

OUR FAMILY HISTORY  
Volume 1



*INTRODUCTION  
EMIGRATION & IMMIGRATION  
NEW YORK NEIGHBORHOODS  
MILITARY SERVICE & MEMORIALS*



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## INTRODUCTION:

In December 2010, my interest in our Ancestors' history was ignited after looking through some family photographs with my parents **Emil and Leonore (Daube) Bruno**. I was fortunate to have known my grandparents: **Andrea Bruno & Rosa Aiello** and **John V. Daube & Gertrude Hutter**. My parents had photographs of some of my great-grandparents: **Salvatore Bruno, Wilhelm Daube & Mary Anna Shelter** and **Leopold Hutter & Sarah Blum**. There also was a photo of my 2<sup>nd</sup> great-grandfather, **Adam Shelter**, along with some of his Civil War buddies.

Around the same time, I watched the television episodes of the show "*Who Do You Think You Are?*" The show portrayed celebrities searching for their own ancestors. I became a member of *Ancestry.com* and started my long road to discovering the history of my ancestors.

Searching for historical personal records used to be a difficult process that entailed personally going to local, county and state offices. Many libraries also had archived newspapers and records. Many historical records have been digitized and are now available online. Looking through American Census, Civil, Probate, Military and Immigration records, as well as Newspaper and Directory archives, I have pieced together a story of our ancestors' immigration and early lives in America.

International records have become more accessible. There are numerous French records from each Department of the Alsace region of France with civil records going back to the late 1700's on [Archives.bas-rhin.fr](http://Archives.bas-rhin.fr). The French organization [Genami.net](http://Genami.net) has some marriage contracts going back to the early 1700's.

Italian civil records from the Cosenza region of Calabria for the Years 1866 to 1910 have been digitized and are available on [Familysearch.org](http://Familysearch.org). The records for the Salerno region for the years 1809-1944 are available on [Antenati.san.beniculturali.it](http://Antenati.san.beniculturali.it).

Bohemia, Austrian records are slowly being digitized by the Czech Republic on the [Badatelna.eu](http://Badatelna.eu) and [Portafortium.de](http://Portafortium.de). Some of the records are in German and others are in Czech.

The German agencies were the slowest in digitizing their birth, marriage and death civil records. But in recent years there are now more available online records. Some are available on [Ancestry.com](http://Ancestry.com) and [Archion.de](http://Archion.de).

DNA testing has also aided in my ancestry research. DNA matching with distant cousins often leads to information on their family tree's that correlates to our family trees.

The Family History section of the book begins with our German Ancestors who were the first to immigrate to this country in the mid 1830's. Our Austrian, French and Italian ancestors began their immigration in the mid 1860's.

This book is dedicated to:  
My parents Emil and Leonore (Daube) Bruno,  
Family members who served in the Military, and  
the 70 family members who perished in the Holocaust of WWII.

## CHAPTER 1: EMIGRATION:

Our Family Story begins with our ancestors' journeys from villages in Germany, western Bohemia (Austria), northeast France, and the mountain towns in southern Italy. More than likely they traveled by wagons and trains to the busy seaports of Bremen and Hamburg, Germany; Le Havre, France; Naples and Genoa, Italy.

Before the emigrants could board the crowded ships leaving for America they had to pass various physical exams to ensure a certain level of health before embarking. This was to prevent the spread of disease while on board as well as to prevent diseases from being carried to American ports.

It was mainly the husband, the father or an elder son that first ventured to America hoping to make enough money to send back home to bring over the rest of the family.

Up until the 1850s, most emigrants traveled on sailing ships, with an average voyage lasting 43 days. Steamships, which made sailing ships obsolete by the end of the 1870s, shortened the voyage to 12-14 days. Steamships began replacing sailing ships as early as 1850, although some emigrants continued to choose sailing ships for nearly thirty years because of their cheaper fares. The last sailing ship left Hamburg in 1879.

The voyage contained a variety of trials including sea-sickness, inadequate food, lack of privacy, cramped living quarters, lack of fresh air, and spreading illnesses. During storms the doors were latched closed, leaving passengers with little light or fresh air.

