

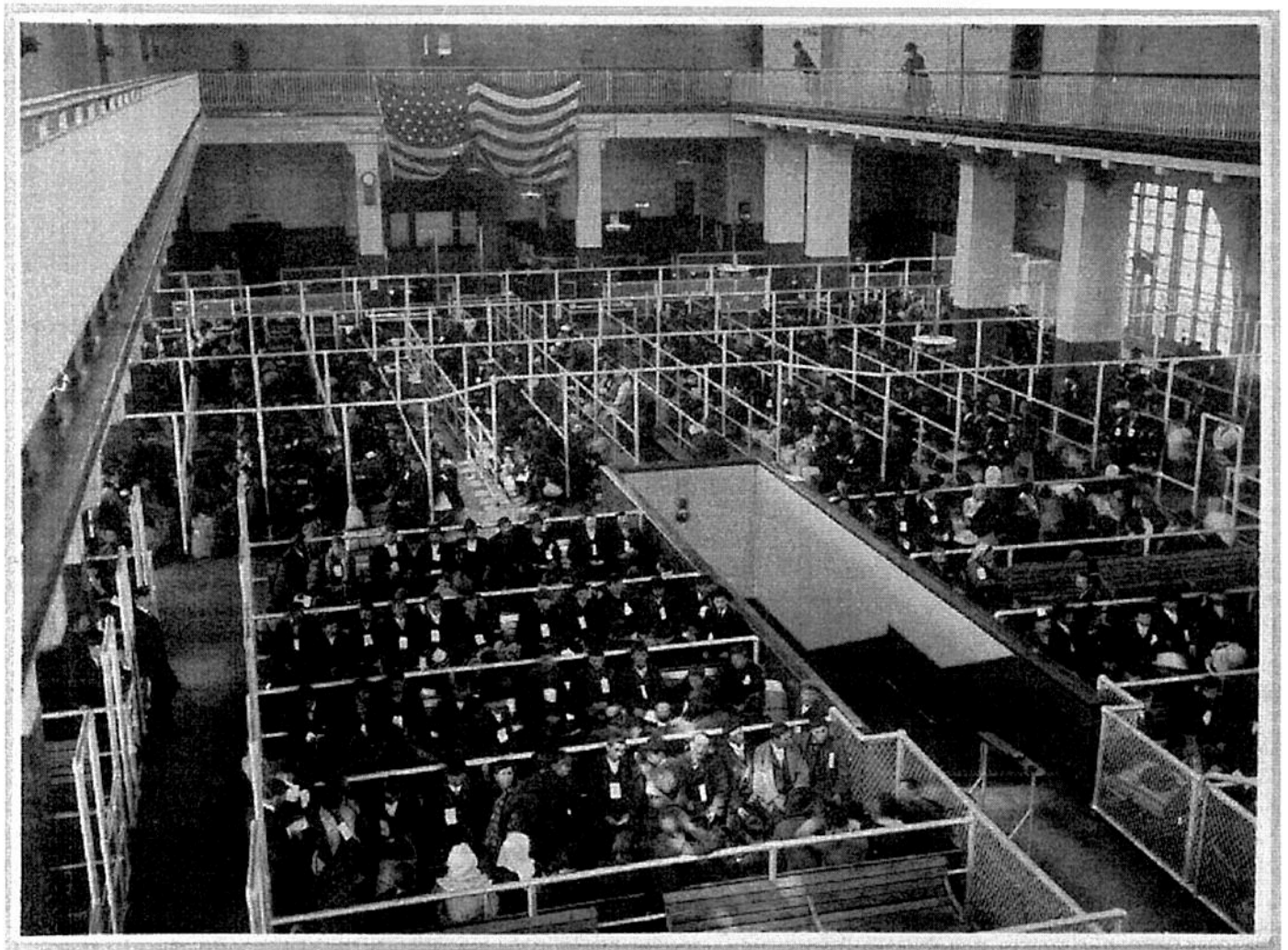
NOTES ON ELLIS ISLAND

The U.S. immigration center located in New York Harbor opened in 1892 and closed in 1954. Before 1892,

Castle Garden

was the immigration center.

