

ELLIS ISLAND — PEOPLING OF AMERICA





ELLIS ISLAND — PEOPLING OF AMERICA

ELLIS ISLAND PEOPLING OF AMERICA

*“Our house is small but our barn is full.
Thank God I came to this country
where we are free from landlords, rent,
and the fear of eviction!”*

— 18th-century migrant from County Donegal, Ireland

*“In this country, we’ve been able
to move ahead economically,
but it is not our own.”*

— Luisa Fernández, 20th-century undocumented migrant
from Guadalajara, Mexico

Contents

1 INTRODUCTION

SECTION ONE:

2 PROJECT GOALS

SECTION TWO:

4 DESIGN CHALLENGES

SECTION THREE:

6 DESIGN STRATEGY

- Thematic Organization 8*
- Experiential Organization 10*
- Content Organization 11*
- Physical Organization 12*

SECTION FOUR: WALKTHROUGH

14 GLOBAL MIGRATION

- Introduction 15*
- Global Migration 16*

SECTION FIVE: WALKTHROUGH

20 SETTLING A NEW WORLD

- Introduction 21*
- Exhibit Components 23*
- Entryway 24*
- Leaving Home 26*
 - Building Anticipation 26*
 - Contextual Graphics & Profiles 28*
 - Timeline and Key events 30*
 - Windows on the Past 32*
- Making the Trip 34*
- Arrival 36*
- Building Community 38*
- Bridges to the Past 40*
- Ties to the Past 42*

SECTION SIX: WALKTHROUGH

44 NEW ERAS OF IMMIGRATION

- Introduction 45*
- Changing America 46*
 - Entry 46*
 - The Pace of Change 48*
 - Towns Across America 50*
 - The Sounds of America 52*
 - Population Map 52*
- The Journey 54*
 - Leaving Home 56*
 - Historic Trends 56*
 - Scenes of the Journey 58*
 - Profiles of Migration 58*
 - Timeline, Key Events 60*
 - Video Vignettes 60*
 - Making the Trip 62*
 - Arrival 64*
 - Bridges to Home 66*
 - Building Community 68*
 - Becoming American 70*
- An American Tapestry 72*
- Threads of Migration 74*

76 CONCLUSION

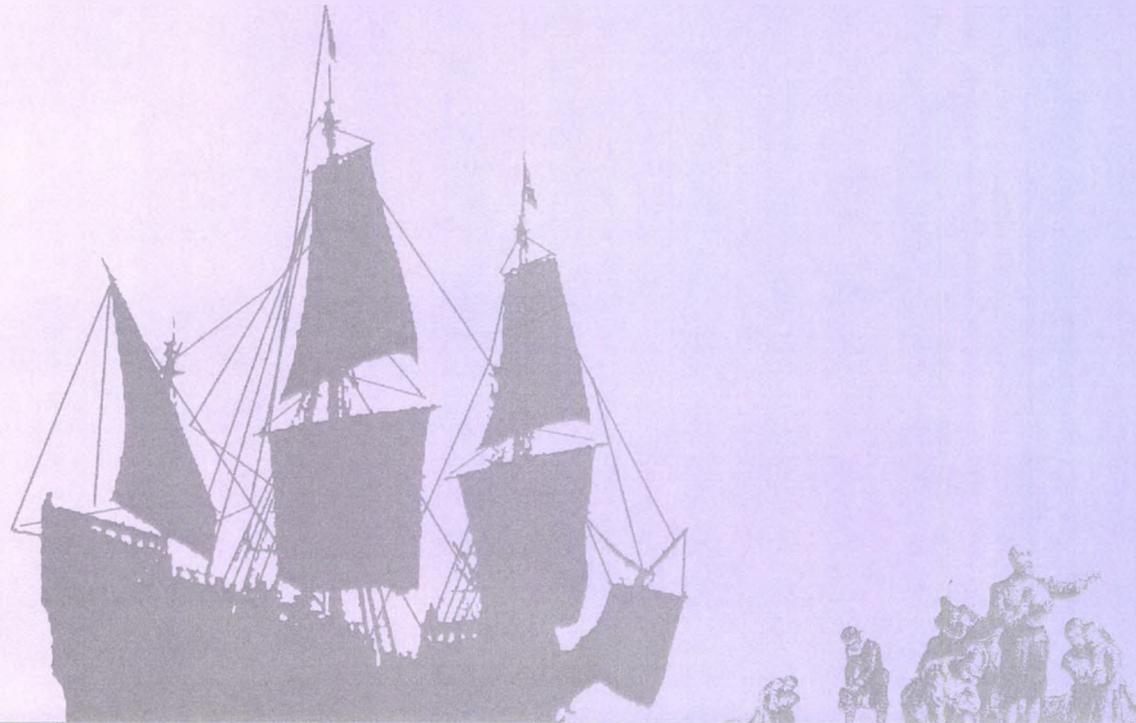
This is an unpublished confidential and proprietary work simultaneously protected under copyright, trade secret and like laws of the United States and of other countries. All rights are reserved. These materials may not be reproduced, displayed, distributed nor may the information therein be used or disclosed, in whole or in part, without the express written permission of ESI DESIGN, 2004.

Introduction

ESI Design is pleased to present this Final Concept Design to the National Park Service (NPS) and the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation (the Foundation). The Final Concept Design represents an important milestone in our work with the NPS and the Foundation.

This report is the third stage of a three-part process in our work with you. After meeting with NPS, the Foundation, and the Ellis Island History Advisory Committee, we prepared a Research and Analysis Report in December 2003, which documented your goals and parameters for the project. Based on your comments, we revised the R&A Report in February 2004. The revised report served as a blueprint for our initial design efforts, which we presented to you as a Preliminary Concept Report in March 2004. This Final Concept Design Report builds upon your feedback from these earlier efforts.

In this report, we articulate our vision for the Peopling of America Center — as an inclusive and compelling expansion of the visitor experience at the Ellis Island Immigration Museum. We describe the organization of the exhibit program, provide an overview of each design element, and explain what visitors will see, do, and learn during their visit. We welcome your comments on this concept. The conversations we have now will guide our work when the project proceeds to the next phase, Design Development.



Project Goals

Project Goals

The NPS, working in partnership with the Foundation, plans to expand the interpretive program at the Ellis Island Immigration Museum to embrace the experiences of all Americans across the centuries. To keep your aspirations in mind as we move forward in the design, we reprise here a summary of your principal goals for the project:

Project Goals

- This project should **broaden the interpretive focus** of Ellis Island to present a comprehensive story of the peopling of America within the broader context of global migration.
- The Peopling of America Center should make Ellis Island **feel more welcoming and inclusive** for all visitors.
- This center should **extend a new kind of invitation**, reaching out to people who may not have visited before believing they would not find “their” stories.
- The center should **make clear that immigration is an on-going process**, not simply a phenomena of the past.
- **Families and school groups constitute the key audiences** for the new program, as they do in the rest of the Museum.
- The new center should **appeal to American and foreign tourists**, who make up a large percentage of the visitors to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island.
- This new center should **re-energize Ellis Island as a destination for visitors**.
- The Peopling of America should **set the stage for seminars and programs** planned for an institute on Ellis Island.

Design Challenges

Design Challenges

Integrating the Peopling of America Center into the existing Ellis Island Immigration Museum poses a number of design challenges.

Content Challenges

- Though the Peopling of America focuses on the history of migration in the years before and after Ellis Island, the exhibit program must **integrate well with the current Museum experience.**
- The interpretive focus must **embrace a vast span of time and a great diversity of people.**

Experiential Challenges

- The Peopling of America should **capture the grand scale of the epic history of migration.** Visitors should feel inspired by and immersed within the story.
- The exhibit should **challenge visitors to question their own assumptions** and explore complex issues from a variety of perspectives.
- **Visitors should feel a personal connection** through compelling stories of individuals and families who immigrated.

Physical Design Challenges

- Peopling of America will be **located on different floors and in different buildings**, complicating navigation and narrative connections between the two spaces.
- The **historic fabric of the buildings must not be marred**, which prohibits attaching exhibits to the floors and walls.
- The **budget for the exhibit design and fabrication** is \$6.8 million.

Design Strategy

Design Strategy

Until now, the Museum essentially offered visitors one large experience — the story of Ellis Island and the immigrants who began their lives in America at this immigration station. While the Museum touched on other topics, including the current Peopling of America exhibits, these remained ancillary to the main event.

With the addition of the Peopling of America Center, the Ellis Island Immigration Museum will introduce its visitors to the epic history of migration and the peopling of America across all time periods. Visitors will have three choices, rather than one:

The tremendous breadth of the story, the limited exhibit space, and the time constraints faced by visitors compel us to develop a clear, cohesive conceptual organization that will help visitors understand this shift. To accomplish this, ESI has developed a design strategy that:

- Organizes the content into clear, distinct time periods.
- Offers a cohesive storyline that thematically ties together the entire Museum experience.
- Introduces visitors to the main themes at the outset of their visit.
- Engages visitors emotionally as well as intellectually with the story of migration.
- Gives visitors a broad overview of the storyline within each exhibit area so they immediately grasp the big picture.
- Presents information in a clear, consistent manner so visitors always understand where they are in the story.



Thematic Organization

We have organized the content as **three key chapters** in American history.

In addition, an introductory exhibit, called Global Migration, sets the story of American immigration within its global context.



Thematic Organization

From the earliest days of planning for the Ellis Island Immigration Museum, NPS and the Foundation had hoped to create an exhibit program that presented the broad history of the Peopling of America. However, one exhibit (indeed, one museum) cannot adequately address all aspects of this saga. Rather than attempt an exhaustive history, we must develop a clear, cohesive core narrative for visitors to follow.

The exhibit program we present in this report touches upon the many issues present in the Peopling of America story. The primary narrative, however, focuses on immigration to and permanent settlement within the United States. This central narrative is the one most in keeping with the current exhibit program of the Ellis Island Immigration Museum, and the one visitors will expect to encounter. This does not mean that the narrative flattens the diverse character or ignores the global dimension of migration. Rather, it provides a strong, clear structure, within which we can develop a nuanced, multi-dimensional story that allows visitors to examine issues from many perspectives and in many time periods.

While the migration experiences of individuals and groups varied enormously throughout these eras, common themes emerge related to the process of leaving home, traveling to a new place, and creating a new life. Therefore, we **use the theme of a “journey to a new life” as the storyline that ties together the three eras.** To a great extent, this theme already underlies the Museum’s current exhibit program about those who immigrated through Ellis Island. For Settling a New World and New Eras of Immigration, the theme serves as the armature for communicating the content. Visitors move sequentially through exhibits about:

- Leaving Home
- Making the Trip
- Arrival
- Building Community
- Bridges to Home



Experiential Organization

In addition to an informational narrative, we hope to **communicate the emotional aspects of migration to visitors**.

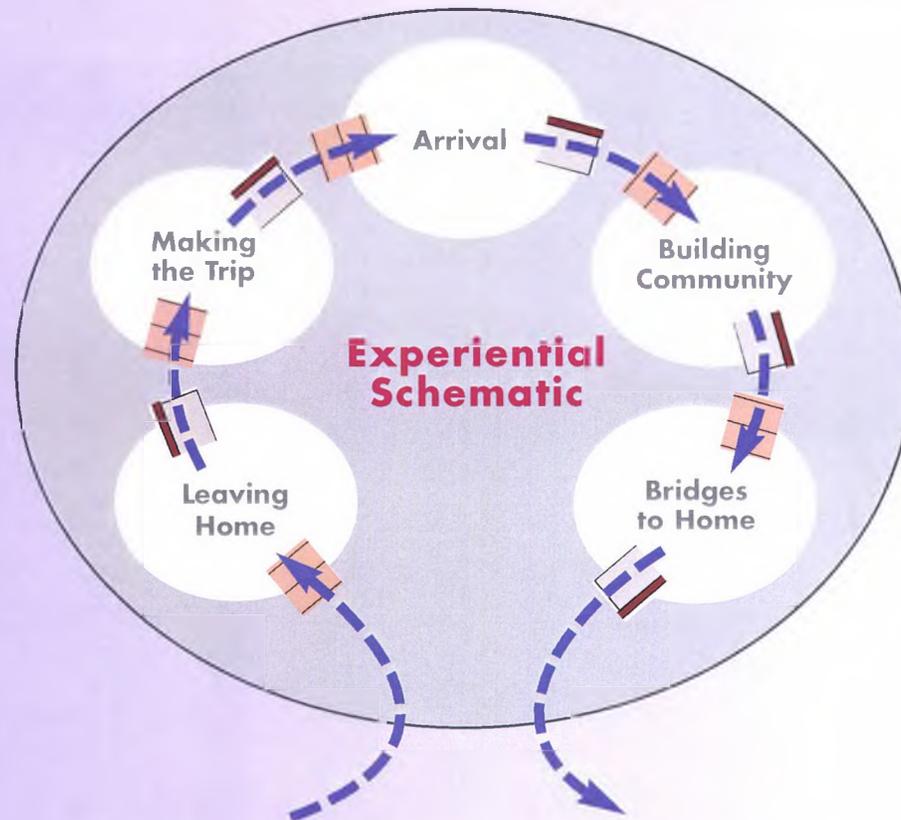
We want to create a compelling, meaningful experience that captures visitors' imaginations and spurs them to further inquiry.

To make the narrative more experiential — more thought-provoking and evocative — we **use audio and audio-visual media at key points in the informational flow** to bring the story to life.

This media bookends each segment of the Journey to a New Life:

 **Building Anticipation** — At the beginning of each segment, visitors hear ambient sounds or see images that migrants may have encountered during the journey. A series of questions, spoken by many voices, reflect migrants' anxieties as they embarked on the journey.

 **Windows on the Past** — Each informational segment concludes with personal accounts of migration. Audio or video vignettes feature individuals speaking about their own experiences — migrants as well as those they encountered along the way.



We also use media to differentiate the time periods. While **Settling a New World** relies primarily on audio recorded from original documents (e.g., letters and diaries), **New Eras of Immigration** uses video interviews, news footage, and interactive activities to reflect the **technological progress** and faster pace of modern life.

Content Organization

The story of migration is extraordinarily rich, complex, and dynamic. To effectively communicate this story to visitors without overwhelming them, we've developed a consistent organization for the information that appears in the exhibits. Visitors will be able to quickly grasp how to move through the exhibits and where to find the information that interests them.

In both *Settling a New World* and *New Eras of Immigration*, we organize the content for each segment of the Journey into the following kinds of information:

Historic Trends

An introductory panel that gives visitors an overview of the pertinent issues surrounding a segment of the Journey in the relevant time periods.

Contextual Graphics

Large evocative images that relate to scenes migrants might have seen during their journeys to set the mood and tone for the exhibits.

