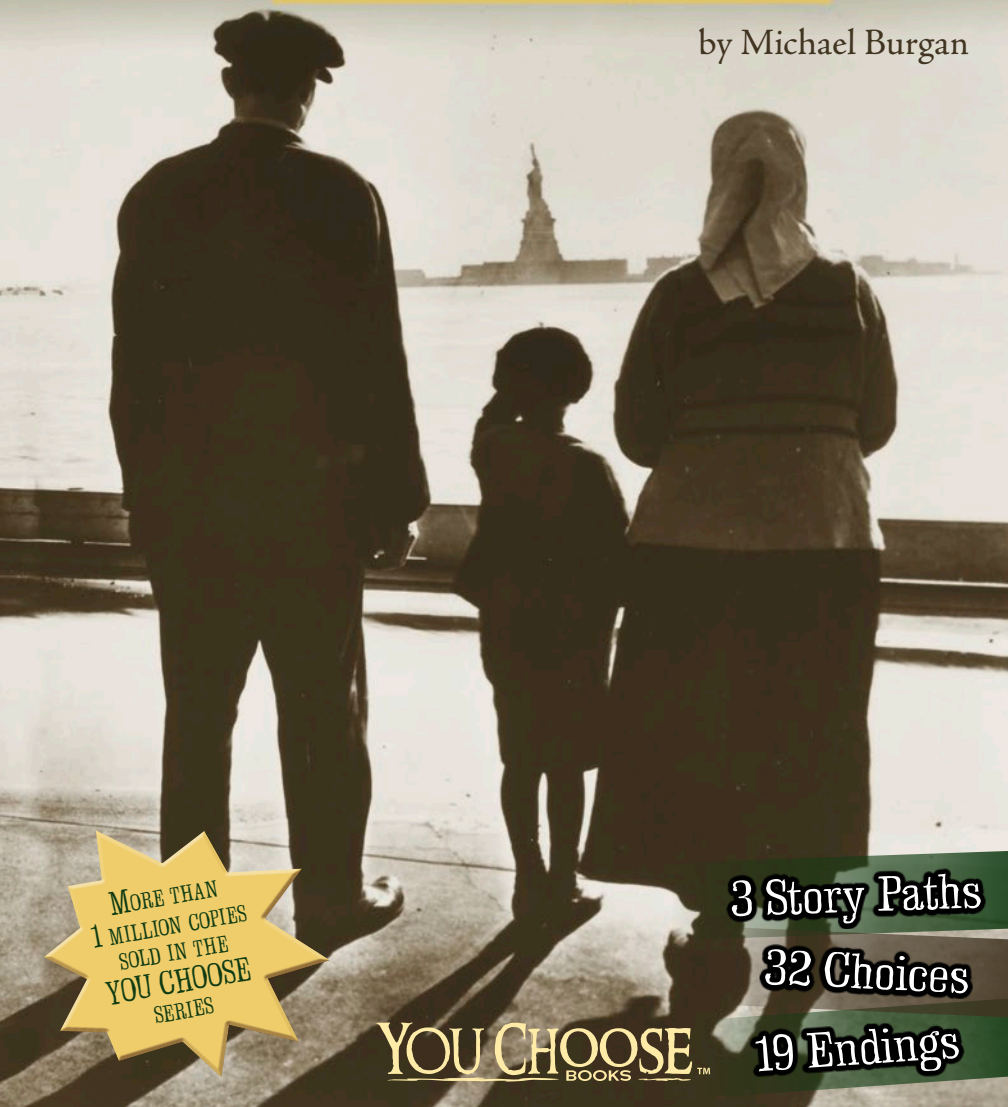


Ellis Island

An Interactive History Adventure

by Michael Burgan



MORE THAN
1 MILLION COPIES
SOLD IN THE
YOU CHOOSE
SERIES

YOU CHOOSE
BOOKS™

3 Story Paths

32 Choices

19 Endings

YOU CHOOSE[™]
BOOKS

Ellis Island

An Interactive History Adventure



by Michael Burgan

Consultant:

