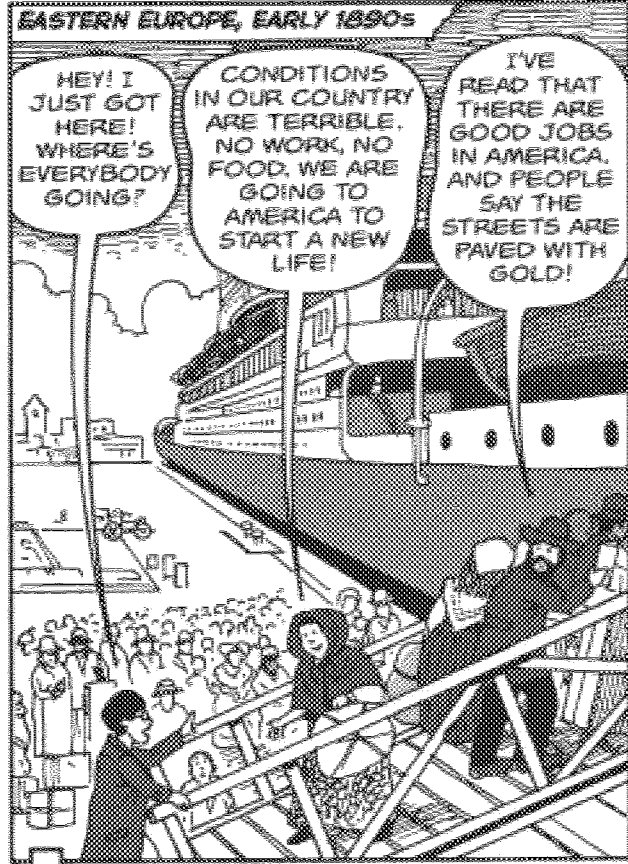


Time Traveler Scooter McGinty in ...

THE STORY OF
**AMERICA'S
IMMIGRANTS**

1890s -- New York Harbor





BETWEEN 1880 AND 1920 MORE THAN 35 MILLION EUROPEANS CAME TO AMERICA IN SEARCH OF A BETTER LIFE. MOST WERE SO POOR THEY TRAVELED IN CROWDED STEERAGE COMPARTMENTS ON STEAMSHIPS—WHERE LUGGAGE WAS USUALLY STORED. THE TRIP COULD TAKE UP TO THREE WEEKS.

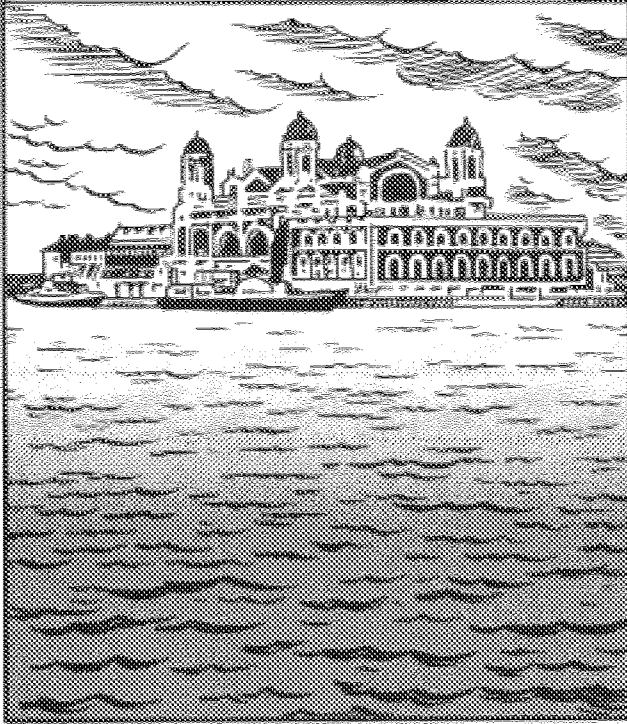


THE STATUE OF LIBERTY, A GIFT FROM FRANCE ON AMERICA'S 100TH BIRTHDAY, GREETED ALL NEW ARRIVALS IN NEW YORK HARBOR. (SHIPS CARRYING IMMIGRANTS ARRIVED IN OTHER U.S. CITIES AS WELL, SUCH AS BOSTON AND NEW ORLEANS.)



FACT BOX The statue was actually 10 years late! It was officially opened on October 28, 1886. A poem by Emma Lazarus, on the statue's pedestal since 1903, includes the famous lines, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free...I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

FIRST, THE NEWCOMERS HAD TO BE PROCESSED. MORE THAN 12 MILLION PEOPLE PASSED THROUGH THE ELLIS ISLAND IMMIGRATION STATION IN NEW YORK HARBOR FROM 1892 TO 1954. IN A SINGLE DAY IN 1954, 11,747 IMMIGRANTS WERE PROCESSED THERE!



