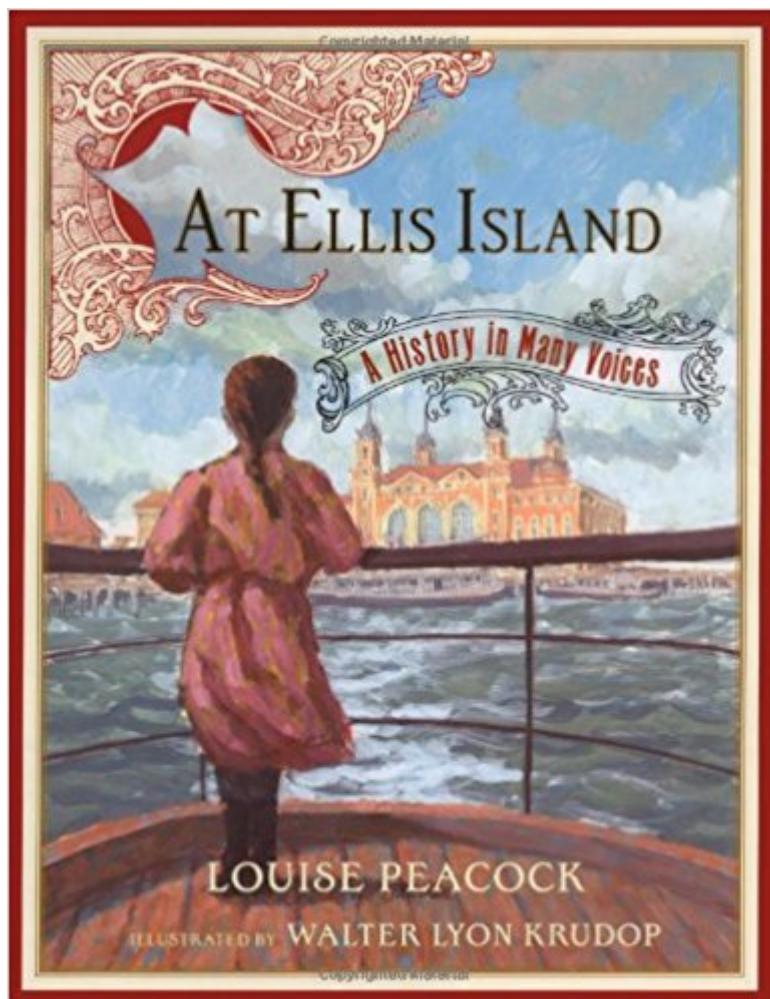


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# At Ellis Island: A History In Many Voices



## **Synopsis**

Ellis Island was the gateway to America and the promise of freedom for thousands. Its walls are rich with stories. Its walls are rich with stories. In this book we hear myriad of those voices. First we follow a young person today. Her great-great-grandmother entered America through Ellis Island. As this young girl walks the halls of the famous site, she wonders about the past, the people, and their hopes, dreams and challenges. Here, too, is the voice of Sera, an Armenian girl from the early 1900s. Fleeing the unthinkable in her home country, she longs to join her father in America. As Sera enters the halls of Ellis Island, she lives those same hopes, dreams, and challenges. The voices of real immigrants -- their suffering in steerage, their first glimpse of the Statue of Liberty, and their journey through the Great Hall -- complete this touching look into an important part of America's history. A pivotal time and place is brought to life through a combination of many voices speaking in harmony.

