


Okinawan Game Changer –

Okinawan Migration Record Database

沖縄県系移民渡航記録データベース

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Target Audience

- People with ancestors from Okinawa who are seeking koseki family registers from Japanese municipal offices
- For background on how to request koseki, please refer to 3-part series from RootsTech 2022

(<https://www.familysearch.org/rootstech/series/how-to-request-japanese-koseki-family-registers>)

Okinawa Background

Okinawa Geography

Ryūkyū Islands (琉球諸島) – Broad definition – stretching from Kyūshū (九州) in north to Taiwan (台灣) in south

- ~~Ōsumi Islands (大隅諸島)~~
- ~~Tokara Islands (吐噶喇列島)~~
- ~~Amami Islands (奄美群島)~~
- Okinawa Islands (沖縄諸島)
- Miyako Islands (宮古列島)
- Yaeyama Islands (八重山列島)
- Daitō Islands (大東諸島)
- Senkaku Islands (尖閣諸島)



沖縄の市 (Okinawa Cities)

那覇市 (Naha-shi)

沖縄市 (Okinawa-shi)

うるま市 (Uruma-shi)

浦添市 (Urasoe-shi)

宜野湾市 (Ginowan-shi)

名護市 (Nago-shi)

豊見城市 (Tomigusuku-shi)

糸満市 (Itoman-shi)

宮古島市 (Miyakojima-shi)*

石垣市 (Ishigaki-shi)*

南城市 (Nanjō-shi)

*Not on main island of
Okinawa

沖縄の町 (Okinawa Towns)

南風原町 (Haebaru-chō)	本部町 (Motobu-chō)
西原町 (Nishihara-chō)	金武町 (Kin-chō)
八重瀬町 (Yaese-chō)	久米島町 (Kumejima-chō)*
北谷町 (Chatan-chō)	竹富町 (Taketomi-chō)*
与那原町 (Yonabaru-chō)	与那国町 (Yonaguni-chō)*
嘉手納町 (Kadena-chō)	

*Not on main island of
Okinawa

沖縄の村† (Okinawa Villages)

† 村 read as “-son” in Okinawa, instead of typical “-mura”

読谷村 (Yomitan-son)

中城村 (Nakagusuku-son)

北中城村 (Kitanakagusuku-son)

恩納村 (Onna-son)

今帰仁村 (Nakijin-son)

宜野座村 (Ginoza-son)

国頭村 (Kunigami-son)

伊江村 (Ie-son)*

大宜味村 (Ōgimi-son)

東村 (Higashi-son)

伊是名村 (Izena-son)*

南大東村 (Minamidaitō-son)*

伊平屋村 (Iheya-son)*

多良間村 (Tarama-son)*

座間味村 (Zamami-son)*

粟国村 (Aguni-son)*

渡嘉敷村 (Tokashiki-son)*

北大東村 (Kitadaitō-son)*

渡名喜村 (Tonaki-son)*

*Not on main island of Okinawa

Okinawa History

- Unified Ryūkyū Kingdom – 1429
- Satsuma Invasion – 1609
 - Independent country
 - Tributary to China
 - Vassal to Japan
 - Considerable trade during closure of Japan to outside
- Okinawa Prefecture established – 1879 (other prefectures in 1872)
 - Annexation
 - Policy of elimination of Ryūkyūan culture, language, religion