Timeline

A linear timeline, which chronicles events and legislation that shaped migrants' experiences over the years.

Key Events

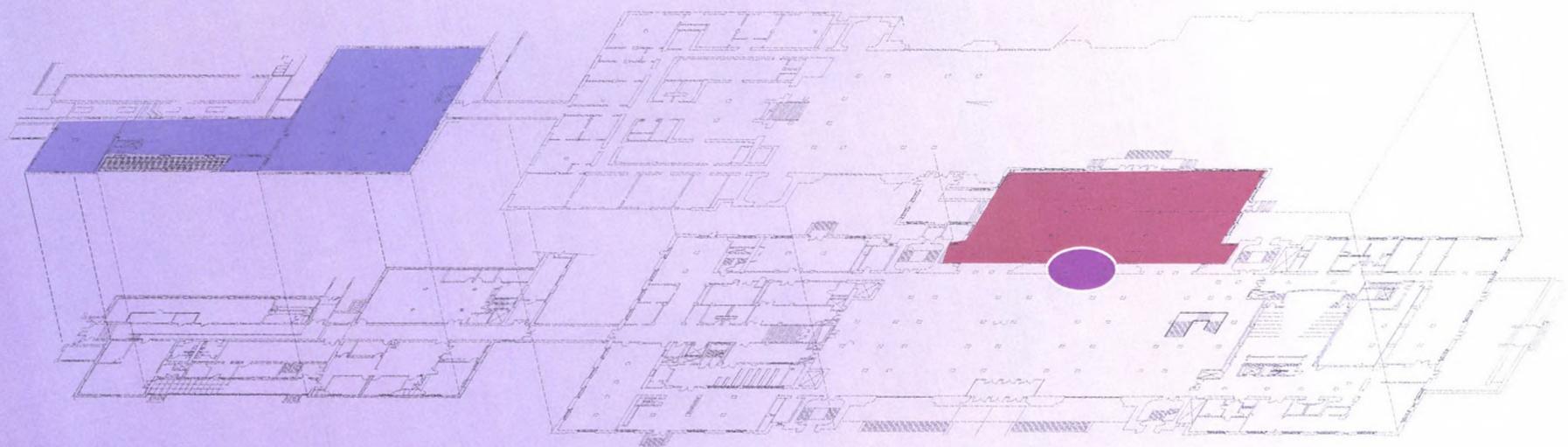
Interpretive panels, which examine major issues and important milestones in migration history through text and images.

Profiles of Migrant Groups

A series of panels that use text, images, and simple activities to explore issues confronting specific migrant groups in particular time periods.

In other exhibits, such as *Global Migration*, visitors encounter an introductory panel that presents a broad overview of the topic and interactive activities that allow them to explore information on their own in greater depth.

Physical Organization



Physical Organization

The **Peopling of America Center** is located in three places within the Ellis Island Immigration Museum:

- **Global Migration** is located directly behind the lobby baggage display in an approximately 1,000-sq. ft area.
- **Settling a New World** occupies the Railroad Ticket Office, an approximately 6,000-sq.ft. space on the ground floor.
- **New Eras of Immigration** resides in the Kitchen & Laundry Building in an approximately 10,000-sq.ft. space on the 2nd floor.

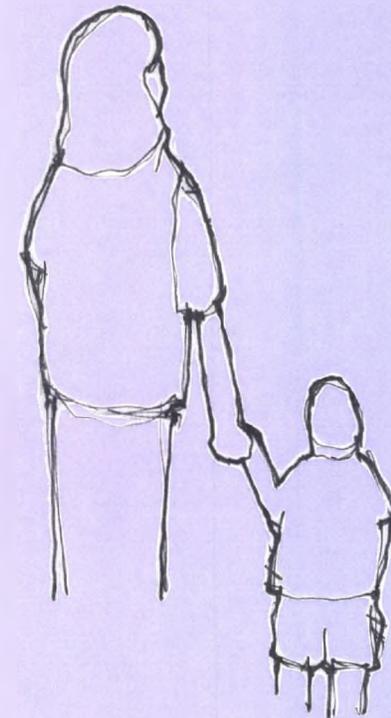
The exhibit design preserves the historical fabric of these spaces. Exhibits do not attach to the floors or walls in these areas, and allow visitors access to windows and doors around the perimeter.

Experiential Walkthrough

Introduction

In the following pages, we walk you through the proposed exhibit elements as visitors will encounter them. In each area, we try to convey the look and feel of the exhibit environment with sketches and inspirational imagery.

While for this presentation we suggest specific content to flesh out the narrative, the actual content for the exhibit program will be developed during the next phase of this project, Design Development. At that point, ESI will work closely with the National Park Service and the Ellis Island History Advisory Committee to determine the information to be communicated to visitors.



Walkthrough

GLOBAL MIGRATION

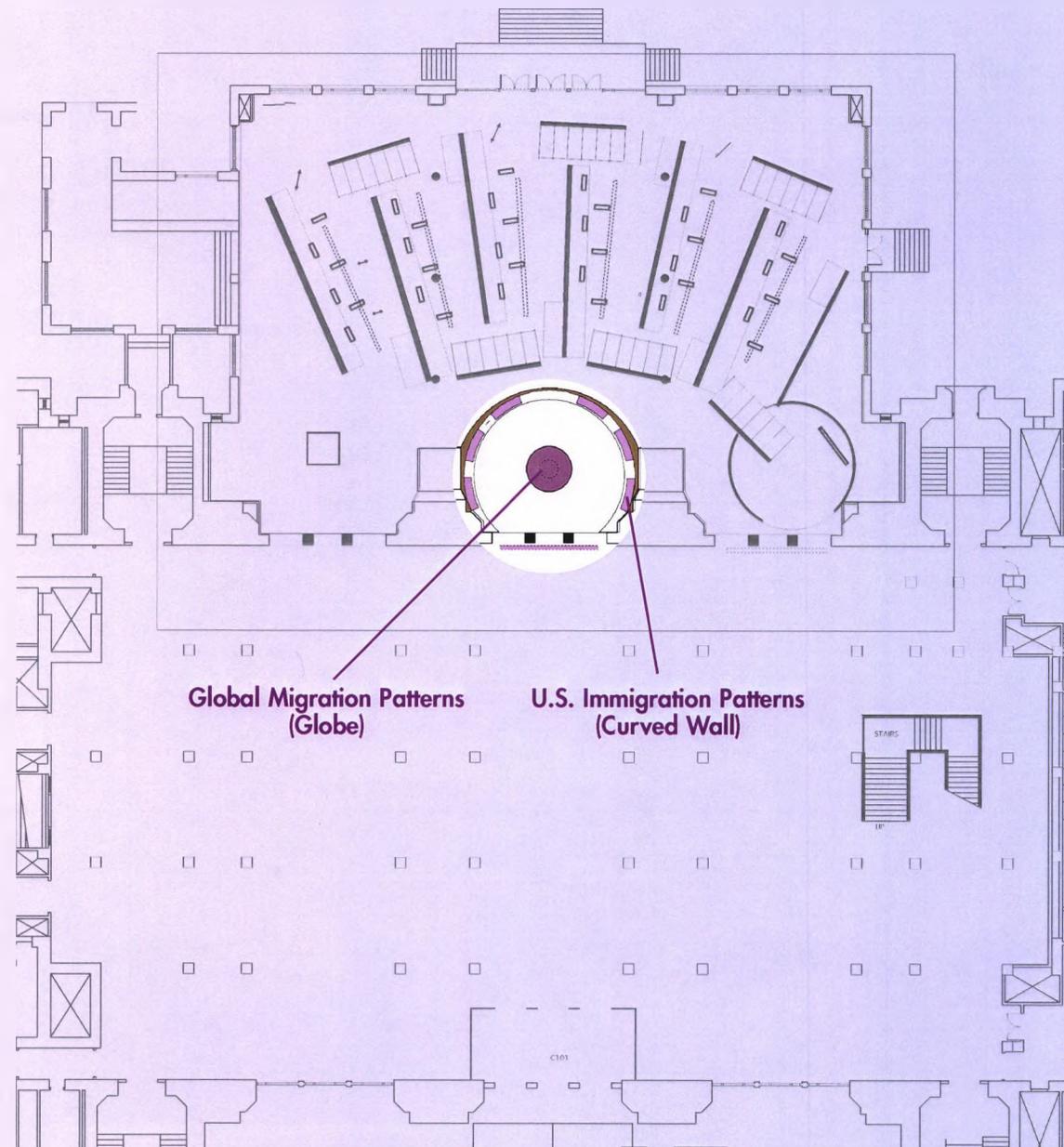
Global Migration

The Global Migration exhibit, located just beyond the baggage display, serves as an introduction to all of the exhibits in the museum.

This exhibit has two components:

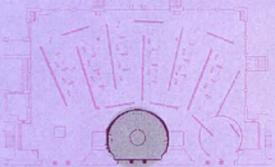
- **Global Migration Patterns**
- **U.S. Immigration Patterns**

This unusually rich exhibit sets the tone for the rest of the museum and invites visitors into the multi-faceted story of migration



Walkthrough: Global Migration

GLOBAL MIGRATION



Global Migration Patterns & U.S. Immigration Patterns

Global Migration Patterns

A large, radiant globe stands in a circular exhibit space behind the baggage display. To set the story of immigration to America within its larger, global context, the globe communicates world migration patterns over the course of human history. As a series of dates appear, glowing strands of light show the flow of migration across continents during each era.

Introductory panels on a rail ringing the globe describe migration as a universal phenomenon and help visitors understand the patterns displayed on the globe:

Moving Across Time and Continents

Throughout history, humans have migrated from one place to another for myriad reasons — in search of sustenance, freedom, or opportunity; fleeing war, oppression, or natural disaster; voluntarily or against their wills. For much of its history, the United States has been a principal (though certainly not the only) destination for migrants. The lights on the globe show the movements of people across time and continents, from the pre-historic beginnings of human existence to the modern world.

U.S. Immigration Patterns

Positioned on a curved wall directly behind the globe, an exhibit on the history of immigration to the United States gives visitors a chronological context for understanding the entire Museum.

A photographic montage of American faces forms the backdrop for the exhibit. Within this, a large timeline graph shows U.S. immigration rates from the colonial era to the year 2000. A graphic panel flanking the timeline introduces the main theme of the Museum:

At three individual stations inset in the wall, visitors can explore an interactive timeline and short video documentaries about migration to the United States in different eras. (These are existing videos, currently accessible only in the American Family Immigration History Center.)

The Peopling of America

The story of the peopling of America is epic and complex. It spans thousands of years, contains an amazing diversity of characters, and takes place within a broad, global context. It encompasses conquest, enslavement, colonial settlement, and migration to this country and across the nation. It embraces those who settled here permanently as well as those who did not. We invite you to explore an important aspect of that story — the journey to a new life in America — in three eras:

Settling a New World,
Pre-history through 1892

The Ellis Island Years,
1892 through 1924

New Eras of Immigration,
1924 to the Present and Beyond

Section Five

Walkthrough

Settling a New World

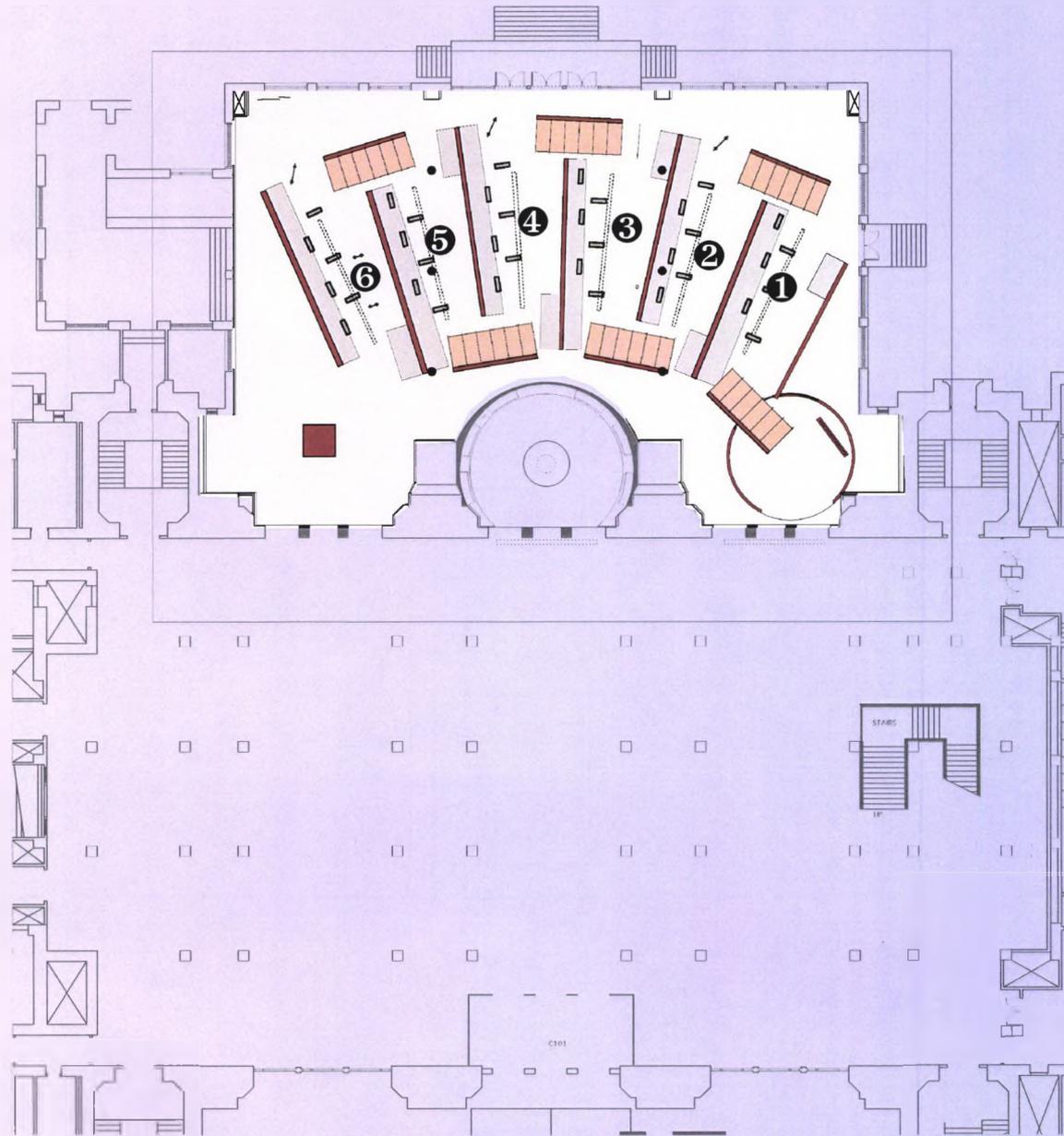
Introduction

In *Settling a New World*, visitors travel through a series of exhibits that tell the story of migration to America in the pre-Ellis Island era. Visitors move sequentially through exhibits that relate to the theme of **Journey to a New Life**:

1. Leaving Home
2. Making the Trip
3. Arrival
4. Building Community
5. Bridges to Home
6. Ties to the Past

These broad subjects provide the armature, or organizing rationale, for the exhibit content.

