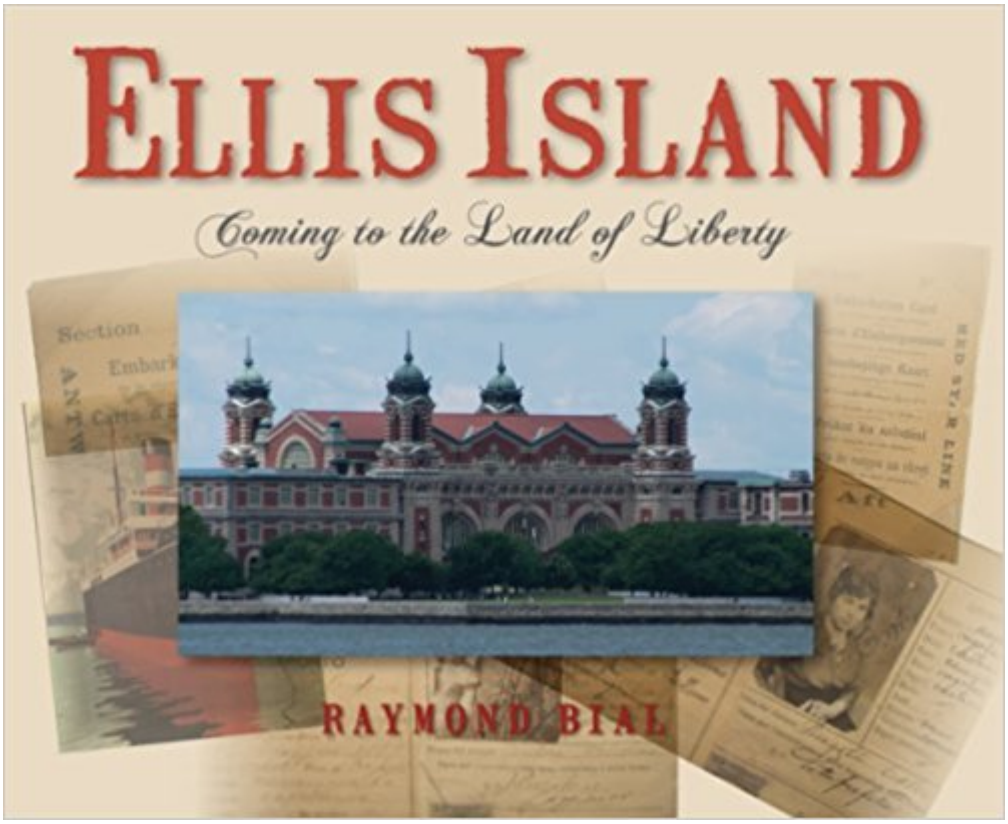
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Ellis Island: Coming To The Land Of Liberty



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Synopsis

Ellis Island, AmericaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s most famous location in its history of immigration, was once a landfill in the upper bay of New York Harbor. Since its opening on January 1, 1892, Ellis Island has come to symbolize the waves of immigrants from a list of countries that seems endless. Although there were other immigration stations along the United StatesÃ¢â ¬â„¢ shores between 1892 and 1924, half of the newcomers to the United States came through Ellis Island. Once a popular spot with picnickers, Ellis Island was purchased by a farmer in 1794. The government reclaimed the island and Ellis Island became the foremost station in immigration services. It was enlarged to six acres, and nearly twelve million people passed through its doors until it closed in 1954. This is the story not only of the many Americans who first came to this country through Ellis Island but of Ellis Island itself.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 1220L (What's this?)
Hardcover: 48 pages
Publisher: HMH Books for Young Readers; 1 edition (May 18, 2009)
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Age Range: 10 - 12 years
Grade Level: 5 - 7

Customer Reviews

"The generously sized period photos and Bial's museum shots tell a vivid and poignant tale for even those who cannot yet read the words. If one cannot get to the museum itself, this book is the next best thing."--School Library Journal"With the handsome treatment readers have come to expect, Bial presents the history of the New York Harbor immigration station . . . Illustrated with the

authorÃ¢â ¬â„¢s photographs of the current museum as well as archival images, the account is further enriched by frequent quotes from those who passed through its doors."--Kirkus Reviews". . . plentiful historical photographs speak volumes, and BialÃ¢â ¬â„¢s contemporary shots provide a worthy guide for those who cannot visit the restored buildings and exhibits in person."--Booklist"As Bial's appended "Children's Books" bibliography attests, there is plenty of material on Ellis Island available to young reader. Bial stakes a claim, though, to some of the most browsable, engaging photographs, which accompany his essay on the function of the island and the experiences of some of the immigrants who passed through, or were turned back, at the examination center."--Bulletin

Raymond Bial is an acclaimed photoessayist for children. Four of his books were chosen as Notable Books in the Field of Social Studies by the NCSS. He lives in Urbana, Illinois, with his wife and children.

Ellis Island has a rich history as the United States' largest and most famous immigration station. Following its formal opening on January 1, 1892 when fifteen year-old Annie Moore disembarked from her steamship as the first immigrant to register at Ellis Island, close to twelve million immigrants passed through the doors of this station. Although it closed in 1954, Ellis Island has remained open to the public, first on a limited basis, and then, following the largest historic renovation in U.S. history, on a more general basis as the Ellis Island Immigration Museum.This interesting and informative book presents a detailed textual and photographic description of how Ellis Island came into being and evolved to meet the extensive demands placed upon it by thousands of immigrants per day. Also of note is the balanced account of the new opportunities that immigrants experienced after passing through Ellis Island, as well as the enormous disappointment felt by those who made the long ocean journey only to face deportation after failing to meet the entrance requirements. Poor health, lack of economic means, and possible criminal backgrounds were enough to substantiate a decision to send an immigrant back to the "old country." Many a reader may feel inspired to schedule a trip to Ellis Island to recreate the feelings their ancestors experienced when walking through these walls during their attempts to secure a more prosperous way of life.

Striking photographs and interesting text will attract children to this lively, warm refresher on the role of Ellis Island Immigration Station in our national and personal histories. Raymond Bial took the modern photographs himself and chose the archival shots. The old and the new graphics blend

seamlessly, highlighting the emotion of the events which, although history, are neither distant nor remote. Bial introduces catchy facts about the history of the island, once mere landfill, and about the United States Immigration Service, a federal response to each state doing their own thing. The book is a general view of all arrivals, with experiences true for all ethnic groups. There are several memories specifically about Jewish experiences and a few photos including Jewish people and religious items. More than half of the famous immigrants noted by name are Jewish, although the text does not say so. Jewish poet Emma Lazarus is quoted (her poem on the base of the Statue of Liberty) without being identified as Jewish. The text does not shirk from noting anti-immigrant sentiment and quotas. But, the common history for all groups helps establish a strong feeling of community. Counter-pointing the visions of the immigrants with the current visitors to Ellis Island creates a sense of poignancy and a common bond. Readers will care about the past, think about their family backgrounds, and hopefully journey there themselves as a result of this well researched, well written and well produced photo journalism. Pair this with another of Bial's excellent photo-essay books, Tenement: Immigrant Life on the Lower East Side. Ages 8 to 12. Ellen Cole

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