

Crossing the Frontera: Finding Your Mexican Immigrant Ancestor in Mexico

Border Crossing Records

- Generally from 1895-1957
- Better after 1906

Where to find them

- Indexes on FamilySearch.org
- Indexes and images on Ancestry.com
- Microfilm (by locality)

Index organization

- Similar-sounding surnames may be filed together
- Within a surname, first names that start with the same letter may be filed together
- Within a surname, there may have been no attempt to alphabetize by first name

Types of forms

- Form 548, 548-B, or Form I-448, *Manifest* – These are the best!
- Form Spl. 259, "*statistical*" an index card
- Form Spl. 442, *Nonstatistical*

Form 548, 548-B, or Form I-448, Manifest

- Name, Age, Marital status, Place of birth
- Physical description
- Occupation
- Ability to read and write and in what language
- Place of last permanent residence
- Destination
- Purpose for entering U.S.
- Intention of becoming a U.S. citizen or of returning to country of previous residence
- Head tax status
- Previous citizenships
- Name and address of the friend or relative whom the alien intended to join
- Persons accompanying the alien
- Name and address of the alien's nearest relative or friend in the country from which he or she came
- If the alien had ever been in the U.S. in the past, the dates and places of such residence or visitation are indicated.

Form Spl. 259, Statistical (index card)

- Name, Age, Sex, Race
- Citizenship ("nationality")
- Last place of residence
- Destination
- Port and date of admission
- Status as immigrant or non immigrant.

Form Spl. 442, Nonstatistical (index card)

- Name, Age, Sex, Marital status
- Occupation
- Ability to read and write
- Place of last permanent residence
- Destination
- Persons accompanying the alien
- Amount of money the alien carried
- If he or she had ever been in the U.S. in the past.
- The reverse side of some cards may be annotated with dates of subsequent admissions to the U.S., destination, and purpose for visiting, such as "6 days to Mission, TX, visiting."

Important tips

- Always look for the long form – manifest
- If you find your ancestor crossing the border, check to see who else crossed the same day at the same place
- Always look at the images because you might find photos!

Bibliography

- “Early Immigrant Inspection along the US/Mexican Border” (Online: <http://www.minorityjobs.net/article/218/Early-Immigrant-Inspection-Along-the-USMexican-Border-Early-Immigrant-Inspection-Along-the-USMexican-Border.html>, accessed February 2012). Originally found on the INS website but no longer available there.
- “Mexican Border Crossing Records” (Online: National Archives, <http://www.archives.gov/research/immigration/border-mexico.html>, accessed January 2012).
- Schmal, John and Donna Morales. *Mexican-American Genealogical Research: Following the Paper Trail to Mexico* (Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, Inc., 2002). [FHL INTL Book 972 D27s](#)
- Ryskamp, George and Peggy. *Finding your Mexican Ancestors: A Beginner’s Guide* (Provo, UT: Ancestry Publishing, 2007). [FHL INTL Book 972 D27r](#).

See also FamilySearch Research Wiki [US Immigration Mexican Border Crossings](#) and [Border Crossings from Mexico to the United States \(FamilySearch Historical Records\)](#)