Zoe Burkholder, PhD

Assistant Professor, College of Education and Human Services

Montclair State University

CAPSTONE PRESS

a capstone imprint

You Choose Books are published by Capstone Press,
1710 Roe Crest Drive, North Mankato, Minnesota 56003
www.capstonepub.com

Copyright © 2014 by Capstone Press, a Capstone imprint. All rights reserved.
No part of this publication may be reproduced in whole or in part, or stored in a
retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical,
photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without written permission of the publisher.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Burgan, Michael.

Ellis Island : an interactive history adventure / by Michael Burgan.

pages cm.—(You choose: history)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-4765-0253-3 (library binding)

ISBN 978-1-4765-3606-4 (paperback)

1. Ellis Island Immigration Station (N.Y. and N.J.)—Juvenile literature. 2. United States—Emigration and immigration—History—Juvenile literature. I. Title.

JV6484.B87 2014

304.873—dc23

2013014256

Editorial Credits

Brenda Haugen, editor; Bobbie Nuytten, designer; Wanda Winch, media researcher;
Charmaine Whitman, production specialist

Photo Credits

Alamy: SZ Photo/Scherl, 94; Corbis: Bettmann, 50, Underwood & Underwood,
72; CriaImages.com: Jay Robert Nash Collection, 42; Library of Congress: Prints
and Photographs Division, cover, 6, 9, 19, 23, 27, 34, 47, 54, 57, 58, 67, 70, 81, 86,
91; National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), 65, ourdocuments.
gov, 83; Shutterstock: SeanPavonePhoto, 103, Songquan Deng, 100; The Statue
of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, Inc., The American Immigrant Wall of Honor®,
www.wallofhonor.org, 104; YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, 12

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Your Adventure..... 5

Chapter 1

Coming to Ellis Island 7

Chapter 2

The Trip to America..... 13

Chapter 3

Life in a New Land 43

Chapter 4

Questions of Loyalty..... 73

Chapter 5

Ellis Island Today 101

Timeline 106

Other Paths to Explore..... 108

Read More..... 109

Internet Sites..... 109

Glossary 110

Bibliography..... 111

Index 112

ABOUT YOUR ADVENTURE

YOU are one of millions of immigrants who are leaving their homelands during the early 20th century to travel to the United States. When you reach America, your first stop is Ellis Island, just off the shores of New York City.

In this book you'll explore how the choices people made meant the difference between life and death. The events and work you'll experience happened to real people.

Chapter One sets the scene. Then you choose which path to read. Follow the directions at the bottom of each page. The choices you make will change your outcome. After you finish one path, go back and read the others for new perspectives and more adventures.

*YOU CHOOSE the path
you take through history.*

Immigrants often had few comforts on the ships that brought them to the U.S.

