

Shine Bright 5^e

File 7 Ellis Island stories

Reasons to believe – Doc 1, p. 95

Bertha Devlin came from Mindoran, in County Derry, Ireland. She was 22 when she sailed¹ to New York on the Cameronia in March of 1923. The decision to emigrate was the only way out, Devlin said.

We didn't have anything to do in Ireland, there was no work, and you didn't want to be poor all your life.

Mary Ellen Smith from Tarmon, County Leitrim in Ireland, sailed for New York in 1920 at 16.

My mother was very upset² when I wanted to go, but I felt there was a future for me here, and there wasn't one for me in Ireland.

Adapted from *irishamerica.com*.

¹ travelled by boat

² sad

When Jessie Came Across the Sea – Extract 1, p. 98

At the beginning of the 20th century, Jessie, a young girl, lived in a poor village in Eastern Europe with her grandmother. One day, she decided to travel to America on a ship to start a new life as a seamstress¹ for Cousin Kay.

On the fourth morning, the sun came up and the passengers dried out. They played cards and sang; sometimes they argued². But mostly they talked, swapped³ stories and dreams. Dreams of America, where the streets were paved with gold. America, land of plenty⁴.

Extract from *When Jessie Came Across the Sea*, Amy Hest (2003).

¹ *couturière*

² fought verbally

³ exchanged

⁴ *terre d'abondance*

When Jessie Came Across the Sea – Extract 2, p. 98

On a fine fall day, they sailed past the Statue of Liberty. America! No one swapped stories or argued. [...]

America! And there it was, New York City, with those tall, tall buildings that touched the sky. “Grandmother,” Jessie thought, “if only you could¹ see what I see now.”

Extract from *When Jessie Came Across the Sea*, Amy Hest (2003).

¹ *si seulement tu pouvais*

When Jessie Came Across the Sea – Extract 3, p.99

The ship docked¹ at Ellis Island. Then papers, wait in line, inspections, wait in line, papers, wait in line, questions.

“What is your name?” “Jessie.” “What is your age?” “13.” “Are you married?” “No.”

“What is your occupation?” “I sew lace².” “Can you read and write?” “Yes.” “Are you ill?” “No.”

Extract from *When Jessie Came Across the Sea*, Amy Hest (2003).

¹ *arriva à quai*

² *couds de la dentelle*

When Jessie Came Across the Sea – Extract 4, p. 99

Cousin Kay lived on the Lower East Side. Her house was three flights up¹. There was a bathtub in the kitchen, a dress shop in the parlor².

Dear Grandmother,

I miss you. Cousin Kay takes me all around the city. I wish you could see the pushcarts³ and shops and the trolleys speeding by. But there are too many people in America, and the streets are not gold. There are no cows. Cousin Kay bought me a pickle⁴ from a barrel. Tomorrow, I begin to sew for her.

Love, Jessie.

Extract from *When Jessie Came Across the Sea*, Amy Hest (2003).

¹ on the third floor

² living room

³ *charrettes*

⁴ *cornichon*

Test your skills! p. 103

On New Year's Day 1892.

Annie Moore was the first immigrant of more than 12 million who sailed past the Statue of Liberty and arrived in New York City.

She was greeted by officials who gave her a \$10 gold coin¹ and all three Moore children were reunited with their parents. [...] Moore remained in New York, living, for the most part, at 99 Cherry Street in the city. In late 1895 she married Joseph Augustus Schayer, a young German-American who worked at the Fulton Fish Market. They married at St. James Church. She went on to give birth to at least ten children and died of heart failure, at the age of 50, in 1924.

She is buried in Calvary Cemetery in Queens. Her grave is marked by a Celtic cross made of limestone² imported from Ireland.

Kate HIKEY, *irishcentral.com*, 2024.

¹ *pièce d'or*

² *calcaire*

Évaluation de la compréhension de l'écrit – Guide pédagogique

John Solan was born in Mayo, Ireland in 1842. Like many other Irishmen, his family escaped the famine for a better life in America. In 1847, he and his family boarded a ship in Galway for a five-week long journey to New York.

In a letter, written many years later, he tells about his first years in America. It was a very hard time. Both his brothers, as well as his mother, died in the first year. John and his father lived together in a small shanty¹ in Wisconsin. Often, he had to stay alone in the shanty all day:

"All summer Father had to be away exchanging work. [...] Day after day I was alone with nothing to eat perhaps but bread."

Later on, the situation got better. His father remarried and John started school. He enjoyed school and later became a successful member of the town council².

www.mayo.ie

¹ *cabane*

² *Conseil municipal*