

Gallery Walk:

An Immigrant Case Study: Pietro Berra

In this activity, each group of four to six students will take a few minutes at each station, answering the questions that are included at the bottom of each station's Gallery Card.

STATION 1A



Malvaglio, Italy

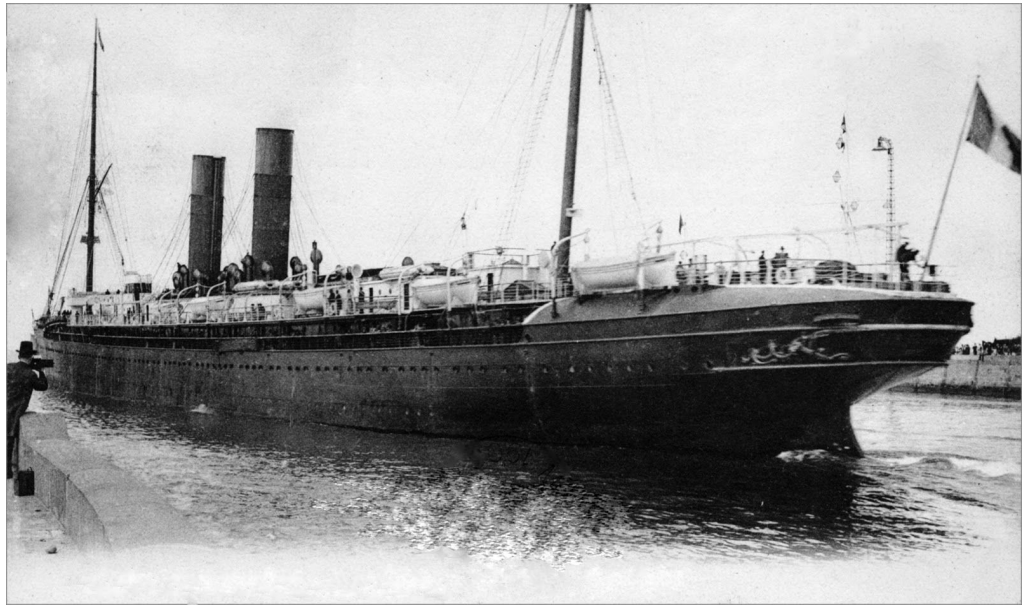
Pietro Berra's Journey to America

Pietro Berra was born in 1886 in Malvaglio, Italy, near Milan. He entered adulthood during a period of great civil unrest in Italy. The newly unified nation was in the midst of a financial crisis. Over half of the country lived in poverty. In 1900, only 26% of Italians were literate. Many Italians saw moving to America as a potential alternative to living in poverty in their homeland. In 1909, at the age of 23, Pietro arrived at Ellis Island, an immigrant to the United States. According to his son Yogi, "My father came over first. He came from the old country. And he didn't know what baseball was. He was ready to go to work. My brothers and my mother came over later on. My two oldest brothers, they were born there — Mike and Tony. John and I and my sister Josie were born in St. Louis."

STATION 1B

Pietro Berra's Journey to America

Although crossing the Atlantic was a significant undertaking for all travelers, some had a much rougher voyage than others. Those who could afford first class travel saw the best side of the experience. Pietro Berra, like other poor immigrants, traveled in the lowest class, what was called "steerage." First class passengers spent the majority of their time above deck.



The Bretagne, the ship on which Pietro traveled



Typical steerage of a ship

They generally enjoyed their own small quarters with beds and other amenities. The majority were in steerage, what was generally described as a cramped space where immigrants were packed in like sardines in a can. Typically, the conditions were unsanitary, the floors and walls filthy. Disease was common and sometimes spread among steerage passengers. Upon arrival in New York City, steerage passengers would be taken to Ellis Island in New York Harbor whereas the wealthier immigrants were granted access straight through to their Manhattan destination.

STATION 2A

Arrival at Ellis Island

Ellis Island was the arrival point for millions of immigrants to the United States. Passengers from steerage were led into a large room known as “The Registry Room” or “The Great Hall.” Here they would wait in line for hours at a time in order to undergo a medical exam and an “interrogation.” With some five thousand new arrivals in the vast space with them, immigrants faced a process that was chaotic and often separated families. The new arrivals were either granted access into the United States or turned back, returning to their homelands. According to immigration historian John Thorn, “Even the slightest cough could be perceived as disease and a reason to deny entry into the States.” Individuals were often quarantined. In many situations family members were moved to different wings of the building, never to see one another again.

