New York City Research: Four Hundred Years of History and Genealogy

Class 4: 20th-Century New York City: Closing the Golden Doors

Rhonda R. McClure, Senior Genealogist

THE BRUE FAMILY LEARNING CENTER

American Ancestors by New England Historic Genealogical Society

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Meet today's presenter

Rhonda R. McClure
Senior Genealogist

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OVERVIEW

- **Presentation** (60 mins.)
  - The rise and eventual restriction of immigration
  - Essential record sets
  - Major repositories
- **Q&A** (30 mins.)

3

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Immigration

Voice of
Rhonda R. McClure
Genealogist

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Immigration in the 20th Century

- By the 1900s, immigration was running at an all-time high
- Ellis Island was a major entry point for immigrants
- The influx of those who looked and dressed differently from the Anglo-Saxons was beginning to cause concerns among some
- Settlement patterns were suggesting a sense of isolation among certain ethnicities

5

Why Head to America?

- Unskilled laborers could find many types of jobs in a growing urban community
- Abject poverty in certain countries
- Chain migration of families
- Improved methods of travel, faster ships
- Pogroms against the Jewish continued to escalate

6

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Come to America

- Letters
- Emigrant Guidebooks
- Newspaper articles
- Promotional brochures
- Steamship lines & their advertisements
- Railway lines & their advertisements

7

"New" Immigrants

- Appeared less likely to assimilate into American life, preferring to congregate together apart from others in America
- Came from southern and eastern Europe with new religions, manners, style of dress
- Unskilled men who often came, not to settle, but to work a few months to make money
- Concentrated in industrial centers

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Passenger Lists

9

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Ellis Island Reopens

MOVING TO ELLIS ISLAND.

Work of Transferring the Immigration Station From Barge Office Begun Yesterday.

The transfer of the immigration station from the Barge Office to Ellis Island commenced in earnest at noon yesterday. The work will be continued to-day and it is hoped to have all the various divisions of the immigration service ready for business at 9 o'clock on Monday morning.

Commissioner Fitchie received several calls from social and political friends, who congratulated him on getting into better quarters. The customs department and the medical department will be transferred to-day. The money changing department, in charge of Mr. Scully, and the railroad department, in charge of Mr. Faulkner, was moved last night. The Ellis Island ferryboat John G. Carlisle, Captain Anthony Arena, went into commission at 9 o'clock yesterday morning and will ply between Ellis Island and the Thirty-ninth street ferry slip, at the foot of Whitehall street, making fourteen trips a day, leaving Ellis Island at 6:20 A. M. on her first trip and leaving the foot of Whitehall street on her last trip at 6:55 P. M.

The Brooklyn Daily Eagle, 16 Dec. 1900

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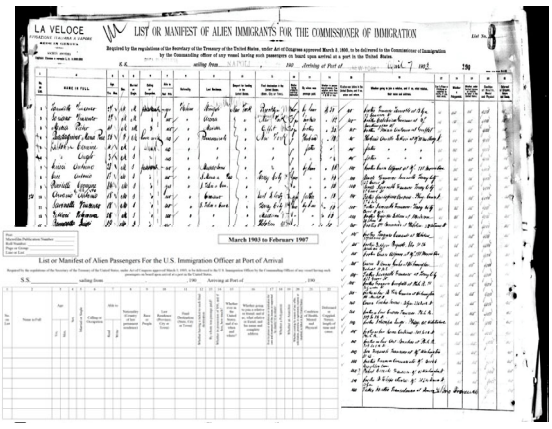
20th Century Passenger Lists

- Many questions were being asked on passenger lists in the 1900s
- For New York arrivals, passenger lists begin to include:
  - Lists of Detained Aliens
  - Lists of those who went before Board of Special Inquiry

11



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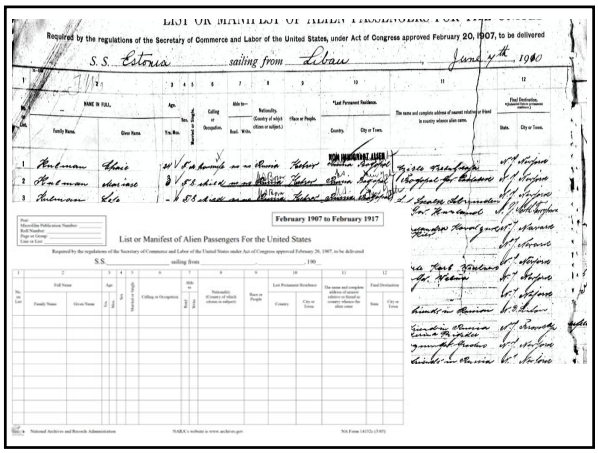
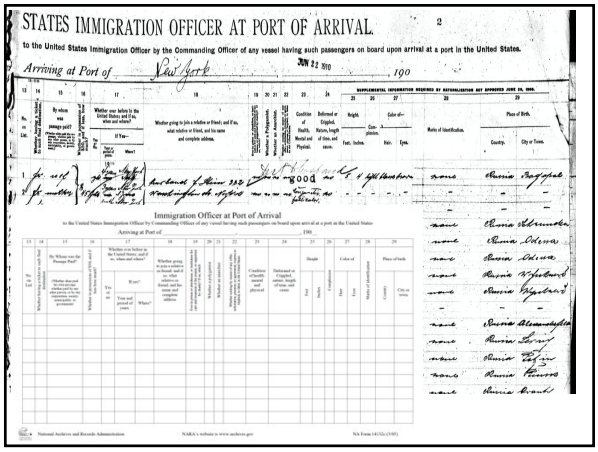
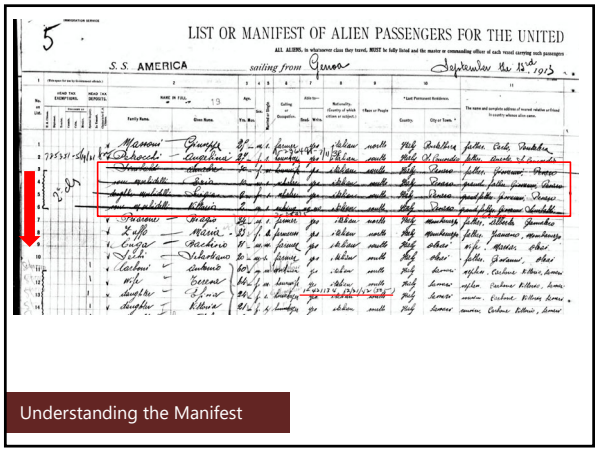

Required by the regulations of the Secretary of Commerce and Labor of the United States, under Act of Congress approved February 20, 1907, to be delivered
S.S. Estonia
sailing from Libau
June 4th 1910
February 1907 to February 1917
List or Manifest of Alien Passengers For the United States

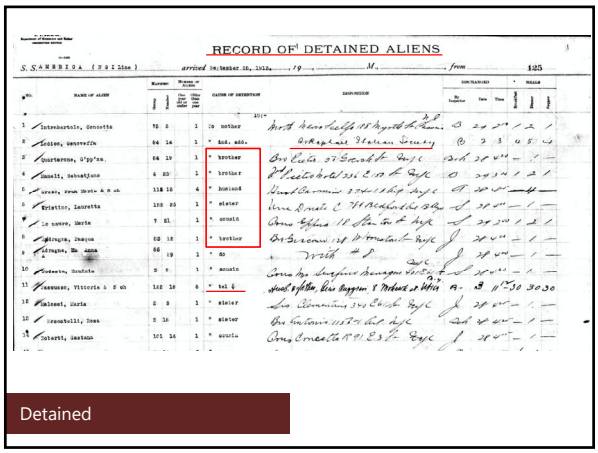
13


STATES IMMIGRATION OFFICER AT PORT OF ARRIVAL.
to the United States Immigration Officer by the Commanding Officer of any vessel having such passengers on board upon arrival at a port in the United States.
Arriving at Port of New York
JUN 22 1910
Immigration Officer at Port of Arrival

14


LIST OR MANIFEST OF ALIEN PASSENGERS FOR THE UNITED
S.S. AMERICA
sailing from Genoa
September the 15th 1913
Understanding the Manifest

15



RECORD OF DETAINED ALIENS

S.S. ANDREA (NDL blue) arrived September 18, 1913, 19 , M. , from 125

Detained

16

Passenger Examination

17

Unacceptable

- *If on such examination there shall be found among such passengers any convict, lunatic, idiot, or any person unable to take care of him or herself without becoming a public charge, they shall report the same in writing to the collector of such port, and such person shall not be permitted to land."*

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Additional Exclusions

- To avoid health epidemics
- To prevent anarchy
- To prevent the undermining of the American "way of life"
- To protect immigrants from forced labor

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Immigrant Inspection

- 1st and 2nd class passengers were inspected on board the ship
- 3rd class, "Steerage," were transferred from the ship to an immigrant inspection station
- Notations made on passenger lists

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6-Second Exam

- Doctors at Ellis Island would examine newly arrived immigrants as they walked up stairs, etc.
- Chalk marks identified possible problems requiring additional examination.