1. Most immigrants passed through Ellis Island. Approximately 5000 per day. Processing took 3 – 4 hours. Only steerage passengers were processed at Ellis Island.
2. The immigrants were “herded” into lines in the baggage room then the Great Hall



3. Legal Inspection:

Questioning: Immigrants were questioned to see if they could get a job and support themselves

and would not be a burden to the United States. Officials checked the answers on the ship's manifest.

Some questions asked were:

"Can you read and write?"

"Are you educated?"

"Do you have a job waiting?"

"Do you have any skills?"

"Do you have any relatives living in the U.S.?"

"Is anyone meeting you?"

"How much money do you have?"

"How did you pay for the trip?"

"Do you believe in democratic government?"



- Interpreters were available to help translate questions for the immigrants.

- Names were sometimes changed by immigration officials who couldn't pronounce foreign names. Sometimes families changed their names before they arrived to sound less ethnic.

-If the immigrant did not pass the exams, he/she could be deported (sent back).

4. Medical Examination:

- Immigrants were examined to be sure they could work and take care of themselves.

-Inspectors used a button hook to flip eyelids to look for trachoma (contagious eye disease)

-Looked for signs of tuberculosis (contagious lung disease)

-Examined for physical disabilities (limping, shuffling)

-Those with contagious diseases were put into quarantine and isolated in the hospital until they were better. The family was housed in the dormitory to wait.

-Clothing was marked with chalk to identify problems.

-If the immigrant did not pass the exams, he/she could be deported (sent back).



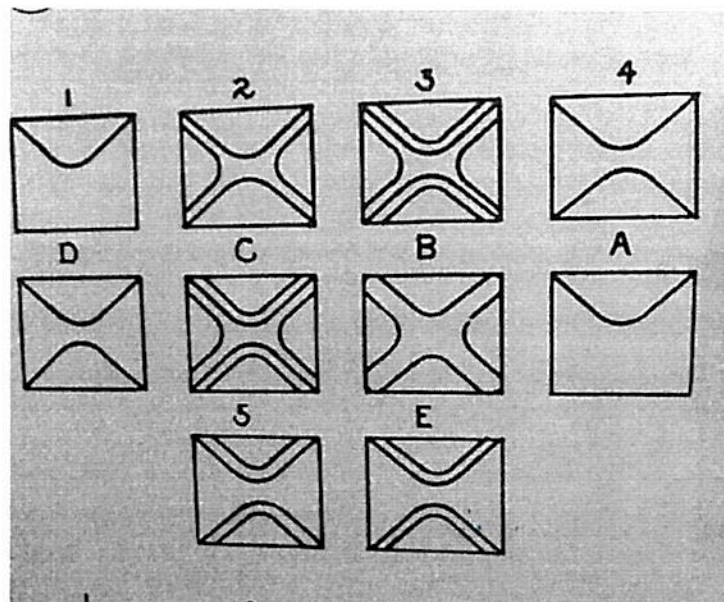
X	Suspected mental defect	F	Face	P	Physical and Lungs
⊗	Definite signs of mental disease observed	F†	Feet	P ₃	Pregnancy
B	Back	G	Golter	S _c	Scalp (Favus)
C	Conjunctivitis	H	Heart	S	Senility
CT	Trachoma	K	Hernia		
E	Eyes	L	Lameness		
		N	Neck		

Mental Examination:

Doctors first asked the immigrants to answer a few questions about themselves, and then to solve simple arithmetic problems, or count backward from 20 to 1, or complete a puzzle.

If the immigrant did not pass the tests, he/she could be deported.

If the immigrant passed through the processing, he/she was free to enter New York City.



Immigrants bought ferry tickets to Manhattan to start their new lives.

Some were taken advantage of by con men – overpriced rooms, stolen luggage, etc.

Called “ greenhorns ” because they were not knowledgeable about America.

ANGEL ISLAND:

Angel Island was the processing center on the west coast. It is located in San Francisco.