

# TAHPDX: Great Decisions in U.S. History

Teaching American History: A partnership between Portland State University and the Beaverton, Hillsboro and Forest Grove School Districts (funded by the U.S. Department of Education)

## HISTORY TOPIC: The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965: Origins of Modern American Society

***Disclaimer:** This is one of twenty-four topic summaries included in the TAH program and is designed to orient readers to the breadth and depth of the subject. These summaries are by no means exhaustive. Each one is a brief overview of a complex historical topic. Because of the informal nature of a summary, they are not necessarily based on primary sources nor do they employ the full range of scholarly techniques, such as foot- or endnotes. This style of presentation is merely one of the varieties of historical writing that readers will encounter as they explore history.*

**Abstract:** The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 is the key turning point in the making of contemporary American society. The ideas and imperatives of the Cold War, the Great Society, and the civil rights revolution combined in legislation that fundamentally changed U.S. immigration policy – and the composition of the American population. Few leaders anticipated the full effects of the change, which transformed the ethnic mix of the United States and helped to stimulate the Sunbelt boom. The new law initiated a change in the composition of the American people by abolishing the national quota system in effect since 1924. Quotas had favored immigrants from Western Europe and limited those from other parts of the world. The old law's racial bias contradicted American values and the self-proclaimed role of the United States as a defender of freedom around the world. Immigration reform thus became part of the propaganda battle of the Cold War. The new law gave preference to family reunification and welcomed immigrants from all nations equally and resulted in what is now the new American society.

**Support Material:** *The Immigration and Nationality Act topic contains the subtopics listed below. Each subtopic includes a narrative with highlighted text [resources] and notations indicating that additional support material is available for viewing and/or downloading including primary documents, maps, spreadsheet data and informative websites. To access the material go to the TAHPDX: Great Decisions in U.S. History Website and use the links available on the HISTORY TOPICS [Immigration Act] page or the QUICK NAVIGATION [Alpha List] pages.*

URL: <http://www.upa.pdx.edu/IMS/currentprojects/TAHv3/Home.html> or search TAHPDX on the internet.

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3. Restricting Immigration
4. Pressures for Change
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*Curricula developed for this topic:*

Scheduled for completion in June, 2010

## 1. Introduction

Within this topic we will examine the ways in which the ideas and imperatives of the Great Society and the Cold War combined in legislation that fundamentally changed U.S. immigration policy—and the ethnic composition of the American population. The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 -- also known as the Hart-Celler Act -- **[pdf resource]** is the key turning point in the making of contemporary American society. Few leaders anticipated the full effects of the change, which transformed the ethnic mix of the United States and helped to stimulate the Sunbelt boom. The new law initiated a change in the composition of the American people by abolishing the national quota system in effect since 1924. Quotas had favored immigrants from Western Europe and limited those from other parts of the world that were deemed "undesirable." The old law's racial bias contradicted the self-proclaimed Post-World War II role of the United States as a defender of freedom. Immigration reform thus became part of the propaganda battle of the ensuing Cold War. The new law gave preference to family reunification and welcomed immigrants from all nations equally. The United States also accepted refugees from Communism outside the annual limits. The legislation can be seen as a key accomplishment of Great Society liberalism **[pdf & audio resources]**, having been introduced in the House by Emanuel Celler and advocated in the Senate by Edward Kennedy. Immigration reform opened the doors to Mediterranean Europe, Latin America, and Asia. Not since World War I had the United States absorbed so many new residents. By the early 1990s, legal immigration accounted for 37 percent of all American population growth, compared with 10 percent before 1965 (US Census). According to the 2000 census, roughly 30 million Americans had been born in other countries (representing 11.1 percent of the population).

## 2. A Nation of Immigrants

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the United States was a nation of immigrants -- some voluntary, some semi-voluntary as indentured servants, some involuntary as slaves. At the time of the American Revolution, the population of the thirteen colonies included many people from England, but also Scots, Irish, Swedes, Dutch, Germans, and, of course, Africans.

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**PDF Map & Data Resource:** Population Ethnicity, 1790 (U.S. Census). Data tables focus on population ethnicity by county for the year 1790 (the first federal census following the American Revolution). Resources include a map layout of Ethnicity in 1790 (11x17) and a Chart showing Ethnicity in 1790 for English/Welsh, Scots, Irish, Dutch, French and German.

Out of this mix of population there emerged in the early decades of the nineteenth century the idea that people from Britain, and perhaps the Netherlands and northern Germany, constituted the standard “American” against whom other ethnic and racial groups had to be compared. This idea became a political movement in the 1830s and 1840s with reactions against Roman Catholic immigrants from Ireland and southern Germany. As religious and ethnic prejudice interacted, the “American Party” (or Know-Nothings) [**pdf resource**] emerged in the 1850s to contest local, state, and national elections. The party’s presidential candidate, Millard Fillmore, gained 21 percent of the popular vote in 1856 before the party collapsed with the rise of the Republican party and the shift of national attention from immigration to slavery expansion.

