Since 1675, foreign born have never constituted more than 16% of the American population.

Each new wave of immigration to the United States has met with some degree of hostility and popular fears that immigrants will harm American society or will not conform to the prevailing American way of life.

Immigration has always been at the foundation of American population growth, domestic innovation and national heritage.

Before 1920, about 30% of all immigrants to the US returned to their native country.

Why? Some only intended to stay a short time; others found life in the US too challenging.

In 2000, about 15% returned to their native land.

The “Melting Pot” – The idea that the US was founded by immigrant people of all sort of ethnic and religious backgrounds, and assimilation over time led directly to our diverse culture and integrated society.

Some view immigration as an economic issue, some as a security issue, and some as a humanitarian issue.

“Once I thought to write a history of the immigrants of America. Then I discovered that the immigrants were American History.”

Historian Oscar Handlin, 1951

During the colonial era, most immigrants were from England and Western Europe.

Why did colonists settle in America?

Some sought adventure

Sent by a nation for mercantilist purposes

Fleeing religious persecution in Europe

Convvicts transported from English jails

In the 18th century, 60,000 convicts arrived!

Most hoped for economic opportunity

Many could not afford the passage to America, so they came as indentured servants

Agreed to work for a Master for 4-7 years to work off the debt incurred for the cost of the travel.

Some Africans came as indentured servants

Over half of all European migrants to colonial America arrived as indentured servants.

Reactions to and Significance of Immigration in American History

(Settlement to 1980s, page 1 of 2)

Federalists noticed immigrants tended to join the opposition political party, led by Thomas Jefferson

Federalists saw this as evidence of a relationship between anti-Federalists and foreigners, which Federalists believed bred disloyalty

Federalists argue for more restrictions against foreigners.

Americans often view with suspicion and question the religion and politics of newcomers.

Immigrants tended to settle in linguistic groups initially, such as in apartment complexes with a majority of residents who speak their same language.

Why? For new arrivals, this offered a source of support, both financially and culturally.

Nationalization Act of 1790

First law by Congress regulating immigration

Allowed immigrants to become citizens in 2 years

1795, expanded to 5 years the minimum requirement for citizenship

Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798, comprised of three laws (when war with France appeared imminent):

Naturalization Act of 1798

Now 14 years residency needed for citizenship;

this deprived anti-Federalists of political support

Alien Act of 1798

Alien Enemy Act of 1798

Immigration into the United States was subject to virtually no legal restrictions before 1882.

Essentially, anyone who wanted to enter the United States could and no specified arrival areas existed until 1855. Individuals simply got off the ship and went about their business.

Little opposition among US citizens to immigration is apparent until about the 1830s.

But the early-1800s, New York City becomes the major port of entry for immigrants

Castle Garden opens 1855, Ellis Island 1892-1854

In the second wave of immigrants, one-third were Irish fleeing the potato famine and another one-third were German

Irish had no money, so once they arrived they tended to stay where they were.

German's had money to journey to the Midwest in search of farmland.

Mid-1800, some states sent agents to Europe to attract settlers. Railroad companies did the same

Better conditions on ships, steep declines in travel time, and lower fares made voyages across the ocean easier and more affordable.

Mid-1800s, news of California gold reaches China.

Chinese immigrants streamed across the Pacific to strike it rich.

By 1810, 2,000,000 school-aged children, many of them immigrants, were working 50-70 hour weeks.

“Sojourners”

Temporary immigrants who intend to strike it rich and then return home

Americans fear job competition from foreigners, particularly during economic downturns.

American Party / Know Nothing Party

A political party which demands laws to reduce immigration and make it more difficult to become a citizen.

Burlingame Treaty of 1868

Between the US and China, it encouraged immigration but limited naturalization/citizenship

1870, US economic depression prompts a reduction of immigrants (the economy in Europe was good).

Chinese massacre of 1871

A racially motivated riot in October, when a mob of over 500 whites attacked the Chinatown district in Los Angeles; 23 Chinese dead

1875, US passes first law which is aimed at restricting immigration

Prevents convicts and prostitutes from entering

Late-1870s, California demands laws to keep out Chinese immigrants

Mobs attack Chinese immigrants

Accuse of lowering wages and unfair business competition

Denounced as racially inferior and inassimilable

A clash of cultures was evidenced as nativist residents scorned newcomers.

Particularly took hold in the early-1900s

President Tyler, 1841

“We hold out to the people of other countries an invitation to come and settle among us as a member of our rapidly growing family.”

Passenger Acts of 1847 and 1855 allows Congress to investigate poor travel and ship conditions.

1830s state and federal governments set their own laws regarding immigration, leading to a Supreme Court showdown.

During the Civil War, the North encouraged immigration through several laws . . .

