Urban America
1865–1896

SECTION 1 Immigration
SECTION 2 Urbanization
SECTION 3 The Gilded Age
SECTION 4 Populism
SECTION 5 The Rise of Segregation

Immigrants look toward New York City while waiting on a dock at Ellis Island in the early 1900s.

1870
- Fifteenth Amendment ratified
- Farmers’ Alliance founded

1872
- Ballot Act makes voting secret in Britain

1876
- Porfirio Díaz becomes dictator of Mexico

1880
- Anti-Jewish pogroms erupt in Russia

1881
- President Garfield assassinated

1883
- Brooklyn Bridge completed
- Civil Service Act adopted

1884
- First subway in London opens

1885

Hayes 1877–1881

Garfield 1881
Arthur 1881–1885

Cleveland 1885–1889
MAKING CONNECTIONS

Why Do People Migrate?

European and Asian immigrants arrived in the United States in great numbers during the late 1800s. Providing cheap labor, they made rapid industrial growth possible. They also helped populate the growing cities.

- How do you think life in big cities was different from life on farms and in small towns?
- How do you think the immigrants of the late 1800s changed American society?

1888
- First electric trolley line opens in Richmond, Virginia

1889
- Eiffel Tower completed for Paris World Exhibit

1890
- Sherman Antitrust Act passed

Harrison 1889–1893

1895
- Booker T. Washington gives Atlanta Compromise speech

Cleveland 1893–1897

1896
- Plessy v. Ferguson establishes “separate but equal” doctrine

1896
- Athens hosts first modern Olympic games

Analyzing Information  Make a Folded Table Foldable to clarify your understanding of how immigration and urbanization are related. As you read the chapter, list the causes and effects of immigration and urbanization. In each cell, list as many causes and effects as possible and include approximate dates where appropriate.

History ONLINE Chapter Overview
Visit glencoe.com to preview Chapter 6.
In the late nineteenth century, a major wave of immigration began. Most immigrants settled in cities, where distinctive ethnic neighborhoods emerged. Some Americans, however, feared that the new immigrants would not adapt to American culture or might be harmful to American society.

**Europeans Flood Into America**

- **MAIN Idea** Immigrants from Europe came to the United States for many reasons and entered the country through Ellis Island.
- **HISTORY AND YOU** Have you ever been to an ethnic neighborhood where residents have re-created aspects of their homeland? Read on to learn how immigrants adjusted to life in the United States.

Between 1865—the year the Civil War ended—and 1914—the year World War I began—nearly 25 million Europeans immigrated to the United States. By the late 1890s, more than half of all immigrants in the United States were from eastern and southern Europe, including Italy, Greece, Austria-Hungary, Russia, and Serbia. This period of immigration is known as “new” immigration. The “old” immigration, which occurred before 1890, had been primarily of people from northern and western Europe. More than 70 percent of these new immigrants were men; they were working either to be able to afford to purchase land in Europe or to bring family members to America.

Europeans immigrated to the United States for many reasons. Many came because American industries had plenty of jobs available. Europe’s industrial cities, however, also offered plenty of jobs, so economic factors do not entirely explain why people migrated. Many came in the 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.

In addition, most European states had made moving to the United States easy. Immigrants were allowed to take their savings with them, and most countries had repealed old laws forcing peasants to stay in their villages and banning skilled workers from leaving the country. At the same time, moving to the United States offered a chance to break away from Europe’s class system and move to a democratic nation where people had the opportunity to move up the social ladder.
Why Did People Emigrate?

Push Factors
- Farm poverty and worker uncertainty
- Wars and compulsory military service
- Political tyranny
- Religious oppression
- Population pressure

Pull Factors
- Plenty of land and plenty of work
- Higher standard of living
- Democratic political system
- Opportunity for social advancement

Analyzing VISUALS

1. Describing When was the level of immigration from the different regions of Europe roughly equal? How did it later change?
2. Analyzing Did more immigrants come from Canada or Latin America?

The Atlantic Voyage

The voyage to the United States was often very difficult. Most immigrants booked passage in steerage, the cheapest accommodations on a steamship. Edward Steiner, an Iowa clergyman who posed as an immigrant in order to write a book on immigration, described the miserable quarters:

Primary Source

“Narrow, steep and slippery stairways lead to it. Crowds everywhere, ill smelling bunks, uninviting washrooms—this is steerage. The odors of scattered orange peelings, tobacco, garlic and disinfectants meeting but not blending. No lounge or chairs for comfort, and a continual babble of tongues—this is steerage. The food, which is miserable, is dealt out of huge kettles into the dinner pails provided by the steamship company.”

