

**Picture of me:** It is 1907, October 1st in Warsaw, Poland. My name is Ania Etra and I am 12 years old. My mother, my sisters, my brother and I are going to America to live with my father. We are leaving on October 27th for America.

**Picture with sisters:** My father left for America three years ago so he could find a better job. He had to sell a lot of important family items to get money for the journey to America. He has made a lot of money in America, so he just sent us all tickets to join him.

**Picture of Poland:** In Poland, there is a lot of poverty. Our family didn't have a lot of money, but we made the best of what we had. My mother and father were farmers in Poland, but they were always looking for a better job. My father runs a factory in America now. I know Poland isn't perfect, but it is my home and I can't imagine living anywhere else.

**Jump rope with a friend:** In Poland, instead of going to school, I work on my father and mother's farm to help collect crops. When I'm not working on the farm, I'm either playing hide and seek or marbles with my friend, Basia. I also like to draw with my older sister, Jola who's 14 and my younger sister and Sybilla who's six.

**Packing:** It's October 7th and my brother Bernard, who's 9, packs with my ma and me. I feel butterflies in my stomach as I'm packing. Will I make new friends in America? Will I go to school in America? Will I have to learn a new language in America? I try to wash all these thoughts away, but I just can't. I have to decide what to bring to America because I can only bring a limited amount of items. I decide on bringing: a small blanket to remind me of Poland that my friend made me, a hat that my Aunt knit me, a pair of socks that I think are lucky, one change of clothes to have in America, pictures of Poland so I will always feel like I'm there, pictures of me and my friends from Poland so I can always see them, and a family recipe of how to bake bread. I have to wear my dress, stockings, and and 2 coats so my sack won't be so heavy.

**Saying goodbye to my friends:** Right before I start my journey to the seaport in Bremen, Germany, I say goodbye to my friends. This is much harder than I imagined. I know I will probably never see them again. Ma keeps telling me to hurry up, but I just can't leave them. I feel like I am leaving a part of myself in Poland. When things got hard and I didn't want

to upset my parents, I would confide in my friends. Who would I turn to in America? I can't let go, I just can't.

**Getting to the seaport:** Getting to the seaport takes about a week and a half. We travel the whole way by foot, stopping every other day to rest. We bring food and money with us. We eat most of our food along the way and spend 20 cents. We try our best to save our money and our energy!

**Picture of boat:** After 11 days of traveling, we finally make it to the seaport. After we get to the seaport, we have to wait four days for our boat, the SS Bremen. To tell the truth, I'm not looking forward to the boat ride. Once the boat comes, we show them our tickets and the captain tells us to go to the lower deck. I look at land for last time, then get on the boat. I hold back tears my eyes and try to be brave.

**Picture of water:** Now we have been on our boat for 3 days. Almost everyone on the boat is sick. The boat is small and smelly. The ocean is rough, it feels like a volcano erupting. I really hope I get to go up on the deck soon.

**Picture of Bremen to Ellis Island:** My stomach hurts from hunger and the motion of the boat. The food on the boat is so bad that I can't even eat it. My head hurts from everyone speaking loudly in different languages. I can't wait for the ride to be over with. Sometimes when I'm feeling better, I tell stories about America with my siblings and the other kids on the boat.

**Seeing the Statue of Liberty:** When I hear people shouting on the deck, I run up to see what people are shouting about. Then I see it: The Statue of Liberty. This was the best thing that had happened to me in nine days! Everyone is pushing and screaming, trying to get a glimpse of it. I am scared someone will fall overboard, but they don't. When the ship stops, men in white coats carrying weird tools come on the boat. My Ma tells me they are doctors. They tell first and second class passengers to get off the boat. Third class, on the other hand, has to take another boat ride to get to Ellis Island.

**Picture of the Great Hall:** Once we enter Ellis Island, there are so many doctors there. I remember what my dad had said in a letter: *doctors are always watching you*. I look around and I'm in a big hall where so many people are lined up to get examined. This hall is so big! It's so big, but seems even bigger because I have been cooped up in a ship for so long.

The hall is so loud, my ears are blasting! My family is almost up to get examined and my hands are really starting to sweat! Now, it's finally our turn to get examined.

**Picture of me getting legal inspection done:** During the medical inspection, they check practically my whole body. My whole family passes the medical exam. I was really happy until I remember the legal inspection. My father told me that they asked you about 29 questions about yourself. I was really nervous even though I would probably know the answers to the questions. Some of the questions the inspector asks me are: "where were you born?" and "do you have any relatives here?" I am slow to answer a couple of them because I don't want to get them wrong. The inspector tells me that I will change my name from Ania to Anna. This new name will definitely take some getting used to. After all of us finish the exam, the inspector tells us that we were good to go!!

**Picture of me seeing my father:** After we pass through Ellis Island, we have to do a currency exchange. This is when you exchange Polish money for American money. The American money looks very different from Polish money. To me, the American money looks fake, like it is part of a children's game. After this, the best thing happens: I see my father again. I am crying tears of joy! My father hugs me close and tells me how much I will love America. He also tells me that I've grown up so much in past three years! My father can't wait to show me around this new, strange place.

**Apartment:** In America, we live on the lower east side of Manhattan. Our apartment has four rooms: the parlor, the kitchen, a bedroom and a bathroom. My father and mother sleep in the bedroom. My older sister sleeps in the bed in the parlor. My younger sister and I sleep on the couch in the parlor. My brother pushes chairs together and lays cushions on them to make a bed.

**Lower east side:** I have made a friend in America and now I attend school. I love getting the chance to learn new things at school instead of spending my days in the fields. I also love how in America everything is so close together. While I miss my friends and other things in Poland, now I understand why my father moved us to America. I have a good life ahead of me in this new country!