Homestead Act of 1862

Act to Encourage Immigration of 1864

Act of 1864, made pre-immigration contracts binding

“Molly Maguires”

Members of a secret Irish organization.

Alleged to be responsible for coalfield crimes and kidnappings in the United States.

22,000 coal miners worked in Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania; 5,500 aged 7-16.

Being exploited by their employers, the Irish miners conspired to resist.

Mine owners hire Pinkerton detective James McParland to spy upon and break up the group, which was forming a union.

Alien Contract Labor Law of 1885

Restricts immigration

Congress learns that since 1869 employers have been running advertisements in foreign newspapers describing good US wages.

Surplus labor tends to push down wages for domestic laborers.

Law makes it illegal to pre-arrange contract with potential immigrants.

1886, the Statue of Liberty becomes a symbol of American promise to all immigrants

1870-1900, Efforts to restrict immigration take hold throughout the nation.
Immigration Act of 1882
- First tax (50 cents) for each immigrant

Tenement houses
- Narrow, low rise apartment buildings which were overcrowded by their landlords.
- They were cramped, poorly lit, under-ventilated, often without indoor plumbing, no heat in winter and were a fire danger.

“How The Other Half Lives” by Jacob Riis, 1889
- Reveals the extent of the poor living conditions to everyone, eventually eliciting public action.

The immigrant workplace was often one of unhealthy and dangerous conditions

Immigrant child labor was common

Cities, where most immigrants settled, were derided and feared by non-immigrants as places filled with dangerous people and radical ideas.
- These sentiments were often formulated by intellectuals, but they resonated with many white Americans who were reared in rather parochial and homogenous rural and small town environments.
- While some reformers, such as Jane Addams, went to work to alleviate the many problems of urban slums, others such as Henry Adams, expressed virulent nativism and anti-Semitism.

Unskilled immigrants were assigned to urban labor
- Laying paving and gas lines, building bridges, and tunneling out the New York City subway system.

1890, 90% of urban laborers in New York City Public Works Department were Italian immigrants

Other common immigrant jobs: shoemaking, masonry, baking, bartending, barbering

Women and children often found jobs in sweatshops
- Work here involved long hours in dark and unsafe factories for little money.
- Some of the early anti-sweatshop critics were found in the 19th century abolitionist movement. Many abolitionists saw similarities between sweatshops and slavery.

Reactions to and Significance of Immigration in American History
(Settlement to 1980s, page 2 of 2)

Triangle Shirt Waist Factory Five, 111 in New York City
- Killed 146 garment workers, mostly Jewish and Italian; all women
- Fire consumed large multistory wooden building; fire escapes locked!
- Fire led to legislation improving factory safety standards and spurred growth of a union.

From the 1880s to the 1920s, a diverse set of groups, ranging from the old line New England elites to the Progressive Movement in the Midwest and to the Ku Klux Klan in the South led a campaign to halt immigration from undesirable immigrants from Europe.

“Xenophobia” means fear of strangers
- America witnessed a xenophobia backlash in response to newcomers.

1913, California allows separate schools to segregate Asian children from whites
- The state also passes law prohibiting Orientals from owning land in California

1907, President Roosevelt negotiated a “gentleman’s agreement” with Japan, wherein the Japanese government agrees to try to prevent its citizens from coming to the US.

Dillingham Commission, 1907-1911
- A joint committee of the House and Senate, it was formed to study the origins and consequences of recent immigration to the US.
- The commission concluded that immigration from southern and eastern Europe posed a serious threat to American society and culture and should be reduced in the future.
- The commission’s finding provided a rationale for sweeping 1920s immigration reduction acts.

1920, Congress bans Japanese immigration
- The newcomers were blamed for crime, pauperism, vice, and other social evils.

1913-1920, anti-Semitism is a growing populist movement
- Prominent racists: Madison Grant, Lothrop Stuward

There was growing fear that the many new immigrants threatened national unity.
- Hostility against Jews, Roman Catholics and Japanese intensified

Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882
- Prohibited Chinese laborers from entering the US
- Congress expands list of unacceptable immigrants beyond convicts and prostitutes, to now include beggars, contract laborers, the insane and unaccompanied minors.

1917, law requires adult immigrants to show they could read and write
- Law excluded all possible immigrants from Asia and the Pacific Islands.

2021, Congress sets a ceiling in the number of people allowed to enter the country.
- Quota limits immigrants from any country to 3% of the foreign born people of that nationality who lived in the US in 1910

Immigration Act of 1924 (took affect in 1929)
- Limited immigration from outside the western hemisphere to 153,700 a year

John Fiske (1842-1901)
- Promoted the racist idea that human evolution had culminated in the Anglo-Saxon (white) race. Such thinkers (his views were shared by many) argued that more "primitive" races (any "race" that did not originate in northwestern Europe) did not possess the mental, physical, or social capacities of Anglo-Saxons, who were responsible for the finer points of civilization.

