

IMMIGRATION

Urban America - Section 1

Vocabulary

Steerage-

The cheapest accommodation on a steamship.

Ellis Island-

A tiny island on the east coast in New York Harbor where about 12 million immigrants were held.

Jacob Biis-

A Danish-born journalist.

Nativism-

Is an extreme dislike of immigrants by native-born people.

Chinese Exclusion Act-

The Law barred Chinese already immigration for 10 years and prevented the Chinese already in the country from becoming citizens.

Angel Island-

Located in California, in 1910. There were barracks opened for Asian immigrants.

Main Ideas

- Why did European immigrants come to the United States?



♦ Europeans immigrated to the United States for many reasons. Many came because American industries had plenty of jobs, so economics factors do not entirely explain why people migrated. Many came

in hope of finding better jobs that would let them escape poverty and the restrictions of social class in Europe. Some moved to avoid forced military service, which in some nations lasted for many years. In some cases, as in Italy, high food prices encouraged people to leave. In Poland and Russia, population pressure led to emigration. Others, especially Jews living in Russia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, fled to escape religious persecution.

- What caused the increase in Chinese immigration in the 1860s?

♦ In the early 1860s, as construction began on the Central

Pacific Railroad, the demand for railroad workers led to further Chinese immigration.



Primary Source

Critical Thinking

- Where did most immigrants settle in the late 1800s? How did this benefit ethnic groups?

- ♦ Many of those who passed these inspections settled in the nation's cities. By the 1890s, immigrants made up a large percentage of the population in major cities, including: New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, and Detroit. In the cities, immigrants lived in neighborhoods that were often separated into ethnic groups, such as "Little Italy" or the Jewish "Lower East Side" in New York City. There, they spoke their native languages and re-created the churches, synagogues, clubs, and newspapers of their homeland.

- Why did some Americans blame immigrants for the nation's problems?

- ♦ Nativists opposed immigration for many reasons. Some feared that the influx of Catholics from countries such as Ireland, Italy, and Poland would swamp the mostly Protestant United States. Many labor unions also opposed immigrants, arguing that immigrants undermined American workers because they would work for low wages and accept jobs as strike breakers.

- Write a journal entry about his or her experience based on what you see in the photo.

- ♦ The children in the photograph were taken in San Francisco in the 1900s. Until 1910, Asian immigrants arriving in San Francisco first stopped at a two-story shed at the wharf. As many as 500 people at a time were often squeezed into this structure, which Chinese immigrants from Canton called mukuk, or "wooden house." In January 1910, California opened a set of barracks on Angel Island for Asian immigrants. Most were young men in their teens or twenties, who nervously awaited the results of their immigration hearings. They could last for months. On the walls of the barracks, several immigrants wrote anonymous poems in pencil or ink.