After many weeks on crowded ships, the emigrants must have felt relief, hope, and uncertainty with their first glimpses of their new homeland.

Political turmoil and poverty, were the overriding reasons families left their European villages during the mid-1800's to look for a better life for their families.

Our emigrant ancestors shared these same reasons with their fellow emigrants as reflected in some of the stories listed below:

- You are searching for an improved standard of living in over crowded towns ...this probably was the story of the **Johann and Katrina Schelter Family** from Bavaria, Germany and for **Adam Feis & Marie Schaefer** of Oldenburg, Germany.
- You have had an argument with your father after buying your brother a new suit from the proceeds of the sale of cattle at market ...this is the story of **Leopold Hutter** from Bohemia, Austria.
- You are told that in 48 hours you are going to be arrested for your political beliefs ...this is the story of **Justus Daube and Regina Hoffmann** from Frankenberg, Germany.
- Your husband has died and you are now worried that your sons will be conscripted into the Prussian army ...this is the story of **Jeanette Blum** from Quatzenheim, France.
- You are hoping that America will provide new job opportunities for your children who are now young adults ...this is the story of **Vito Aiello and Filomena Capaccio** from Campagna, Italy.
- You have buried your wife and you have 4 young children to support in a small mountain town where jobs are scarce ...this is the story of **Salvatore Bruno** from Civita, Italy.

## CHAPTER 2: IMMIGRATION:

Our ancestors' immigrated through the port city of New York. Most of the families stayed in New York. The Blum family from France first settled in Wheeling, WV and then moved across the Ohio River to Bellaire, OH.

In New York before 1855 there was no central immigration processing center. The shipping company presented a passenger list to the Collector of Customs, and the immigrants made whatever Customs declaration was necessary and went on their way. Most of the U.S. immigrant ships arrived in New York at any number of scattered docks. There was virtually no assistance for new immigrants as they came ashore.

From August, 1855 through April, 1890 they came through Castle Garden, New York (also known as Castle Clinton). It is an island off the southwest tip of Manhattan. Immigration was under the jurisdiction of New York State.

At the Castle Garden Processing Center, immigrants reported their names and destinations. Government officials informed them that in Castle Gardens they could purchase train tickets, exchange money, seek out directions, learn about employment opportunities, etc. Immigrants could also sleep on the floor there for a couple of nights until they got their bearings.

Starting in 1882 the reception of immigrants was handled as a joint State/Federal system. In 1890, the Treasury Department assumed total control of immigration at the Port of New York. The New York State authorities refused to allow the federal government to use the Castle Garden facilities.

The Federal government then constructed a new immigration station on Ellis Island in New York. "*Annie Moore, a 15 year old Irish girl, accompanied by her two brothers entered history and a new country as she was the very first immigrant to be processed at Ellis Island on January 2, 1892.*" Over the next 62 years more than 12 million immigrants followed in her footsteps.

In the 1890's Immigrants had to show that they had \$5.00 to enter the ports of New York and Boston. Passengers could enter through the port of Baltimore for a bit less.

Not all immigrants fared well in their new home. Some U.S. scholars believe that as many as 25% of immigrants returned to their home country. Many persons returned to their home countries on a temporary basis. During the depression of the 1930s there were actually more people leaving the US than entering the country.

## **Chapter 3: THE NEW YORK NEIGHBORHOODS:**

### **A. THE GERMAN:**

From the 1600's to the late 1800's, Germany had the largest number of immigrants to the United States. In the 1830's, 23% of the half million immigrants were Germans. In the 1860's 34% of the 2 million immigrants were Germans. By 1855 New York had the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest German population in the world after Berlin and Vienna. Many Germans were educated and had marketable skills as bakers, cabinet makers, construction workers, machinists etc.

In the 1880's The Prussians lived in the city's 10<sup>th</sup> ward: the Hessians lived in the 11<sup>th</sup> ward and 17<sup>th</sup> ward; the Badens lived in the 13<sup>th</sup> ward, the Wurttembergers lived in the 17<sup>th</sup> ward, The Bavarians lived in all of the German wards (except for the 10<sup>th</sup> where the Prussians lived). These wards surrounded Tompkins Square, which at one time had a Bier Garten, libraries, shooting clubs, theaters, schools, German churches, etc. For many immigrants, the first floor of their home was their business; the basement was the workshop, and the second floor was their home.