BALCONY, CABIN, AND STEERAGE ALIENS MUST BE COMPLETELY MANIFESTED.

73 HB LIST OR MANIFEST OF ALIEN PASSENGERS FOR THE UNITED STATES

Required by the regulations of the Secretary of Commerce and Labor of the United States, under Act of Congress approved February 20, 1907, to be delivered to the collector of Customs at the port of arrival.

S. S. *St. Pauline* sailing from *Genoa* October 27, 1909

No.	Family Name	Given Name	Sex	Age	Rank	Birthplace	Profession	Religion	Color of Hair	Color of Eyes	Complexion	Height	Weight	Build	Education	Married	Single	Other
1	Motta	Francesco	M	31	Passenger	Italy												
2	Paul	Pietro	M	31	Passenger	Italy												
3	Alvini	Francesco	M	27	Passenger	Italy												
4	Motta	Francesco	M	26	Passenger	Italy												
5	Alvini	Francesco	M	26	Passenger	Italy												
6	Alvini	Francesco	M	25	Passenger	Italy												
7	Alvini	Francesco	M	24	Passenger	Italy												
8	Alvini	Francesco	M	23	Passenger	Italy												
9	Alvini	Francesco	M	22	Passenger	Italy												
10	Alvini	Francesco	M	21	Passenger	Italy												
11	Alvini	Francesco	M	20	Passenger	Italy												
12	Alvini	Francesco	M	19	Passenger	Italy												
13	Alvini	Francesco	M	18	Passenger	Italy												
14	Alvini	Francesco	M	17	Passenger	Italy												
15	Alvini	Francesco	M	16	Passenger	Italy												
16	Alvini	Francesco	M	15	Passenger	Italy												
17	Alvini	Francesco	M	14	Passenger	Italy												
18	Alvini	Francesco	M	13	Passenger	Italy												
19	Alvini	Francesco	M	12	Passenger	Italy												
20	Alvini	Francesco	M	11	Passenger	Italy												
21	Berra	Giuseppe	M	10	Passenger	Italy												
22	Merlo	Pietro	M	25	Passenger	Italy												
23	Donattoni	Luigi	M	22	Passenger	Italy												
24	Berra	Pietro	M	23	Passenger	Italy												
25	Donato	Maurizio	M	23	Passenger	Italy												
26	Cesi	Pietro	M	24	Passenger	Italy												
27	Faina	Domenico	M	27	Passenger	Italy												
28																		

Amos Jordan Superintendent

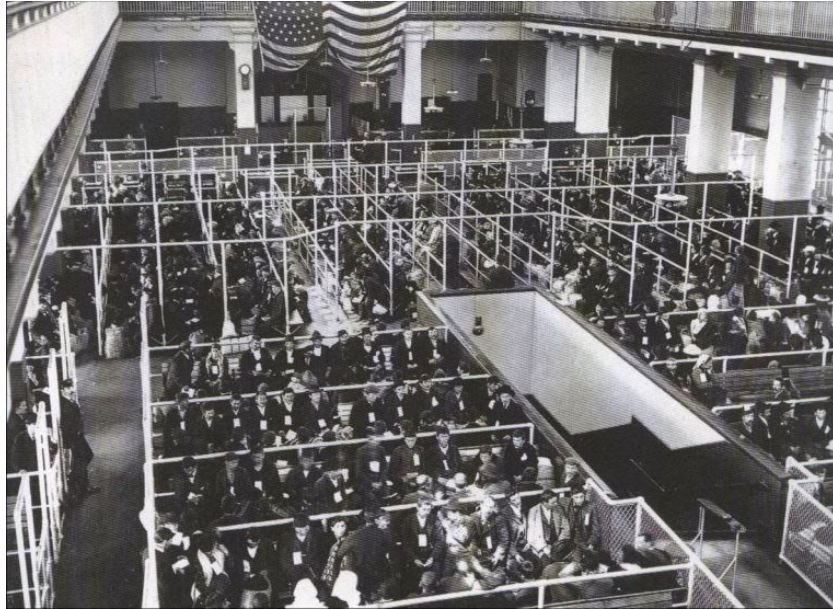
Manifest of Pietro Berra's ship

21					
22	Berra	Giuseppe	10	m	/
23	Merlo	Pietro	25	m	/ 8-42781
24	Donattoni	Luigi	22	m	/ 160472059-17-Dumha heb-50
25	Berra	Pietro	23	m	/ 12-9070
26	Donato	Maurizio	23	m	/
27	Cesi	Pietro	24	m	/
28	Faina	Domenico	27	m	/

