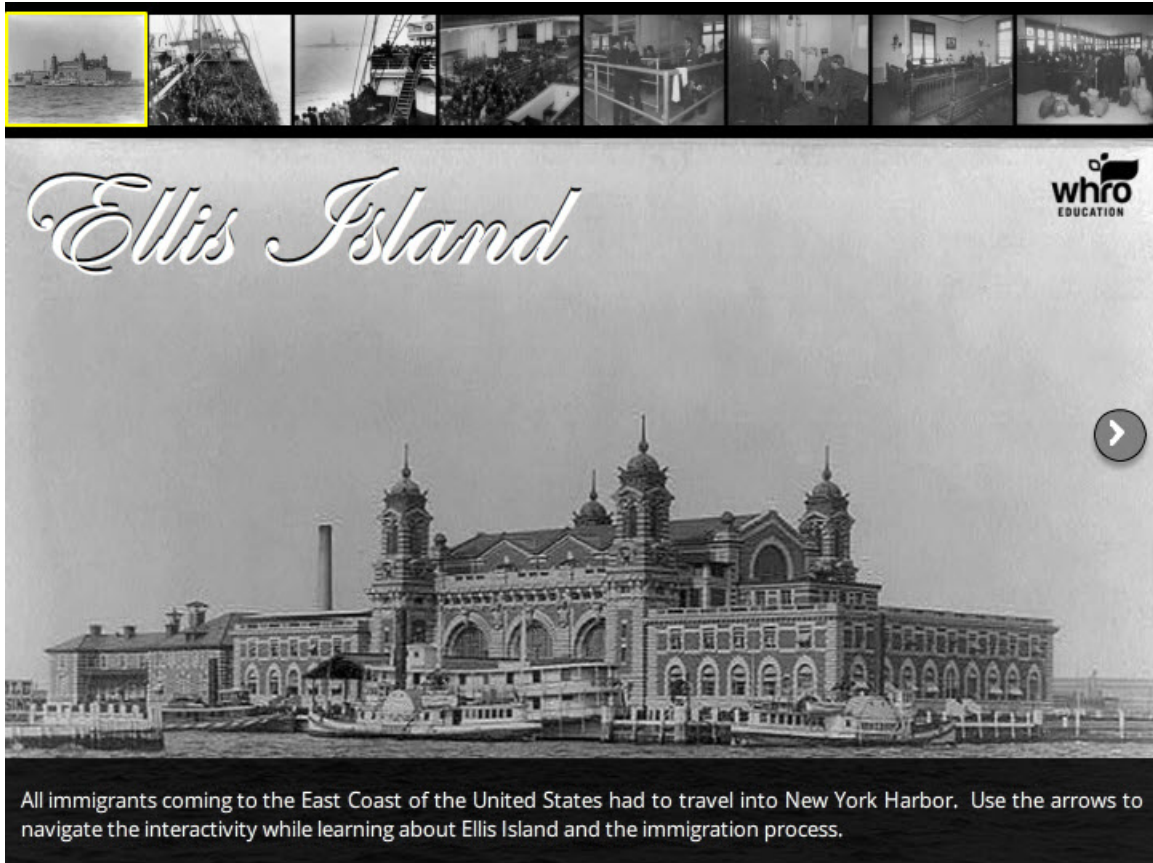


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Introduction

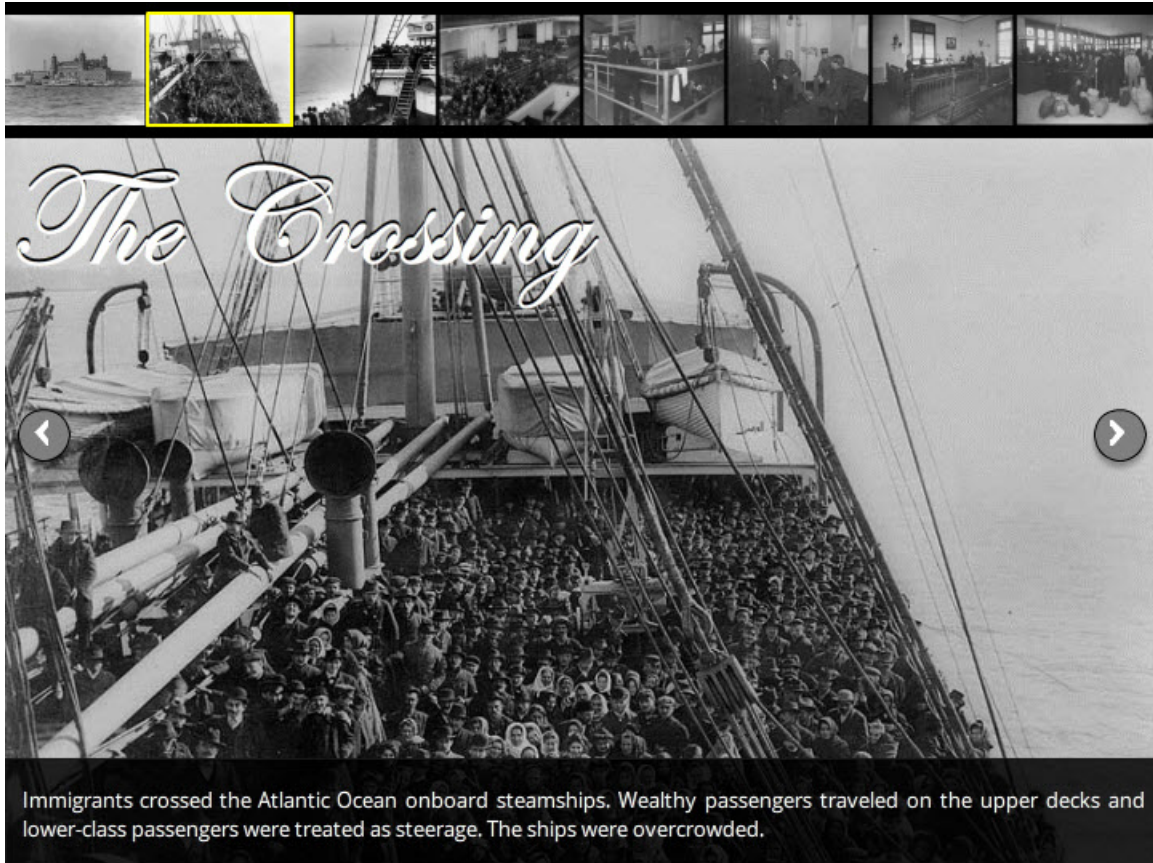


All immigrants coming to the East Coast of the United States had to travel into New York Harbor. Use the arrows to navigate the interactivity while learning about Ellis Island and the immigration process.