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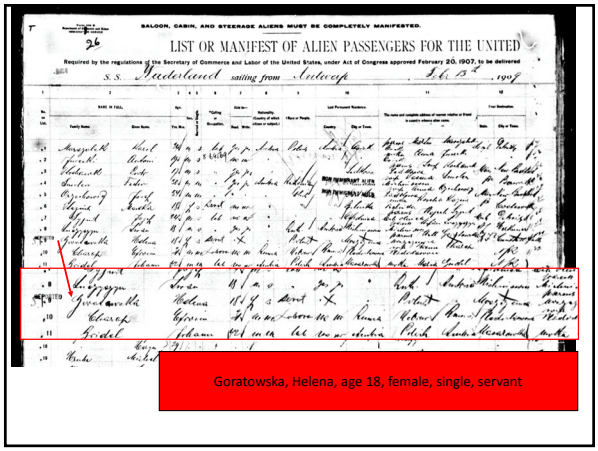
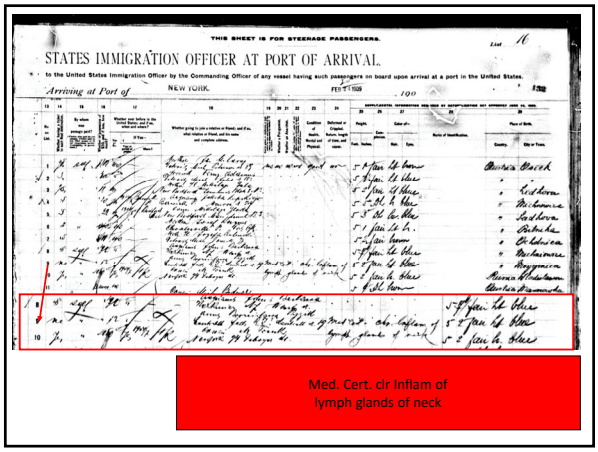
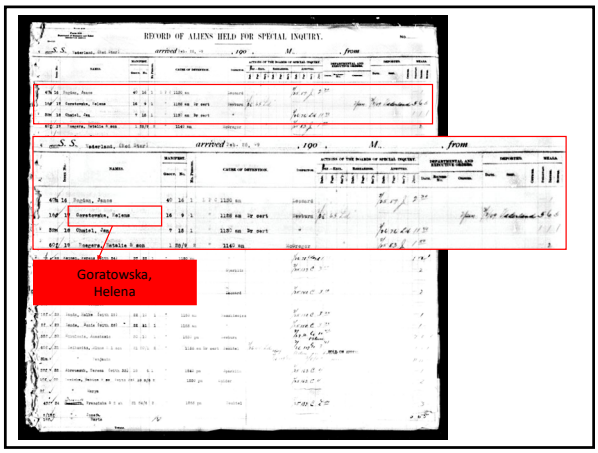

SALOON, CABIN, AND STEERAGE ALIENS MUST BE COMPLETELY MANIFESTED.
LIST OR MANIFEST OF ALIEN PASSENGERS FOR THE UNITED
Goratowska, Helena, age 18, female, single, servant

23


THIS SHEET IS FOR STEERAGE PASSENGERS.
STATES IMMIGRATION OFFICER AT PORT OF ARRIVAL.
Arriving at Port of NEW YORK.
Med. Cert. clr Inflam of
lymph glands of neck

24



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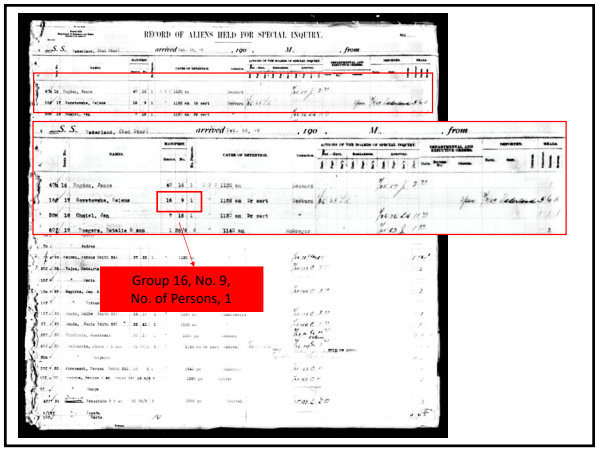

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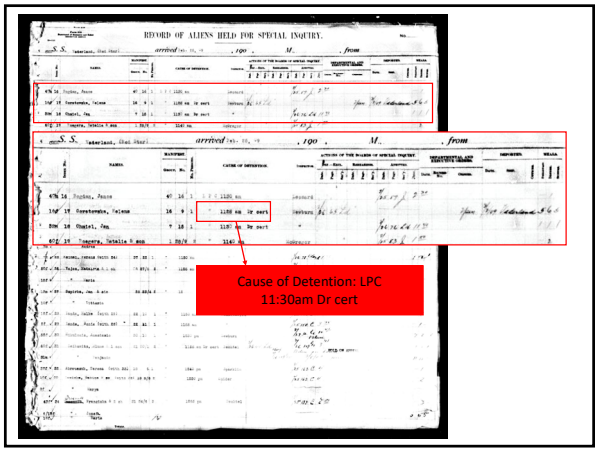

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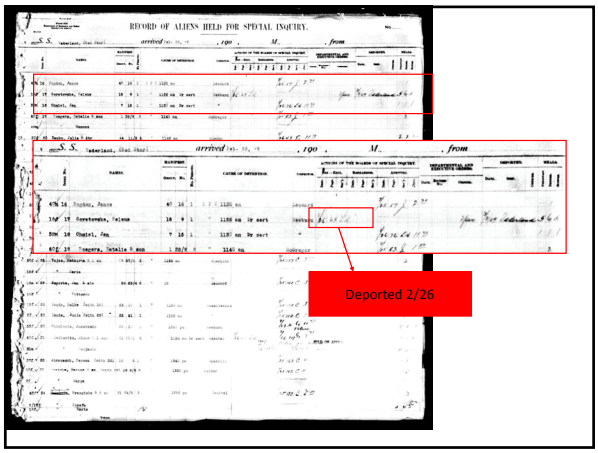

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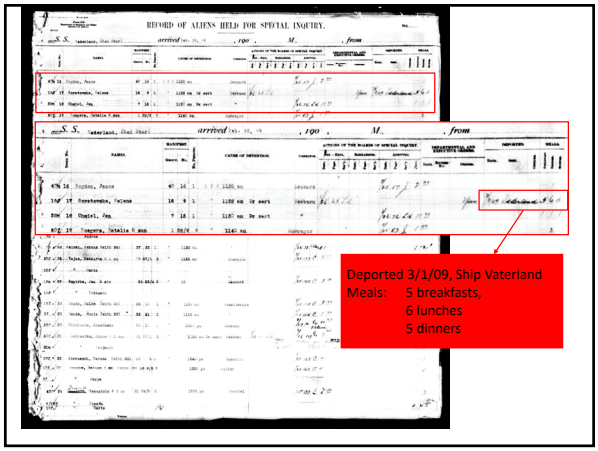

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Border Crossings

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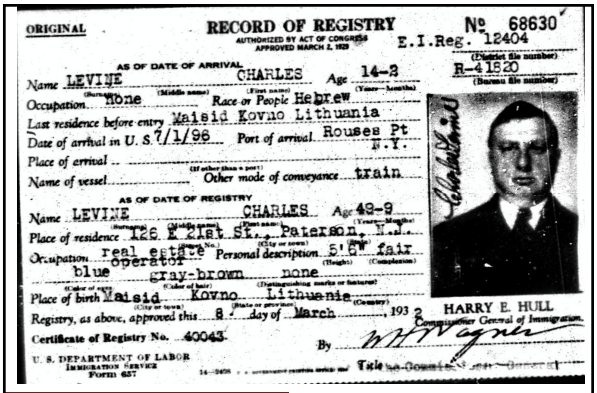
Border Crossings

- From Canada to the United States, these records begin in 1895 and are available online up through 1956.
- Some of the arrivals are recorded much later than the actual arrivals took place.

31



ORIGINAL

RECORD OF REGISTRY

AUTHORIZED BY ACT OF CONGRESS APPROVED MARCH 2, 1929

No. 68630

E.I.Reg. 12404

R-4 1520

AS OF DATE OF ARRIVAL

Name LEVINE CHARLES Age 14-3

Occupation None Race or People Hebrew

Last residence before entry Waisid Kovno Lithuania

Date of arrival in U. S. 7/1/96 Port of arrival Rouses Pt N.Y.

