PASSENGER SEARCH TIPS & TRICKS
A REMOTE EDUCATIONAL TOOL


The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, Inc.
INTRODUCTION TO THE DATABASE

THE AMERICAN FAMILY IMMIGRATION HISTORY CENTER® ON ELLIS ISLAND

In 2001, SOLEIF opened the American Family Immigration History Center® (AFIHC) in the National Museum of Immigration on Ellis Island. A collection of 65 million Port of New York arrival records from the Ellis Island Archives was compiled into a searchable database – made available to the public by visiting Ellis Island, or online at home via https://libertyellisfoundation.org/

WHO CAME TO ELLIS ISLAND?

First and second class passengers went through a brief inspection and then disembarked at the piers in New York. Third class (steerage) passengers were transported to Ellis Island, where they underwent a thorough inspection process. Only two percent of all immigrants were denied entrance into the U.S. and deported. If you are searching for a passenger who traveled first or second class, there will still be a ship manifest record available for you to view.

SEARCHABLE RECORDS

The SOLIEF database is comprised of ship manifests, records of detention, as well as images and information about passenger ships. The database has ship manifest records from Castle Garden, Ellis Island, and Port of New York from 1820 to 1957. There are also plane manifests for arrivals to New York City airports from the late 1930s through the 1950s. Our database contains only arrival records – no records of departure from the United States.

In 2018, AFIHC was able to upload Port of New York entry records from Castle Garden, the immigration processing center that served NYC prior to 1892. Ellis Island was in full operation as an immigration processing facility from 1892 to 1924. From 1924 to 1954, Ellis Island was used as a detention and hospitalization center for immigrants who were held for special inquiries. In 1954, Ellis Island was deemed unnecessary government property after immigration laws changed in the United States, and was closed. Our records continue to 1957 for Port of New York entries.
TIPS & TRICKS FOR A SUCCESSFUL PASSENGER SEARCH

- Ship manifests are 1 page in length from 1820 - 1907. After 1907, manifests become 2 pages with additional information provided.

- On June 15, 1897, there was a fire on Ellis Island that resulted in the destruction of all manifests held on the island: Castle Garden and Ellis Island (1855-1897). Luckily, we do have records for all passengers who arrived prior to the fire. They are U.S. Customs Lists!

- When searching, the more you know about the passenger’s arrival, the easier it will be for you to locate the record (i.e. date of arrival, port of departure, age at arrival, ethnicity, U.S. destination, etc.). All refinements can be entered using the "Wizard".

- Search for the passenger’s "original" name! For example, “Frank” from Italy will likely be recorded as “Francesco”; from Germany, it could be "Franz", or from Poland, “Franciszek”. Keep in mind that there is always room for spelling error in the handwriting/type on a manifest, or in the digital transcription.

JANUARY 1, 1892:
ELLIS ISLAND OPENED ITS DOORS FOR IMMIGRATION PROCESSING.

NOVEMBER 12, 1954:
ELLIS ISLAND CLOSED BY U.S. GOVT.

DURING WWII:
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICES IN THE UNITED STATES LAUNCHED AN EFFORT TO PRESERVE IMMIGRATION RECORDS. MANIFESTS WERE TRANSFERRED TO MICROFILM AND STORED IN THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES.

PHYSICAL RECORDS WERE THEN DESTROYED, THUS DEBUNKING THE MYTH OF "BOOKS" ON ELLIS ISLAND.

PRO TIP:
To search without a name, enter all known information about the passenger and their arrival into the Wizard.

Then, in the Passenger ID field, enter the number ‘1’ or ‘0’. Every passenger in our database is assigned an ID number, all of which contain ‘1’ or ‘0’. This will give you every passenger to which the information you entered, applies.
**P A S S E N G E R S E A R C H**
libertyellisfoundation.org

**Enter the Passenger’s Name in the Search Field**

**List of Results Will Appear Below**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Arrived</th>
<th>Last Place of Residence/Birth Place</th>
<th>Ship Name</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smith, William A</td>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>Cameonia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith, William A</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>Cameonia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith, William A</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>Caledonia</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Click to View Passenger Record (A Transcription of the Ship Manifest)**

**Click to View Ship Manifest**

**Click to View Ship Image & Ship Information**
THE WIZARD FEATURE IS AVAILABLE FOR YOU TO APPLY REFINEMENTS TO YOUR SEARCH! REFINEMENTS ARE IMPORTANT, AND MAKE SEARCHING EASIER, ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU KNOW THE DATE OF ARRIVAL, SHIP OF ARRIVAL, ETHNICITY, ETC.

