**“OLD” IMMIGRATION 1750-1860**

**Who Are the Old Immigrants?**

* **English, Scotch, Irish -**mostly colonial settlers who were English citizens or lived in English territories
* **Dutch, German, Swedish, Scandinavians -**many western and northern European nations helped the early growth of the colonies and the newly formed United States
* **Africans -**many early immigrants came to the Americas as slaves, to work the plantations of the agricultural south, this continued until the ending of the slave trade in the early 19th century

**Why Did They Come?**

* **Political Reasons –**Many immigrants found that they had little to no say in the government of his homeland. As a result many came seeking a political voice or **freedom** from an oppressive government. Others were seeking to escape political **unrest** and violent **political turmoil** at home.
* **Social Reasons - Religious freedom** is the greatest example of social motivation in immigration. The **Pilgrims**, the **Quakers** and many other groups came to the Americas seeking freedom from religious intolerance in their homelands. This tradition of religious freedom had become a fundamental principle in American government.
* **Economic Reasons -**The greatest motivating factor for most immigrants. Vast numbers of the earliest settlers came to America seeking **land**. The **Irish** immigrants of the early 1800's sought land and escape from the deadly **potato famine** that gripped their homeland. **African slaves** were brought over for economic reasons, ones that did not serve them, but instead served the economic interests of the slave owner.

**What Issues Did They Face?**

* While not as severe as during the wave of "new immigration," **nativist** **(anti-immigration)** thinking was seen early in American politics.

**What Impact Did They Have?**

The contributions of early immigrants cannot be overstated. The very foundation of America is built upon the ideas, skills and culture they brought with them. The **English** settlers formed the **governments**,**language** and major **cultural traditions** that would become America. Many **Irish** workers **constructed transportation routes** (railroads, etc...) and the **Germans** and others brought **farming** techniques and **education** traditions.

Source: http://www.regentsprep.org/Regents/ushisgov/themes/immigration/index.htm**“NEW” IMMIGRATION 1870-1929**

**Who Are the New Immigrants?**

These immigrants came to America from areas that had not traditionally supplied settlers to the US. The lands of**southern Europe** and**eastern Europe** such as **Italy, Russia, Poland** and **Greece**, as well as **Asian** locales such as **China** and **Japan**.

**Why Did They Come?**

Immigrants came to America during these eras mostly for economic opportunities.

* **Political Reasons -**Some New Immigrants such as Russian and Ukrainian Jews came seeking refuge from religious oppression by governments at home.
* **Social Reasons -**One idea that gave motivation to many immigrants leaving their homelands for America was the social mobility offered by the "**rags to riches**" American dream. This popular idea viewed America as the land of opportunity where anyone willing to work hard, save money and be smart could become rich.
* **Economic Reasons -**By far the greatest reason for new immigration was for employment. The growth in US industrial development fueled a seemingly endless demand for workers, which the desperate immigrants willingly fulfilled. The reality of the immigrant’s life was far from the roads paved with gold many envisioned. Industrial jobs paid low wages, demanded long hours and offered no benefits.

**What Issues Did They Face?**

* Many newly arrived immigrants found themselves at the mercy of **corrupt political forces**. Political Machines used the votes of newly arrived immigrants to dominate and corrupt the political process in many of Americas growing cities.
* Language, customs, religions and traditions clashed with those prevailing in the US at the time, based on the culture brought by the older immigrants. This social conflict led to **discrimination** against such groups and the Irish on the east coast and the Chinese/Asians on the western coast.
* **Nativists**, those who were against immigration, tried to prevent immigrants from coming to America.

**What Impact Did They Have?**

The contributions of the new immigrants were transformative to America. The ethnic diversity of the immigrants changed America into a more multi-cultural society with varied language, traditions and practices. The cultural contributions of the new immigrants can be seen in the art, food, music and culture of modern America.