

B. The History of (Im)migration to the U.S

As seen in the previous section, migration to the U.S. is part of a larger pattern of global migration. We recognize, however, that much of our interest is in immigration as it pertains to the U.S. so that is the focus of this section.

1. Migration Patterns and Numbers

Migration Maps

These maps, taken together, depict the movement of people into and within what is now known as the U.S. over time.

- ***Homo erectus* migration from Africa into Europe and Asia**
(http://rines.net/genealogy/images/T_MigrationMap_cw.jpg)
- **Migration from Siberia to Turtle Island/The Americas**
(<http://www.scott.k12.va.us/martha2/images/Landbridgeweb.jpg>)
- **Pre-Columbian location of American Indian Tribes**
([http://www.freewebs.com/kstevens/Native_American_map\[1\].jpg](http://www.freewebs.com/kstevens/Native_American_map[1].jpg))
- **Colonial migration to the Americas** (<http://www.irwinator.com/126/5-1.jpg>)
- **Slave Trade from Africa to the Americas**
(<http://media.nowpublic.net/images/6b/e/6be1bc82bf9eff108c3c96d985bfa223.jpg>)
- **1830 Indian Removal Act forced migration**
(<http://storiesofusa.com/images/indian-removal-act-map.jpg>)
- **Immigration to the United States 1880-1920**
(http://constitutioncenter.org/timeline/html/cw08_12150.html)
- **Immigration Explorer Interactive Map**
(<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2009/03/10/us/20090310-immigration-explorer.html>) Click the box that reads "All Countries" on the upper left-hand side of the map to see settling patterns for different foreign-born groups.
- **Migration Policy Institute Maps**
(<http://www.migrationinformation.org/DataHub/maps.cfm#3>) Includes maps of foreign-born groups in U.S.
- **Latino Population Growth in the U.S. 1980-2007**
(<http://pewhispanic.org/states/population/>)

(With thanks to Lisa Swanson for assembling this list.)

Annual Immigration to the United States: The Real Numbers

(http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/FS16_USImmigration_051807.pdf) (pdf, 4 pages)

Study from the Migration Policy Institute attempts to access the total numbers of permanent immigrants to the U.S., including lawful permanent residents, those with temporary visas who are likely to stay, and undocumented immigrants.

Department of Homeland Security: Immigration Statistics

(<http://www.dhs.gov/files/statistics/immigration.shtm>)

A portal page that links to a number of documents put out by the Department of Homeland Security pertaining to immigration – numbers, profiles, and maps on naturalized citizens, nonimmigrant admissions, unauthorized immigrants, and refugees/asylees.

Mexican Immigrants: How Many Come? How Many Leave?

(<http://pewhispanic.org/reports/report.php?ReportID=112>)

Immigrants to the U.S. come from all over the world but by far the largest number is from Mexico. This report from the Pew Hispanic Center looks at movement of people between Mexico and the U.S.

2. Colonialism as a Driving Force of U.S. Immigration

Why should Pennsylvania, founded by the English, become a Colony of Aliens, who will shortly be so numerous as to Germanize us instead of our Anglifying them, and will never adopt our Language or Customs, any more than they can acquire our Complexion.

- Benjamin Franklin, as excerpted from *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind*

We trust that the majority of people using this study guide have learned U.S. history at one point in their lives. If so, it is likely that you taught the history of this country from the perspective of European settlers. Most U.S. histories start with the “discovery” of America by Christopher Columbus and the subsequent settlements in the “new world” of English, French, Dutch and Spanish colonists. There are other sides to this story - the perspectives of those who immigrated subsequently and the perspectives of the people who were already here when the land was “discovered.” Since these perspectives – especially the latter - are much less widely taught, they will be our focus here.

An excellent resource overall is:

A People's History of the United States (<http://amzn.to/d6JkR1>), by Howard Zinn. Harper Perennial Modern Classics; Rev Upd edition (November 2, 2010), 768 pages.

This 1980 classic by noted a historian and political scientist argues that narratives of national unity and progress are a smoke screen that disguises the ongoing oppression and exploitation of the common people by the political and economic elites.

a. Perspectives of Native Americans

Rethinking Columbus: The Next 500 Years (<http://amzn.to/c1Zo9>), by Bill Bigelow. Rethinking Schools Ltd; 2 edition (September 1, 1998), 192 pages.