In the following pages, we describe one segment of the Journey, Leaving Home, in some detail to give you an idea of how all of the elements work together within the exhibit. For the remaining five segments, we suggest a direction for content development.



Settling a New World

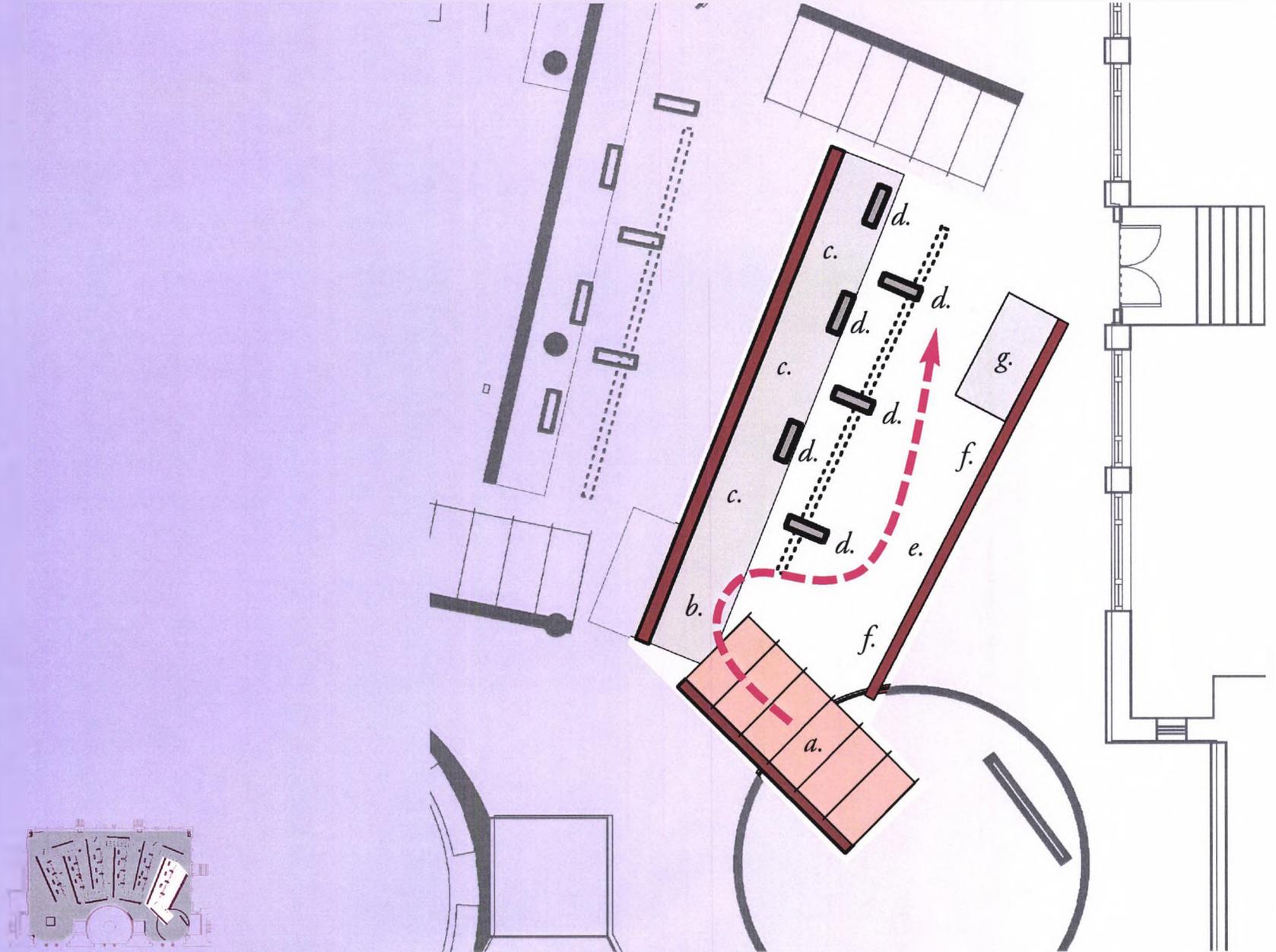


Exhibit Components

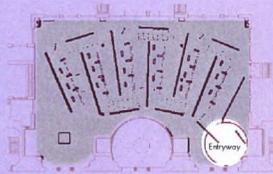
The exhibit environment consists of a series of display surfaces of varying heights, which create a context for the exhibits yet allow views of the rear windows and door. The exhibit structure forms six, roughly pie-shaped wedges. The interior of each wedge relates to a segment of the Journey. To cue visitors to where they are in the Journey, distinct colors and evocative contextual graphics distinguish each segment.

Within each of the six segments of the Journey, visitors discover the story of migration in stages through a variety of media:

- (a) **Building Anticipation** —
In a sound-controlled area, visitors hear an evocative audio of ambient sounds and questions that give a sense of what migrants may have thought or felt during this part of the Journey. The questions are also printed on the walls for those visitors who have hearing impairments.
- (b) **Historic Trends** —
An introductory panel, visible as visitors exit the Building Anticipation area, provides an overview of this segment of the Journey.
- (c) **Contextual Graphic** —
As visitors enter the exhibit area, they see a large evocative image related to this part of the Journey that covers one whole side of the exhibit area.
- (d) **Profiles of Migrant Groups** —
On the same wall as the Contextual Graphic, a series of panels focus in on episodes in the history of specific migrant groups. Each segment of the Journey includes panels about members of these groups:
 - Native Americans
 - Early European settlers
 - Spanish/Mexican settlers in the Southwest and French settlers along the Mississippi
 - Africans and African-Americans
 - Mid-19th century Europeans (especially Irish and Germans)
 - Asians (particularly Chinese and Japanese) in mid- and late-19th Century
- (e) **Timeline** —
On the opposite wall, a long, horizontal panel contains a timeline of important events and legislation related to this segment of the Journey.
- (f) **Key Events** —
Above the timeline, a number of interpretive panels examine important milestones in migration history through text and images.
- (g) **Windows on the Past** —
The concluding exhibit within a Journey segment features a series of audio segments about specific individuals that bring the story to life. (The final segment, Ties to the Past, features video rather than audio.) Visitors open a window to hear a story and see an artifact or image related to the story. Some windows are positioned lower on the wall for younger children.

Settling a New World

Entryway



Entryway

Visitors enter Settling a New World through a circular entryway. A graphics panel at the entry helps them make a transition — leaving behind their own lives to consider the world from a migrant's point of view. This panel could convey the following type of information:

Leaving Behind All That's Familiar

A change as momentous as leaving one's home to migrate to a new world generates tremendous stress and anxiety as well as hope. As you move through the museum, imagine yourself as a migrant, leaving behind your home and all that's familiar to journey to a strange land of unknown possibilities and challenges.



Accompany'd with
Some Accoets of the Grievous Moleftations, by D/ MONS and WITCHCRAFTS, which have late annoy'd the Countrey; and the T rials of fome eminent *Misdoers* Executed upon occafion thereof: with feve Remarkable *Curiofities* therein occurring.

Some Counfils, Direcing a due Improvement of the terrible things, lately done, by the Unufual & Amazi Range of EVIL SPIRITS, in Our Neighbourhood: the methods to prevent the *Wrong*, which thofe *Evil Angels* may intend againft all forts of people among u especially in Accufations of the Innocent.

Some Conjeftures upon the great EVENTS, like to befall, the WORLD in General, and NEW-ENGLAND in Particular: as alfo upon the Advances the TIME, when we fhall fee BETTER DAYES.

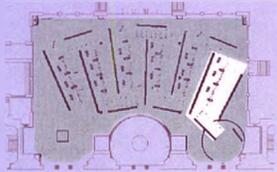
A fhort Narrative of a late Outrage committed by knot of WITCHES in *Sardians*, very much Rele ving, and fo far Explaining, *That* under which our pa of *America* have labour'd!
THE DEVIL DISCOVERED: In a Brief Difcourfe up



Settling a New World

Leaving Home

BUILDING ANTICIPATION



Leaving Home: Building Anticipation

Moving into the sound-controlled Building Anticipation space, visitors begin their journey by listening to an evocative audio program for the first exhibit, Leaving Home. A number of voices — men, women, children — speak softly in many different languages. Even without understanding the words, visitors sense that the migrants are expressing their hopes and anxieties. Then, several of the voices ask questions in English:

“Do I want to go?”

*“Can my family
come with me?”*

*“How do I prepare
for this journey?”*

*“What should I
take with me?”*

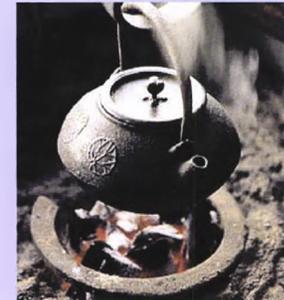
*“Will I ever see my
home again?”*

As they move into the exhibit area, visitors see banners overhead identifying the six stages of the Journey. Facing them, the Historic Trends introductory panel poses the question:

Why did people leave their homes?
The panel text suggests that the answer is as diverse as the number of individuals who made the journey:

**Why did people
leave their homes?**

Conditions in their home countries usually spurred the idea of emigration. The decision to leave was sometimes an individual choice; sometimes a decision made by the family, whether one person left or the whole family came together. Others had no say at all, brought forcibly against their wills. Similarly, where migrants chose to go and whether they wished to remain varied greatly among individuals and groups.



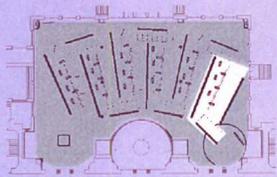
**CALIFORNIA
GOLD REGION DIRECT!**



Settling a New World

Leaving Home

CONTEXTUAL GRAPHICS & PROFILES

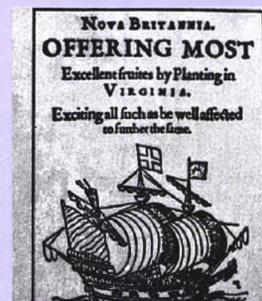
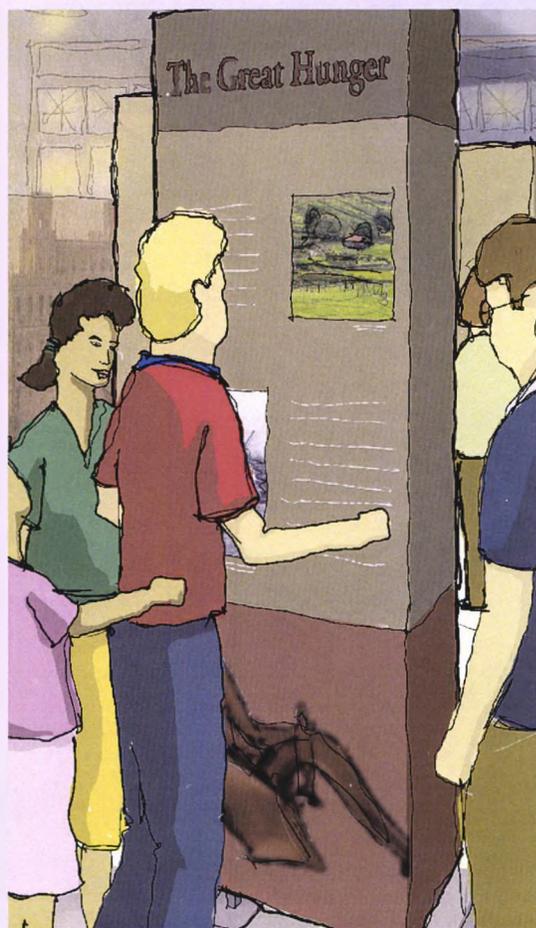


Leaving Home: Contextual Graphic & Profiles

Leaving Home begins with the world a migrant left behind — a large, impressionist view of a village that spans across one wall of the exhibit area.

Panels along the wall profile the experiences of six migrant groups. For example:

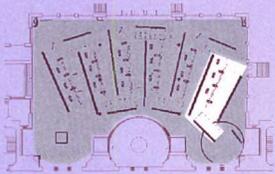
- Native Americans first migrated to North America from Siberia 20,000 years ago, and over the centuries expanded south and west over the entire continent.
- Puritans, Quakers, and Mennonites left Europe in search of religious freedom.
- Spanish explorers, missionaries, and ranchers expanded across the Southwest, and French trappers and traders explored and settled along the Mississippi.
- People from western Africa were captured and brought forcibly to the Caribbean and North and South America as enslaved labor.
- In the mid-19th Century, the potato blight in Ireland killed a million people and forced millions more to flee the country.
- Many Chinese migrants left home in the mid-19th Century hoping to make their fortunes on "Gold Mountain."



Settling a New World

Leaving Home

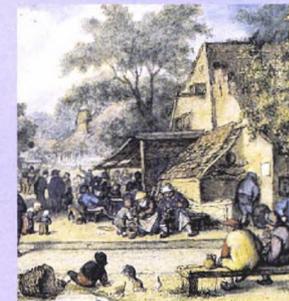
TIMELINE & KEY EVENTS



Leaving Home: Timeline & Key Events

Crossing to the opposite wall, visitors find a timeline that indicates the key events around the world that led various peoples to migrant to North America. Above the timeline, a series of interpretative graphics expands upon some of these events. The following topics might be explored:

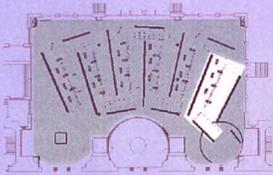
- Power struggles among European nations led to global exploration, colonialism, and slavery. This resulted in mass movements of peoples all across the world.
- Where migrants came from – emigration rates from the leading sending nations.
- From the colonial era on, the United States has been one of the most popular destinations for European migrants and, beginning in the mid-19th Century, for Chinese migrants as well. Many individuals sought economic opportunity, including those who planned to make their fortunes and return home. Some migrants left Europe seeking religious freedom, such as Puritans, Quakers, Jews. Other migrants left to escape poverty, such as those who came here because of the potato famine in Ireland and those displaced by the Industrial Revolution. Political reasons led others to make the journey: refugees, those fleeing political persecution, and soldiers who remained here after war.
- Migrants employed a variety of strategies for leaving home: Some came with only the clothes on their backs; others with all they owned. Many first migrated to a larger city near their homes, and then made the long trip to America. Some families pooled their money to send one or a few family members; others sold their labor for the price of passage.
- Gender played a major role in who migrated during different eras and the experiences they had in making a new life.
- The business of migration extended beyond trade to include indentured servants, and settlers and laborers recruited by shipping and land companies.



