

Waves of Immigrants in the Mid-1800's

By Delphine Kendrick, Jewett Middle Academy

I. Lesson Summary

Summary

During the mid-1800's many immigrants came to America for different reasons. Many immigrants were fleeing economic and or political difficulties in the own country. There were many dangers the immigrants had to face during the expansion of the United States.

Objectives

Students will:

- 1.) Describe the difficulties each immigration group faced in America;
- 2.) Identify reasons why each immigration group left their native country, and;
- 3.) Identify the struggles Chinese immigrants faced upon arriving in America.

Sunshine State Standards: SS.A.4.3.1-Knows factors involved in the development of cities, LA.B.2.3.1-Writes text that demonstrates comprehension of content.

US History Event or Era

This lesson could be used with any unit that highlights the Age of Immigration in America during the westward expansion (mid-1800's); the wave of immigrants shown in this lesson also details the diversity and economic growth of the United States during the same time period.

Grade Level

This lesson can be implemented into the middle school Social Studies classroom.

Materials

Transparency of the immigration pictures found at the following websites:

<http://library.thinkquest.org/20619/Chinese.html>

<http://immigrants.harpweek.com/ChineseAmericans/Illustrations/065SearchingChineseImmigrantsMain.htm>

Copies of the reading assignment:

"Immigration: Journey To America" <http://library.thinkquest.org/20619/Chinese.html>

Immigrations Reading: <http://library.thinkquest.org/J003298F/immigration.htm#Native>

Timeline: http://us_asians.tripod.com/timeline-1600.html

Venn-Diagram: <http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/>

Journal

Lesson Time

This lesson could be implemented and discussed in 60 minute classes.

II. Lesson Procedures

Procedures

Day One – Introduction (30 minutes)

1.) Have your students read “Journey to America” (found in the “Activities” section in this lesson) and create a chart showing the reasons each immigrating group came to America. Discuss the reading from the excerpts in small groups. Students should answer the questions about each group:

1. Which ethnic group did you read about?
2. Which areas did they come from?
3. What year did they start to arrive?
4. What area in the United States did they settle in?
5. What reason did they leave their native country?

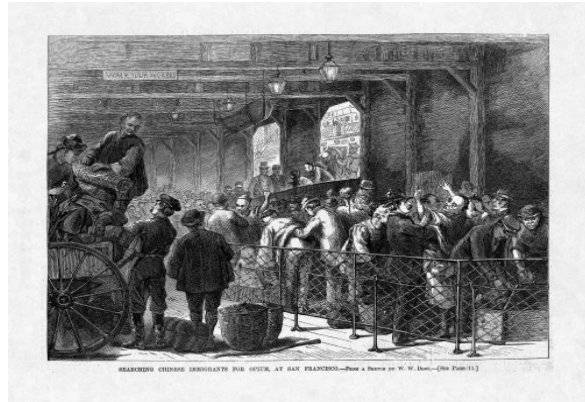
2.) Display the picture titled “Searching Chinese Immigrants for Opium (pictured at right).”

Have the students do the following:

a. Divide the photo into quadrants with a pen or marker and examine each quadrant closely (Note: you may want to tape a large piece of white butcher paper to the front of the room and project the image as a transparency, or pair students and give each pair a copy of the picture). Have students list their observations about the scene in the picture.

b. Point out the man standing on the wagon.

What might this man be saying? Answer the following question: Who are the people standing around the wagon?



1. Who are the people behind the fence? Why are they there?
2. Who are the people standing behind the wagon?
3. Which group seems to be in charge? Why do you think they are?

Below is the image in its **original context** on the page:

<http://immigrants.harpweek.com/ChineseAmericans/illustrations/065SearchingChineseImmigrantsMain.htm>

3.) After about 5 to 8 minutes, students should discuss the picture in small teams. The teacher will then explain to the student that the photo is of Chinese immigrants being checked for drugs coming into San Francisco.

Day Two

1.) Students review reasons Chinese immigrants came to the United States. The teacher will pass out the reading assignment titled “**Immigration: Journey to America** (found in the “Activities” section).” The teacher will prepare the students for the reading by explaining how the immigrants came to America to flee despair. However, they also had difficult times in America. Students will answer the questions at the end of the reading:

1. Why did the Chinese immigrants move to San Francisco?
2. What other ethnic group suffered in America along with the Chinese?
3. How were the Chinese treated by settlers from the American South?

