OUR IMMIGRANTS AT ELLIS ISLAND

BY

MRS. FRANCIS E. CLARK

http://lccn.loc.gov/12013648

Library of Congress www.loc.gov/teachers

OUR IMMIGRANTS AT ELLIS ISLAND

An Exercise Prepared for the Young People and Descriptive of the Reception, Inspection, and Experiences of our Immigrants in the Detention-Room and Railway Offices

BY

MRS. FRANCIS E. CLARK

Harriet Elizabeth (Abbott) Clark

COPYRIGHT, 1912

UNITED SOCIETY OF CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR
BOSTON CHICAGO

http://lccn.loc.gov/12013648

Library of Congress www.loc.gov/teachers

JV6435
C6

FOREWORD

THIS exercise has been prepared in order that our young people may know more of the conditions under which the immigrants come to our shores, and may have a more sympathetic interest in their lives. All the stories here told are true accounts of real experiences of immigrants who have recently come to our country.

Pictures in our home-missionary magazines and leaflets will give illustrations of the costumes needed, and a glance at the immigrants we may see in our railway stations will also help. But simply a bright-colored handkerchief and apron will do much towards picturing out one of these foreign women, and almost any old-fashioned garret will furnish carpetbags and boxes and bundles for their luggage.

Cards should be prepared beforehand to hang around the necks of those representing immigrants, on which have been printed the letters F. I. (Further Investigation), S. I. (Special Inquiry), T. D. (Temporarily Detained), E. (Excluded), D. (Deported), O. K. (All Right), etc. Screens will easily divide the platform into offices and detention-room. Officers with caps and badges will receive the incoming immigrants and direct them where to go. Further information may be found if needed in the mission-study book called "Aliens or Americans?" by Howard B. Grose, but still better would it be to make a visit to Ellis Island itself, as did the one who prepared this exercise.

$.10
© Cl. A 316024
No. 1

http://lccn.loc.gov/12013648

Library of Congress www.loc.gov/teachers

mcw June 6 '12

GENERAL DIRECTIONS

SCENE I.

The Inspection.

Let the arrival of the ship, with the number of immigrants, be announced to the officer in charge, and let the order be given that they shall be brought in. Have a special officer conduct them to the platform in groups, a family, or two or three individuals, or sometimes a single person.

1. A general inspection, as they pass through a gateway, by a surgeon of the marine hospital, who takes a general look from feet to head; he is on the lookout for contagious skin-diseases or for any disease or deformity. If he sees anything suspicious in any one, that person is marked with a chalk-mark and sent to the detention-room, after being marked "F. I.," for a more careful examination.

2. A careful inspection of the eyes by another uniformed doctor, who is looking especially for trachoma or any contagious eye-disease. Those whose cases seem doubtful are also marked with chalk and sent to the detention-room.

3. Inspection by a matron, who questions all the women, and eyes them sharply, and detains any who seem to her to be doubtful characters or to need special help such as she can give.

4. The immigrants pass up to the table of the inspector, who asks them the questions given below. He has before him the papers on which are the answers they have already given to the same questions at the place where they embarked. If their answers are satisfactory, and if they agree with those on the paper before him, they are marked "O. K. for New York," or "O. K. for the Railroad," or "O. K. for the West," or wherever they are going.

If any immigrants are not able to give satisfactory answers to the questions, or if for any reason the inspector does not dare to

http://lccn.loc.gov/12013648

Library of Congress www.loc.gov/teachers

admit them on his own responsibility, they are marked "F. I." (Further Investigation), or "S. I." (Special Inquiry), and are sent to the detention-room.

SCENE II.

In the Detention-Room.

Let the missionary go into this room, in which a number of immigrants are sitting, and talk with them; and let some of them tell her their stories as given below. She should shake hands with one after another, and ask them whether she can do anything to help them, and whether they are expecting some one to meet them, and thus draw out their stories. She should also have a little package of tracts and leaflets and Testaments to give them.

SCENE III.

