

45 Reasons to Research Immigration Records

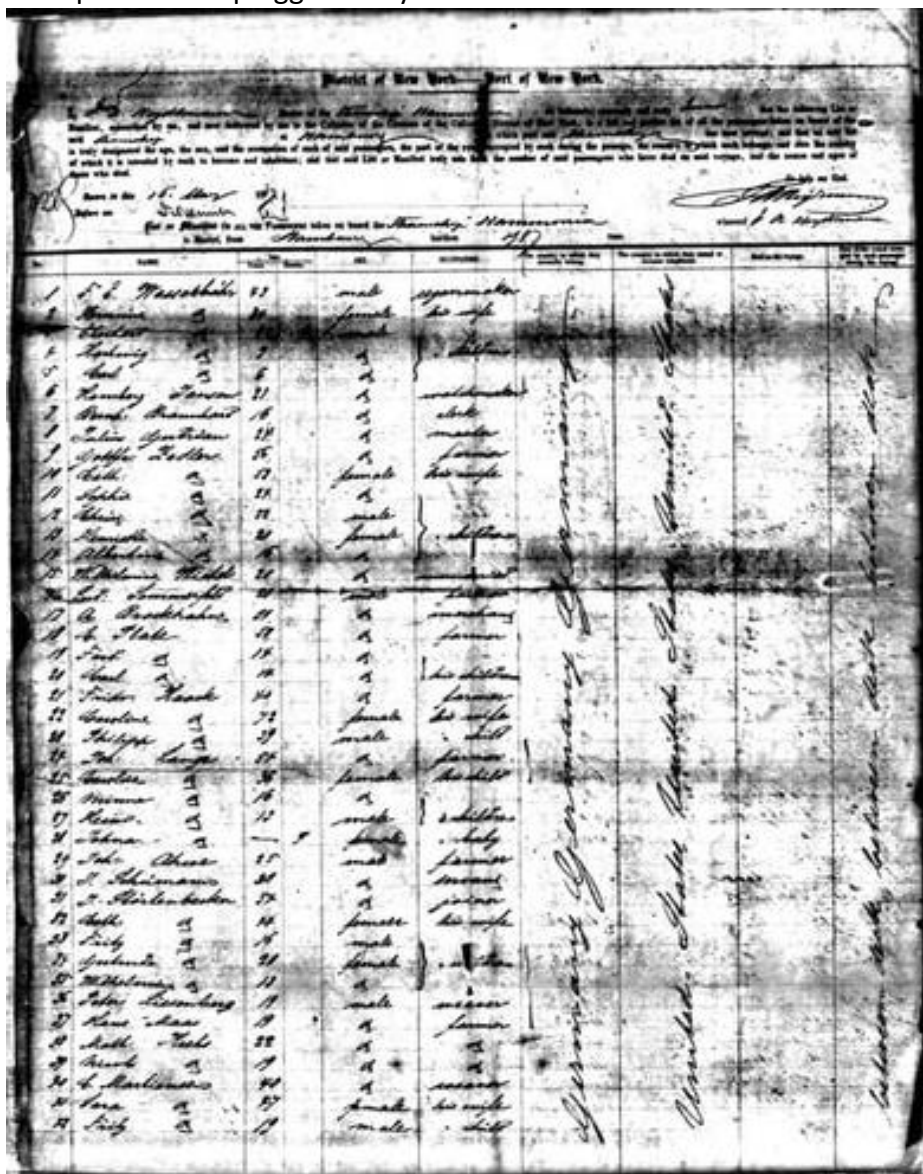
9/13/2020

When I first started my ancestor research, after I had gotten over the initial excitement of reviewing census records and interviewing my living relatives, I almost immediately began trying to find my immigrant ancestors and how they got to America (Note: my earliest ancestor who immigrated came here in 1851). Through free repositories such as Ellis Island and Castle Garden and other sites, as well as those records available via subscription sites I plugged away.

After collecting a few records, I began to analyze the contents of those records. What I learned and the abundance of information available is below. There are tons of information included in these records - AND if you analyze them enough you can discover familial relationships that are much beyond what ship they arrived in and on what date they immigrated.

The first few records were really old - as in mid-1850's immigrating old. Below is a sample of one of those records for one of my ancestors from his voyage to America in 1857.

As you can see, the quality of the image is not too great and the amount of information is not abundant. Not to mention that the handwriting is difficult to read.