Place of arrival

Name of vessel Other mode of conveyance train

AS OF DATE OF REGISTRY

Name LEVINE CHARLES Age 43-9

Place of residence 126 E 21st St., Paterson, N.J.

Occupation real estate operator Personal description 5' 6" fair blue gray-brown none

Place of birth Waisid Kovno Lithuania

Registry, as above, approved this 8 day of March 193 2

Certificate of Registry No. 40043

By W H Wagner Title

HARRY E. HULL

Commissioner General of Immigration

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR IMMIGRATION SERVICE FORM 657

1896 Canadian Border Crossing

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Settlement Patterns

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Four States

- New York: nearly 2.75 million
- Massachusetts: more than 1 million
- Pennsylvania: more than 1 million
- Illinois: more than 1 million

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Too Many Immigrants

- A closing of the "Golden Door" had begun:
  - Immigration Act of 1882
  - Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882
  - Alien Contract Labor Laws of 1885, 1887
- Third Major Immigration Wave, 1890-1914
- Inception of INS Service in 1906
- Dillingham Commission, 1907-1910

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Dillingham Commission

- Act of Congress, 20 February 1907, created a commission, headed by William P. Dillingham, to examine the "immigrant question."
- The commission consisted of three senators appointed by the President of the Senate; three members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House; and three persons appointed by the President of the United States.

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Dillingham Commission

- Senators:
  - William P. Dillingham, chairman
  - Henry Cabot Lodge
  - Asbury C. Latimer (d. 20 Feb. 1908)
  - Anselm J. McLaurin (appt. 25 Feb. 1908; d. 22 Dec. 1908)
  - Le Roy Percy (appt. 16 March 1910)
- House of Representatives:
  - Benjamin F. Howell
  - William S. Bennett
  - John L. Burnett
- Appt. by President:
  - Charles P. Neill
  - Jeremiah W. Jenks
  - William R. Wheeler

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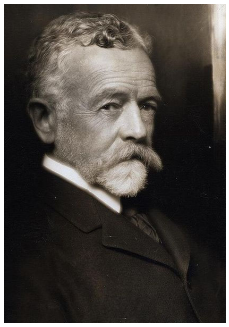
William Paul Dillingham



Henry Cabot Lodge

Dillingham Commission

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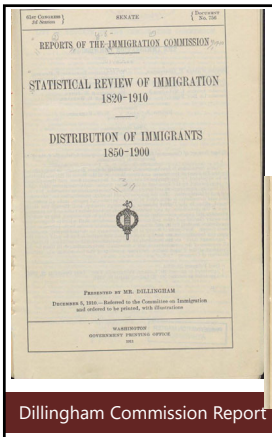
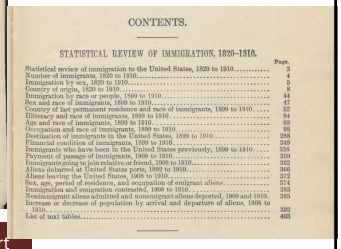


- Officially submitted to the Committee on Immigration – December 5, 1910
- Printed in 1911



Dillingham Commission Report

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TABLE 38.—*Number of immigrants whose passage was paid by self or relative, during years 1908, 1909, and 1910, by*

[Compiled from reports of the United States Commissioner-General of Immigration.]

Race or people.	1908.			1909.			1910.		
	Self.	Relative.	Other than self or relative.	Self.	Relative.	Other than self or relative.	Self.	Relative.	Other than self or relative.
African (black)	3,456	961	939	3,305	863	139	3,831	994	141
Armenian	2,301	371	27	2,330	359	19	4,658	811	19
Bohemian and Moravian	5,319	4,985	50	5,923	2,891	36	5,403	2,948	51
Bulgarian, Servian, and Montenegrin	17,252	957	37	5,952	539	13	14,177	957	46
Chinese	786	421	56	1,000	670	111	886	854	30
Croatian and Slovenian	16,921	3,432	119	17,160	2,927	94	35,926	3,501	135
Cuban	2,654	628	41	2,540	811	29	2,106	1,199	26
Dalmatian, Bosnian, and Herzegovinian	3,353	199	13	1,696	199	2	4,907	294	10
Dutch and Flemish	3,443	3,982	99	4,706	3,319	89	7,994	4,795	223
East Indian	1,041	18	31	315	15	7	1,023	137	22
English	31,172	16,547	1,337	25,385	12,529	1,007	35,004	17,097	1,397
Finnish	2,809	2,561	379	3,225	2,967	395	10,357	4,671	528
French	8,536	3,835	510	10,009	8,838	516	11,917	8,670	520
German	43,565	28,381	1,022	36,280	21,173	1,068	47,878	29,567	884
Greek	26,138	2,588	65	18,669	1,536	37	37,919	2,078	38
Hebrew	39,542	65,492	953	27,037	54,709	813	50,668	81,172	936
Irish	21,100	14,241	486	18,346	12,379	438	25,541	14,360	541
Italian, North	18,716	5,777	207	19,986	5,008	102	25,774	4,727	279
Italian, South	68,875	41,252	420	125,472	38,947	828	147,763	44,092	518
Japanese	7,060	9,265	93	848	2,374	53	497	2,265	36
Korean	59	7		6	2		14	4	1
Lithuanian	7,967	5,630	114	10,692	4,400	102	14,904	8,538	172
Magyar	17,278	6,841	164	21,905	6,740	61	19,935	7,333	64
Mexican	3,729	1,825	128	8,434	6,988	169	9,438	8,120	193
Pacific Islander	1	1		3	3	1		1	60
Polish	44,023	23,816	906	50,620	20,330	895	98,745	30,193	1,007

Dillingham Commission Report

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Immigrant Restriction League

- Founded in 1894 in Boston by Charles Warren, Robert DeCourcy Ward, and Prescott F. Hall
- All three were Boston Brahmin Harvard alumni of the class of 1889
- Warren & DeCourcy Ward were Mayflower descendants while Hall's ancestors arrived from England in the 1600s
- Believed that immigrants from southern and eastern Europe were ethnically inferior to Anglo-Saxons

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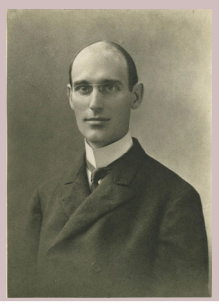
Prescott F. Hall

- 27 Sep 1868 – 28 May 1921
- Also served as general secretary of the National Association of Immigration Restriction Leagues
- The IRL disbanded after his death



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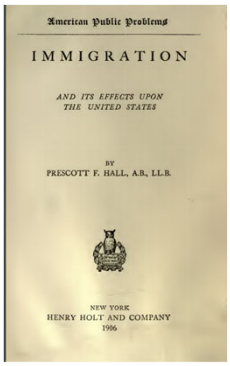

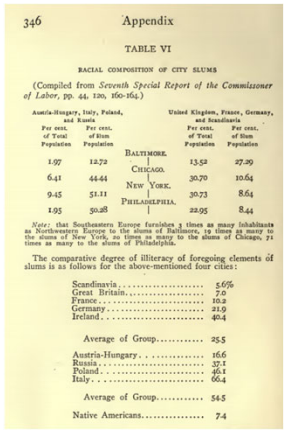

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TABLE VI

RACIAL COMPOSITION OF CITY SLUMS

(Compiled from *Seventh Special Report of the Commissioner of Labor*, pp. 44, 120, 160-164.)

Austria-Hungary, Italy, Poland, and Russia			United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Scandinavia	
Per cent. of Total Population	Per cent. of Slum Population		Per cent. of Total Population	Per cent. of Slum Population
1.97	12.72	Baltimore	13.52	27.29
6.41	44.44	Chicago	30.70	10.64
9.45	51.11	New York	30.73	8.64
1.95	50.28	Philadelphia	22.95	8.44

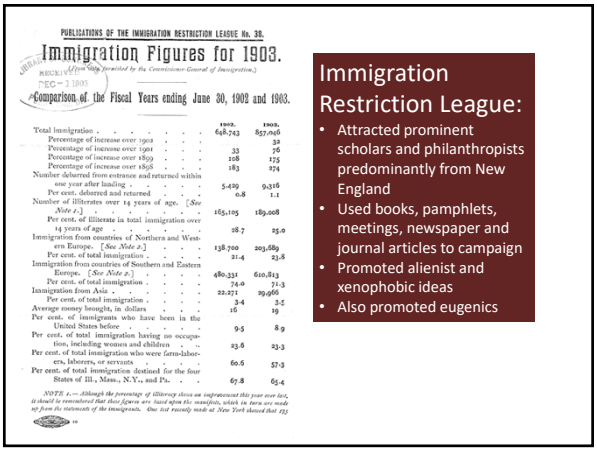
Note: that Southeastern Europe furnishes 3 times as many inhabitants as Northwestern Europe to the slums of Baltimore, 19 times as many to the slums of New York, 20 times as many to the slums of Chicago, 71 times as many to the slums of Philadelphia.