This is a revised and expanded edition of a popular 1991 booklet that changed the way "the discovery of America" is taught in classroom and community settings. The original edition made educational history by introducing a startling new view of Columbus from the Native American perspective. The new edition expands on this with over 100 pages of new material.

Tohono O'odham Nation (http://www.tonation-nsn.gov/history_culture.aspx) Website of the Tohono O'odham Nation, whose lands span the Mexico-U.S. border. The division of O'odham lands has resulted in an artificial division of O'odham society and U.S. border enforcement is affecting the ability of the O'odham to practicing migratory traditions essential to their religion, economy and culture.

Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America (<http://amzn.to/azfkhh>), by Daniel K. Richter. Harvard University Press; First Edition edition (April 30, 2003), 336 pages.

Written by the director of the McNeil Center for Early American Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, the book uses a variety of sources to reconstruct the Native American experience of the European arrivals. Richter shows that Native Americans were able to adapt to the newcomers and were active partners in co-creating a new way of life on the continent until the Revolution, when the idea of a white, democratic country took hold.

Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery (<http://amzn.to/ctO6q2>), by Steven T. Newcomb. Fulcrum Publishing (January 29, 2008), 224 pages.

Newcomb argues that U.S. federal Indian law and policy are premised on biblical narratives of the chosen people and the promised land - as exemplified in the 1823 Supreme Court ruling *Johnson v. McIntosh* - that the first "Christian people" to "discover" lands inhabited by "heathens" have an ultimate title to and dominion over these lands and peoples.

Native America, Discovered and Conquered: Thomas Jefferson, Lewis & Clark, and Manifest Destiny (<http://amzn.to/aQfSqt>), by Robert J. Miller. Bison Books (July 1, 2008), 240 pages.

Miller shows how Manifest Destiny grew directly out of the legal elements and policies of the Doctrine of Discovery and how Native peoples, whose rights stood in the way of this destiny, were "discovered" and then "conquered." Miller's analysis of the principles of discovery brings a new perspective and valuable insights to the study of Jefferson, Lewis and Clark, the Louisiana Purchase, the Pacific Northwest, American expansionism, and U.S. Indian policy.

Lewis and Clark Through Indian Eyes: Nine Indian Writers on the Legacy of the Expedition (<http://amzn.to/czCR3J>), by Alvin M. Josephy Jr. Vintage (June 12, 2007), 224 pages.

During the course of their famous expedition, Lewis and Clark and company encountered several Indian nations, whom they depended upon for the success of their mission. This book looks at the legacy of that journey through from the perspective of nine of the tribes.

A Very Brief Primer on U.S.-Mexican History (<http://bit.ly/b2iRmY>), by Kat Liu. Published in Inspired Faith, Effective Action (2010)

Blog post recaps the history of the border between Mexico and the U.S., as well as the national perception of Indians/Mexicans.

b. African Enslavement and Colonial Prosperity

Much has been said about the dehumanizing horrors and racist cruelty of slavery, and rightly so. But from an economic standpoint what slaves meant to the colonies in the Americas was cheap labor. And with ample access to the cheap labor of enslaved Africans and the resources taken by indigenous Americans, colonists (and then U.S.Americans) were able to accumulate tremendous amounts of wealth.

Capitalism and Slavery (<http://amzn.to/awkO8t>), by Eric Williams. The University of North Carolina Press (October 14, 1994), 307 pages. While the author focuses on Europe, the argument is applicable to the United States as well. Williams shows how it was slavery that financed the Industrial Revolution and thus the African slave trade was central in Western economic development.

Revisiting the Immigration Reform Debate: An African American Perspective (<http://bit.ly/cpLNu4>), by Dr. Ron Daniels, published on the FreeSpeechTV website.

c. Subsequent Immigration, Xenophobia and Nativism

Understanding that the events of U.S. history as founded upon an assumption of the nation as a white, Protestant nation provides a basis for understanding the “nativist” backlash against each successive wave of immigrants. Understanding the need for cheap labor provides a basis for understand why, despite the backlash, there continued to be (low-wage) jobs for those who came.

