

# U1 HOW IMMIGRATION SHAPED THE USA

## DOC C Ellis Island <https://archive.org/details/Immigrat1946>

Ellis Island was established as the first Federal *immigration* station by President Benjamin Harrison in 1890. Between 1892 and 1924 it operated as the United States' largest immigration center, where more than 12 million foreigners entered the country. Before Ellis Island, all immigrants were processed by each individual state.

Today, the buildings of Ellis Island still stand in New York harbor, just off the New Jersey coast. But the original land of the island was quite small—just 3.3 acres. Before it was an immigration center, the island was known as Oyster Island due to the rich and plentiful oyster beds that it had. It was used as a hanging site for pirates, a harbor fort, and an ammunition depot, until a man named Samuel Ellis became the private owner of the island in 1770. Then it was bought by the government in 1808, to be used as a *fortification* and harbor defense site. After it became an immigration station, the island was expanded with man-made extensions, using excess dirt and landfill that came from the *excavation* of New York City subway tunnels. It is now 27.5 acres.



1. Who was the first immigrant to be processed at Ellis Island?

2. What happened to the immigration building on June 14, 1897?

3. Why did Ellis Island end up closing?

### Their conditions of arrival





# Your visit at Ellis Island Immigration

- 1 – Read the paragraphs and use the annotations to understand them.
- 2 – Watch the short film and find out the order of the paragraphs.



Nr.	1	2	3	4	5
paragraph					

Upon *arrival*, immigrants were *inspected* for visible *ailments*. It was known as the "six second medical *exam*". Those who *failed* were marked with chalk for a full physical exam.

Those who passed went on to the Great Hall to be processed. Average processing time: **3-4 hours**. Arrivals were asked **29 questions** including: name, *occupation*, and the amount of money carried. About **2%** of immigrants were *denied admission* for *disease*, criminal background, or *insanity*. One third of the *approved* stayed in New York, the rest *scattered* across the country.

In **1976**, it opened to the public as a museum. Visitors can look through millions of arrival records to research family history. It's been *estimated* that close to **40% of all U.S. inhabitants** can *trace* at least part of their *ancestry* to Ellis Island.

**January 1892** - First station opened. Almost **450,000 immigrants** were processed during its first year.

**June 15, 1897** - A fire destroyed the building, along with most immigration *records* dating back to 1855. Plans were immediately made for a new building, with one condition - it had to be *fireproof*.

From **1892 to 1955**, this *tiny* island in New York Harbor *served as* America's largest Immigration Station - *processing* over **12 million immigrants** in just **62 years**. Originally 3.3 acres, Ellis Island was *expanded* with *landfill* to *house* the Immigration Station. It eventually grew to 27.5 acres. The fill came from the *excavation* of New York City subway tunnels.

The new building looked like a railroad station. Total cost for construction: **\$ 1.5 million**. It included a *baggage* room, a large dining hall and kitchen, *dormitories* with 600 beds, a hospital, and outdoor *recreation areas* including a roof garden.

## Annotations:

**ailment, disease** – illness, sickness, health problem

**ancestry** – origin, old family connection

**the approved** – die Zugelassenen

**arrival** – coming to a new place

**baggage** – bags, backpacks, cases

**(to) deny admission** - to not allow so. to enter the country

**dormitories** – rooms with beds

**(to) estimate** – to make a good guess

**exam (examination)** – a medical check

**excavation** – digging up things

**(to) expand** – to make larger

**(to) fail** – to not pass

**fireproof** – cannot be destroyed by fire

**(to) house** – to contain

**insanity** – mental illness

**(to) inspect** – to have a close look at

**landfill** – rubbish and rubble

**legislation** – making laws

**occupation** – job

**peak year** - the best year

**(to) process** – to deal with, to work through

**records** – papers with lots of information

**recreation area** – a green place to relax

**tiny** – very small

**(to) scatter** – to go everywhere

**(to) serve as sth./sb.** – to have the function of

**(to) trace** – to follow sth. back into the past



## DOC D SOME OF AMERICA'S MOST INFLUENTIAL AND FAMOUS IMMIGRANTS

The immigration boom of the late 1800s and early 1900s gave us some of the most influential Americans!

See if you can match these eight famous immigrants with their accomplishments.

**HINT:** Names were sometimes changed at immigration centers due to communication issues, or immigrants changed them by choice upon arriving in America. Look for clues in the descriptions to match with the names on the left.

1. *Isaasc Adimov*

A. This Iranian, born in France is the founder of eBay where he served as chairman from 1998 to 2015. He became a billionaire at the age of 31 with eBay's 1998 initial public offering.

2. *Albert Einstein*

B. Archibald Alexander Leach arrived in 1920 from England. One of the most well-known actors in Hollywood, he was known for his good looks and suave charm.

3. *John Muir*

C. Originally named Erik Weisz, this famous magician came with his family from Hungary in 1878.

4. *Joseph Pulitzer*

D. He arrived in 1923 from Russia as Isaak Yudovich Ozimov. He went on to write some of the most famous science fiction stories in history.

5. *Harri Houdini*

E. He came from Scotland in 1849. He went on to study nature and became a forest conservationist. The founder of The Sierra Club, he's often considered the father of the modern-day environmental movement.

6. *Gari Grant*

F. He arrived in Boston from Hungary in 1864 under the name Pulitzer József. He became a famous journalist. Every year, awards named after him are given out to writers, photographers and artists.

7. *Pierre Morad Omidyar*

G. computer scientist and Internet entrepreneur. Together with Larry Page, he co-founded Google. He is the 13th-richest person in the world.

8. *Sergey Brin*

H. A famous scientist, he moved to the United States in the 1930s. As a Jewish man, he decided to leave Europe because the Nazis were making it unsafe for Jewish citizens to live there.



## DOC E LEVI STRAUSS

He was born of German Jewish Descent on February 26, 1829 in Buttenheim, Germany as Loeb Strauss.

In 1847 he went to New York with his two sisters and mother to join his brothers on dry goods wholesale business. In 1850 he changed his name to Levi and in 1853 he became an American citizen.



When California Gold Rush began he decided to go west and to open a West Coast branch of the family dry goods business in San Francisco in early March 1853. He opened his dry goods wholesale business as Levi Strauss & Co. and sold clothing, bedding, combs, purses, handkerchiefs and bolts of fabric delivered from his brothers in New York.



One of his costumers was Jacob W. Davis, a Reno, Nevada tailor. Strauss received a letter from him in 1872 in which Davis told him about the new way he made pants stronger. Davis used copper rivets to make them stronger. He also wanted to patent the idea of riveting the clothing because he was afraid that someone will steal the idea. Because he did not have enough money for patent application Davis asked Strauss to be his business partner and to share the costs. Strauss agreed and on May 20, 1873 the full US Patent No. 139121 was granted in the name of Jacob W. Davis and Levi Strauss and Company. That was the birthday of the blue jeans.



For the Gold Rush, miners needed strong overalls and Levi Strauss was told the miners complained that the overalls tended to chafe. Levi Strauss substituted a twilled cotton cloth from France called "serge de Nimes." The fabric later became known as denim and the pants were nicknamed blue jeans.

### Answer the questions

1. Who was Levi Strauss?
2. Why did he go to California?
3. What did he sell at first? What for?
4. Why did he invent jeans?
5. How did he strengthen the pockets?
6. Who made jeans popular?
7. What is the most famous brand?

**Imagine you are a journalist who have travelled in time to meet Levi Strauss, let's discuss with him about how immigration shaped the USA.**