PRO TIP:
THE “CONTAINS” OPTION ALLOWS YOU TO ENTER AS LITTLE AS 2 LETTERS INTO THE PASSENGER SEARCH FIELD, AND WILL THEN LIST EVERY PASSENGER WHOSE NAME CONTAINS THOSE LETTERS IN YOUR RESULTS!

THESE SPELLING REFINEMENTS ARE A GREAT OPTION WHEN YOU DO NOT KNOW THE CORRECT SPELLING OF A NAME, OR ARE UNSURE OF A PASSENGER’S FIRST NAME.

HELPFUL HINT:
IT IS BEST TO LEAVE A GAP OF 3 TO 5 YEARS WHEN ENTERING AGE AT ARRIVAL OR YEAR OF ARRIVAL.

HERE YOU CAN ENTER SHIP NAME, PORT OF DEPARTURE, PASSENGER ID, ETC. CLICK THE ‘ETHNICITY’ TAB TO SELECT THE APPLICABLE ETHNICITY FOR YOUR SEARCH.
THE FRAME NUMBER REFERENCES THE FRAME ON WHICH YOU CAN FIND THE PASSENGER'S SHIP MANIFEST IN THE SCROLL OF MICROFILM.

THE LINE NUMBER REFERENCES THE LINE ON WHICH A PASSENGER'S INFORMATION IS LOCATED ON THE MANIFEST BELOW (IN THIS CASE, IT IS LINE NUMBER 10).

THE MANIFEST FOR THE PASSENGER SELECTED WILL BE HIGHLIGHTED IN RED OR YELLOW.

Each image in the roll of microfilm has a frame number listed below.
PAGE 1
BEGINNS WITH A LIST OF PASSENGER NAMES

PAGE 2
IS A CONTINUATION OF PAGE 1, AND WILL NOT LIST PASSENGER NAMES

PAGE 2 WILL OFTEN APPEAR FIRST

1907:
The standard 1 page ship manifest expands to 2 pages, with additional questions to be answered.
**MANIFEST QUESTIONS**

Columns in the heading of a ship manifest will list the questions asked of passengers upon departure; reading across a passenger's line will give you their answers (comparable to a spreadsheet)!

**LIST OF QUESTIONS ASKED**:  

- Name in Full  
- Head-tax Status - Paid or Unpaid  
- Age - Years & Months  
- Sex  
- Marital Status  
- Occupation  
- Whether able to read/write - if yes, in what language?  
- Nationality  
- Race or People  
- Last place of residence - country/city  
- Name & address of nearest relative/friend in country whence alien came  
- Final destination - state/city  
- Whether having a ticket to final destination?  
- By whom was passage paid?  
- Whether in possession of $50, and if less, how much?  
- Whether ever in U.S. before - if yes, when and where?  
- Whether going to join a relative or friend; if so, list name and address  
- Ever in prison, almshouse, institution for care of insane, etc?  
- Whether a polygamist or anarchist?  
- Does person believe in overthrow of U.S. government or laws?  
- Whether coming with an offer, promise, or agreement of labor?  
- Condition of health - mental & physical  
- Deformed or Crippled?  
- Height - Feet & inches  
- Complexion Color  
- Color of hair and eyes  
- Marks of identification  
- Place of birth - country/city  
- Passport/visa/reentry permit number and date issued (if applicable)  
- Has the passenger been deported from the U.S. before?

*Note that not all manifests provide answers to these questions. Please see pages 6, 9, 10, 11 for further explanation.
A crossed out name means the person purchased a ticket, but did not embark on this particular voyage.

An 'X' or 'SI' next to a person's name means they were detained or held for special inquiry - you can then find their record of detention to find out why.

