

family history center

tips & tricks

The American Family Immigration History Center at Ellis Island is home to the Ellis Island Passenger Database. This awe-inspiring resource was unveiled by The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation in 2001, for the first time making readily available nearly 65 million passenger records for travelers entering the Port of New York 1820-1957. With more than 30% of Americans tracing at least one ancestor through Ellis Island and the Port of New York, this is an essential resource on one's genealogical journey.

Through our Ellis Island Museum Reimagined project, the database will be expanding to include ports of entry from across the U.S., along with airline manifests, allowing millions more to trace their family legacy. The database is available at the Family History Center on Ellis Island or free via the Foundation's website (www.StatueOfLiberty.org).

BECOME A MEMBER

The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation is the nonprofit that raises funds to preserve and honor the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, collaborating with the National Park Service in one of the country's most successful public-private partnerships. In 1982, President Ronald Reagan called for the Foundation to lead a private-sector effort for the centennial restorations of the historic monuments. The Foundation has since created the museum on Ellis Island, constructed the Statue of Liberty Museum, and funded over 200 additional projects on the islands.

When you give to the Foundation, you help bring history to life. Your support allows us to continue restoring the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island; provide free access to millions of passenger arrival records; develop educational opportunities; and much more.

Start your search at the link below
<https://heritage.statueofliberty.org/passenger>



search tips & tricks

ALL SHIP PASSENGERS ARE LISTED

Ship manifests records do not only list immigrants – by law, they were required to list every passenger on board. Accordingly, both members of the crew and U.S. citizens are listed on our database. Look at the top of the manifest page to see what class a passenger is in. If they are an employee of the ship, our database will have a record for each trip that crewman made to New York!

NAME CHANGES

While immigrants did not change their names on Ellis Island, they often changed their names themselves once arriving in America. Moreover, since most immigrants could neither read nor write, they did not know how to spell their names for ship manifests. To account for this, try searching for only a few syllables of their first or last name at a time.

SEARCH BY AGE

While some immigrants either lied about or did not know their age, this filter is very useful if either searching for a child or someone who traveled with a child. If this is the case, try searching passengers under the age of 18.

LESS IS MORE

While using filters is very important for a successful search, it's important not to overdo it. Due to both human error and the way the records changed over time, the more filters you add, the more likely you are to accidentally omit the result you are looking for.

more tips & tricks

MAIDEN NAMES

Keep in mind that women (or children traveling with their mothers) could have been recorded under their maiden name. For example, a married Italian woman and her child might both travel under the mother's maiden name.

SEARCH BY ETHNICITY

Between the years of 1892 and 1924, ship manifest records recorded ethnicity. While a useful filter, there are a few caveats to this technique.

- Ethnicity listings were inconsistent, with different ethnicity categories overlapping the same geographic areas.
- Europe's geopolitical boundaries were very different when Ellis Island was operational – for example, people from what is now Belarus could be listed under Russia.
- It is useful to note that Jewish travelers were nearly always logged religiously, not ethnically. If the passenger you are searching for is Jewish and arrived during the time ethnicity was recorded, they are almost certainly under “Hebrew.”

TYPES OF MANIFESTS

- 1820–1907: Single Page Ship Manifests.
 - Before Ellis Island was established in 1892, Clinton Castle (where you can now catch the ferry to Ellis and Liberty Islands) was the immigration processing station. Both records from Castle Clinton and early Ellis Island are one page.
- 1907–1947: Two Page Ship Manifests
- 1947–1957: New Single Page Ship Manifests
- World War II–1957: Plane Manifests

KNOW WHEN A FILE IS MISSING

The AFIHC database has limits; there are several date ranges where files are missing.

- U.S. Citizen arrivals: January 1–May 20 1944
- Passenger arrivals: January 1–September 17 1949
- Passenger arrivals: December 1954

website tips *using the wizard*

NAME OPTIONS

Every time you make a search, the first thing you should do is expand the naming criteria by making sure these options are all selected as so. This will help catch more possible results for the passenger in question.

YEAR OF ARRIVAL

The year of arrival slider is a great way to cut down your results. To account for error, it is best to use a breadth of 3-5 years to each side of the year in question. For example, if you were looking for a passenger that you believe to have arrived in 1913, you would set the date range from 1908-1918.

PASSENGERS ARE LISTED UNDER THEIR ORIGINAL NAMES

Remember: Ship manifests were written at the port of departure. If the immigrant changed their name after arriving in the United States, the AFIHC database would still list them under their previous name.