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The Crossing

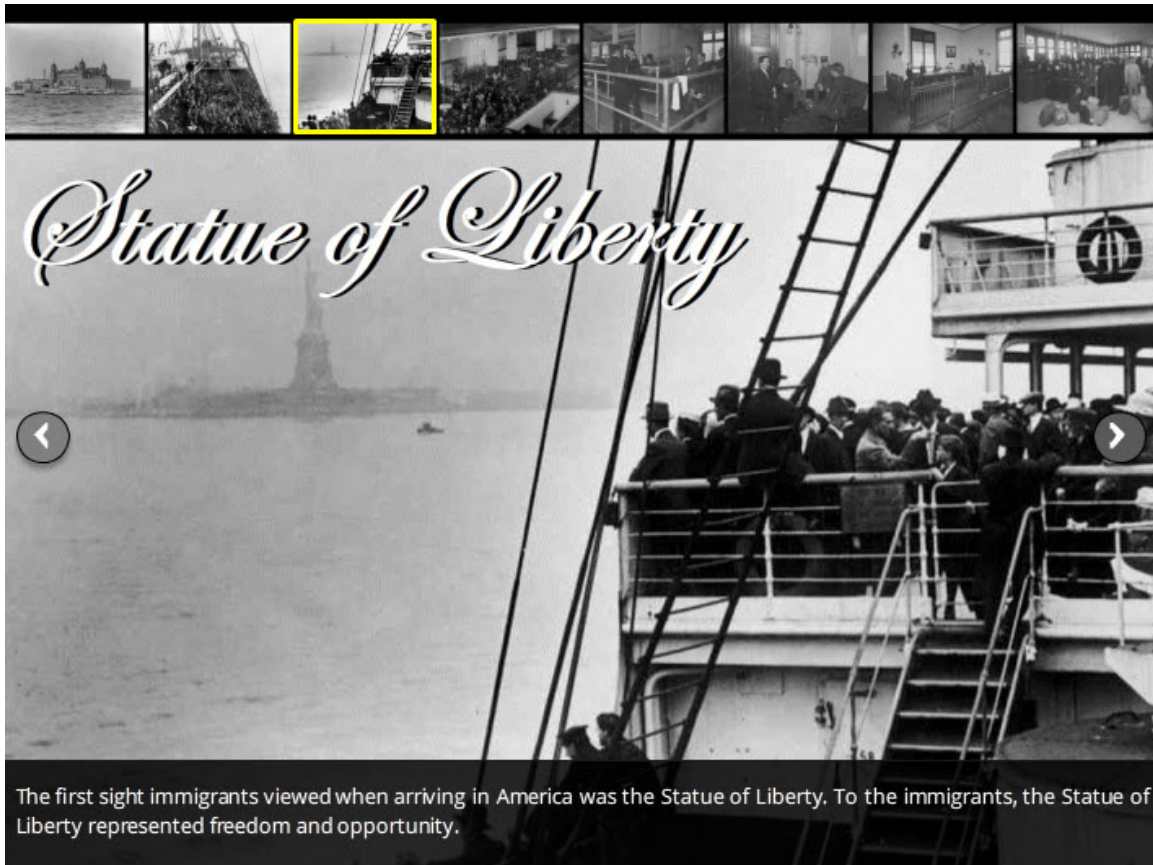


Immigrants arriving from Europe had to cross the Atlantic Ocean by ship. In order to board the ship, immigrants were required to pass an examination and an inspection. Traveling via the Atlantic Ocean often proved difficult. Wealthy passengers had access to upper decks of ships. Conversely, poor immigrants were treated as steerage, and packed closely in lower decks and cargo holds. These overcrowded ships took anywhere from eight to twelve days to cross the Atlantic Ocean.