After the Civil War, immigration reached new peaks in the 1880s and again in the years from 1905 to 1914. Nativist responses increased with the volume of newcomers, with southern and eastern Europeans as the targets. A Columbia University professor in 1887 warned that Hungarians and Italians were “of such character as to endanger our civilization” (Faragher's *Out of Many: A History of the American People*, 2003, p.484). The director of the Bureau of the Census warned in 1896 that the US was being overrun by “beaten men from beaten races” (Francis A. Walker, “Restriction of Immigration” *Atlantic Monthly*, 1896). Protestant minister and reformer Josiah Strong detailed the dangers of immigration in *Our Country: Its Present Crisis and Its Possible Future* (1885) [**pdf resource**]. The crisis was immigration. In Strong’s view, new immigrants congregated dangerously in big cities, supported the pernicious liquor trade, allowed themselves to be manipulated by corrupt political bosses, carried socialist ideas, and gave allegiance to foreign leaders (meaning the Pope for Catholics and European radicals and anarchists for others).

Active political organizations took up the anti-immigrant banner. The American Protective Association (1887) [**web resource**] represented skilled workers and small businessmen, growing quickly to half a million members. Its goal was to protect the jobs of white Protestants against Catholic and Jewish immigrants. The Immigration Restriction League (1894) [**web resource**] called for a literacy test which it expected most southern and eastern European immigrants to fail. The League also encouraged universities to set quotas to limit the number of Jews in higher education. In California, the Workingmen’s Party [**web resource**] and the Native Sons of the Golden West campaigned against Chinese workers.

Racist thinking increasingly took on scientific trappings. Writers such as Madison Grant in *The Passing of the Great Race* [**web resource**] worried that immigrants were out-breeding and out-competing native-born Americans. Critics of immigration also looked to Europe, where pseudo-scientific racial analysis was highly developed, and they adopted a hierarchy of races in which Anglo-Saxons or Aryan Germans (depending on where you lived) perched on top. Intelligence tests administered to US military recruits during World War I seemed to confirm the racial ranking (what they really tested was mastery of English and familiarity with “traditional” American culture).

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**Web Resource:** *Eugenics Laws Restricting Immigration*. A good synopsis of the use of "eugenics" to craft U.S. immigration policy.

**PDF Resource:** *Eugenists Dread Tainted Aliens*. New York Times, Sept. 25, 1921.

### 3. Restricting Immigration

Formal immigration restriction got its start on the West Coast, where workers and the public feared continued Chinese immigration. The result of this political agitation was the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 [**pdf resource**], which halted the immigration of single male laborers, although it did not completely cut off immigration of merchants and family members.

As Japanese immigrant workers filled the gap left by Chinese exclusion, westerners shifted their fears to this new group. Efforts by the San Francisco school board to segregate Japanese children led to diplomatic repercussions and the negotiation of the Gentlemen's Agreement (1907-1908) [**pdf resource**]. By this informal pact, Japan agreed to deny exit visas to potential immigrants to the United States in return for the promise that the US would not overtly prohibit Japanese immigration.

Wholesale immigration restriction arrived in 1921. Acting case by case, immigration officials had long turned away immigrants whom they judged to be carrying dangerous diseases or who they thought might become a public burden. In addition, Congress required a literacy test in 1917 in order to immigrate to the US [Immigration Act of 1917: **pdf resource**]. In the context of the Red Scare of 1919-20 [**web resource**] and fears of domestic subversion, Congress in 1921 passed the Emergency Quota Act, [**web resource**] establishing country-of-origin quotas for immigrants based on the numbers of each nationality in the US in 1910. The 1921 act also cut the total number of immigrants by two-thirds.

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**Web Resource:** The *1921 Emergency Quota Act*. Provides a short summary of the act with a link to the full text. Also includes a link to text of the Congressional debate on immigration restriction in 1921.

In 1924 the National Origins Act (or the Immigration Act of 1924) [**pdf resource**] deepened the restriction, explicitly stating that the goal was to maintain the "racial preponderance" of "the basic strain of our population." The new law restricted immigration quotas to 2 percent of the foreign-born population of each nationality as recorded in the 1890 census. It thus rolled back the 'starting line' to a point before the heaviest migration from eastern and southern Europe. Countries with little demand for immigration (e.g. the Netherlands) received large quotas and countries with high demand (e.g. Greece) received small quotas. It also set an annual total of 150,000 immigrants per year. The exception to these quota rules was that two kinds of immigrants could be admitted "without numerical limitation." One category was family members --wives, but not husbands -- and unmarried children under age eighteen of US citizens. The other was immigrants from Western Hemisphere nations. One consequence was increased migration from the Philippines which became a U.S. territory after the Spanish-American War and thus not subject to the quotas. Filipino immigration to the US skyrocketed in the 1920s.

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**Map Resource:** *U.S. Immigration Quotas by Country (1924)* -- based on the quotas set by the Immigration Act of 1924.

The 1924 law also barred "aliens ineligible to citizenship." American law since 1887 had permitted only "white persons" and those "of African descent" to become naturalized citizens. The purpose of this specific clause was to keep out Japanese, as other Asians had been barred already by prior legislation. And, as a further control, all immigrants, quota and non-quota, were required to obtain entry visas into the United States from US consuls in their country of origin before leaving. While most American foreign service officers were mostly "immigrant friendly," many refused visas to persons who nonetheless were legally eligible for admission. The State Department's instructions to its consular officials emphasized rejection rather than admission of anyone who might become a "public charge" according to the law.

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**Web Resource:** USA Today (4-5-2006). *US Urged to Apologize for 1930s Deportation*. Tells the story of the 1930s anti-immigrant campaign.

