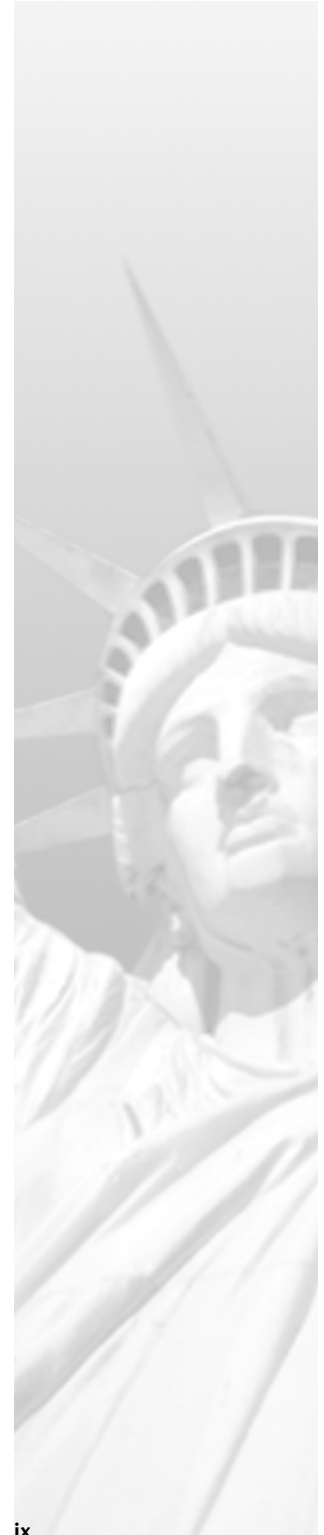


Reader's Guide

The U.S. Constitution, signed in 1789, gave Congress the right to create laws involving immigration and citizenship. When the first Congress assembled, it created a loose idea of what it meant to be a citizen of the United States: all “free white persons” who had lived in the country for a couple of years were eligible. But the concept of citizenship was still vague. The naturalization process—the set of rules for becoming a citizen—was initially quite simple. The young nation actively sought immigrants to bring their professional skills and labor and to take part in expanding the borders of the nation from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. There were initially no immigration agencies or border patrols—no passports or green cards. But not everyone was allowed to become a citizen or afforded the same rights. Issues of race for non-whites and Hispanics as well as a historical preference for the northwestern European immigrants led to inequalities and discrimination from the start.

Legislations and policies have continually added to or changed the original vague requirements, rights, and responsibilities of citizenship and immigration. Through the Four-



teenth and Fifteenth Amendments after the American Civil War (1861–65), the concept of the “free white persons” eligible to become citizens was amended to include African Americans. Women’s citizenship generally was dependent on their husband or father’s citizenship until 1920. Until 1943, most Asians were not included in the definition of someone who could become a citizen.

American sentiment toward immigrants has always gone back and forth between positive and negative for a number of reasons. During good economic times when labor is needed, immigrants usually receive better treatment than during economic downturns when people fear the competition for employment. When mass migrations from particular areas begin, there is often hostility in the United States toward the latest group to arrive. They are often perceived as different and as a threat to “American values,” leaning more toward Western European traditions. Immigration has almost always been at the center of political controversy in the United States. In fact, the first anti-immigrant government policies began to arise within only a few years of the signing of the Constitution.

Immigration restrictions brought about by nativist (favoring the interests of people who are native-born to a country, though generally not concerning Native Americans, as opposed to its immigrants), racist, or anti-immigrant attitudes have had a very major impact on the U.S. population, dictating who entered the country and in what numbers. The Chinese, for example, were virtually stopped from immigrating by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 until it was repealed in 1943. Many families were separated for decades because of the severity of U.S. restrictions. Immigration from many other countries was significantly reduced by the immigration quota (assigned proportions) systems of 1921 and 1924.

Most immigrants, since the first English settlers landed at Jamestown, have had to pay tremendous dues to settle in North America. There has been a long-held pattern in which the latest arrivals have often been forced to take on the lowest-paying and most undesirable jobs. However, many historians of immigration point out that the brightest and most promising professional prospects of the nations of the world have immigrated to the United States. A daring spirit and the

ability to overcome obstacles have always been, and continue to be today, qualities common to the immigrants coming into the nation.