## **Book Information**

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Age Range: 7 - 10 years

Grade Level: 2 - 5

## **Customer Reviews**

Nearly 100 years ago, Sura, 10, fleeing the Armenian genocide, writes letters to her lost mother about her voyage and the struggle to get past inspectors and join her father in America. Visiting Ellis Island today, a young girl thinks of her great-great-grandmother coming through in the rush of immigrants long ago. Terse, boxed, archival quotes by real immigrants from all over Europe and

moving sepia-tone photos extend the two fictionalized narratives. The constant switch in viewpoints is sometimes confusing, especially the contemporary child's overview, but the facts are as dramatic as the fiction, and Krudop's full-color gouache pictures extend Sura's story, showing the crowded ship, the exciting and confusing landing, the terrifying interrogations, and, finally, the reunion with Papa. Many readers will find connections with their own family stories, whether in the past or coming here today. Hazel RochmanCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

Louise Peacock, who has always been interested in history, took a PhD in medieval studies before turning to children's literature. Her first book, *Crossing the Delaware*, was inspired by a trip with her son to Washington's Crossing. The book, also told in many voices, was praised by Booklist with a starred review. *At Ellis Island* continues this unique method of historical exploration. Dr. Peacock lives in Haslett, Michigan. Walter Lyon Krudop was born in Elizabeth, New Jersey, in 1966. He had his first painting lesson when he was eight years old and later studied illustration at the School of Visual Arts in New York. He has illustrated a number of books for young readers, including *The Good-Night Kiss* and *Wake Up, Little Children* by Jim Aylesworth; *Black Whiteness* by Robert Burleigh; and *Crossing the Delaware* by Louise Peacock. He lives with his wife, Sara, in New York City.

I purchased this for my nine-year-old granddaughter in preparation for a birthday trip to NYC in May. She loved the book, and told me "It was sad sometimes." I think that understanding the necessity to be sad in order to accomplish difficult things or realize a dream is a good thing for children to understand. Lovely pictures and touching personal narratives formatted like letters make this a very child-accessible book.

Great book--great service

I bought this book to use in an ESL graduate course. I used it in a reading lesson plan. I had a friend who is a Reading Specialist review it and she also loved this book. The use of fiction and nonfiction in the same book is a wonderful way for students to read about the immigration experience and compare and contrast information gleaned from the two genres.

Really nice photos from Ellis Island

Excellent book! Great for teaching the story of immigration. The story and illustrations are beautiful. Every teacher that teaches this subject should have this book.

Part story of a fictional immigrant girl (Sera), part personal reminiscence by the author, and part quotations from other (real) child immigrants. This book is for older kids - the children portrayed in this book have experienced wartime atrocities and desperate times. Sera is fleeing Turkey, where blood runs in the streets and her mother was murdered, to join her father in America. Every page has a section in script type of Sera telling/praying the story of her emigration to her mother. The pages also feature block quotations from immigrant children's accounts or memoirs, with their names and ages. Most pages also contain a block in red type that are the author's personal observations... those seem anachronistic and out of place on the pages, interrupting the story and setting up a strange sense of present-time clashing with the past. It was hard to follow, reading it with my kids. Great photographs, beautiful illustrations, and very sad and haunting retelling of the challenges these child immigrants faced. My grandmother immigrated to America as a child - this gives good context. It's an interesting beginning to the conversation of how socialism and social unrest led to wholesale slaughter in Europe.\*\*\* Update -- also read "The Arrival" by Shaun Tan -- a very moving book about the helplessness, connectedness, hope of the immigrants.\*\*\*Ã  The Arrival

This book is the perfect addition to a teacher's toolbox for teaching about immigration. It contains a fiction story, original sources and a reflection of someone visiting Ellis Island today--all on the same page. The information is easy to follow and stimulating to all kinds of discussion. Dr. Peacock is a master storyteller and a wonderful historian. There are so many uses for this book. When I think of all the names engraved on the walls at Ellis Island I can only imagine each descendant would love a copy of this book. And--the book itself is beautiful. The paintings are stunning and the photographs grab the reader. This book is destined to become the standard for books about Ellis Island.

I read this book to my daughter's third grade class as they learned about Ellis Island. I cried reading about this small girl traveling to America all alone. I think it was valuable for them to see what people were willing to do 100 years ago to find a better life for their children

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