Little Germany included an area in the Lower East side of Manhattan. Later on many families moved to the Yorkville area of Manhattan (Upper East side from E 79<sup>th</sup> to 96<sup>th</sup> St, and W. Third Ave to the East River.)

### **B. THE ITALIAN:**

Early immigrants from Italy were recorded in the late 1600's. With the founding of the Kingdom of Italy around 1860, Italian immigration swelled. Most immigrants were from southern Italy, Sicily, Naples, etc. The large number of Italian immigrants continued until 1921 when Congress passed the Emergency Quota Act slowing down the immigration rates.

Many Italian immigrants opened up Fruit and Vegetable stores, or were employed as brick layers or stone masons.

In 1930, about 89,000 Italians lived in tenements from 96th Street to 125 Street East of Lexington Avenue in Manhattan, NY. *"In Italian Harlem there was on East 112th Street, a settlement from Bari; on East 107th Street between First Avenue and the East River, people from Sarno near Naples, on East 100th Street between First and Second Avenues, Sicilians from Santiago; on East 100th Street, many Northern Italians from Pisco; and on East 109th Street, a large settlement of Calabrians."*

(Note: As written by historian Gerald Meyer in an article called "Manhattan's one-time biggest Little Italy". [www.epheremalnewyork.wordpress.com](http://www.epheremalnewyork.wordpress.com))

### **C. THE BOHEMIAN (AUSTRIAN):**

The first major immigration wave occurred in 1848 when the Bohemian "Forty Eighters" fled to the United States to escape political persecution by the Hapsburgs. The oldest significant Bohemian colony in the United States is in New York, which by 1854 had about 40 families.

By the late 1850s there were an estimated 10,000 Bohemians living in the United States. By 1870, cities with Bohemian immigrants included Chicago, St. Louis, Cleveland, New York, and Milwaukee. Another large wave of Bohemians migration to America occurred in the late 1800s and early 1900s, when Mid-western farmland was widely available at low prices.

Most Bohemian emigrants journeyed to the United States with their families, as compared to other groups who tended to come over individually. Many of the Bohemian immigrants were butchers or cigar makers.

The Bohemian Benevolent and Literary Association (BBLA), established in 1891 in New York, was founded as an umbrella organization representing approximately eighty Czech and Slovak cultural, educational and athletic community groups and clubs. With contributions from the newly arrived

immigrants, the Bohemian National Hall (Narodni Budova) was built four years later as a gathering place for these organizations in the Yorkville section on Manhattan's Upper East Side.

### **E. THE FRENCH:**

French settlement in the United States began during the age of exploration and colonization of the seventeenth century in Louisiana, and intensified with the expulsion from France of the Huguenots or French Protestants during the eighteenth century. Among France's most skilled artisans, the Huguenots were well-educated members of the wealthy middle class. Their departure crippled the French economy but led to the creation of prosperous settlements at New Rochelle, Staten Island, Harlem, and New Paltz in what would become the state of New York.

The loss of the French province of Alsace-Lorraine to Germany in 1871 increased the number of French Alsatians, particularly French Jews, who immigrated to the United States. Many of the young men left that area due to forced conscription into the French and Prussian Armies during the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871).

### **C. THE JEWISH:**

Jewish immigrants arrived in New York City as early as the mid 1600's from Brazil to escape the inquisition. Most Jewish families that emigrated from Europe in the next 300 years were fleeing their homelands due to religious persecution and Wars.

By the mid 1850's there were many communal aid societies that had formed. In 1859 the Hebrew Benevolent and Orphan Asylum Society was formed. In 1852 the Jews' Hospital was formed and opened by philanthropist, Sampson Simson to aid the rapidly growing Jewish population in Manhattan. It was later to be renamed the well known Mt. Sinai Hospital in 1871.

In 1654 there were 23 residents in New York. In 1850 there were 16,000 residents and in 1880 there were 80,000 Jewish residents in New York City. Many emigrants left Germany and France during the Franco-Prussian War.