Enlarged section containing Pietro Berra's name

STATION 2B

Arrival at Ellis Island



The Great Hall

INSPECTION CARD
(Immigrants and Steerage Passengers).

Port of departure, DANZIG. S. S. Astoria
Name of ship, Igarsi, Jax
Name of Immigrant, Poland
Date of departure, _____
Last residence, _____

Inspected and passed at DANZIG. **UNITED STATES PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE**
Seal Stamp of Consul or Medical Officer

Passed at quarantine, port of _____
Passed by Immigration Bureau, port of _____
(Date), _____ (Date), _____

(The following to be filled in by ship's surgeon or agent prior to or after embarkation.)
Ship's list or manifest No. 10 No. on ship's list or manifest 17

Berth No.	Alarms- specimen	list day.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19

No. 27c. 3000. 5. 24.

Typical inspection card filled out at Ellis Island

“I did not speak English. My mother spoke very little. The guards were screaming at us. Pushing and pulling us in all directions. I began to cry. I will never forget that feeling.”

—Agatha Polanski (came through Ellis Island at age 6 in 1917)

STATION 3A

Detainmentment

After registration, the majority of immigrants who had been cleared by Ellis Island officers were transported by boat to Manhattan or Secaucus, New Jersey. Those who had been detained would stay on the island for anywhere between a few hours and a few months. Immigrants could be detained for a number of reasons, including health issues, lack of documentation, or a suspected criminal past. Intrusive medical examinations were common, as were psychological evaluations. Sleeping conditions for those detained were often poor, with hundreds of people housed in small, poorly ventilated rooms. After detainment, a final decision would be made on whether or not an immigrant would be granted access into the country.

