THE “NEW” IMMIGRANTS

Objectives

• Compare the “new immigration” of the late 1800s to earlier immigration
• Explain the push and pull factors leading immigrants to America
• Describe the challenges that immigrants faced in traveling to America
• Analyze how immigrants adapted to American life while trying to maintain familiar cultural practices

Key Terms

• “New” Immigrant—a new wave of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe began to arrive in America in the 1870s until the outbreak of World War I.
  o “Old” Immigrants—Before 1870, most immigrants to America came from Ireland and Germany.
• Steerage—the worst accommodations on a ship. Most immigrants traveled to America on the steerage level of ships.
• Ellis Island—starting in 1892, this is where immigrants who crossed the Atlantic Ocean first arrived when they came to America. Located by New York City.
• Angel Island—Chinese and other Asian immigrants crossed the Pacific Ocean and arrived at Angel Island, located in the San Francisco harbor. Angel Island opened in 1910.
• Americanization—the belief that assimilating immigrants into American society would make them more loyal citizens. Americanization programs helped immigrants learn English and adopt American dress and diet.
  o In this case, “assimilating” means integrating immigrants into American society; making them look, think, act like Americans.
• “Melting Pot”—the belief that America society was a “melting pot” in which white people of all different nationalities blended together to form a single culture
• Nativism—the belief that native-born white Americans were superior to newcomers
• Chinese Exclusion Act—extreme hostility toward Chinese laborers led Congress to pass the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882. This act prohibited immigration by Chinese laborers, limited the civil rights of Chinese immigrants already in the United States, and forbade the naturalization of Chinese residents.
  o “Naturalization” is the process immigrants go through to become citizens.

Teacher Note: These key terms are generally the bold words in your textbook. It’s always important to know the key terms and people that are highlighted in your textbook.

What is immigration? How does it affect society?

• Immigration is when people permanently move from one country to another country.
• Immigration is a major theme in American history
  o America is a country of immigrants—the only people who are not immigrants to America are the Native Americas. Even if you were born here, your family’s history probably started somewhere else.
• How does immigration affect society?
  o Changes the labor force
  o Population increases
  o Immigrants bring their cultures and traditions
    ▪ Food
    ▪ Ideas
    ▪ Religion

New Immigrants Come to America

• Immigrants have always come to America for economic opportunity and religious freedom
• Until the 1870s, most immigrants to America come from northern and western Europe—mainly German and Irish. These are what we might call the “old immigrants.”
• After 1870, there was a wave of new immigrants from eastern and southern Europe
  o Came from countries like Italy, Greece, Poland, Hungary, and Russia

Why do immigrants decide to leave home?

• “Push” factors—reasons that immigrants decide to leave home, such as famine, war, or persecution. (Persecution means to treat someone badly because of something like their religion or political beliefs.) In the 1880s, the “push” factors that made immigrants want to leave their homes and come to America were:
  o Tough environments for farming in other countries. Farmers come to America to get a fresh start.
  o Wars and political revolutions forced people out of their countries and into America.
  o Religious persecution
• “Pull” factors—reasons that immigrants are drawn to a new place, like America. In the 1880s, the “pull” factors that made immigrants want to leave their homes and come to America were:
  o Opportunity
  o Plentiful land and employment
  o Join family and friends already in America

The immigrant experience: What was it like for immigrants coming to America?

• Tough decisions to leave their home country and their family and friends
• Hard and expensive journey
  o Could only bring what they could carry
Sometimes they only had enough money for their ticket, and had little or no money when they arrived in America
- Easy to catch illness in steerage section of boat, where most immigrants traveled
  - Arriving at ports like Ellis Island or Angel Island
    - Immigrants had to show they were healthy and show that they had money, a skill, or a sponsor in order to be able to enter the country

**Opportunities and challenges for immigrants arriving in America**

- Challenges
  - Many immigrants had to learn to speak English
  - Had to learn new customs
    - “Assimilation” has to do with Americanization and melting pot. Immigrants assimilated by learning American customs, etc.
- Had to find work and housing
- Faced nativism—some Americans were hostile towards immigrants and treated them poorly

**Immigrants change America**

- Immigrants cause industrial growth
- As numbers of immigrants grow, they cause political change through labor unions and political parties
- Immigrant traditions become a part of American culture
- Overall, immigrants expanded the definition of American