Turn of the Century Immigration

What was it like to be an immigrant to the US during the early 1900s?

Why Europeans Immigrated to the US

- New European immigrants = Italians, Greeks, Hungarians, Poles, Russians
- Push Factors (reasons for leaving country)
 - Population Growth
 - Hunger
 - Lack of land
 - Religious persecution
- Pull Factors (reasons for coming to US)
 - Free, democratic society
 - Land and natural resources
 - Jobs for unskilled workers
 - Letters from other immigrants already in US





Ellis Island

- Rich immigrants → easily entered US through NY
- Poorer immigrants → had to go through Ellis Island
 - Medical Exam: poor health could lead to deportation
 - Legal Interview: demographic questions
 - However, only about 2% of all immigrants were deported
- Most jobs were in cities → city pop. exploded
- Most immigrants lived in cheapest parts of cities that were run down
- Most immigrants lived with others from their home countries
 - Led to segregated neighborhoods





Responses to New European Immigrants

- Some offered help
 - Settlement houses provided aid for struggling immigrants
 - Political bosses provided jobs in exchanges for votes
- Some wanted assimilation
 - Wanted immigrants to adopt American values
- Some rejected them
 - Nativism: favor native-born Americans over immigrants
 - Blamed immigrants for lack of jobs, lowering wages
 - 1920s, Congress started passing quota laws (limiting # of immigrants from each country)





Immigration from Asia

Chinese immigrants

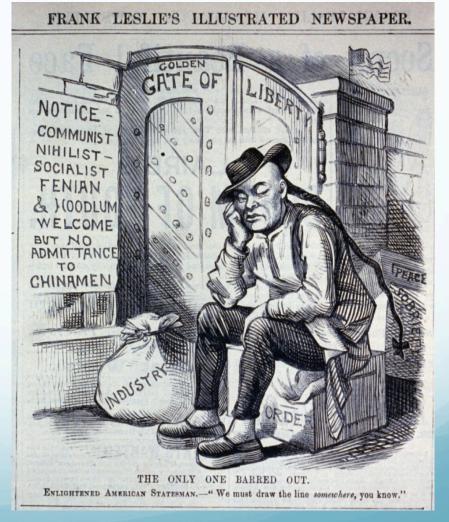
 Built railroads, searched for gold in CA, farm labor in Hawaii and CA

Chinese Exclusion Act (1882)

- Economic downturn caused Americans to blame Chinese workers for low wages
- Racism was prevalent
- 1st time US restricted immigration solely on race
- Caused shortage of farm labor
 → more immigrants from
 Japan, Korea, Philippines

Angel Island

"Ellis Island of the West"



Immigration from Mexico & Canada

 Restrictions on Asian immigration caused farm labor shortage in West

Mexican immigration

- Came to work farmland, escape poverty, war (Mexican Rev. 1910)
- Experienced racism from white Americans

French-Canadian immigration

- Came to work in textile factories in New England states
- Were accused of not wanting to Americanize