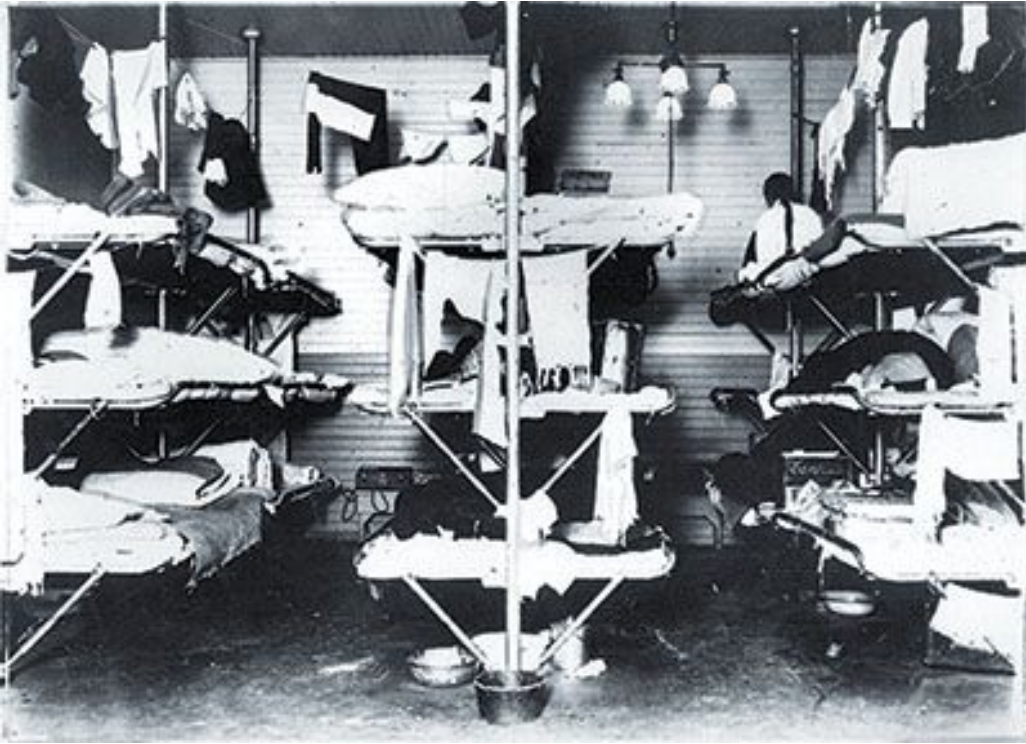


An immigration officer checking the eyes of an immigrant for signs of disease

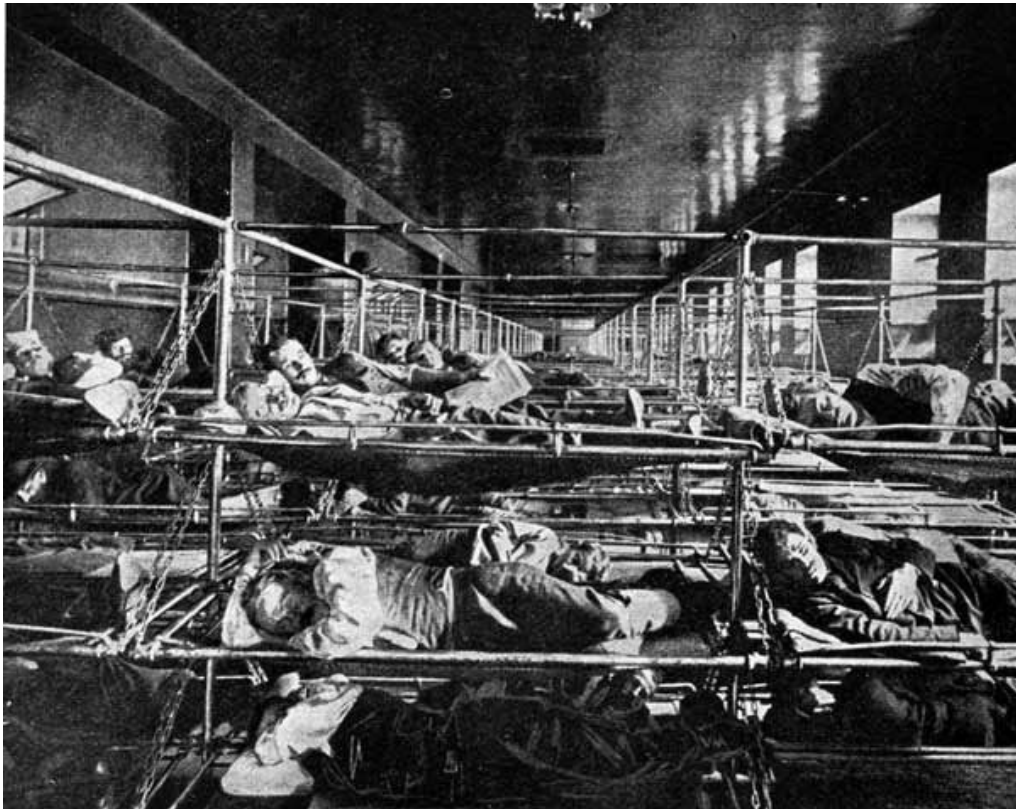


Ellis Island

STATION 3B



Ellis Island living quarters



Quarantine quarters

STATION 4A

The Hill

After leaving Ellis Island, immigrants faced the challenge of finding a place to live in their new country. Many immigrants tried to find work in New York, while others traveled West in search of opportunities or to join friends or family who had done so earlier. Immigrant communities emerged in cities across the country. People from the same homelands often formed communities that had cultural elements reminding of the homes they left behind. Pietro would eventually settle in St. Louis, joining other Italian Americans in the area known as “The Hill.”



Yogi's childhood home



Italian storefront in The Hill

STATION 4B



St. Ambrose Church, The Hill

The Hill

Pietro's son Yogi grew up in "The Hill." Speaking fondly of his childhood neighborhood, Yogi once described it as "a paradise for boys who love sports." Yogi's childhood neighbor and future St. Louis Cardinals catcher, Joe Garagiola, remembers, "We were always up to something. Our parents wanted us to play soccer, and we did, but more often it was baseball in the summer and hockey in the winter. Always, we were looking for trouble, and usually we would find it."