Throughout the United States in the 1800's thousands of Jewish Immigrants met with financial success in the retail business. Their businesses were well suited to an economy that was transitioning to a market economy of peddling and shop ownership.

Many of the **Blum** relatives from Quatzenheim, Neuwiller-les-Saverne and Westhoffen Alsace France were retailers, manufacturers, or importers of clothing and general merchandise.

**Isaac Blum and Brothers:** Dry Goods Store - Wheeling, WV and Philadelphia, PA (Isaac, Gustave, Moses, Emanuel, Gabriel & Ralph)

**Blum Brothers Store:** Clothing Store - Philadelphia, PA (Isaac, Gabriel & Ralph)

**Blum Textile Corp.:** Manhattan, NY (Emanuel & son Milton Centennial Blum) They manufactured undergarments.

**Henry & Isaac Blum:** Dry Goods and Home Furnishings - Bellaire, OH. (Henry, Isaac, Ralph and Maurice,

**Julius Weil:** Merchant - Bellaire, OH.

**Julius Schwob:** Dry Goods merchant - Bellaire, OH.

**Paul Blum:** Importer - San Francisco and Kobe, Japan

**Isaac Blum:** Dry Goods Merchant and then a Lime manufacturer. - Santa Cruz, & San Francisco, CA

**Simon & Gabriel Blum:** Retail Merchants - Martinez, CA

**Camille Elikan:** General Merchandise - Long Beach, CA.

## CHAPTER 4: MILITARY SERVICE AND MEMORIALS:

### REVOLUTIONARY WAR

The **Daube** Family had its first presence in America in 1776 when a distant relative from Frankenberg, Germany, **Philipp Daube** (born 1750), served in 1783 as part of the Hessian troops during the Revolutionary War. He was Fusilier in the von Ditfurth Regiment.

There was also a **Jakob Mentzler** (b.1735-d.1778) who in 1775 was a Fusilier in the Von Ditfurth Regiment, and then in 1778 he was a Grenadier in the von Minnegorde Batallion. He died of non-battle causes. It was probably his son, **Wilhelm Mentzler** (b.1764) who in 1777 at age 12 was the Piper in the von Minnegorde Batallion. Records also show that in 1783, at age 18, he was also a Piper.

The British purchased the services of 30,000 German soldiers for \$150,000 during the American Revolution. There were around 18,000 Hessian troops that were sent by the German Princes as part of a compact with the English Empire. After the War, a document signed by John Hancock, allowed these men to stay in America. Only 15% remained in America and the rest returned to Germany. Records of these soldiers are kept in Marburg, Hesse, Germany.

<https://www.lagis-hessen.de/en/subjects/index/sn/hetrina>

### CIVIL WAR

The Confederate army began drafting soldiers in 1862 and the Union army in 1863. Most soldiers did not care about the fight for slavery or secession, they just wanted to take care of their families.

In the Civil War archives there are letters from soldiers to their families that describe camps being in poor condition, that many men were ill and disheartened, that they had very little food, and that they didn't have any change of clothing.

Desertion was quite a problem. It is estimated that over 200,000 men deserted from the Union Army and about 104,000 from the Confederate Army. The most common reasons were unfavorable temperatures, hunger, homesickness, lack of pay, lack of leadership, illness, and fear of battle. The punishment for desertion could be the death penalty, but it was rarely carried out mainly because the soldiers were needed to fight.

1. **Johann, John B. and Adam Schelter**, sons of Johann and Katrina Schelter, were soldiers in the Union Army during the Civil War as described in Schelter Family Section. **Johann** was in Company U, 75<sup>th</sup> Infantry; **John B.** served in Company U, 16<sup>th</sup> Artillery Heavy; and **Adam** served in Virginia with Company E, of the 158<sup>th</sup> Infantry as a private.

There were 72 men who enlisted at the same time as **Adam Schelter** in August 1862. The commanding officer of the 158<sup>th</sup> Infantry was Colonel James Jourdan of the First Regiment of the Empire Brigade. They were first stationed at Camp Viele in Portsmouth, VA in Sept 1862, then at Suffolk, VA in Nov 1862, and then New Berne, NC in Jan 1863.

