

MODULE 3A

Listening p.26

2

Order of photographs:

1 D (immigrants arriving at Ellis Island by boat)

2 E (the Baggage Room) 3 C (the Registry Room)

4 B (Wall of Honor) 5 A (the Bunk Room)

3

1 1897 and 1924; 2 ferry (boat); 3 (B)baggage;

4 (an) interview(s); 5 (W)wall of (H)hono(u)r;

6 (B)bunk; 7 (H)hope and (F)fears;

8 11:10 (a.m.)/eleven ten (a.m.)/ten past/after eleven (a.m.);

9 Oral History Library; 10 ticket office

Audio script

Hello everyone. First of all, a big welcome to New York from all of us here at the hotel. My name's Bob and I'm here to make sure you enjoy your stay in the city. I've organised some great guided tours for you, and we start tomorrow with a trip to the Museum of Immigration on Ellis Island. Now I'm going to give you a few background details that will help you get the most out of your visit.

As you know, millions of people came to the USA from Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially during the period between 1897 and 1924 – that's the year when immigration controls were introduced – and Ellis Island was the place where they first landed. The buildings which immigrants had to pass through before they were allowed to come and live in the USA, were used right up till 1954. Then they stood empty until they were restored as a museum, which opened in September 1990. And that's where we'll be going tomorrow.

Your tour of the museum begins when you step off the ferry – at the very point where the immigrants stepped off the ships that had brought them on their long journey all the way from Europe.

The first place they passed through is called the Baggage Room. That's where they picked up their bags and other possessions, and you'll be able to see a display of typical baggage from the period there as you pass through.

You then go into what's called the Registry Room – just as the immigrants did. This is where they had medical check-ups and interviews and then, if all went well, they were allowed to enter the USA. Imagine how it must have felt to be so close to your new home, but still not be sure if you'd be accepted, or put on the next ship home again.

But most people were accepted, and it's incredible, but 100 million Americans can trace their family history in the USA to a man, woman or child who passed through this room. And 420,000 of them have their names written on what is known as the 'Wall of Honor' which you can see at the museum.

If things were real busy, or if there was a problem, the newcomers might have to spend a few days on the island, and the next place you see on the guided tour is the sleeping area, known as the Bunk Room, and then after that what's called the Hearing Room – that's where people who'd been refused entry could have their case heard by a judge.

The museum also has three theatres. Theatre 1 is a movie theatre and I've reserved tickets for you to see the 30-minute movie called Hope and Fears. In the movie, you'll see immigrants telling their own stories of how they pulled up their roots in Europe and came to live in the USA. Next door, in Theatre 2, there'll be the chance to see the play called Ellis Island Stories, which also lasts 30 minutes. This play features two immigrants and one immigration officer and it's based on real-life interviews recorded at Ellis Island. We haven't made reservations for the play, but it begins at 11:10 a.m. and there'll be plenty of time to see it if you'd like to.

Or you might want to visit the Oral History Library. The Ellis Island Oral History Project has collected recordings of first-hand accounts of people's experiences at Ellis Island, and you can listen to some of these on a computer system with 20 individual listening stations.

And if there's still time after that, why not visit the exhibition called The Peopling of America which is located in the old ticket office which was across the water from the old railroad station. This exhibition places Ellis Island in the context of 400 years of North American immigration history.

So, all in all, it looks like being a great tour ...