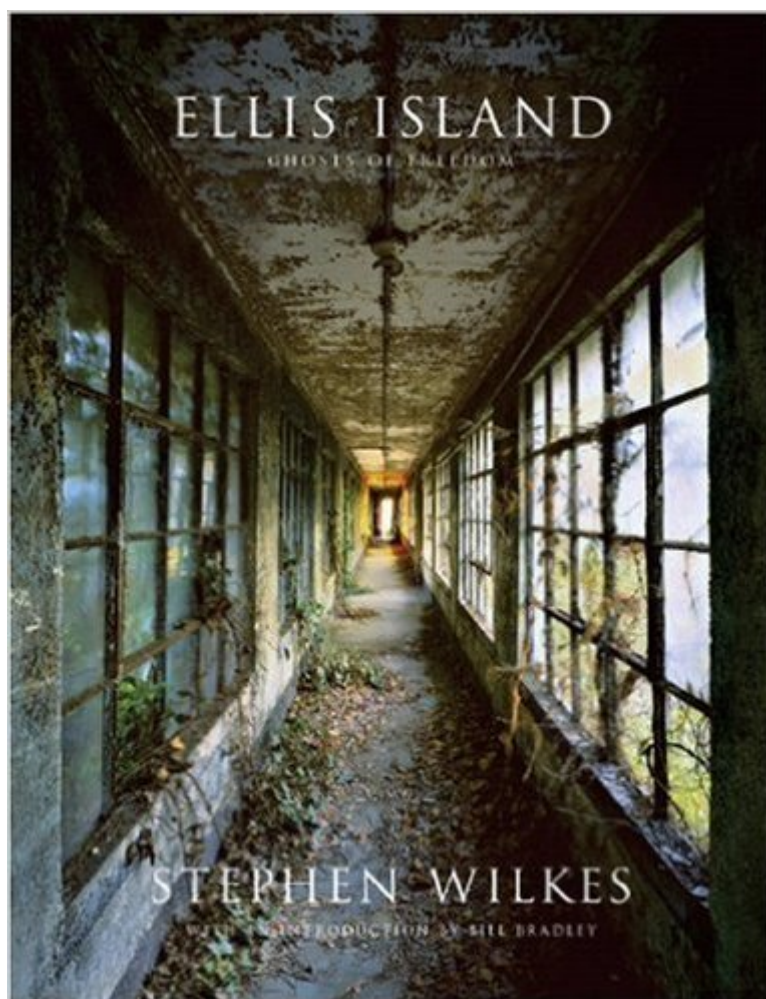


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# Ellis Island: Ghosts Of Freedom



## Synopsis

"Wilkes's photographs of the 'dark side' of Ellis Island are extraordinary...this book will be a major event." --David McCullough For five years (1998-2003) New York photographer Stephen Wilkes explored the hospital complex that comprised the south side of Ellis Island. Neglected for almost fifty years, the buildings were in a state of extreme disrepair: lead paint peeled from the ceilings and walls, vines and trees grew through the floorboards, detritus and debris littered the hallways. In rooms long-abandoned, Wilkes captured a spirited new vision of this gateway to freedom. Twelve million people passed through Ellis Island. Approximately one percent were turned away for health reasons. Wilkes's powerful images of the underbelly of the island--a purgatory between freedom and captivity--ask us to reflect on the defining experiences of millions. With that rare combination of an eye that sees far beyond the lens with the technical acumen of a master draftsman, Wilkes takes us on an unforgettable journey through our collective past. 77 color photographs

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Stephen Wilkes is a wonderful photographer and he makes the gritty details of a run down part of Ellis Island into a moving, dramatic and beautiful experience. It is powerful and also haunting and compelling you to walk in his foot steps. The images are technically exquisite. It is an inspiration to see the routes of our ancestors. A great book to own. David Kalman

This book brings to light an unusual reflection: pictures taken at a historical site which does not look

at all like this any more. The photos in this book have a haunting quality because of the disrepair of the isolation hospital on the "South Side" of Ellis Island. The dishevelment of the facility has a haunting, poetic quality as captured by Stephen Wilkes here. We learn, though, that the site looks nothing like this any more. The Ellis Island foundation has enough money now to restore this facility to its former state, as it existed long before this level of deterioration advanced as far as shown in the book. Meaning that this photographic record is all that survives. It calls to question the notion of historic preservation. We now have the means to make something old look new - or as it did when it was first built. Does this mean that, eventually, this awful hospital will become a Disney World version of itself? It's a tough ethical call, for sure. At least, though, I'm so grateful to Wilkes for creating and sharing this rare record with us all.

I Love this book, the pictures are beautiful, the design and layout make the pictures and quotes very moving. As a photographer I admire the quality of the work, and the bright vivid prints. I love that most of the images are full pages, sometimes spread across two pages, with small text labeling the room, or part of the property. There are no frames, page designs, or paragraphs to take away from the imagery. For more information and details the photographer includes a section of thumbnails with descriptions, stories about the room, or the shooting conditions, or even bitd of history. The thumbnails and text are at the back of the book with an arial shot and map showing the layout of the buildings. It really helps to peice together the history of Ellis Island. The quotes including add to the emotion behind the images, and I like that they were on parchment paper, so that you can see the pictures behind it. The books are being enjoyed by me and my mother, who is very interested in the hostory of Ellis Island, while I enjoy it for the photography. Great book to own, everyone should have a copy.

The pictures of the old building at Ellis Island were exceptional and definitely something we would never see again. I certainly enjoyed looking at and reading the history of Ellis Island. This is a book I know is a keeper.

As an artist, I purchased this after my artist friend showed it to me, to use as a guide for selecting particular colors and/or color combinations in abstract paintings. It is amazing that the light in the photos has been captured as it truly was--not altered or enhanced with SW to convey a particular mood. Everyone I have showed this to has been propelled to stop and look through every image in the book--it draws you in as you flip through the pages. The colors portray emotion. Content is one

of a kind. Highly recommended.

This is a beautiful photography book. I loved looking at the photographs. The images convey many emotions - both past and present. A must have for anyone whose ancestors came through Ellis Island.

THIS IS THE BEST PHOTOGRAPHY BOOK I HAVE EVER SEEN. THE PHOTOS AND THE COLORS ARE SO EXTRAORDINARY. THIS BOOK WILL BE MY HOLIDAY GIFT I SEND OUT FOR 2006.

Evocative view of a portal to America of the past. Thrilled that these photos helped to stabilize Ellis Island in a way that reminds us of what it took to immigrate to America in the past... courage, determination and stamina. Unvarnished, truly has the patina of time, beautiful book, a book with feeling.

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