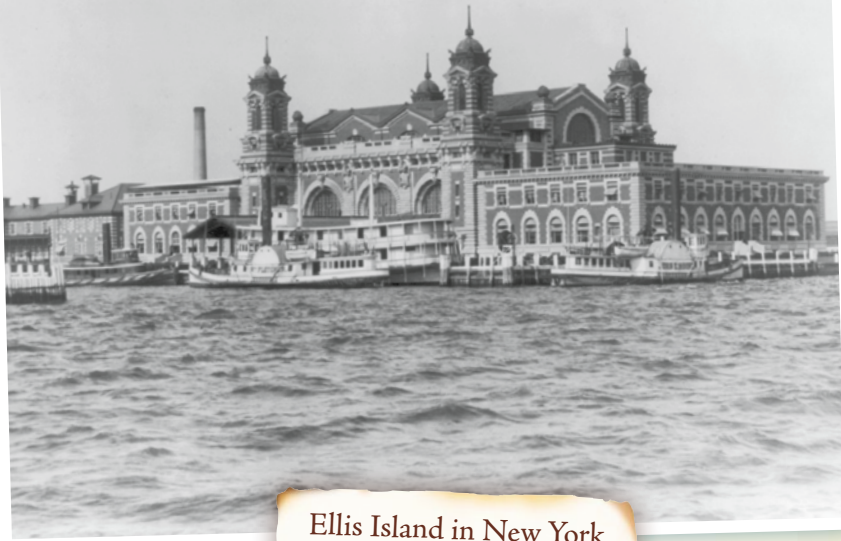


Coming to Ellis Island

Immigrants came to the United States long before Ellis Island opened in 1892. They came for many reasons. Some wanted to escape problems in their homelands, such as wars or famine. Some immigrants couldn't worship as they chose in Europe. Many came seeking jobs. For many, hard work led to a chance to earn more money than they could at home. Their children also had a chance to get an education.

At times friends and family members already in the United States pulled immigrants to the country. Letters talked about the land available in the west or the jobs in factories. Most immigrants of the 19th and early 20th centuries were young men. Some came to make money and then planned to return to their homelands. Others sent for wives, children, and other relatives once they found homes and jobs.

By the 1880s many native-born white Americans were alarmed by the growing number of immigrants entering the country. Americans also noticed a change in the immigrants. Previous immigrants had come mostly from northern Europe, Germany, and the United Kingdom. Most were Protestant, which was the major faith in the United States at the time.



Ellis Island in New York
was the first stop for
many immigrants.

But the immigrants of the 1880s and after came from southern and eastern Europe. Some were dark skinned. Many were Roman Catholic or Jewish. They spoke unfamiliar languages.

Some native-born Americans saw these new immigrants as a threat. These Americans thought the new immigrants committed crimes and spread political ideas that could weaken democracy. Some American workers also feared the immigrants would take away their jobs.

The first major law to limit immigration targeted the Chinese, who settled mostly on the west coast. That law was passed in 1882. But soon other laws affected all immigrants, including the ones entering New York City. The number of immigration laws increased after 1890.

Ellis Island will be the first stop on your search for wealth and freedom in the U.S. At Ellis Island you see the effects of the laws meant to restrict immigration. If you're lucky, you'll pass all the tests you must go through. If you're unlucky, Ellis Island might be your last stop before going back to your homeland.

- *To be a young Russian Jewish girl during the early 1900s seeking a better life in the U.S., turn to page 13.*
- *To be a teenage Italian boy landing at Ellis Island during World War I, turn to page 43.*
- *To be a German immigrant facing deportation after World War I, turn to page 73.*



A house in Russia was home to eight families and included a grocery store.

The Trip to America

You live with your family in a part of western Russia called the Pale of Settlement. The Russian rulers set aside this area for Russian Jews long before you were born. Now, in 1909, several million Jews live there.

You ask your mother why Jews are forced to live in this region and can't travel freely in Russia.

“Because the Russians hate us,” she replies.
“They think we take business away from them. They think Jews are evil. That's why your father left for America. Soon we will too.”

Your father left your village three years ago, after a pogrom. In these vicious attacks, gangs of Russians destroyed the homes of Jews. Sometimes they killed the Jews. People in your village escaped the violence, but you have neighbors whose relatives were killed. The police did nothing to stop these brutal gangs.

You know a little about the United States from your father's letters. In one he described his voyage there and his arrival at Ellis Island. You'll go there too. But first you and your family must travel to Hamburg, Germany. From there you'll sail to New York.

You have a passport and your ticket for the ship. Mama also has money to show the officials in New York. Paupers, who are people without money, aren't allowed into the United States.

The day finally comes to begin your journey. Your heart beats fast with excitement as you stand by your mother. Next to her is your brother, Samuel, and your mother's sister, Hannah. She's going with you to meet her husband, who emigrated last year. Three large wagons wait in the village square to carry you and others to the train station.