The comparative degree of illiteracy of foregoing elements of slums is as follows for the above-mentioned four cities:

Scandinavia	5.6%
Great Britain	7.0
France	10.2
Germany	21.9
Ireland	40.4
Average of Group	25.5
Austria-Hungary	16.6
Russia	37.1
Poland	46.1
Italy	66.4
Average of Group	54.5
Native Americans	7.4

Book by Prescott F. Hall

43



PUBLICATIONS OF THE IMMIGRATION RESTRICTION LEAGUE No. 38.

Immigration Figures for 1903.

(From data furnished by the Commissioner-General of Immigration.)

Comparison of the Fiscal Years ending June 30, 1902 and 1903.

	1902.	1903.
Total immigration	648,743	857,046
Percentage of increase over 1902		32
Percentage of increase over 1901	33	76
Percentage of increase over 1899	108	175
Percentage of increase over 1898	183	274
Number debarred from entrance and returned within one year after landing	5,429	9,316
Per cent. debarred and returned	0.8	1.1
Number of illiterates over 14 years of age. [*See Note 1.*]	165,105	189,008
Per cent. of illiterate in total immigration over 14 years of age	28.7	25.0
Immigration from countries of Northern and Western Europe. [*See Note 2.*]	138,700	203,589
Per cent. of total immigration	21.4	23.8
Immigration from countries of Southern and Eastern Europe. [*See Note 2.*]	480,331	610,813
Per cent. of total immigration	74.0	71.3
Immigration from Asia	22,271	29,966
Per cent. of total immigration	3.4	3.5
Average money brought, in dollars	16	19
Per cent. of immigrants who have been in the United States before	9.5	8.9
Per cent. of total immigration having no occupation, including women and children	23.6	23.3
Per cent. of total immigration who were farm-laborers, laborers, or servants	60.5	57.3
Per cent. of total immigration destined for the four States of Ill., Mass., N.Y., and Pa.	67.8	65.4

NOTE 1.—Although the percentage of illiteracy shows an improvement this year over last, it should be remembered that these figures are based upon the manifests, which in turn are made up from the statements of the immigrants. One test recently made at New York showed that 175

Immigration Restriction League:

- Attracted prominent scholars and philanthropists predominantly from New England
- Used books, pamphlets, meetings, newspaper and journal articles to campaign
- Promoted alienist and xenophobic ideas
- Also promoted eugenics

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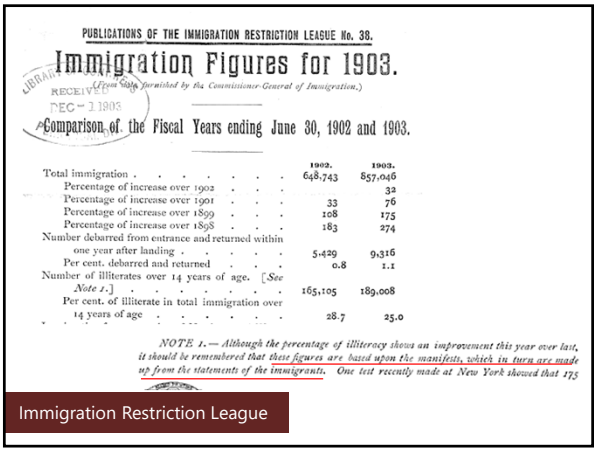

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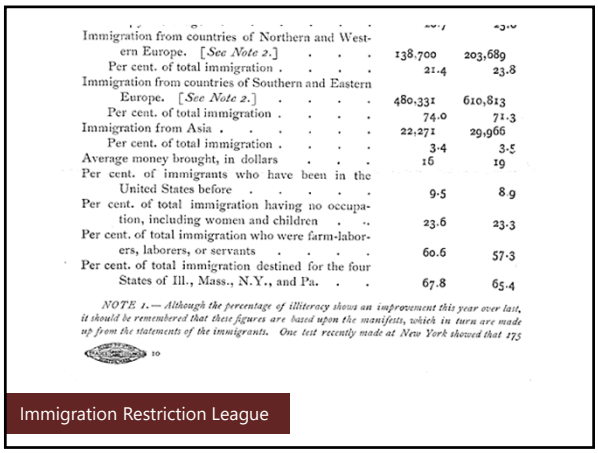

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Per cent. of total immigration	21.4	23.8
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Per cent. of total immigration having no occupation, including women and children	23.6	23.3
Per cent. of total immigration who were farm-laborers, laborers, or servants	60.6	57.3
Per cent. of total immigration destined for the four States of Ill., Mass., N.Y., and Pa.	67.8	65.4

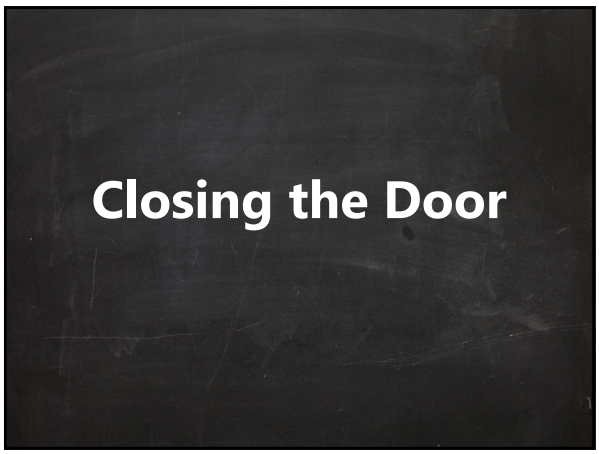
NOTE 1.— Although the percentage of illiteracy shows an improvement this year over last, it should be remembered that these figures are based upon the manifests, which in turn are made up from the statements of the immigrants. One test recently made at New York showed that 175

10

Immigration Restriction League

46

47

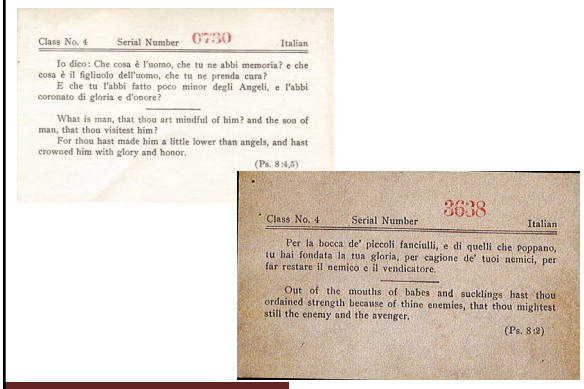


48

Literacy Tests

- 1891 was the first time that a literacy test was suggested
- Recommended with each act that followed
- Eventually included in the Immigration Act of February 5, 1917
- The Immigration Restriction League heavily lobbied for the changes in the Immigration Act of 1917

49


Class No. 4 Serial Number 6730 Italian

Io dico: Che cosa è l'uomo, che tu ne abbi memoria? e che cosa è il figliuolo dell'uomo, che tu ne prenda cura?
E che tu l'abbi fatto poco minor degli Angeli, e l'abbi coronato di gloria e d'onore?

What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?
For thou hast made him a little lower than angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor.
(Ps. 8:4,5)

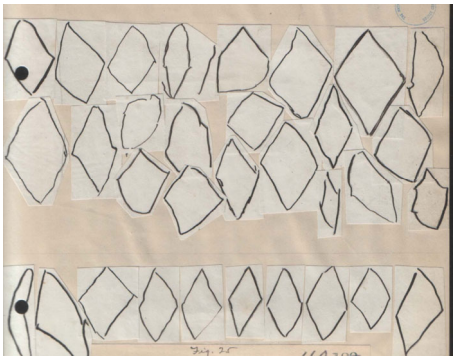
Class No. 4 Serial Number 3638 Italian

Per la bocca de' piccoli fanciulli, e di quelli che poppano, tu hai fondata la tua gloria, per cagione de' tuoi nemici, per far restare il nemico e il vendicatore.

Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.
(Ps. 8:2)

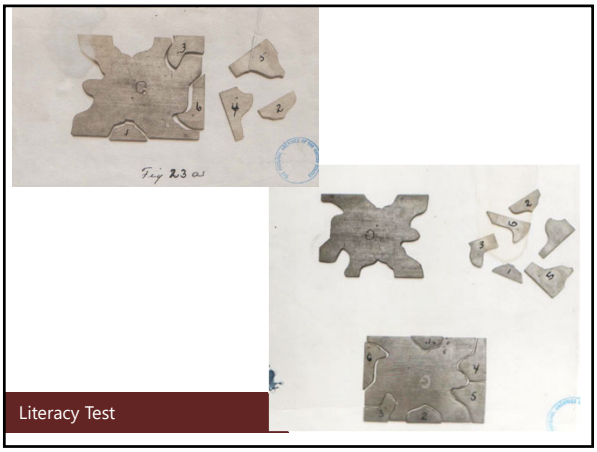
Literacy Test

50



Literacy Test

51



Literacy Test

52

Beginning of Quota System

- Act of May 19, 1921
- Set the annual quota for each nationality group at 3% of the number of foreign-born persons of that national origin as enumerated in the 1910 census
- Asiatic barred zone immigrants still denied
- Exempted certain classes of alien

53

National Quota Act of 1924

- Heavily weighted to limit the southern and eastern Europeans from gaining entry
- The "national origins" system became fully operational in 1929
- Capped total immigration outside of Western Hemisphere to 150,000
- Averaged out to 5 northwestern Europeans to 1 southeastern European

54

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National Origins Quotas

- Afghanistan – 100
- Albania – 100
- Andora – 100
- Arabian peninsula – 100
- Armenia – 100
- Australia – 100
- Austria – 1,413
- Belgium – 1,304
- Bhutan – 100
- Bulgaria – 100
- Cameroon – 100
- China – 100
- Czechoslovakia – 2,874
- Danzig – 100
- Denmark – 1,181
- Egypt – 100
- Estonia – 116
- Ethiopia – 100
- Finland – 569
- France – 3,086
- Germany – 25,957
- G.B. & No. Ire. – 65,721
- Greece – 307
- Hungary – 869
- Iceland – 100
- India – 100
- Iraq – 100
- Irish Free State – 17,853
- Italy – 5,802
- Japan - 100

55

National Origins Quotas

- Latvia– 236
- Liberia– 100
- Liechtenstein- 100
- Lithuana – 386
- Luxembourg – 100
- Monaco – 100
- Morocco – 100
- Muscat (Oman) – 100
- Naura – 100
- Nepal – 100
- Netherlands – 3,153
- New Zealand – 100
- Norway – 2,377
- New Guinea – 100
- Palestine – 100
- Persia – 100
- Poland – 6,524
- Portugal – 440
- Ruanda & Urundi – 100
- Rumania – 295
- Russia, European and Asiatic – 2,784
- Samoa – 100
- San Marino – 100

56

Researching in New York City

57

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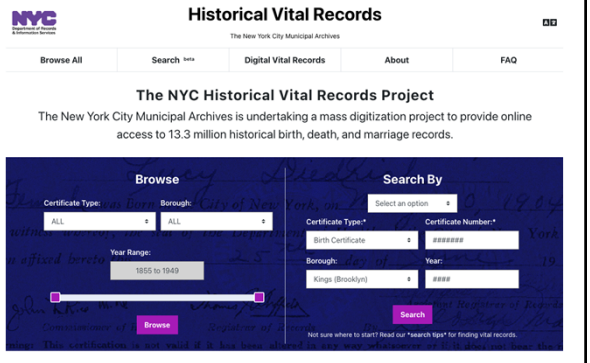
New York City Research

- Vital records
- City directories
  - Annual
  - May show who else is living at the same address
- Jewish cemeteries
- Repositories

58

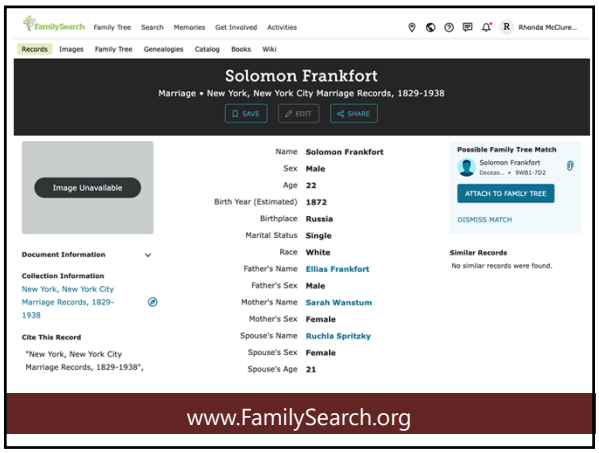


https://a860-historicalvitalrecords.nyc.gov/

59

NYC Historical Vital Records

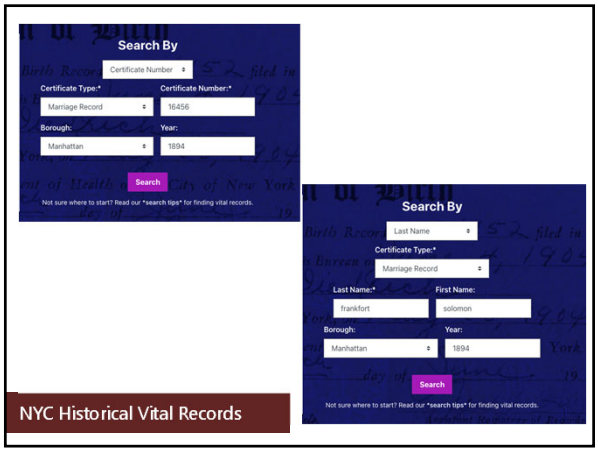
60


Solomon Frankfort
Marriage • New York, New York City Marriage Records, 1829-1938
Image Unavailable
Name Solomon Frankfort
Sex Male
Age 22
Birth Year (Estimated) 1872
Birthplace Russia
Marital Status Single
Race White
Father's Name Ellias Frankfort
Father's Sex Male
Mother's Name Sarah Wanstum
Mother's Sex Female
Spouse's Name Ruchla Spritzky
Spouse's Sex Female
Spouse's Age 21
Possible Family Tree Match
ATTACH TO FAMILY TREE
DISMISS MATCH
Similar Records
No similar records were found.
Document Information
Collection Information
New York, New York City Marriage Records, 1829-1938
Cite This Record
"New York, New York City Marriage Records, 1829-1938",
www.FamilySearch.org

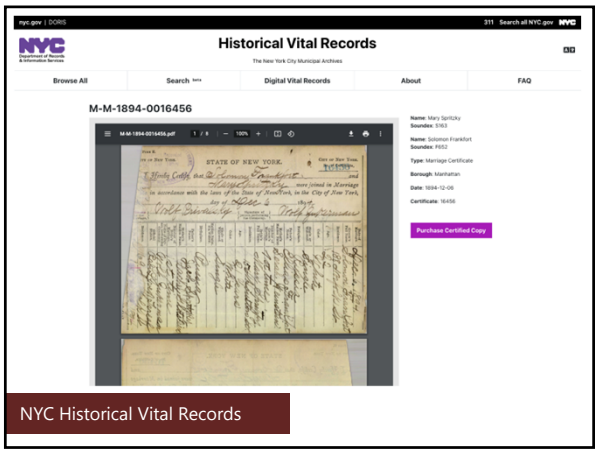
61

Document Information
Collection Information
New York, New York City Marriage Records, 1829-1938
Cite This Record
"New York, New York City Marriage Records, 1829-1938", database, FamilySearch (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:24CD-ZRG : 22 August 2022), Solomon Frankfort and Ruchla Spritzky, 1894.
Copy Citation
Marital Status Single
Race White
Father's Name Ellias Frankfort
Father's Sex Male
Mother's Name Sarah Wanstum
Mother's Sex Female
Spouse's Name Ruchla Spritzky
Spouse's Sex Female
Spouse's Age 21
Spouse's Birth Year (Estimated) 1873
Spouse's Birthplace Russia
Spouse's Marital Status Single
Spouse's Race White
Spouse's Father's Name Jacob Spritzky
Spouse's Father's Sex Male
Spouse's Mother's Name Rachel Hotstein
Marriage Date 6 Dec 1894
Marriage Place Manhattan, New York County, New York, United States
Marriage Place (Original) Manhattan, New York
Event Type Marriage
Source Details cn 16456
Similar Records
No similar records were found.
www.FamilySearch.org

