology, nor do they include ALL nationalities arriving at each port.

- Principal nationalities = Canadians, Eastern and Mediterranean Europeans, Irish, Jews
- By 1850, the Irish constitute 75% of Boston’s foreign-born population.
- By 1880, Boston is the 2nd largest U.S. port of immigration.
- Key Dates: (1840) Cunard Line establishes regular, packet service between Liverpool, Halifax, and Boston. (1847-1854) Britain subsidizes relocations to Canada; 200,000+ immigrants enter through Boston during this window. (1848) Massachusetts Alien Passenger Act of 1848 requires passenger lists. These lists – plus MA State Department transcripts and copies of original Customs Passenger Lists – are research workarounds for the 1820-1883 (regular) Customs Passenger Lists which were destroyed by fire.

Sites & Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ “Major U.S. Immigration Ports." <i>Ancestry.com Learning Center</i>, www.ancestrycdn.com/support/us/2016/11/majorusports.pdf . Accessed 5 Oct. 2021. ✿ “Boston Passenger Lists." <i>NARA (Catalog)</i>, https://eservices.archives.gov/orderonline/start.swe . Accessed 19 Jun. 2024. <Note: Select the “Microfilm” button and enter “Boston Passenger Lists”> ✿ "Passenger Manifest Lists (1848- 1891)." <i>Massachusetts Archives</i>, www.sec.state.ma.us/ArchivesSearch/Passengermanifest.aspx . Accessed 19 Jun. 2024. <p><Records from the Port of Boston – and the records of many other ports along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts – can be accessed through the FamilySearch films of NARA’s “Index to Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at Atlantic and Gulf Coast Ports (Excluding New York), 1820-1874.” This searchable link can be found on p.7 of this handout with “Minor Ports”.></p>
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The Detail Pieces: PORT OF BALTIMORE

- Principal nationalities = Free and enslaved Blacks, Caribbeans, Czechs, English, French, Germans, Greeks, Irish, Italians, Jews, Poles, Scots, Ukrainians. (Source = Balck Institute for Ethnic Studies, *Freedom’s Doors*)
- In 1820, Blacks represented nearly 1/4 of Baltimore’s 63,000 inhabitants with Free Blacks numbering 10,326 and an additional 4,357 enslaved people of African descent.
- Baltimore’s textiles and grains were the immigrants’ initial draw to this port, but by the 1830s, Baltimore was the largest exporter of American tobacco, bonding it with Bremen – the tobacco import center for Europe. Ships between these two ports carried “tobacco out” (east), “passengers in” (west) at relatively low fares.
- Key Dates: (1818) Cumberland Road opens Baltimore to the land west of the Appalachians, while (1824) the new turnpike system and (1828) railroads make travel easier. (1868) B&O Railroad + North German Lloyd Line + Augusta Koether’s Boarding House = spike in immigration through the Port of Baltimore as immigrants take advantage of the single-ticket option from Europe to America’s heartland (with room and board in Baltimore).

Sites & Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ "Baltimore Passenger Lists." <i>NARA (Catalog)</i>, https://eservices.archives.gov/orderonline/start.swe . Accessed 19 Jun. 2024. <Note: Select the "Microfilm" button and enter "Baltimore Passenger Lists"> ✿ "Information on BRG55-1- Passenger Arrival Lists." <i>Maryland State Archives</i>, https://guide.msa.maryland.gov/pages/series.aspx?id=BRG55-1 . Accessed 19 Jun. 2024. <This site is slow to load/search and incomplete, but I haven't found these records anywhere else. They appear to include the "City Lists" which ship captains had to submit to the mayor from 1833-1866.> ✿ Marks, Kenneth R. "Free Online Maryland Immigration Records." <i>The Ancestor Hunt</i>, 12 Feb. 2024, https://theancestorhunt.com/blog/free-online-maryland-immigration-records/. Accessed 19 Jun. 2024.
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The Detail Pieces: PORT OF PHILADELPHIA

- Principal nationalities = Eastern European Jews, English, Germans, Hungarians, Irish, Italians, Poles, Russians, Scots, Scots-Irish
- In the 1700s, Philadelphia was the largest port of immigration due, in part, to good publicity from William Penn and a general welcoming of varied cultural and religious ideals. The City of Philadelphia continued to grow even after the Port of New York took the #1 spot with immigrants entering the U.S. through New York, then journeying the 90 miles to settle in Philadelphia.
- While about 90 miles upriver from the coast, Philadelphia offered easy access to coastal trade and the Pennsylvania interior with its good, affordable land and inland (fur) trade.
- Key Dates: (1873 – 1923) Red Star and American steamship lines establish packet services to the Port of Philadelphia, and 1,000,000 immigrants enter through Philadelphia during this window. (1910) Immigration through this port – and others – slow on the eve of World War I. (1924+) Port of Philadelphia immigration numbers drop to less than 1% of total U.S. immigrant entries after the Immigration Act of 1924.