In the Railway and Refreshment Room.

In this room there should be a special officer who stands ready to help the immigrants in buying their tickets, sending telegrams to their friends, buying refreshments, getting their money changed, and starting them for the right station for their trains.

From this room the immigrants should be started off in different groups; one end of the platform might be the stairway which leads to the ferry for the railway stations, and the other end for those who are going to stay in New York. Here, too, some might be met by friends, who might perhaps bring new hats and jackets for their newly arrived friends to wear away from Ellis Island.

Questions to be Answered by All the Immigrants.

Each individual or family or group of people will come to the inspector's table; and, as he asks the questions, he looks at the papers which they signed at the port from which they sailed. These papers have already been handed to the inspector, and the answers must correspond with those that they give now. If any give answers which do not agree with those on his paper, they must be marked "F. I." and detained.

http://lccn.loc.gov/12013648

Library of Congress www.loc.gov/teachers

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you?
3. Where did you live before coming here?
4. Who paid your passage?
5. Where are you going?
6. Have you a ticket?
7. What is your business?
8. How much money have you?
9. Can you read and write?
10. Were you ever in a prison or an almshouse?
11. Are you an anarchist or polygamist?
12. Are you under a labor-contract?
13. Who is to meet you here?

A Sample Group of Immigrants.

(See No. 13.)

Carmelita Orrificio, her mother, and eight children. There are Carmelita, thirteen years old; Antonio, eleven; Giovanni, ten; Pietro, eight; Anita, five; Carlo, three; Theresa, two; and the baby.

The mother carries the baby (this should be a doll) done up in a little brown bundle, Italian style; over her shoulder she slings two brown sacks tied together in the middle; in her other hand she carries a huge satchel; she gives the word of command, and the six children fall into line behind her. Carmelita looks after grandma, and carries a large carpetbag, and grandma carries a big bundle tied up in a bandanna handkerchief; Antonio carries a little trunk and a big bundle, and leads Carlo, who carries a little chair that he is very fond of; each of the others carries a bag or a bundle, and little Theresa carries a bird-cage.

They easily pass the first doctor; but the second one examines the baby's eyes very carefully, but at last passes them all on.

The inspector asks the questions given above, and Carmelita, the only one who can speak English, answers them. The mother is forty-two years old, and the grandmother sixty-seven; Carmelita also tells the ages of all the children. Her name is Carmelita Orrificio, the same as mother's and grandmother's. Her business is just taking care of grandmother and the children;

http://lccn.loc.gov/12013648

Library of Congress www.loc.gov/teachers

they come from Naples; father paid their passage-money, of course. "Ever in this country before?" "Why, how could we be till father sent the money?" They are going to Boston. Have they a ticket? Carmelita turns to mother, who drops the baby and bags, and has a great time hunting for it, but at last produces it. How much money? She turns to mother, and says "Quanti centesimi?" Mother hunts in all her pockets, and finally says "Cinquanta centesimi," which Carmelita translates into "Ten cents"; but father is coming. He will meet them. He is a fruit-merchant. Father will surely meet them.

SCENE I.

Inspection of Immigrants.

The following groups of immigrants enter, and are inspected and labelled by the doctors, and then pass to the inspector's table, where they answer the questions as suggested below:

1. Five Bulgarians. — Paul Popoff, Petros Popoff, Thomas and John Dimchefski, James Strumnitz.

They have come over to get a higher education; they have saved up enough money to get a start, and mean to work their way through Harvard College. They have all had a good high-school education at Samokov, in Bulgaria, and can speak English pretty well. Each one has at least twenty-five dollars. They all look strong and well, and promise to make good citizens, and are marked "O. K." and sent to the railway station. They all came from Samokov, and all paid their own fares, and can answer all the questions satisfactorily.