62

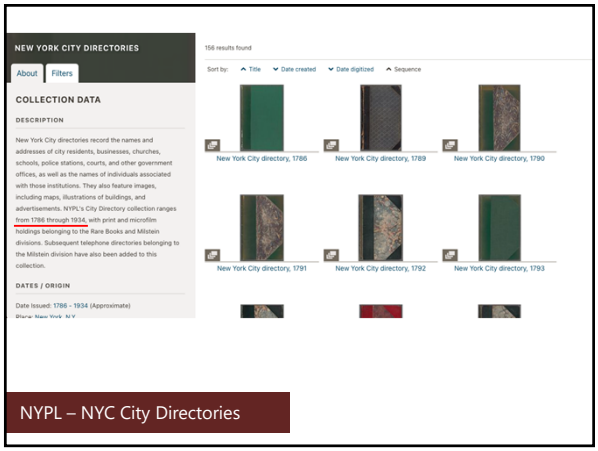

Search By
Certificate Number
Certificate Type:*
Marriage Record
Certificate Number:*
16456
Borough:
Manhattan
Year:
1894
Search
Not sure where to start? Read our "search tips" for finding vital records.
Search By
Last Name
Certificate Type:*
Marriage Record
Last Name:*
frankfort
First Name:
solomon
Borough:
Manhattan
Year:
1894
Search
Not sure where to start? Read our "search tips" for finding vital records.
NYC Historical Vital Records

63



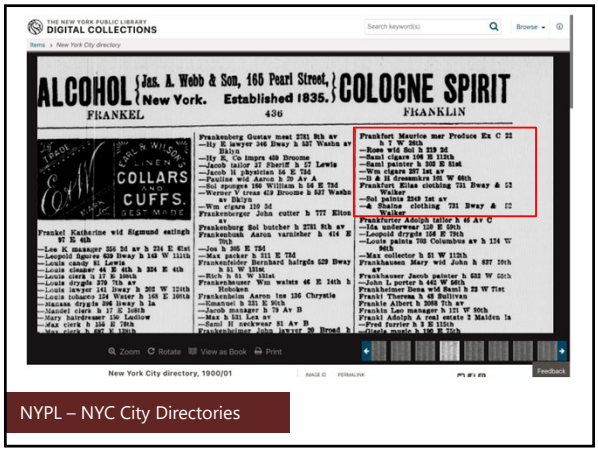
NYC Historical Vital Records

64



NYPL – NYC City Directories

65



NYPL – NYC City Directories

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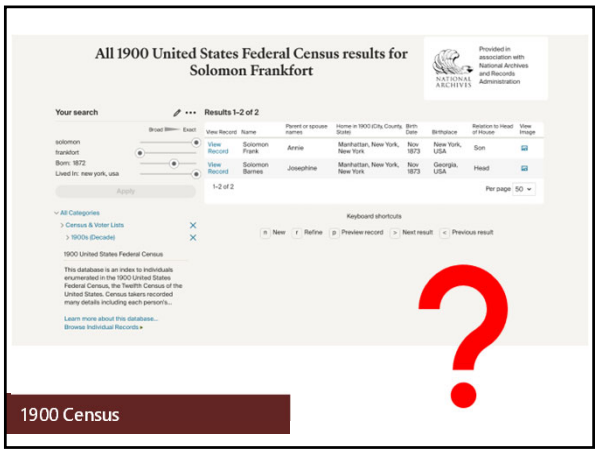
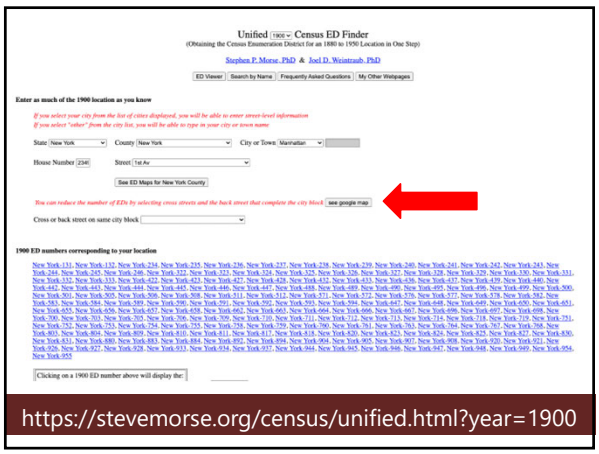

All 1900 United States Federal Census results for Solomon Frankfort
1900 Census

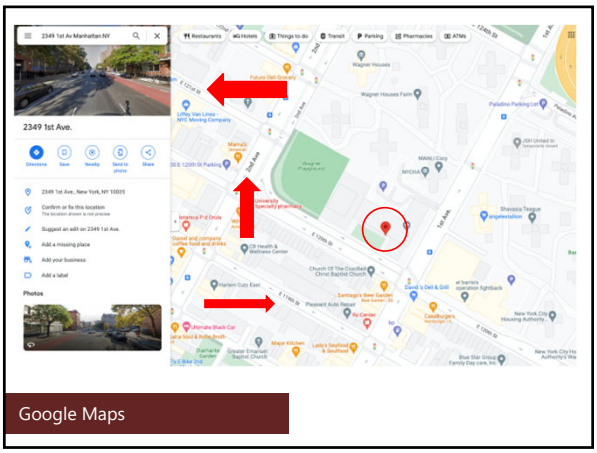
67

One-Step Webpages by Stephen P. Morse
https://stevemorse.org/index.html

68


Unified Census ED Finder
https://stevemorse.org/census/unified.html?year=1900

69



Google Maps

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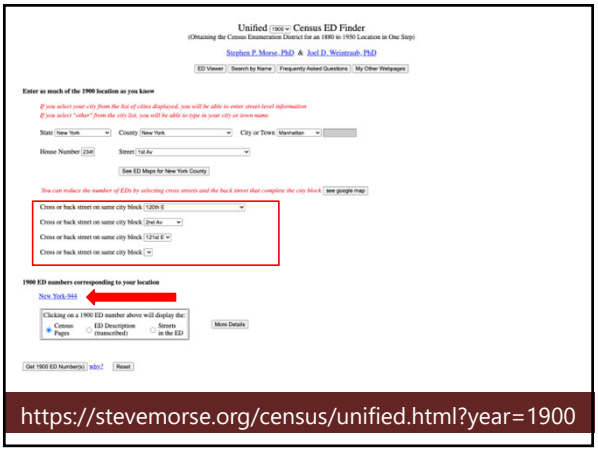

https://stevemorse.org/census/unified.html?year=1900

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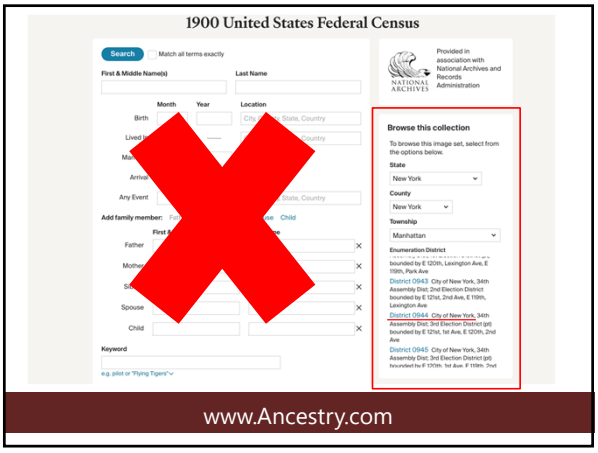
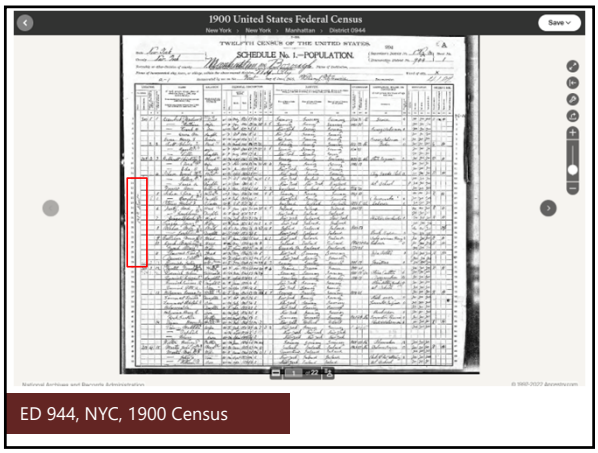


