

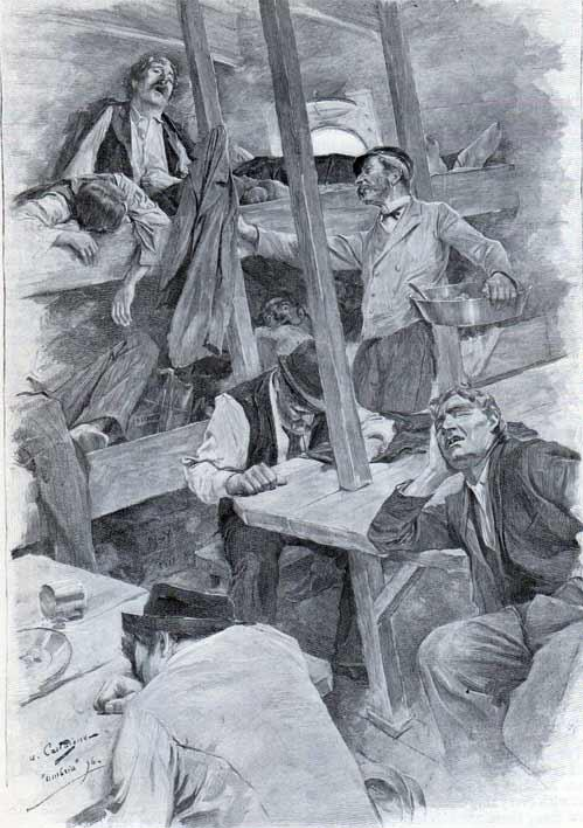
A low-angle shot of the Statue of Liberty, showing her head, crown with spikes, and right arm holding the torch. The statue is green and set against a blue sky with white clouds. The text "Coming to America" is overlaid in the upper right.

Coming
to
America

The Passage:

- From 1865-1915, the largest flood of immigration came to America
- Between 1865 and 1900, some 13.5 million immigrants arrived
- Wars, famine, religious persecution, and overpopulation were major reasons
- Passage often cost a life's savings
 - Families would save enough to send 1 or 2 members over in hopes that they'd then make enough to send for the rest





- Most came over in steerage
 - These were poor farmers, schoolmasters and artisans seeking work and opportunities, and young people willing to take risks
- Conditions below decks were horrible
 - Stench was overwhelming
 - Everything was dirty and sticky to the touch
 - Disease and death were not uncommon



The Arrival, Ellis Island:

- In 1890, Congress designated Ellis Island as an immigration station
- it opened in 1892 and burned down in 1897
- reopened in 1900, it had greeted some 6 million arrivals by 1910



- The station's facilities were very inadequate to handle such large numbers
 - Remained this way until immigration quotas were tightened in 1924
- In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson declared it part of the Statue of Liberty Monument