The people jostle as they try to get into the wagons. You get separated from your family. Suddenly you hear a cry. It's Samuel! He's lying on the ground. Your mother stands over him.

“What happened?” you ask after you force your way through the crowd to get to them.

“He fell, and someone stepped on him!” your mother replies, her voice thick with anger. “I think he broke his foot. He needs to see a doctor right away. Go with Hannah. We’ll have to take another train. Don’t worry. We’ll be OK.”

You want to be with your mother and brother for this long trip. But you think of the ticket in your pocket and finally seeing your father again.

➤ *To continue on with Hannah, go to page 17.*

➤ *To stay with your mother, turn to page 41.*

You look at your mother as you feel tears fill your eyes. “Go with Hannah,” she says. “Everything will be fine.”

Hannah squeezes your hand and then waves at your mother. You step into the wagon. As it pulls away, you wonder when—or if—you will see Mama and Samuel again.

The wagon takes you to the railroad station. The train is even more crowded than the wagon. People are jammed onto benches and sitting on their bags, which are crammed into the aisles. You and Hannah finally find a spot to sit.

At the German border, several men get on the train. Two of them are police officers. They stop and question everyone on board. “I think one’s a doctor,” your aunt says.



Speaking in Russian, the doctor asks about your health. “No signs of cholera?” Hannah says no.

As the men move on, you ask Hannah, “What’s cholera?”

“A sickness of the stomach. If they thought we had it and could spread it, they wouldn’t let us into Germany.”

You’re glad you’re feeling well. You would hate to turn back now.

After several days’ journey on the crowded train, you finally reach Hamburg. At the docks you board the largest ship, the *Pretoria*. You enter your tiny cabin in steerage. Three levels of bunks are attached to the wall. An old woman, Leah Orloff, is already on the lowest bunk. You take the middle one. Hannah takes the top. After the ship sails, you notice your stomach feels strange. You haven’t eaten much today. Maybe that’s why you feel ill. Or maybe it’s seasickness.



The SS *Pretoria* was used by the U.S. Navy to transport troops after World War I.

“Maybe you should see the ship’s doctor,”
Hannah says.

You don’t like doctors. But maybe he can help.

You leave the cabin and walk through the crowded ship. Your stomach feels odd, and your legs cramp a bit. When you reach the doctor, many other people are in line ahead of you. A nurse approaches. She speaks to you in a foreign language—perhaps German. You shake your head and say in Yiddish, “I don’t understand.”

A young man behind you speaks up. “I speak Yiddish and some German. Tell me your problem, and I’ll try to explain it to her.”

You tell him your stomach and legs hurt. As you stand there, you feel a sudden urge to go to the bathroom. The young man points at a door. You rush to it. Later you return to the line, feeling weak.

The young man says, “The nurse says it’s probably just seasickness. And maybe you’re tired. Eat an apple to settle your stomach, and try to sleep.”

The young man continues, “My name is Jacob. I’m from Poland. Let’s see if we can find you an apple.”

“But aren’t you sick too?” you ask. “Why did you come to the doctor?”

“For my brother. He’s in with the doctor now.
Come on.”

Jacob is also traveling in steerage. But he takes you to a part of the ship where the second-class passengers stay. He calls out several times in German, “Does anyone have an apple for a sick girl?” Finally a woman comes over and hands him an apple. He smiles as he hands you the fruit.

“Would you like to meet my family?”
Jacob asks.

You like Jacob. It would be nice to meet his family. But Hannah is waiting for you.

➤ *To go back to the cabin, turn to page 22.*

➤ *To go with Jacob, turn to page 29.*

“My aunt might be worried about me,” you tell Jacob. “I should go. But we can meet later.”

Jacob tells you where his cabin is located. Then you turn back toward yours.

The apple didn’t make you feel better. The ship is not swaying as much, but your stomach still feels upset. And you’re so thirsty.