The image shows a historical ship manifest from 1857, titled "Manifest of the Steamer 'Hannover'". The document is a form with multiple columns for recording passenger information. The columns include: No., Name, Age, Sex, Occupation, and Remarks. The manifest lists 25 passengers, including names like F. L. Haverbach, J. H. Haverbach, and J. H. Haverbach. The handwriting is cursive and somewhat difficult to read. There are also handwritten notes in the margins, such as "German", "United States", and "between 1850 and 1857".

No.	Name	Age	Sex	Occupation	Remarks
1	F. L. Haverbach	33	male	seaman	
2	Haverbach	30	female	his wife	
3	Haverbach	7	male	his son	
4	Haverbach	6	female	his daughter	
5	Haverbach	11	male	his son	
6	Haverbach	1	female	his daughter	
7	Haverbach	12	male	his son	
8	Haverbach	15	male	his son	
9	Haverbach	17	female	his wife	
10	Haverbach	18	male	his son	
11	Haverbach	19	female	his daughter	
12	Haverbach	20	male	his son	
13	Haverbach	21	female	his daughter	
14	Haverbach	22	male	his son	
15	Haverbach	23	female	his daughter	
16	Haverbach	24	male	his son	
17	Haverbach	25	female	his daughter	
18	Haverbach	26	male	his son	
19	Haverbach	27	female	his daughter	
20	Haverbach	28	male	his son	
21	Haverbach	29	female	his daughter	
22	Haverbach	30	male	his son	
23	Haverbach	31	female	his daughter	
24	Haverbach	32	male	his son	
25	Haverbach	33	female	his daughter	

But things got better. Later versions of the ship manifests included additional information and were easier to read. And remember - many of the records had two pages of entries for the same person, so make sure that you look at the page before and the page after you have found someone. Here are some examples from the late 1800's and 1900's. And the last image is not from a ship, but from immigration via aircraft.

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

4 S.S. *Pomping / Kishin* sailing from *Premier* June 22nd 1909

No.	NAME IN FULL		Age	Sex	Calling or Description	Any form of Disposition	Nationality (Country of which subject is citizen or subject)	Place of Birth	Last Permanent Residence	The name and complete address of nearest relative or friend in country whence alien came	Port of Destination
	Family Name	Given Name									
1	Kornelike	Tomaz	45	m	black		Portuguese	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal
2	Bergan	Prof	47	m			Portuguese	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal
3	Reiter	Sam	48	m			Portuguese	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal
4	Kadac	Kater	47	m			Portuguese	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal
5	Bombard	Willy	47	m			Portuguese	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal
6	Kidder	Sam	47	m			Portuguese	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal
7	Shirish	Sam	47	m			Portuguese	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal
8		Sam	47	m			Portuguese	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal
9		Sam	47	m			Portuguese	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal
10	Bombard	Sam	47	m			Portuguese	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal
11	Bombard	Sam	47	m			Portuguese	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal
12	Bliss	Elizabeth	48	f			Portuguese	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal
13	Bliss	Lena	48	f			Portuguese	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal
14	Bliss	Lena	48	f			Portuguese	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal
15	Bliss	Lena	48	f			Portuguese	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal
16	Bliss	Lena	48	f			Portuguese	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal
17	Bliss	Lena	48	f			Portuguese	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal
18	Bliss	Lena	48	f			Portuguese	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal
19	Bliss	Lena	48	f			Portuguese	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal
20	Bliss	Lena	48	f			Portuguese	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal
21	Bliss	Lena	48	f			Portuguese	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal
22	Bliss	Lena	48	f			Portuguese	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal
23	Bliss	Lena	48	f			Portuguese	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal
24	Bliss	Lena	48	f			Portuguese	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal
25	Bliss	Lena	48	f			Portuguese	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal
26	Bliss	Lena	48	f			Portuguese	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal
27	Bliss	Lena	48	f			Portuguese	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal
28	Bliss	Lena	48	f			Portuguese	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal
29	Bliss	Lena	48	f			Portuguese	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal
30	Bliss	Lena	48	f			Portuguese	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal

* For foreigner not born in one of our States, certificate of naturalization. The last passing to which effect with the territory of country as long as one year shall be the last permanent residence regardless of length of actual residence therein.
 ** "Place of Birth" to be determined by the alien's own statement and the language they speak. List of names will be found on back of this form.