Timelines

- **Immigration Timeline from the University of North Carolina** (<http://www.unc.edu/~perreira/198timeline.html>)

A comprehensive list of timelines with respect to immigration, organized by date (era), subject, and ethnicity.

- **Immigration Timeline by The Flow of History**
(http://www.flowofhistory.org/themes/movement_settlement/uspolicytimeline.php)

An immigration timeline specifically looking at U.S. policy towards immigration and different immigrant groups over time

Stories of (Mostly) Today's Immigrants

Immigration: Stories of Yesterday and Today

(<http://teacher.scholastic.com/ACTIVITIES/IMMIGRATION/index.htm>)

Wonderful website for children and adults too. Includes an interactive tour of Ellis Island and the first-person stories of children who recently arrived in the United States.

Kids Like Me: Voices of the Immigrant Experience

(<http://www.interculturalpress.com/store/pc/viewPrd.asp?idproduct=56>), by Judith M. Blohm & Terri Lipinsky. Intercultural Press. 296 pages.

An appealing and accessible book with 26 narratives written by children and young adults describing their experience as immigrants in the United States. The individual narratives are short, and can be read on their own.

We Are America (<http://www.weareamericastories.org/>)

A collection of stories – both video and written - from today's immigrants

Immigrant Archive Project (<http://www.immigrantarchiveproject.com/>)

An independent national initiative dedicated to preserving the life stories of America's Latino immigrant population, accomplished by recording, in their own words, the intimate stories of Latino immigrants of all nations

Gateway to Dreams

(<http://www.todaysteacher.com/EllisIslandWebQuest/GatewayToDreams.htm>)

An upper grade school level resource that helps students to understand the experiences of immigrants coming from countries such as Italy, Ireland, Germany, Poland, and Greece to Ellis Island in the first part of the 20th century.

New York: A Documentary Film (<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/newyork/>), a seven part PBS documentary series directed by Ric Burns. In particular, episodes 2 and 4 deal most directly with immigration.

Episode 2 discusses a massive wave of German and Irish immigration provided the cheap labor for the city's breathtaking rate of industrial expansion while at the same time causing social unrest, culminating in the Civil War Draft Riots of 1863. Episode 4 discusses the effects of over 10 million immigrants (now coming mainly from Eastern and Southern Europe) arriving into New York City, providing cheap labor for the construction of subways and skyscrapers, and for

sweatshops. Exploitation became so acute that eventually landmark legislation was passed to protect workers.

Angel Island

Most people know about Ellis Island, but Angel Island off the coast of California is not as well known. Between 1910 and 1940, about 175,000 Chinese immigrants were detained and processed at Angel Island. Chinese immigrants experienced a great deal of discrimination and some were forced to stay on Angel Island for months or even years. There, detainees carved poetry into the walls to describe their experience.

- **Angel Island Immigrant Station Poetry**
(http://www.cetel.org/angel_poetry.html)
- **Text of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act**
(http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/a_f/angel/exclude.htm)
- **History of Angel Island Immigration Station**
- **Angel Island Poetry Site**
(http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/a_f/angel/angel.htm) Includes Asian American History timeline
- **Information about Asian American immigration today**
(<http://www.advancingequality.org/immigrationpubs/>)

(Thanks to Lisa Swanson for assembling this list.)

Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life (<http://amzn.to/9JGBsv>), by Roger Daniels. Harper Perennial. 576 pages. After discussing the topic of immigration in general and sociological theories of why people migrate between countries, Daniel discusses each racial or national group that came to the United States during the various eras of the nation's history, giving statistics and patterns of immigration and detailing interesting and often little-known facts. Also set out are the reactions of Americans to the various waves of immigration from the rise of the antforeign Nativists, Know Nothing, and Ku Klux Klan elements; to the restrictive immigration laws and quotas of the 1920s; through the World War II era incarceration of Japanese Americans in "resettlement camps." (review from School Library Journal, VA)

A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America (<http://amzn.to/brXJOp>), by Ronald Takaki. Back Bay Books (December 8, 2008), 560 pages. Tracing the economic and political history of several different groups within the U.S., Takaki presents the viewpoints, stories and facts from alternative perspectives that have been under-emphasized in the past. Woven throughout is a constant threat of racism.

The Truth about Immigrants: Xenophobia existed in early America

(<http://www.cjd.org/paper/truth.html>), by Brian Frazelle on the Houston Catholic Worker blog, December 1999.

