

# ***An Introduction to Ellis Island – Your Ancestors’ Gateway to America***

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## **The History of Ellis Island**

Ellis Island - 1892 – 1924 - 22 million immigrants came through – Closed in 1954  
Reopened to the public in 1990.

## **What Website Have To Offer the Amateur Genealogist**

[www.ellisland.org](http://www.ellisland.org)

## **How To Search**

- Ellis Island
  - Matching passenger records
  - Links to the original manifest
  - Photos of ship and history
  - Search for the names of the ship

## **Tips for Using Ellis Island Database**

- Look at the 1900, 1910 and 1920 Federal Census as when the person came to the USA
- Obtain Naturalization records especially the Declaration of Indents has more genealogical information

## **What Each Database Contains**

- |   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| • Names                                 | • Date of arrival and departure |
| • Dates                                 | • Captain’s name                |
| • Other family members who came on ship | • What port they left from      |
| • Name of ship                          | • Age at arrival                |
| • Gender                                | • Able to read/write            |
| • Ethnicity/Nationality                 | • Race                          |
| • Occupation                            | • Final destination             |
| • Marital status                        | • Who are you going to visit    |
| • Last Residence                        |                                 |

## Notes -

- Indexes exist for New York passenger lists from June 1897 to 1948
- Available on microfilm from the National Archives, your local Family History Center and on Ancestry.com
- If someone was born or died on the ship, it would be indicated in the right hand column

## Unable To Locate Your Ancestors?

- Use Stephen Morse's web site <http://stevemorse.org/>
- Not all immigrant came through New York (Check other ports) and look for departure lists
- They may not have come together as a family – usually the father goes first and then rest of the family comes later
- It is possible they might have come through Canada which was cheaper

## Ancestors' Name Might Have Been Spelled

- Don't limit yourself to a single spelling
- Did your ancestor "Americanize" his name? Koch – Cook or Giovanni - John
- Use Ellis Island Database One Step Search Tools
- Search by last name and first initial only
- Check for women under their maiden names
- Check all other family members
- Search for other passengers
- Reverse the first and last names

## What Do The Annotations on the Manifest Mean?

- <http://www.jewishgen.org/infofiles/Manifests/>

## Ships Used By Your Ancestors?

- Ancestry and Ellis Island web site
- Trick is – you can right click on picture and save it to your genealogy software or hard drive

## Visit Ellis Island

- More than 3 million visitors from around the world walk through the Great Hall at Ellis Island.
- Statue cruises provide ferry transportation to Ellis Island from Battery Park in New York and Liberty State Park in New Jersey
- On Ellis Island, the Ellis Island Museum is located in the main immigration building, with three floors dedicated to the history of immigration and the important role played by Ellis Island in American history.
- Don't miss the famous Wall of Honor or the 30-minute documentary film "Island of Hope, Island of Tears."
- Guided tours of the Ellis Island Museum are available.

## Websites

- [www.theshipslist.com/pictures/index.htm](http://www.theshipslist.com/pictures/index.htm)
- [stevemorse.org/ellis/pictures.html](http://stevemorse.org/ellis/pictures.html)
- [www.cyndislist.com/ships.htm](http://www.cyndislist.com/ships.htm)
- [www.fortunecity.com/littleitaly/amalfi/13/ships.htm](http://www.fortunecity.com/littleitaly/amalfi/13/ships.htm)
- [www.collectionscanada.ca/02/020118\\_e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/02/020118_e.html)

## Books

- Colletta, John P. *They Came in Ships - A Guide to Finding Your Immigrant Ancestor's Arrival Record*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Orem, UT: Ancestry, 2002.
- Anuta, Michael J. *Ships of Our Ancestors*, Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1983.
- Conway, Lorie. *Forgotten Ellis Island - The Extraordinary Story of America's Immigrant Hospital*, New York City: HarperCollins Publisher, 2007.
- Szucs, Loretto Dennis. *Ellis Island – Tracing your Family History through American's Gateway*, Provo, UT: Ancestry, 2000.
- Carmack, Sharon DeBartolo. *The Family Tree Guide To Finding Your Ellis Island Ancestors*, Cincinnati, OH: Family Tree Book, 2005.