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Statue of Liberty

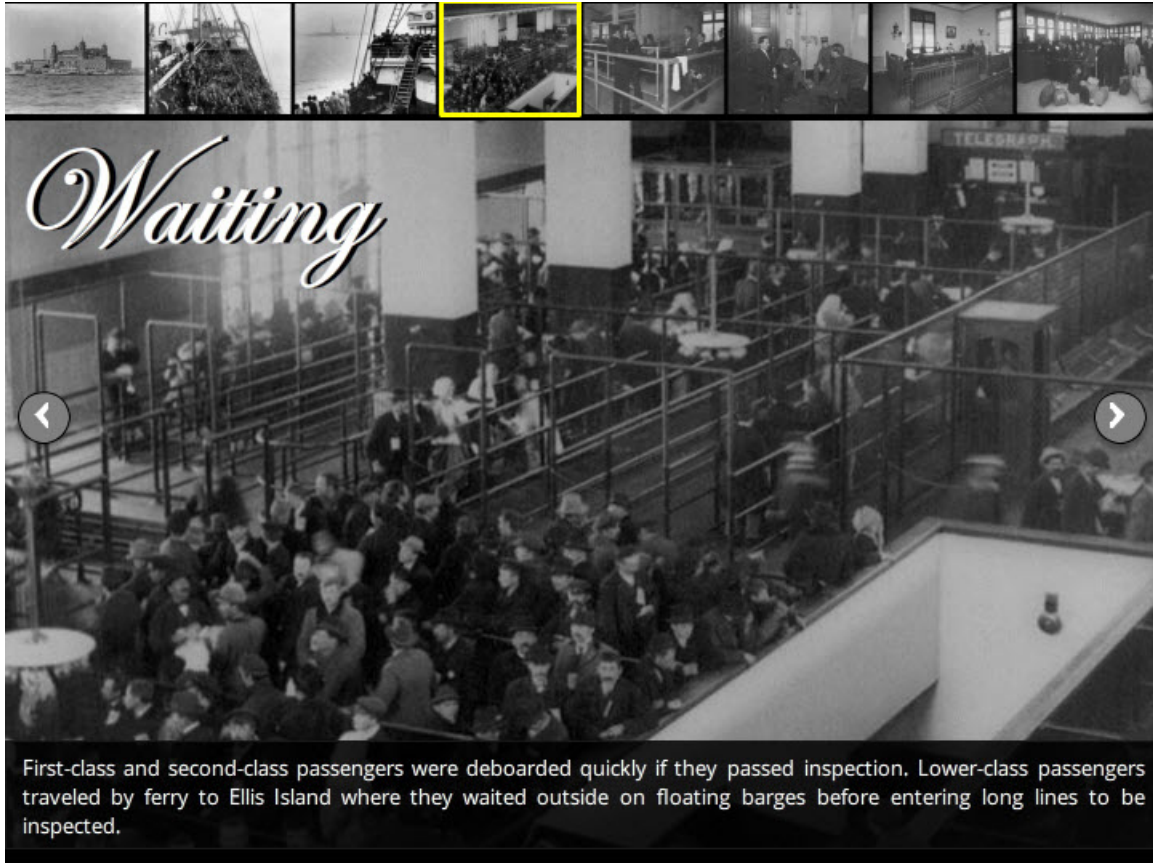


As a result of the American Revolution against the British, France gave the United States the Statue of Liberty as a gift 1886. This majestic sight was what immigrants first viewed as they entered America. In addition, the Statue of Liberty reassured immigrants that they had arrived in the land of opportunity. The raised torch served to welcome immigrants.

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Waiting



