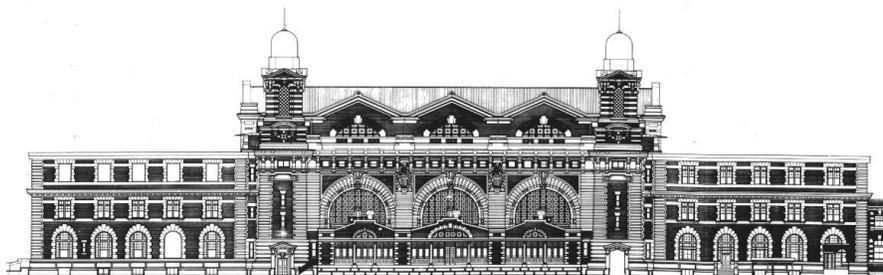




“A Distant Shore”



Distance Learning Program Guide for Teachers



Ellis Island

Ellis Island is a unit of the National Park Service, part of the Statue of Liberty National Monument. Opened to the public as a museum of immigration in 1990, Ellis Island brings to life the importance of America’s 400 years of immigration history and cultural heritage.

“A Distant Shore” meets the standards set forth by New York State and the State of New Jersey. It has been developed for grades 4-8 and can be modified to meet additional educational age levels.

New York Standards:

English/Language Arts:

Standards 1 – 4.

Math/Science/Technology:

Standards 1-3, 5, 6

Social Studies

Standards 1-5

New Jersey Standards:

Cross-Content Workplace Readiness:

Standards 2.6, 2.7

Language Arts/Literacy:

Standards 3.1-3.5

Mathematics:

4.3, 4.10

Social Studies:

6.4 – 6.9

Suggestions for a Successful Program



***Make sure you're ready to connect with the park 15 minutes prior to the program. This would be a good time to let the ranger know if there are any special needs of the group**

Please have the students seated and ready at the program start time .

***Please have the lights turned on in the room and have the students stand up when they ask a question.**

***To facilitate time allotted for the program, the educator should be prepared to call on their students who have questions .**

***Help prepare your class by completing the activities in this booklet. There is background information for both teachers and students that help set the context for Ellis Island. There are both Pre and Post Program Activities. The Pre-Program activities set the tone of the long distance learning experience. The Post-Program Activities help students make the connection between immigration in the past and how immigration impacts them today. You can also e-mail the education department before your program if you have any questions or concerns.**

***If you must cancel a program , please call (212) 363-3206, ext. 180.**

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Technology Alert!
To ensure a smooth connection for your program, please check with the your technology department to make sure that a test connection was made at least 7 days prior to the presentation.

If your students have questions after the program , the teacher can e-mail questions to stli_education_department@nps.gov Visit the park website at www.nps.gov/elis for more teacher resources. Visit the National Park Service (NPS) website at www.nps.gov for information about the almost 400 other NPS sites in the United States.

Program Description



This distance learning experience offered at Ellis Island is a 30-minute curriculum-based program which includes an interactive distance learning component. Students will learn about America’s immigration past during its busiest era in history. The interactive distance learning program has students explore reasons people chose to leave their homeland for a new land, the conditions the immigrants faced as they traveled to America, and the role of Ellis Island in enforcing United States immigration laws by explaining the procedure of immigration processing. Students will also explore the importance of Ellis Island’s resources as a part of the National Park Service. The program includes a Question and Answer session with a National Park Service Ranger

Although you have remained in your classroom, students will take many of the same footsteps as the 12 million immigrants whose lives were forever changed by this island. Many of the same conditions may be in place as they were when over 5000 people per day were examined in the “Great Hall”. Using historical objects and images, students will examine the immigrant process and proceed through a medical checkpoint and legal checkpoint.

Pre and Post program activities support the distance learning experience. The Pre-Program Activities have the student decide why they would come to New York City, what they would bring to their new home, and imagine the conditions of steerage. There is also an activity that introduces students to the National Park Service. The Post-Program Activities takes the history of Ellis Island and asks students to think about how immigration has impacted their lives. Some of the activities use Document Based Questions (DBQ) or Oral Histories. These primary materials also have supplemental classroom activities listed.

After the program and after the completion of Post-Program Activities, students can download their own “Ellis Island Citizen Award” at www.nps.gov/stli/ellisaward/index.html for their participation in learning about the immigrant experience and the importance of preserving Ellis Island.

The New World and Ellis Island

As industrialization in Europe took hold, millions of people found themselves in a world of change. Production for the masses became standard. People moved from rural and suburban areas to cities where there were jobs. The local farmer was now unable to compete with large high output producers. People with skilled trades moved to find work in the factories of the cities. Laborers spent their workday working for someone else. By the latter half of the 19th century, the Industrial Revolution and its ability to change the course of millions of lives had both its benefits and problems. Many people found themselves poorer than ever before. Millions of people who were once self-supporting, were now reliant on a company or someone else for a job. Industrialization brought poverty, disease, and crime to Europe and many would seek to leave to America, where many said that the “streets were paved with gold”. Industrialization, economic opportunity, and freedom from war and persecution now attracted millions of people to America. The advent of the modern steamship made that journey across the ocean more affordable and faster, making it possible for millions of people to cross the Atlantic.

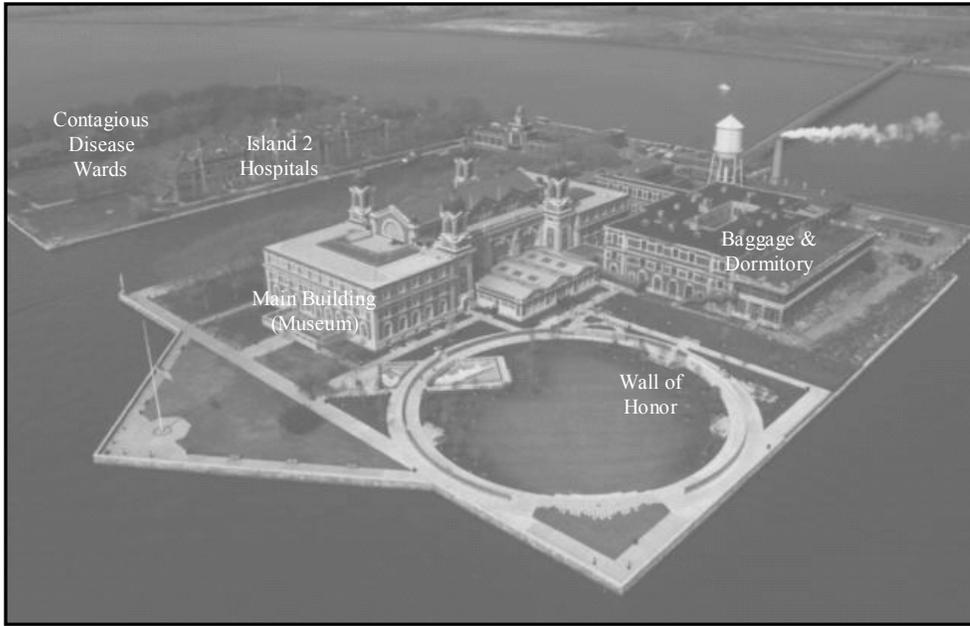
Massive migration from Europe to the New World fostered most to travel to major cities along the Eastern Coast of the United States. Cities like Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, and Miami were popular entry points. One port of entry stands out historically as the most popular place for immigrants to reach the New World, that was New York City. By all accounts: economically, socially, politically, and geographically, New York had become the leading metropolis. As high as 70% of immigrants, travelling days or even weeks aboard steamships to America, sailed to New York City.

From 1855 to 1890, immigrants arriving in New York were processed, at the New York State facility known as Castle Garden, located in Battery Park in Manhattan. The Federal Government then constructed Ellis Island, to handle the increasing tide of immigrants. Ellis Island processed only third and “steerage” class passengers. The few who could afford a first or second class ticket were inspected on board the ships as they entered the harbor and, if they passed inspection, after arriving at the Hudson River passenger terminals were released. All third class and steerage immigrants were transferred to ferries or barges for the ride to Ellis Island. Most immigrants faced a day-long experience of being medically examined by U.S. Public Health Service physicians and legally inspected by U.S. Immigration Inspectors. The broad definition of who could enter America and who could justifiably be returned to their country of origin was vast. “Likely to Become a Public Charge” was the definition to prevent the admission of aliens, who could not prove beyond a reasonable doubt, that they were of good health and had the ability to earn a living and not become a charity case. Still, approximately 80 % of those arriving each day at Ellis Island passed through successfully by day’s end. The remaining 20% were detained for legal reasons or held in one of the island’s hospital or quarantine buildings for observation or treatment.

Immigrants who did not pass legal inspection were seen by the “Board of Special Inquiry” . In 8 out of every 10 cases heard before the Board, immigrants were allowed to stay in the United States. If admissibility was denied, the immigrant would be returned to their country of origin usually within 2 weeks. During the time that Ellis Island processed immigrants, between 1892 and 1954, over 12 million people passed through its doors to begin their new lives here in America. Only 2%, about 250,000 people, were denied entry and returned.



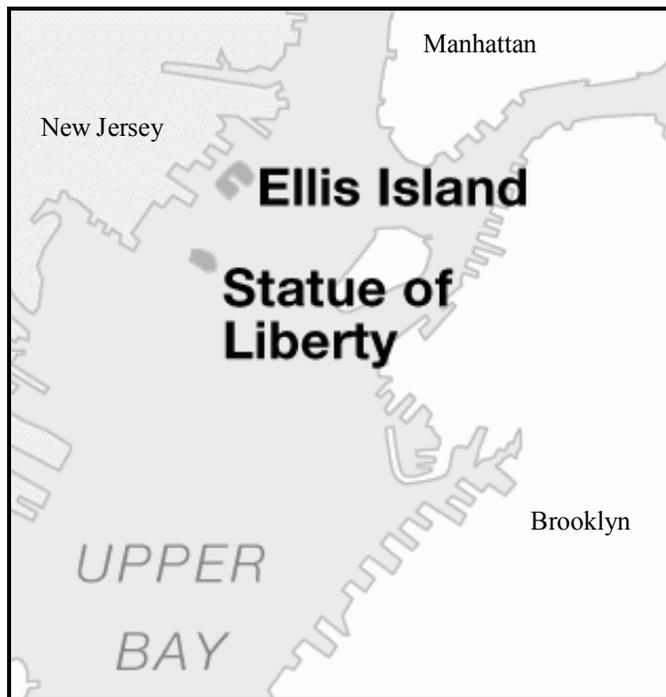
Maps



Ellis Island Today

NPS Photo

Map of



New York Harbor

NPS Photo

Pre-Program Activities



1. *The National Park Service*

Ellis Island is a unit of the National Park Service (NPS) and was included as part of the Statue of Liberty National Monument in 1965. After an extensive \$156 million dollar restoration during the 1980's, Ellis Island's Main Building opened to the public in September of 1990 as a national immigration museum. In 2010, the NPS has almost 400 sites all across the United States.

Look at the arrowhead to the right, this is the symbol of the NPS. Ask students if they have ever visited a place where they saw this symbol.



1. Have students list any NPS sites they may have visited
2. Have students look up the NPS at www.nps.gov and list any sites located in their state.

2. *Ports of Entry*

Although about 70% of arriving immigrants passed through Ellis Island and the Port of New York, the Federal Government operated dozens of small receiving stations around the country, most bordering the perimeter of the nation's coastline. **Partial Listing of historical Ports of Entry:**



- Ellis Island, NY
- Boston, MA
- Philadelphia, PA
- Baltimore, MD
- St. Albans, VT
- New Orleans, LA
- Miami, FL
- Norfolk, VA
- Galveston, TX
- Providence, RI
- Buffalo, NY
- San Juan, Puerto Rico
- Seattle, WA
- San Diego, CA
- San Francisco, CA
- Portland, ME

Today, U.S. Customs and Border Protection controls entry points from land, sea, and air, processing millions of citizens and aliens arriving each day. The USCBP enforces immigration, customs, and agricultural laws and works with the U.S. Public Health Service and other agencies to determine the admissibility of aliens coming to the United States.

What do all these ports of entries have in common? (they are all harbors or ship ports)

How did most immigrants arrive in the United States during the time of Ellis Island?
(by steamship)

How do most immigrants arrive in the United States today? (airplane)

3. Ports to Freedom (DBQ#1)

Once immigrants decided to emigrate to America they were often ill-prepared for the unknown experience of traveling steerage. They were also often unaware of US laws and policies that may impact their processing at Ellis Island

Class Preparation: Using The New World on page 4, the American Immigration & Legislative History on page 13, the DBQ#1 book extract on page 14, and the chart below to help answer the questions .