Several high profile immigrants were anarchists, which furthered a backlash.

Eugenics movement
- Leading supporter: Dr. Charles Benedict Davenport
- The "science" of eugenics claimed that heredity determined cultural and social patterns and, hence, that selective human breeding would advance civilization. Many Americans seized on eugenics to rationalize "scientifically" their racism. Since many Americans already assumed that southeastern Europeans, African-Americans, Jews, Asians, Middle Easterners, and American Indians were of "inferior" blood, eugenics simply gave them "scientific proof" that these "inferiors" were causing America's social problems.

War Brides Act of 1945
- Admitted spouses and children of US military who had married overseas.
- With China an ally in World War II, the US lifted its ban on Chinese immigrants

McCarran-Walter Act of 1952 established quotas for Asian newcomers.
- Congress also set aside separate provisions for refugees

Displaced Persons Act of 1948 and the Refugee Relief Act of 1953
- Opens the country up to Europeans and Soviet citizens left homeless by World War II

1965, quotas’ based on nationality end
- Begins system which favors people related to US citizens or those who have certain sought-after skills.

1978, quota by hemisphere ends
- US establishes border control to block illegal immigration

Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986
- President Reagan offered amnesty to illegal immigrants.
- The law set penalties for employers who hire undocumented workers.
- Why? a clean start to immigration policy, and to get more Republican votes
- Highly controversial
- Late-2000s, major political backlash against illegal immigrants and a spread of xenophobia toward all foreign nationals.

For two centuries, small businesses comprised over three-fourths of America’s economy; with scant initial capital, anyone with a profitable idea could rise to financial security. The small business field was dominated by immigrants.
- In every U.S. census from 1880 onward, immigrants accounted for a greater percentage of small business owners than natives. These businesses greatly expanded the country’s productivity and job openings, creating jobs for immigrants and natives alike.
- Moreover, immigration fueled industrialization. In 1910, foreign-born persons comprised about 53% of the national industrial labor force. So not only did immigrants carry the small business field; they played an indispensable role in large industries as well. Clearly, America would not have reached the status of a global economic power in those days were it not for the contributions of immigrants.
Reactions to and Significance of Immigration in American History

1. Since 1675, the foreign-born have never constituted more than _____ of the American population.

2. Before 1920, about _____ of all immigrants to the US returned to their native country.

3. In the second wave of immigration to New York, ______ were Irish fleeing the potato famine.

4. In 2000, _____ of immigrants returned to their native land.

5. In 1818, ____________ school-aged children, many of them immigrants, worked 50-70 hour weeks.

6. Was President Tyler for or against immigration? (circle…)    For    Against

7. To what does the word “sojourners” refer?

8. Define “Xenophobia”

9. What was the Chinese Massacre of 1871?

10. What was the War Brides Act of 1945?

11. What did the Immigration Act of 1882 do?

12. What made New York a major port of entry for immigrants?

13. What did the Nationalization Act of 1790 do?

14. How was the Nationalization Act of 1790 changed in 1795?

15. how did a 1917 law affect immigrants?

16. What did the Naturalization Act of 1798 do?

17. In the mid-1800s, states and railroads wanted immigrants. What did they do to achieve this?

18. To what goes “The Melting Pot” refer?

19. What did T. Roosevelt’s “Gentleman’s Agreement” do?

20. In 1875, how did the first law restricting immigration do it?

21. What did the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952 do?

22. What did Jacob Riis’s book do?

23. What was the conclusion of the Dillingham Commission?

24. Relating to immigration, what did Americans fear during economic downturns?

25. Why did the 1870 economic depression cause a reduction of immigrants?

26. Immigration is often viewed in three ways. Which are they?

27. What did the Immigration Act of 1924 do?
28. What type of labor did unskilled immigrants do?

29. Why did 30% (prior to 1920) of immigrants return to their native country?

30. What year did the US get the Statue of Liberty?

31. What was the Triangle Shirt Waist Factory Fire?

32. What did the Burlingame Treaty of 1868 do?

33. What was the goal of the American (Know Nothing) Party?

34. What did the Displaced Persons Act of 1948 and the Refugee Relief Act of 1953 do?

35. What does the underlined part on the bottom of the second page state?

36. What were the Molly MaGuire?

37. What did Reagan do in 1986?

38. There is an underlined section on page 1. What does it say?

39. What did the Alien Contract Labor Law of 1885 do?

40. What is the quote by historian Oscar Handlin in 1951?