Optional lesson: Have students pick 3 events in the Chinese struggles in America and have students write or illustrate journal entries to show the life of a Chinese immigrant.

III. Activities

Journey To America – Part I

These people were more than workers; they were families who brought their traditions, religions and cultures with them.

We are now a country with different religions, races, songs, and languages, because of mining. Here are some people who came here, became American citizens, and helped create our colorful country.

Native Americans

As the Westward colonization grew with every [strike](#), Native Americans were forced off their lands onto small reservations. Making things even worse for the Native Americans were the diseases the settlers brought with them. Native Americans' had never been exposed to them before. "...the task of colonization was made easier by the large-scale deaths of native peoples who had no resistance to the diseases imported by the colonizers."

Chinese

In 1850, there were about two hundred Chinese people in America. When the Gold Rush occurred, the white workers in the West left their jobs to mine gold, drawing many Chinese to America. Their main goal of coming was to make enough money here to have a more comfortable life when they went back to China. By 1880, there were over 100,000 Chinese here.

The mining caused a big demand for city growth. The Chinese were a huge part of building these cities in the West, because they would work more cheaply than anyone else.

Cornish

In the 1830's and 40's, Cornish miners came to America to mine the lead they had heard of in the hills of the Wisconsin Territory. The Cornish miners were from Cornwall, and were very good at using blasting powder, and other mining tools. They picked up where other miners stopped, and dug deeper underground. They soon started their own colony in a neighborhood called Pendarvis.

French

A coal mine in Osage County, Kansas brought many immigrants in the late 1800's. The French were some of them. When the mining industry in Kansas diminished, they moved to other areas, like Lexington, Missouri, Henryetta, Oklahoma, and Crawford County.

Germans

With high food prices throughout Europe, Germans saw America as a land where they could make a better living for themselves. They emigrated by the thousands in the 19th century to many locations here, including Texas. You can still go to towns all around the U.S. where German food and architecture make you feel as though you're really in Germany!

Irish

In the 19th century, mining brought many to places in the U.S. that hadn't been colonized before. But, many of the Irish would have starved to death if they had stayed in their country. At that time, the Irish had depended on the potato for a major part of their diets. But, after 1845, a fungus destroyed the potato crops of Ireland, which caused the starvation and sickness deaths of over 1,000,000. This was called The Great Famine.

Italians

In Italy, during the 1800's, incredible food prices, and diseases like [Pallagra](#) and [Malaria](#) were causing the deaths of up to 2,000,000 Italians every year! By the late 19th century, over 1,000,000 Italians had emigrated to the U.S.

Scottish

One of the most famous Scots to immigrate to the U.S. in the 19th century was Andrew Carnegie and his family. Coming to make a better life (like many other Scots), his parents brought the family to America. Although Carnegie was very poor as a child, he grew up to be one of the richest people in the world. He made his fortune in the steel industry.

Swedes

The Swedes, because of the rocky soil in Sweden, also depended on the potato crops. When their crops failed in the late 1800's due to weather, over 60,000 Swedes emigrated to the U.S. By 1900, one fifth of all Swedes lived in the U.S.

