

U.S. Immigration Records

U.S. Passenger Arrival Lists

Immigration authorities specified the format of passenger arrival lists (manifests) so they could be used to account for the immigrants arriving at each port of entry. Manifests were prepared overseas. Passenger lists are maintained by port of entry and then ordered by the date of each vessel's arrival. 19th-century lists often contain little more than the immigrant's name, age, gender, marital status, occupation, country of origin, and the destination "U.S." Later arrival records are more detailed, containing such information as birthplace, last residence, closest relative in the town of last residence, and the name and address of the immigrant's contact in the U.S.

U.S. passenger arrival lists are available on microfilm at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in Washington, D.C., and at NARA regional branches around the country, which typically have records for the ports of entry nearest each branch. For further information about immigration records at NARA, see www.archives.gov/research/immigration/index.html. Many lists from a variety of ports have now been scanned and made available online by commercial vendors, such as ancestrylibrary.com, available at the Center for Jewish History's Ackman & Ziff Family Genealogy Institute and other libraries. Please check your local library.

The largest number of immigrants arrived in the Port of New York, for which lists are available from 1820 to 1957, including some passengers who arrived by airplane. Surname indexes exist for most of these lists, either on microfilm or online through commercial databases like ancestrylibrary.com, available at the Center for Jewish History's Ackman & Ziff Family Genealogy Institute and other libraries. Please check your local library.

More recent immigration records can be obtained by filing a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services. For further details, see <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis> and click on *Form* on the top left side of the page.

Identifying the Ship

- If the port, ship, and date of arrival are not known, it may be possible to find this information in naturalization papers (see our U.S. Naturalization Records fact sheet).
- The *Morton Allan Directory of European Passenger Ship Arrivals* (Genealogical Publishing Co., 1980) lists the dates and names of passenger ships arriving at eastern U.S. ports, including New York, from 1890 to 1930. Thus, if you have partial information, such as the name of the ship and the approximate date of arrival, you may be able to pinpoint the date using this directory. **Genealogy Institute HE 945 .A2 D5**
- CIMO - Cimorelli Immigration Manifests Online, www.cimorelli.com/safe/shipmenu.htm, has several useful online databases, including the *Morton Allan Directory*.
- *Migration from the Russian Empire: lists of passengers arriving at the Port of New York*, vol. 1-6, Ira Glazier, editor (Genealogical Publishing Co). **Genealogy Institute JV 6858 .N5 M5**

How to Obtain Records

If your online search is not successful, you can manually search microfilmed indexes and ship lists at the National Archives. For the addresses and holdings of regional branches, see www.archives.gov/locations.

If you have reasonably exact information about your immigrant's arrival in the U.S. (typically, the date and name of the ship) you can request a search of the relevant list directly from NARA by completing NATF Form 81. Request Form 81 online at www.archives.gov/contact/inquire-form.html or by writing to: National Archives and Records Administration, Attn: NWCTB, 700 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20408-0001, with your name and mailing address. Please note that there is a charge of \$25.00 fee for it.

Other Passenger Records

Passenger records prepared at the port of embarkation also exist and may contain much useful information.

- The American Family Immigration History Center of the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation has prepared an online index to passenger lists for ships that came into Ellis Island from 1892 to 1924. For the most efficient searches of this database, use the Ellis Island Search Forms at <http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/EIDB/>. **CastleGarden.org** offers free access to an extraordinary database of information on 11 million immigrants arriving in New York, from 1820 through 1892, prior to the opening of Ellis Island.

Even if you think your immigrant ancestor first settled in New York, she or he may have actually entered by some other port, such as Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Boston. Immigrants were often diverted to other ports during heavy traffic periods, even to Canadian ports. Lists of immigrants destined for the U.S. who arrived in Canadian ports are available from NARA. See www.archives.gov/research/immigration/index.html, under "Canadian Border Crossing records." As mentioned above, lists from other ports are available online at commercial websites like [Ancestrylibrary.com](http://ancestrylibrary.com), available at the Center for Jewish History's Ackman & Ziff Family Genealogy Institute and other libraries. Please check your local library.