2. A Slovak Family. — Mrs. Bulenski and her two daughters, Margit and Erzebet.

None of them can read or write or speak much English. One child has some trouble with her eyes, and is marked "F. I."; the other is lame, and is also marked "F. I." They come from northern Hungary. The mother has about six dollars in money, but she expects her husband to meet her. He is a farmer somewhere in Pennsylvania, but she does not know just where. They can none of them read or write; the father paid for their tickets. They are sent to the detention-room to wait for news from him.

http://lccn.loc.gov/12013648

Library of Congress www.loc.gov/teachers

3. A French Girl. — Adrienne Sauvin.

She has come over from Marseilles, and can speak English only very imperfectly. She expects to go to work, and, though she has only seven dollars, has no doubt that she can support herself. Her sister paid her passage, and will meet her here. She expects to go to Worcester. She is marked "T. D." and sent to the detention-room till her sister shall appear.

4. Five Irishmen. — John O'Henessy, Pat O'Leary, Michael O'Brien, Dennis Maloney, and Michael Mahony.

They have all come from the country near Cork. One or two of them can read and write a little. They all admit that their tickets were paid for by a friend. They are going to Boston. None of them have much money, perhaps a shilling or two each; lest they should be rejected on that account, one, who seems to be the leader among them, says that they have all got work engaged, and pulls out a paper from his pocket, thus inadvertently confessing what he had meant to conceal, that they had come under a labor-contract; they must all therefore be excluded, and are marked "E." and sent to the detention-room to wait till the steamer which brought them over shall take them back. They go out very indignant and disappointed after trying vainly to argue the case with the inspector.

5. A Swede Family. — Mr. and Mrs. Johann Johannsen, and their children, Carl, Marie, and Ulrich.

Mr. Johannsen answers all the questions satisfactorily. He has something more than two hundred dollars in money, and expects soon to find work in Worcester, Mass., where he has friends. The family can all read and write, and seem likely to make good citizens. They are marked "O. K." for Worcester, Mass., and are sent to the railway offices, where they are helped to buy their tickets and exchange some money, and buy lunches, and send a telegram.

6. A German Girl. — Gretchen Stieglitz.

She answers all but the money question satisfactorily. Her home was in Dresden. She expects to live in New York State. She has only five dollars, but has come over to be married, and expects the young man to meet her. Her lover does not yet appear, and she is marked "T. D." and sent to the detention-room. Later she tells her story to the missionary, and a telegram is sent

http://lccn.loc.gov/12013648

Library of Congress www.loc.gov/teachers

to Hans Leiter, who afterwards arrives; and she goes out to meet him, and they are married at once at Ellis Island.

7. An English Boy. — Timothy Donalds.

He is thirteen years old, and has come over to live with his uncle, who is in San Antonio, Tex. He had two hundred dollars, but it was stolen from him in the steerage while he was seasick. He has only $1.37 left, but is sure his uncle will send for him. He also is marked "T. D." and sent to the detention-room. Later a telegram comes from his uncle, and he is marked "O. K." and sent to the railway station. He came from Manchester, England.

8. A Finnish Family. — Mrs. Petovski, Olga, Gretel, Rosina, Ann.

They came from Helsingfors, and are going to Minnesota. They can all read and write; they have about six dollars, but are sure the father will meet them. They are marked "T. D." and sent to the detention-room.

9. A Russian Jew. — Isaac Jacobson, from Riga.

He expects to stay in New York. His son paid for his ticket, and is to meet him; but he has no money, and his son is earning only five dollars a week, he says. He insists that he can earn his own living, but he looks so old and so feeble that he is marked "L. P. C." (Liable to become a Public Charge) and sent to the detention-room till his case shall be decided. Later he tells his story to the missionary there, and is finally released in the belief that he will be able to earn his own living.

10. A Dutch Girl. — Katrina Homberg.

She has no money, and has come over to be married. Her Jan does not appear, and cannot be heard from, though telegrams are sent in several directions. She thinks he is in Omaha or in Oklahoma, though on being further questioned she thinks it may be Oakland; at any rate, it is near New York. She also is sent to the detention-room to wait a little longer, but will probably have to be marked "E." (Excluded) and deported.