AT ELLIS ISLAND, CROWDED CONDITIONS AND TOUGH MEDICAL INSPECTIONS AWAITED IMMIGRANTS. SOME, WHO WERE FOUND TO BE PHYSICALLY OR MENTALLY UNFIT, WERE SENT RIGHT BACK TO EUROPE. AMONG THE IMMIGRANTS, ELLIS ISLAND WAS KNOWN AS THE "ISLAND OF TEARS."



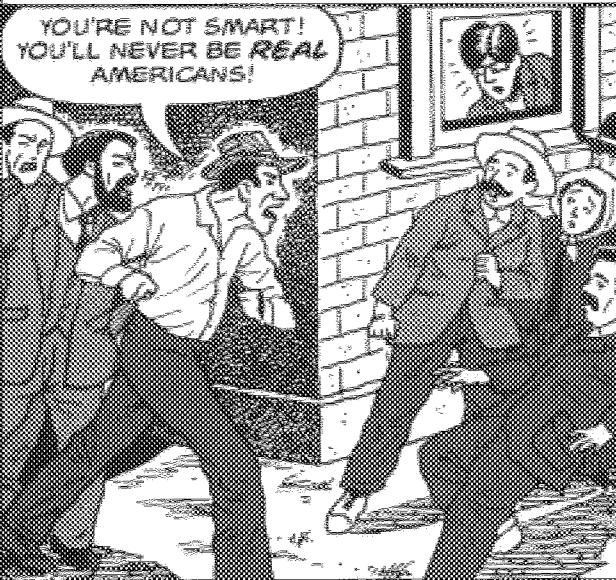
CONDITIONS WERE NO BETTER IN THE CITIES. IMMIGRANT FAMILIES LIVED IN TINY APARTMENTS IN CHEAPLY MADE BUILDINGS CALLED TENEMENTS. STILL, MANY FOUND A SENSE OF COMMUNITY IN NEIGHBORHOODS FILLED WITH PEOPLE FROM THEIR HOME COUNTRIES. EVERYONE SPOKE THE SAME LANGUAGE AND ATE FAMILIAR FOODS IN THESE GHETTOS.



THE IMMIGRANTS WERE A CHEAP LABOR SOURCE FOR MANY AMERICAN INDUSTRIES SUCH AS THE RAILROADS, STEEL MILLS, COAL MINES, MEAT-PACKING PLANTS AND CLOTHING MAKERS. MANY FACTORIES WERE KNOWN AS SWEATSHOPS BECAUSE OF THEIR LONG HOURS, LOW PAY, AND DANGEROUS CONDITIONS.



PEOPLE BORN IN AMERICA WERE NOT ALWAYS KIND TO THE NEWCOMERS. SOME WANTED THE IMMIGRANTS TO GIVE UP THE CUSTOMS OF THEIR HOME COUNTRIES. OTHERS THOUGHT THAT THEY SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED IN THE UNITED STATES AT ALL.



LAWS PASSED IN 1921 AND 1924 CHANGED THE U.S. IMMIGRATION POLICY. THOSE FROM ENGLAND, IRELAND, AND GERMANY -- WHERE THE PARENTS OF MOST PEOPLE BORN IN AMERICA CAME FROM -- WERE ALLOWED IN. ALL OTHER IMMIGRATION WAS SEVERELY LIMITED UNTIL 1965.

AT THE SAME TIME, OTHER AMERICANS TRIED TO HELP THE IMMIGRANTS. IN CHICAGO, JANE ADDAMS HELPED IMMIGRANTS GET JOBS AND EDUCATE AND CARE FOR THEIR CHILDREN. IN NEW YORK, JACOB RIIS WORKED TO IMPROVE THE GHETTOS BY SHOWING HIS PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE BAD LIVING CONDITIONS.



THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE HAS IMPROVED OVER TIME, BUT MANY NEWCOMERS TO THESE SHORES FACED SIMILAR HARDSHIPS. THE COMING TOGETHER OF DIFFERENT PEOPLES AND CULTURES IS WHAT AMERICA IS TRULY FAMOUS FOR. WE ARE A MELTING POT-- A NATION OF IMMIGRANTS!



SCOOTER'S QUICK QUIZ

1. What was the name of the place in New York where most immigrants were processed?
2. Which country gave us the Statue of Liberty and why? What has it come to represent?
3. Why do you think Jacob Riis's photographs changed the way people thought about immigrant life?
4. Research your own family's immigrant story. What nation were your ancestors from? Who was the first to come to the United States?
5. What are the benefits of a society that is a melting pot of many different cultures?