



# “Decide An Immigrant’s Fate”: Ellis Island Board of Special Inquiry

UNITED STATES IMMIGRATION SERVICE  
PORT OF NEW YORK, ELLIS ISLAND, MARCH 7, 1910

The said William J. McCracken, arriving at the Port of New York on 2nd day in March, 1910. Mr. McCracken completed primary inspection and was detained by the Inspection Division for possible violation of U.S. Immigration Law. The said immigrant is now being examined on this day March 7, 1910 in relation to his right to land in the United States. The details of the immigrant's payment of passage and possible employment are in question. Here are the case details:

**Statistics:** 39 year old male, single, can read and write, born in Ireland in 1871, indicated that passage was paid for by brother, occupation-machinist, has no money, he states that he is meeting his brother Edward in NYC.

**Reason for Detention:** Officials called for brother to be interviewed. A letter from Edward states that he will take William under his wing. He assisted him in sending ticket for passage and promised to help him in finding employment. This differs from intentions listed on ship's passenger list.

<b>Questions:</b> Do you have any money?	No
What work did you do in Ireland?	Machinist
Did you spend all your money?	Yes
Who provided for your passage?	brother
Did your brother contribute anything to the ticket?	yes
What is your brother's occupation?	Machinist
Did your brother send for you?	yes
How did you know he would have work for you?	Asked boss
What did the boss say?	send for him
Did your brother send you a ticket.	yes
Your brother denied paying for the passage. Is this true?	no answer

## Class Activity:

Assign the roles of William McCracken, 3 Special Inquiry Officers, and the rest as Hearing Room observers. Have class prepare for the hearing during their on-site Park Ranger tour of Ellis Island. The case will be reviewed and decided upon by your class in the restored Hearing Room #210/211 .