If a passenger was admitted to the hospital, you will see a stamp beside their name: 'Admitted' or 'In Hospital'.

If released, you will see 'Discharged', but if not, you will see the 'Deported' or 'Died' stamp.

A numerical sequence preceding with 'P' references a reentry permit.

This numerical sequence references a passport or visa application.

'Non immigrant alien' means that the passenger was not intending to remain in the United States.

'In transit' is used for passengers who are only in the U.S. temporarily, before they continue on to another country (usually Canada).

'NAT' followed by a numerical sequence shows that the passenger is a naturalized United States citizen.

You will often see handwritten notes explaining reason for admittance.

In this case, senility.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIRST &amp; LAST NAME</th>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>SEX</th>
<th>OCCUPATION</th>
<th>COUNTRY OF ORIGIN</th>
<th>FINAL DESTINATION</th>
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**U.S. Citizen Manifests**

Ship manifests were required for everyone aboard a vessel entering the Port of New York - not just those immigrating.

You will know you are viewing a list of U.S. citizens when you see this heading at the top of the page.

- Citizen manifests are 1 page

**List of United States Citizens**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>Date of Arrival</th>
<th>Place of Arrival</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visa</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>12/30/1982</td>
<td>New York</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Address in the United States

If not native of the U.S., give date/location of court where naturalized.

If native of the U.S., give date and place of birth.
MANIFESTS NOW REVERT BACK TO 1 PAGE IN LENGTH

SHIP MANIFESTS 1947 - 1957

FIRST AND LAST NAME OF PASSENGER AND DESTINATION IN THE U.S.

PASSPORT OR VISA NUMBER AND PLACE OF BIRTH

SHIP NAME, PORT OF DEPARTURE/ARRIVAL, DATE OF DEPARTURE/ARRIVAL LISTED AT THE TOP OF A MANIFEST

TOTAL PIECES OF LUGGAGE

PLANE MANIFESTS

NEW YORK AIRPORT ARRIVALS THROUGH 1957

NAME, AGE, SEX, PERMANENT ADDRESS, COUNTRY OF NATIONALITY, PASSPORT NUMBER & PLANE TICKET NUMBER

NOTE THAT SOME PLANE MANIFESTS LIST NAME ONLY

AIRLINE, AIRCRAFT & FLIGHT NUMBER, DATE, AND POINT DISEMBARKATION LISTED AT TOP OF MANIFEST
# Records of Detention

## Common Detention Causes:

### Likely Public Charge (LPC)
- Not in possession of enough money, no sponsor, anarchist, polygamist, stowaway, etc.

### Telegram for Money (TEL $)
- Passenger has no money and must telegram a family member. Usually to ensure a passenger can buy a railway ticket to their final destination.

### Medical (MED CERT)
- Contagious disease, mental or physical ailment/defect, senility, etc.

### Illiterate (ILL’T or P.D.)
- Passengers who could not read or write, or had mental and/or educational disqualifications.

### Under 16
- Passengers under 16 traveling alone were held upon release to sponsor.

## Records of Detained Aliens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name of Detainee</th>
<th>Cause of Detention</th>
<th>Date and Time of Which the Detainee Was Discharged</th>
<th>Number of Meals Consumed While Detained (Breakfast, Dinner, Supper)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Raps</td>
<td>I To Suit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Kotsinek</td>
<td>I To Tel $</td>
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</tr>
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<td>33</td>
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<tr>
<td>34</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The "Manifest" column references the group & line number of the ship manifest on which the detainee is located. This is helpful if you find a passenger's detention record, but cannot locate their manifest.

The "Disposition" column shows the name and address of the person to whom the immigrant was released after detention.
SAVING & ORDERING DOCUMENTS

CLICK TO ADD THE FRAME YOU ARE VIEWING TO YOUR CART FOR PURCHASE

WHEN YOU FIND A DOCUMENT THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SAVE TO YOUR PROFILE SELECT THE RED BUTTON: 'SAVE IMAGE TO MY PROFILE'

ALL DOCUMENTS ON LIBERTYELLISFOUNDATION.ORG ARE AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE AND WILL BE PRINTED ON ACID-FREE ARCHIVAL PAPER

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT