

ELLIS ISLAND

1892 - 1954

WHY DID IMMIGRANTS COME TO AMERICA?

- From 1850 - 1900, people in many parts of the world decided to leave their homes and immigrate to the United States.
- Crop failures
- Land shortages
- Unemployment and labor conditions
- The USA was perceived as the land of economic opportunity
- Nearly 14 million immigrants arrived between 1850 and 1900
- The vast majority of these people were from Germany, Ireland, and England

- Not all immigrants to America came through Ellis Island. After September 26, 1906 county, state and federal courts were allowed to naturalize using specific forms created by the Bureau of Naturalization—later the Immigration Naturalization Service or INS, and presently the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services or USCIS. All forms were required to be sent to the USCIS.
- Before Ellis Island, immigrants came through Castle Garden, on the southern tip of Manhattan. Throughout the late 1800s, most immigrants arriving in New York entered at Castle Garden before the federal government opened Ellis Island in New York harbor.

IMMIGRATION BEFORE ELLIS ISLAND

- Before Ellis Island opened, Immigrants arriving in New York entered at the Castle Garden depot near the tip of Manhattan.
- From 1890 to 1891, the immigration station was located at the Barge Office.
- In 1892 the federal government opened a new immigration processing center on Ellis Island in New York harbor.



THE PORT OF NEW YORK

- Over 70% of all immigrants to the USA arrived at the Port of New York.
- It is estimated that 11 million immigrants arrived from 1820 to 1891.
- On January 2, 1892, the facilities at Ellis Island opened.

IMMIGRANTS THROUGH ELLIS ISLAND

- On January 2, 1892, 15-year-old Annie Moore, from Ireland, became the first person to pass through the newly opened Ellis Island, which President Benjamin Harrison designated as America's first federal immigration center in 1890.
- Not all immigrants who sailed into New York had to go through Ellis Island. First- and second-class passengers submitted to a brief shipboard inspection and then disembarked at the piers in New York or New Jersey, where they passed through customs. People in third class, though, were transported to Ellis Island, where they underwent medical and legal inspections to ensure they didn't have a contagious disease or some condition that would make them a burden to the government. Only two percent of all immigrants were denied entrance into the U.S.

- Immigration to Ellis Island peaked between 1892 and 1924, during which time the 3.3-acre island was enlarged with landfill (by the 1930s it reached its current 27.5-acre size) and additional buildings were constructed to handle the massive influx of immigrants. During the busiest year of operation, 1907, over 1 million people were processed at Ellis Island.
- With America's entrance into World War I, immigration declined and Ellis Island was used as a detention center for suspected enemies. Following the war, Congress passed quota laws and the Immigration Act of 1924, which sharply reduced the number of newcomers allowed into the country and also enabled immigrants to be processed at U.S. consulates abroad. After 1924, Ellis Island switched from a processing center to serving other purposes, such as a detention and deportation center for illegal immigrants, a hospital for wounded soldiers during World War II and a Coast Guard training center.

- On November 12, 1954, **Ellis Island**, the gateway to America, shuts its doors after processing more than 12 million immigrants since opening in 1892. The last immigrant to come through **Ellis Island** was Arne Peterssen, a 48-year-old merchant seaman from Narvik, Norway, and he did so in 1954.
- Today, an estimated 40% of all Americans can trace their roots through Ellis Island, located in New York harbor off the New Jersey coast and named for merchant Samuel Ellis, who owned the land in the 1770s.
- Beginning in 1984, Ellis Island underwent a \$160 million renovation, the largest historic restoration project in U.S. history. In September 1990, the Ellis Island Immigration Museum opened to the public and today is visited by almost 2 million people each year.

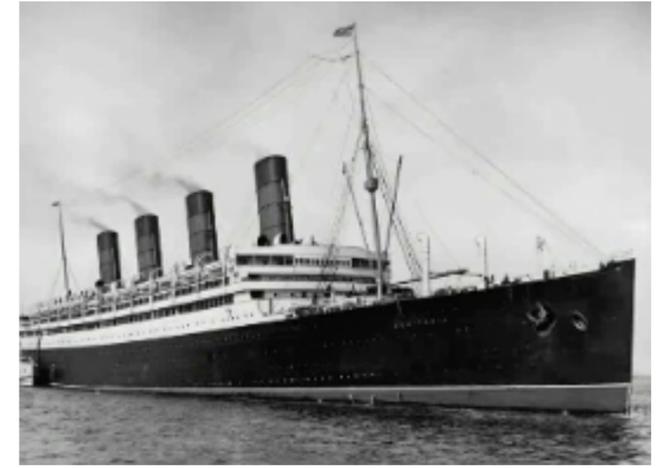
BRIEF HISTORY OF PASSENGER ARRIVAL RECORDS

- A bill was proposed in 1818 to regulate passenger ships entering American ports from abroad.
- Of approximately 5,000 passengers who sailed from Antwerp for the US the previous year, no less than 1,000 had died before reaching their destination port.
- On one ship sailing from an European port, more than half of the 1,267 persons died in transit.
- Congress enacted an act in 1819 to regulate passenger ships. Under this act, masters of vessels arriving at American ports were required to submit a list of all passengers to the collector of customs in the port where the ship arrived. The act provided greater provisions against overcrowding.

IMMIGRATION ACTS

- Required an on-board hospital with a physician and medicines
- Three cooked meals to be provided each day
- Berths could be not less than 2 feet wide by 6 feet long.
- The Immigration Acts of 1891 and 1893 established the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

The Crossing



- During 1840s - 1850s, a steerage class ticket from Liverpool to New York cost 3 to 5 pounds (3 pounds in 1940 = approximately \$22; in 2017 dollars, would be about \$95)
- The voyage usually took from 4 to 6 weeks
- These vessels held about 200 - 300 passengers
- During 1910s - 1920s, the Voyage usually took from 6 to 10 days and were steam ocean liners, holding 600+ 1st class passengers, 600+ 2nd class, and 2,000+ 3rd class (steerage) passengers, and a crew of 900+.

SOME VIDEOS OF IMMIGRATION

- A video on Amazon Prime: https://www.amazon.com/Ellis-Island-New-Land-Special/dp/B01J4NYCA2/ref=sr_1_4?s=instant-video&ie=UTF8&qid=1511987440&sr=1-4&keywords=ELLIS+ISLAND&refinements=p_n_ways_to_watch%3A12007865011
- Webinar about MyHeritage records: https://familytreewebinars.com/download.php?webinar_id=776

Search for Your Immigrant Ancestor

- Find your Ellis Roots - libertyellisfoundation.org
- www.myheritage.com
- genealogy.com
- stevemorse.org