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## Caribbean Immigrants: Using Federal Records to Locate Ancestors from the West Indies:

1890-1930

This presentation explores federal records that can be used to find genealogical information on black immigrant ancestors from the West Indies (or the former British colonies in the Caribbean region). The lecture focuses on the first wave of Caribbean migration to the U.S. during the early twentieth-century. The presentation will focus primarily upon “ship passenger arrival records” but will also show how they should be examined in conjunction with other related records.

Before delving into the relevant federal records, the presenter first provides a brief survey of the general history of Caribbean migration. This is done in order to establish the historical context of the records the records examined. It is crucial that genealogical researchers have a grasp of the historical background of the people being investigated, for it can provide clues on which records to scrutinize and what information to look for. After the brief historical introduction, the presenter will focus on case examples of Caribbean immigrants found in the records.

1. Internal migration within the Caribbean
  - a. Eastern Caribbean Migration
  - b. Panama Canal Project
  - c. Cuba & Dominican Republic Sugar Estates
  - d. Bermuda Docks
  - e. Bahamas to the Keys and south Florida
  
2. Migration shifts to the United States
  - a. Panama Canal Project ends 1914
  - b. New York, NY (Northeastern port cities) becomes primary destination
  - c. Bahamian migration continues to south Florida
  
3. Three primary waves or phases of migration to the United States
  - a. 1910s-1930: First Phase
  - b. 1941-1952: Second Phase (smallest)
  - c. 1968-Present: Third/Current Phase (largest)
  
4. Case examples of federal records documenting early Caribbean immigrants
  - a. Passenger arrival records

- b. Federal population census schedules
- c. Naturalization records
- d. Passport applications
- e. Military records