Migration, Emigration, and Immigration
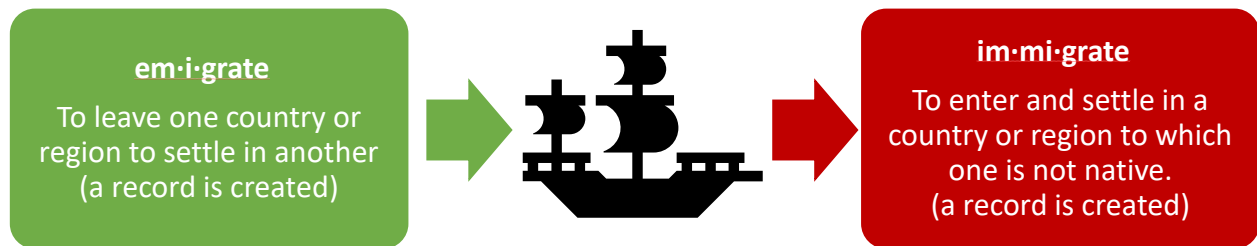
Building and Researching Your Family Tree, a Twelve Part Series

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Know the Difference

em·i·grate

To leave one country or region to settle in another (a record is created)

im·mi·grate

To enter and settle in a country or region to which one is not native. (a record is created)

Records were created in a person's native country as well as their new country. Check all locations where a record may have been created.

Finding Records

Information Needed

- Full name (all variations)
  - Maiden name
  - Foreign spelling vs. American spelling (Joung vs. Young or Pierre vs. Peter)
  - Spelling variations
  - Nick names
- Approximate age at arrival
- Approximate date of arrival
- Family story or lore about arrival
  - This can be a good clue, but it is not always accurate. Always look for verification.
  - Immigration officials at Ellis Island did not change your ancestor's name. If your ancestor's name changed after arrival, it was for other reasons.

Records that Can Provide Clues

Naturalizations Records

Declarations of Intention

- AKA "First Papers"
- Immigrant declared their intent to become a US citizen and renounced allegiance to a foreign government.
- Beginning in 1795, a person could declare their intent at any time after arrival.

Naturalization Petition

- Following the Declarations of Intention and meeting the residency requirements.
- 5-year residency in US required (raised to 14-years in 1798, lowered back to 5-years in 1802).
- Until 1922 women derived citizenship from their husbands.
- Information contained in these records changes over time.
- Naturalization records created prior to September 1906 usually do not list a person's port of arrival. Some do, but most do not. In Naturalizations records created after 1906, the port and date of arrival is almost always given.

Census

Census questions change every year. Many census records ask questions that may provide clues to when an individual immigrated and naturalized as well as where they were from originally.

1830
- Number of white persons in household foreign and not naturalized

1850 & 1860
- Place of birth

1870
- Place of birth
- If parents were foreign born

1880
- Place of birth (and parents')

1900
- Place of birth (and parents')
- Year of immigration, and number of years in the US
- Naturalization status

1910
- Place of birth (and parents')
- Year of immigration
- Naturalization status
- Whether able to speak English, if no, language spoken

1920
- Place of birth (and parents')
- Year of immigration
- Naturalization status, and year if applicable
- Native language (and parents')

1930
- Place of birth (and parents')
- Year of immigration
- Naturalization status
- Whether able to speak English

1940
- Place of birth
- Citizenship status

1950
- Place of birth
- Naturalization status

- Contain facts about immigrations and naturalization
- Passports were not required by law until 1941
- Foreign travel was much more frequent that one might expect.
- Many emigrants would return home to visit family, for business, or to travel with family members immigrating to the US.
- On Ancestry Library Edition (ALE): U.S. Passport Applications, 1795-1925

Passenger Lists

Stowaways, Births, & Deaths
These events happened and may have been part of your ancestor's journey. Look for a column that indicates death (this was not required by law). Look at the end of the passenger list for deaths, stowaways, and births. Stowaways that were caught may be listed under the crew listing.

Pre-1820 Records
- Passenger lists are not required by law
- No central depository for records
- Very few original extant records
- Lists have been published in a variety of sources
- Vary broadly in type of information collected
- Example of type of information that may be found in records:
    - Ship name
    - Captain name
    - Date & Port of Arrival
    - Name of each passenger

Post-1820 Records
- In 1819, Congress passed the Steerage Act
- Captains of vessels arriving in US ports from foreign countries must submit a list of passengers on board his ship to the Collector of Customs at the port of entry.

Customs Passenger Lists (1820-1891)
Contain Information about:
- Name of ship
- Master
- Port of embarkation
- Date and port of arrival
- Passenger information (5 columns)
    - Each passenger's name
    - Age
    - Sex
    - Occupation
    - Nationality

Amount of information collected increased over time.

- Before 1893: 5 questions
    - passenger's name, age, sex, occupation, nationality
- 1893: from 5 to 21
    - passenger's name, age, sex, occupation, nationality, marital status, last residence, final destination in US, ever in US before, joining a relative, able to read and write, whether or not has a train ticket to final destination, who paid for passage, amount of money passenger is carrying, if passenger was ever in prison, almshouse, institution for insane, or was a polygamist, status of health
- 1903: from 21 to 22
    - all questions asked before plus race or ethnicity
- 1906: from 22 to 28
    - all questions asked before plus, personal description (height, complexion, color of hair, color of eyes, identifying marks), and place of birth
- 1907: from 18 to 29
    - all questions asked before plus name and address of closest living relative in native country

Port Records

- Pre-1820 there were hundreds of ports.
    - Philadelphia was the major port of entry in the 1700s.
- Post-1820 there were 101 ports.
- 5 Major Ports
    - New York (Most popular after opening of the Erie Canal in 1825)
        - Castle Garden (1830-1892) 100 million+ immigrants
        - Ellis Island (1892-1954) 12 million+ immigrants
    - Baltimore (2nd most popular)
    - Boston
    - New Orleans
    - Philadelphia
- Most ports were not active for the entire 18270-1957 period as point of entry for immigrants.
- Many listings are known to be missing (Estimates 10-40% of records missing)

Migrations

Migration is the movement of a person or family within one country.

How and why do people move? Things to consider:

- Follow the crops
- Modes of transportation
- Known trails and routes
- Removals or events
- Motivators

Genealogy Links

Learning about Historical Context and Resources

National Archives
- www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1998/summer/women-and-naturalization-1.html
- www.archives.gov/research/immigration/naturalization

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services www.uscis.gov/records/genealogy

German Roots www.germanroots.com

Databases

FamilySearch (catalog) www.familysearch.org

Ancestry (Library Edition is Free with a library card) libguides.wacolibrary.org/wacolibrary/genealogy

Ships

www.immigrantships.net

www.theshipslist.com

Port Records

Baltimore www.genesearch.com/baltimore/quickguide.html

Boston www.sec.state.ma.us/arc/arcsrch/passengermanifestsearchcontents.html

Bremen www.passengerlists.de/

Castle Garden www.castlegarden.org

Ellis Island www.libertyellisfoundation.org

New Orleans
www.sos.la.gov/HistoricalResources/ResearchHistoricalRecords/Pages/PassengerManifests.aspx

Rotterdam https://stadsarchief.rotterdam.nl/zoek-en-ontdek/passagierslijsten/