Sites & Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ "Philadelphia Passenger Lists." <i>NARA (Catalog)</i>, https://eservices.archives.gov/orderonline/start.swe . Accessed 19 Jun. 2024. <Note: Select the "Microfilm" button and enter "Philadelphia Passenger Lists"> ✿ "Passenger Ship Records." <i>US GenWeb Archives - Pennsylvania</i>, http://usgwarchives.net/pa/1pa/ship.htm . Accessed 19 Jun. 2024. <Note: Early records> ✿ Ingle, Cyndi. "Ports of Entry » Philadelphia, Pennsylvania." <i>Cyndi's List</i>, https://cyndislist.com/ports-entry/philadelphia-pennsylvania/ . Accessed 19 Jun. 2024.
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The Detail Pieces: PORT OF NEW ORLEANS

- Principal nationalities = Asians, Eastern Europeans, French, French Canadians, Germans, Irish, Italians (especially Sicilians) and other Mediterraneans, Latin Americans, Spanish
- As we saw in Baltimore, immigrants travel to New Orleans on reduced fares as the westbound half of a "goods-out / immigrants-in" business model, but this time the export is cotton.

- While the 2nd largest port of immigration in 1860 – largely due to its access to lands up the Mississippi River – the poor climate and scarcity of jobs in New Orleans impede its growth, and it never really comes back after the Civil War.

Sites & Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ "New Orleans Passenger Lists." <i>NARA (Catalog)</i>, https://eservices.archives.gov/orderonline/start.swe . Accessed 19 Jun. 2024. <Note: Select the "Microfilm" button and enter "New Orleans Passenger Lists"> ✿ "WPA Transcript of Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New Orleans, Louisiana." <i>NARA</i>, https://catalog.archives.gov/id/122157682 . Accessed 19 Jun. 2024. <In 1940-41, the Works Progress Administration transcribed original New Orleans customs passenger lists dated from 1813 to 1849. Searchable! > ✿ Beine, Joe. "Resources for Finding Passenger Arrival Records at the Port of New Orleans, Louisiana." <i>GermanRoots.Com</i>, www.germanroots.com/neworleans.html . Accessed 19 Jun. 2024.
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The Detail Pieces: PORT OF SAN FRANCISCO

- Principal nationalities = Australians, Austrians, Canadians, Chinese, French, Germans, Italians, Japanese, Mexicans, New Zealanders, Poles, Portuguese, Russians, and others from Central and South America
- Approximately 1 million immigrants entered the U.S. through this port. By 1880, 60% of San Francisco's population was either immigrant or 1st gen. American – the highest percentage in the U.S. at the time.
- The biggest "pull" to San Francisco was the Gold Rush (1848/1849+), drawing Chinese immigrants plus people from other parts of the U.S. over land and sea to the area. <Note: The Panama Canal did not open until 1914, so most ocean voyages went around Cape Horn, Chile.>
- San Francisco was, "A city of European immigrants, but not a port of entry for European immigrants." (*Freedom's Doors*, p. 60)
- Key Date: (1910) Angel Island established to regulate immigration on the West Coast. Accounts of immigrant experiences at Angel Island tend to differ considerably from those of their Ellis Island counterparts.

Sites & Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ "San Francisco Passenger Lists." <i>NARA (Catalog)</i>, https://eservices.archives.gov/orderonline/start.swe . Accessed 19 Jun. 2024. <Note: Select the "Microfilm" button and enter "San Francisco Passenger Lists"> ✿ Chan, Ruth. "San Francisco INS Office Records." <i>NARA's History Hub</i>, 11 May 2023. https://historyhub.history.gov/genealogy/immigration-and-naturalization-records/b/immigration-naturalization-blog/posts/san-francisco-ins-office-records . Accessed 19 Jun 2024.
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The Detail Pieces: CANADA, MEXICO, & THE MINOR PORTS

REMINDERS & GENERAL INFO:

- In addition to the ports above, there were 96 "minor ports" on the Atlantic, Gulf and Pacific Coasts, the Great Lakes and along major rivers.
- As discussed earlier, an immigrant's journey may have included more than one port, and they may have stayed at the first port for a while before resuming the journey to their original destination.