Settling a New World

Leaving Home

WINDOWS ON THE PAST



Leaving Home: Windows on the Past

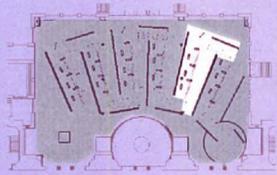
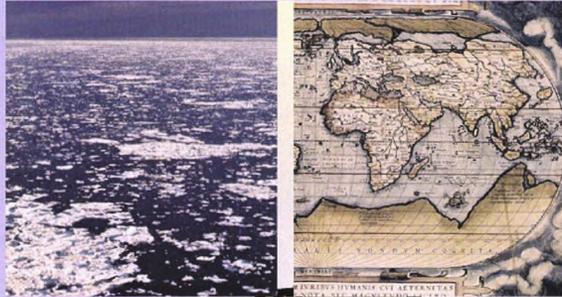
At the end of Leaving Home, visitors encounter a collection of small windows, which they open to hear the recollection of a migrant and, perhaps, see a small artifact or image. Created from letters and diaries, the audio programs might include:

- An individual seeking religious freedom
- A young indentured servant looking for opportunity
- An African man, captured and enslaved
- A letter from a farmer to a friend back home
- A child preparing for a trip with his or her family
- A young Chinese man hoping to find gold and then return home



Settling a New World

Making the Trip



Making the Trip

Moving to the next exhibit, visitors enter the Building Anticipation area, where they hear ambient sounds suggestive of what migrants' may have heard as they made the journey: Sounds of footsteps, waves slapping against the sides of a ship, voices speaking in many languages. Then, a series of questions in English give voice to migrants' anxieties:

*"How much will this trip cost me?"
"Is it dangerous?" "Will this voyage never end?"
"Can I survive this journey?"*

After listening briefly, visitors move on to explore Making the Trip. A large picture of the ocean stretches across one wall. The Historic Trends panel describes the ways migrants journeyed to the new world:

Making the Trip

The earliest migrants walked to America, crossing the Land of Beringia between Siberia and Alaska (now submerged and known as the Bering Strait). While some people migrated to the United States on foot from the neighboring countries of Mexico and Canada, the vast majority of migrants braved the vast barriers of the Atlantic or Pacific Ocean to reach this new land.

To appreciate the difficulties migrants faced in making the journey, visitors explore the Profiles of Migrant Groups. For example:

- The earliest people to make the trip – those who crossed Beringia by foot or kayak to reach North America, and those who took an ocean route from Polynesia to Hawaii.
- Slave ships and the horrors of the middle passage.

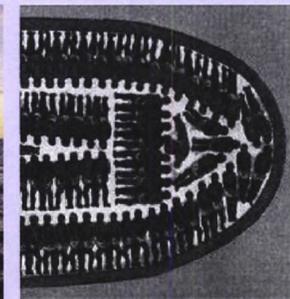
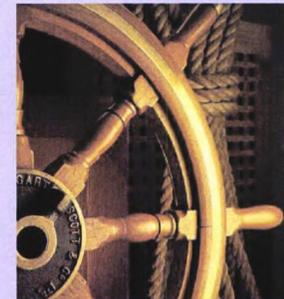
Next to the panel on slave ships, visitors see a life-size segment of a diagram of slaves in the hold of the ship, Brooks. They can stand against the diagram to grasp the small amount of space allotted to each enslaved person for the many weeks of the passage.

Along the Timeline wall, visitors encounter panels that discuss some of the issues associated with travel during the time periods covered in the exhibit, such as forms of transportation, the cost of travel, and conditions migrants' faced on the journey.

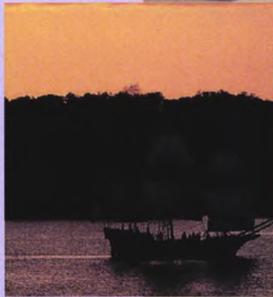
"Will this voyage never end?"

At a series of portholes visitors hear stories by migrants or some individual who migrants met as they crossed the Atlantic from Europe and Africa and the Pacific from China. The stories may include:

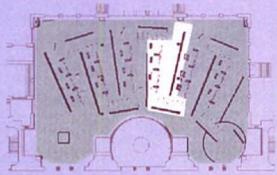
- A slave aboard ship
- The captain of slave ship
- A woman describing the difficulty of the passage for herself and her family
- A young European describing adventure at sea
- A Chinese migrant describing the voyage across the Pacific
- A child talking about life aboard ship



Settling a New World



Arrival



Arrival

As they enter the Arrival area, visitors hear the sounds of a busy dock: A ship's horn, cargo being unloaded onto the wharf, a medley of voices speaking many languages.

Voices ask in English:

"What will I find in this new place?"

"What will happen to me here?"

"Will anyone speak my language?"

"Will I locate my family?"

As they step into the exhibit area, visitors see a large image of a migrants arriving at New York's Castle Garden in the era before Ellis Island was built. The introductory panel discusses migrants' arrival in the United States:

Arrival

The moment of arrival threw migrants into the maelstrom of a new world.

The earliest European arrivals found a land far vaster and richer in natural resources than the world they had left behind, and encountered an indigenous people not always welcoming. Later arrivals from Europe and Asia entered a rapidly growing, changing environment that was often equally unwelcoming. The fortunate joined family or friends already here or encountered previous immigrants from the home country willing to help them get settled. For some the port of entry was their final destination; for others, simply a stopover on a journey to other parts of the country.

Profile panels discuss the arrival moment of different groups, which may include:

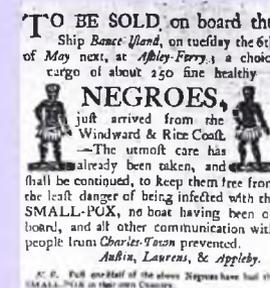
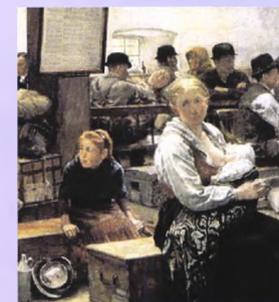
- First encounters between Europeans and Native Americans
- Restrictions on Asian immigration beginning with the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, and "paper sons" as migrants' response to these restrictions.

Along the Timeline wall, a number of interpretative graphics expound upon the theme of arrival, which may include:

- An overview of colonial, state, and federal government legislation regulating immigration, including medical examinations and quarantines.
- The major ports of entry around the country.
- Immigration rates to the United States.
- Migrants continuing the journey to other parts of the country by boat, train, or wagon.

At Windows on the Past, visitors listen to accounts that might include:

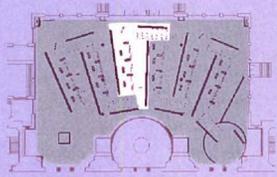
- A 17th-century European encountering the American wilderness and Native Americans
- Native American discussing European settlers
- An Irish or German migrant at Castle Garden
- A slave auctioneer
- Charitable worker meeting young migrants just off the boat
- A Chinese migrant talking about the Exclusion Act



"What will happen to me here?"

Settling a New World

Building Community



Building Community

To evoke a sense of migrants' new lives, visitors hear city noises, the sounds of industry, music from different cultures, prayers in many languages. Then, voices asking in English:

*"Where should I live?" "Will I find work?"
"What will life be like in this new place?"
"Why do they hate me?" "Who will help me
if I become too sick to work?"*

Upon entering the exhibit area, visitors see a large image of a community gathering. An Historic Trends panel introduces the theme of Building Community:

Building Community

The steady influx of migrants during the 18th and 19th Centuries continuously reshaped American society. The migrants themselves found ways to adapt to American culture while preserving elements of their own. A key to survival for many new migrants lay in establishing their own ethnic communities within the larger culture. Even so, migrants experienced prejudice and conflict with already established groups and competed with other new migrants for jobs and housing.

The series of Profile panels focus on the experiences of different migrant groups as they attempted to find a place for themselves in a new and sometimes hostile environment. The topics covered may include:

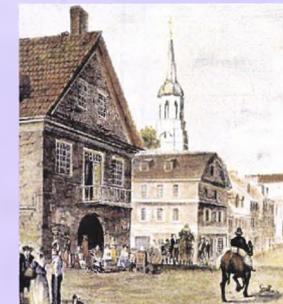
- Where to settle in the country varied greatly among ethnic groups. European migrants frequently settled among others from their homelands or even hometowns, selecting places where they could plant similar agricultural crops or engage in the same trades as they had back home.
- Cajun and Creole culture in Louisiana, and their conflicts with American settlers.

Interpretive graphics along the Timeline wall examine the prejudices migrants faced and the ways they found to build communities. For example:

- Legal restrictions migrants faced, including Jim Crow laws in the South.
- Nativists' reactions to migrants, such as the Know-Nothings.
- Conflicts that arose between migrant groups, such as Irish and African-Americans, over jobs and housing.
- The role of gender in shaping migrants' lives.
- Ethnic associations and religious institutions that helped immigrants adjust to a new life and retain their culture.
- Migrant labor building America's infrastructure, including canals, roads, railroads, and cities.
- Children as the go-between for their parents and the new culture.

At a series of windows representing different kinds of houses, visitors listen to accounts of migrants' lives in America and the reactions of others to the migrants. These accounts might include:

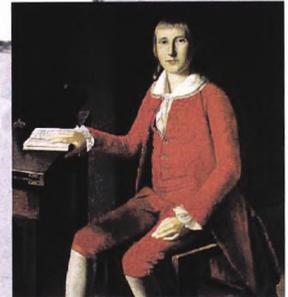
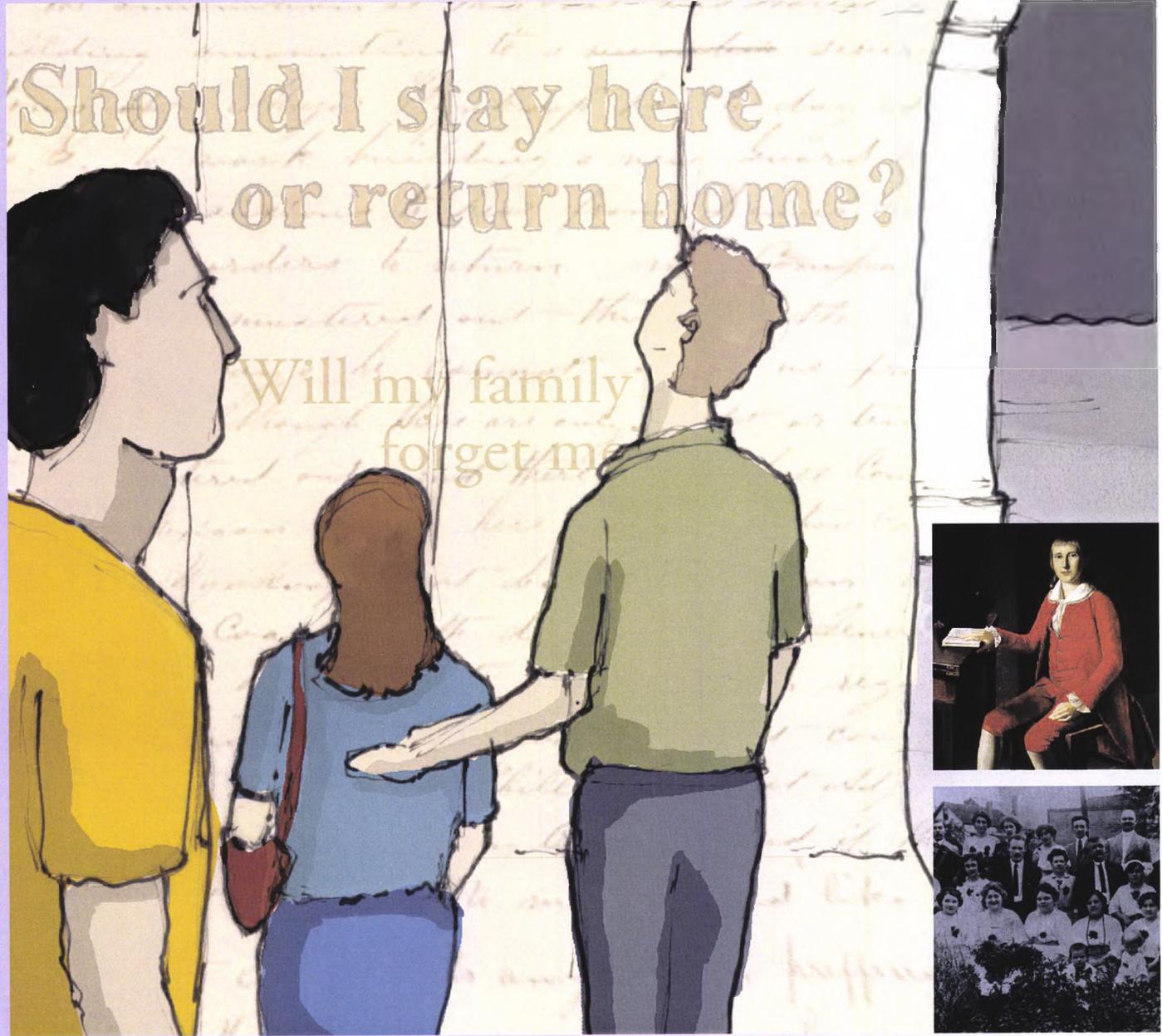
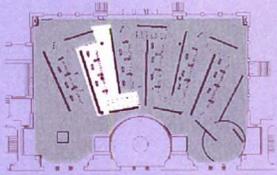
- Native American discussing loss of land and culture
- Puritan woman discussing life in New England
- Scandinavian or German woman on life on a Midwestern farm
- Mexican national in the Southwest on Americans encroaching upon their land
- Member of an older immigrant group criticizing new immigrants, such as the Irish at mid-19th Century
- A child describing school and life in the new country



*"Will I find
work?"*

Settling a New World

Bridges to Home



Bridges to Home

Stopping to listen at the entry of Bridges to Home, visitors hear the scratch of a quill pen on parchment, the sharp tap tap of a telegraph, and voices reading letters aloud in different languages. In English, several voices ask:

"Will my family forget me?"

"Can I hold them close though I'm so far away?"

"Can I convince my family to join me?"

"Should I stay here or return home?"

Visitors encounter the Historic Trends introductory panel as they move into the exhibit area. The panel discusses how migrants maintained ties with those left behind:

Bridges to Home

Although communication between America and the rest of the world was very slow, many migrants remained in contact with their families and friends back home. Through letters, and later the telegraph, they relayed news of their adventures and misfortunes, sent money home, and encouraged others to join them. Perhaps as many as one-third returned to their homeland after their sojourn in the United States.