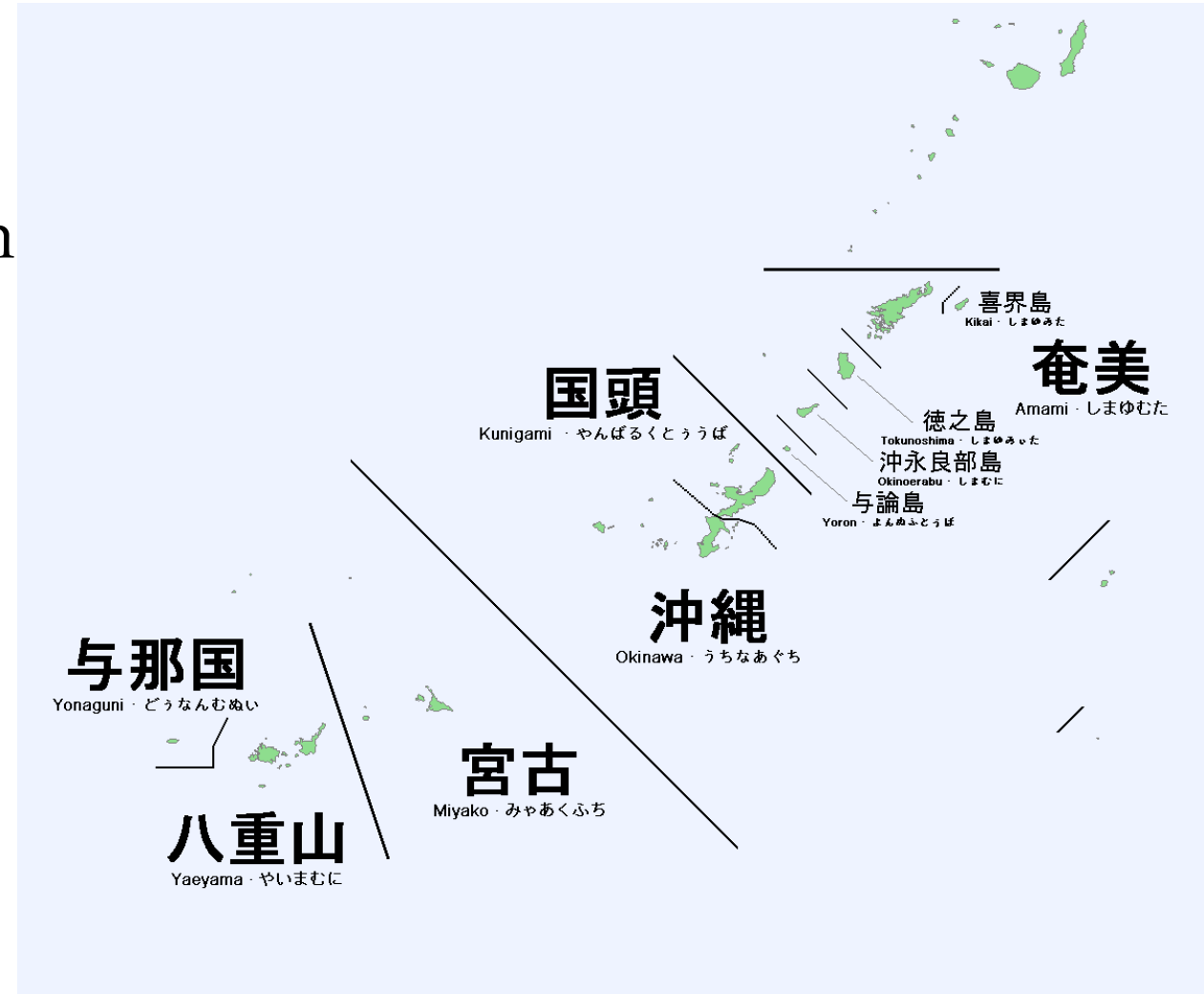
Okinawa History

- Battle of Okinawa – April 1 to June 22, 1945
 - 1/3 of civilian population killed (300,000 people)
 - U.S. Military Occupation – 1945 to 1950
 - U.S. Civil Occupation – 1950 to 1972
- U.S. Military Presence
 - 75% of U.S. military forces in Japan are located in Okinawa
 - 18% of the main island of Okinawa under U.S. military control

Ryukyuan Languages

Lumped in Japonic language family, but Japanese and Ryukyuan languages are not mutually intelligible. Ryukyuan languages also not mutually intelligible with each other.

