Genealogy Rocks!

Ellis Island Passenger Records

To most people, Ellis Island is synonymous with immigration to America. Over 12 million immigrants to America passed through New York Harbor's Ellis Island during its 60-year period of operation from 1892 until 1954. It was the busiest immigration station in America; during its peak years in the early 1900s, approximately 5,000 to 10,000 people were processed each day. Nearly 40% of Americans today can trace their ancestry back to someone who passed through Ellis Island.

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The entry process consisted of answering medical and legal questions to prove fitness for entry into the United States. About 80% were processed successfully in a matter of hours, but others could be detained for days and weeks. Some were returned to their ports of origin, thus giving rise to the island's nickname, "Island of Tears." The free website www.ellisisland.org is a great starting point for finding those ancestors. Passenger manifests and pictures of ships are also available at this site. The popular subscription website, www.ancestry.com, also has passenger manifests during the Ellis Island period. In addition, ships' pictures can usually be found by googling the name of the ship.

The New York Times published a daily column called "Shipping News," which listed every ship arriving or departing from the harbor. These listings give a brief overview of a ship's voyage, mentioning sightings of ice bergs and deaths on board. The columns cover the period from 1855 through the present. The New York Times can be accessed from home via the Denver Public Library website: http://denverlibrary.org. A library card is required, but cards are available at no cost.

❖ *Carol Stetser is our society's researcher, instructor, speaker, and Old Town Library volunteer for the Larimer County Genealogical Society. Please visit our society website at www.lcgsco.org or our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/lcgsco to learn more about genealogy and our monthly events.*