A much briefer version of the history of U.S. American xenophobia than is recounted in the books above. The author also gives an introduction to globalization as the cause of migration of poor workers, a subject we will touch on in sections C and E.

Americans Know How to Do Xenophobia: Bigotry can still get candidates elected in America (<http://baltimorechronicle.com/2010/082310Hickman.shtml>), by John Hickman, August, 2010.

Another brief history of xenophobia in the U.S. with different examples and a focus on its uses as a political ploy.

Islam, Immigration, and Catholics, by Trevor Persaud. Published in Christianity Today, September, 2010.

(<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2010/septemberweb-only/48-41.0.html>)

This Interview with assistant professor of history, Jonathan Den Hartog, compares the anti-Muslim rhetoric of today with the anti-Catholic rhetoric that existed in the U.S. until the election of President Kennedy.

Assimilation Today: New Evidence Shows That the Latest Immigrants to America Are Following in Our History's Footsteps (<http://bit.ly/dn2LsL>) Report from the Center for American Progress using comprehensive Census Bureau data to argue that today's immigrants are assimilating just as well into U.S. society as immigrants of the past.

Resisting Calls for Assimilation

(<http://www.thirdway.com/wv/?page=4131|resisting+calls+for+assimilation>)

From the Mennonite Central Committee's Washington Office, the author questions why assimilation is assumed to be a good thing.

d. The expanding concept of "American"

As discussed in the first book in this section, there was a time when only those persons who were recognized of the "white race" could legally become a citizen of the United States. Thus the history of being accepted as "American" has long been linked with being viewed as white. Even the Germans were not initially considered "white" and thus were thought to be unable to assimilate into "American" culture. Eventually they did, followed by the Irish, the Polish, the Italians, etc. In most cases, transition to "whiteness" and thus "American" was associated with a transition from poor, unskilled laborers to middle-class. Maintenance of the pro-assimilation view, however, perpetuates a hierarchy of "good citizenship" where people of color (and for that matter, non-Christians) will perpetually be viewed as less.

White By Law: The Legal Construction of Race (<http://amzn.to/9YO3A2>), by Ian Haney López. New York: New York University Press, 2006, 263 pages

Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White: The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs (<http://amzn.to/bAzzob>), by David R. Roediger. Basic Books (2006), 352 pages

Roediger recounts how "new immigrants" who came to the United States in the late nineteenth century -including Jewish-, Italian-, and Polish-Americans-once occupied a confused racial status in their new country. By the end of World War II, they became part of "white" America thanks to the nascent labor movement, New Deal reforms, and a rise in home-buying. *Working Toward Whiteness* charts the strange transformation of these new immigrants into the "white ethnics" of America today.

How the Irish Became White (<http://amzn.to/ahHGDI>), by Noel Ignatiev. Routledge (1996). 248 pages

In the first half of the 19th century, some three million Irish emigrated to America. The Irish immigrants were (self-evidently) not Anglo-Saxon; most were not Protestant; and, as far as many of the nativists were concerned, they weren't white, either. In the years surrounding the Civil War, the Irish evolved from an oppressed, unwelcome social class to become part of a white racial class by embracing white superiority, which they learned in the United States. Ignatiev targets the Irish because they were the largest immigrant group to compete with blacks for manual labor jobs.

How Jews Became White Folks: And What That Says About Race in America (<http://amzn.to/bdYrFI>), by Karen Brodtkin. Rutgers University Press (1998), 264 pages

Brodtkin synthesizes much recent scholarship to assess the shifting notions of race and changing objects of racism in the U.S. She points out that racial inferiority has been ascribed to waves of immigrants only when they were used as unskilled labor. She notes how "Jewish whiteness became American whiteness" after WWII, when Jews began to speak as whites and Jewish intellectuals "contrasted themselves with a mythic blackness."

Red, Brown and Blue: How our definition of whiteness has changed with each new wave of immigration (<http://www.race-talk.org/?p=5571>), by Ray Suarez for race-talk

3. Social Impact of Immigration to the U.S.

There are undeniably many positive social benefits that come with immigration – consider what life in the U.S. would be like without immigration the next time you're eating sushi, or pizza. The interface of many cultures makes U.S. society

rich in ways that are beyond the scope of this study guide to cover. We encourage you to think about them. However, there are also undeniably social stresses that come with immigration, especially in large numbers. Changing demographics, unfamiliar customs, and/or the overcrowding that often comes with an influx of poorer immigrants all cause stress on communities.

