1.4

Immigration Lecture Handout

**Key Terms:**

Immigration

Great Era of Immigration

Stereotype

Resentment

Nativism

Chinese Exclusion Act

Ellis Island

**Essential Questions**

* Is America a land of opportunity?
* Why has anti-immigrant sentiment arisen at different points in U.S. history?
* How do the experiences of immigrants in various periods of United States history compare to those of immigrants today?

**A Brief History of Immigration to the U.S.**

**The First Migrants**

* Bering Land Bridge--12,000 years ago

**Native Americans**

* Native Americans settled throughout the continent---Major changes came when Europeans arrived

**Early Europeans and Africans**

* First Europeans established settlements in the early 17th century
* Africans began being forced onto ships around 1619

**Era of Immigration**

* Immigration means moving into one country from another
* “Great Era of Immigration” lasted roughly from 1820–1930

**German Immigration**

* Earliest German immigrants settled in Pennsylvania
* Large numbers came in the 1850s
* Settled in present-day Midwestern states
* Left Germany for economic and political reasons

**Scandinavian Immigration**

* Arrived in large numbers beginning in the mid-1800s
* Drawn by abundance of farmland on the frontier
* Finnish immigrants faced greater language barriers
* Scandinavians flocked to urban areas in the late 19th century

**Irish Immigration**

* Early Irish immigrants were Presbyterians from Ulster (Scots-Irish)
* Most Irish immigrants were Catholic
* Fled British because of religious persecution
* Irish immigration increased dramatically in the 1840s -- Potato famine

**The Irish in America**

* Industrial Revolution in the United States attracted Irish immigrants
* Most Irish moved to the urban cities of the Northeast
* Most worked jobs in factories or coal mines, or as servants or maids

**Prejudice against the Irish**

* Disdained or disliked for their Catholicism and large families
* Stereotyped as alcoholics who got into a lot of fights. A stereotype is an oversimplified standardized image of a person or group.
* Resentment or bitterness against the Irish built over competition for jobs

**Nativism**

* Favoritism to native-born Americans, meaning those “born in America”
* This gave rise to anti-immigrant groups and immigration restrictions

**Anti-Irish Nativism and the Know Nothing Party**

* The anti-immigrant American Republican Party began in 1843 a.k.a. the Know Nothing Party
* The party was secretive, therefore, when a member of the party was asked what they believed in they would state “I know nothing”, hence the nickname of the party.
* “Know Nothing” movement– advocated for immigration limits
* Dissolved in the years before the Civil War (1861-1865) due to a divide over slavery

**The Gold Rush**

* Immigrants followed the Gold Rush after 1848
* Hoped to strike it rich in gold or to work in new businesses that arose along with the Gold Rush
* Nativist sentiment increased amongst non-immigrant miners
* The Chinese were particularly resented

**Chinese Railroad Workers**

* Many Chinese worked on the transcontinental railroad
* They received lower pay than their white counterparts
* Extremely dangerous working conditions

**Anti-Chinese Sentiment**

* Because of white resentment and prejudice Chinese were not allowed to vote or hold elected office
* U.S. economy declined after the Civil War and the Chinese were blamed for job competition and depressed wages
* Workingman’s Party tried to put an end to Chinese immigration

**Chinese Exclusion Act – 1882**

* The Chinese Exclusion act was the first major law in U.S. history to restrict immigration.
* The act prohibited Chinese laborers and miners from entering the country for the next 10 years.
* It also specified that Chinese immigrants already in the United States could not become citizens

**Negative Portrayals of Immigrants in Political Cartoons**

* Political cartoons popular in the mid-19th century had racist portrayals of immigrants
* Even in cartoons that were pro-immigration, negative stereotypes persisted

**The Journey**

* Most immigrants traveled in steerage class (third class)
* Terrible conditions on board the ship & often diseases would spread
* Two-week journey

**Ellis Island**

* Most immigrants after 1892 were processed at Ellis Island, an immigration station where new immigrants were examined.

Ellis Island: Medical & Legal Examinations

* Everyone was checked for contagious diseases and physical impairments, reading and writing ability, financial status
* Most people screened at Ellis Island were eventually admitted into the United States

**Immigrant Work**

* Variety of jobs, typically manual labor or factory work
* Low wages
* Child labor among immigrants was common

**The “Melting Pot”**

* Cultures lose their unique qualities while blending together-- Assimilation
* A popular idea among 19th-century intellectuals was “Americanization”– a program designed to help immigrants assimilate or become more American

**The “Salad Bowl”**

* Cultures retain their unique identities while mixing together
* Two terms to define the “salad bowl” are cultural pluralism and multiculturalism
* Most historians feel this is a more accurate picture of what happened, but some would argue the opposite