- Canada was a popular via point for Irish immigrants and others. Statistics indicate that up to 40% of immigrants arriving in Canada during the 19th and early 20th centuries were headed to the U.S.
- Land crossing statistics/records were not required by early immigration laws.
- Since immigration over land borders tended to be more individual than seaport arrivals, records had to be reimagined to work with land crossings. Canadian and Mexican border crossing records are typically individual "card manifests" or "inspection cards" which recorded data like that collected on a ship's passenger list. These cards may or may not be accompanied by a separate passenger list.

CANADIAN BORDER CROSSINGS

- Canadian border crossings could be by land (usually train) or by ship. The most popular *Canadian* ports at this time were Quebec City and Halifax (NS). NARA's "Browse by Port of Entry" site (see below) includes these and many other Canadian port records and border crossings as well as minor port records across the U.S.
- Canadians entering the United States were usually recorded in American government border records, 1895 to 1956 (AKA "The St. Albans Lists"). If your ancestor relocated from Canada to Maine, you might also check the alien registrations available on the Maine State Archives page.

MEXICAN BORDER CROSSINGS

- Mexican Border Crossings Records (1903 – 1953) for the 24 land ports along the U.S. border with Mexico are available through NARA. They are organized by bordering U.S. state – Arizona, California, New Mexico, Texas.
- Note that, while most immigrants entering the U.S. through Mexican border ports were Mexican citizens, this was also a point of entry for Europeans, Japanese, Turks, Syrians, Guatemalans, and Korean citizens.

Sites & Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ "Browse by Port of Entry." NARA, www.archives.gov/research/immigration/ports . Accessed 20 Jun. 2024. ✿ "NARA M334- A Supplemental Index to Passenger Lists Of Vessels Arriving At Atlantic And Gulf Coast Ports (Excluding New York), 1820-1874." <i>FamilySearch.Org</i>, 5 Jun. 2024, www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/United_States_Index_to_Passenger_Arrivals,_Atlantic_and_Gulf_Ports_-_FamilySearch_Historical_Records . Accessed 22 Jun. 2024. ✿ "United States Immigration Online Genealogy Records." <i>Family Search</i>, 8 Mar. 2024, www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/United_States_Immigration_Online_Genealogy_Records . Accessed 19 Jun. 2024 ✿ Beine, Joe. "US Ports of Arrival and Their Available Passenger Lists 1820-1960s." <i>GeneSearch</i>, 29 Nov. 2022, www.genesearch.com/ports.html . Accessed 19 Jun. 2024. ✿ Smith, Marion L. "By Way of Canada." <i>NARA - Prologue Magazine</i>, www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2000/fall/us-canada-immigration-records-1.html . Accessed 18 Jun. 2024. ✿ "Immigration Records." <i>Library and Archives of Canada</i>, 29 Nov. 2022, https://library-archives.canada.ca/eng/collection/research-help/genealogy-family-history/immigration/Pages/immigration.aspx . Accessed 21 Jun. 2024. ✿ "Mexican Border Crossing Records, Ca. 1903–Ca. 1955." NARA, 21 Dec. 2022, www.archives.gov/research/immigration/border-mexico . Accessed 19 Jun. 2024.
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The Detail Pieces: CASE STUDY – 1907

- With just short of 1.3 million immigrants, 1907 was the peak year for U.S. immigration during the 1800-1950 window. Ellis Island's biggest day was also this year with 11,747 entries registered on 17 Apr 1907. (Happily for us, this is right after new, more detailed 1906 passenger list forms went into use!)
- According to the *Morton Allan Directory of European Passenger Steamship Arrivals*, 23 different shipping LINES sailed into Baltimore, Boston, NY, and Philadelphia that year from 15 different European ports of embarkation. The largest of these European ports were Naples, Bremen, Liverpool, and Hamburg.
- Based on the 1907 *Annual Report of the Commissioner-General of Immigration* (available on Archive.org), immigrants admitted from Austria-Hungary topped the list with over 600,000 – an increase of over 73,000 from the previous year.

