



## South Side: Immigration and Cultural Diversity

### Historical Context and Overview

As the United States rapidly industrialized in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, immigrants began pouring into the country looking for job opportunities. Prior to the Civil War, most immigrants were from Western and Northern Europe. Beginning in the 1880s, a new wave of people came from Southern and Eastern European nations such as Italy, Poland, Russia, Greece, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the Ottoman Empire (Turkey). By 1907, about 80 percent of all immigrants in the U.S. were from Southern and Eastern Europe. Many of the newer immigrants were either Roman Catholic or Jewish, and left their homelands to escape religious and political persecution.

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many native-born Americans thought of the United States as a “melting pot,” a mixture of people of different cultures who blended together by abandoning their native languages and customs. However, many of these new immigrants preferred to see themselves as “hyphenated” Americans who blended cultural practices of their homeland with American ways of life. The majority of these immigrants from the same country of origin stayed together in urban neighborhoods. Italian, Polish, Russian, and Greek ethnic neighborhoods developed in most major cities in the industrial Midwest. These communities formed social clubs and mutual aid societies and established orphanages, cemeteries, and native-language newspapers.

Although the Germans were the first immigrant group to settle on the South Side of Columbus, numerous Eastern and Southern Europeans groups arrived in the area by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. A large Jewish community had formed on the South Side by the turn of the century. At least two dozen languages were widely spoken in South Side neighborhoods as people from Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, and other countries arrived. Hungarians were especially active in establishing churches in cultural institutions and social organizations. Businesses such as the Foreign Grocery emerged to serve all the groups on the South Side.

### Standards Alignment

#### Ohio's New Learning Standards: Social Studies

##### Grade 3

Content Statement 3. Local communities change over time.

Content Statement 8. Communities may include diverse cultural groups.

##### Grade 4

Content Statement 13. The population of the United States has changed over time, becoming more diverse. Ohio's population has become increasingly reflective of the cultural diversity of the United States.

##### Grade 8

Content Statement 17. Americans began to develop a common national identity among its diverse regional and cultural populations based on democratic ideals.

#### HS American History

Content Statement 12. Immigration, internal migration and urbanization transformed American life.

## Learning Objectives

- Identify some specific ways in which the South Side of Columbus has changed over time.
- Trace the patterns of immigration to the South Side of Columbus.
- Explain how immigration to the South Side of Columbus reflected changes nationally in patterns of immigration in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- Describe the ways immigrants adapted to the challenges of life in urban industrial cities.
- Identify some similarities among the groups of people that settled on the South Side.
- Explain how immigrants contributed to cultural diversity and cultural exchange (diffusion) in the United States.
- Describe the role that language plays in communities.
- Explain how the characteristics of South Side neighborhood are remnants of the people who lived there 75-100 years ago.

## Discussion Questions

1. From what nations did immigrants arriving on the South Side of Columbus beginning in the 1880s come? How did this wave of immigrants differ from previous immigration patterns?
2. What cultural characteristics did immigrants to the South Side of Columbus bring with them to their new homes?
3. How did large influx of immigrants to the South Side impact the area in terms of culture? In terms of the economy? In terms of religion?
4. How did immigrant groups adapt to the challenges of life in a new city?
5. How did the number of languages found in the South Side effect daily life among the residents and business owners?
6. How did local businesses cater to the residents of the South Side? In what ways did they need to operate their business differently than most business? Compare this to a local business today. What is done differently today? What is still the same?
7. How did immigration impact business development on the South Side? What contributions were made by immigrant business owners?
8. What was the long-term impact of immigration on South Side neighborhoods? What evidence of these immigration patterns remains even today? Discuss evidence of the Hungarian legacy in the neighborhood today.

## Extension Activities

- Have students write journal entries from the perspective of a newly arrived immigrant on the South Side. Students should first provide a biographical sketch of their fictional individual by identifying their age, occupation, country of origin, and reason for immigrating. What are their impressions of Columbus and the United States? How have they adapted to life in the city? What employment opportunities are available? What cultural institutions have been established?
- Have students conduct oral history interviews of someone who has arrived in the United States recently or someone whose ancestors were earlier immigrants to Columbus.
- Give students an idea of how complicated it could be with so many different languages in one concentrated geographical area. The video mentions that there were at least two dozen languages spoken just in this neighborhood. How hard would communication be if we each spoke a different language right here in this classroom? Use the foreign language strips to have students experience this (see directions on attached sheet).
- Why did so many people come to America from foreign countries? Why do you think so many different types of people and from so many different cultures able to get along and respect each other? Although their differences were many, what did they have in common that may have unified them?

## Additional Resources

- Immigration Lesson for Grades 3-5  
<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/immigration-lesson-plan-grades-3-5>
- The Demographics of Immigration: Using United States Census Data  
[http://www-tc.pbs.org/independentlens/newamericans/pdfs/tna4\\_demograph.pdf](http://www-tc.pbs.org/independentlens/newamericans/pdfs/tna4_demograph.pdf)
- Making of Multi-Cultural America: The History and Future of American Immigration  
<http://www.historyspeaks.org/industrialization-and-progressivism.html>
- Immigration Challenges for New Americans  
<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/immigration/>
- Immigration Myths  
<http://www.tolerance.org/lesson/immigration-myths>

**A Conversation in Different Languages Activity**

Cut apart strips. Use in different ways:

- Divide students up into groups of eight. Give each student a foreign language strip. Taking turns, they each say their sentence while the group tries to decipher what is being said.
- Have eight different students come to the front of the class and each say one foreign language sentence. The class tries to decipher the conversation.
- Divide students into pairs or small groups. Give each group a complete set of all 16 strips. Have them try to match the sentence with the translation.

<b>Ce qui est le temps</b>	<b>What is the weather? (French)</b>
<b>Ito ay pag-ulan</b>	<b>It is raining. (Filipino)</b>
<b>Eu preciso de um guarda-chuva</b>	<b>I need an umbrella. (Portuguese)</b>
<b>I matumaini ni jua kesho</b>	<b>I hope it's sunny tomorrow. (Swahili)</b>
<b>Por que</b>	<b>Why? (Spanish)</b>
<b>Ich will an den Strand gehen</b>	<b>I want to go to the beach. (German)</b>
<b>Mehetek veled</b>	<b>Can I come with you? (Hungarian)</b>
<b>Si</b>	<b>Yes. (Italian)</b>