

Our speaker this month was Rich Venezia of Rich Roots Genealogy (<https://www.richroots.net>). His topic was "Discovering Your Immigrant's Origins: Exhausting Every Resource". He covered so much material this can only be a summary of the highlights:

### **Ship Manifests:**

Available on

[Ancestry.com](#), [FamilySearch.org](#), [ellisisland.org](#), [castlegarden.org](#)

- o 1820 to mid-1890s: Country of origin listed – almost never more specific
- o Mid-1890s to 1906: Place of last residence listed (often same as place of birth), as well as who going to join in the U. S.
- o 1907 forward: Place of birth listed, as well as relatives/friends left behind

### **Naturalization paperwork:**

- o Declaration of Intent (DOI): filed two years after establishing residency
- o Petition for Naturalization: filed after another three years
- o Lots of courts could have records in any jurisdiction
- o Here's the National Archives article on naturalization:

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

- o [FamilySearch.org](#) and [Ancestry.com](#) have some naturalization records digitized. On FamilySearch, search the county (or sometimes city) under "Catalog" and look for entries under the heading "Naturalization and Citizenship". For Ancestry go to the card catalog entry "Immigration and Travel", then "Citizenship & Naturalization Records".

### **Vital Records:**

- o All the major genealogy sites have them so don't limit your search to just one
- o FamilySearch has an excellent article on vital records by place and where to find them:

[https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United\\_States\\_Vital\\_Records](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United_States_Vital_Records)

### **World War I/World War II Draft Registration Cards:**

- o Some of them have place of birth.
- o Available on [Ancestry.com](#), [FamilySearch.org](#), [Fold3.com](#)
- o FamilySearch has articles on them.  
For WWI  
[https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United\\_States\\_World\\_War\\_I\\_Draft\\_Records](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United_States_World_War_I_Draft_Records)  
And WWII

[https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United\\_States\\_World\\_War\\_II\\_Draft\\_Records](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United_States_World_War_II_Draft_Records)

### **Church records:**

Church records may be found in churches, archives, and in some cases online. There's no general rule where to find them as they vary by place, time and denomination. Here are three places:

- o [FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org) has some of them online. Go to the "Catalog" enter the place name (city or county) and look for Church Records.
- o For the Diocese of Pittsburgh they are in the Archives and Records Center. They work from requests and provide excellent service:  
<https://diopitt.org/genealogy>
- o [FindMyPast.com](https://www.findmypast.com) has gotten access to Catholic records in several large cities, with more to come:  
<https://www.findmypast.com/catholicrecords>

### **Newspapers:**

See the notes from Jim Stuber's talk in March on newspaper sites:

<http://www.mtlebanonlibrary.org/DocumentCenter/View/2255/March-2019-Notes>

### **County histories:**

Published from the 1880's to the 1910's (in some cases more than once), they contain biographies submitted by anyone willing to pay to get it published. The best way to find them is to do a google search for "history of county & state".

FamilySearch has digitized their collection of books so look there too since google hasn't indexed their collection:

<https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/>

### **Probate Records:**

They're in county court houses, on [FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org) (not indexed), and [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) is indexing the FamilySearch records. They rarely have useful information to find birth location.

[Recon.com](https://www.recon.com) and [FindMyPast.com](https://www.findmypast.com) mentioned by Rich (and in these notes) are usually paid subscription sites, but they are available to access for free at the Green Tree Family History Center. [MyHeritage.com](https://www.myheritage.com) is also available there and it has a large and growing set of records worth exploring:

[https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Pittsburgh\\_Pennsylvania\\_Family\\_History\\_Center](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Pittsburgh_Pennsylvania_Family_History_Center)