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Blast From the Past: Ellis Island

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Distinctly Catholic

For me, the most pressing moral reason for immigration reform is the need to unite families. Another episode from Jay Dolan's *The Irish Americans* shows that the goal of uniting families has been a concern since the very first person came through Ellis Island.

The first person to pass through Ellis Island was Annie Moore, a fifteen-year-old Irish immigrant from county Cork. Her parents, along with her older brother, had emigrated to the United States in 1888 and were living in New York. In a typical chain-migration pattern, they now sent for the rest of the children. Annie, together with her two younger brothers, sailed from Queenstown (Cobh) on the SS Nevada in December 1891. After a journey of several days, they arrived at Ellis Island on January 1, 1892, and Annie was the first person processed at the newly opened facility. To mark the occasion she was presented with a ten-dollar gold piece.

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