Back at the cabin, you tell Hannah what’s happened. “You look awful,” she says.

You feel awful too. Over the next few hours, you rush several times to a bucket that serves as a toilet.

Back in your bunk, you finally fall asleep. The next thing you know, Hannah is waking you.

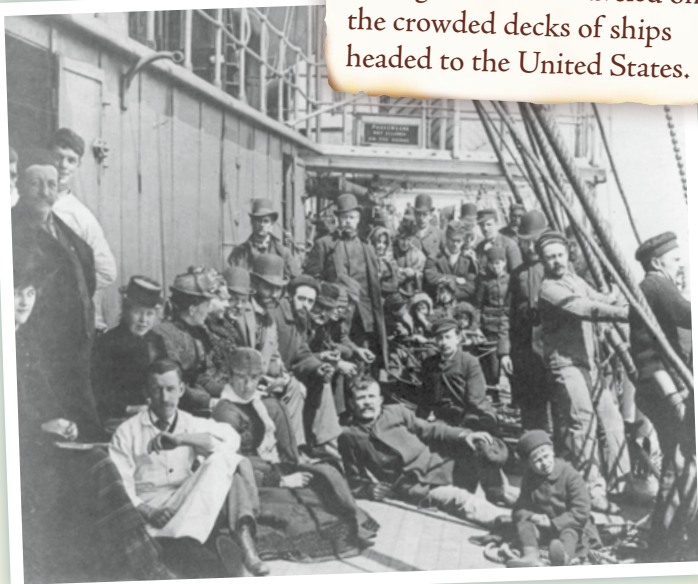
“Here, drink this water.”

“I’m not thirsty,” you say.

“Take it,” Hannah says. “And I think we should go back to the doctor.”

“Find Jacob first,” you say. “He can translate for us.” You tell Hannah where Jacob’s cabin is. You fall asleep again. When you awake, Hannah and Jacob help you to the doctor’s office. The doctor looks at you while Jacob explains your symptoms. The doctor says something, and Jacob turns to you with a serious look.

Immigrants often traveled on the crowded decks of ships headed to the United States.



“He thinks you have cholera,” he says. “You probably caught it before you reached Hamburg.”

“What can we do?” Hannah asks.

“The doctor has some drugs here, but they don’t always work,” Jacob explains. “You would have to stay here in the hospital.”

“I don’t want to stay here!” you say. “I want to go back to the cabin with Hannah.”

“But you could die!” Hannah cries.

You know that’s true. But you could die if you stay at the hospital. And what if the doctor is wrong? Maybe you don’t have cholera.

➤ *To stay in the hospital, go to page 25.*

➤ *To go with Hannah, turn to page 40.*

“I’ll stay here,” you say. “But tell the doctor he must let Hannah stay with me.”

The doctor agrees and begins giving you the medicine. With you in the small room are other people with cholera.

Over the next week, you start feeling better. The doctor lets you return to your cabin as the ship nears New York. Finally the day comes. You and Jacob watch as the ship passes the Statue of Liberty. The deck is filled with people who want to see this symbol of hope in their new country.

When the ship docks, you board a ferry that takes you from the dock to Ellis Island. You enter a room where guards tell you to leave your things. You walk up some stairs and enter a huge hall.

Many languages are being spoken as the officials question the new arrivals. Translators help the immigrants communicate. Doctors inspect you and Hannah. To check your eyes, the examiner lifts up your eyelids with a metal rod with a small hook at the end. Hannah passes through, but a translator pulls you aside.

“Your eyes don’t look right,” the man says. “They want to check you again.” He marks your back with a piece of chalk and leads you to an examination room.

“You’ll be fine,” Hannah says, but she looks worried. After the doctor examines you, he speaks to the translator, who then comes over to you.