11. Two Italians. — Giuseppe Andrade and Annunzio.

They are street-musicians. Giuseppe has a hand-organ, and his little boy Annunzio can sing. They have no money, and the hand-organ looks so old that the inspector is doubtful whether they can earn their own living. Giuseppe is sure, however; and

http://lccn.loc.gov/12013648

Library of Congress www.loc.gov/teachers

they are finally marked "F. I." and sent to the detention-room.

12. An Irish Woman. — Bridget Maloney.

She comes from the north of Ireland. Her ticket was sent to her by her daughter, who is at service in New York. She expects to meet her daughter. She is sixty years old, and has no money, but is sure her daughter will come. She is marked "T. D." and sent to the detention-room.

13. An Italian Family. — Carmelita Orrificio and eight children.

They have come from southern Italy. The old grandmother is also with them. Each child is carrying a bag or box or bundle. Even the smallest one carries a little chair. They are going to live in New York, and expect the father to meet them. They have no money. One child seems to have some trouble with its eyes and another is lame; and both of these are marked "F. I." All are sent to the detention-room.

14. An Irishman. — Patrick O'Flaherty.

He is a little deaf and does not answer when spoken to. They think he does not understand English, and therefore try different languages. He answers the questions in some such manner as the following:

Inspector. Quel nom avez-vous?

Patrick (*with hand to his ear*). Hey?

Insp. Comment t' appelle toi?

Pat. Huh?

Insp. Wie heisst du?

Pat. Eh?

Insp. (*slowly, in a loud tone*). Was ist Ihre Name?

Pat. Hey?

Insp. Come vi chiamate?

Pat. (*shakes his head doubtfully*).

Insp. (*to himself*). For goodness' sake what language does he speak? I'll try French again. (*He speaks in a very loud voice.*) *Quel nom avez-vous?*

Pat. For the love of hivven is there none of yez here speaks English?

Insp. Do you speak English? For goodness' sake, why didn't you say so?

http://lccn.loc.gov/12013648

Library of Congress www.loc.gov/teachers

Pat. Sure I do bees a little deaf, and I didn't know whatever ye was drivin' at wid all that foreign lingo.

Insp. Well, then, wake up! What's your name?

Pat. Jist Patrick O'Flaherty, yer honor.

Insp. How old are you?

Pat. Sure I doesn't be exactly knowing. I guess I might be forty, perhaps. Annyway, I'm old enough to work.

Insp. Where did you come from?

Pat. Why, from ould Oirland! Phwat did yez think?

Insp. Don't try to be funny. Just answer the questions.

Pat. Sure that wasn't funny. I did come from ould Oirland! I did, *so*.

Insp. Who paid your passage?

Pat. Faith, it was jist me boy Mike paid it; he do be working in Boston, an it's the fine job he has.

Insp. Where are you going?

Pat. Why, to Boston, af coorse, wid Mike. Where did yez think?

Insp. Have you a ticket?

Pat. (*hunting in all his pockets, and finally producing it*). Yis!

Insp. What's your business?

Pat. O, anny kind of a job'll do for me; Mike says he'll soon find me one, I'm that strong. He says the work is very easy in this counthry; I'll only have to carry the bricks up to the top of a tin-story house, an' the man at the top does all the work.

Insp. How much money have you?

Pat. (*taking pieces of money from various pockets, and counting it out laboriously*). Jist three shillings, tuppence, ha'-penny, yer honor. How much have you got?

Insp. Just answer the questions, and be quiet, please. Can you read and write?

Pat. Faith, an' how can I answer the questions an' be quiet too? Well, you see, yer honor, I can't not to say exactly read; but, if you was to give me a P-a-t, I could give you back a Pat in change; and I can make my mark, Pat O'Flaherty, his mark, you know; an' there's a boy from Ballymory does be writing the letters for me.

Insp. Were you ever in a prison or an almshouse?

