

A modern city, full of history: worksheet n°5

New York and the history of immigration in the USA: Statue of Liberty National Monument

Source 1: Statue of Liberty National Monument

Statue of Liberty National Monument is a national monument comprising Liberty Island and Ellis Island. It includes the Statue of Liberty, situated on Liberty Island and the former immigration depot on Ellis Island. The Statue of Liberty was dedicated in 1886. The immigration station at Ellis Island opened in 1892 and closed in 1954.

President Calvin Coolidge used his authority under the Antiquities Act to declare the statue a national monument in 1924. In 1937, by proclamation 2250, President Franklin D. Roosevelt expanded the monument to include all of Bedloe's Island, and in 1956, an act of Congress officially renamed it Liberty Island. Ellis Island was made part of the Statue of Liberty National Monument by proclamation of President Lyndon Johnson in 1965. The monument is managed by the National Park Service as part of the National Parks of New York Harbor office.

From Wikipedia

Source 2: The Statue of Liberty

Video, http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xn07sn_explore-the-colorful-history-behind-the-statue-of-liberty_travel

Source 3: The immigrant's Statue



Frank Leslie, *Illustrated Newspaper*, July 2, 1887.

*A modern city, full of history: worksheet n°5***A symbol of immigration**

Between 1886 and 1924, almost 14 million immigrants entered the United States through New York. The Statue of Liberty was a reassuring sign that they had arrived in the land of their dreams. To these anxious newcomers, the Statue's uplifted torch did not suggest "enlightenment," as her creators intended, but rather, "welcome." Over time, Liberty emerged as the "Mother of Exiles," a symbol of hope to generations of immigrants.

The opening of the immigrant processing station at Ellis Island in 1892 in the shadow of the Statue of Liberty facilitated an immigrant association, as did the later popularity of Emma Lazarus's poem, "**The New Colossus**." In 1883, Lazarus donated her poem, "The New Colossus," to an auction raising funds for the construction of the Statue's pedestal. This poem vividly depicted the Statue of Liberty as offering refuge to new immigrants from the miseries of Europe. The poem received little attention at the time, but in 1903 was engraved on a bronze plaque and affixed to the base of the Statue.

War tensions in the twentieth century reinforced this connection and further advanced the image of the Statue in the harbor as an emblem of the United States as a refuge for the poor and persecuted of Europe, and as a place of unlimited opportunity. Sometimes this image glossed over the very real drawbacks and difficulties of settling in the United States, but it was a romantic view that was dominant for decades and continues to persist. In addition to masking immigrant setbacks in the United States, it was a story that tended to favor the European side of immigration at the expense of trials encountered by newcomers from Latin America and Asia. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1936 speech in honor of the Statue's 50th Anniversary helped solidify the transformation of the Statue into an icon of immigration. In the speech he presented immigration as a central part of the nation's past and emphasized the newcomers' capacity for Americanization.

Connections drawn between the Statue of Liberty and immigration were not always positive. Nativists (Americans who opposed immigration) linked the Statue to immigration most starkly in political cartoons critiquing foreigners' threats to American liberties and values. They portrayed the monument as a symbol of a nation besieged by pollution, housing shortages, disease, and the onslaught of anarchists, communists, and other alleged subversives. Such images appeared mainly in middle-class popular magazines. They appeared in response to proposed increases in New York's immigrant processing capacity or in connection to specific political campaigns. When a new immigrant processing station was proposed on Bedloe's Island in 1890, a cartoon in *Judge* depicted the Statue as "the future emigrant lodging house." Expressing fears about the Statue's literal desecration by newcomers, as well as fears about immigrants' threat to the liberty it represented, the cartoon showed the monument encumbered by a tenement-style fire escape and clothesline. That same year, *Judge* published a scathing image of a sneering Statue raising her robe to protect it from the newcomers "European Garbage ships" dumped at her feet.

From the National Park Service website, <http://www.nps.gov/stli/historyculture/the-immigrants-statue.htm>

Source 4: History of Ellis Island

<http://www.nps.gov/elis/historyculture/places.htm>

Source 5: Ellis Island Immigration Museum

In November of 1954 the last detainee, a Norwegian merchant seaman named Arne Peterssen was released, and Ellis Island officially closed. In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson declared Ellis Island part of the Statue of Liberty National Monument. Ellis Island was opened to the public on a limited basis between 1976 and 1984. Starting in 1984, Ellis Island underwent a major restoration, the largest historic restoration in U.S. history. The \$160 million dollar project was funded by donations made to The Statue of Liberty - Ellis Island Foundation, Inc. in partnership with the National Park Service. The Main Building was reopened to the public on September 10, 1990 as the Ellis Island Immigration Museum. Today, the museum receives almost 2 million visitors annually.

http://www.ellisland.org/genealogy/ellis_island_history.asp

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Tasks

1) Watch the video on the history of the Statue of Liberty and answer the following questions:

- a) What was the original name of the Statue?
- b) Who commissioned the Statue? What for?
- c) Who designed the Statue?
- d) Where did the designer of the Statue get his ideas from?
- e) What responsibility did the Americans assume in the construction of the Statue?
- f) What was the role of Gustave Eiffel in the construction of the Statue?
- g) What was put on display during the centennial exhibition in Philadelphia?
- f) What was the original name of Liberty Island?
- i) When was the head of the Statue completed?
- j) When was the all Statue completed?
- k) When was the Statue unveiled?
- l) What was the Statue used for until 1902?
- m) What happened to the Statue in 1916?
- o) What happened to the Statue in 1984?

2) Using sources 2 and 3, explain how the Statue of Liberty became associated with immigration. Was it a positive or negative connection?

3) Read the pages on the history of Ellis Island on the National Park Service website (<http://www.nps.gov/elis/historyculture/places.htm>) and answer the following questions:

- a) Who were the first people to occupy the island?
- b) What was the island original name?
- c) Where did the name Ellis Island originate from?
- d) What was the island used for in the 19th century before 1892?
- e) What happened to the island in 1892?
- f) What buildings were built on the island during the early 20th century?
- g) How many immigrants passed through Ellis Island between 1892 and 1954?
- i) What explained the decrease in the number of immigrants passing through Ellis Island in 1920?
- j) What was Ellis Island used for during World War II?
- k) What happened to Ellis Island after the war?

4) Explain why and how both the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island have been preserved and why they are part of the same national monument.