

The for life for the immigrants approaching



The first glimpse of the Statue of Liberty was an emotional experience remembered for life for the immigrants approaching New York Harbor. Engraved on the base of the Statue of Liberty are the words from Emma Lazarus's poem, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." The French sculptor, Frederic-Auguste Bartholdi, designed the statue. It was intended as a monument to the freedom found lacking in his own country of France. Bartholdi said, "I will try to glorify the Republic and Liberty over there, in the hope that someday I will find it again here." Bartholdi used his own mother as the model for the statue and devoted 21 years of his life to the making of the monument. Gustave Eiffel, who later designed the Eiffel Tower, designed the frame.

The Statue of Liberty was a gift from the French commemorating the American Revolution. President Grover Cleveland made the statue public on October 28, 1886. Previously, the statue had been a fixture in Paris before it was brought to Bedloe's Island, now known as Liberty Island.

In 1986 the statue underwent extensive restoration at a cost of \$69.8 million dollars. A new gold torch was added replacing the corroded original (the original is on display in the main lobby). The torch was coated with 24-carat gold leaf.

The Statue of Liberty is recognized as a symbol of freedom throughout the world. When immigrants from Southern Italy came to New York, they found themselves in "dumbbell" apartments. These apartments were so close together that no sunlight ever reached the lower windows or back yards. During the late 1800s over 40,000 people were crowded into this small 17-

block area. Diseases, such as tuberculosis, were a part of daily life. Even with these hardships, the residents of Little Italy built a lively and colorful community with the sights, sounds, and flavors of their homeland. The Italian population of New York City's " Little Italy" has dwindled to fewer than 5, 000 residents. Chinatown has expanded and replaced many of the original " Little Italy" neighborhoods.

The Feast of San Gennaro (Fiesta di San Gennaro) is the most exciting annual event in the neighborhood, beginning on September 19th and continuing for nine days. During this celebration, Mulberry Street is renamed Via San Gennaro and the shrines and relics of this saint are paraded through the streets. The crowds enjoy Italian foods of all types, as well as other ethnic dishes, and there is much singing and dancing. For visitors who enjoy eating, the restaurants in Little Italy offer reasonably priced food in quiet and friendly surroundings.

Chinatown began as a small community of Chinese immigrants seeking work in the West so that they might send home wages to their families still living in the motherland. At the turn of the century, Chinatown was isolated and controlled by secret neighborhood organizations known as " The Tongs." Some of the Tongs simply brokered loans within the community; others, such as the " Hip Sing," had formed criminal organizations.

Doyers Street was well known as " the bloody angle," where gangs often carried out retribution against their enemies. The Tongs made a truce in 1933 that brought peace to the streets of an aggressive Chinatown. By 1940 the area had become home to many middle-class families. During the post-

war era, businesses and immigrants from Hong Kong brought new wealth to Chinatown. Today, over 80, 000 Asian Americans who trace their roots back to the East call Chinatown their home. The neighborhood is known for its excellent Chinese cuisine, but its highlight is the Eastern States Buddhist Temple at 64b Mott Street.

Inside the Temple, the sight of 100 golden Buddhas shimmering in the candlelight will delight visitors. The frequent festivals and parades, as well as the galleries and curio shops create a celebration of Chinese culture that is well worth a visit. During the nineteenth century millionaires like the Astors and Vanderbilts had homes in East Village. But the waves of Irish, German, Jewish, Polish and Ukrainian immigrants who flooded into New York City in the 1900s soon displaced the elite, who moved uptown. Since then, the area has been home to the beat generation of the 1950s, Hippies in the 1960s, and later the Punks. The latest musical styles and avant-garde theater are presented here and the East Village contains the most varied assortment of ethnic restaurants in New York City. Their cuisine ranges from Indian eateries on the south side of East Sixth Street to McSorleys Old Ale House, a pub that seems unchanged since it first opened in 1854, located on East Seventh Street. Once the home of the Astor Library, the restored Public Theater has been the opening venue for many now-famous plays.

A haven from the pressure of classes at New York University, students regularly gather around the Alamo at Astor Place. The Alamo is a 15-ft (4.5m) steel cube designed by Bernard Rosenthal that revolves when pushed.

Across the street is the location of the old Astor Place Opera House. In 1849, trouble broke out here when English actor William Macready criticized American Actor Edwin Forrest. Forrests fans rioted and police killed thirty-four people.

It was here, in the Lower East Side of Manhattan, that Italians, Jews, and Chinese immigrants first settled after arriving in New York. They settled in different neighborhoods, uniquely preserving the heritage of their homelands. The Italians, who made their homes in what became known as Little Italy, found themselves living in crowded, dimly lit tenement housing. It was not uncommon to find ten to twelve people living in one room. Today, there are less than 5, 000 Italians living in Little Italy, but the smells of the Italian bakeries and restaurants can still be smelled around Mulberry and Grand Streets, the last vestiges of the Italian old-world neighborhood. Chinatown is New Yorks largest ethnic neighborhood with over 80, 000 residents and growing rapidly. Hundreds of Chinese restaurants can be found here, most of which serve excellent food. During the Chinese New Year celebrations of January and February, puppet dragons rule the streets while the sound of exploding fireworks can be heard everywhere.

Jewish immigrants' presence was located in and around Orchard Street. It was here that the New York garment industry began. Considered a stepping-stone to a new life, Jewish immigrants often moved out of the Lower East Side more quickly than their ethnic neighbors.

Many of the large Jewish synagogues found here were eventually abandoned; however, restoration is now in progress. Shapiros Winery still

remains, as does Streits Matzoh. Visitors can taste one of their 32 flavors of wine or try the delicious freshly baked unleavened bread as it rolls off the conveyor belts behind the counter. During the period from 1892 to 1954, nearly twelve million people entered the United States through the gates at Ellis Island. Forty percent of the population of America can trace their roots to an ancestor who passed through Ellis Island. In fact, at least seventy percent of all immigrants who came to America came through the New York port. Ellis Island came into being as a result of the U. S.

Governments' attempt to regulate the flow of the huge waves of immigrants coming to America's shores. Federal law determined immigrants' citizenship eligibility. As many as 5, 000 people a day were checked, questioned and sent to their destination. For most people, the process took approximately 3 to 5 hours. For the unfortunate two percent, it was a grief-stricken return trip home. First and second-class passengers on many ships were processed on board, but third class and steerage were transported to Ellis Island. Once at Ellis Island, immigrants underwent medical and legal examinations at the main building. Originally 3-acres in size, Ellis Island expanded over the years to over 27 acres and 35 additional buildings.

The islands' facilities were always inadequate until immigration quotas stemmed the tide of immigrants in 1924. In that year, Ellis Island became a detention and deportation center for undesirable aliens. During World War I and II, the island was used as a medical facility for wounded servicemen and servicewomen, and as a training site for the U. S. Coast Guard. Ellis Island was closed on November 29th, 1954 and remained abandoned until May 11,

1965. At that time then-President Lyndon Johnson placed the care of the facility under the control of the National Park Service.

To this day, Ellis Island remains a monument to the American ideals of hope, opportunity, and freedom. Words/ Pages : 1, 412 / 24