A letter from a migrant to family back home is enlarged to fill one wall. Visitors discover how migrants' built bridges to home through a series of Profile panels. For example:

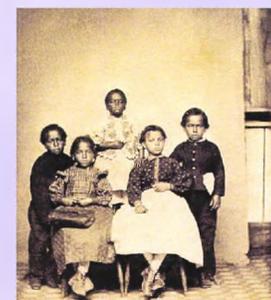
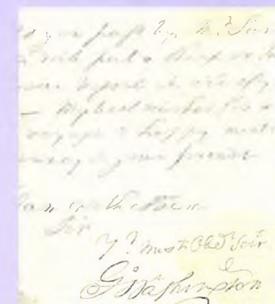
- Letters home kept European migrants in contact with family members and painted a picture of life in America for those left behind. These communications spurred "chain migration," in which established migrants helped other family members and countrymen come to the United States and find housing and jobs.
- The Back to Africa movement sent freed American slaves to a colony in Africa, which became the nation of Liberia.

Key Events panels along the Timeline might discuss such issues as:

- The ties of commerce and trade that bound the United States to the rest of the world.
- Advances in communication, such as the telegraph.
- Return migration rates during this era.
- Federal and state legislation affecting bringing family to the United States.
- Migrants sending money home to help family and institutions there.

At Windows on the Past, visitors open the windows to hear letters written by migrants, such as:

- Letter from a migrant to a family member talking about his homesickness
- Letter from a European migrant arranging to bring a family member to the U.S.
- African-American discussing Liberia
- A Chinese migrant who returned home to marry and brought his bride to the U.S.
- A young laborer in the Midwest encouraging his family in New York to join him
- A migrant who returned home after acquiring enough money

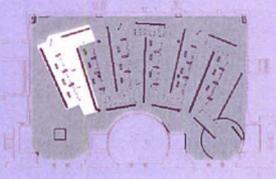


"Can I convince my family to join me?"

Settling a New World

Ties to the Past

Ties to the Past



Ties to the Past

As they begin the last segment of their journey, visitors hear songs in many languages and voices asking in English:

"How can I honor my parents, yet go my own way?"

"Where do I come from?"

"Do I have relatives still living in the old country?"

"If I'm American, why do they hate me so much?"

A contextual image of school children in America stresses the importance of immigrants' children in shaping American society. An introductory panel discusses some of the issues facing the children of immigrants:

Ties to the Past

The American-born children of immigrants faced different challenges and opportunities than their parents. Their allegiance and sense of identity often straddled two worlds — that of their ethnic communities and the wider American culture. Over the generations, high intermarriage rates, among other factors, has diffused, but not eliminated, ethnic associations within American culture. However, many Americans today eagerly seek information about their families' immigrant pasts and lives in their countries of origin.

The Profile panels examine the impact of the past on groups today. For example:

- Continued prejudice and social barriers toward African-Americans, and the Civil Rights Movement that grew out of this group's struggle for justice.
- Native Americans facing hardships on reservations and loss of identity within the larger culture; their attempts to pass on their traditions and values.

Key Events panels on the Timeline wall explore such major historical trends as:

- Economic and social mobility of the second generation.
- Acculturation and the "whitening" of some migrant groups in subsequent generations.
- The widespread interest today in genealogical research.

At a series of windows, visitors view short video documentaries (now shown only in the American Family Immigration History Center) about individuals researching their family histories. These documentaries include:

- A descendant of an Irish immigrant returning to her family's ancestral home in Ireland

- An African-American researching her slave ancestors
- A Chinese-American discovering that his father was a paper son
- A Jewish man tracing his family history to Bohemia and learning what happened to them during the Holocaust
- A Mexican-American woman trying to track her family history through the female line
- A descendant of an Italian immigrant who meets members of her family still living in Italy

The exhibit concludes with a large panel that invites visitors to add their own families' stories to an Ellis Island family history archive in the American Family Immigration History Center.



"Where do I come from?"

Section Six

Walkthrough New Eras of Immigration

Introduction

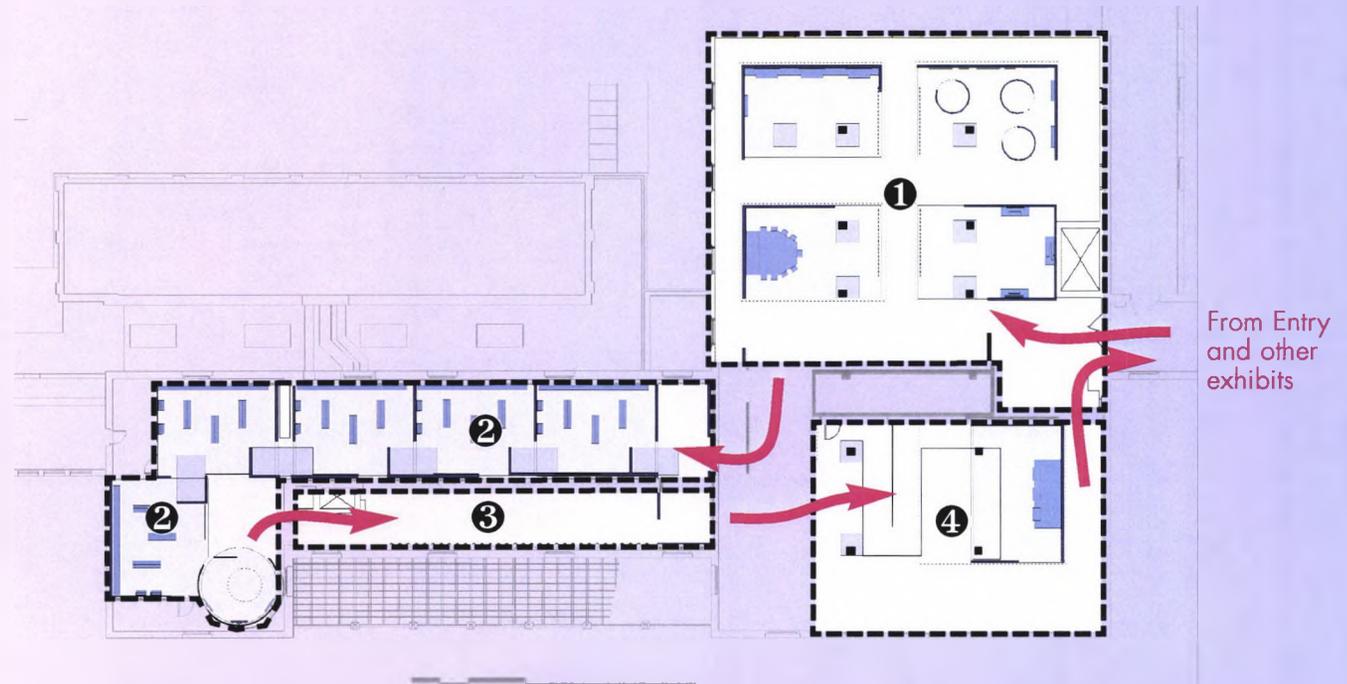
To explore the modern era of migration, visitors take the stairs or elevator near the American Family Immigration History Center to the second floor of the Kitchen & Laundry Building. (While not in the Scope of this project, a comprehensive wayfinding system would help visitors navigate through the Museum.)



New Eras of Immigration reflects the rapid pace of technological progress that characterizes migration and communication in the modern era. This exhibit area makes greater use of dynamic media and computer-enhanced interactive exhibits.

This exhibit area consists of four areas, which visitors encounter sequentially:

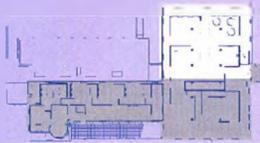
- ① The first room, **Changing America**, contains four activities that present the “big picture” of current migration.
- ② The second and third rooms chronicle **The Journey** from 1924 to the present.
- ③ **The American Tapestry**, a lenticular image wall, divides the second room, directing visitors from the entry of the Journey to the back room, and back around along an exit corridor.
- ④ **Threads of Change**, which occupies one half of the first room, serves as the concluding activity.



New Eras of Immigration

Changing America

ENTRY



Changing America – Entry

As visitors enter the New Era of Immigration, they hear the buzz of activity and feel the upbeat energy of the space. Ahead of them, they see the four Changing America activity areas. Just inside the entry, a graphics panel introduces them to the theme of this first exhibit area:

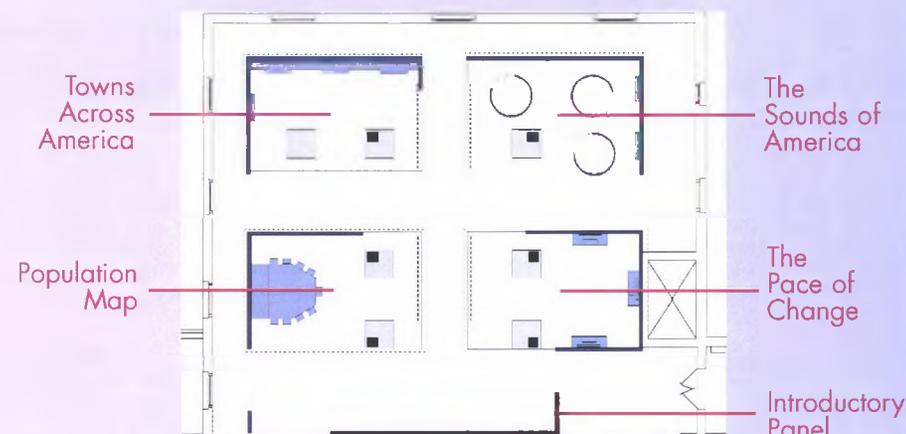
Changing America

Immigration once again is changing the face of America. The United States today is experiencing a surge in immigration on par with Ellis Island's heyday. As in previous eras, migration to this country takes place within a larger global context as people move from one place to another in search of better economic opportunities or greater freedoms. Today's migrants are far more diverse than at any point in history — they come from widely different countries, social and economic backgrounds, and occupations. Though migrants today enjoy far more options about where to settle in the world and whether or not they wish to remain there, the United States continues to be a popular (though not the only) destination.

Changing America illustrates the broad sweep of change in the United States' population and culture since Ellis Island ceased operation as the primary immigration processing station.

In Changing America, visitors participate in four engaging interactive activities:

- The Pace of Change
- Towns Across America
- The Sounds of America
- Population Map

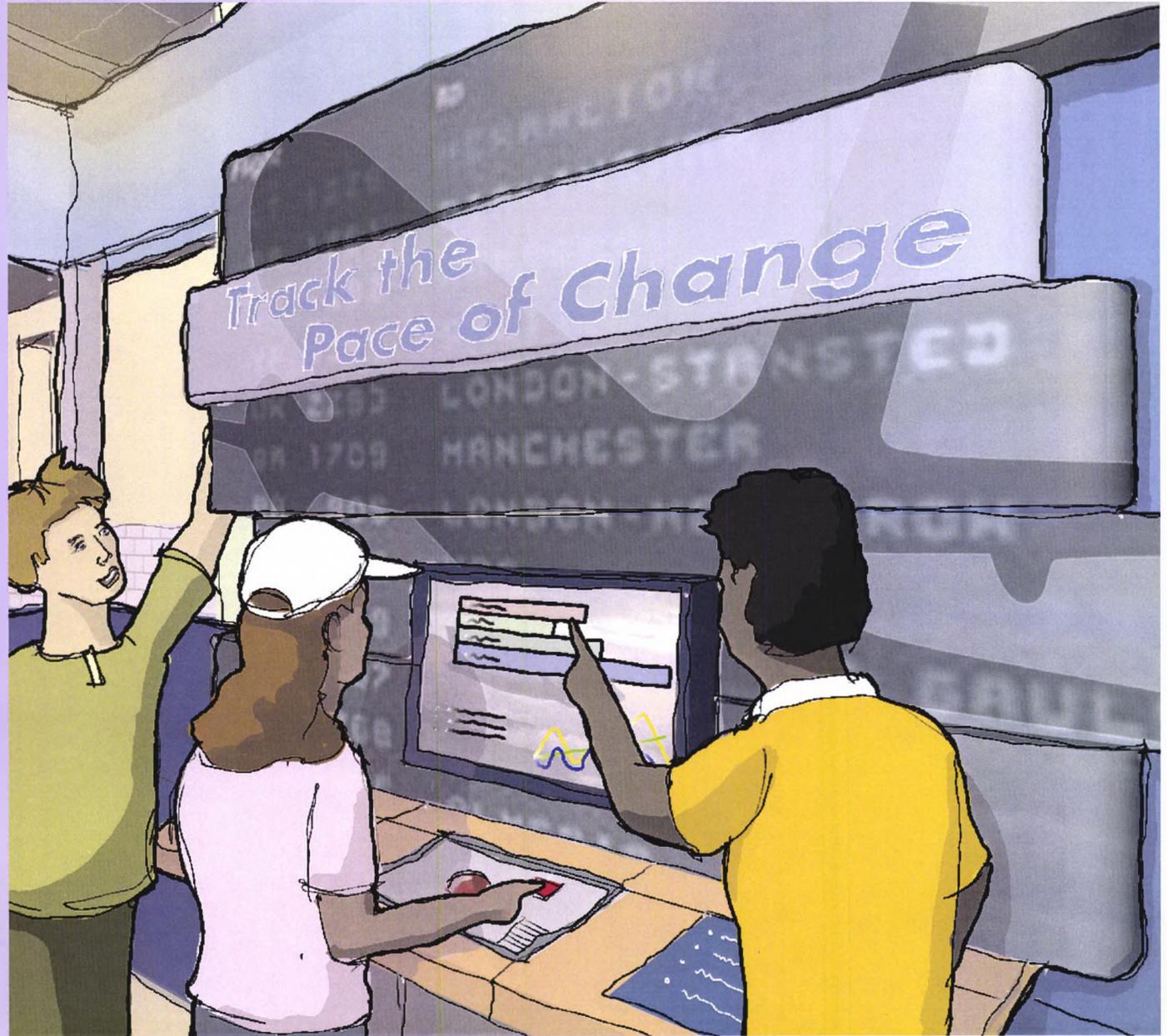
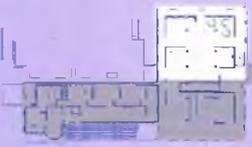


The exhibit environment surrounding each activity creates a context for understanding the subject examined in the activity. An introductory panel invites visitors to participate in the activity and gives them an overview of the topic. Clear instructional graphics guide visitors step by step through the activity. The activities themselves allow visitors to explore topics of interest at their own pace.