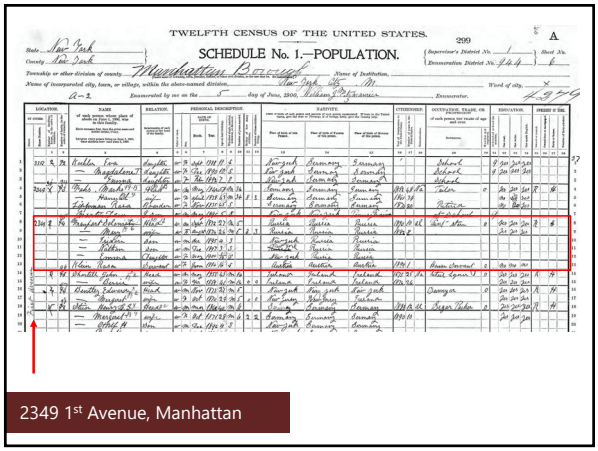
www.Ancestry.com

72



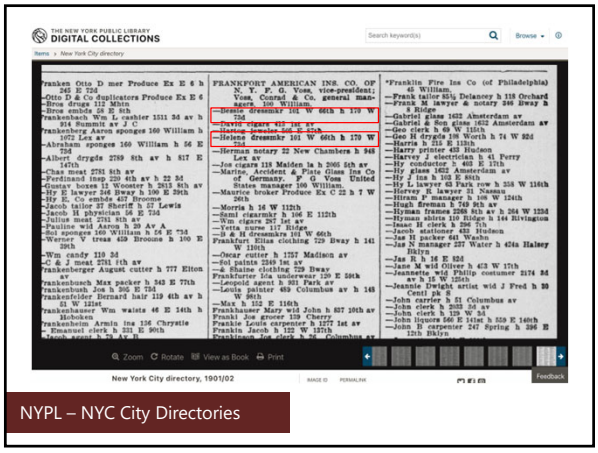
ED 944, NYC, 1900 Census

73



2349 1st Avenue, Manhattan

74



NYPL – NYC City Directories

75

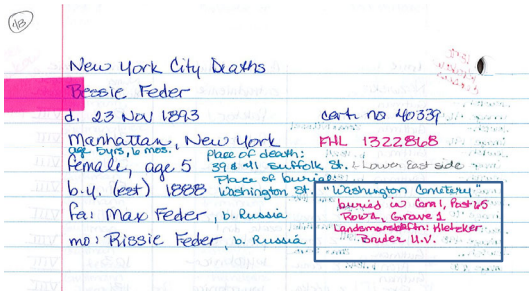
NYPL – NYC City Directories

76

Cemetery Plots

- If Jewish ancestors are buried in New York City, it is possible their plot was purchased by a *landsmanschaftn* organization.
- Larger cemeteries may have many such sections of graves.

77



Bessie Feder's Death

78

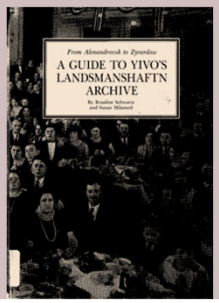
Landsmanschaftn Groups

- Began with newly arrived immigrants pooling money together to aid with:
  - A sick friend
  - A burial
  - A place to worship
  - To help bring a *landsman* (country man) over
- Formalized borrowing from their own experiences as well as fraternal orders of the time

79

Landsmanshaftn Records

- Rosaline Schwartz and Susan Milamed's *A Guide to YIVO's Landsmanshaftn Archive*
- Now online at: https://www.jgsny.org/index.php/searchable-databases/indexes-to-jewish-organizations/yivo-landsmanshaftn-collection



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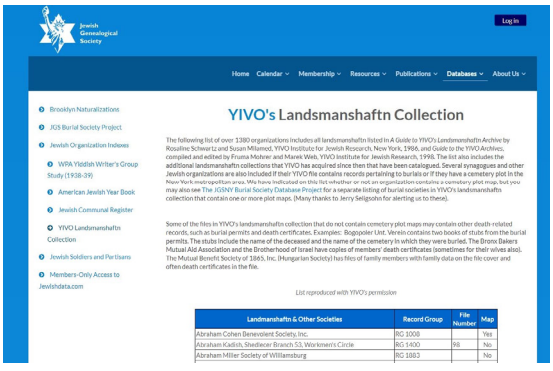

https://www.jgsny.org/index.php/searchable-databases/indexes-to-jewish-organizations/yivo-landsmanshaftn-collection

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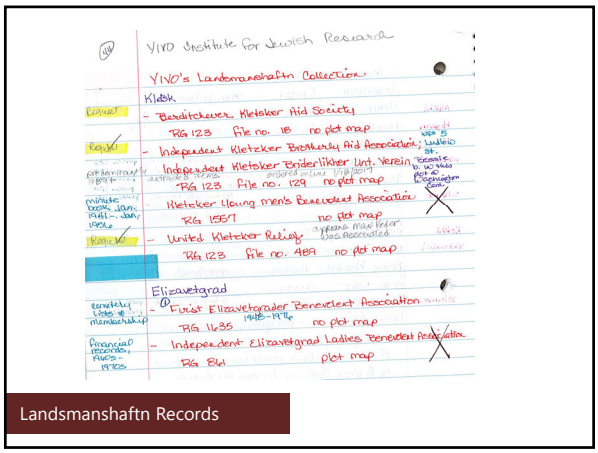

Landsmanshaftn Records

82

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84

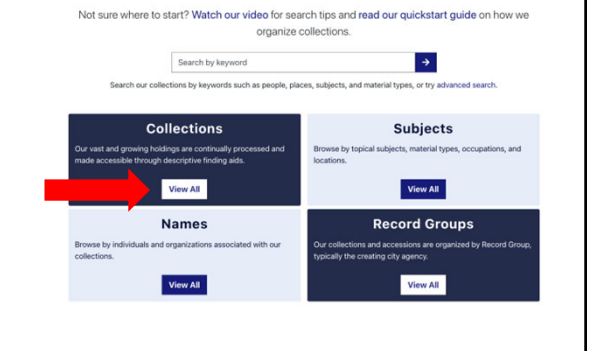
NYC Repositories

- Municipal Archives of New York City
- Center for Jewish History
- New York Public Library
- Center for Migration Studies

85

https://a860-collectionguides.nyc.gov/

86



https://a860-collectionguides.nyc.gov/

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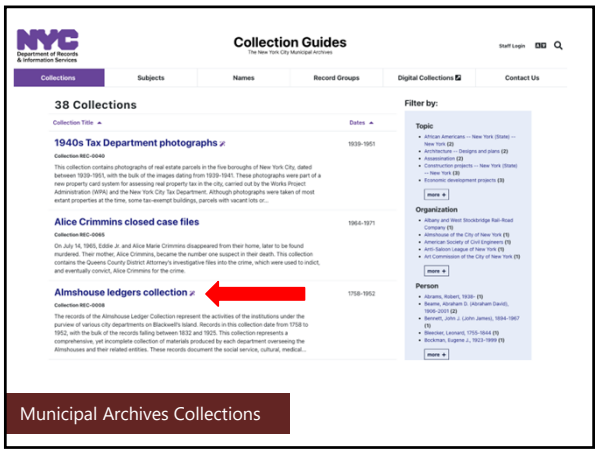
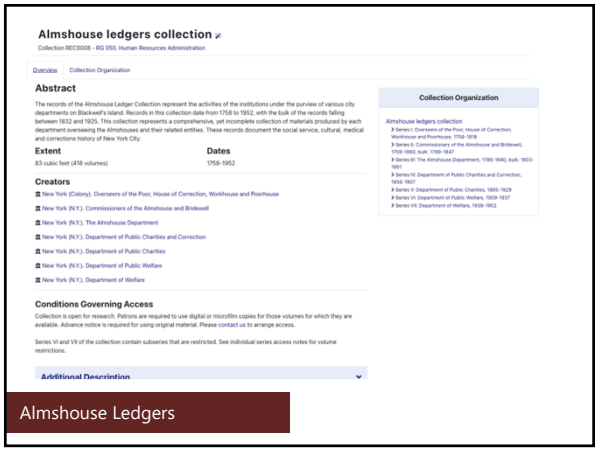


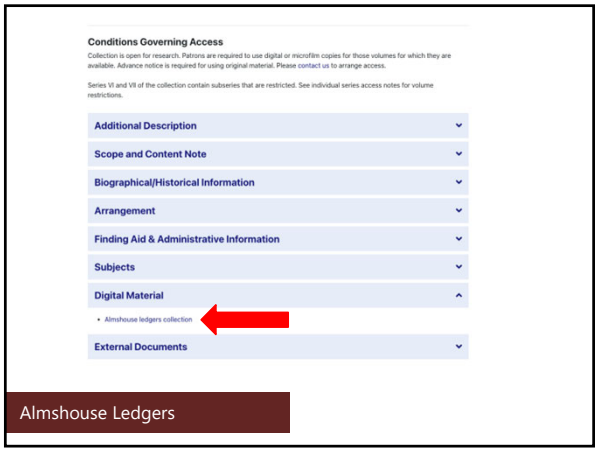
Municipal Archives Collections

88



Almshouse Ledgers

89



Almshouse Ledgers

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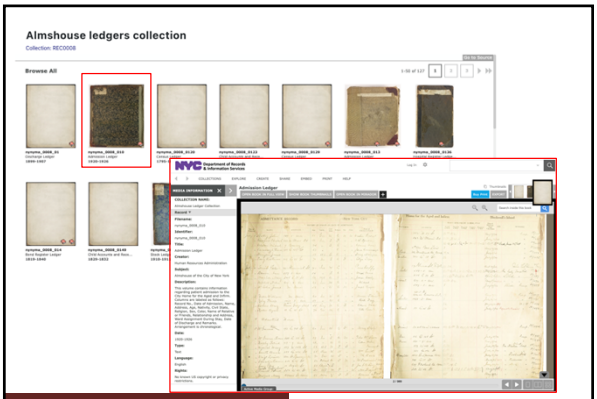