2. **Jacob Feis** (1844-1922) was 17 years old when he enlisted in 1861 as a Private in Company B, of the 25<sup>th</sup> regiment of the New York Infantry. In 1863 he re-enlisted as a seaman and served in the military until 1870.

## WORLD WAR I

1. **John A. Daube** (b.1896, Brooklyn) served as a Private in the US Army in the 23rd Infantry, New York Company B, from August 1917 to January 1918. His record stated he was 21 years old, born in Brooklyn, and lived in Woodhaven, Queens, NY. He was the son of Wilhem and Catherine Daube.

2. **Jacob (Jack) Hutter** (b.1897, Bohemia) served as a private with the 107th Infantry of the National Guard from 1917-1919. He was the son of Samuel Hutter and Regina Hauser Hutter.

3. **Albert V. Aiello** (1896-1973) He served in the Army from July 1918- July 1919. He was stationed at Camp Johnston, FL. and then went overseas. He is buried in Long Island National Cemetery in Farmingdale, NY. He was the son of Tom Aiello and Carmela Cestaro.

## WORLD WAR II

1. **Anthony Bruno** (b.1918, NY) was drafted in 1946 into the US Army of Occupation in South Korea working in the Postal unit. He was the son of Andrea Bruno and Rosa Aiello Bruno.

2. **John Bruno** (b.1920, NY) was drafted into the US Army Air Corps on January 29, 1942 at Camp Upton, Yaphank, NY as a Private. He served in Africa, Italy, and Indo-China. He was discharged from the service in 1945 as a Tec 5, and is buried at Calverton National Cemetery in New York. He was the son of Andrea Bruno and Rosa Aiello Bruno.

3. **Emil Bruno** (b.1922, NY) was drafted into the US Army at the Camp Upton in Yaphank, NY in August 1943. He was sent to Miami, FL for training as a flight cadet where he was quartered at the Cavalier Hotel. After 2 months he was assigned to anti submarine work in the Air corps reserves at Columbia University Airborne Instruments. In May of 1944 he was sent to Fort Dix Army Airbase in New Jersey where he was reassigned to the Air Corps. He was the son of Andrea Bruno and Rosa Aiello Bruno.

As part of the Army Air Corp he trained as an Aerial Radio Operator and Gunner at the following military bases:

- Keesler Base in Biloxi, MS where he had basic military training
- Sioux Falls AFB in South Dakota where he trained as an airborne radio operator.
- Lincoln AFB in Nebraska for transition.
- Yuma Arizona Army Airfield for B17 gunnery training.
- Westover Field, Springfield, Mass for assignment to Europe on B-24s. War ended in Europe - assignment ended.- sent to B-29 training.
- Davis-Monthan AFB in Tucson, AZ where he trained on the B-29 Bomber for assignment to Japan war zone. Japan surrendered.
- Pratt AFB in Kansas, Trained for "good will" flights from Germany to fly over Russia - Ruskie said "No Way" That ended that.
- Fort Leavenworth, Kansas for discharge from the Air Force and then back to home in 1946 .

During WW II, **Rose** Bruno lovingly wrote letters to her sons, Emil and John, who were serving in the Army.

5. **Alexander Aiello** (1915- 1971, NY). He enlisted in the Army in 1942 as a Private. He is buried in Long Island National Cemetery in Farmingdale, NY. He was the son of Tom Aiello and Carmela Cestaro.

6. **Albert Aiello:** (1907-1981, Scranton, PA) . He enlisted into the army in 1942, and served until 1945. He was the son of Liberato Aiello and Margaret Mugno Aiello from Scranton, PA

7. **James (Giacomo Aiello** (1924-1908, B. New Haven, CT). He served in the Army from 1943 until 1945. He was the son of Gentile Aiello and Santina Florio Aiello.

8. **Thomas J Aiello** (1914-1977, NY). He enlisted in the Army n 1942 . He was the son of Frank Aiello and Fanny Rose Aiello.

9. **Arthur Aiello** (1907-1995, NY) He enlisted in the Army in June of 1942. He was the son of Liberato Aiello and Mamie Rose.