New Eras of Immigration

Changing America

THE PACE OF CHANGE

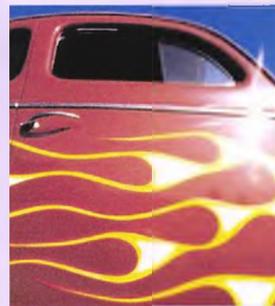
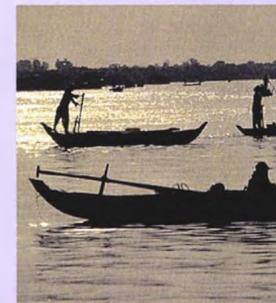


Changing America – The Pace of Change

From a distance, visitors see an iconic image of a jet plane and an invitation to **“Track the Pace of Change.”** Visitors approach the activity station, and see a large departure board listing destinations around the world.

Over the centuries, the cost of travel and the time it takes to make a trip have changed drastically. The Pace of Change explores the changing nature of travel over time. Visitors choose a port of embarkation from around the world and a U.S. destination city. For example, they might choose Dublin to Boston, or Canton to San Francisco. They then find out how much time such a trip would have taken, what it would have cost, and what forms of transportation would have been used during three different eras of U.S. history (the 1700s, 1800s, and early 20th century). This data is contrasted with facts about transportation today, and enriched by interesting facts about what their journey would have been like.

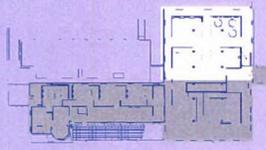
The Pace of Change consists of three individual computer stations.



New Eras of Immigration

Changing America

TOWNS ACROSS AMERICA



Changing America – Towns Across America

As visitors approach the activity, they are greeted with the invitation to “See the Changes in Towns Across America.” Set in an environment that hints at a townscape, visitors explore the way migration has changed American towns and cities over time.

In this activity, visitors at an individual station select a locale to see a short video documentary about its transition. A larger group can watch the captioned video on a large screen mounted overhead. To give an example of the kind of programs offered: A visitor who selects Brooklyn might see a video about a neighborhood in Brooklyn that was home to the Irish in the 19th Century, became a Puerto Rican neighborhood in the 1950s, and then a Polish neighborhood in the 1980s. The video shows how these changes are reflected in both the environment (stores, signage, architecture) and the people who live there. The story highlights the character and customs of the neighborhood in different periods, and the clashes that may have occurred between groups.

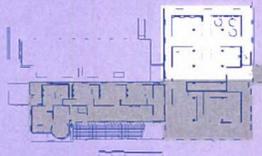
Towns Across America features approximately 10 videos, each about three minutes long. Visitors access this activity at two individual stations. Two group monitors mirror the program shown at the individual stations.



New Eras of Immigration

Changing America

THE SOUNDS OF AMERICA
& POPULATION MAP



Changing America – The Sounds of America & Population Map

Responding to an invitation to “Listen to the Sounds of America,” visitors enter a circular sound-controlled space. The introductory graphic encourages them to:

Tune in to Community Radio

Traditionally, the radio has been one of America’s most popular and democratic media formats. Through radio, immigrant communities all over the country use music, news, and discussion to keep ties to their homelands alive.

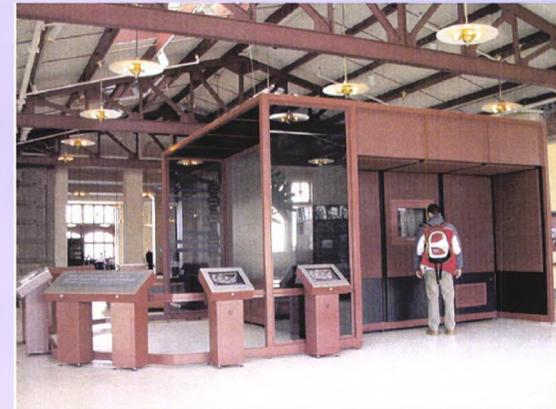
The Sounds of America activity gives visitors access to some of the diverse sounds of American community radio programs. Visitors chose and listen to recorded samples from radio shows across the United States, including stations available on the Internet. The activity samples 30 to 40 different programs, each about 30 seconds long. Visitors access the Sounds of America activity at three individual stations.

Content for the Sounds of America will be collected from community radio stations across the country. The specific radio programs (or the types to be represented) will be chosen for geographic and cultural diversity, in consultation with the Ellis Island History Advisory Committee.



Population Map

The fourth activity in Changing America invites visitors to “Map the Population of These United States.” This activity allows visitors to select an ethnic group and see its distribution across the country. (This existing census-based activity currently resides in the present Peopling of America exhibit area.)



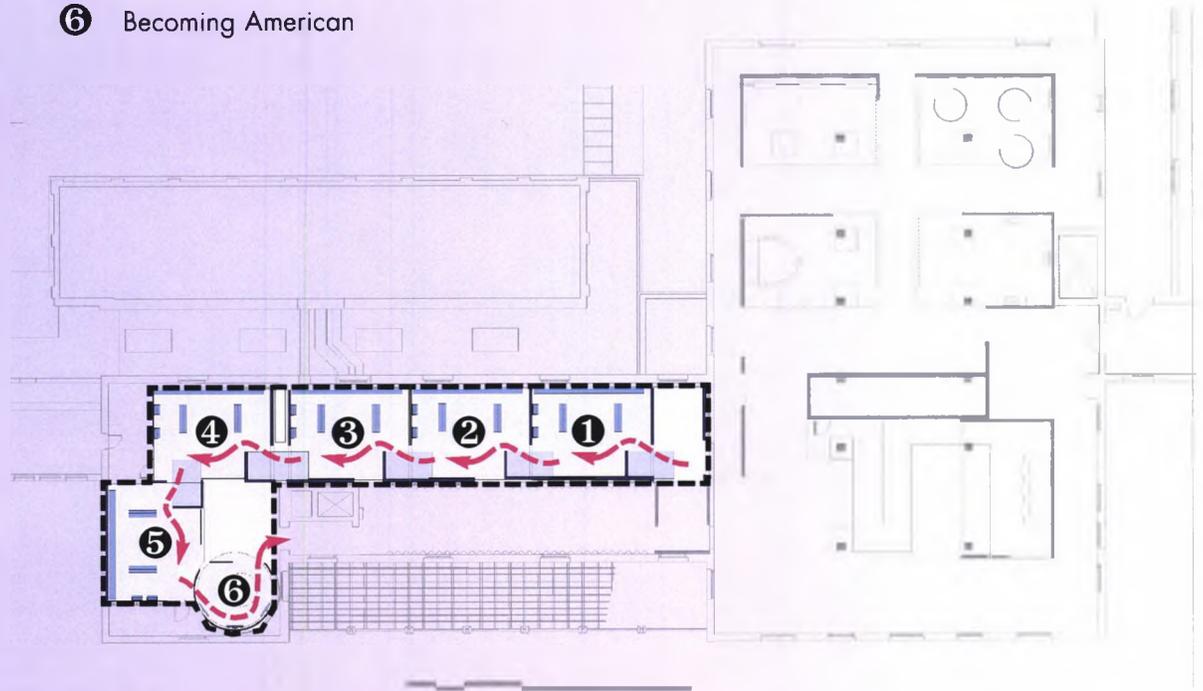
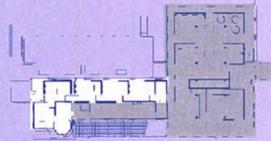
New Eras of Immigration

The Journey reprises the themes presented in *Settling a New World*. Visitors follow migrants through the process of:

- ① Leaving Home
- ② Making the Trip
- ③ Arrival
- ④ Bridges to Home
- ⑤ Building Community
- ⑥ Becoming American

In the following pages, we describe one segment of the Journey, Leaving Home, in some detail to give you an idea of how all of the elements work together within the exhibit. For the remaining five segments, we suggest a direction for content development.

The Journey



The Journey

The Journey begins with a Building Anticipation audio program that serves the entire exhibit rather than one segment. Then, as visitors move through each segment of the Journey, they encounter the following sequence of exhibit elements which convey the narrative:

- (a) **Historic Trends** —
An introductory panel provides an overview of this segment of the Journey.
- (b) **Scenes of the Journey** —
A large projected video montage runs along one side of the exhibit area, immersing visitors in the story. Compiled of evocative images related to this segment of the Journey, the silent video conveys the emotional dimension of migration.

- (c) **Profiles of Migrant Groups** —
A series of freestanding panels focus on episodes in the history of specific migrant groups. Each segment of the Journey includes panels about groups from these regions:

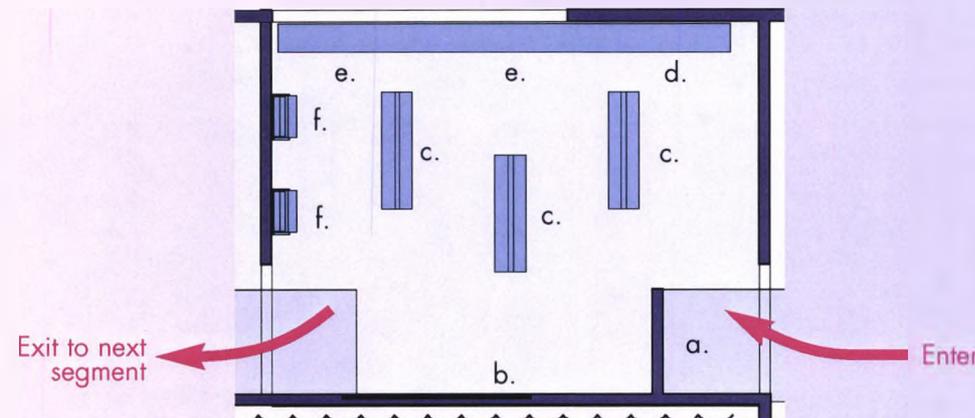
Latin America
Caribbean
Africa
Middle East
Asia
Europe and the UK

- (d) **Timeline** —
A long, horizontal panel contains a timeline of important events and legislation related to this segment of the Journey.

- (e) **Key Events** —
In association with the Timeline, a number of interpretive panels examine important milestones in migration history through text and images.

Spotlight audio —
Ambient audio of sounds migrants' may have heard activates some of the Profile and Key Events panels as a way to make the visitor experience feel more immediate.

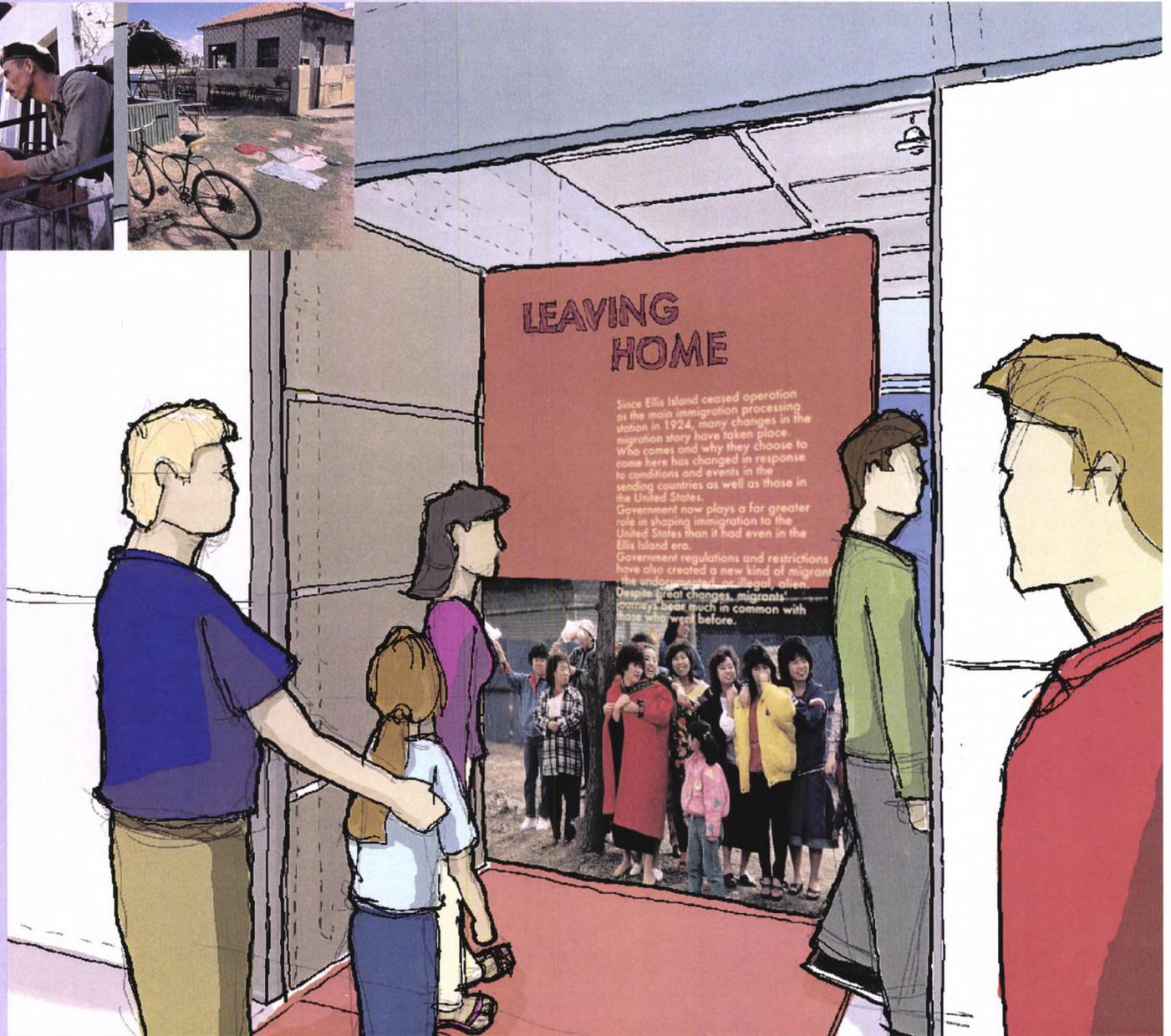
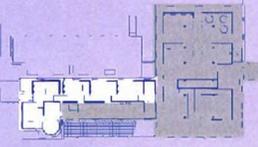
- (f) **Video Vignettes** —
Concluding the segment, a video shows individuals speaking about their journeys. In personalizing migration, the video brings the story to life for visitors. The video consists of new and existing footage of migrants (both adults and youth) from all over the world who came to the United States.



New Eras of Immigration



The Journey LEAVING HOME



Leaving Home – Historic Trends

As visitors embark upon the Journey, they pass through an anteroom where an audio program builds anticipation for what's to come. They hear voices speaking softly, anxiously, in many languages, interspersed with questions asked in English:

“Should I stay or go?”