Try to envision what the passenger's name would be in their native language. For example, the English name John can be converted to Giovanni in Italian, Jean in French, and Hans in Danish. You should be able to search for non-English name alternatives online.

types of manifests

Port: _____

Microfilm Publication Number: _____

Roll Number: _____

Page or Group: _____

Line or List: _____

August 1882 to March 1903

Customs List of Passengers

- +

To be used for all passengers
- ++

To be used for cabin passengers only
- *

To be used for passengers other than cabin passengers

District of the City of New York

Port of New York

I, _____ Master of the _____ do solemnly, sincerely and truly swear that the following List or Manifest subscribed by me, and now delivered by me to the Collector of Customs of the District of the City of New York, is a full and perfect list of all the passengers taken on board said vessel at _____ from which port or ports the said vessel has now arrived; and that on said list is truly designated the age, sex, calling or occupation, the port of embarkation, the number of pieces of baggage of all passengers as to a protracted sojourn in this country, and also, in regard to Cabin passengers, the country of which they are citizens, and of passengers other than cabin passengers, their native country, their intended destination or location in the United States, and whether they are citizens of the United States, or not, and the location of the compartment or space occupied by each, as required by the Passenger Act of 1882 and the Regulations of the Secretary of the Treasury. So help me God.

Sworn to before me this _____ day of _____ 18____

_____ Deputy Collector

_____ Master

1	2 +	3 +	4 +	5 +	6 ++	7 *	8 *	9 *	10 +	11 *	12 +	13 +	14 +	
No. on List	Name in Full	Age		Sex	Calling or occupation	Country of which they are citizens	Native Country	Intended destination or location, State, or Territory	State of passengers other than Cabin, whether Citizens of the United States	Transient, in transit, or intending protracted sojourn	Location of compartment or space occupied forward, amidships or aft	Number of pieces of baggage	Port of embarkation	Date and cause of death
		Yrs.	Mos.											



types of manifests

Port: _____
 Microfilm Publication Number: _____
 Roll Number: _____
 Page or Group: _____
 Line or List: _____

March 1903 to February 1907

List or Manifest of Alien Passengers For the U.S. Immigration Officer at Port of Arrival

Required by the regulations of the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States, under Act of Congress approved March 3, 1903, to be delivered to the U.S. Immigration Officer by the Commanding Officer of any vessel having such passengers on board upon arrival at a port in the United States.

S.S. _____ sailing from _____, 190____ Arriving at Port of _____, 190____

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22		
No. on List	Name in Full	Age		Sex	Married or Single	Calling or Occupation	Able to		Nationality (Country of last permanent residence)	Race or People	Last Residence (Province, City or Town)	Final Destination (State, City or Town)	Whether having a ticket to such final destination	By whom was passage paid?	Whether in possession of \$50, and if less, how much?	Whether ever in the United States; and if so when and where?	Whether going to join a relative or friend; and if so, what relative or friend, and his name and complete address	Ever in prison or almshouse or institution for care and treatment of the insane or supported by charity? If so which?	Whether a Polygamist	Whether an Anarchist	Whether coming by reason of any offer, solicitation, promise, or agreement, express or implied, to labor in the United States	Condition of Health, Mental and Physical	Deformed or Crippled. Nature, length of time and cause.
		Yrs.	Mos.				Read	Write															



types of manifests

Port: _____

Microfilm Publication Number: _____

Roll Number: _____

Page or Group: _____

Line or List: _____

1907

List or Manifest of Alien Passengers For the United States

Required by the regulations of the Secretary of Commerce and Labor of the United States under Act of Congress approved February 20, 1907, to be delivered

S.S. _____ sailing from _____, _____, 1907

1	2		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		11	12			
No. on List	Full Name		Age		Sex	Married or Single	Calling or Occupation	Able to		Nationality (Country of which citizen or subject)	Race or People	Last Permanent Residence		The name and complete address of nearest relative or friend in country whence the alien came	Final Destination	
	Family Name	Given Name	Yrs.	Mos.				Read	Write			Country	City or Town		State	City or Town



types of manifests

Immigration Officer at Port of Arrival
to the United States Immigration Officer by Commanding Officer of any vessel having such passengers on board upon arrival at a port in the United States

Arriving at Port of _____, _____, 1907

13	14	15	16	17		18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25		26	27		28	29		
No. on List	Whether having a ticket to such final destination	By Whom was the Passage Paid?	Whether in possession of \$50, and if less how much?	Whether ever before in the United States; and if so, when and where?		Whether going to join a relative or friend; and if so, what relative or friend, and his name and complete address	Ever in prison or almshouse, or institution for care and treatment of the insane, or supported by charity? If so, which	Whether a polygamist	Whether an anarchist	Whether coming by reason of any offer, solicitation, promise, or agreement, express or implied, to labor in the United States	Condition of health: mental and physical	Deformed or Crippled, nature, length of time, and cause	Height		Complexion	Color of		Marks of identification	Place of birth		
		(Whether alien paid his own passage, whether paid by any other person, or by any corporation, society, municipality, or government)		Yes or no	If yes?								Feet	Inches		Hair	Eyes		Country	City or town	
					year and period of years.																Where?