- For ancestors who traveled through Hamburg, there are Hamburg emigration lists in German. They extend from 1850 to 1934 and are completely indexed. (The indexes, however, are somewhat difficult to use). The Hamburg lists and indexes are available at the **Ackman & Ziff Family Genealogy Institute**. The institute has a set of these microfilms on long-term loan. For more information please check the following link <http://www.jgsny.org/microfilms-at-cjh>

The Hamburg lists and indexes are also available online at the Genealogy Institute through ancestrylibrary.com.

- The passenger lists of the Holland-America Line, for ships that departed from Rotterdam, 1900-1940, are available on microfiche at the **Genealogy Institute**. (See the link above).
- The Texas Seaport Museum Immigration Database found at, http://www.galvestonhistory.org/Galveston_Immigration_Database.asp offers information on more than 130,000 passengers who first disembarked at Galveston from 1844 to 1948. If a passenger first disembarked at another port (such as New York) and then traveled to Texas, he or she will not be found in this database. This database is made up of names from the National Archives microfilm, various book sources, and information from the Galveston Daily News. *The*
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Galveston Movement operated between 1907 and 1914 to divert Jews fleeing Russia and Eastern Europe away from crowded East Coast cities. Ten thousand Jewish immigrants passed through Galveston, Texas during this era, which is approximately one-third the number who migrated to Palestine during the same period.

- The Jewish immigrants who took advantage of the Homestead Act of 1862 in areas like North and South Dakota came from Russia, Poland, Romania and Galicia. Their homestead file will contain information about their immigration. Homestead files are kept in the National Archives building at the **National Federal Records Center in Suitland, Maryland**, and may be accessed by using the legal description of your ancestor's land.
- **The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)** has passport applications from October 1795 to March 1925. **The U.S. Department of State** has passport applications from April 1925 to the present. More information on how to draw genealogical information from passport records can be found at <http://www.archives.gov/research/passport/index.html>
- **The National Archives' Passenger lists databases (AAD):**
 1. Data files relating to the immigration of Russians to the United States, documenting the period 1834-1894.
 2. Records of passengers who arrived at the port of New York during the Irish Famine, documenting the period 1/12/1946-12/31/1851.
 3. Data Files Relating to the Immigration of Germans to the United States, documenting the period 1850 – 1897.
 4. Data Files Relating to the Immigration of Italians to the United States, documenting the period 1855 – 1900.

<http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=GP44>

- United States census takers in 1900, 1910, and 1920 asked foreign-born residents what year they came to the United States, how many years they had resided here, and what their citizenship status was. Federal censuses are available at the **National Archives in Washington, D.C.**, the twelve regional archives, and numerous libraries, including the **LDS church Family History Library** and ancestrylibrary.com.

Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS)*

“The Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society had its origins in one of the mushrooming *landsmanshaftn* established in New York by Jewish Immigrants. The Society originated in a store on the lower East Side, at a meeting summoning public-spirited Jews to help provide traditional burial for Jews who had died on Ellis Island. From this limited purpose the Society expanded with the needs of the immigrants and the readiness of the founders to meet widening claims for assistance... Until 1915 it confined its activities to the United States... Then, during World War I, HIAS extended a helping hand to the refugees in Europe and the Far East; and, since then, its range of operations has become world-wide... At the end of 1953, HIAS activities embraced Western Europe, North Africa, the Near East, Latin America, Australia, New Zealand, and the state of Israel, with offices in 50 countries.” (Wischnitzer, M. (1956). *Visas to freedom*. pp. 16-17).