10. **John Vicat Daube** (b.1919) enlisted at age 20 in the Army Air Corp of the regular Army in New York City on Oct 7, 1940. He enlisted for the Panama Canal Dept. On Dec 12, 1941 he sailed on the USS Chateau Thierry for Reykjavik, Iceland. He was the son of John A. Daube and Margaret Vicat Daube.

11 **Alice Loop Daube** enlisted in the Women's Army Corp as a Private in Elmira, NY on Feb 1, 1944. She released out of the Army on July 2, 1945. She was the daughter of Arthur Loop and Mattie Smith Loop.

12. **Elmer W Reeves** (1907-1987) served from Mar 1943 to Dec 1945. He served on the SS President Johnson out of San Francisco as a Lieutenant, Junior Grade. They toured to Milne Bay, New Guinea. He was the son of Ignatius Reeves and Johanna Reeves.

13. **William J. Daube** (1914-1988, NY) enlisted in the Army as a Private in June of 1942. He was a Police Captain in Freeport, LI, NY. He was the son of William E. Daube and Lillian Brown Daube.

14. **Robert W. Daube** (1923-1998, NY) served in the Coast Guard from Dec 1942 to Apr 1946. He was the son of William E. Daube and Lillian Brown Daube.

15. **Ruth Alma Daube** (1928-2001) served in the Nursing Corps Cadets. She was the daughter of Edward Daube and Ruth Wescott.

16. **Harry M. Daube** (1921-2015) served in the U.S. Coast. He was on the USS Leopold when it was sunk on March 9, 1944 by a torpedo from a German U-boat while escorting a 27-ship convoy off the coast of Iceland. Out of over 200 men there were only 28 men that survived. In June 2010 in New Smyrna Beach, FL when Harry was 88 years old, he was presented a Purple Heart. At the time he was the last living survivor of the ship. He was the son of Harry E. Daube & Sara Jane Magale.

The Purple Heart is the oldest military decoration in the world in present use and the first American award made available to the common soldier. The Purple Heart award was established by General George Washington in Newburgh N.Y. on August 7, 1782.

#### **OTHER SERVICE:**

1. **John Raymond Shelter** was 20 years old when he entered the US Military Academy in July 1950. He graduated June 3, 1954. He was promoted to 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant and records indicate he was in the service until 1957. He is buried at the US Military Academy West Point Cemetery. He was the son of Raymond P. Shelter and Marion Hitzel Shelter.

2. **Arthur Percy Daube** (1932-2010) enlisted in the US Navy at age 19 and served in the Koren War until 1953. He was trained as a Naval Aviation Electrician.

3. **Alexander J. Daube** (1932-2005) served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War (1953-1955). He was the son of Alexander A. Daube & Helen Meister.

4. **Alexander J. Daube, Jr.** (b.1958) served in the US Airforce starting in 1976. He was the son of Alexander J. Daube & Charlotte Muller.

5. **John August Daube II** served as a Hospital Corpsman in the Navy during the Vietnam War. He is the son of John Vicat Daube & Alice Loop.

## **WORLD WAR II HOLOCAUST MEMORIALS**

Most of the French **Blum** and **Joseph** family members that were still in France in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had moved from their small Alsatian villages to the cities. Any Jewish residents still living in the villages and cities during the early 1940's were transported to and perished in the Nazi concentration camps in Poland.

The Shoah Memorial in Paris France recognizes the family members who perished in the concentration camps: **Blum, Behr, Levy, Kahn, Metzger, Hoemel.**

**Any Hutter, Beck and Mahrer** family members who stayed in the western Bohemia cities and villages of the Czech Republic were also transported and perished in the concentration camps of the Czech Republic, Germany and Poland.

The Pinkas Synagogue in Prague has a permanent exhibition that includes 4,500 pictures, drawn by the children imprisoned in Theresienstadt, that were hidden in the concentration CAMP. A wall in the synagogue also has a list of Holocaust victims.

There were at least 50 family members perished in the concentration camps: **Beck, Hutter, Mahrer, Schleissner, Sucharipa, Epstein. Bloch.**