—quoted in World of Our Fathers

At the end of a 14-day journey, the passengers usually disembarked at Ellis Island, a tiny island in New York Harbor. There, a huge three-story building served as the processing center for many of the immigrants arriving from Europe after 1892.
**Ellis Island**

Most immigrants passed through Ellis Island in about a day. They would not soon forget their hectic introduction to the United States. A medical examiner who worked there later described how “hour after hour, ship load after ship load . . . the stream of human beings with its kaleidoscopic variations was . . . hurried through Ellis Island by the equivalent of ‘step lively’ in every language of the earth.” About 12 million immigrants passed through Ellis Island between 1892 and 1954.

In Ellis Island’s enormous hall, crowds of immigrants filed past the doctor for an initial inspection. “Whenever a case aroused suspicion,” an inspector wrote, “the alien was set aside in a cage apart from the rest . . . and his coat lapel or shirt marked with colored chalk” to indicate the reason for the isolation. About one out of five newcomers was marked with an “H” for heart problems, “K” for hernias, “S” for scalp problems, or “X” for mental disability. Newcomers who failed the inspection might be separated from their families and returned to Europe.

**Ethnic Cities**

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 of major cities, including New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, and Detroit. Jacob Riis, a Danish-born journalist, observed in 1890 that a map of New York City, “colored to designate nationalities, would show more stripes than on the skin of a zebra.”

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 homelands.

How well immigrants adjusted depended partly on how quickly they learned English and adapted to American culture. Immigrants also tended to adjust well if they had marketable skills or money, or if they settled among members of their own ethnic group.

**Reading Check**  
**Explaining** How did immigration affect demographics in the United States?
Asian Immigration

**MAIN Idea** Asian immigrants arrived on the West Coast, where they settled mainly in cities.

**HISTORY AND YOU** Do you know someone who has moved to the United States from Asia? What motivated that person to come here? Read on to learn about the experiences of earlier generations of Asian immigrants.

In the mid-1800s, China’s population reached about 430 million, and the country was suffering from severe unemployment, poverty, and famine. Then, in 1850, the Taiping Rebellion erupted in China. This insurrection caused such suffering that thousands of Chinese left for the United States. In the early 1860s, as construction began on the Central Pacific Railroad, the demand for railroad workers led to further Chinese immigration.

Chinese immigrants settled mainly in western cities, where they often worked as laborers or servants or in skilled trades. Others became merchants. Because native-born Americans kept them out of many businesses, some Chinese immigrants opened their own.

Japanese also began immigrating to the United States. Although some came earlier, the number of Japanese immigrants soared upward between 1900 and 1910. As Japan industrialized, economic problems caused many Japanese to leave their homeland for new economic opportunities.

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 *muk uk*, or “wooden house.” In January 1910 California opened a 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. The wait could last for months. On the walls of the barracks, several immigrants wrote anonymous poems in pencil or ink.

**Reading Check** Making Generalizations Why did Chinese immigrants come to the United States?

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### Immigration Settlement Patterns

**Why Did Immigrants Come to America?**

**Typical Occupations in America**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Italians</strong></th>
<th><strong>East Europeans</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cholera epidemic in 1880s</td>
<td>Russians, Poles: land shortages for peasants, unemployment, high taxes; long military draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>land shortage for peasants; landlords charge high rent</td>
<td>Jews: discrimination, poverty, and recurring pogroms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>food shortages</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>poverty, unemployment</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Chinese</strong></th>
<th><strong>East Europeans</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>famine</td>
<td>Poles: farmers, coal miners, steel and textile millworkers; meatpacking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>land shortage for peasants</td>
<td>Jews: laborers, garment workers, merchants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>civil war (Taiping rebellion)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Chinese</strong></th>
<th><strong>East Europeans</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>railroad and construction workers; some skilled labor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>merchants, small businesses</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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**Analyzing VISUALS**

1. **Analyzing Visuals** To which city did most Russian immigrants come to live?
2. **Contrasting** How would you contrast the immigration settlement patterns of Texas and Ohio?
Nativism Resurges

**MAIN IDEA** Economic concerns and religious and ethnic prejudices led some Americans to push for laws restricting immigration.

**HISTORY AND YOU** In what ways does immigration affect the area in which you live? Read on to learn why nativists tried to stop immigration.

Eventually the wave of immigration led to increased feelings of nativism on the part of many Americans. Nativism is an extreme dislike of immigrants by native-born people. It had surfaced during the heavy wave of Irish immigration in the 1840s and 1850s. In the late 1800s, anti-immigrant feelings focused mainly on Asians, Jews, and eastern Europeans.

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 immigration, arguing that immigrants undermined American workers because they would work for low wages and accept jobs as strikebreakers.

