Immigration Research

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I. Background

- An Act of Congress passed March 2, 1819 required the captain or master of a vessel arriving at a port in the United States or any of its territories from a foreign country to submit a list of passengers to the collector of customs, beginning January 1, 1820.

- If your ancestors immigrated to the U.S. after this date, there should be a record of arrival.

II. Searching pre-1820 immigration records

- P. William Filby's *Passenger and immigration lists index*
  - a. Initially published as a 3 volume set in 1981, supplements have been published in succeeding years since.
  - b. Currently 46 volumes
  - c. Over 4.5 million names from 2500 different sources
  - d. It can be found online at Ancestry.com. The database is titled “U.S. and Canada, Passenger and Immigration Lists Index, 1500s-1900s.”

- [http://immigrantships.net/index.html](http://immigrantships.net/index.html) (Immigrant Ships Transcribers Guild)

III. Searching post-1820 immigration records

- Ancestry Library Edition:
  - a. From the home screen, click on the search tab, then Immigration and Travel from the drop down menu.
    - 1. Passenger lists
    - 2. Border Crossings & Passports
    - 3. Ship Pictures & Descriptions

- Find My Past:
  - a. From the home screen, scroll to the bottom of the home page and click on “Search Family Records,” then narrow your search to “Immigration & Travel.”
    - 1. Passenger lists leaving the UK
    - 2. Germans to America
    - 3. Irish Famine Immigrants

- Other websites with immigration records:
  - c. [https://familysearch.org/](https://familysearch.org/)
Naturalization Research

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I. Background

- United States Naturalization Law of March 26, 1790 provided the first set of requirements to be met by an individual in order to obtain US citizenship. An immigrant could file a Petition for Naturalization with "any common law court of record" having jurisdiction over his residence.

- This law was repealed and replaced or amended numerous times over the next 115 years, altering either residency requirements or eligibility.

- The Act of June 29, 1906, creating a Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, had as its purpose “to provide for a uniform rule for the naturalization of aliens throughout the U.S.” This agency had authority for rule-making, and it managed the naturalization process through the design and control of specific forms that were required from that point on.

II. Searching pre-1906 naturalization records for St. Louis

- Missouri State Archives
  a. [https://s1.sos.mo.gov/records/archives/archivesdb/naturalization/](https://s1.sos.mo.gov/records/archives/archivesdb/naturalization/)
  b. Enter a surname and click search.
  c. Click on the “view details” button next to the person you’re interested in.
  d. The “record detail” includes all the information needed to find the naturalization record on microfilm in the History and Genealogy Department.

III. Searching post-1906 naturalization records for St. Louis

- St. Louis County Library
  a. At the home page, hover over the “Research” tab.
  b. In the blue dropdown menu, click “Indexes and Finding Aids.”
  c. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click the number 3.
  d. Click “Naturalizations”, then click “Saint Louis, Missouri naturalization index.”
  e. Click “Index to naturalization records created after September 27th, 1906.”
  f. Click “Index to declarations of intention and petitions created after September 27th, 1906 | Alphabetical by surname.”
  g. Also, be sure to search “Index to certificate of naturalization stubs.”

- Neither of these databases is comprehensive.

- The National Archives
  a. [https://www.archives.gov/kansas-city](https://www.archives.gov/kansas-city)
IV. Searching for naturalization records outside the city of St. Louis

- Pre-1906
  a. Naturalization records are court records.
  b. Court records are generally held at the county courthouse.
  c. There are often indexes to those court records found in genealogical libraries.
     1. St. Louis County Library
     2. At the home page, hover over the “books, e-media, and more” tab.
     3. In the blue dropdown menu, click “catalog.”
     4. In the search box, type the county, state, and the word naturalization.
  d. State Archives Websites
     1. Missouri State Archives -
        https://s1.sos.mo.gov/records/archives/archivesdb/naturalization/
  e. Websites for all other places of naturalization:
     2. Familysearch.org
     3. Ancestry Library Edition
     4. Heritage Quest

- Post-1906
  a. https://www.archives.gov/
  b. Familysearch.org