

Ethnic Groups: They Came Into America

What We Want to Address

- Who (Polish, German, French, Walloons, Irish, Italian, Dutch)
- When (when were the largest migrations)
- Why (why did they come)
- Where (where did they locate in America)
- Other (other information about group)

Some Common Reasons for Immigration

- Population pressure leading to fragmentation of land in rural Europe
- The spread of railroads and the progressive substitution of sailing boats by steamships
- Letters from previous immigrants to folks back home excited about the promise of more affluence than the old country
- America being seen as a land of potential political or religious freedom

Where They Entered America

- During the 1700s, most immigrants arrived in Philadelphia, the main port in the colonies
- During the 1800s, the most common ports utilized were:
 - New York, Boston, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New Orleans, San Francisco, Galveston, Charleston
- In Canada before 1900, Halifax, Nova Scotia and Quebec City, Quebec were the most common ports of entry
- A popular crossing point was St. Albans, Vermont, through which immigrants from Montreal and Quebec were processed
- In 1856, only 5% of the immigrants landing in New York came by steamship, but by 1870, it was 88%. In 1876, passage cost about \$30

Number of Immigrants Entering 1820-1920

- New York: 24 million
- Boston (port opened in 1630): 2 million
- Baltimore (port opened in 1729): 1.5 million
- Philadelphia (port opened in 1682): 1.2 million
- New Orleans (opened in 1718): 710,000
- San Francisco (opened in 1835): 500,000
- Galveston (opened 1825): 110,000
- Charleston (opened 1670): 20,000
- Other ports: almost ½ million

Castle Garden

Immigration center in New York; Opened: 3 Aug 1855; Closed: 18 Apr 1890

The Barge Office

Temporary landing depot in New York, controlled by the U.S. Superintendent of Immigration

Operational: After 18 Apr 1890 until opening of Ellis Island on 1 Jan 1892

Ellis Island

Opened: 1 Jan 1892; Closed: Nov 1954

Poland: History Leading to Emigration from Poland

- 5 Aug 1772, Poland is partitioned between Russia, Prussia, and Austria
- 23 Jan 1793, Poland is further partitioned between Russia and Prussia—Austria doesn't participate

- 1794: Tadeusz Kościuszko leads an unsuccessful uprising against Imperial Russia and the Kingdom of Prussia in an attempt to liberate Poland
- 24 Oct 1795, Poland ceases to exist as a country as remaining lands are partitioned between Russia, Prussia, and Austria
- There is constant political persecution, especially by Russia
- This led to a large 19th century emigration to Canada and the United States
- Poland is restored as a country after WWI

When Did Immigration to America Take Place?

- A number of Poles came over about 1776 to assist in the American Revolution
- The largest wave took place between 1831 and 1870
- Another large wave of immigrants came between 1875 and 1914

Where Did They Go?

- Originally many Poles went to France, but then left there for the United States
- Circa 1858, Polish Kashubs from the then German-occupied area of northern Poland settled in Wilno, the first and oldest Polish settlement in Canada
 - One of the reasons they chose this area to settle was because of the landscape which reminded them of their original homes
- In 1854, about 100 Silesian families from villages in West Poland, then part of Prussia, led by Father Leopold Moczygemba established Panna Maria, a settlement in southern Texas
 - They entered the United States at the Port of Galveston after a nine week sea voyage
- Poles, mostly from Prussia-controlled northwest Poland, have been in Chicago since 1837
 - The first immigrants were noblemen who had fled Poland after the Polish-Russian War of 1830-31
 - Polish Chicago's growth began in earnest after 1850
 - Later immigrants came from the overpopulated southern territories
- Poles from Pomerania and Poznan, then sections of Poland ruled by Prussia, began arriving in Detroit in the middle of the 1850s
 - Pomerania is on the south shore of the Baltic Sea in Poland—Kashubians are also from this area
 - Poznan is in west central Poland

Germany: Reasons for German Emigration

- Potato blight in 1840s caused local authorities to encourage and even assist immigration so people wouldn't become public charges
- Unstable political situation in the German states in 1848
- To avoid mandatory military conscription, especially when Denmark held part of northern Germany

Schleswig-Holstein

- Schleswig-Holstein has been linked to Denmark since 1460
- 1848: Danish-German War
 - Holstein rose against Danish rule and asked for Prussian assistance. War lasted nearly three years
- July 1850: Danish army defeated the Schleswig-Holstein forces
 - By the terms of the Peace Treaty, Schleswig and Holstein remained Danish
- 1863: Schleswig incorporated into Denmark; Holstein remained in the German Confederation but with Danish rule
- Danish-Prussian War starts in Jan 1864 wherein Bismarck wanted to get the area back for Germany
 - 14 Jun 1864: the War is over; Peace Treaty in Vienna in Oct 1864 returns Schleswig and Holstein to Germany

In 1847, over 53,000 Germans arrived in New York

Other Reasons for German Emigration

- Unemployment due to mechanization in Germany
- An increase in taxation

- Land became scarce and expensive
- Low wages and high food prices

When Did They Come?