Pat. Well, did you ever hear the likes of that? What 'ud I be

http://lccn.loc.gov/12013648

Library of Congress www.loc.gov/teachers

after doing in a prison or an almshouse? I'll bet yerself has seen more of thim places than I have. The imperence of ye!

Insp. Are you an anarchist or polygamist?

Pat. Niver a bit of it, yer honor, though I don't rightly know what that first one is. But, polygamist! Well, I should say not! It would take more than one man to manage Norah, let alone having six or siven of them. No, thank you! One woman'll do for Pat O'Flaherty.

Insp. Is any one coming to meet you?

Pat. Sure, Mike!

SCENE II.

In the Detention-Room.

Several groups of immigrants sitting around the room, waiting their turn, and looking expectantly for friends every time the door opens.

A missionary lady enters and talks with one and another, giving them tracts and questioning them, and doing anything she can to help them make their troubles plain to the inspectors.

For instance: The missionary questions the Italian family, and little Carmelita, thirteen years old, tells her story in some such way as follows:

"Our home was in Naples in the south of Italy. It is so beautiful there! And the sun shines all day long and every day, and we often sing our dear song, 'La bella Napoli.' We loved our dear sunny Italy so much! But we were very poor, and father heard there is good times in America and plenty money; so one day he say good-by to us all and come over here. He not find plenty money, and sometimes he very poor, and it was long to wait; but by and by he find a good work and begin to save money to bring us all over.

"Every week my mother gotta letter, and every time it tell how much money father saved. Father can't write himself, but he know a boy that can; and mother, she get a lady that she work for to read it to her. We not have so many schools in Italy, and when the father and mother were little they not have much chance; but my Italy now is do like other countries and make more schools, and many children can go in the school, but not all. I learn a little, and the American lady that mother wash

http://lccn.loc.gov/12013648

Library of Congress www.loc.gov/teachers

for, she teacha me the English. Father, he write that, when we come to America, we all shall go in the school; so we all want to make hurry to come to this land.

"At last, in a letter came money to buy the ticket for all of us, mother and grandmother and all the children. Mother think it much work to get us all ready, but we all helped; and, after all, there was not much to get ready, for we did not own many things; and so at last we all were packed up, and every one had something to carry except baby. Even Theresa carried the bird-cage, though she is only two.

"Coming over, Giovanni and Pietro and I were much seasick, and so was mother; but grandma was well all the time, and she took care of the children.

"We were much afraid when the inspector looked long at baby's eyes. What if baby would have to go back? Then mother would have to go with her, and what would become of us all? But by and by the doctor say not much the matter with Anita's eyes; then he look hard at Pietro's head, and again we are much afraid; what if Pietro must go back? But he let him go through the gate with the rest of us. Then the inspector ask many hard questions, but he say I answering them all right, because mother can't speak the English. He look cross when he find mother have only little money, but father will have some. Will father come soon? It is long to wait. A man is telling me that, if father not come, we must all go back to Italy; but he will certainly come, won't he? You think he come, don't you?"

Missionary. I hope so, dear; we will just wait patiently and some one will come and tell us when father comes. You are helping mother with the children all you can, aren't you? I wonder whether you could read one of these little books if I give it to you. (*Hands her a small leaflet.*)

Carmelita. O, yes, lady; I like it. And there is a picture too. Pietro will like that.

After a time the officer comes to the doorway and calls in a loud voice, "Carmelita Orrificio." They go out to meet the father. As they pass through the gateway, the officer counts them one by one, looking occasionally at his paper. Finding only six children, he stops them. "There should be seven besides the baby," he says, referring to his paper. Again he counts, and the

http://lccn.loc.gov/12013648

Library of Congress www.loc.gov/teachers

mother counts in Italian, calling out their names one by one. There surely is one missing; Giovanni is not there. Little Carmelita runs back, and finally returns, dragging along the missing boy with a chair in his hand; he has stopped to look at something that interested him. Father meets them at the gate, and they all embrace him and go joyfully away.

In the same way the missionary tries to help the others and listens to their stories.