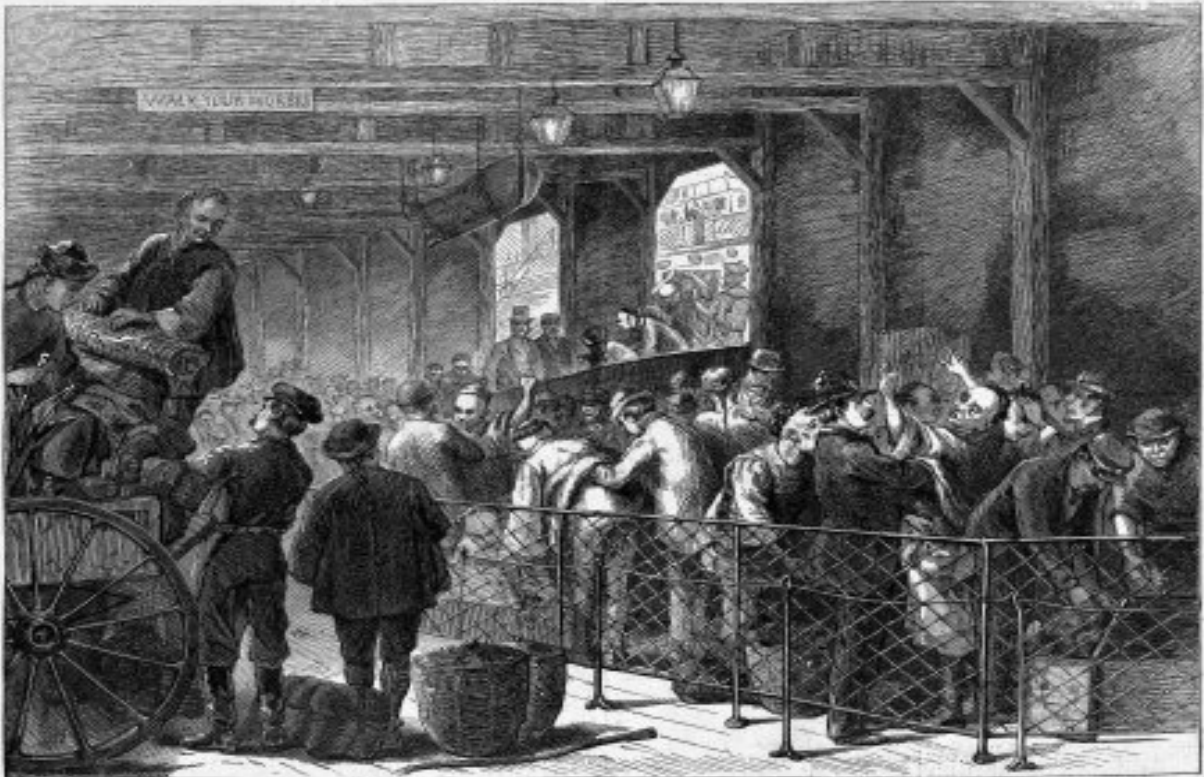
Ukrainians

These people came to America to mine coal, and among other things. Bringing their families to coal mining towns in Pennsylvania, they brought their language, culture, and food, with them.

<http://library.thinkquest.org/J003298F/immigration.htm#Native>

“Searching Chinese Immigrants for Opium”

<http://immigrants.harpweek.com/ChineseAmericans/Illustrations/065SearchingChineseImmigrantsMain.htm>



SEARCHING CHINESE IMMIGRANTS FOR OPIUM, AT SAN FRANCISCO.—From a Sketch by W. W. Dorr.—[See Page 11.]

1. Who are the people behind the fence? Why are they there?
2. Who are the people standing behind the wagon?
3. Which group seems to be in charge? Why do you think they are?

Immigration: Journey to America

(<http://library.thinkquest.org/20619/Chinese.html>)

However, after a much larger group of coolies, unskilled laborers usually working for very little pay, migrated to the U.S. in the mid 1800's, American attitudes became negative and hostile. By the year 1851, there were 25,000 Chinese working in California, mostly centered in and out of the "Gold Rush" area in and around San Francisco. During that time, more than half the Chinese in the U.S. lived in that region. These Chinese clustered into groups, working hard and living frugally. As the populations of these groups increased, they formed large cities of ethnic enclaves called "Chinatowns" all over the country. The first and most important of the Chinatowns, without a doubt, belonged to San Francisco. One of the most remarkable qualities of San Francisco's Chinatown is its geographic stability. It has endured half a century of earthquakes, fires, and urban renewal, yet has remained in the same neighborhood with the same rich culture. Chinatowns have traditionally been the places where Chinese Americans lived, worked, shopped, and socialized. Although these cities were often overcrowded slum areas in the 1800's, the Chinatowns turned from crime and drug ridden places to quiet, colorful tourist attractions in the mid 1900's.



The way of living among the Chinese was quite dissimilar from the patterns displayed among the masses of rowdy American gold-seekers surrounding them. Approximately 1/3 of the of the men attracted by California gold were Southern whites. Along with desires of wealth, many Southerners brought along hostile racial attitudes from the antebellum South. In the years that followed, those virulent temperaments were felt through laws and attitudes, and Blacks as well as Chinese suffered throughout the mid-century. Miners in the area often used violence to drive the Chinese out of various mines. While impatient gold-seekers would abandon prospective rivers, the Chinese would remain, painstakingly panning through the dust to find bits of gold.