- The biggest wave of immigration from Germany took place from 1815 to 1914
 - About 5.5 million Germans came to the United States during that time period
 - From 1866 to 1873, while Bismark was unifying the imperial state and economy, over 800,000 Germans arrived in the United States

Where Did They Go?

- In the 1680s, they settled primarily in New York and Pennsylvania
 - First permanent German settlement was Germantown, Pennsylvania, founded near Philadelphia on 6 Oct 1683
- During the 1860s and 1870s, many settled in southern Minnesota, the homeland of the Dakota Indian tribe
- German Americans comprise 17% of the U.S. population
- California, Texas, and Pennsylvania have the largest numbers of people of German origin
- The upper Midwestern states, including Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Nebraska, Ohio, and the Dakotas have the highest proportion of German Americans at over one-third

Pennsylvania Dutch (Deutsch)

- Who were they?
 - They were descendants of refugees from the Palatinate of the German Rhine
 - The Palatinate immigration of about 2100 people who survived was the largest single immigration to America in the colonial period
 - When they came in the 1720s and 1730s, these people were called the Pennsylvania Dutch (corruption of the German word Deutsch)
- Why did they emigrate?
 - worsening opportunities for farm ownership in central Europe
 - Persecution of some religious groups
 - Military conscription
 - Promise of better economic conditions, especially the opportunity to own land and to experience religious freedom
- Where did they settle?
 - Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, Virginia, and Ontario, Canada

Hessians

- Hessians were basically draftees who were hired out by their ruler for cash
 - The landgrave of Hesse-Kassel got the money
 - The soldiers got shot at
- At the end of the Revolutionary War
 - 17,313 Hessians returned to Germany
 - 4,972 (more than one in five) remained to settle here

France: When Did They Come?

- Quebec was founded by the French in 1608
- After that, there were three main waves of French immigration:
 - 1673 to 1754
 - From 1669-1682, the French explored the great central valley of north America, following the Ohio, Mississippi, and Missouri Rivers into what became the Ohio Valley
 - 1754 to 1803
 - 1820 to 1900

Why Did They Come?

- Because of French imperialism, many came for exploration and colonization
- War was another factor
- Loss of Alsace-Lorraine during the Franco-Prussian War caused many to leave the area

- Religious persecution (especially of the Huguenots)

Where Did They Settle?

- Many of the French came originally to Canada
- In the 17th century, they explored and colonized further south into what became the United States
- The French established a settlement at Detroit in 1701
- They also settled in St. Louis, Memphis, Natchez, Mobile, and New Orleans in the south as well as New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Maine, and Vermont in the north

The Cajuns of Louisiana

- These were people whose ancestors settled Acadia in the Canadian provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island in the 17th and early 18th centuries
- From 1755 to 1763, during the Seven Years War, many were expelled from the colonies and went south to Louisiana rather than take the British oath of loyalty
- ‘Cajun’ is derived from the English pronunciation of the French word ‘Acadien’

French Huguenots

- French Huguenots were members of the Protestant Reformed Church of France (or French Calvinists) during the 16th to the 18th centuries
- By the end of the 17th century, roughly 200,000 Huguenots had been driven from France during a series of religious persecutions
- Many of these settled in New York, South Carolina, and Virginia in the colonial era
- They tended to intermarry and assimilate rapidly

Belgium: Walloons

- Who are they?
 - Walloons are a people of Germanic and Celtic origin who speak French and live in Belgium/Luxembourg
 - The term *Walloon* is derived from *walha*, Germanic term used to refer to Celtic and Latin speakers
 - *Walloon* also designates the inhabitants of *Wallonia*—a monolingual French-speaking territory—as opposed to *Flemish*
 - *Adventurous daring is the historical characteristic of Walloons*
- When did they leave Belgium?
 - Biggest wave came to America from 1830 to 1850
- Why did they leave?
 - Bad living conditions at home
 - Socioeconomic crises
 - Overpopulation
 - Epidemics
 - Unemployment
 - Shrinking of farmers’ properties due to inheritance law
 - Failure of or unprofitable potato and cereal crops
 - Letters from those who had gone ahead promising better conditions
- Where did they go?
 - Indiana, New York, Ohio, Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Kentucky, Michigan
- Large concentrations of Walloons in:
 - Leopold, Indiana
 - Town Belgium, Wisconsin
 - St. Louis, Missouri
 - Sheldon, New York

Ireland: Conditions in Ireland Leading to Emigration

- During the 1840s, there was a potato blight all throughout Europe
- One-third of the population of Ireland was dependent on the potato for food
- The Potato Famine took place in Ireland between 1845 and 1852
- During that time, Ireland’s population fell by between 20% and 25%
- Approximately, 1 million Irish died and a million more emigrated

- During the Famine period, an estimated half-million Irish were evicted from their cottages
- Landlords removed their tenants by:
 - Getting a legal judgment against the male head of a family owing back rent, then having him thrown in jail, and dumping his wife and children out into the streets OR
 - Paying to send the pauper families overseas to British North America with phony promises of money, food, and clothing which never materialized

When Did They Come?