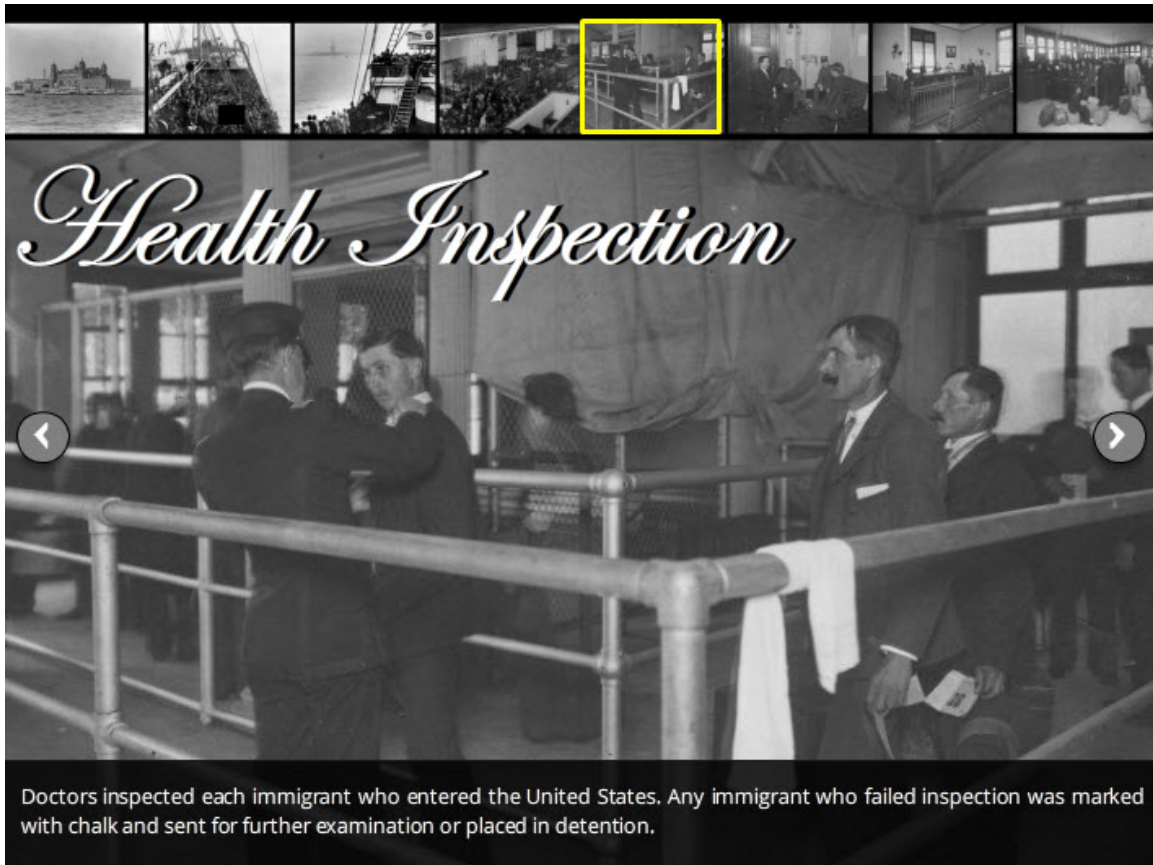
After viewing the Statue of Liberty on Liberty Island in New York, immigrants had to enter the United States through the buildings on Ellis Island. Once ships docked, American inspectors boarded them and inspected wealthy passengers first, and then second class passengers. Wealthy passengers got debarked quickly due to their economic status. First and second class passengers only got directed to buildings on Ellis Island if they failed the inspection.