*“Will I ever see
my home again?”*

*“Can my family
come with me?”*

*“What kind of work
will I find?”*

*“Will life truly
be better there?”*

*“What will become
of my family here?”*

On the wall ahead of them, they see an introductory graphics panel that describes the historic trends reshaping migration:

Leaving Home

Since Ellis Island ceased operation as the main immigration processing station in 1924, many changes in the migration story have taken place. Who comes and why they choose to come here has changed in response to conditions and events in the sending countries as well as those in the United States.

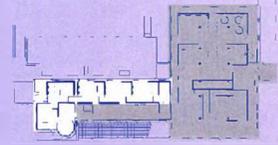
Government now plays a far greater role in shaping immigration to the United States than it had even in the Ellis Island era. Government regulations and restrictions have also created a new kind of migrant – the undocumented, or illegal, alien. Despite great changes, migrants' journeys bear much in common with those who went before.



New Eras of Immigration

The Journey

LEAVING HOME

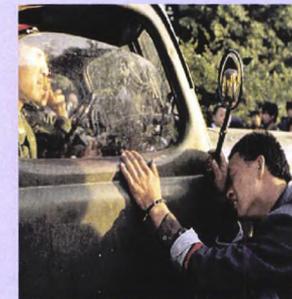
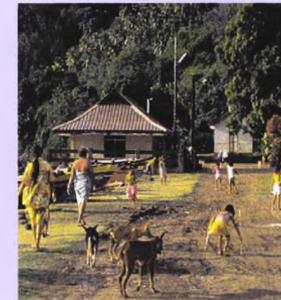
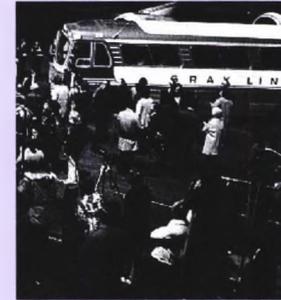


Leaving Home – Scenes of the Journey and Profiles of Migrant Groups

Entering the Leaving Home exhibit area, visitors move past a video that evokes the pangs of leaving home: Scenes of hands packing, a town viewed through a window, loved ones waving goodbye as a car drives away.

Profiles of Migrant Groups illustrate some of the issues in immigration history in this era, such as:

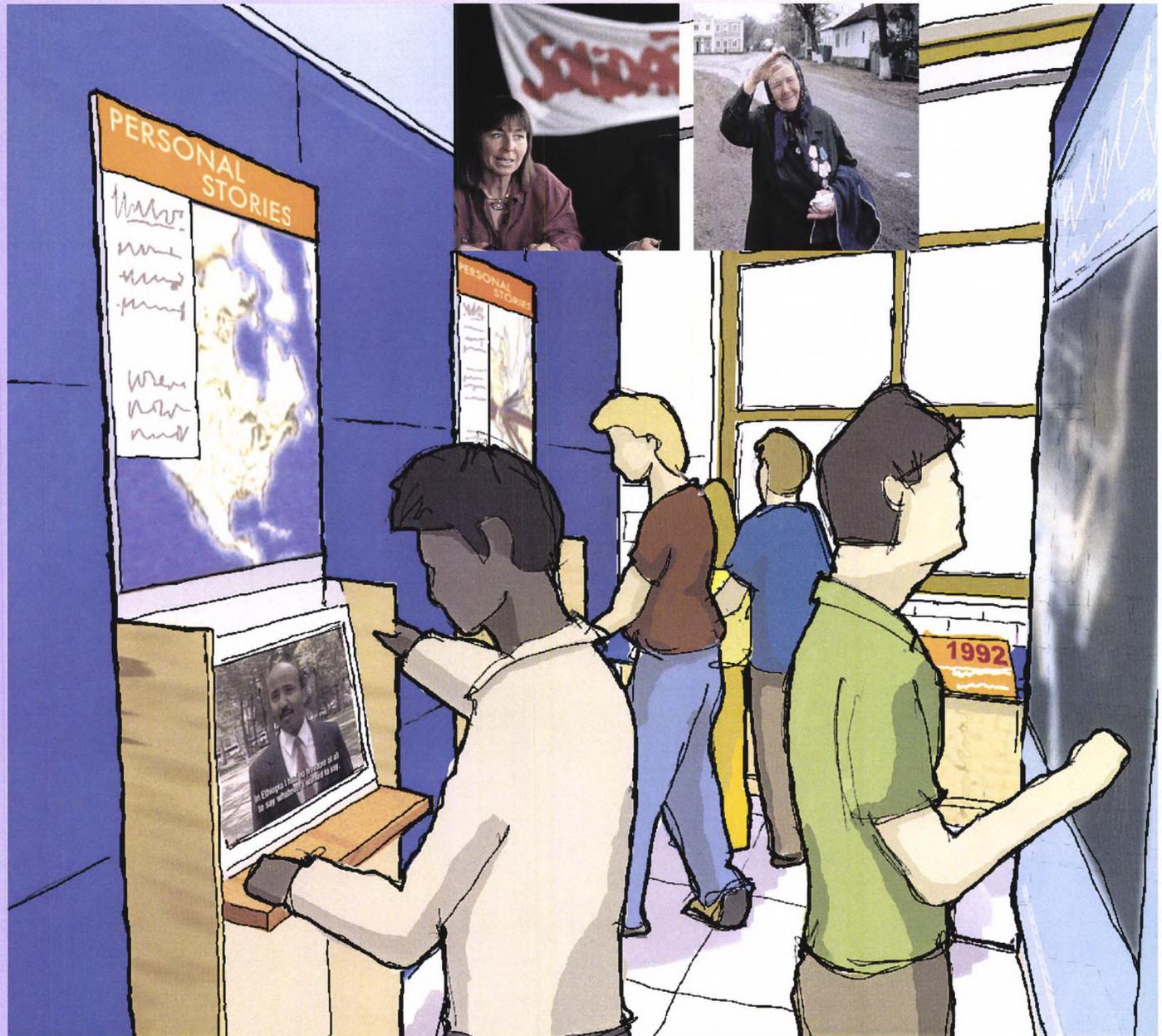
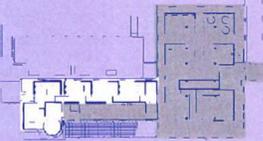
- Migrants from Southeast Asia affected by the Vietnam War.
- Cubans who fled Castro's Communist regime.
- Professionals from southern Asia seeking better employment opportunities.
- African students coming to American universities.



New Eras of Immigration

The Journey

LEAVING HOME



Leaving Home – Timeline, Key Events and Video Vignettes

The Timeline chronicles world and U.S. events that influenced global migration. A series of interpretative graphics around the Timeline highlight some of the key issues. The topics covered might include:

- Changing U.S. immigration policies:
 - 1924 legislation introduced a quota system based on national origin and initiated a visa system. This legislation favored European immigration and shifted the examination process from Ellis Island to U.S. consuls.
 - In 1965, a new quota system, based on even distribution for all nations and familial and occupational preferences, opened migration to people from Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, and Africa.
 - 1990 legislation increased the number of immigrants permitted from each country, and offered amnesty to illegal aliens already working in the country.
- Undocumented migrants: A new issue in immigration because of restrictive policies; while some undocumented migrants cross the border illegally, most overstay legal visas.

- War as a factor spurring emigration, and the plight of refugees, including World War II, the Korean Conflict, the Vietnam War, Bosnia.
- Political asylum during the Cold War, and recent changes in U.S. attitudes toward those seeking asylum.
- Those who come looking for economic opportunities, both unskilled laborers and professionals; the high levels of education among today's migrants.
- International adoption as a new type of migration.

A spotlight audio supplements some of the graphic panels. For instance, visitors exploring the topic of war's effect on migration might hear the sounds of war — low flying helicopters, bombs dropping, gunfire, men yelling commands, people running.

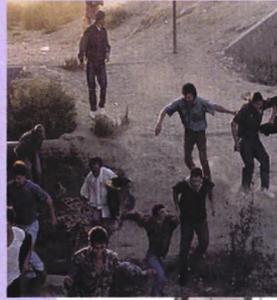
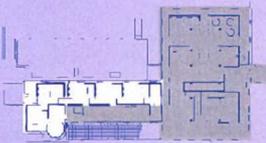
At two individual stations, visitors watch a collection of video vignettes in which a number of migrants share their memories of leaving home.



New Eras of Immigration

The Journey

MAKING THE TRIP



Making the Trip

In the next segment of the Journey, projected images show scenes migrants would be likely to see while traveling — airplanes taking off and landing, sky and clouds through a plane window, and wide vistas of open land and water.

As they walk past the scenes of travel, visitors encounter an introductory graphic panel that provides them with an overview of Making the Trip:

Making the Trip

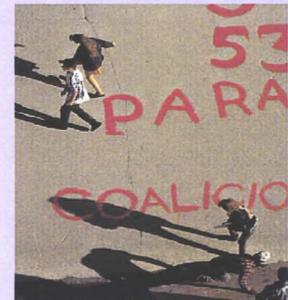
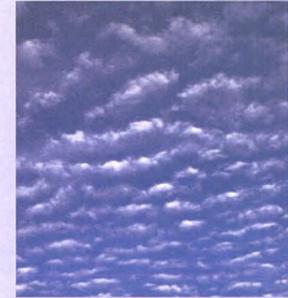
The journey itself has changed radically, with jet planes replacing steamships as the primary mode of transportation. A trip that once took weeks or months now takes hours. While a faster trip eases the strains of travel, it can also be jarring and heighten migrants' anxieties. A small percentage of migrants still travel on foot or in small boats, crossing the border surreptitiously because they lack the official documents that would allow them legal entry into the country.

The Timeline and interpretative graphics discuss changes in transportation, from steamships to jet planes, and the volume of travel to America in different eras.

Visitors learn about the travel experiences of specific migrant groups in the Profiles panels. For example:

- The Bracero programs, which brought trainloads of seasonal migrants from Mexico to the U.S. agricultural belt, from the 1920s through the 1950s.
- Desperate migrants braving the open sea in small boats from Haiti. A spotlight audio could supplement this panel: Visitors hear the sounds of water, distressed voices, and a blaring Coast Guard megaphone.

Visitors watch video vignettes of people recalling their own passages to the United States, the sense of adventure they felt, or the dangers they encountered.



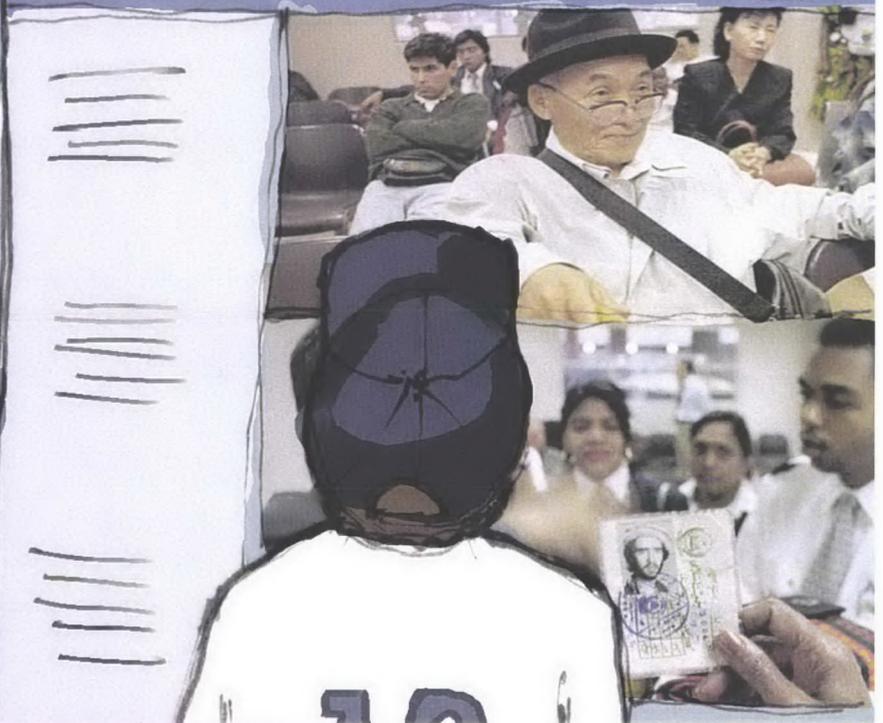
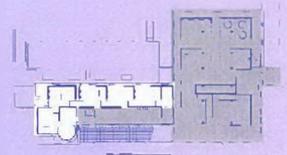
New Eras of Immigration



Joining Friends and Family

The Journey

ARRIVAL



Arrival

In Arrival, visitors see scenes of airport terminals, queues of people going through customs, and migrants being detained at borders.

An interpretive panel introduces the theme of Arrival:

Arrival

The majority of migrants arriving in the United States experience much the same process as those who come as tourists. Since migrants receive their visas from U.S. consuls in their home countries, the long examination process migrants faced upon arrival at Ellis Island no longer takes place. Those who try to enter without the proper documentation, however, face arrest and deportation.

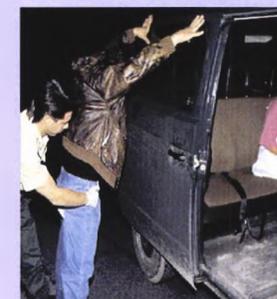
The Timeline notes key events and legislative milestones that determine who and how migrants arrive in this country. Nearby panels describe some of the issues in greater detail, such as:

- The major points of arrival around the country today.
- The process of going through customs at the airport.
- Border patrols and the Immigration & Naturalization Service.
- Migrants refused entry for medical reasons.
- What it means to be detained or deported.

In a series of Profile panels, visitors see how these issues affect specific groups of people. For example:

- A migrant from Guatemala detained for lack of documentation
- A Chinese migrant joining friends and family members already here. Spotlight audio might accompany the panel: Visitors hear airport noises and the sounds of happy people greeting loved ones in a number of languages.

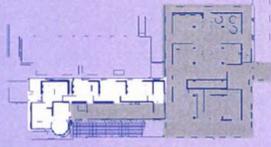
In video vignettes, migrants talk about their own moments of arrival and their first impressions of the United States.



New Eras of Immigration

The Journey

BRIDGES TO HOME



Bridges to Home

As visitors walk into the next exhibit area, they see images that convey the ways migrants remain in touch with those back home — people at telephone centers, bodegas with dozens of different phone cards for sale, TV and periodicals geared toward immigrants, people at cyber cafes.

An introductory graphic presents the theme of this area:

Bridges to Home

Faster modes of transportation make it far easier for migrants to return home, whether they decide to do so permanently or simply for vacation. Similarly, advances in communications make it easier for migrants to maintain ties with family and friends left behind.

A Timeline and interpretative graphics allow visitors to explore the many ways migrants maintain ties to their homelands, which may include such topics as:

- The relatively lower cost of travel and communications today compared to the past makes remaining connected possible for even migrants of modest means.
- Traveling between homes: Many migrants and their relatives fly back and forth to spend time with one another.
- Sending money to help those left behind or to bring them to the United States; supporting institutions in the home country, such as a church or a political organization.
- Saving money made in the U.S. to return to the home country to start a business or to retire.
- Instantaneous communication through the phone and email.

