

Research Paper Proposal

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HY 103: US History from 1865

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Research Topic:

My research topic is going to be looking at the mental and physical health of immigrants traveling to America in the late 1800's. I will also be finding why so many were turned away despite the incredibly long and exhausting journey. What checklist did the American's go by to determine pass or fail and how did they treat those immigrants that had to receive medical care first before being cleared?

Thesis:

Although immigrants coming to the United States were hopeful for a better life, some were turned away by medical personnel who denied them passage into the United States because of disease, mental illness, and discrimination.

Thesis Road Map:

- The medical ailments that were found in many immigrants on Ellis Island
- Mental assessments were taken seriously and "aliens" had three stages of examination
- The discrimination toward immigrants had a lot to do with Castle Garden

What I know about this topic and why am I interested:

I know that my ancestors came to Ellis Island to find opportunity and I am here because of them. As a child I always assumed Ellis Island was a sad place surrounded by negativity, but it was actually a place of hope for millions of people. I also didn't quite realize the impact immigrants played on our countries success. Learning more about the people who came to Ellis Island and their health is what I'm interested in.

What I want to learn:

I want to learn about the people who came to Ellis Island. What were the medical findings and how were they treated? I also want to focus on the discrimination towards immigrants and why it was so strong with some Americans.

Initial Questions:

- Who was the first immigrant to enter Ellis Island and how was his/her health?
- What were the diseases and problems of the immigrants who were deported?
- What was the most common medical problem in newly arrived immigrants?
- What were the signs of mental instability in immigrants and why would they be turned away?
- At what point will doctors allow immigrants to receive medical care and release into America vs. deportation?
- Did the United States have people designated to help with children if parents were ill or had passed away on their journey over?

- How many immigrants were turned away?
- What were the real reasons for strict screening?
- Why was discrimination so strong towards immigrants when Ellis Island opened?
- Was this discrimination justifiable/understandable?_If so, why?