1. Why do you think first and second class passengers were treated differently than steerage?
2. Why would a first or second class passenger be brought to an Immigration Station?
3. Why do you think most immigrants traveled in steerage? Why would some immigrants save their money and spend it on a first or second class ticket– what benefit would they get?
4. Why do you feel the 1924 Quota Act may have been passed to limit immigration?

Year	Total Population	Foreign Born	% American Born	% Foreign Born
1850	23,191,876	2,244,602	90.3	9.7
1860	31,443,321	4,138,697	86.8	13.2
1870	38,558,371	5,567,229	85.6	14.4
1880	50,155,783	6,679,943	86.7	13.3
1890	62,622,250	9,249,547	85.2	14.8
1900	75,994,575	10,341,276	86.4	13.6
1910	91,972,266	13,515,886	85.3	14.7
1920	105,710,620	13,920,692	86.8	13.2
1930	122,775,046	14,204,149	88.4	11.6
1940	131,669,275	11,594,896	91.2	8.8
1950	150,216,110	10,347,395	93.1	6.9
1960	179,325,671	9,738,091	94.6	5.4
1970	203,210,158	9,619,302	95.3	4.7
1980	226,545,805	14,079,096	93.8	6.2
1990	248,709,873	19,767,316	92.1	7.9
2000	276,000,000	?	?	?
2010 ?	?	?	?	?

4. Destination America!

Tens of millions of people have immigrated to the United States during the last 200 years. Reading the Ellis Island oral histories and further classroom discussion, students should be able to explain why people left their homelands for America and what conditions existed on both sides of the Atlantic to make that journey possible. Have students list and discuss such things as technology and social conditions to support their answers.

Class Preparation: Students should read The New World on page 4 and the oral histories (page 19). Have them look at the map of New York Harbor (page 5) and discuss why America, particularly New York City, was the most desired location for immigrants.

5. Preparing for America

As the time to cross the ocean grew nearer, thinking about what to bring would be very important. If you were going to move to a new country with no prospect of going back to the old world, what would you bring if all you could carry had to fit into one old trunk.

Class Preparation: Students should prepare a list of things they would take with them if they were leaving their home. Students may be asked to explain their choices during the long distance program.

6. Experiencing “Steerage”

Once on-board the great steamships of the day, immigrants to America soon realized that traveling in steerage would be the worst part of the experience. Originally designed to hold cargo, steerage compartments were often dark, unhealthy, overcrowded, and located below the upper decks of the rich and famous and those who could afford to travel in more humane conditions.

- a. (DBQ)** Students should review the photograph “The Steerage” (page 15). What can be determined about the immigrant’s experience travelling in “steerage”? Discuss in class.
- b.** If their classroom were steerage, how many people would they have to share the space with?
- c.** Have students read the historical accounts of the conditions of steerage (Historical Commission Report page 17-18). Have them write a letter to relatives back in the old world about the experience of crossing the ocean in steerage.
- d.** How similar/different were their comments of the drawing with the historical accounts in the Historical Commission Report?

7. Reaching Ellis Island – “Gateway to America”.

After almost 2 weeks at sea, steamships entered New York Harbor and released all passengers at the New York passenger terminals.

Class Activity *Students should prepare themselves for the experience of being processed through Ellis Island.*

- A)** *As your ferry approaches Ellis Island, what might immigrants be thinking about the building?, the island’s location?, the Statue of Liberty?, Manhattan? , their families, etc.*
- B)** *As your class enters the baggage room, have them record their thoughts and observations in their journals. Keep in mind that students may want to tell their story to future generations.*
- C)** *Medical/Legal Exam – What things were physicians of the U.S. Public Health Service looking for? Are they the same things immigrants are checked for today? (**check our web-page at www.nps.gov/stli/medmarkings/index.html**) for medical markings used at Ellis Island. Have the class create their own list of diseases & conditions along with their symbols.*
- D)** *If you pass inspection, where would you go? How would you earn a living? Develop a class listing of the top 10 questions that Immigration Inspectors would ask immigrants today. View the historical manifest at : www.nps.gov/stli/manifest/index.html*
- E)** *If you did not pass the initial inspection, what would you say in the Board of Special Inquiry? Download the hearing to prepare for your trip to Ellis Island: www.nps.gov/stli/hearing/index.html*





Post-Program Activities

To encourage discussion about how immigration impacts students today by comparing the policies/procedures of Ellis Island to the immigration policies/procedures of today.