**Web Resource:** PBS *"The Border"*. Section explains the 1953 Operation Wetback that detained and deported more than 3.8 million people of Mexican descent.

#### 4. Pressures for Change

The first pressures for modification of the 1924 quota system came during and after World War II, when the United States Congress struggled with how many war refugees and displaced persons to admit. In 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt convinced Congress to repeal 15 statutes excluding immigrants from China, give a minimal immigration quota to China, and make Chinese aliens eligible for naturalization. Three years later Congress gave the same rights to Filipinos and "natives of India." In 1952 it erased all racial or ethnic bars to the acquisition of American citizenship. These changes were primarily motivated by foreign policy concerns rather than ethnic "contamination" or labor pressures, highlighting an issue that would be increasingly important in the coming decades.

In the first years after 1945, the United States also had to decide what to do about a million or more people displaced in Europe by war and the radical redrawing of national boundaries there. Displaced persons, or DPs, had no place to go. Some were surviving Jews; others were refugees from Baltic nations absorbed by the USSR. President Truman asked Congress to find ways to fulfill the nation's "responsibilities to these homeless and suffering refugees of all faiths," introducing the idea that the US had an obligation—moral and political—to absorb refugees [Truman speech on displaced persons, 1947: **pdf resource**]. In response, Congress eventually allowed the admission of 400,000 DPs. Historian Roger Daniels has noted that "to create the illusion for their edgy constituents that the traditional quota system was still intact, Congress pretended that the immigrants admitted by these bills above the national quotas represented, in essence, 'mortgages' that would be 'paid off' by reducing quotas for those nations in future years. This manifestly could not be done. To cite an extreme example, the annual Latvian quota of 286 was soon 'mortgaged' until the year 2274! Congress quietly cancelled all such "mortgages" in 1957" [*Historians on America*: **web resource**].

The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (the McCarran-Walter Act) [[pdf resource](#)] controlled immigration policy from 1953 to 1965. It allowed 3.5 million immigrants to legally enter the United States. Only one-third, however, came under the quota system. Immigrants from Asia totaled 236,000, for example -- mostly family members of native-born or newly naturalized Asian Americans. The balance of immigrant sources also began to shift. During this period 7 percent of immigrants were from Asia, 48 percent from the Americas, and only 43 percent from Europe (Source: Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics).

Three factors account for the gradual shift in US immigration policy in the 1940s and 1950s and then its substantial makeover in 1965. One factor was the political maturing of “ethnic” voters in the New Deal coalition. During the 1930s and 1940s, millions of American-born children of parents who had immigrated in the great 1905-14 wave came of age. These new voters became an essential part of the New Deal coalition as they overwhelmingly voted for Roosevelt, Truman, and Kennedy. They were bread-and-butter liberals in many cases, and they also resented the way that immigration quotas indirectly classified them as members of inferior groups.

Secondly, the racial bias of the quota system contradicted the self-proclaimed role of the United States as a defender of freedom. Immigration reform thus became part of the propaganda battle of the Cold War. Especially with the new independence of nations in Asia and Africa, the United States found itself competing with the USSR for the hearts, minds and political loyalty of the new nations. The quota system—just like Jim Crow segregation in the South—was an international embarrassment. In 1952, Hubert H. Humphrey, then a US Senator, said the existing immigration law stood in contrast to the growth of refugee legislation aimed at forming international linkages and having “the respect of people all around the world” (Congressional Record, June 27, 1952, p. 8267).

The third factor was the growth of the Civil Rights Movement. The immigration legislation drafted in 1965 can be seen as a key accomplishment of Great Society liberalism, having been introduced in the House by Emanuel Celler and advocated in the Senate by Philip Hart and Edward Kennedy. It can be grouped with the Voting Rights Act as one of the success stories of the liberal coalition. As Rep. Philip Burton (D-CA) said in Congress: “Just as we sought to eliminate discrimination in our land through the Civil Rights Act, today we seek by phasing out the national origins quota system to eliminate discrimination in immigration to this nation composed of the descendants of immigrants” (Congressional Record, Aug. 25, 1965, p. 21783).

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**PDF Resource:** *Three Decades of Mass Immigration: The Legacy of the 1965 Immigration Act*. A good synopsis of the events and debates leading up to the revisions to the 1952 Immigration Act including quotations and graphs (from the Center for Immigration Studies).

## 5. The 1965 Legislation: The Hart-Celler Act

The 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act [[pdf resource](#)] abolished the national quota system and replaced it with two separate quotas, one for the Eastern Hemisphere (170,000 per year) and one for the Western Hemisphere (120,000 per year). There was also a limit of 20,000 immigrants per year from any one nation. There were also provisions for immigrants whose entry was authorized outside of numerical limits. For example, the new law expanded the

categories of family members who could enter without numerical limit and reserved most of the enumerated slots for more distant family members of citizens and even some family members of resident aliens. Most of the 22.8 million immigrants who entered between 1966 and 2000 were family members of recent immigrants participating in "chain migration," with arriving immigrants making still other family members potential future immigrants.

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**PDF Resource:** *Family Reunification Program* (Migration Policy Institute).

*Graph Resource: Family Preference as a Proportion of Total Immigration, 1986-2008.* Graph comparing immigrant status based on family preference categories and all other categories.

