

## **FAMILY ROOTS TAKE HOLD ON ELLIS ISLAND**

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### **Body**

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Katherine Jacobs came to yesterday's grand opening of the American **Family** Immigration History Center on **Ellis Island** seeking to find out more about her grandfather's journey to America.

She knew his name - John Siaflas - and she knew that he made the trip sometime in the early 1900s, but not much else.

Jacobs, a retired bookkeeper from Parkside, N.J., **took** a seat at one of the center's 40 new computer terminals and typed in Siaflas' name. No results. Then she tried variations; Siaflos. Siflos. Siflas. Still no luck.

"Oh, well," she said after finally giving up.

Jacobs went away disappointed, but others who come to the \$22.5 million history center, and tap into its new Web site, may have better luck unlocking secrets about ancestors who entered America through **Ellis Island**.

Launched yesterday by the Statue of Liberty-**Ellis Island** Foundation, the Web site - [www.ellislandrecords.org](http://www.ellislandrecords.org) - contains the names of 22 million immigrants who arrived at the Port of New York between 1892 and 1924. It also **holds** such information as ship manifests listing immigrants' ages, ethnicities and hometowns, and photographs or artists' renderings of those ships.

Later - it is uncertain when - plans call for the center to add names of immigrants who continued to arrive at **Ellis Island** until it closed as an immigration processing center in 1954.

The information contained on the Web site has been provided by members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints - also known as the Mormon church - which maintains its own **family** genealogy Web site at [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org).

Mormon Elder Russel Nelson, who was on hand for yesterday's grand opening ceremony, said "it was a labor of love." It **took** 12,000 volunteers about seven years to painstakingly lift the information from reels of microfilm.

With all the stresses on the modern **family**, Nelson said, tracing ancestral **roots** can help build stronger **family** ties. The Mormon volunteers put in all the time on the Web site, he explained, because, "We have a responsibility to help."

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