The United States differs from many other countries of the world in having a population made up of people descended from all of the world's nations. Immigration controversy continues to confront the United States in the early twenty-first century, posing difficult questions from concerns about regulating entry and controlling undocumented immigration, to providing public services and a decent education to recently arrived immigrants. In the early years of the twenty-first century, the U.S. Marines intercepted refugees from the civil uprising in Haiti and sent them back to their country, where they feared for their lives. When does the United States provide refuge and what makes the nation deny others who are in need? These concerns are not likely to be resolved in the near future. The value of studying the historical and cultural background of immigration and migration in the nation goes well beyond understanding these difficult issues.

Why study immigration and migration?

As a chronicle of the American people's roots, the history of immigration and migration provides a very intimate approach to the nation's past. Immigration history is strongly centered on the people of the United States rather than the presidential administrations or the wars the nation has fought. Learning about the waves of immigration and migration that populated the continent and seeing the American culture as the mix of many cultures is central to understanding the rich diversity of the United States and appreciating it as a multicultural nation.

U.S. Immigration and Migration: Primary Sources tells the story of U.S. immigration and migration in the words of the people who lived and shaped it. Eighteen documents provide a wide range of perspectives on this period of history. Included are excerpts from French immigrant Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur's 1782 *Letters from an American Farmer*, in which he describes the advantages of being an American; the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which banned Chinese immigrants; *My Antonia*, novelist Willa Cather's depiction of the difficulties experienced by European immigrants in the Unit-

ed States; President Harry S. Truman's veto of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952; and *The Death of the West*, conservative commentator Patrick J. Buchanan's laments over the rise in U.S. immigration. Document-specific glossaries provide context to unfamiliar terms on the pages on which they appear.

Each excerpt presented in *U.S. Immigration and Migration: Primary Sources* includes the following additional material:

- An **introduction** places the document and its author in a historical context.
- **“Things to remember while reading ...”** offers readers important background information and directs them to central ideas in the text.
- **“What happened next ...”** provides an account of subsequent events, both in immigration and migration and in the life of the author.
- **“Did you know ...”** provides significant and interesting facts about the document, the author, or the events discussed.
- **“For more information”** lists sources for further reading on the author, the topic, or the document.

U.S. Immigration and Migration: Primary Sources also features sidebars containing interesting facts about people and events related to immigration and migration, over forty photographs, a “U.S. Immigration and Migration Timeline” that lists significant dates and events associated with immigration and migration, and an index.

U.S. Immigration and Migration Reference Library

U.S. Immigration and Migration: Primary Sources is only one component of the three-part U.S. Immigration and Migration Reference Library. The other two titles in this set are:

- *U.S. Immigration and Migration: Almanac* (two volumes) presents a comprehensive overview of the groups of people who have immigrated to the United States from the nations of Africa, Europe, Asia, and Latin America, as well as those who migrated within the country to unexplored lands or to newly industrialized cities. Its seventeen chap-

ters include information on groups or clusters of groups of immigrants from other nations and cultures: Pre-Columbian; Spanish; English; Scotch and Scotch-Irish; French and Dutch; Africans; German; Irish; Scandinavian; Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino; Jewish; Italian and Greek; Eastern European; Arab; Asian Indian, Korean, and Southeast Asian; Mexican; and other Latino and Caribbean groups. Internal migration is also covered, including westward expansion, forced migration, and industrialization and urbanization. The *Almanac* also contains more than 150 black-and-white photographs and maps, “Fact Focus” and “Words to Know” boxes, a “Research and Activity Ideas” section, a timeline, and an index.

- *U.S. Immigration and Migration: Biographies* (two volumes) presents the life stories of fifty individuals who either played key roles in the governmental and societal influences on U.S. immigration and migration or are immigrants who became successful in the United States. Profiled are well-known figures such as German-born physicist Albert Einstein; Scottish-born industrialist Andrew Carnegie; Czech-born Madeleine Albright, the first female U.S. secretary of state; and English-born comedic actor Charlie Chaplin. In addition, lesser-known individuals are featured, such as Kalpana Chawla, the first female astronaut from India; Mexican-born Antonia Hernández, a lawyer and activist for Latino causes; and folk singer Woody Guthrie, whose songs focused on the plight of victims of the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl of the 1930s—migrants who left the Midwest in search of a better life in the West. *Biographies* also contains nearly 130 black-and-white photographs, a timeline, and an index.
- A cumulative index of all three titles in the U.S. Immigration and Migration Reference Library is also available.

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