The law allocated 6 percent of the overall global limit for refugees (6 percent of 290,000 or 17,400). But it also allowed the President to override this limit, as has been done repeatedly for refugees from Hungary, Cuba, Vietnam, Cambodia, Tibet, and a few other nations.

### **Preference Order under 1965 Act**

1. Unmarried adult children of US citizens.
2. Spouses and unmarried adult children of permanent resident aliens.
3. Members of the professions and scientists and artists of exceptional ability.
4. Married children of US citizens.
5. Brothers and sisters of US citizens over age twenty-one.
6. Workers in occupations for which there is insufficient labor supply.
7. Refugees given conditional entry or adjustment.
8. Applicants not entitled to preceding preferences.

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**PDF Resource:** Lyndon B. Johnson Speech at the signing of the 1965 Immigration & Naturalization Act (10-3-1965).

## **6. The New American Society**

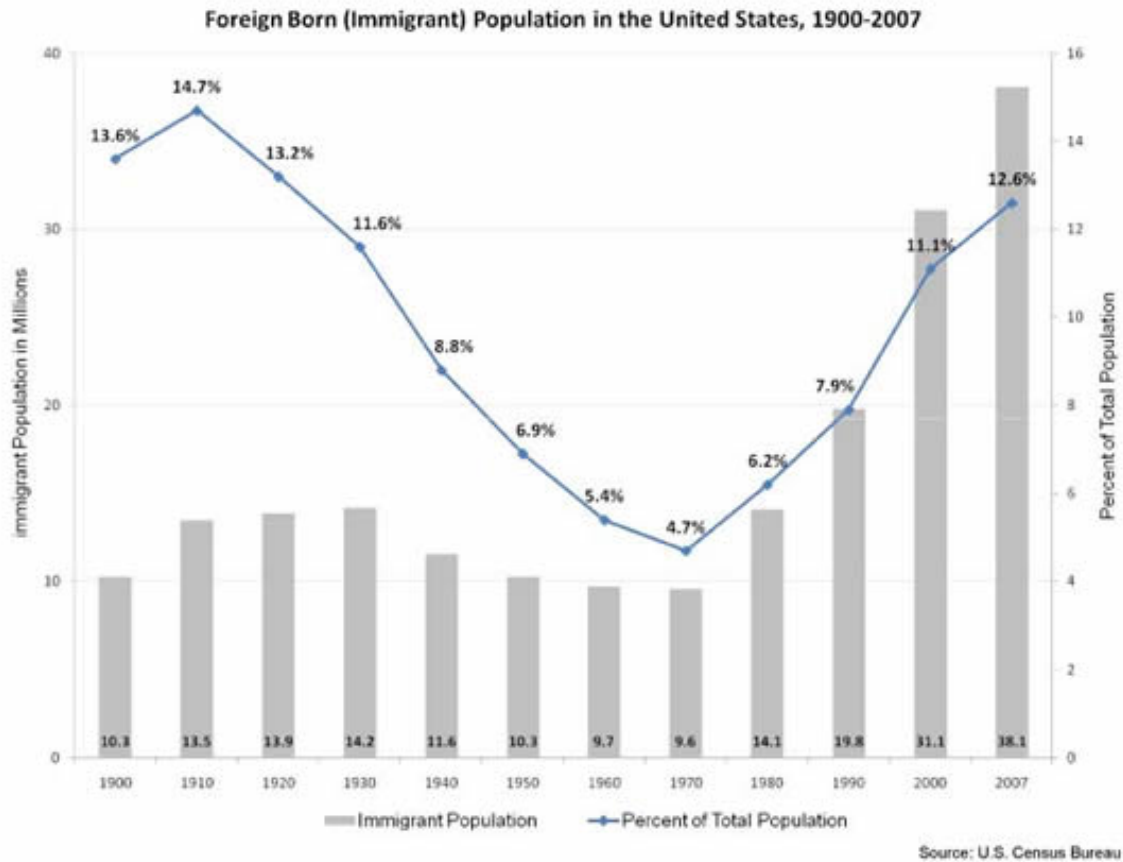
Few leaders anticipated the full effects of the change, which transformed the ethnic mix of the United States and helped to stimulate the Sunbelt boom. Indeed, its supporters went out of their way to reassure Americans that the patterns of immigration would not substantially change (see above for President Johnson's speech when he signed the bill).

They were wrong.

Immigration changed the nation's ethnic mix and opened the doors to Mediterranean Europe, Latin America, and Asia. Not since World War I had the United States absorbed so many new residents. By the early 1990s, legal immigration accounted for 37 percent of all American population growth, compared with 10 percent before 1965. Members of officially defined ethnic and racial minorities accounted for 25 percent of the American population in 1990 and 30 percent in 2000. According to the 2000 census, roughly 30 million Americans had been born in other countries, or 11.1 percent of the population. This was lower than the all-time high of 14.7

percent in 1910, but a great increase from the low of 4.7 percent in 1970. One-third of the foreign-born were from Latin America and one-fourth from Asia (Source: U.S. Census).

**Graph 1: Foreign Born (Immigrant) Population, 1900-2007.**



The largest single group of new Americans came from Mexico. Especially in the border states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California, permanent immigrants have mingled with tourists, family members on visits, temporary workers, and other workers without legal permission to enter the United States. The long border has always facilitated easy movement from south to north and the Hart-Celler Act had the ironic and unexpected consequence of increasing illegal immigration. With the bracero system abolished by the legislation and a cap on Western Hemisphere admissions (previously it had been unlimited), many workers from Mexico and the Caribbean who wanted temporary jobs found it easier to enter illegally than to go through the time-consuming and often unsuccessful application for a visa slot. The result was that seasonal migration of workers continued, but now outside the legal system. In the decade from 1966 to 1975, the Immigration and Naturalization Service deported on average 500,000 illegal entrants each year.