Profile panels illustrate interesting episodes in immigration history. For example:

- Chinese migrants raising money to buy ambulances for China when Japan invaded the country in the 1930s.
- Migrants from Latin America sending their children to relatives in the old country during school vacations to nurture cultural and familial ties in the younger generation.

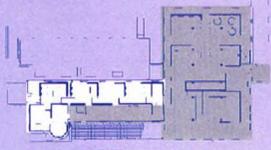
Visitors can watch a video of migrants discussing their homelands and what staying in touch with relatives means to them.



New Eras of Immigration

The Journey

BUILDING COMMUNITY



Building Community

In the next segment of the Journey, visitors pass scenes of migrant communities across the country — people gathering for events, sharing meals, working, celebrating.

An introductory panel discusses the theme of Building Community:

Building Community

Today, as in the past, many migrants live in thriving ethnic communities.

These communities ease migrants' transition to a new life, provide emotional support, bolster ethnic identity, and create a network for economic survival and advancement.

A growing number of professionals who migrate to the United States, however, prefer integration within the wider community once they get settled here.

A series of panels profile some of the challenges migrants face in their adopted country and explore the importance of community in migrants' lives. For example:

- Migrants creating communities within major U.S. cities, such as Dominicans in New York and Mexicans in Chicago.
- Korean migrants working together to open businesses.

The Timeline notes historic events that have affected immigration policies and trends. Interpretive panels around the Timeline discuss such issues as:

- Traditional institutions, such as religious organizations, that help migrants maintain their cultural connections.
- Patterns of work and entrepreneurship among different ethnic groups.
- Nativists' reactions to migration, including California's Proposition 187; migrants and ethnic groups facing prejudice and exploitation within American society.
- Nativists' response to migrants in times of crisis, such as Japanese internment during World War II and reactions against Moslems after September 11.
- The varied experiences of men and women migrants in American culture.
- Education of migrants' children as an agent of acculturation, and the controversies surrounding bilingual education.

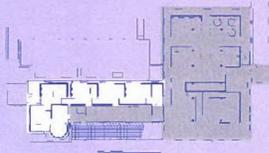
In Video Vignettes, migrants discuss their lives in America, some of the difficulties they have faced, and what living in America means to them.



New Eras of Immigration

The Journey

BECOMING AMERICAN



Becoming American

The final exhibit in the Journey, Becoming American, explores immigrants' integration into American culture. Approaching the exhibit, visitors see an introductory graphic that discusses the theme:

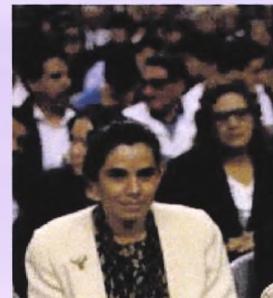
Becoming American

For those who choose to remain in the United States, "becoming American" often means embracing those values that characterize this country — belief in the importance of democracy, capitalism, and personal freedom. Some of these immigrants elect to make their status official, becoming citizens of the United States.

Walking into a circular space, visitors see the Oath of Allegiance printed on the back wall. The centerpiece of the exhibit is an A/V program of immigrants taking the Oath of Allegiance in a citizenship ceremony (now shown in the current Peopling of America exhibit).

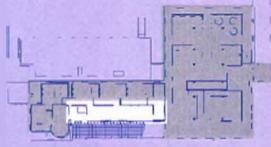
Interpretative graphics in this area examine topics related to the theme, such as:

- Being American as well as having an ethnic identity.
- The experiences of the second generation, and their adaptation to American culture.
- Choosing to become a citizen — and choosing not to.
- The requirements for citizenship.



New Eras of Immigration

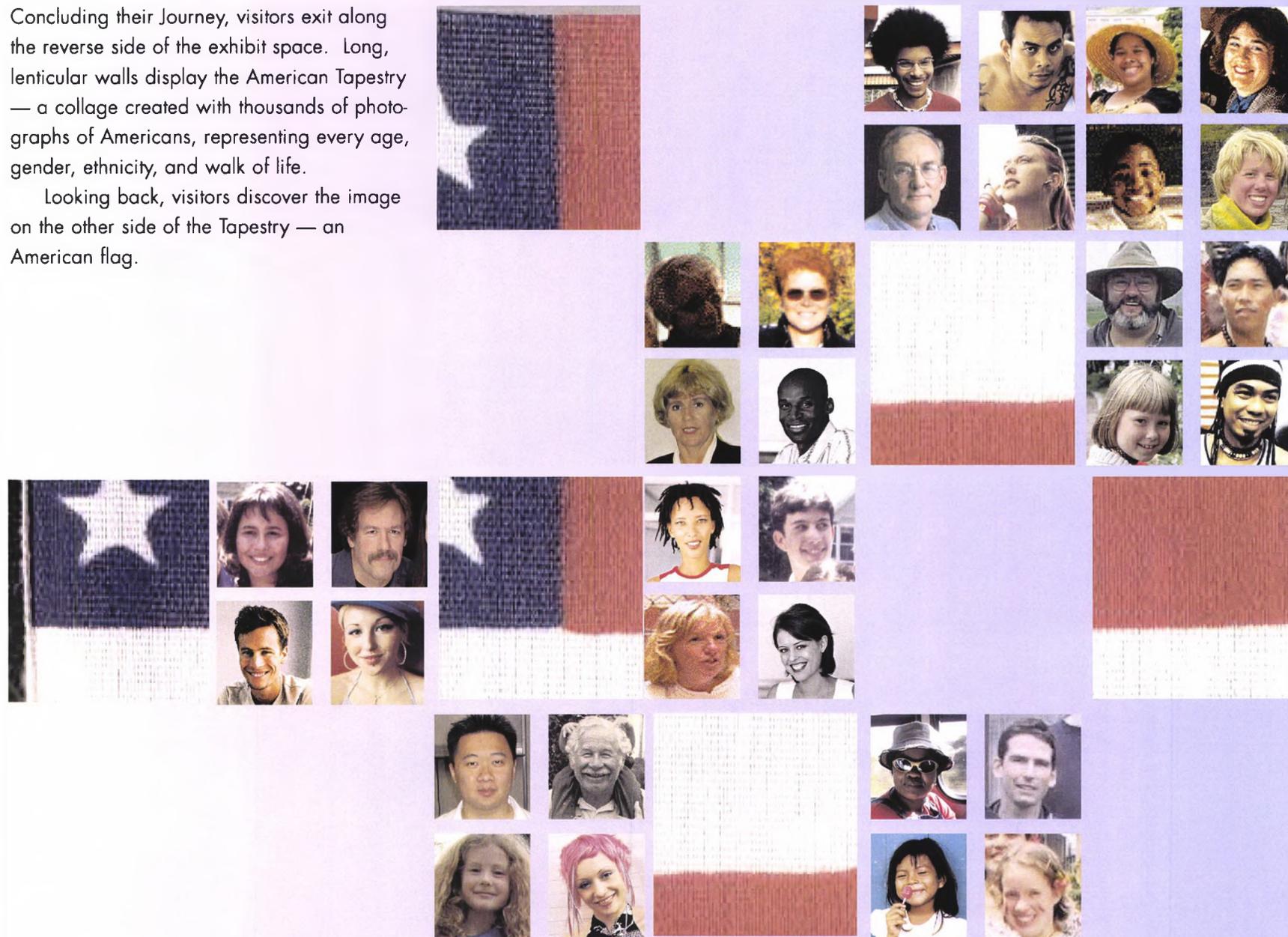
An American Tapestry



An American Tapestry

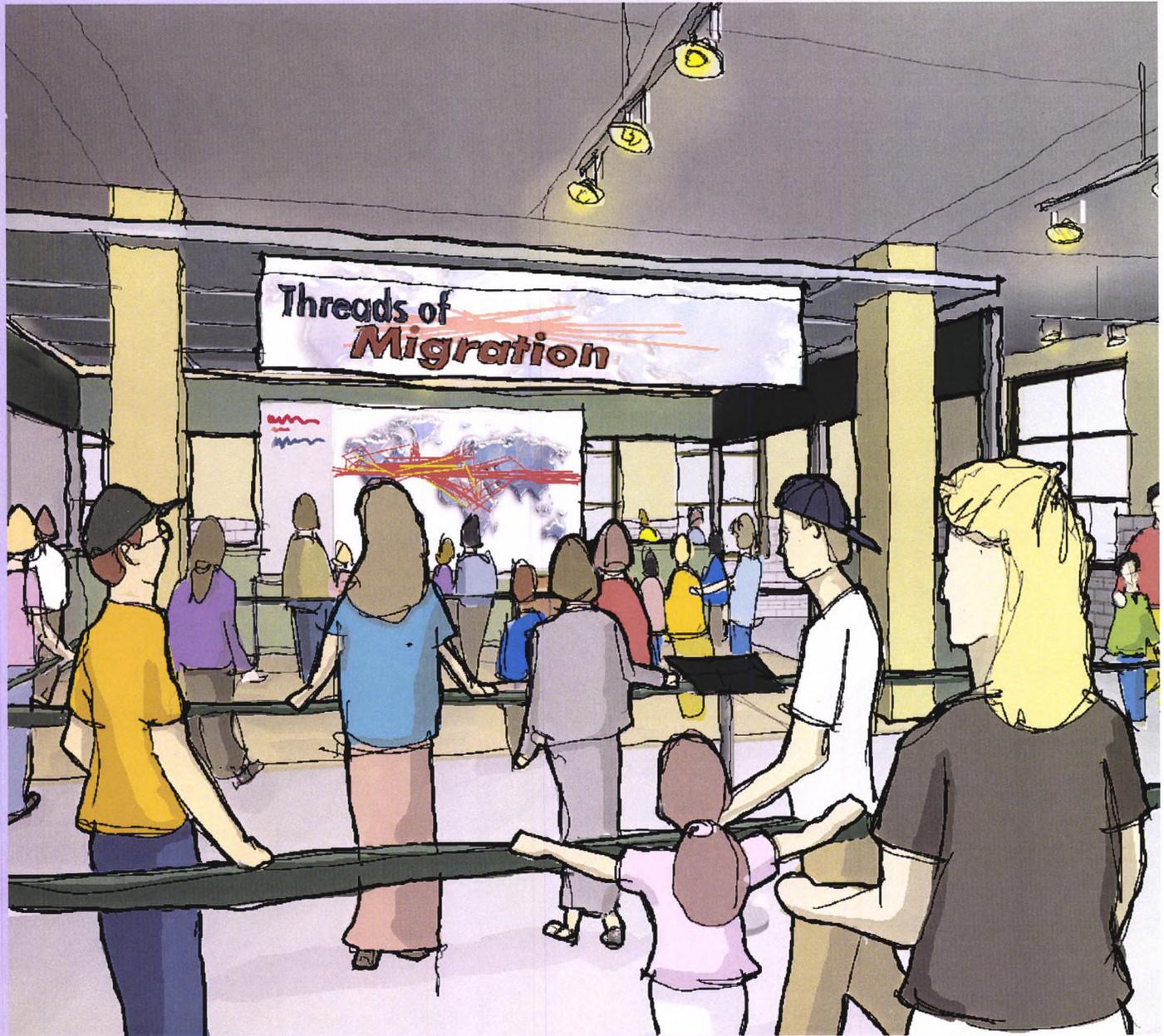
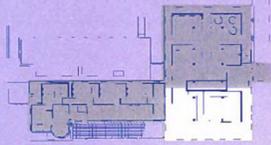
Concluding their Journey, visitors exit along the reverse side of the exhibit space. Long, lenticular walls display the American Tapestry — a collage created with thousands of photographs of Americans, representing every age, gender, ethnicity, and walk of life.

Looking back, visitors discover the image on the other side of the Tapestry — an American flag.



New Eras of Immigration

Threads of Migration

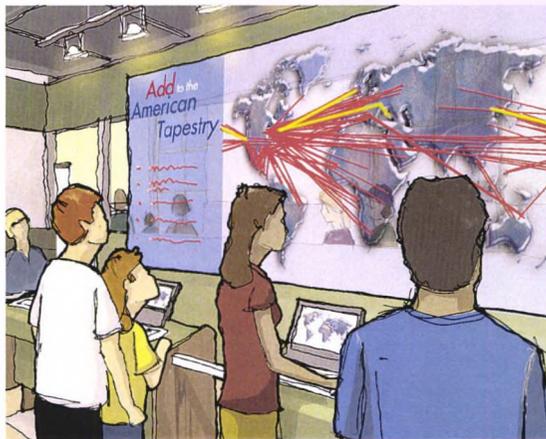


Threads of Migration

As they leave, visitors encounter the Threads of Migration, where they can connect the story of their family's journey to the larger story of migration to America.

Before them, visitors see a large projection of a geodesic map, crisscrossed with lines between the United States and other nations. A graphic above the activity stations invites them to "Add to the American Tapestry." While individual visitors participate in the activity at three computer stations, a much larger group can view the results on the projected map.

At the activity stations, visitors enter their last names, states of residence, and the countries where their ancestors originated. (Alternately, visitors can enter continents of origin, such as Africa, or states of origin in the case of Native Americans.) They can input up to five points of origin. When visi-



tors finish, they see threads representing their families' migration added to the large, projected map. Initially, these lines glow brightly. Over time, these new threads fade into the American tapestry.

Visitors then have the opportunity to see:

- How many visitors entered the same countries of origin.
- Threads entered by people who settled in the same state.
- Threads entered by people with the same last name.
- Threads entered by people from a specific country of origin.

In addition, the activity includes software that allows people with one of the 50,000 most common last names to see the distribution of their name across the nation based on census information.

To accommodate people who self-identify with places of origin that have been subsumed within another country or have been renamed (e.g., Prussia, the Czech Republic), the interface will draw from an alternative names database.

Threads of Migration Queuing Line

For times of high visitor traffic, a roped queuing line can be set up in front of the Threads of Migration activity. To make the waiting time for the activity more pleasant, information printed on the rope stanchions gives visitors some interesting tidbits related to migration, such as the number of languages spoken in the United States or the number of babies born on Ellis Island.

Kitchen & Laundry Building Exhibits

On the columns near the Threads of Migration activity, several plaques describe the original use of the Kitchen & Laundry building when the Ellis Island Immigration Station was in operation. Photographs show how the building looked during that period.



Conclusion



Conclusion

ESI Design is honored to be a part of this exciting project. Through our collaboration with the National Park Service and the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, we believe the new Peopling of America Center will greatly enhance the Ellis Island Immigration Museum by creating a more inclusive and meaningful experience for all of the Museum's visitors.