- Amami (奄美)
- Kunigami (国頭)
- Okinawa (沖縄)
- Miyako (宮古)
- Yaeyama (八重山)
- Yonaguni (与那国)



Different Surnames

Japan (日本)	Hiroshima (広島)	Okinawa (沖縄)
佐藤 (Satō)	山本 (Yamamoto)	比嘉 (Higa)
鈴木 (Suzuki)	藤井 (Fujii)	金城 (Kinjō)
高橋 (Takahashi)	田中 (Tanaka)	大城 (Ōshiro)
田中 (Tanaka)	高橋 (Takahashi)	宮城 (Miyagi)
渡辺 (Watanabe)	村上 (Murakami)	新垣 (Aragaki)
伊藤 (Itō)	佐藤 (Satō)	玉城 (Tamashiro)
山本 (Yamamoto)	佐々木 (Sasaki)	上原 (Uehara)
中村 (Nakamura)	中村 (Nakamura)	島袋 (Shimabukuro)
小林 (Kobayashi)	井上 (Inoue)	平良 (Taira)
加藤 (Katō)	岡田 (Okada)	山城 (Yamashiro)

Okinawan Cultural/Historical Factors Affecting Family History

- Favoring
 - Ryukyuan religion – indigenous animism and ancestor worship
 - Influence of Chinese recordkeeping – some Okinawa family records can trace back to BCE China
- Opposing
 - Destruction of records in World War II
 - Some reconstruction of destroyed records (koseki, etc.) in 1950s, but many were not

Okinawan Migration Record Database

Joint effort

- Okinawa Prefectural Library (Naha, Okinawa, Japan)
- Okinawan Genealogical Society of Hawaii (Mililani, Hawaii)
- Center for Okinawa Migration Studies (Nishihara, Okinawa, Japan)

Initiated in 2000 by Okinawa Genealogical Society of Hawaii – gradual addition and translation of records. Some additional work to be done.

Based on migration records from the Diplomatic Archives of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Why is the Okinawan Migration Record Database a “Game Changer”?

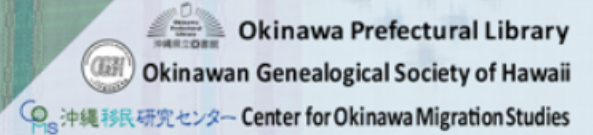
- Based upon Japanese emigration records instead of non-Japanese immigration records
- Open internet access instead of limited archive access
- Indexed data instead of microfilm images
- Emigration to multiple countries
- Search capabilities in English, Japanese, Portuguese, and Spanish
- Provides 本籍地 (honsekichi “permanent residence”) – key information for requesting koseki documents
- Sets an important precedent for the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other prefectures

Okinawan Migration Record Database

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Okinawan Migration Record Database



検索

Search

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Pesquisar

Okinawan Migration Record Database 1900-1937

This database was developed in a joint collaboration with the [Okinawa Prefectural Library \(OPL\) in Naha](#), [Okinawa Genealogical Society of Hawaii \(OGSH\)](#), and [Center for Okinawa Migration Studies \(COMS\)](#) to enable Okinawan people around the world to discover their roots and promote, preserve and perpetuate the Okinawan culture.

You can search the 50,000 emigration records from 1900 to 1937 of Okinawans who ventured from Okinawa to all over the world.

The travel record data is based on the books "Okinawa Prefectural Historical Materials: Modern 5 (Immigratino List I), which is an excerpt from the "Overseas Passport Subscript" held by Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.

OPL provides an additional research by using other resources.

Visit [1st Generation Immigration Genealogical Reference Service](#) for more details.

About this Database

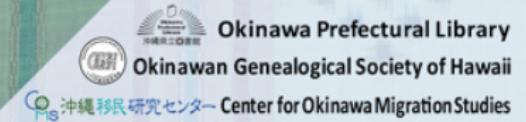
Resources

Okinawan Migration Record Database

沖縄県系移民渡航記録データベース

沖縄県系移民渡航記録データベース

Okinawan Migration Record Database



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Okinawan Emigrants

Last Name (required) First Search for Last Name only (try 1st 2 letters only!)

