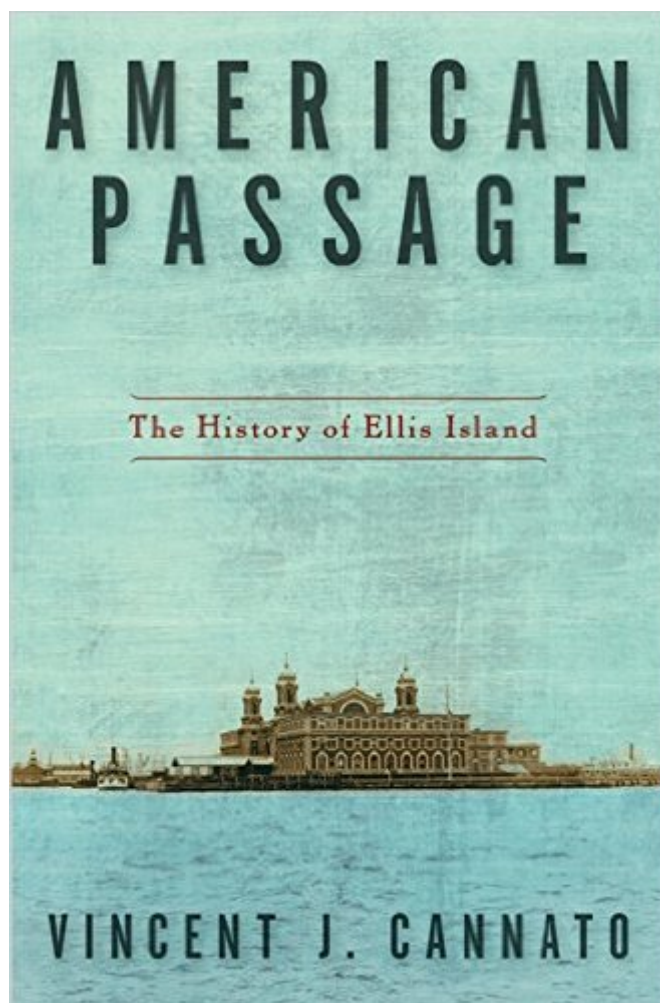


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# American Passage: The History Of Ellis Island



## Synopsis

"By bringing us the inspiring and sometimes unsettling tales of Ellis Island, Vincent Cannato's *American Passage* helps us understand who we are as a nation." — Walter Isaacson "Never before has Ellis Island been written about with such scholarly care and historical wisdom. Highly recommended!" — Douglas Brinkley, bestselling author of *The Wilderness Warrior* The remarkable saga of America's landmark port of entry, from immigration post to deportation center to mythical icon.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (34 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

When I speak at community meetings, it is almost inevitable that someone stands up and tells me that when his great-grandfather came over from Germany in the 1870s he did it the right way, not like these immigrants today. "He came legally and had to pass a bunch of tests at Ellis Island, he had to have a sponsor to vouch for him and only then was he allowed in." The person then usually says "We need a new Ellis Island." Of course, when his great-grandfather came, there were no tests for newly arriving immigrants, anyone who wanted to come could immigrate here (so long as they weren't Chinese), so saying he came legally is meaningless, and the Ellis Island immigration station did not exist. In fact, if your ancestors came before 1892, they definitely did not come through Ellis Island. But since so many people think their families got their start there, the truth may be less relevant than the perception. I am always on the lookout for books on American immigration history, so I was happy to come across a new history of Ellis Island. *American Passage*, unfortunately, is

only partially successful in telling the story of the iconic place of American immigration. There are many ways to tell the story of Ellis Island. Vincent Cannato chooses to begin his telling with the story of feuds between various officials at the immigration station. Bureaucratic infighting is rarely interesting, and the fights among the big-wigs at Ellis are no different. The first third of the book is taken up with who said what to who sort of nonsense. Hardly a grabber.

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