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## Ellis Island Museum to Expand, Touching on Other Eras

By DAVID W. DUNLAP

The story of immigration told at the Ellis Island museum will be expanded to the eras before and after the period when Ellis was the portal to America, Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne said on Wednesday, speaking in the vaulted Registry Room of the island's main building. Mr. Kempthorne said the expansion would increase the museum's "relevancy to the more diverse audiences who visit national parks today."

The \$20 million museum expansion, to be known as the Peopling of America Center, will extend the public space from the main building at the Ellis Island National Monument into the adjacent kitchen and laundry building. The new exhibits will follow archetypal families, past and present, through the stages of immigration: leaving, journeying, arriving, struggling and, finally, helping build the nation.

Although the new exhibition will touch on the story of illegal immigrants, it will keep its focus on citizenship, an emphasis that was underscored on Wednesday when a dozen men and women, most of them in the armed forces, were sworn in as citizens after Mr. Kempthorne's announcement. (They pledged, among other things, to "bear arms on behalf of the United States.")

Specialist Franck Dorval, 36, was among them. He arrived from Haiti two years ago, he said, and worked in restaurants in New Rochelle, N.Y., before enlisting in the Army. "The best way to give the country something back is to serve



The Immigration Museum at the Ellis Island National Monument will be expanded to include other eras of great movement.

the people," Specialist Dorval said, though he allowed that education benefits were another inducement.

As to why he had applied for citizenship, he said he hoped it would open doors in the Army. "If you want a career, if you want a promotion, you need to be a U.S. citizen," he said. An hour after saying that, he was.

Construction on the museum expansion began last week, said Stephen A. Briganti, president and chief executive of the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, which is overseeing the project and says it is to be finished in 2011.

Given the changing nature of immigration, it is likely that if the museum did not broaden its approach, future generations might see Ellis Island as an anachronistic institution devoted largely to European arrivals from 1892 to 1954,

**Growing in space and subject matter, for today's more diverse audiences.'**

when the immigration station operated there.

Mr. Briganti said that illegal immigration needed to be part of the story the expanded museum would tell. "There have been undocumented people ever since immigration began to be controlled," he said.

The exhibit will trace one family that lived in the United States illegally for a time before applying for citizenship. But none of the families traced will be in the United States illegally on a permanent basis, said Edwin Schlossberg of ESI Design, which designed the new center.

Mr. Schlossberg said that it did not make sense to place too much emphasis on the great concerns surrounding illegal immigration. "In a public environment, where people are going to spend one and a half hours, the idea of raising issues you can't answer is irresponsible," Mr. Schlossberg said. Instead, he said, such issues could be presented in depth on the museum's Web site.

And a practical objection was noted by Alan M. Kraut, a professor of history at American University and the chairman of the academic committee that advised the foundation. "If a family was undocumented," he said, "they would be a little bit reticent to have their story told."

The National Park Service Centennial Challenge Initiative has committed \$2.3 million to the new center, matched by \$1.5 million from the Bank of America Charitable Foundation and \$1 million from the Annenberg Foundation. All told, Mr. Briganti said, fund-raising is about 75 percent complete.

But he acknowledged how cloudy the future was, with the turmoil on Wall Street. Asked about fund-raising prospects in a recession, Mr. Briganti said: "This one has me concerned. I don't know, to tell you the truth."