All lower-class passengers automatically were sent via ferry to Ellis Island, where they were then held on overcrowded floating barges. Passengers often waited many hours on the barges before being directed to long lines for their inspection. The barges lacked food, water, restrooms, and protection from the elements.

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Health Inspection

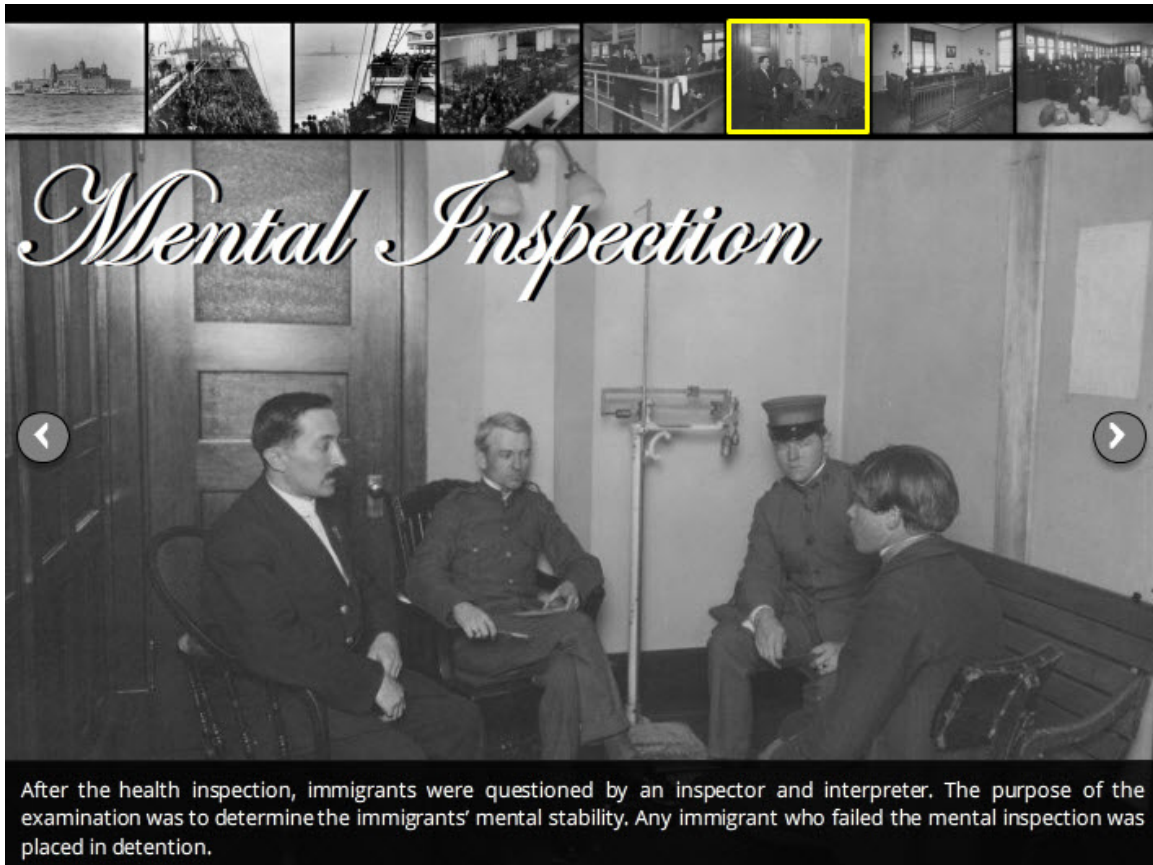


After waiting for hours on the barges, immigrants proceeded to more lines that brought them to the registry room. There, doctors inspected each person's health and well-being. If immigrants failed the health inspection, doctors put a mark on their clothing with chalk. The letter "H" meant possible heart condition, "E" meant eyes, and "L" meant lameness. The abbreviation "LCD" indicated loathsome contagious disease. Curable immigrants were sent to local hospitals for observation and care. Those who failed the health inspection were placed in detention.

