

Dates & Details: Keep a Genealogy Resource File

When did Saskatchewan become a province, eh? When did Ellis Island, NY, open to process immigrants to the USA? These details about states, provinces, counties and other events, can be overwhelming if you try to remember them all. Don't even try: instead, develop a personalized resource file.

You may need to know when and where your ancestors emigrated to the USA, in order to determine where to research their entry place or their ship arrival. Although you may think you know a great deal about Ellis

Island and immigration, it was used for screening immigrants from these dates only - *January 1, 1892 to 1924*. However, during those years over 400,000 immigrants were screened via the Barge Office (at the tip of Manhattan) in 1891 before the official immigration office was opened. Those dates, 1892-1924, would be useful to have on a handy form, wouldn't they? Before that time, Castle Garden (Castle Clinton) at the southern tip of Manhattan, NY City, was an immigrant receiving center from August 1, 1855-April 18. Search "US immigration, timeline" for information including how to search both Ellis Island and Castle Garden records.



Did your ancestors come to North America from another country? Ireland, for instance? It would help to know the dates of the major famines in Ireland, (search "famines, Ireland") as well as where most emigrating Irish families landed in Canada or the United States. Or, if they crossed the sea to England, where might they have landed there? If you are searching censuses in England, many counties changed boundaries several times, particularly after the 1974 Boundary Changes. But some changed prior to that time. One line of my family lived in the Black Midlands, and their town (Dudley) changed counties several times between Staffordshire and Worcestershire. I was sure that others must have recorded the county incorrectly, until I found an article detailing the various changes in boundaries! Search online for "British counties, changes" and you will find several excellent sites with details.



Did you know that passenger lists were not required to be recorded and filed until 1865 in Canada, 1820 in the USA, 1837 in much of England? In some areas of Germany, some life event registrations began in 1792, others not until 1876, varying by state, and they were not kept in a central repository. This date of "vital statistics" (birth, marriage, death) is highly varied throughout the world. You will need to have these details for each specific place, in order to search successfully.

My **Personal Resource File** includes the following details (*based on my particular ancestors*):

1. Canadian Provinces/Territories, dates of Confederation and Civil Registration - and county maps!
2. Canadian ships passenger lists source (at Library & Archives)
3. Border Crossings dates, and Passport requirements for both US and Canada
4. Canadian land grants periods
5. Specific U.S. States (PA, CT, NY, MA, WA, OR) and county borders, history of formation
6. Immigration dates for Ellis Island, Crystal Garden
7. US cities receiving immigration ships; dates
8. Dates of US wars from 1600-1945
9. UK Civil registrations, where held
10. UK counties, border changes, where to find details
11. The German Palatine emigration paths
12. Blank Census forms used by Canada, USA, & UK



And much more! Pensions, social insurance records, railway historical maps - there is no end to the variety of resources available to help you. I also have old maps of all sorts including of villages, land grants, towns, county borders, plus details of various historical events which might have impacted on my ancestors' lives. All of this makes your research more efficient and accurate, plus these resources will allow you to provide correct citations of the sources you find. Enjoy your research and build up your own helpful personalized Genealogy Resource File!