

Today's meeting was a viewing of the Ancestry video titled "Finding Your Immigrant Ancestors" by Crista Cowen. If you missed the meeting or want to view it again, here's the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DXjRjINPMIQ>

Here's a longer video from Ancestry that amplifies much of what Crista spoke on and includes some non-ancestry sources.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qB5x1SYYy4I>

After viewing Crista's video, since it only covered resources on Ancestry, Jim Stuber gave some other places to look.

Familysearch.org has more European records than Ancestry so it's a vital stop. If you know an exact name and exact birth date you can search for individual records here: <https://familysearch.org/search>

If you have a country and an exact last name and it's an unusual one, on both Ancestry and Familysearch, restrict the search to that country and click the box for "exact" for the name. Maybe restrict the years to ones you know they lived there. It may give you one or just a few towns to focus your research in.

Here's the list of all the European collections on Familysearch, especially useful if you know a town or region:

<https://familysearch.org/search/collection/list/?page=1®ion=EUROPE>

If there's a number after the collection that means it has been indexed and can be searched. If it says "Browse Images" you'll have to go through the images one page at a time. Since the records are usually in date order, you can jump ahead to get close to a known date.

Crista talked about using passenger lists and Ancestry has been indexing passenger lists from the National Archives. But for immigrations after 1892, Ellis Island was the most popular port of entry. To raise funds to maintain the site and museum, the images that used to be free are now accessible only after paying a steep per page fee. You can still search and get a transcript for free but the "good stuff" costs. Prior to Ellis Island, Castle Garden was the New York port of entry and its site is free and searchable.

Ellis Island: <http://libertyellisfoundation.org/passenger>

Castle Garden: <http://www.castlegarden.org/>

The National Archives has some immigration records. You can see what they have and access them here. The German records are the most extensive:

<http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=GP21,22,23,24,44>

If you have some information on your U.K. ancestor but have hit a dead end, try posting a message on the site rootschat.com. There are highly skilled researchers with access to lots of records you can't get to that may be able to help you. <http://www.rootschat.com>

As in all research in Europe, you have to know a town or at least a region to hope to have success.

And if you're a Facebook user, there may be a facebook page for your region or town with people who have can access local records. In facebook, search for "town name" "genealogy".

If you have hit a dead end on ancestors who lived in the Pittsburgh region, the Allegheny County Facebook page is excellent.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/122539950638/>

County histories were popular in some parts of the country from the late 1800s to the early 1900's. If your ancestor paid to put a biography in one, they may tell the story of the family's immigration and where they came from. Google "History of" "County name" and you may find one on books.google.com or archive.org. Search in the text for your family name. If your ancestor didn't submit a bio, maybe a sibling or child did.