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**PDF Graph Resource:** *Illegals Removed (Deported) or Returned by US Authorities, 1892-2008* (Dept. of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, 2008 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics).

Mexican Americans were the largest minority group in many southwestern and western states by the later twentieth century. In addition, Latinos were transforming neighborhoods in Chicago and other midwestern cities and changing everything from politics to the Catholic Church.

**Table 1: Immigrants 1991–2002, by Continent and by Twenty Countries of Origin**

<b>Total</b>	<b>11,223,000</b>	
North America	4,730,000	
Mexico		2,677,000
Dominican Republic		385,000
El Salvador		280,000
Cuba		237,000
Haiti		229,000
Jamaica		204,000
Canada		179,000
Guatemala		133,000
Asia	4,730,000	
Philippines		610,000
China		542,000
India		525,000
Vietnam		490,000
Korea		213,000
Pakistan		155,000
Iran		136,000
Europe	1,661,000	
Poland		194,000
Ukraine		184,000
United Kingdom		171,000
Russia		169,000
South America	683,000	
Colombia		167,000
Africa	497,000	
Oceania	60,000	

**Table 2 Major Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the United States (1960 and 2000)**

	<b>1960 Population (in millions)</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>	<b>2000 Population (in millions)</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
American Indians	0.5	0.3	2.5	0.9
Asians and Pacific Islanders	1.1	0.6	10.6	3.7
African Americans	18.9	10.5	34.7	12.3
Hispanics	not available		35.3	12.5

(Source: U.S. Census, compiled from various years)

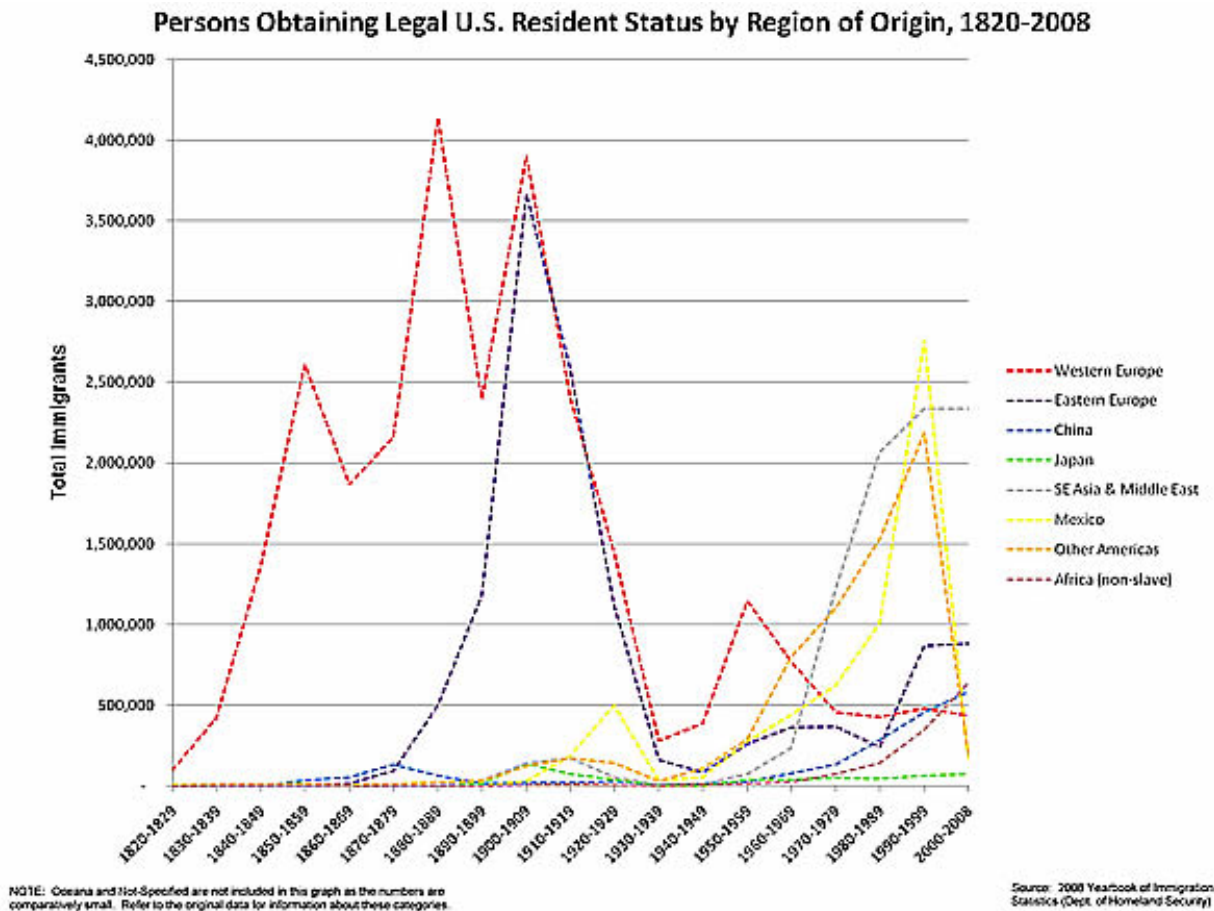
The East Coast has especially welcomed migrants from the West Indies and Central America. Many Puerto Ricans, who hold US citizenship, came to Philadelphia and New York in the 1950s and 1960s. The 110th Street subway station in East Harlem marked the center of El Barrio de Nueva York for the city's estimated 600,000 Puerto Ricans. Other countries sending large numbers of immigrants included Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Jamaica. Cuban refugees from Castro's regime concentrated in Miami and in major cities such as Chicago and New York.