1. I do hereby take the oath. . .

The objective for most immigrants was to eventually become American citizens. Once a candidate acquires naturalization, he/she can fully enjoy the rights, benefits, and privileges guaranteed by the constitution. Before that can happen, an immigrant has to meet requirements of residency (usually 5 years), having a command of the English language, a knowledge of American history, and not have any serious violations of the law.

Class Activity:

1. Have students discuss the rights that they enjoy as citizens. Compare them to the first 10 amendments of the U.S. Constitution /Bill of Rights. (Visit the National Archives at: www.nara.gov)

2. What is the most important right that a citizen has? _____

3. Have students review the Naturalization Self Test and answers (www.uscis.gov-naturalization) and come up with ways of how they could help an immigrant child pass the current test

2. “I Lift my Lamp beside the Golden Door”

In 1886, the Statue of Liberty was dedicated in New York. This was before the Ellis Island Immigration Station was built, but New York was still one of the busiest ports of entry.

The New Colossus

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset-gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome, her mild eyes
command
The air-bridged harbor that twin-cities frame.

“Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp! cries she,
With silent lips. “Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore;
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

Class Activity:

Discuss the sonnet “New Colossus” written by Emma Lazarus. This poem is on a bronze plaque and is located in the museum of the Statue of Liberty.

What does this poem represent?

What could the “golden door” refer to?

Does this poem still mean something today?

3. For Future Generations. . .

Even before the Ellis Island Immigration Museum opened, an extensive effort was in place to record the stories of those who passed through Ellis Island. These oral histories give a human face to what could be just facts and figures.

Class Activity:

Students will conduct an oral history of a family member who immigrated to America. (Seek prior permission from the person who will be interviewed before you start and have proper supervision). Find out important facts and first-person accounts of their experiences and any important information that you would want to leave in a time capsule which would be opened in the year 2101. If no available family member is an immigrant, interview a family friend.

4. Immigration: Which side of the scale are you on?

Class Activity:

Our United States legislature introduces many bills that change the way immigration is handled. Many times, the public's demand for change has fueled our lawmakers to enact legislation either for or against immigration. Using your knowledge of Ellis Island, would there be anything that you would have changed about the way Ellis Island processed immigrants?



- *What arguments would you make to keep or change the way immigration is handled today? Look for examples of current events, articles, oral histories, personal experiences, or photos to justify your argument. Should we continue to be a nation of immigrants?*

Based on the above class assignment and discussion, have your students debate the reasons “for or against” American immigration and why. Have them set up a class debate panel to resolve this important topic. Should America have an “Open Door Policy” or should we restrict who should be allowed to enter our country?

5. The National Park Service

Below is the mission of the National Park Service

"...to promote and regulate the use of the...national parks...which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

National Park Service Organic Act, 16 U.S.C.1.

The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

Class Activity:

Students will read the mission and discuss the questions below.

1. Have students discuss why Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty are considered important enough to American history to be designated units of the National Park Service.
2. Based on pre-program activity #1– have the students discuss why any of the NPS sites in their state has been made part of the National Park Service system.

RESOURCES

American Immigration & Legislative History



America has been home, voluntarily and involuntarily, to millions of people from across the globe. It is truly a nation of immigrants. After the founding of the nation in 1776, America would see unprecedented growth, in population, territorial expansion, technological advances and industrialization. However, the Federal Government would soon find the need for regulatory and legislative control. The following laws were instrumental in regulating Immigration to America:

“Naturalization Act of April 14, 1802”

- a) reduced the residence period for naturalization from fourteen to five years.
- b) established basic requirements for naturalization; including good moral character, allegiance to the Constitution, a formal declaration of intention, and witnesses.