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Mental Inspection



After the health inspection, immigrants received a barrage of questions to determine their mental stability. An inspector and interpreter administered the questions, which included a probe about why they came to America. They were also asked to solve basic arithmetic problems, figure out puzzles, and draw geometric shapes. Some immigrants received tests to diagnose possible mental disorders. As you can imagine, immigrants often felt frightened and nervous during the mental inspection. Anyone who failed was placed in detention.

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Detention and Hearings

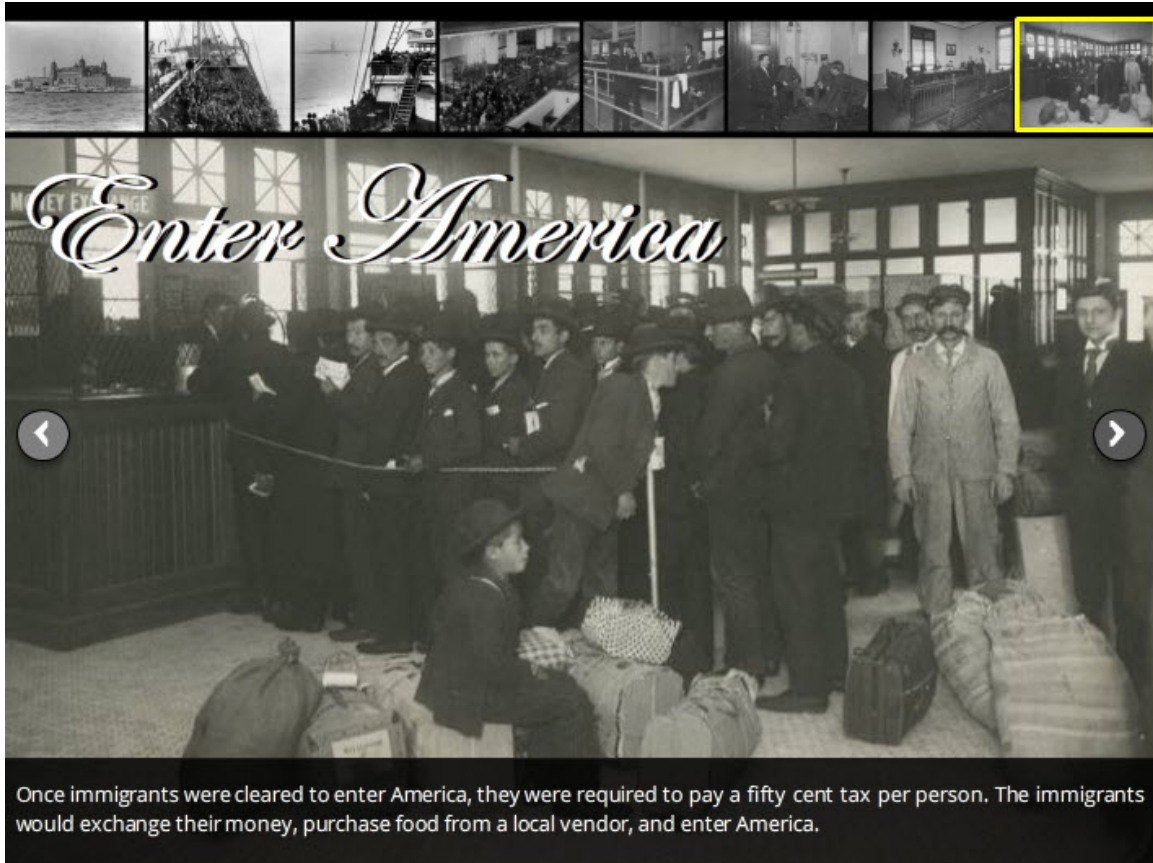


An estimated ten percent of immigrants were placed in detention, and had to undergo a hearing. During hearings, evidence was presented about immigrants' health, economic status, and beliefs. A committee made up of inspectors reviewed the evidence to determine if immigrants could stay in America or had to be deported. About two percent of all immigrants were actually deported.

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Enter America



Each immigrant who passed inspection had to pay a tax of fifty cents. This money funded the Office of Immigration. Upon leaving the buildings at Ellis Island, immigrants typically exchanged their money so they could buy food from the local vendors. They now had the freedom to enter America and travel around to find a destination.