- Biggest wave of immigration was 1820 to 1890
- From 1820-1860, Irish never made up less than 1/3 of all immigrants
- By 1840, the Irish made up nearly half of all immigrants
- Almost 3.5 million Irishmen entered the United States between 1820 and 1880

Where They Came

- The first Famine emigrants went to Quebec, Canada
- The voyage lasted from 40 days to 3 months
 - Due to overcrowding and unsanitary conditions, many contracted typhus on the journey
- When they reached port, there was a 15 day quarantine before anyone could get off the boat
 - Many succumbed to typhus before debarking
 - Those who died were simply dumped overboard into the St. Lawrence River
- An estimated one out of five of the 100,000 Irish that sailed to British North America in 1847 died from disease and malnutrition
- After the quarantine, they were sent to Montreal, Kingston, and Toronto
- Up to half the men who survived the voyage simply walked across the border to America
- Throughout the Famine years, 75% of the Irish coming to America landed in New York
 - In 1847, about 52,000 arrived in the city
- The next biggest port of entry was Boston
 - In 1847, about 37,000 Irish Catholics swamped the city
 - The Irish received their roughest welcome in Boston
 - Boston was run by descendants of the English Puritans, who could trace their lineage back to 1620 and the Mayflower and they didn't like Catholics
 - Many Irish families were taken advantage of by landlords and charged \$1.50 a week to live in a single nine-by-eleven foot room with no water, sanitation, ventilation, or daylight

Italy: Reasons for Emigrating

- Conflicts between northern and southern Italy
- Natural disasters, including volcano eruptions and tidal waves
- Poverty due to overpopulation
- Low wages and high taxes
- Economic deprivation and political reaction

When They Came

- The two main waves of Italian immigration were 1876-1914 and 1915-1945
- During the 19th century, more Italians migrated to South America than to North America
- More Italians immigrated than any other Europeans
 - From 1820 to 1978, Italians amounted to 10.9% of the total foreign immigration during this period
- Most Italian immigrants never planned to stay in the United States permanently
 - From 1890 to 1900, 655,888 Italians arrived in the U.S., of whom 2/3 were men—they planned to return to Italy after building up some capital
 - Half of all late 19th century Italian immigrants were manual laborers—they were particularly likely to take heavy construction jobs

Where Did They Come?

- The biggest influx of Italians came to New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago
- Other cities with large Italian communities included Baltimore and Detroit

- Some Italians, especially those from southern Italy, came to northern California to continue the family business of grape growing and wine making

Netherlands: Some Reasons for Leaving

- The first wave of immigration was prompted by the failures of three consecutive potato and rye harvests in the mid-1840s
- The second wave was prompted by the agricultural crises of the 1880s and 1890s, which led to the need for land suppression by the Dutch states

When Did They Come?

- There were two main waves of Dutch immigration:
 - 1847 to 1857
 - 1880 to 1900
- Nearly half of Dutch immigrants between 1845 and 1849 belonged to a dissenting Protestant denomination called the ‘Afgescheidenen’ or ‘Seceded’
 - This happened after the Separation of 1834 which led to independent Reformed churches alongside the Dutch Reformed Church over which the government was trying to gain control
 - Rather than stay and be persecuted in the Netherlands, they emigrated to America

Where Did They Go To?

- In 1613, the first Dutch immigrants founded New Amsterdam, which became New York
- Later groups ended up east of Lake Michigan
- Today, the majority of Dutch Americans live in Michigan, California, Montana, Minnesota, New York, Wisconsin, Idaho, Utah, Iowa, Ohio, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania

Spain: An Addendum

- Lest we forget, the Spanish explored our continent in the late 1400s and early 1500s
- They had a presence in Florida and the western United States early on
- The exploration of the western United States originated through Mexico
- The Spanish are responsible for the California Mission System as well as the colonization of New Mexico

Final Thoughts

- Up until the First World War, the United States government practiced an open door immigration policy
- At the end of the 19th century, the U.S. excluded prostitutes, criminals, retarded people, and alcoholics, among others
 - The shipping companies had to pay the costs of the return journey for those rejected at Ellis Island so they became increasingly reluctant to grant passage to anyone who looked as though they might be rejected
- In 1882, Chinese were excluded; in 1907, Japanese were excluded; in 1911 all Asians were excluded

More Final Thoughts

- The outbreak of WWI in 1914 put an abrupt end to the surging mass migration to America
- Post-war immigration (1919-1924) was largely a family reunification movement
- Between 1820 and 1924, 7 million people went to Canada; 6 million of them later moved on to the United States

All Kinds of People! That's What Makes Us Great!