

IMMIGRANTS SPARED THE ISLAND TEST

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Body

To the Editor:

The renovation and restoration of Ellis **Island** has been mentioned in papers recently, notably in articles and letters in The Times. Ellis **Island** did indeed play a considerable role in the immigration that helped to build our country, but I wonder how many of those who want to restore it are aware of the part that class played in Ellis **Island** interrogation.

Only steerage passengers went through Ellis **Island**. While cabins on the liners were occupied mostly by Americans and wealthy European tourists, this was not invariably the case. I have an example in my own family.

My maternal grandfather came to the United States as an **immigrant** at the turn of the century. He traveled steerage, like most other **immigrants**, and was interrogated on Ellis **Island**. He was questioned closely about his prospects and qualifications. He was not allowed to have a job, but had to have good qualifications for one.

My grandmother and the children, who came over several months later, had enough money to obtain second- class cabins. They were politely interviewed in the ship's salon and waved ashore without ever seeing Ellis **Island**.

ARTHUR J. MORGAN New York, June 8, 1984

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