Sites & Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✿ "Annual Report of the Commissioner-General of Immigration." <i>Internet Archive</i>, 30 Jun. 1907, https://archive.org/details/ldpd_11897909_003 . Accessed 15 Jun. 2024.✿ <i>Morton Allan Directory of European Passenger Steamship Arrivals</i>. <i>Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc.</i>, 1979. pp. 118-126.
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The Detail Pieces: GENERAL TIP #1 – WATCH FOR FACTORS

What made your immigrant ancestor leave their homeland? Why did they leave *when* they left? Watch for factors influencing the timing of your ancestor's decision to emigrate and their choice of immigration port.

- News of the Day. Using Everett S. Lee's "push and pull" terms, what was happening in their world around the time of their immigration to America that might have made them want to leave their homeland (the push) and why might they have chosen America at that time (the pull)?
 - PUSH – economic downturns, war, political turmoil, discrimination, natural disasters
 - PULL – better living conditions, jobs, land, security, freedom, reuniting with family
 - Predictably, U.S. immigration numbers dropped during times of war and economic lows. Maybe the PUSH was still strong for your immigrant ancestor at those times, but the PULL wasn't compelling enough!
- Technology. Did advancements in transportation (canals, railroads, steamships) and communication (trans-Atlantic news, telegraph) – play roles in your immigrant ancestor's decision to make the move to America?
- Innovation. When planning a big trip, most of us *still* "shop" for the least expensive flight with a schedule that fits our family's needs. Did our immigrant ancestors see packet services as answers to their prayers? How about the shipping lines that offered reduced fares for their "goods-out, immigrants-in" services?

The Detail Pieces: GENERAL TIP #2 – LEARN THE RULES

Get to know the document-generating laws in play both in your immigrant ancestor's homeland and in the U.S. at the time of their departure to America.

- Were they required to register their intent to emigrate with someone? Civil office? Police?
- Were they required to secure permission from some governmental entity to leave? Travel papers? Passport?
 - Departure documents can be goldmines, often offering both personal and travel information, including the ports of embarkation, intended U.S port of arrival, and possibly ports of call along the way.
 - Registry and Visa Files are available through the USCIS Genealogy Program. This is a fee-based service. For more info, go to <https://www.uscis.gov/records/genealogy>
- Would your ancestor have notified a church of their plans to emigrate and would that church have generated paperwork acknowledging the family's removal from their roster?

The Detail Pieces: ONLINE PORT RECORDS

- NARA. The National Archives and Records Administration is responsible for maintaining most of the immigration records of this time. NARA typically partners with other platforms to make filmed records

available online, but they also have their own Access to Archival Databases with several relevant (and searchable) record sets.

- When searching big genealogy databases, focus your search on specific record sets such as...
 - Ancestry – Card Catalog Search: Passenger → 250+ titles
 - FamilySearch – Wiki Search: U.S. Immigration → record sets by port, state, nationality, and more
 - FindMyPast – Category: Immigration & Travel → 250+ million records
 - MyHeritage – Category: Immigration & Travel → 239 million records
- Other websites that are too wonderful to omit are included in the links below.

Sites & Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ "Immigrants." NARA - <i>Access to Archival Databases</i>, https://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=SB301&bc=sb . Accessed 18 Jun. 2024. ✿ "Immigration Records." NARA, www.archives.gov/research/immigration/overview . Accessed 15 Jun. 2024. ✿ "Records of the Center for Immigration Research, 1976–2003." NARA, https://catalog.archives.gov/id/566631 . Accessed 18 Jun. 2024 ✿ Ingel, Cyndi. "Ports of Entry." <i>Cyndi's List</i>, www.cyndislist.com/ports-entry/ . Accessed 19 Jun. 2024. ✿ Morse, Stephen P. <i>One-Step Webpages</i>, https://stevemorse.org/ . Accessed 19 Jun. 2024. ✿ Beine, Joe. "Tips for Determining Your Ancestor's Probable Port of Arrival." <i>GenealogyBranches</i>, www.genealogybranches.com/arrivalports.html . Accessed 19 Jun. 2024. ✿ Beine, Joe. "US Ports of Arrival and Their Available Passenger Lists 1820-1960s." <i>GeneSearch</i>, www.genesearch.com/ports.html . Accessed 19 Jun. 2024. ✿ "U.S. Immigration After 1820." <i>FamilySearch.Org</i>, 15 Jan. 2024, www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/U.S. Immigration %E2%80%93 After 1820 . Accessed 19 Jun. 2024. ✿ "Immigrant Ships Transcribers Guild." <i>ITSG</i>, https://immigrantships.net/ . Accessed 20 Jun. 2024. <This group of volunteers has been transcribing and uploading immigration/emigration information since 1998. Special projects include the Bremen Project (emigrants from Bremen and Bremerhaven to elsewhere in the world) and the 1903 Project; also check out their link to "The Compass" and all its related data.>
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The Detail Pieces: MORE PORT RECORDS

