

Immigration



CLARIFYING TERMINOLOGY:

- **Authorized immigration/unauthorized immigration**
- **“Immigration” and choice**

Movement of people, movement of borders:

Two examples:

Example 1: In the 1600s and 1700s, supply and demand for labor resulted in a great deal of forced immigration from Africa and Europe

Status of immigrants to what would become the United States (%)

<u>Years</u>	<u>Slaves</u>	<u>Prisoners</u>	<u>Indentured servants</u>	<u>Free labor</u>
1607-1699	17	1	49	33
1700-1775	47	9	18	26

Source: Aaron S. Fogleman, "From Slaves, Convicts, and Servants to Free Passengers: The Transformation of Immigration in the Era of the American Revolution," *Journal of American History* 85 (June 1998), 43-76.

Immigration has been a major factor in the U.S. population and economy from the 1600s to the 2000s

- Two exceptional periods when immigration was less common: 1775-1815 and 1925-1965**
- Every year, more people have entered the U.S. than have left, except for 1932-1935**

In the 1800s, millions of Irish and Germans immigrated to the United States in search of economic opportunity and freedom.

Irish immigration

Reasons for immigration: Fleeing the Great Potato Famine and religious persecution

Numbers: More than one-third of all immigrants to the United States between 1820 and 1860

Destination: Many settled in cities in Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania

Work: Many worked as laborers building canals and railroads, or as domestic servants for wealthy families

German immigration

Reasons for immigration: Political and religious freedom, and economic opportunities

Numbers: More than 5 million people left Germany for the U.S. during the 19th century

Destination: Settled in nearly every state, but especially in the North and Midwest

Work: Many worked in agriculture, but also as skilled artisans and laborers

Challenges Faced discrimination from nativists,
Faced cultural barriers and negative stereotyping,
and Faced social stigmas.

Contributions

- Built canals and railroads
- Helped build America
- Contributed to the social climate of what it meant to be an American

Another part of the pattern: Reverse migration; people leave the U.S. to return to their country of origin

- For many European immigrants, coming to America was a strategy to make money to send back or take back to country-of-origin**
- Between 1860-1930, somewhere between 1/3 and 1/2 of all immigrants to the United States did not stay permanently.**

Remigration Rates: 1890-1930

– Bulgarians	87 %
– Romanians	66 %
– Russians	65 %
– Greeks	54 %
– Hungarians	47 %
– Italians	46 %
– Slovaks	36 %
– Poles	33 %
– French	24 %
– Finns	22 %

Examples from Thomas Archdeacon, *Becoming American: An Ethnic History* (New York: Free Press, 1983), p. 139.

A final pattern:

For much of U.S. history, the percentage of the U.S. population that was foreign born was a constant 13-14%

Foreign born as percentage of U.S. population

• 1860	13.2 %
• 1870	14.0
• 1880	13.3
• 1890	14.7
• 1900	13.6
• 1910	14.7
• 1920	13.2
• 1930	11.6

Immigrants then and now: Five similarities and differences

1. ORIGINS:

1820-1920 – 85% from Europe

Today – 75% from Latin America and Asia

40% of today's immigrants come from five countries:

- 1. Mexico**
- 2. India**
- 3. China**
- 4. Philippines**
- 5. Vietnam**

Immigrants then and now: Five similarities and differences

2. AGE AND FAMILY PROFILE:

**1820-1920 – Overwhelmingly single
young adult men**

**Today – Still disproportionately youth
and young adult, but more balanced sex-
ratios and more families**

Immigrants then and now: Five similarities and differences

3. EDUCATION LEVEL:

1820-1920 – Typically had less formal education than general population

Today – Typically have less *and* more formal education than general population

Immigrants then and now: Five similarities and differences

4. SOCIALLY:

A similarity between 1820-1920 and today – the most recent immigrants face resistance or resentment from other Americans

Immigrants then and now: Five similarities and differences

5. POLITICALLY:

Prior to 1920 in many places, immigrant men could vote even if they were not naturalized.

This is a difference between then and now, and gave European immigrant communities a bit more political influence in shaping the society that they were joining.

Origins of immigration restriction and the beginning of legal/illegal immigration

- **Immigration and the Constitution**
- **1875 U.S. Supreme Court: immigration
is exclusively federal domain**

1882 CHINESE EXCLUSION ACT

- Began a process of seeking to limit immigration to “desirable” populations**
- 1907 ban on Japanese immigration**
- 1917 general ban on immigration from all of Asia (except Philippines)**
- Asians were “aliens ineligible for citizenship”**

OTHER EXAMPLES OF RESTRICTING IMMIGRATION

– 1891 barred insane, paupers, those persons suffering from contagious disease, felons, polygamists, and (after 1903) anarchists.

In percentage terms, few turned away for any of these reasons (less than 1%)

– 1917 Literacy test

- Restriction movement culminated in National Origins Act (1924) that banned immigration from Asia and severely limited immigration from eastern and southern Europe. *No numeric limits on Canada or Latin America***

After 1882, with immigration limited for the first time, it was now possible to have unauthorized entry (illegal immigration)

—Excluded Europeans and Asians went to Canada or Mexico and crossing into U.S.