Mrs. Bulenski and her children, the Slovak family, look up eagerly every time the door opens, and the missionary goes out to inquire where telegrams have been sent, and whether any word has come from the father; she tries to comfort the family and cheer them up; but the mother is in tears, and at last an officer comes for them, saying that the father has not arrived, and they must be deported. They go off in tears and protesting, but go they must.

Adrienne Sauvin, the French girl, is called for and told that her sister has arrived. The sister appears at the gateway with a new hat and jacket for her, which she puts on, and they go off arm in arm.

Gretchen Stieglitz, the German girl, is called for, and is told that she may go if she is willing to be married now and here to Hans Leiter, who has come for her. She joyfully agrees, and is taken to the other room, where a minister is in readiness to marry any couples that need his services, since the government will not allow a young unmarried girl to go off alone and friendless. They must know that she is married to the young man who has come for her.

Timothy Donalds, the English boy, goes to the missionary and tells all about his troubles in the steerage, and how his money was stolen and he cannot hear from his uncle and does not want to go back to England. The missionary asks more about his uncle, and then asks an officer to send one more telegram. At last an officer appears with a telegram from his uncle, who has been away, and he is sent to the railway office.

Mrs. Petovski and her family, the Finns, are called for and go out to meet the father, who has come for them.

http://lccn.loc.gov/12013648

Library of Congress www.loc.gov/teachers

Isaac Jacobson, the Russian Jew, sits mournfully awaiting his son, with the prospect of being deported, because he looks so feeble, and seems liable to become a public charge. The missionary talks with him, and he assures her that he can work and support himself.

"But you do not look very strong," she says. "Have you been ill?"

"No," he replies; "I am all right. When I have eaten, I shall be strong again."

"What!" she says. "Are you hungry? Have you not eaten anything to-day?"

"Eight days ago I have eaten," he says; "down in the bottom of the ship it was not clean, and they gave us food that was unclean, and my religion will not let me eat it; so I have just fasted till I could get food that I may eat. When I have eaten, I shall be strong."

"What!" says the missionary. "Have you not eaten for eight days?"

"No," he replies, "but soon I shall eat; then I shall be strong; then I can work, O, please, kind lady, do not let them send me back. Truly, I can work."

The missionary has a talk with the inspector, and explains the case to him; he calls up Isaac Jacobson, and talks with him, and then calls an officer, and sends him to the dining-rooms with orders to give him a square meal, and then let him go with the son who is waiting for him.

Katrina Homberg, the Dutch girl, tells her story to the missionary with many tears. Jan sent the money for her ticket, and is ready to marry her. He will come as soon as they send a telegram. She has lost the paper that has his address, but it is somewhere near New York, and it begins with O. She thinks it was Oklahoma, but it might be Omaha, or Oakland, or perhaps Orange. She knows only that it is near New York. Several telegrams are sent, but no answer comes, and she is marked "E.," and taken away to be deported. She sobs as she goes out, and insists: "Jan will surely come! Oh! I know he will come; he says he will come. Oh, do not send me back! Oh, please let me wait for Jan." But there is no help for it; go she must, and is led away, sobbing piteously.

http://lccn.loc.gov/12013648

Library of Congress www.loc.gov/teachers

Giuseppe Andrade and his son, the Italian street-musicians, are questioned a little, and asked to give a sample of the music they can make, and at last are allowed to go.

Patrick O'Flaherty asks every few minutes whether Mike has come for him, and at last is called for and goes joyfully away.

SCENE III.

