

# Reasons for European Immigration

The Push and the Pull

# 1. Economic

## a) The Push.

European farmers discouraged as they tried to reap an adequate crop from **small and worn-out lands**.

European city workers were disheartened by low wages, and many workers faced **unemployment** as the Industrial Revolution hastened the use of machines.

## b) The Pull.

Immigrants looked to America as a land of **opportunity**, where **fertile lands** could be acquired at **little or no cost** and where the **expanding economy** provided **steady employment** at decent wages.

## 2. Political

a) The Push.

Most European **governments were controlled by the upper classes.** And the common people had **little or no say** in political matters.

b) The Pull.

Immigrants looked to democratic America, where the ordinary citizen had a **voice in government.**

# 3. Social

## a) The Push.

European society was characterized by **rigid class distinctions**, **few educational opportunities** for the lower classes, and **discrimination** against religious minorities.

## b) The Pull.

Immigrants looked to America as a land of **equality**, where they **could rise in social status**, provide an **education** for their children, **practice their religion** without fear.

# 1830s to 1860

1831-1840: 600,000

1841- 1850: 1.7 million

1851-1860: 2.6 million

Most of these immigrants came from Ireland and Germany.

- 1. Ireland – potato famine;** settled in compact areas in East coast cities such as Boston and New York. Worked in mills and factories and in construction gangs building canals and railroads.
- 2. Germans** settled chiefly on farms and in the cities of the **Midwest**. They became prominent in making watches, optical equipment, pianos, beer and medicinals.



# Germans as an Example of Success

- The roll call of German-American leaders in business and finance includes names like **Astor, Boeing, Chrysler, Firestone, Fleischman, Guggenheim, Heinz, Hershey, Rockefeller, Steinway, Strauss** (of-blue jeans fame), **Singer** (originally Reisinger).

And other famous names, such as **Einstein, Bausch, Lomb**, Mergenthaler, Steinmetz, **Westinghouse**, and Wernher **von Braun** helped give America preeminence in science and technology.

In sports there have been such memorable figures as baseball players **Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig**, and **Casey Stengel**, and swimming champions **Johnny Weissmuller**.

In literature, Theodore Dreiser, **John Steinbeck, Thomas Mann**, Kurt Vonnegut and the inimitable "**Dr. Seuss**" (Theodor Seuss Geisel), author of forty-four children's books.

In journalism, **Thomas Nast**, the German-born cartoonist who created the popular images of Uncle Sam and Santa Claus and gave us the donkey and elephant symbols for our major political parties, **Charles Schulz** of "Peanuts" fame, H. L. Mencken, and Walter Lippman.

From music have come - beside the piano- and organ-makers, **Steinway**, Knabe, and Wurlitzer – John Philip Sousa, Oscar Hammerstein, Paul Hindemith, Arnold Schoenberg, and Kurt Weill.

And from the theatre a succession of gifted playwrights, directors and performers, among them Eric von Stroheim, Fritz Lang, Otto Preminger, **Billy Wilder**, and the inimitable **Marlene Dietrich**.

# Immigration from 1861-1890

After being temporarily slowed by the Civil War, immigration again began rising , **from 2.8 million in the years 1871-1880, to 5.2 million in the years 1881-1890.**

Immigrants continued to come from **Ireland** and **Germany**. Farmers came from the Scandinavian countries of Sweden, Norway and Denmark to look for abundant and fertile soil.

To the Pacific coast came thousands of **Chinese** immigrants fleeing famine, oppressive government and civil war. They found work as cooks, laundry workers, miners and construction laborers.

# Old v. New Immigrants

Old Immigrants (arrived before 1890)

Originated mainly **from northern and western Europe:**

Great Britain, Ireland, Germany, Holland, France and the Scandinavian countries.

Shared certain attitudes and values: religion, customs, alphabet, foods, dress;

They arrived while the frontier was still open and many settled on farms in the West.

Possessed **customs and traditions similar** to those of Americans.



# Europe in 1878



# New Immigrants from Europe

They **came in greater numbers** than immigrants had ever come before.

1901-1910 – 8.8 million persons entered the U.S.

They originated **mainly from southern and eastern Europe:**

Italy, Greece, Austria-Hungary, Serbia, Romania, Russian Poland, and Russia.

Settled chiefly **in cities as factory workers** and worked in coal mines.

Possessed **customs and traditions different** from those of Americans.

# More on the New Immigrants

- **Italians** – settled in Atlantic coast cities and formed **ethnic enclaves**. “**Little Italys**” – worked in highway and railway construction, the building industry and in garment trades.
- **Greeks** – settled in northeastern cities, worked in mines and on railroads and opened small retail businesses.
- **Poles** – settled in cities in the northeast, forming “**Little Polands,**” and worked in meat-packing plants, steel mills, coal mines and textile factories.

# Little Italy



# Lower East Side, NYC



## THE GHETTO, NEW YORK CITY.

The Ghetto, also known as "Judea" covers a large section of the East Side between Third Avenue and the river from Chatham Square to 10th Street. It consists of 6 and 7 story tenement houses, crowded to their eaves with humanity. A certain square mile of this section is said to contain a quarter of a million people. The narrow streets all through the Ghetto are thronged with push cart vendors, who deal in fruits and food stuffs of every description.

THIS SPACE FOR WRITING

1922

# More and more...

- **Jews from Russia and Russia-controlled Poland** had long been forced to live in special districts or ghettos called the Pale of Settlement and had been subjected to educational restrictions and to legal and economic discrimination.
- Fled outbreaks of anti-Semitic violence known as **pogroms**.
- Settled in northeastern cities, worked in the needle trades and pioneered in the new motion picture and radio industries.

# Opposition to Immigration

Some Americans (Nativists) disapproved of the “new immigrants” arguing as follows:

- a) No more free or cheap land for immigrants;
- b) Competed with and took away jobs** from Americans;
- c) Difficult to “Americanize”** little education, settled in large cities, creating their own ghettos and did not readily learn American ways.
- d) Some Americans argued that the “new immigrants” were physically and mentally **inferior** to the “old immigrants.”

# Nativist Hostility to Immigrant Groups

Nativism-favoring native-born Americans and opposing immigrant groups;

**A. Know-Nothing Party** – opposed to Irish and Germans – Before the Civil War; most influential nativist group in mid 1800s; condemned Irish and German immigrants for

- taking jobs
- for not following all American ways and customs
- for being Roman Catholic;



# Know-Nothing Proposals

- defend Protestantism against Roman Catholicism;
- limit office-holding to native-Americans;
- 21 years for naturalization
- restrictions on immigration

Know-Nothing party died out in 1850s

# Nativist Hostility cont.

## B. Opposition to Orientals

### 1. Anti-Chinese Agitation

Accused Chinese of being

- cheap “coolie” labor;
- strikebreakers
- following strange customs
- Unassimilable

Actions: state and local laws discriminate against Chinese workers and shopkeepers; mob violence;  
**Chinese Exclusion Act 1882**

B. cont.

## 2. Anti-Japanese Agitation:

Accusation: threatened living standards and jobs;

Actions: violent mobs, discriminatory laws, SF segregated schools;

# Nativist Hostility

C. Opposition to Minority Religious Groups:  
1890s – 1930s

**anti- Catholicism** – Ireland, Italy, Poland;  
Protestant hostility toward Catholicism;

**anti- Semitism** –

Perceived as a different culture;  
stereotypes – ambitious, greedy, materialistic;  
Discriminated against in jobs, colleges, real estate,  
etc.