“Steerage Act of March 2, 1819”

- a) Established the continuing reporting of immigration to the United States by requiring that passengers lists or manifests of all arriving vessels be delivered to the local Collector of Customs copies transmitted to the Secretary of State, and the information reported to Congress.
- b) Set specific sustenance rules for passengers of ships leaving U.S. ports for Europe.
- c) Restricted the number of passengers on all vessels either coming to or leaving the United States.

Joint Act of Congress on April 11, 1890

- a) \$75,000 was appropriated for the removal of the naval magazine from Ellis Island to “improve it for immigration purposes”.

“Immigration Act of March 3, 1891”.

- a) Establishes the Bureau of Immigration under the U.S. Treasury Department to administer all immigration laws, except the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. This “Act” also set forth the establishment of classes of inadmissible aliens and provided adequate procedures for the returning of such persons and those entering the United States under unlawful means.

“Immigration Act of May 26, 1924

- a) Established the “national origins quota system.” In conjunction with the Immigration Act of 1917, governed American immigration policy until 1952. The 1924 act contained two quota provisions:

In effect until June 30, 1927– set the annual quota of any quota nationality at two percent of the number of foreign-born persons of such nationality resident in the continental United States in 1890 (total quota-164,667)

From July 1, 1927 to December 31, 1952-the annual quota for any country or nationality had the same relation to 150,000 as the number of inhabitants in the continental United States in 1920 having that national origin had to the total number of inhabitants in the continental United States in 1920.

Immigration & Legislative History Time Line - <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis> (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services). Look up historical immigration and naturalization legislation



Document Based Question #1

In 1924 the Institute for Government Research at Johns Hopkins University published an administrative history of the Bureau of Immigration, detailing its history, activities, and organization. This documented the processes at Ellis Island and other immigration stations in the United States in the early 20th century.

Examination at Ports of Entry. Examination of aliens at foreign ports or on shipboard, together with the furnishing of documentary information thereon, is followed by inspection at ports of entry. This latter constitutes the prime administrative activity of the service.

Numerous classifications of the examination processes might be adopted for purposes of discussion, though none of the classes is exclusive. Distinction is made, in the first place, between classes of aliens on shipboard. Where a vessel puts in at a port possessing an immigration station, the passengers are divided as first-class, second-class, and steerage. The last group is usually removed to an immigration station for examination, while aliens of the first two classes are generally given a primary examination aboard ship. Only those aliens of the cabin classes whose admissibility is in doubt are removed to an immigration station. In case there is no immigrant station, all three classes are examined on board ship.

Another differentiation lies with the personnel conducting examinations. Such personnel varies with the purpose of the inspection: ships' surgeons and officers of the Public Health Service for physical or mental examinations, and immigration officers for other tests.

Since the handling of examinations of the individual by differing personnel involves also the varying purposes of the examination, discussion of these inspectional activities may be best conducted under the "purpose" classification,²⁶ and so far as possible in the natural sequence.

²⁶ That is, the reason for which the examination is conducted; for example to reveal illiteracy, to detect disease, to discover anti-social habits, etc. Still another classification might be made on the basis of the type of alien examined: Orientals, aliens in transit, contract laborers, seamen, and so on.

Extract from "The Bureau of Immigration its History, Activities and Organization by Darrell Hevenor Smith and H. Guy Herring 1924

Photos – Document Based Question #2



“The Steerage (1907)” by Alfred Stieglitz
(Library of Congress)

***Supplemental Class Activities: To be used also with DBQ#1 & Document Extract
(page 17)***

1. What can you conclude about the experience of traveling in steerage?
2. What are most immigrants in this picture doing?
3. What effects could steerage have on some immigrants?

Photo Observations: _____



Photos – Document Based Question #3



Detention at Ellis Island
(Library of Congress)

Most immigrants passed through Ellis Island in a few hours. However, there were a number of reasons an immigrant could be detained for further examination.

An immigrant who displayed symptoms of illness would be sent to the hospital or contagious disease wards.

Immigrants detained for legal reasons would stay in dormitory rooms and may have time for recreation.

Supplemental Class Activities:

1. Describe the significance of this photo
2. Where do you think these immigrants were?
3. What group seems least effected in this photo? Why?
4. What groups were not directly examined during the legal inspection?
5. Does society treat various groups differently? How ? Give examples!
6. What's your overall impressions/concerns would you think adults had vs. children during the to America and their experience of going through Ellis Island?