Image 2

LIST OR MANIFEST OF ALIEN PASSENGERS FOR THE UNITED

ALL ALIENS sailing at a port of continental United States from a foreign port or a port of the border possessions of the United States, and all aliens arriving at a port of call from a foreign port, a port of continental United States, or a port of the border possessions of the United States, shall file this (white) card for the filing of

S. S. COAST GUARD Passengers sailing from GERMANY FEBRUARY 20, 1941

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120	121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134	135	136	137	138	139	140	141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	149	150	151	152	153	154	155	156	157	158	159	160	161	162	163	164	165	166	167	168	169	170	171	172	173	174	175	176	177	178	179	180	181	182	183	184	185	186	187	188	189	190	191	192	193	194	195	196	197	198	199	200	201	202	203	204	205	206	207	208	209	210	211	212	213	214	215	216	217	218	219	220	221	222	223	224	225	226	227	228	229	230	231	232	233	234	235	236	237	238	239	240	241	242	243	244	245	246	247	248	249	250	251	252	253	254	255	256	257	258	259	260	261	262	263	264	265	266	267	268	269	270	271	272	273	274	275	276	277	278	279	280	281	282	283	284	285	286	287	288	289	290	291	292	293	294	295	296	297	298	299	300	301	302	303	304	305	306	307	308	309	310	311	312	313	314	315	316	317	318	319	320	321	322	323	324	325	326	327	328	329	330	331	332	333	334	335	336	337	338	339	340	341	342	343	344	345	346	347	348	349	350	351	352	353	354	355	356	357	358	359	360	361	362	363	364	365	366	367	368	369	370	371	372	373	374	375	376	377	378	379	380	381	382	383	384	385	386	387	388	389	390	391	392	393	394	395	396	397	398	399	400	401	402	403	404	405	406	407	408	409	410	411	412	413	414	415	416	417	418	419	420	421	422	423	424	425	426	427	428	429	430	431	432	433	434	435	436	437	438	439	440	441	442	443	444	445	446	447	448	449	450	451	452	453	454	455	456	457	458	459	460	461	462	463	464	465	466	467	468	469	470	471	472	473	474	475	476	477	478	479	480	481	482	483	484	485	486	487	488	489	490	491	492	493	494	495	496	497	498	499	500	501	502	503	504	505	506	507	508	509	510	511	512	513	514	515	516	517	518	519	520	521	522	523	524	525	526	527	528	529	530	531	532	533	534	535	536	537	538	539	540	541	542	543	544	545	546	547	548	549	550	551	552	553	554	555	556	557	558	559	560	561	562	563	564	565	566	567	568	569	570	571	572	573	574	575	576	577	578	579	580	581	582	583	584	585	586	587	588	589	590	591	592	593	594	595	596	597	598	599	600	601	602	603	604	605	606	607	608	609	610	611	612	613	614	615	616	617	618	619	620	621	622	623	624	625	626	627	628	629	630	631	632	633	634	635	636	637	638	639	640	641	642	643	644	645	646	647	648	649	650	651	652	653	654	655	656	657	658	659	660	661	662	663	664	665	666	667	668	669	670	671	672	673	674	675	676	677	678	679	680	681	682	683	684	685	686	687	688	689	690	691	692	693	694	695	696	697	698	699	700	701	702	703	704	705	706	707	708	709	710	711	712	713	714	715	716	717	718	719	720	721	722	723	724	725	726	727	728	729	730	731	732	733	734	735	736	737	738	739	740	741	742	743	744	745	746	747	748	749	750	751	752	753	754	755	756	757	758	759	760	761	762	763	764	765	766	767	768	769	770	771	772	773	774	775	776	777	778	779	780	781	782	783	784	785	786	787	788	789	790	791	792	793	794	795	796	797	798	799	800	801	802	803	804	805	806	807	808	809	810	811	812	813	814	815	816	817	818	819	820	821	822	823	824	825	826	827	828	829	830	831	832	833	834	835	836	837	838	839	840	841	842	843	844	845	846	847	848	849	850	851	852	853	854	855	856	857	858	859	860	861	862	863	864	865	866	867	868	869	870	871	872	873	874	875	876	877	878	879	880	881	882	883	884	885	886	887	888	889	890	891	892	893	894	895	896	897	898	899	900	901	902	903	904	905	906	907	908	909	910	911	912	913	914	915	916	917	918	919	920	921	922	923	924	925	926	927	928	929	930	931	932	933	934	935	936	937	938	939	940	941	942	943	944	945	946	947	948	949	950	951	952	953	954	955	956	957	958	959	960	961	962	963	964	965	966	967	968	969	970	971	972	973	974	975	976	977	978	979	980	981	982	983	984	985	986	987	988	989	990	991	992	993	994	995	996	997	998	999	1000
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120	121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134	135	136	137	138	139	140	141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	149	150	151	152	153	154	155	156	157	158	159	160	161	162	163	164	165	166	167	168	169	170	171	172	173	174	175	176	177	178	179	180	181	182	183	184	185	186	187	188	189	190	191	192	193	194	195	196	197	198	199	200	201	202	203	204	205	206	207	208	209	210	211	212	213	214	215	216	217	218	219	220	221	222	223	224	225	226	227	228	229	230	231	232	233	234	235	236	237	238	239	240	241	242	243	244	245	246	247	248	249	250	251	252	253	254	255	256	257	258	259	260	261	262	263	264	265	266	267	268	269	270	271	272	273	274	275	276	277	278	279	280	281	282	283	284	285	286	287	288	289	290	291	292	293	294	295	296	297	298	299	300	301	302	303	304	305	306	307	308	309	310	311	312	313	314	315	316	317	318	319	320	321	322	323	324	325	326	327	328	329	330	331	332	333	334	335	336	337	338	339	340	341	342	343	344	345	346	347	348	349	350	351	352	353	354	355	356	357	358	359	360	361	362	363	364	365	366	367	368	369	370	371	372	373	374	375	376	377	378	379	380	381	382	383	384	385	386	387	388	389	390	391	392	393	394	395	396	397	398	399	400	401	402	403	404	405	406	407	408	409	410	411	412	413	414	415	416	417	418	419	420	421	422	423	424	425	426	427	428	429	430	431	432	433	434	435	436	437	438	439	440	441	442	443	444	445	446	447	448	449	450	451	452	453	454	455	456	457	458	459	460	461	462	463	464	465	466	467	468	469	470	471	472	473	474	475	476	477	478	479	480	481	482	483	484	485	486	487	488	489	490	491	492	493	494	495	496	497	498	499	500	501	502	503	504	505	506	507	508	509	510	511	512	513	514	515	516	517	518	519	520	521	522	523	524	525	526	527	528	529	530	531	532	533	534	535	536	537	538	539	540	541	542	543	544	545	546	547	548	549	550	551	552	553	554	555	556	557	558	559	560	561	562	563	564	565	566	567	568	569	570	571	572	573	574																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																										

