



Immigration

STORIES OF YESTERDAY AND TODAY

Gull Island, Pirate Island, Ellis...

Ellis Island has had many names and many functions over the years. In the 1600s it was originally called 'Kioshuk' or 'Gull Island' by the Mohegan Tribe. Due to the many oyster beds found near the island, Dutch settlers renamed it Oyster Island. The island was also known as Dyre, Bucking and Anderson's Island.

In the 1760s, after some pirates were hanged from one of the island's scrubby trees, it became known as Gibbet Island. On January 20, 1785, Samuel Ellis purchased the property and gave it his name, which remains the name of the island till today.

During and immediately following World War II Ellis Island was used to detain American civilians or immigrants who were accused of spying or sabotage. Some 7,000 Germans, Italians and Japanese would be detained at Ellis Island. Ellis Island was also a processing center for returning sick or wounded U.S. soldiers, and a Coast Guard training base.

Research Question:

Can you find two more functions that Ellis Island played over its illustrious history?

Answers will be covered in the 15 minute preview to the Ellis Island Virtual Field Trip on March 29th.
Tune in at 12:45 ET to check your answers!