Photo Observations: _____

Document Extract



At the turn of the 20th century, the United States Government formed an Immigration Commission to report their findings on the conditions of “Steerage” and the thousands of men, women, and children who traveled to America this way. Steerage conditions for many of the earlier immigrants to Ellis Island were very harsh. The Immigration Commission had their employees travel in steerage to observe conditions first hand. Their reports led to a series of laws that mandated improvements. The extract below compares steerage from the earlier years to steerage in the first decade of the 20th century.

“The universal human needs of space, air, food, sleep, and privacy are recognized to the degree now made compulsory by law. Beyond that, the persons carried are looked upon as so much freight, with mere transportation as their only due. The sleeping quarters are large compartments, accommodating as many as 300 or more persons each. Passengers are divided into three classes, namely women without male escorts, men traveling alone, and families. Each class is housed in a separate compartment and are often in different parts of the vessel. The berths are two tiers, with an interval of 2 feet and 6 inches of space above each. They consist of an iron framework containing a mattress, a pillow, or often a life-preserver as a substitute and a blanket. The mattress and pillow, if there is one, are often filled with seaweed. Generally the passenger must retire almost fully dressed to keep warm. Through the entire voyage, from seven to seventeen days, the berths receive no attention from stewards.

No space is designated for hand baggage. As practically every traveler has some bag or bundle, that must be kept in the berth. Floors are generally made of wood and sweeping is the only form of cleaning done. At least two large transportation lines furnished the steerage passengers utensils and require each one to retain these throughout the voyage.

The open deck available to the steerage is very limited, and regular separable compartments are not included in the construction. The sleeping compartments must therefore be the constant abode of the majority of the passengers. During days of continued storm, when the unprotected open deck can not be used at all, the berths and the passageways between them are the only space where the steerage passenger can pass the time away.

When to this very limited space and much filth is added, inadequate means of ventilation, the result is almost unendurable. The air was found to be invariable bad.

Wash rooms and lavatories, separate for men and for women, are required by law, which also states that they be kept in a “clean and serviceable condition throughout the voyage.” The indifferent obedience to this provision is re-

Report of the Immigration Commission :

Continued.

Regular dining rooms are not a part of steerage. Passengers, each carrying their utensils, pass in single file before the three or four stewards who are serving and each receives his rations. Then he finds a place wherever he can eat them, and later washes his dishes and finds a hiding place for them where they may be safe until the next meal. Laundry basins also served as a dishpan for greasy tins, as a laundry tub for soiled handkerchiefs and clothing, and as a basin for shampoos, and without receiving any special cleaning. It was the only receptacle to be found for use in the case of seasickness.

The food may be generally described as fair in quality and sufficient in quantity, and yet it is neither; fairly good materials are usually spoiled by being wretchedly prepared. Bread, potatoes, and meat when not old leavings from the first and second galleys, form a fair substantial diet. Vegetables, fruits, and pickles form an insignificant part of the diet and are generally of a very inferior quality. Milk is supplied for small children. The white bread, potatoes, and soup, when hot, were the only foods that were good. And received the same favorable criticisms from passengers of all nationalities.

The new type of steerage, follows the plans of second-class passengers. Unfortunately, it is found only on those lines that carry emigrants from the north of Europe. Legislation however may complete what competition began.” On newer vessels after 1909, conditions were often better and simulated those on second class. “

Mistreatment of steerage passengers, by crew, was often commonplace. Women traveling alone were often vulnerable. There was no one to whom they might appeal. Besides, most of them did not know the official language on the steamer, nor were they experienced enough to know they were entitled to protection.”

Abstracts of Reports of the Immigration Commission (In Two Volumes: Volume II) 1911
Reprinted 1970

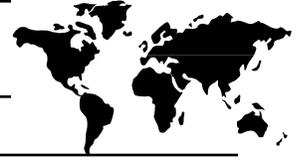
Compared to steerage travel, conditions on Ellis Island were often a marked improvement. The worse part of being processed at Ellis Island may have been the lack of communication and the fear of the unknown. Observing the direct release of first and second-class passengers at New York passenger terminals, steerage immigrants bound for Ellis Island, often became confused and uncertain about their admission to America.

