Immigration and Growing Cities

1865-1915
**IMMIGRANTS**

*Immigration*: the moving from one country to another country to live.
**Immigration**

**Pull and Push Factors:**

| Pull Factors - events and conditions that strongly attract them to settle in a new land |
| Push Factor - events and conditions that force people to leave their native land |
• Hope for better opportunities
• Desire for religious freedom
• Escape from oppressive governments
• Desire for adventure
• Prior to 1871, most immigrants to America came from northern and western Europe: Germany, Great Britain, Norway, and Sweden

• Between 1865-1915 more than 13.5 million immigrants came to the USA
During the half-century from 1871-1921, more immigrants came from **Southern and Eastern Europe**: Italy, Greece, Poland, Russia, etc.

- As well as **China and Japan**
How did immigrants get here?

- Passage to the United States often cost a life’s savings. Entire families would often save money to send just one or two family members to America, hoping that eventually these members could afford to bring over the rest of the family.
Travel Dangers:

- **Disease** and death
- Sickening Smells
- Overcrowded

“During the twelve days in the steerage I lived in ... surroundings that offended every sense. Only a fresh breeze from the sea overcame the sickening odors. Everything was dirty, sticky, and disagreeable to the touch.”
Immigrants from Europe entered America through Ellis Island in New York Harbor. Their first view of America was often The Statue of Liberty.
In 1890, Congress designated three acre Ellis Island in Upper New York Bay as an immigration station.

By 1910, six million immigrants had come through Ellis Island.
Statue of Liberty

- Located at **New York Harbor**
- Greeted Immigrants as they entered Ellis Island

“Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”
- Emma Lazarus
Inspections:
• Medical inspections were performed
• Asked 32 background questions
• Immigrants with contagious diseases were shipped back
• The immigrant inspection process was a humiliating and dehumanizing experience
• Many immigrants had their name changed by the inspectors because they didn’t have time or patience to struggle with the foreign spellings
• Long lines – immigrants were tagged by the language they spoke and marked according to their medical ailments
Immigrants made valuable contributions to the dramatic industrial growth of America:

- Chinese workers helped to build the Transcontinental Railroad.
ANGEL ISLAND WAS CONSIDERED MORE HARSH THAN ELLIS ISLAND
Immigrants made valuable contributions to the dramatic industrial growth of America:

- Northeast immigrants worked in textile and steel mills
Immigrants made valuable contributions to the dramatic industrial growth of America:

- Slavs, Italians, and Poles worked in the coal mines of the East
• They often worked for very **low pay** and in **dangerous** working conditions to help build the nation’s industrial strength.

• Women and children were desirable for small hands and could pay them less

• 1 in 5 children between 10 and 16 were employed
Life for Immigrants

• **Overcrowded** immigrant **neighborhoods**

• Settled in the big cities where **factory jobs** were available. (By 1900, 4 out of every 5 people in NYC were immigrants.)

• **Tenements** – a crowded, run-down building with **small, cheap apartments**

• Lived in **crowded, dirty tenement** buildings

• Families shared space

• Light and fresh air were scarce
Life for Immigrants
• **Melting Pot**: used to describe the US as a place where cultures blend, creates a unique American culture.

• **Assimilation**: the process by which new immigrants blended into American society.
Despite their hard work, immigrants faced 
hardship, hostility, and discrimination.
Nativism - fear that immigrants would take jobs 
from American workers, and belief that native 
Americans were superior

Discrimination against 
immigrants:

- Irish
- Chinese
Growing resentment led Congress to **limit immigration**

- **Chinese Exclusion Act** – banned Chinese immigrants for 10 years and from US citizenship
- **Gentleman’s Agreement** - 1907, the Japanese agreed to limit the number of immigrants to the US, while the US pledged fair treatment of Japanese Americans already in the US
- **Immigration Act of 1917** – required all immigrants to be able to read and write in some language.
Why did cities grow and develop?

- Movement of Americans from rural (farm) to urban (city) areas for job opportunities
- Industries often located near population centers
- Inventions helped cities and industry grow
- Immigration from other countries
As cities grew, so did political machines. Political machines controlled the activities of a political party in a city. “Political Bosses” (usually mayor) worked to ensure their candidates were elected.
The “Boss” (typically the mayor) controlled jobs, business licenses, and influenced the court system.

- Precinct captains and ward bosses were often 1\textsuperscript{st} or 2\textsuperscript{nd} generation immigrants so they helped immigrants with naturalization, jobs, and housing in exchange for votes.

Boss Tweed ran NYC