HIAS Records at the Center for Jewish History

Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) collection ca.1900 - ca.1970. The records of HIAS reflect the activities of all its administrative offices in the United States and abroad. The collection is comprised of the records of HIAS, HICEM and the United HIAS Service, and is divided into several subgroups. **YIVO Archives RG 245**

HIAS Ellis Island Bureau Records, 1905-1923. Includes troublesome cases involving deportation, illness, or detention requiring the services of the HIAS Ellis Island Bureau. **YIVO Archives RG 245.2**

HIAS Foreign Relations Department, 1915-1973. Includes correspondence requesting HIAS' assistance in locating individuals in behalf of relatives in the U.S. A. **YIVO Archives RG 245.3**

HIAS AND HICEM Main Offices, New York, Individual Cases and Lists of Immigrants. Includes case folders, 1940-1942, for over 450 cases. **YIVO Archives RG 245.4.21**

HICEM European Office, 1935-1953. France Series III (1940-1945) and Series IV (1945-1953) subsections include individual cases processed. **YIVO Archives RG 245.5**

HICEM/HIAS Office in Lisbon. Subseries I includes Lisbon central refugee case files; Subseries II, Transportation Companies. **YIVO Archives RG 245.6**

United HIAS Services, Main Office, New York, 1954-1967. This office processed a substantial number of cases from 1940-1959. **YIVO Archives RG 245.8**

United HIAS Service Office in Chile, 1946-1970. Includes individual case files arranged by agency, year and then alphabetically. **YIVO Archives RG 245.9**

HICEM Office in Prague, 1927-1939. Central Committee for German Speaking Refugees (Prague). Series III includes refugee case files, 1936-1939. **YIVO Archives RG 245.10**

Records of Arrival, 1909-1978. The Arrival Cards include information on immigrants that were assisted by HIAS at port of entry all over the U.S.A. **YIVO Archives RG 245.4.41**

(*Source: Guzik, Estelle M. (2003). *Genealogical resources in New York*, pp. 44-45)

Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (Boston). Consists of individual case files of refugees assisted by HIAS primarily in immigration and naturalization services. Included in many files are biographical data, correspondence between HIAS and American and foreign governmental agencies, and miscellaneous supporting documents. **AJHS Archives I-96 (see also under Indexes to HIAS Case Files Online)**

Indexes to HIAS Case Files Online (Boston)

The American Jewish Historical Society has an online index of case files including names of immigrants who arrived in Boston and were assisted by the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society. The information online may include the date of birth, date of arrival, and other informative information. The database can be searched via **Family History Databases** on the CJH Website at <http://www.cjh.org/p/61>.

Also, the American Jewish Historical Society, New England Archives Branch, has posted a list of names of immigrants who arrived in Boston and were helped by the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS). The name list is incomplete, but can be found online at <http://ajhsboston.files.wordpress.com/2010/11/i-96-hias.pdf>. For more information please contact reference@ajhsboston.org.

Further Reading

- Colletta, John P. *They Came in Ships*. 2d ed. (Ancestry, Inc., 1993)
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- *Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives of the United States*. (NARA, 2000)
Genealogy Institute Z 5313 .U5 U54 2000
- Tepper, Michael. *American Passenger Arrival Records*. (Genealogical Pub. Co., 1988)
Genealogy Institute C 549 .T46
- Stern, Malcolm H. *First American Jewish families. 600 genealogies, 1654-1977*. (Cincinnati American Jewish Archives, 1978).
LBI Library ; REF ; CS 59 S76 1978
- Stern, Malcolm H. *Jews of Texas: some sources for their genealogy*. (Texas State Genealogical Society, 1982.)
AJHS ; AJHS Monographs ; Z6373.U5 ; S6
- Rochlin, Harriet. *Pioneer Jews: a new life in the Far West*. (Houghton Mifflin, 1984.)
AJHS ; AJHS Monographs ; F596.3.J5 ; R63
- Krasner-Khait, Barbara. *Discovering your Jewish ancestors* (Heritage Quest, 2001.)
CGI ; REF ; CS66.J4 ; K73 2001

National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)

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www.archives.gov/contact/inquire-form.html

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