Another great immigration has occurred eastward across the Pacific. Chinese, Filipinos, Koreans, Samoans, and other Asians and Pacific Islanders constituted only 6 percent of newcomers to the United States in 1965 but nearly half of all arrivals in 1990. The number of ethnic Chinese in the United States jumped from a quarter of a million in 1965 to 1,645,000 in 1990. Immigrants from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the People's Republic created new Chinatowns in Houston and San Diego and crowded into the historic Chinatowns of New York and San Francisco.

The most publicized Asian immigrants were refugees from Indochina after the withdrawal of troops from Vietnam and the Communist victory in 1975. The first arrivals tended to be highly educated professionals who had worked with the Americans. Another 750,000 Vietnamese, Laotians, and Cambodians arrived after 1976 by way of refugee camps in Thailand. Most settled on the West Coast. The San Francisco Bay area, for example, boasted at one point more than a dozen Vietnamese-language newspapers, magazines, and cable television programs.

In addition to southeast Asians, political conflicts and upheavals sent other waves of immigrants to the United States. Many Iranians fled the religious regime that took power in their country in the late 1970s, at the same time that Ethiopians were fleeing a nation shattered by drought, civil war, and doctrinaire Marxism. To escape repression in the Soviet Union, Jews and conservative Christians came to the United States in the 1980s, and the collapse of Communism in the Soviet Union opened the door for Russians, Ukrainians, Romanians, and other eastern Europeans.

**Graph 2: Persons Obtaining Legal U.S. Resident Status by Region of Origin (1820-2008)**



**Web Resource:** National Public Radio's *All Things Considered* "1965 Immigration Law Changed Face of America" with text and audio.

## 7. Possibilities and Problems

Recent immigrants have found both economic possibilities and problems. On the negative side, legal and illegal immigration has added significantly to the number of non-union workers. By one estimate, at one point two-thirds of the workers in the Los Angeles garment trade were undocumented immigrants. Most worked for small, deliberately non-union firms in basements and storefronts, without health insurance or pensions and without an ability to bargain for better pay or working conditions.

But a positive contrast was the abundance of opportunities for talent and ambition in the expanding US economy of the mid-1980s and 1990s. The 130,000 Vietnamese immigrants of 1975 now have an average income above the national figure. Asians and Pacific islanders by the year 2000 constituted 22 percent of the students in California's public universities. Like earlier European immigrants, many newcomers opened groceries, restaurants, and other businesses that

served their own ethnic group before expanding into larger markets. Asian-born business owners often filled retail vacuums in central city neighborhoods abandoned by chain stores. One Korean told a typical story: “A friend of mine came over with his family. He invested a few dollars in a vegetable stand in downtown Manhattan. He and his sons got up early, went to the market early. He took some of his earnings and invested in a candy store. Then he bought two more vegetable and fruit stands. Their kids work hard too and they make a lot” [from T. Kessner & B. Boyd Caroli Today's Immigrants, Their Stories. Oxford University Press, 1983].

### *Pan-Ethnic Identity:*

In struggling for recognition and political influence, recent immigrants have added new pan-ethnic identities to their national identities. In the nineteenth century, English-speaking Americans looked at European immigrants from widely separated geographic regions and cultural backgrounds and saw simply “Italians” or “Jews.” In turn, immigrants have found economic and political strength by bridging differences and molding identities as ethnic groups within the US demographic landscape. Hispanic activists revived the term “Chicano” to bridge the gap between recent Mexican immigrants and Latinos whose families had settled in the Southwest before the American conquest in 1848. Great gaps of experience and culture separate Chinese, Koreans, Filipinos, and Vietnamese, but they understand that they gain political recognition and influence if they dealt with other Americans as “Asian-Americans.” Native Americans have similarly downplayed tribal differences in efforts to secure better opportunities as a minority group.

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**Book Resource:** Miri Song, *Choosing Ethnic Identity* (Polity, 2003). This book explores the ways in which people choose their ethnic identities in contemporary multiethnic societies such as the USA and Britain and provides a broad view of the idea of pan-ethnic identity.

The increasing diversity of immigrants in public life highlighted a set of troublesome questions about demographic and ethnic balance. In adopting the Immigration Act, was government justified in seeking to equalize demographic outcomes as well as starting points? More broadly, was the United States to be a unitary society in which everyone assimilated to a single culture and adhered to a single set of formal and informal rules, or might it be a plural society in which different groups accepted different goals and behaviors? Ironically, the debates at the end of the twentieth century replayed many of the questions that European immigration raised at the century’s beginning.

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**PDF Resource:** *The State of American Public Opinion on Immigration in Spring 2006* (A review of major public surveys from the Pew Hispanic Center).

