



NATIONAL
ARCHIVES
Research Services

Immigration Laws

Steerage Act of 1819

- First law requiring passenger manifests for vessels entering the US

Immigration Act of 1891

- First law requiring documentation of Canadian and Mexican border crossings

Naturalization Act of 1906

- Uniform rules enacted, forms standardized, and Federal courts took sole responsibility for naturalization procedures

Immigration Act of 1924

- Imposed national-origins quota that required visas for legal entry to the US

Alien Registration Act of 1940

- Required all immigrants to register alien status with the Federal government

Immigrant Records for Genealogical Research

The National Archives has a number of online resources to aid in genealogy research on immigrant ancestors

Passenger Arrival Lists:

<https://www.archives.gov/research/immigration>

Border Crossing Records:

- Mexican –

<https://www.archives.gov/research/immigration/border-mexico>

- Canadian –

<https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2000/fall/us-canada-immigration-records-1.html>

US Passport Applications:

<https://www.archives.gov/research/genealogy/pasports>

Visa Applications:

<https://www.archives.gov/research/foreign-policy/state-dept/genealogy>

Naturalization Records:

<https://www.archives.gov/research/immigration/naturalization>

Alien Files (A-Files):

<https://www.archives.gov/research/immigration/aliens>

The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Genealogy Program (www.uscis.gov/genealogy) is another resource for immigrant records from the early 1900s (predominantly 1906–1956)

