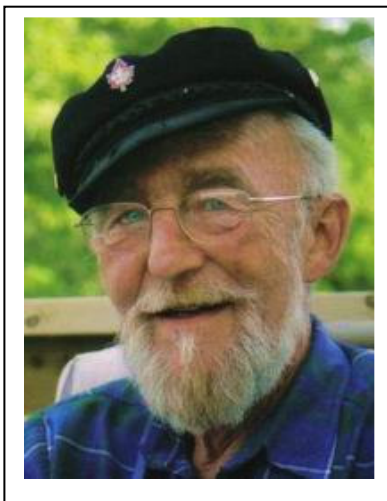


### Ellis Island



Family History researchers who had ancestors (or siblings of ancestors) who emigrated from Europe to the United States were extremely excited with the news that the records of the Ellis Island Immigration Station in New York were being placed on-line.

A bit of history is in order, however. Prior to 1890, immigration was regulated by the individual states and the Battery (aka Castle Garden) served as New York's immigration station from about 1855 to 1890, processing about eight million immigrants. The dramatic increase of immigration in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, coupled with increasing incompetence and corruption, led the Federal Government to take over the function and it opened a new wooden structure on Ellis Island on 1 Jan 1892.

In 1897 (14 June) this structure was burned to the ground and all the immigration records from 1855 to that date were lost. So it is important to note that there are no records of entry at that port prior to 1897. The new stone built facility opened in 1900 and their records up until 1924 are the ones that are now available. We will deal with Castle Garden records in another column.

There were some initial difficulties with searching the database but the system is now very user friendly and should not pose a problem to anyone with a computer and internet connection.

In order to search the data, go to: < <http://www.ellislandrecords.org/search/passearch.asp?> > . You will have to sign in at an early stage of the process but don't be threatened by this, there is no charge and I have never been bothered by them.

There are two levels of search and I always start with the basic one. The search engine finds everyone that responds to the criteria you gave it (and I usually give only a surname). The spreadsheet that appears provides the name (which is actually a hot link to their passenger record), their residence before sailing, the year of arrival, their age on arrival, and hot links to the ship's manifest, and, if available, to an image of the ship.

The Passenger Record adds their ethnicity, the actual date of their arrival, gender, marital status, the name of the ship, their port of departure, and line number where their name is on the manifest.

This last is important because you can call it up and see if they were travelling alone or with other family members. The manifest page that appears is a photograph of the original and there is a little magnifying glass that you can click on and then click on the page and it will enlarge sufficiently for you to read it.

If the basic search doesn't turn up the person you are looking for, then you can go to the advanced search. The problem is usually with the spelling of the name and in this search you can use "sounds like" and provide some extra information to try to locate that file.

Not everyone from Europe entered the United States through New York, but over twenty-two million did and that was about 80% of the total. A truly great resource for many researchers.

### Mount Royal Cemetery, Montreal

I was delighted to learn that Mount Royal Cemetery, the major non-Catholic cemetery in Montreal, now has an on-line search capability for interments. You can reach them at: [www.mountroyalcem.com](http://www.mountroyalcem.com) and select <Products & Services>, then <Genealogy Research>. Enter the first name or initial and the last name and you will be presented with a list of names with burial dates.

If you want an official record, you can order it on-line for a fee of \$4.00. I have used the site for several searches and was very happy with it.