**Web Resource:** *Spotlight on Legal Immigration to the United States* (an updated article on legal immigration for the year 2008 from the Migration Policy Institute).

### *Illegal Immigration:*

A heated issue born of immigration policy reform that resonates today is the economic impact of illegal immigration. Advocates of tight borders assert that illegal immigrants take jobs away from legal residents and eat up public assistance budgets. Many studies, however, find that

illegal immigrants fill jobs that nobody else wants. Over the long run, high employment levels among legal immigrants mean that their tax contributions – through sales taxes, Social Security taxes and payroll deductions – more than pay for their undocumented brethren’s use of welfare, food stamps, and unemployment benefits, which illegal immigrants are often afraid to claim anyway for fear of calling attention to themselves. Nevertheless, high immigration can strain local government budgets even if it benefits the nation as a whole. Partly for this reason, 60 percent of California voters approved Proposition 18 in 1994, cutting off access to state-funded public education and health care for illegal immigrants.

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**PDF Resource:** *Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States, January 2008.* From the Dept. of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics. Concise, easy to read report on illegal immigrants.

**PDF Resource:** *The Size & Characteristics of the Unauthorized Migrant Population in the U.S.* (based on the March 2005 Population Survey). A summary report from the Pew Hispanic Center.

**PDF Resource:** *The Impact of Unauthorized Immigrants on the Budgets of State and Local Governments, December 2007.* From the Congressional Budget Office, U.S. Congress (easy to read summary report).

#### *English as the Official Language:*

Another issue apparent due to the changing composition of the American population is the degree to which American institutions (political and educational) should accommodate non-English speakers. Referendums in Alaska (1996) and Utah (2000) raised to 26 the number of states that declared English their official language. The measures ranged from general statements to specific prohibitions on printing forms and ballots in multiple languages. California voters in 1998 banned bilingual public education, a system under which children whose first language was Spanish or another “immigrant” tongue were taught for several years in that language before shifting to an English-language classrooms. Advocates of bilingual education claimed that it eased the transition into American society, but opponents said that it blocked immigrant children from fully assimilating into American life.

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**Web Resource:** Education World. *The Bilingual Education Debate*, Part I and Part II. Provides an excellent synopsis of the debate surrounding bilingual education with many useful links to resources, research, and opposing viewpoints.

**Web Resource:** *English First.* An organization that seeks to make English the official language (in all aspects of society) and eliminate bilingual policies.

**Web Resource:** OPB, *Do You Speak American?* A fun website with links that explore the idea of English as the official language of the United States including information about the debate from the founding of the nation.

#### *Projections:*

The changing ethnicity of the American people promises to be increasingly apparent in coming decades. Immigrants tend to be young adults who are likely to form families, and birth rates have historically been high among Hispanics and Asian Americans. The result is a sort of multi-ethnic baby boom. In 1972, at the peak of the post-World War II baby boom, 80 percent of elementary and high school students were non-Hispanic whites. By 1999 the figure was 63 percent and

falling (U.S. Census). Over the coming decades, the effects of ethnic change will be apparent not only in schools but also in the workplace, popular culture, and politics.

**Table 3: U. S. Census Projections (projected from the 2000 census)**

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2050</b>
Non-Hispanic whites	66 percent	46 percent
Hispanics	15 percent	30 percent
African Americans	14 percent	15 percent
Asian Americans	5 percent	9 percent

**Web Resource:** U.S. Census Report on Population. *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 2009*. Provides more detailed information about the projected characteristics of the U.S. population (age, ethnicity, etc.).

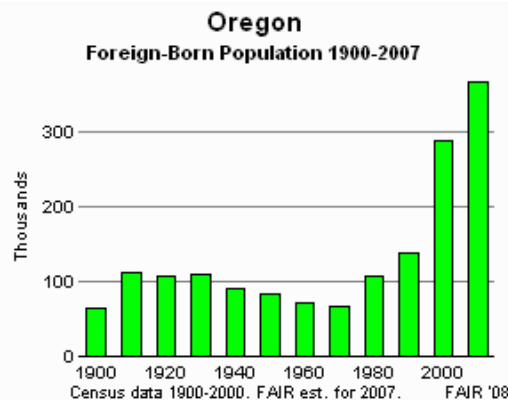
**PDF Resource:** Pew Research Center. *U.S. Population Projections: 2005-2050*.

## 8. Impacts on Oregon

After peaking between 16 and 18 percent from 1880 to 1910, foreign-born residents as a percentage of all Oregonians fell to a low of 3 percent in 1970. In the years from the 1910s to the 1960s, Oregon’s colorful mosaic of immigrant groups turned monochromatic. In 1910, Italians were the largest immigrant group in Wasco County, Swedes in Sherman County, Danes in Curry County, Irish in Lake County, Finns in Clatsop County, Scots in Wheeler County, Germans in Marion County and Multnomah County, with Chinese close behind in Multnomah. Fifty years later, Canadians dominated the list of foreign-born.

The pattern began to change in the 1970s and change accelerated in the following decades. As of 1990, Hood River County had the highest proportion of foreign-born residents at 10.6 percent, followed by Washington County at 7.3 percent and Umatilla County at 7.2 percent. In 2000, foreign-born residents made up 8.5 percent of the statewide population. The figure grew to 9.9 percent (371,000 of 3,747,000) according to estimates by the Federation for American Immigration Reform (an organization that works to restrict the volume of immigration).