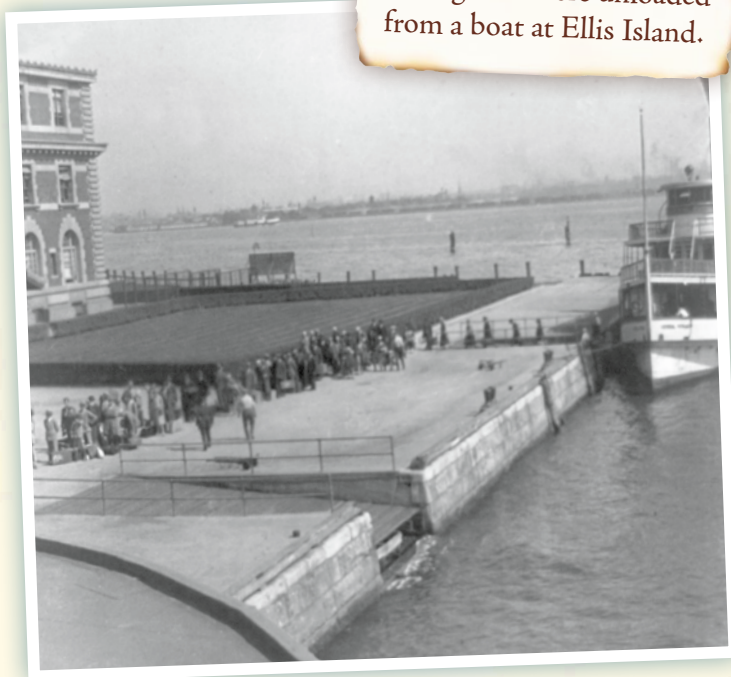
“He says you have a disease called trachoma. You have to go through another exam.”

First the cholera and now this! You start to cry.

“What will happen to her?” Hannah asks.

“They will examine her again. She might have to go back to Hamburg,” the man says. “And you’ll have to go with her. She’s too young to travel alone.”

Immigrants were unloaded from a boat at Ellis Island.



You're led to a room where more people examine you. A translator asks if you have money to pay for a doctor. You shake your head no.

"Then they won't let you in," the translator says. You start to cry again.

"Maybe I can get out before we sail, to tell your father," Hannah says, wiping away her own tears. "And we'll write your mother. Everything will be all right."

But you wonder what will happen as you make the long voyage back to Europe. This isn't how you had hoped your new life would turn out.



THE END

*To follow another path, turn to page 11.
To read the conclusion, turn to page 101.*

You eat the apple as you walk with Jacob. The cabins in steerage are hot, tiny, and smell of unwashed bodies. The cabins smell so bad that many people crowd outside on deck. The first- and second-class passengers are on the decks above you. They paid more money, so they have better food and nicer rooms. A few of them throw candy to the younger kids on the steerage deck. After a while you feel better. You thank Jacob for his help and go back to your cabin.

For more than a week, the ship cuts across the Atlantic. The trip is long and boring. You eat watery soup that tastes horrible. You have some of your mother's homemade bread with you, but what's left is stale. You can't wait to reach Ellis Island.

On the last night, the wind begins to howl. The seas get rough, and all around you people are moaning. Some are praying.

“What’s the matter?” you ask a woman.

“A storm—a terrible storm. We’re right in the middle of it. The crew has never seen anything like it.”

Back in the cabin, Hannah looks pale. So does the elderly woman with you, Mrs. Orloff.

“Maybe food will help,” you say. “I felt better after I ate an apple.”

“Oh, I don’t think I could eat anything,” Mrs. Orloff says. “I feel so miserable. I feel like I’m going to die.”

“You won’t die,” Hannah says. “I’ll look for food.”

Maybe you should go. Hannah is sick and shouldn’t be walking around the ship during a storm. But if Mrs. Orloff needed help, Hannah might not have the strength to do it.

➤ *To look for food, go to page 31.*

➤ *To stay in the cabin, turn to page 35.*