INFORMATION SHEET (concerning passenger arriving on aircraft)

This sheet must be filled out in the English language, typewritten, or printed in ink
(Note further instructions on back of this sheet)

1. Aircraft NC 90903 Departing from Hurn, England Date April 14, 1946
(Registration mark)
Arriving in area at New York Date April 15, 1946
2. Passenger:

NAME IN FULL		AGE	SEX	COUNTRY OF WHICH CITIZEN OR SUBJECT	EMBARKATION	
FAMILY NAME	GIVEN NAME				PLACE	COUNTRY
BRAUNHART	SARA SEIMA	51	F	Stateless	Hurn	England

3. Destination in United States New York New York 7810 New Utrecht Avenue
(State) (City or town) (Street and number)

Fill out spaces below in the cases of aliens only

4. Place of birth Poland Scrabin Race Polish 325
(Country) (City or town)

5. Height: Ft. 5; in. 1; complexion Buddy; color of hair Brown of eyes Brown

6. Married or single Single Occupation Sales Woman

7. Able to read English
(State language or ground for exemption)

8. Immigration visa, passport visa, reentry permit, or other immigration document. (Prefix number with QIV, NQIV, PV, RP, or abbreviated designation of other immigration document, as case may be.)

6a (3)1

- Number QIV 592 Issued at London, England Date of issue 4th February 1946

9. Last permanent residence England London 21 Chataworth Road, NW2
(Country) (State) (City or town) (Street and number)

10. Final destination (intended future permanent residence):
USA New York New York 7810 New Utrecht Avenue, Brooklyn
(Country) (State) (City or town) (Street and number)

11. Going to join relative or friend in U. S. Sister Name and address of such relative or friend:
Mrs. Anna Tulman New York New York 7810 New Utrecht Avenue, Brooklyn
(Name) (City or town) (State) (Street and number)