***(only third and steerage passengers were required to pass inspection at Ellis Island. First and second-class immigrants were inspected on board the steamships and then released in New York.)**

Supplemental Class Activity:

Have your students read this account of steerage conditions. Discuss the impact of this report and ways that your students would change steamship travel for steerage passengers.

Oral Histories – Ellis Island



The following are excerpts of Oral Histories of Ellis Island immigrants. They bring their sentiments of hope and expectation for a better life despite all the hardships and obstacles that were sometimes placed before them.

Edward Myrbeck, Sweden:

“The school teacher said, why in the world anybody would want to go to America, he said. You know, we have all these resources in Sweden. We have iron. We have coal. We have forests. We have land. And he gave quite a dissertation on this. I went home to my father. And I told him. It’s the only time I heard him swear. And he said, you go back and tell that teacher if I can have one of those resources, I’ll stay in Sweden.”

Rocco Morelli, Italy:

“ My mother said, look, I do not want to raise my children in this country any longer. I don’t want no wars. I don’t want no famine. I don’t want no poverty. I don’t want... I want to go to the United States. You work over there. The children will work over there. And at least, we’ll eat. You got two mothers, the United States and Italy. I do love them both.”

Inga Nastke, Germany:

“And the official said, follow me. You will be brought to Manhattan. So, we went down to the piers, boarded a little boat. And off we went. And I just couldn’t believe. I thought, oh, I’m really released. And I took a last look at the Statue of Liberty. And I was wondering, would I ever meet again? And then, I looked at Ellis Island. I thought, oh, how many tears I had to shed there.”

Bessie Akawie, Ukraine:

“By the time we came to New York, we had somehow, the experience of Ellis Island had aged us.”

Pearl Pohrille, Germany:

“For one thing, Ellis Island gave me a chance to stay here and live here and bring my children up here. And for that, I’m grateful to that little island.”

Victor Tarantini, Italy:

“When I saw the Statue of Liberty, it was something beautiful. I knew I was in America, you know. I knew I was going to see my stepmother. I had somebody to love.”

Supplemental Class Activity: Read and comment on oral histories and the significance of their stories as it pertains to America and particularly New York and why they were the places of choice for immigrants.

WORDS THAT MAY BE USED IN PROGRAM

Alien	Excluded	Quota
Almshouse	Famine	Refugee
Anarchist	Gateway	Sponsor
Ancestor	Genealogy	Steamship
Asylum	Heritage	Steerage
Button Hook	Immigrant	Trachoma
Census	Indentured	Tuberculosis
Commissioner	Inquiry	
Consulate	Inspector	
Contract Labor	Interpreter	
Customs	Manifest	
Deportation	Naturalization	
Detention	Oral History	
Discrimination	Passport	
Ellis Island	Port of Entry	
Emigrant	Public Charge	
Excluded	Quarantine	

MORE RESOURCES

List of reading resources and web sites regarding immigration, population, and Ellis Island.

- 1) Statue of Liberty & Ellis Island website & Oral History Department:** collection of 2000 oral histories. Call for information (212) 363-3206, ext. 157. www.nps.gov/stli
- 2) National Archives and Records Administration:** collection of passenger manifests, census data, military records, etc. Address at 7th & Pennsylvania Ave NW, Wash. DC 20408. NY regional office at 201 Varick St. NY, NY 10014, Tel. (212) 337-1300. www.nara.gov
- 3) U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services** – for statistical information on immigration from 1892 to the present. <http://www.uscis.gov/graphics/shared/aboutus/statistics/legishist/index.htm>
- 4) U.S. Census Bureau** – U.S. & World population clocks updated daily. www.census.gov
- 5) Library of Congress** – contains thousands of photos pertaining to immigration, Ellis Island, the Statue of Liberty, steerage etc. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amtitle.html>
- 6) American Family Immigration History Center**– Center on Ellis Island containing manifests of ship passenger records for Port of NY between 1892-1924. www.ellislandrecords.org
- 7) Ellis Island: Gateway to the American Dream**, by Pamela Reeves.
- 8) Sam Ellis' Island:** by Beatrice Siegal.
- 9) Ellis Island: A Pictorial History**, by Barbara Benton.
- 10) Morton Allen Directory of European Steamship Arrivals**
- 11) The Story of Ellis Island** by Willard A. Heaps.

Comments/Questions

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