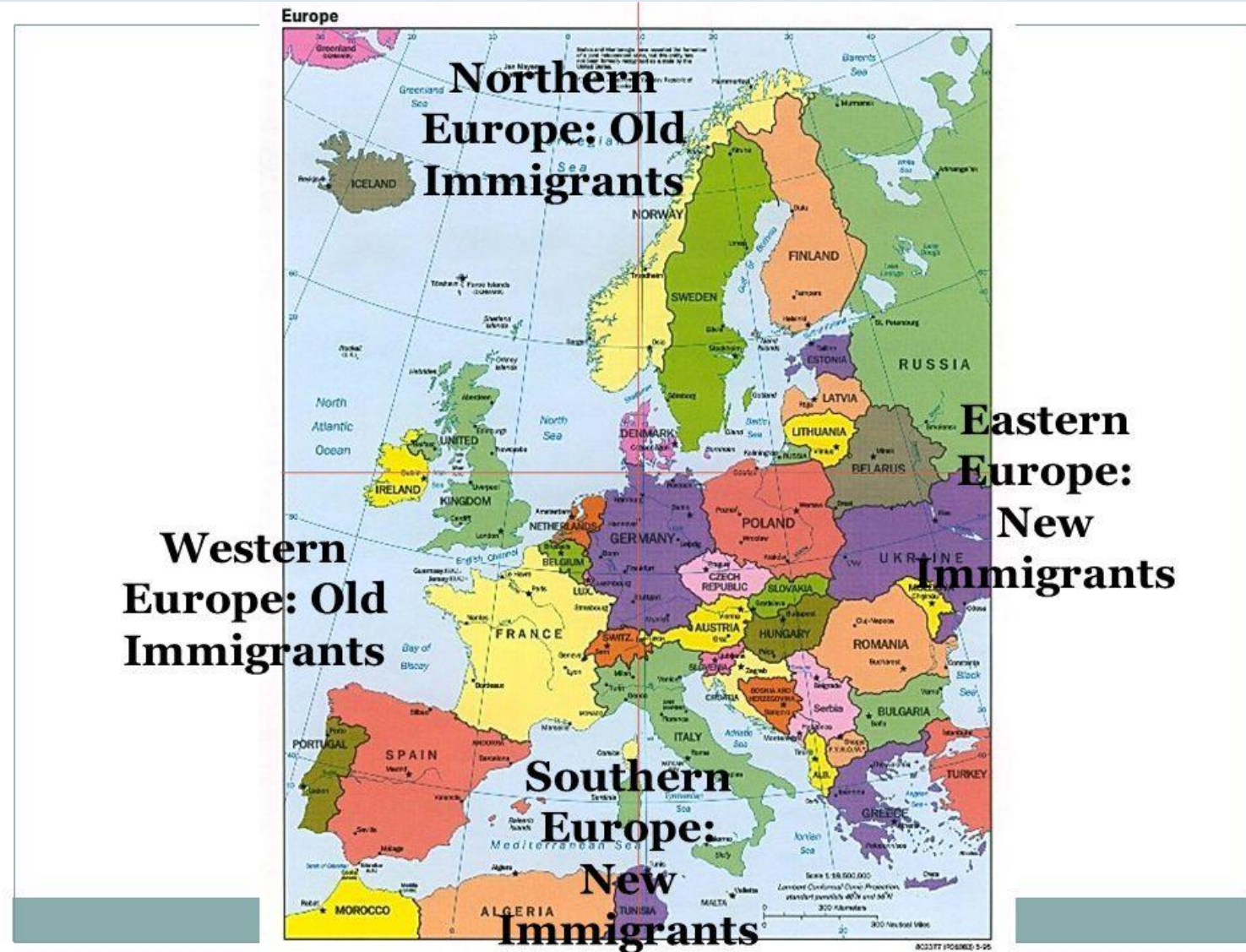
- If lucky enough to afford cabin - an extra \$20 - passengers were handled first and taken care of quicker than those in steerage
- Most immigrants arrived in Ellis Island in New York where processing was a humiliating and dehumanizing experience
- With large numbers of immigrants to see each day, inspectors had just 2 minutes for each medical examination and ask 32 background questions

- Those found to have contagious diseases could be shipped back
- Many last names were changed due to communication problems
- Majority of time was spent in long lines in the main hall
 - Tagged according to native language
 - Chalk-marked is suspected of having medical ailment



"Old" and "New" Immigrants:

- Prior to 1880, majority (85%) of immigrants came from northern and western Europe - Great Britain, Ireland, Germany and Scandinavian countries
 - Most were Protestant and spoke English
- After 1880, larger number came from eastern and southern Europe - Italy, Russia, Poland, and Hungary
 - Most were either Catholic or Jew
 - Languages and customs differed greatly