12. Whether in U. S. before, and if so, where No
(State) (City or town) (Street and number)

13. Purpose in coming to the U. S. to Reside and when Permanently
Length of intended stay

14. Whether has ticket to destination Yes Amount of money shown \$50

15. Whether ever in prison or in institution for the care and treatment of the insane No

16. Whether ever excluded from admission to the United States or arrested and deported from the United States No

17. Marks of identification:

(These spaces reserved for United States immigration officer)	
Immigration list No. <u>1</u>	Line No. <u>16</u>
Name of person or transportation company operating aircraft <u>AMERICAN OVERSEAS AIRLINES, INC.</u>	
Alien's passport will expire <u>4/16/46</u>	Alien's Cert. of Identity <u>4/16/46</u>
Head tax status <u>Paid</u>	
Held for BSI <u>No</u>	
Admitted under section <u>2</u>	<u>6a(3)1</u>

Passenger inspected (and information hereon verified) by L. J. Olson
(Signature of immigrant inspector)

This form may be obtained upon prepayment from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. It may be printed by private parties provided it conforms to official form in size, wording, arrangement, and quality and color of paper.

Image 5

So, let's take a look at the information available in the last four images - which make up the preponderance of the form types in the late 1800's through mid-1900's or so. As you can see, the later images were typed. This of course could create a problem - were they typed from a handwritten form, which could certainly introduce errors not only in typing but in transferring?

In any case, let's list the information that is available in all the form variations and why it is valuable to our genealogy and family history research:

1. Name of the Immigrant - to me this is always fascinating. Despite the legend that names were changed at Ellis Island - they certainly were not. But folks did change their name later. Members of my own family changed their Hebrew names to their English/American equivalents - not necessarily at the time of immigration but at some point later. So searching for the Anglicized name may not bear fruit in these cases when searching for their immigration records. Later naturalization records may give some hints to their birth name. Many times abbreviations were used. For example in Image 1, my ancestor Bernhard Brauhart had his entry shortened for his given name to "Bernh"
2. Family - families certainly did travel together and sometimes not, but sometimes not on the same ship or in the same year. For example, my great grandmother immigrated in 1888; one sister in 1892, another sister and brother in 1890, her mother and yet another sister in 1898. Other relatives may have been on the same ship - so take a look at all the manifest pages. Just like in census records, a page or two away may be an aunt, a cousin, or other relative.
3. Age
4. Gender
5. Marital Status
6. Occupation
7. Ability to Read and/or Write - also indicates which language they were proficient in.
8. Nationality /Citizenship
9. Race
10. Place of Birth - City/town and country
11. Place of Last Residence - City/town and country
12. Name and Address of Contact for Location from Whence they Came - This is very useful information because it may provide information about a family member in the "old country" that you may know nothing about. This is especially true in Image 2 as this record was used to provide further evidence of the name of the father of my immigrant ancestor.
13. Visa - Number and where and when issued.
14. Final Destination - City/Town and State.
15. Whether Going to Visit a Relative or Friend - name and complete address is requested in this entry. Similar to the contact person from whence they came - this entry can also provide terrific clues as to other relatives of the immigrant.
16. Ever Been in Prison, Almshouse, Mental Institution or Supported by Charity?
17. Polygamist?
18. Anarchist?
19. Labor Contract?
20. Physical and Mental Health Condition?
21. Deformed or Crippled?
22. Do You Have a Ticket for Final Destination?
23. Who Paid for Your Passage?
24. How Much Money in Your Possession?
25. Been to The U.S. Before?
26. Height - just one of the physical characteristics requested in the form. In lieu of a lack of a photo for an ancestor - these characteristics provide some clue to what they looked like.
27. Hair Color

28. Eye Color
29. Complexion Type
30. Marks of Identification
31. Name of Ship
32. Port/City of Departure
33. Date of Departure
34. Part of the Vessel for Travel - which deck, for example
35. Port/City of Arrival
36. Date of Arrival
37. For Aircraft - Carrier and Flight Number
38. Purpose for Coming to the U.S.
39. Length of Intended Stay
40. Ever Excluded from U.S., Deported or Arrested?
41. Detained Aliens - Name
42. Detained Aliens - Reason for Detention- usually medical; the form is not shown here but is a separate form
43. Detained Aliens - Final Disposition
44. Detained Aliens - Date of Discharge
45. Detained Aliens - Number of Meals Provided

And by the way - if these 45 reasons aren't enough for you, you can always research and analyze emigration records - that is the records for the immigrant from his or her departure location.

As stated above, there is a ton of information available in these documents and records - not just the name of the immigrant and the ship and date of arrival. One can piece together quite a bit of clues about the immigrant's family, health, physical characteristics and other interesting and helpful information.

So search away - but make sure that you analyze every piece of information provided. You just might find new family members who did not even travel or immigrate.