

Audio-taped Interviews



— Bettmann/CORBIS

In the 1970s, the National Park Service began taping immigrants' memories of their ocean crossing to America, their reasons for immigration and tales of everyday life in their country of origin. Below are five excerpts from the collection of more than 1,700 audio recordings that are available online for free at www.ancestry.com/immigration.

Immigrant Memories	Notes of Immigrant Experience through listening.
<p>A Baker's Son</p> <p>Lawrence Meinwald's father was having trouble with his business partner and was having trouble with money. Lawrence's father gave away his bakery in Poland. After convincing his wife it was a good idea to look for economic security in America, he took his family and left Poland. Meinwald was 6 years old when he left in 1920.</p>	

<p>The Sound of Music</p> <p>Maria von Trapp emigrated from Austria in 1939 at the age of 25 with her family. A singing manager from the United States had heard the family sing and asked them to come to America. Maria's father gathered the family to discuss what they should do, and they decided to go to America in hopes of becoming famous. The memoirs of Maria's stepmother, Maria Augusta von Trapp, were published as a book and later fictionalized as a Broadway musical and movie.</p>	
<p>Sinking of the <i>Titanic</i></p> <p>Millvina Dean was only 9 weeks old in 1912 when her ship, the <i>Titanic</i>, went down. When her father realized what was happening, he gathered the family on deck, and that was the last time the others would see him.</p>	
<p>A Family Reunited</p> <p>In 1928, 4-year-old Lillian Galletta left Sicily with four older sisters. Her parents and two oldest sisters were already in America and had earned enough money for the rest of the family to join them. Her uncle cared for the five sisters until the day he took them to the ship headed for America.</p>	

Text adapted from and Audio recordings are available for each excerpt at:

http://www.aarp.org/relationships/genealogy/info-09-2010/ellis_island_immigrant_audio_excerpts.html