- Offline, there are thousands of material/physical resources – books, periodicals, maps, dvds, and audio cds – available at libraries like MGC and through interlibrary loan. (Hint: Check the 304.8 section.) Take advantage of MGC’s “Passenger Lists Holdings Guide” which identifies the NARA immigration films available at MGC.
- Speaking of film ... With so many filmed NARA resources available on this topic, this is a great time to take advantage of the “NARA-to-FHL film conversion” table (linked [HERE](#)) to see if the NARA film series and roll you need for your research can be accessed online through FamilySearch.org.

Sites & Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ Colletta, John P. <i>They Came in Ships</i>. 3rd ed., <i>Ancestry Publishing</i>, 2002. ✿ Tepper, Michael. <i>American Passenger Arrival Records</i>. <i>Genealogical Publishing, Co., Inc.</i>, 1996. <p style="text-align: right;">“More Port Records” continued →</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ Stern, Gail F. <i>Freedom's Doors: Immigrant Ports of Entry to the United States. The Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies</i>, 1986. ✿ Wokeck, Marianne S. <i>Trade in Strangers. Pennsylvania State University Press</i>, 1999.
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The Detail Pieces: EMIGRATION RECORDS

- Few countries have a central facility for maintaining emigration documents, so you'll need to be prepared to hunt. The examples below were among those noted in a 2023 *Heritage Discovered* article (also cited).
- FYI- A FamilySearch.org WIKI search of the word EMIGRATION will open quite a few doors as will an Ancestry CARD CATALOG TITLE search of the same keyword.

Sites & Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ "Ancestors Project." <i>Center for Family History and Genealogy</i>, http://immigrants.byu.edu/ . Accessed 15 Jun. 2024. ✿ "The Scottish Emigration Database." <i>University of Aberdeen</i>, www.abdn.ac.uk/emigration/search.html . Accessed 15 Jun. 2024. ✿ "Irish Emigration Database." <i>Mellon Centre for Migration Studies</i>, https://mellonmigrationcentre.com/about-us/irish-emigration-database-ied/ . Accessed 15 Jun. 2024. ✿ "Det Danske Udvandrerarkiv." <i>Danish Emigrant Archive</i>, www.aalborgstadsarkiv.dk/UA.asp?UA=UAProtokol . Accessed 15 Jun. 2024. ✿ "How To Take Advantage of Emigration Records to Uncover Family Stories." <i>Heritage Discovered</i>, www.heritagediscovered.com/blog/where-to-find-emigration-records-united-states . Accessed 15 Jun. 2024.
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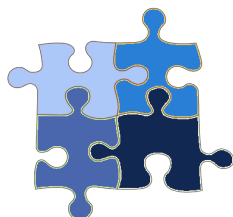
Challenges: "NEXT-STEPS" RECORDS

Still stumped? Here are 5 "tried-and-trues" (plus an outlier) to help your ports of call research:

- U.S. Naturalization, alien registrations, or passport documents (once naturalized)
- U.S. federal and state/territorial censuses
- Newspaper articles, obituaries, advertisements
- County records and histories
- Specific data sets like Ancestry's "New York U.S. Emigrant Savings Bank Records, 1850-1883"

Sites & Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ "Researching Individuals." <i>USCIS</i>, 6 Feb. 2023, www.uscis.gov/about-us/our-history/history-office-and-library/research-guides/researching-individuals . Accessed 19 Jun. 2024. (A U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services tutorial with a few links) ✿ "Emigrant Savings Bank Records, 1841-1945." <i>New York Public Library Archives & Manuscripts</i>, https://archives.nypl.org/mss/925#descriptive_identity . Accessed 15 Jun. 2024.
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Henry Ward Beecher said, "It is not the going out of port, but the coming in, that determines the success of a voyage," and our immigrant ancestors would doubtless agree. May their stories – through our research – continue to unfold, allowing us to leave the pieces of our family's puzzle well-sorted for the next generation.



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