The Chinese did not only mine for gold, but took on jobs such as cooks, peddlers, and storekeepers. In the first decade after the discovery of gold, many had taken jobs nobody else wanted or that were considered too dirty. However, in 1870, hasty exploitation of gold mines and

a lack of well-paying jobs for non-Asians spurred sentiment that the "rice-eaters" were to blame. By 1880, a fifth were engaged mining, another fifth in agriculture, a seventh in manufacturing, an added seventh were domestic servants, and a tenth were laundry workers. Approximately 30,000 Chinese worked outside of California in such trades as mining, common labor, and service trades. During the 1860's, 10,000 Chinese were said to be involved in the building of the western leg of the Central Pacific Railroad. The average railroad payroll for the Chinese was \$35 per month. The cost of food was approximately \$15 to \$18 per month, plus the railroad provided shelter for workers. Therefore, a fugal man could net about \$20 every month. Despite the nice pay, the work was backbreaking and highly dangerous. Over a thousand Chinese had their bones shipped back to China to be buried. Also, although nine-tenths of the railroad workers were Chinese, the famous photographs taken at Promontory Point where the golden stake was driven in connecting the east and west by railway, included no Chinese workers.

As time passed, the resentment against the Chinese increased from those who could not compete with them. Acts of violence against the Chinese continued for decades, mostly from white urban and agricultural workers. In 1862 alone, eighty-eight Chinese were reported murdered. Though large landowners that hired Chinese, railroads and other large white-owned businesses, and Chinese workers themselves pushed against a growing anti-Chinese legislation, the forces opposing the Chinese prevailed, issuing laws that excluded or harassed them from industry after industry. Mob violence steadily increased against the Chinese until even employers were at risk. Eventually, laws such the Naturalization Act of 1870 and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 restricted immigration of Chinese immigrants into the U.S.

Despite the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the Chinese population in the United States continued to increase. Although, after the population reached its peak in 1890 with 107,488 people, the Chinese population began its steady decline. These descending numbers reflected not only the severing effect of the legislation on the inflow of Chinese immigrants, but of the many returning back to China due to the highly imbalanced sex ratio and to bring back monetary support for their families. In fact, many of the Chinese immigrants who migrated to the United States had no intention of permanent residency in the country. These sojourners preferred to retain as much of their culture as possible.

As decades passed, the situation between the Chinese and the Americas improved. Such events as the Chinatowns turning from crime and drug ridden places to quiet, colorful tourist attractions, well-behaved and school conscientious Chinese children being welcomed by public school teachers, and China becoming allies with the U.S. during World War II, all paved the way for the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act. As immigration from China resumed, mostly female immigrants came, many, wives of Chinese men in the U.S. Many couples were reunited after decades apart.

IV. Assessments

1.) Create a Timeline (Illustrate the events): 1800, 1848, 1854, 1860, 1865—base this on the reading timeline.

_____ 2.) During the expansion of the American West., what were the main reasons why Chinese immigrants came to the United States?

- A. U.S. rich land and gold
- B. Strict tariffs put on the Chinese in China
- C. harsh treatment in their native country
- D. Resentment of the westerners

_____ 3.) What type of jobs were available for the immigrants in the American West?

- A. cooks
- B. building railroads
- C. miners
- D. All the above

_____ 4.) Why did Chinese immigrants continue to work in the gold mines or in other occupations in mining camps?

- A. They received the benefits of United States citizens
- B. They were able to assimilate into the culture and community of the west quickly.
- C. They earned better money than they did in China
- D. They were welcomed by the mining company.

5.) Choose two other immigrating groups (not the Chinese) and discuss the skills they brought to the American West. On a Venn Diagram show those groups similarities and differences.

Assessment Answers:

1. Timeline answers:

1800-Chinese checked for disease as they enter United States

1848- Chinatowns established. Wave their own flag.

1854-20,0000 Chinese dead in native country, causes mass of emigrants to United States

1865- Central Pacific railroad built by 90% Chinese. 1,000 killed by the terrible working conditions.

2. C

3. D

4. C

5. Answers will vary

V. Resources

Transparency of the immigration pictures <http://library.thinkquest.org/20619/Chinese.html>
immigrants.harpweek.com/ChineseAmericans/Illu...

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Venn-Diagram: <http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/>

Textbook: Call To Freedom, Holt, Rhinehart and Winston. A Harcourt Education Company, copyright 2005. Pp.437-439, (F43a-Fcat question)