Almshouse Ledgers

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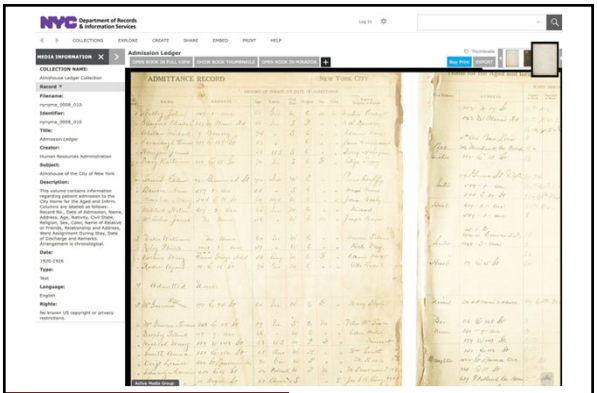

Almshouse Ledgers

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https://cjh.org/

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Center for Jewish History

- Ackman & Ziff Family Genealogy Institute
- American Jewish Historical Society
- American Sephardi Federation
- Leo Baeck Institute
- Yeshiva University Museum
- YIVO Institute for Jewish Research

94

https://libguides.cjh.org/c.php?g=923295&p=6654551

95

NYPL

- Milstein Division of United States History, Local History & Genealogy (Room 121)
- Milstein Microform Reading Room
- Collections acquired from the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society

96

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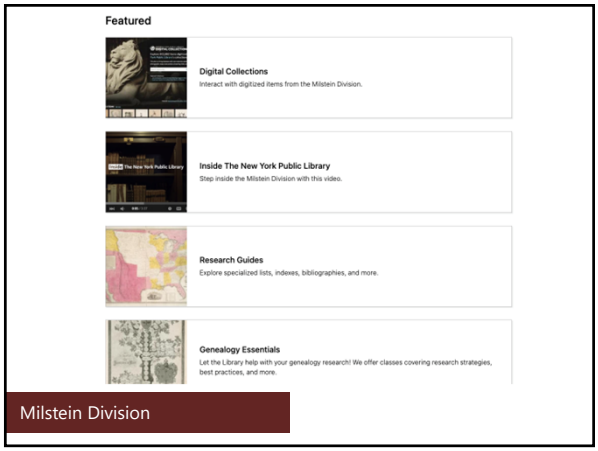
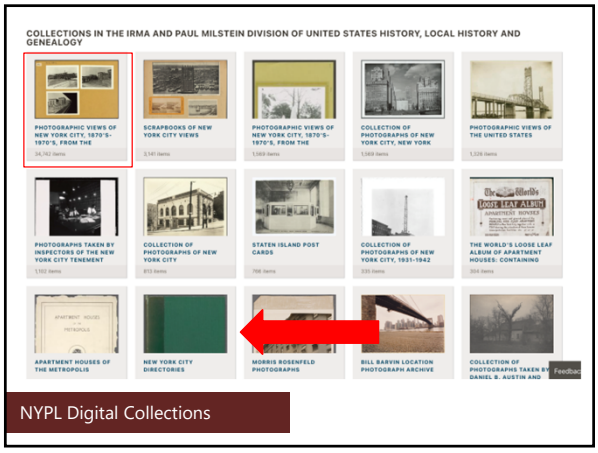
https://www.nypl.org/about/divisions/milstein/genealo

97



Milstein Division

98



NYPL Digital Collections

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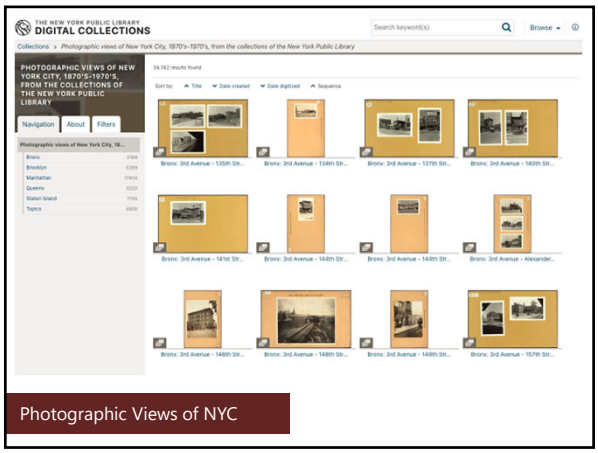
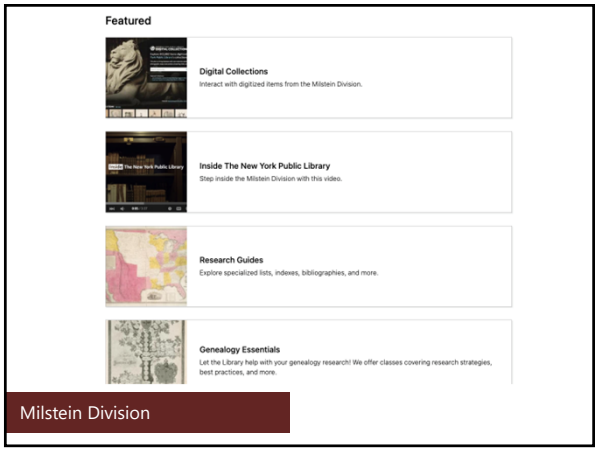


Photographic Views of NYC

100



Milstein Division

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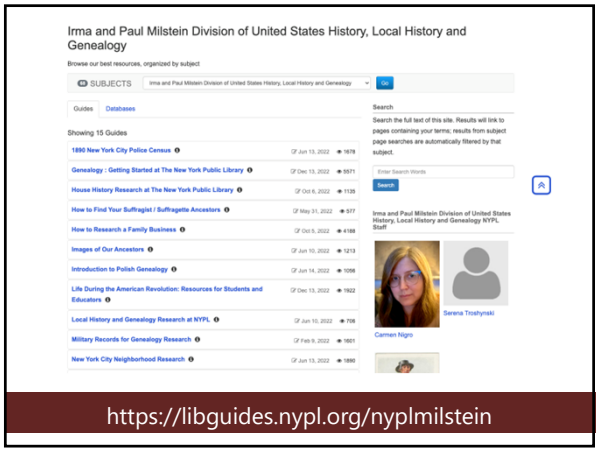


https://libguides.nypl.org/nyplmilstein

102

https://libguides.nypl.org/neighborhoodresearch

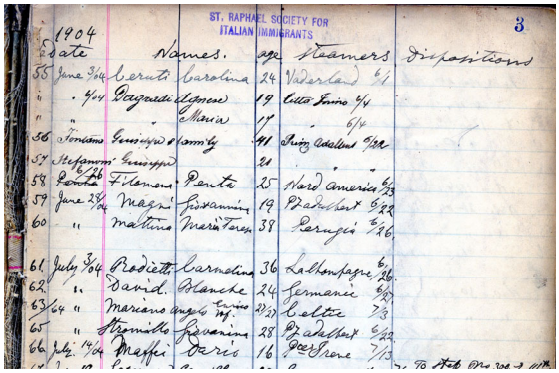
103

https://cmsny.org/about/archive/

104

cmsny.org

105



St Raphael Society

CMS CENTER FOR MIGRATION STUDIES

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cmsny.org

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109

THANK YOU!
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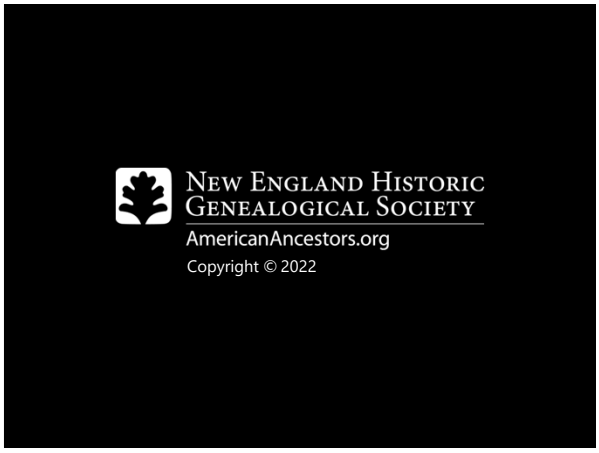
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