

# Lesson 26: The Great Wave of Immigration

*What was life like for immigrants in the early 1900s?*

# Lesson 26 - Section 4: Chinese Immigrants

- The first Chinese immigrants came to the United States to seek gold in California.
- Later, many helped to build the country's first transcontinental railroad.
- Some of these immigrants returned to China with money they had earned.



# Lesson 26 - Section 4: Chinese Immigrants

- In the United States, discrimination against the Chinese had been increasing ever since whites had pushed Chinese off their mining claims.
- As the number of Chinese immigrants climbed, U.S. labor leaders warned of Chinese workers who would work for less pay than whites and take away their jobs.



# Lesson 26 - Section 4: Chinese Immigrants

- In 1882, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which banned Chinese laborers from immigrating to the United States and denied Chinese immigrants the right to become citizens.





# Lesson 26 - Section 4: Chinese Immigrants

- As a result of the Chinese Exclusion Act, Chinese immigration slowed to almost nothing.
- However, that changed after the 1906 earthquake and fire destroyed much of San Francisco, including most birth records.
- Suddenly, many Chinese men were able to claim to be native-born citizens and as citizens, they were allowed to bring their wives and children to the United States.



# Lesson 26 - Section 4: Chinese Immigrants

- Chinese claiming American birth started arranging for people in China to immigrate to the United States as their relatives.
- On the long voyage, the newcomers studied hundreds of pages describing their “families.”



# Lesson 26 - Section 4: Chinese Immigrants

- These “paper relatives” landed at Angel Island in San Francisco Bay.
- Government immigration officials “locked us up like criminals in compartments like the cages in zoos,” said one Chinese immigrant.
- Chinese usually remained on the island for three to four weeks, but sometimes they spent months or even years there.



# Lesson 26 - Section 4: Chinese Immigrants

- Many Chinese started laundries because it required less capital and is one of the few opportunities that are open.
- Most Chinese settled in city neighborhoods like San Francisco's bustling Chinatown,





# Lesson 26 - Section 4: Chinese Immigrants

- For many years, most Chinese immigrants were men. In 1900, only about 1 in 20 Chinese on the U.S. mainland was female.
- With so few women and families, the Chinese population began to decline. In 1880, about 105,000 Chinese lived in the United States, but by 1920, there were only 61,600.



# Lesson 26 - Section 4: Chinese Immigrants

- Gradually, more women and children arrived, especially in San Francisco.
- Housing was closed to Chinese in most areas, so Chinatown became more and more crowded.



# Lesson 26 - Section 5: Mexican Immigrants

- In 1910, landless farmers rebelled, breaking up large landholdings and giving the land to impoverished families.
- In response, soldiers attacked villages, killing thousands of peasants.



# Lesson 26 - Section 5: Mexican Immigrants

- The Mexican Revolution dragged on for ten years.
- Between 1910 and 1920, about 500,000 Mexicans entered the United States, and many did so freely, without passports or money.





# Lesson 26 - Section 5: Mexican Immigrants

- Mexicans were welcomed by many American employers, especially the expanding railroads and large-scale farms and ranches in the Southwest, which depended on laborers who were willing to work hard for little pay.



# Lesson 26 - Section 5: Mexican Immigrants

- Some Mexican immigrants found employment with railroads, mines, factories, and canneries.
- Most found work in agriculture. Mexican farmworkers moved from region to region, harvesting crops as they ripened.
- They picked oranges in southern California, almonds in central California, apples in Oregon, and cotton in Texas and Arizona before moving on to sugar beets in Colorado.



# Lesson 26 - Section 5: Mexican Immigrants

- After harvest season, farmworkers sometimes moved to nearby towns.
- *Barrios*, or Mexican neighborhoods, sprang up on the edges of cities near such farming areas as Los Angeles, California and San Antonio, Texas.
- Food stands and grocery stores in the barrio offered familiar tastes and smells, and residents helped each other take care of the sick and find jobs.





# Lesson 26 - Section 5: Mexican Immigrants

- Mexicans who remained in the United States often faced strong prejudice.
- Compared to whites, they earned very low wages, and they had little say in their working conditions.

