

Welcome to the Ellis Island Immigration Museum Website. Ellis Island was the gateway through which more than 12 million immigrants passed between 1892 and 1954 in their search for freedom of speech and religion, and for economic opportunity in the United States. Because of its unique historical importance, it was declared part of the Statue of Liberty National Monument in 1965. After a six-year, \$162 million renovation, it reopened to the public as a museum in 1990.

For three quarters of a century, the National Park Service has endeavored to preserve America's parklands for generations to come. The National Park Service and concessioner ARAMARK work to provide everything you need for a memorable visit.

This website is provided by ARAMARK to enhance your appreciation and enjoyment of the Ellis Island Immigration Museum. Come explore our site, and we hope that you will come to see us in person for a visit you will find inspirational, historic and educational.

Overview

Today's visitors to Ellis Island, although unencumbered by bundled possessions and the harrowing memory of a transatlantic journey, retrace the steps of twelve million immigrants who approached America's "front doors to freedom" in the early twentieth century. Ellis Island receives today's arriving ferry passengers as it did hundreds of thousands of new arrivals between 1897 and 1938. In place of the business-like machinery of immigration inspection, the restored Main Hall now houses the Ellis Island Immigration Museum, dedicated to commemorating the immigrants' stories of trepidation and triumph, courage and rejection, and the lasting image of the American dream.

During its peak years-1892 to 1924 Ellis Island received thousands of immigrants a day. Each was scrutinized for disease or disability as the long line of hopeful new arrivals made their way up the steep stairs to the great, echoing Registry Room. Over 100 million Americans can trace their ancestry in the United States to a man, woman, or child whose name passed from a steamship manifest sheet to an inspector's record book in the great Registry Room at Ellis Island.

With restrictions on immigration in the 1920s Ellis Island's population dwindled, and the station finally closed its doors in 1954. Its grand brick and limestone buildings gradually deteriorated in the fierce weather of New York Harbor. Concern about this vital part of America's immigrant history led to the inclusion of Ellis Island as part of Statue of Liberty National Monument in 1965. Private citizens mounted a campaign to preserve the Island, and one of the most ambitious restoration projects in American history returned Ellis Island's Main Building to its former grandeur in September, 1990.