Farmingville (2003) (<http://www.farmingvillethemovie.com/>), directed by Carlos Sandoval and Catherine Tambini

The documentary *Farmingville* tells the story of a suburban, Long Island town named Farmingville that made national headlines in the early-2000s when conflict over a sudden influx of Mexican day laborers tore the town in two. It's the unique story of one particular town's response to change and conflict, but it is also a story of unresolved national questions about labor, the economy, and immigration that are probably playing out in your communities, too. Download the movie guide from Sojourners for this and several other movies on immigration (<http://www.faithandimmigration.org/movieguide>).

What if Undocumented Workers Were Gone? NPR, May 18, 2005

Longer grass on America's lawns, higher costs for child care, maybe emptier emergency rooms. What would society, what would your daily life, look like, without undocumented immigrants? A half-hour radio discussion explores how undocumented immigration actually affects American life.

From Beacon Press:

Medicine in Translation: Journeys with My Patients

(<http://www.beacon.org/productdetails.cfm?SKU=7320>), by Danielle Ofri
Beacon Press (2010), 256 pages

Ofri introduces us, in vivid, moving portraits, to patients who have braved language barriers, religious and racial divides, and the emotional and practical difficulties of exile in order to access quality health care. With controversy over immigrants in our society escalating, and debate surrounding health-care reform becoming increasingly urgent, these riveting stories could not be more timely.

The Immigration Fallacy (http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=10149), by Will Wilkinson. Published in *The Week*, April 27, 2009.

This research fellow for the Cato Institute points to Toronto, which has more foreign-born residents than any other city in North America (47%), as evidence that cultural diversity can create healthy, vibrant cities.

The Hispanic Challenge (<http://bit.ly/5ETHzJ>), by Samuel Huntington (pdf, 16 pages) *Foreign Policy* magazine, March, 2004.

Huntington argues that the recent wave of immigration, which comes predominantly from Latin America, is unlike previous waves of immigration – and

that we are facing the division of the United States “into two peoples, two cultures, and two languages.” While some will find his language harsh, the author meticulously illustrates the social stresses being experienced in the U.S. today.

A Question of Identity. The Economist, March, 2004.

(http://www.economist.com/node/2479808?story_id=2479808)

A response to Huntington’s essay arguing that Latino immigration is good for the U.S.

4. Nativism Today

Wiki article on Nativism ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nativism_\(politics\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nativism_(politics)))

An introduction to the term and some examples. Although the article is about nativism in general, most of the discussion centers around the United States.

Immigrants Targeted: Extremist Rhetoric Moves into the Mainstream

(http://www.adl.org/civil_rights/anti_immigrant/fair.asp)

Report from the Anti Defamation League (ADL) about the anti-immigrant group, FAIR (Federation for American Immigration Reform), whose name belies its opposition to all forms of immigration, authorized or not.

The Year in Nativism (<http://bit.ly/c4hD3L>)

From the Southern Poverty Law Center, their Spring 2010 report on nativist groups across the country (see links in the upper right-hand box).

The Far-Right Movement Behind Arizona Copycat Bills (<http://bit.ly/9INA7r>),

by Seth Freed Wessler. Published in ColorLines, May 4th, 2010

Article shows that what appears to be a populist reaction against immigration is being orchestrated almost exclusively by one organization and their lawyer.

America Has a Nativism Problem, Not a “Muslim Problem”

(<http://www.sepiamutiny.com/sepia/archives/006301.html>), by Abhi. Sepia

Mutiny, August, 2010.

Opinion piece from a Desi (South Asian) blog site.

Building Democracy Initiative (<http://www.buildingdemocracy.org/>)

Website lists reports and resources to keep track of nativist activity across the country.

Questions for Reflection:

1. What role do racism, hate and intolerance play in driving immigration and enforcement policies?
2. Who are the immigrants in our communities?
3. Are there ways that immigrants enrich the social fabric of the country in which they settle and in particular the United States?
4. Based on our history, what has it meant to be “American”? What should it mean?