**Graph 3: Oregon Foreign-Born Population (1900-2007)**



**Table 4: Speakers of Foreign Languages at Home (Oregon)**

Spanish	214,605
German	18,400
Vietnamese	17,805
Russian	16,345
Chinese	12,950
French	11,770
Japanese	6,375
Korean	9,185
Tagalog	6,180
Romanian	4,734

(Source: Census Bureau. Language Spoken at Home for the Population 5 Years and Over, April 2004)

## **9. Chronology of Immigration Policy**

1882: Chinese Exclusion Act bars admission of Chinese laborers and declares Chinese immigrants to be aliens ineligible for naturalized citizenship.

1891: Congress established Bureau of Immigration to comprehensively administer immigration laws. Barred persons include those with certain contagious diseases, felons, polygamists, and anyone guilty of “moral turpitude.”

1906: Naturalization Act makes knowledge of English a requirement for citizenship.

1907-08: Gentlemen’s Agreement between US and Japan, which volunteers to stop emigration of laborers to the US.

1917: Immigration Act requires literacy test for admission and creates Asiatic Barred Zone from which no immigration is permitted.

1921: First Quota Act creates annual ceiling of 355,000 quota admissions and allocates by country.

1924: Second Quota Act sets quotas at 2 percent of the foreign-born nationality in the US in 1890 and lowers annual total to 165,000, with 83 percent allocated to northern and western Europe, 15 percent from southern and eastern Europe, and 2 percent from elsewhere.

1940: Smith Act requires registration and fingerprinting of aliens and widens ground for deportation.

1942: Bracero program for admission of temporary Mexican workers.

1943: Repeal of Chinese Exclusion Act creates small quota for Chinese.

1945: President Truman issues executive order to allow admission of 40,000 refugees.

1945: War Brides Act facilitates foreign born spouses and children of American military personnel.

1946: Immigrants from India and the Philippines made eligible for citizenship.

1948: Displaced Persons Act allowed entry of 202,000 war refugees from Europe.

1952: McCarran-Walter Act recodifies immigration and naturalization statutes, creates system of occupational preferences, and prohibits racial and gender discrimination in naturalization.

1965: Hart-Celler Act abolished the national quota system in favor of hemispheric quotas.

1975-76: Congress provides for admission of refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos.

1986: Immigration Reform and Control Act establishes amnesty for aliens unlawfully in the US and provides an opportunity to legalize their status; provides sanctions prohibiting employers from knowingly hiring illegal immigrants.

1990: Congress revises the admissions system and creates a flexible overall cap of 700,000 starting 1992, to be reduced to 675,000 in 1995.

(Source: Reed Ueda, *Postwar Immigrant America: A Social History*)

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**PDF Resource:** *Immigration Legal History from 1790 to 1996*. A comprehensive list (with short description) of legislation regarding US immigration policy (from the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services).

## 10. More Resources & Bibliography

### MAPPING IMMIGRATION:

New York Times. *Remade in America*. A seven part series that looks at immigrants and their impact on American institutions. The site allows you to explore numerous aspects of immigration throughout United States history. Using the *Immigrant Explorer* you can look at the foreign-born population in the U.S. from 1890 to the present as a percentage of total population or by specific countries or find out where U.S. workers come from using the *Immigrants & Jobs* interactive mapping application.

### DATA SOURCES: Immigration, Migration & Demographic Characteristics of the US Population

**Spreadsheet Data:** *U.S. Immigration Data*. Contains worksheets for U.S. Immigrants and Foreign-Born Population Figures (1820-2008), Illegal Deportations (1892-2008), Immigrants - Family Preference Categories (1986-2008), Country Quotas based on the 1924 Immigration Act (see associated world map), and Ethnicity of the Population (1790).

**Map & Data Web Resource:** *The Social Explorer* (an online mapping application with Census demographic data from 1790 to present).

**Web Resource:** *Migration Policy Institute* – links to migration facts, statistics and maps.

**PDF/Data Resource:** U.S. Census, Population Division, Working Paper 81, *Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-Born Population of the United States, 1850 to 2000*.

**PDF Resource:** *2008 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics.

**Web Resource:** Harvard University. *Immigration to the United States, 1789-1930*. This site contains a huge collection of primary sources on immigration to the United States, including 1,800 books and pamphlets, 13,000 pages from manuscripts and 9,000 photographs. Visitors can search the collection or browse by source type, topic, and other categories.

#### **INFORMATION ABOUT IMMIGRANTS:**

**Web Resource:** *Castle Garden*. CastleGarden.org is an educational project of The Battery Conservancy. This free site offers access to an extraordinary database of information on 12 million immigrants from 1820 through 1892, the year Ellis Island opened. Over 100 million Americans can trace their ancestors to this early immigration period.

**Web Resource:** *Ellis Island*. This site has an online searchable database of 22.5 million arrivals to New York between 1892 and 1924.

#### **IMMIGRATION LESSONS:**

**Web Resource:** Library of Congress. *Immigration: The Changing Face of America*. The presentation was shaped by the primary sources available in the Library's online collections and probing questions such as "Why did each immigrant group come to the United States?" and "How did United States government policies and programs affect immigration patterns?" There are student activities, educator guides, photos and links to useful resources.

**Web Resource (lessons):** PBS "*The New Americans*".

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