First Name (required) Then pick from available First Names in list.

Birth Year ##### Do Not use Birth Year & Address until full name is found!

Okinawa Address

Destination Country

Please enter your immigrant's last and first names. You can use their English or kanji names. Partial names are acceptable. As there are multiple English readings of kanji, you will have better results entering their kanji if you know them. The address can be a partial entry of the city, town, village or house number. Birth year searched will be between the previous and next entered year. If you do not know the birth year, you can try obtaining a death certificate from the Board of Health or locating their headstones and urns at the cemetery.

[English Search Tutorial](#)

[Kanji Search Tutorial](#)

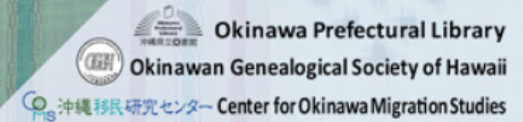
[You can request assistance from our Genealogical Reference Service](#)

Okinawan Migration Record Database

沖縄県系移民渡航記録データベース

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Okinawan Emigrants

Last Name (required)	<input type="text" value="Higa"/>	First Search for Last Name only (try 1st 2 letters only!)
First Name (required)	<input type="text" value="Ushi"/>	Then pick from available First Names in list.
Birth Year	<input type="text"/>	#### Do Not use Birth Year & Address until full name is found!
Okinawa Address	<input type="text"/>	
Destination Country	<input type="text" value="v"/>	
<div><input type="button" value="Search"/> <input type="button" value="Clear"/></div>		

Please enter your immigrant's last and first names. You can use their English or kanji names. Partial names are acceptable. As there are multiple English readings of kanji, you will have better results entering their kanji if you know them. The address can be a partial entry of the city, town, village or house number. Birth year searched will be between the previous and next entered year. If you do not know the birth year, you can try obtaining a death certificate from the Board of Health or locating their headstones and urns at the cemetery.

[English Search Tutorial](#)

[Kanji Search Tutorial](#)

[You can request assistance from our Genealogical Reference Service](#)


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Immigration Records 1900-1937

Okinawan Migration Record Database 沖縄県系移民渡航記録データベース

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Okinawan Migration Record Database



Okinawa Prefectural Library
Okinawan Genealogical Society of Hawaii
沖縄移民研究センター Center for Okinawa Migration Studies

[New Search](#)

Found: 139

If you found someone and see a number under the [View Relatives] column, click on it! Otherwise, click [Show]


	Last Name	First Name	Destination Country	Birth Date	Age	Sex	Travel Date	Passport Date	Relationship	Travel Purpose	Registered Domicile	House Number	View Relatives	Show All Info	Record #
1	Higa 比嘉	Ushi ウシ	America アメリカ	1869 (est) n/a	54 yr 10 mn 54歳 10ヶ月	M		1924-04- 02 1924年4月2日	Household Head 戸主	Repeat Trip 再	Nakagami-gun Nakagusuku-mura Aza-Tomari	273	1	Show	33208
2	Higa 比嘉	Ushi ウシ	America アメリカ	1896 (est) n/a	18 yr 04 mn 18歳 4ヶ月	F		1915-02- 18 1915年2月18日	Non-Household Head Kana's 加那 Wife 非戸主加那妻	Husband's Yobiyose 夫ノ呼寄	Nakagami-gun Nishihara-son Aza-Kochi	1076	2	Show	21375
3	Higa 比嘉	Ushi ウシ	Brazil ブラジル	1867-11-08 1867年11月8日	44 yr 05 mn 44歳 5月	F	1912-03-10 1912年3月10日	1912-02-13 1912年2月13日	Wife 妻	Agriculture 農業	Shimajiri-gun Ozato-son Aza-Inamine	910	3	Show	10013
4	Higa 比嘉	Ushi ウシ	Brazil ブラジル	1868-10-04 1868年10月4日	44 yr 44歳	F	1912-03-03 1912年3月3日	1912-02-14 1912年2月14日	Wife 妻	Agriculture Labor 農事労働	Unknown (不明)			Show	10528