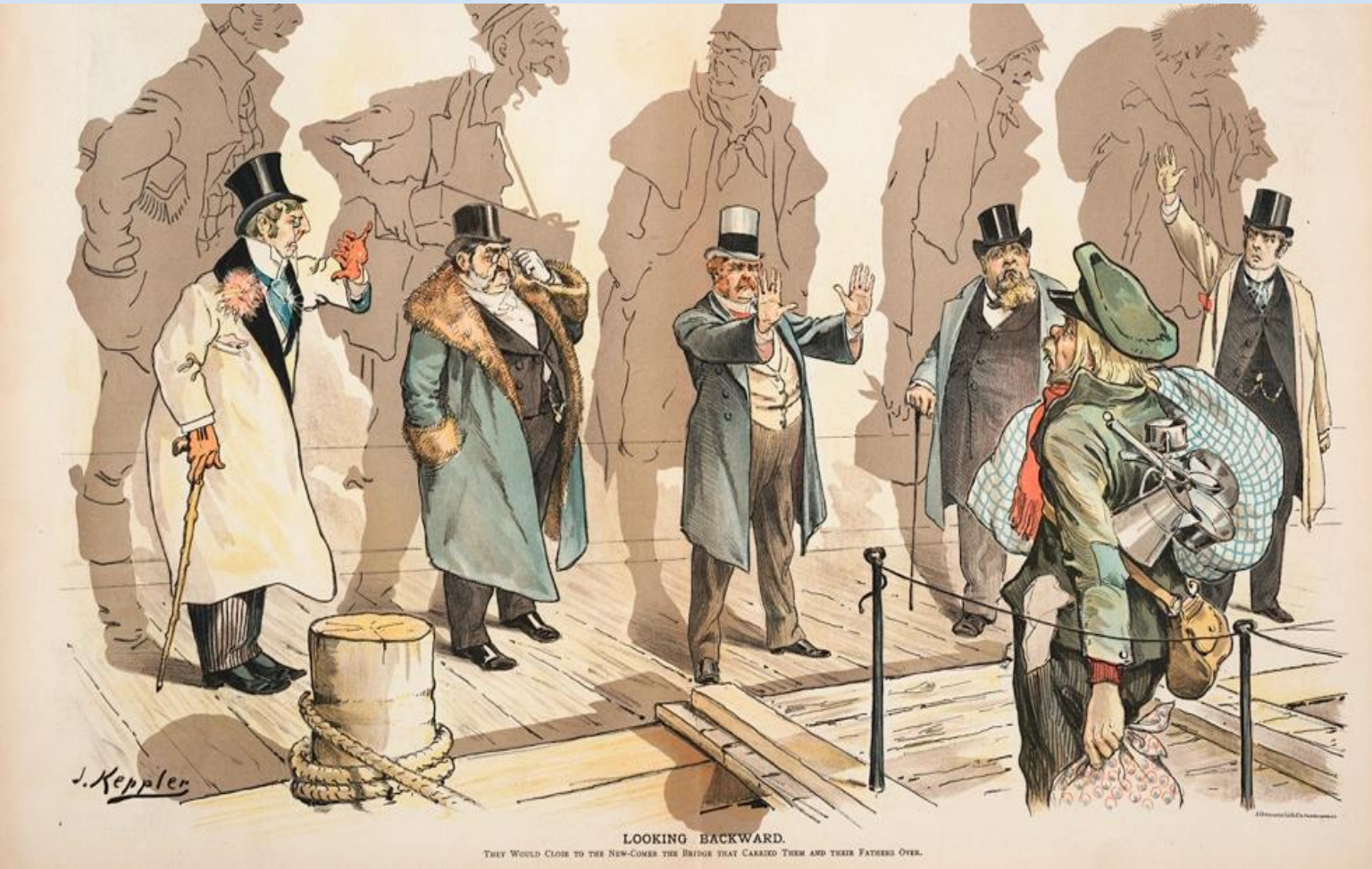


-Largest number of “new immigrants” came from southern Italy to leave drought, economic disaster and widespread disease behind

- Russian and Polish Jews also made up large numbers, escaping religious persecution and violence



- Some native-born Americans feared and resented new immigrants
 - o couldn't deal with strangeness of languages, customs and religions



- Newcomers also competed for jobs
 - o desperate for work, immigrants accepted lower wages and worse working conditions than American-born workers
 - o often used as strike-breakers, which further angered American-born workers