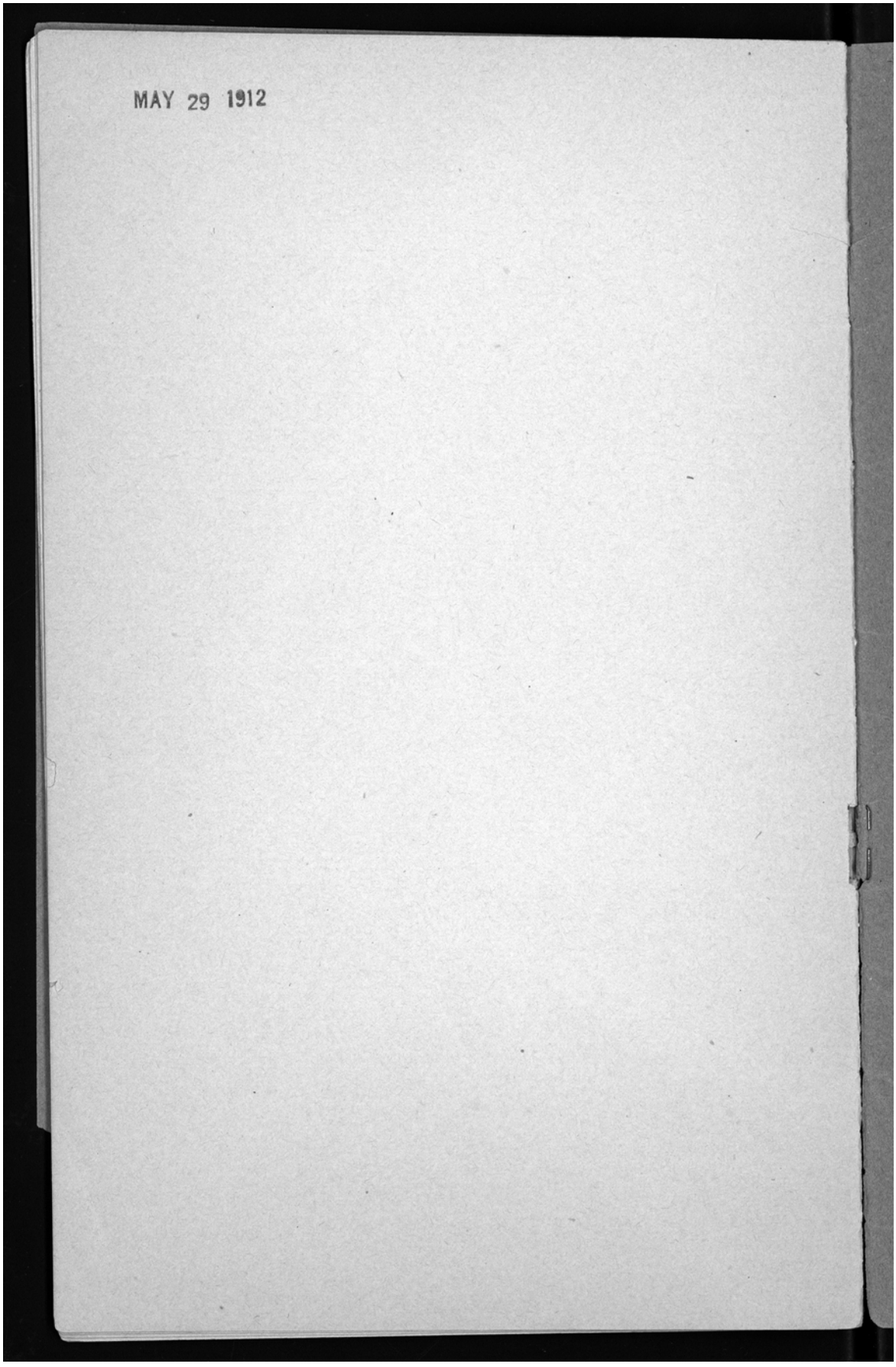
In the Railway Offices.

Different groups of immigrants come in, each group in charge of an officer, who helps them to send their telegrams, and buys their railway tickets, gets their money changed, buys lunches for them if they wish, and starts them down the right stairway for New York or for the ferry-boat to their trains. He also helps them to hunt up and check their luggage.

Interesting episodes may be invented in the finding of luggage and sending telegrams.

http://lccn.loc.gov/12013648

Library of Congress www.loc.gov/teachers



http://lccn.loc.gov/12013648

Library of Congress www.loc.gov/teachers