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Okinawa Prefectural Library



Okinawan Genealogical Society of Hawaii



沖縄移民研究センター Center for Okinawa Migration Studies

New Search

These people were living at the SAME address and are probably related - study the [Relationship] column.
Also realize that there may others relatives living nearby as determined by the proximity of house numbers.
If this is your family you should click [Show] to see the travel record.

	Last Name	First Name	Destination Country	Birth Date	Age	Sex	Travel Date	Passport Date	Relationship	Travel Purpose	Registered Domicile	House Number	View Relatives	Record #
1	Higa 比嘉	Ushi 牛	America アメリカ	1869 (est) n/a	54 yr 10 mn 54歳 10ヶ月	M		1924-04-02 1924年4月2日	Household Head 戸主	Repeat Trip 再	Nakagami-gun Nakagusuku-mura Aza-Tomari 中頭郡中城村字泊二七三	273	Show	33208
2	Higa 比嘉	Ryoju 良重	Philippines フィリピン	1910-03-01 1910年3月1日	17 yr 17歳	M		1927-10-31 1927年10月31日	Household Head Ushi's 牛 Grandson 戸主牛孫	Farming 農	Nakagami-gun Nakagusuku-mura Aza-Tomari 中頭郡中城村字泊二七三	273	Show	36069

New Search

Immigration Records 1900-1937

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 Okinawa Prefectural Library
 Okinawan Genealogical Society of Hawaii
 沖縄移民研究センター Center for Okinawa Migration Studies

New SearchPrint

Last Name, First Name:	Higa, Ushi	比嘉, 牛
Last Name Transcription:	Fija Higa	
Birth Year:	1869-06 (estimated from Age and Passport and/or Travel Dates)	
Age:	54 yr 10 mn	54歳10ヶ月
Sex:	M (inferred from Relationship below)	
Relationship:	Household Head	戸主
Passport Number:	223205	二二三二〇五
Passport Date:	1924-04-02	1924年4月2日
Travel Date:		
Travel Purpose:	Repeat Trip	再
Travel Approval Authority:	Kanagawa Prefecture	神奈川県
Travel Company:		
Travel Company Location:		
Home Prefecture:	Okinawa-ken	沖縄県
Registered Domicile:	Nakagami-gun Nakagusuku-mura Aza-Tomari	中頭郡中城村字泊二七三
House Number:	273	
Port of Departure:		
Ship Name:		
Destination Country:	America	アメリカ
Destination City:	USA	米国
Destination Area:		
Reference Source Volume Page:	Okinawa Kenshi Shiryohen 1912-1926 Vol: 19 Page: 220	資料編19 220
Voyage Number:		
Record #:	33208	

In the [Travel Purpose] field above, you may see "Yobiyoze" which means "Summoning". This means a person already in the country has petitioned the immigration authorities to allow a spouse, family member, relative or even a friend to join him/her. "Household Head" is the patrilineal head (male) of a group of families. The Passport Number is not unique. An individual could be issued a different number on a repeat trip. Also an entire family can travel under one passport number so it may appear that passport numbers are duplicated.

Other Okinawa Sources

- Okinawan Migration Record Database (Okinawa Prefectural Library)
 - <https://opl.okinawan-migration.com/main.php>
- Okinawa Genealogical Society of Hawaii
 - <https://ogsh.warubozo.com/home/>
 - Genealogical resources
(<https://lewchew.warubozo.com/main.php>)
 - Research support
(<https://ogsh.warubozo.com/contact/>)

Contacts

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(<https://www.facebook.com/martinus.wolf.1>)
- Japanese Family History (日本の家族歴史)
Facebook Group
(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1076993109374556>)

