*Angel Island, the Western gate to the USA*

We want to tell you about a place that represented the first introduction to America for many immigrants. Now, most people know about Ellis Island, the East Coast port where more than 12 million immigrants, mostly from Europe, first set foot in the United States. But many people don't know about its West Coast counterpart, Angel Island.

Located roughly 45 minutes from San Francisco, Angel Island opened in 1910. More than a million people passed through its doors, including hundreds of thousands from China and Japan.

Here to tell us more about all this is Eddie Wong. He's executive director of the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation. Mr. Wong, welcome. Thank you for talking to us.

Mr. EDDIE WONG (Executive Director, Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation): I'm glad to be here. Thank you.

MARTIN: Were the experiences of people at Angel Island very different from those at Ellis Island?

Mr. WONG: It was for the Chinese, in the sense that they had to go through lengthy interrogations to prove that they were who they were. And the way that worked was your sponsor had a certain story, so to speak, about you, and you had to match that story point for point. Now, for other groups - whether they were Japanese, Filipino, Korean - they had different laws applying to them. And in some cases, there wasn't as strict an interrogation process, and they spent less time there.

MARTIN: Is that true? Were children - young children routinely separated from their parents there, and if so, why?

Mr. WONG: Well, I think there was sort of an age cut off around like 12 years old. Women and children were kept together, and so that didn't happen for them. But I think a lot of young men traveled by themselves, even as young as eight or nine or 10, and in some cases, they ended up in the men's barracks. So, I think this is a very lonely and frightening experience for them - a different country, being asked questions in a different language.