**Prejudice Against Catholics**

Increased feelings of nativism led to the founding of anti-immigrant organizations. The American Protective Association, founded by Henry Bowers in 1887, was an anti-Catholic organization. Its members vowed not to hire or vote for Catholics.

The Irish were among the immigrants who suffered most from the anti-Catholic feeling. Arriving to escape famine and other hardships, many were illiterate and found only the lowest-paying work as miners, dockhands, ditch-diggers, and factory workers. Irish women worked as cooks, servants, and millworkers. The dominant Protestant, British culture in America, which considered Irish poverty to be the result of laziness, superstition, and ignorance, had no use for the Catholic Irish.

Although several presidents vetoed legislation that would have limited immigration, prejudice

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**Primary Source**

“We unite to protect our country and its free institutions against the secret, Intolerant, and aggressive efforts . . . by a certain religious political organization to control the government of the United States. . . .

. . . We have men born in several countries remote from this that are as loyal as any native, but they are not Romanists [Catholics]. American loyalty consists in devotion to our Constitution, laws, institutions, flag, and, above all, our public schools, for without intelligence this representative republic will go to pieces . . . We are opposed to priests and prelates as such ‘taking part in elections’ and voting their laity as a unit in the interests of a foreign corporation . . .”

—from the platform of the American Protective Association, 1894

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**Image Description**

- Catholic priests crawl ashore as children are tossed to them by New York politicians in this 1871 cartoon criticizing New York’s decision to fund Catholic schools.

**DBQ**

1. **Explaining** What does the American Protective Association believe is incompatible with American citizenship? To what power does the statement refer?
2. **Detecting Bias** How does the cartoon express hostility toward Catholicism? Why might the cartoonist have depicted the public school on the hill in ruins?
Restrictions on Asian Immigration

In the West, anti-Chinese sentiment sometimes led to racial violence. Denis Kearney, himself an Irish immigrant, organized the Workingman’s Party of California in the 1870s to fight Chinese immigration. The party won seats in California’s legislature and pushed to cut off Chinese immigration.

In 1882 Congress passed the **Chinese Exclusion Act**. The law barred Chinese immigration for 10 years and prevented the Chinese already in the country from becoming citizens. The Chinese in the United States organized letter-writing campaigns, petitioned the president, and even filed suit in federal court, but their efforts failed. Congress renewed the law in 1892 and made it permanent in 1902. It was not repealed until 1943.

On October 11, 1906, in response to rising Japanese immigration, the San Francisco Board of Education ordered “all Chinese, Japanese and Korean children” to attend the racially segregated “Oriental School” in the city’s Chinatown neighborhood. (Students of Chinese heritage had been forced to attend racially segregated schools since 1859.) The directive caused an international incident. Japan took great offense at the insulting treatment of its people.

In response, Theodore Roosevelt invited school board leaders to the White House. He proposed a deal. He would limit Japanese immigration, if the school board would rescind its segregation order. Roosevelt then carried out his end of the deal. He began talks with Japan, and negotiated an agreement whereby Japan agreed to curtail the emigration of Japanese to the continental United States. The San Francisco school board then revoked its segregation order. This deal became known as the “Gentleman’s Agreement” because it was not a formal treaty and depended on the leaders of both countries to uphold the agreement.

The Literacy Debate

In 1905 Theodore Roosevelt commissioned a study on how immigrants were admitted to the nation. The commission recommended an English literacy test. Two years later, another commission suggested literacy tests—in any language—for immigration. These recommendations reflected the bias of people against the “new immigrants,” who were thought to be less intelligent than the “old immigrants.” Although Presidents Taft and Wilson both vetoed legislation to require literacy from immigrants, the legislation eventually passed in 1917 over Wilson’s second veto. The purpose of the law was to reduce immigration from southeastern European nations.

**Vocabulary**
1. **Explain** the significance of: steerage, Ellis Island, Jacob Riis, Angel Island, nativism, Chinese Exclusion Act.

**Main Ideas**
2. **Listing** Why did European immigrants come to the United States?
3. **Describing** What caused the increase in Chinese immigration in the 1860s?
4. **Organizing** Complete a graphic organizer by listing the reasons nativists opposed immigration to the United States.

**Critical Thinking**
5. **Big Ideas** Where did most immigrants settle in the late 1800s? How did this benefit ethnic groups?
6. **Interpreting** Why did some Americans blame immigrants for the nation’s problems?
7. **Analyzing Visuals** Select one of the people featured in any photo in this section. Write a journal entry about his or her experience, based on what you see in the photo.

**Writing About History**
8. **Descriptive Writing** Imagine that you are an immigrant who arrived in the United States in the 1800s. Write a letter to a relative in your home country describing your feelings during processing at either Ellis Island or Angel Island.

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