



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1988 Volume II: Immigrants and American Identity

Immigration into an Urban Industrialized Northeast: 1879-1914

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As the early pioneers raced across the continent as part of the great westward expansion, another group of pioneers was coming ashore on the Northeast (and midwest). Perplexed, poor and lacking knowledge of the American lifestyle and language these immigrants in the words of one observing journalist, “constituted the ragged regiments of Europe.” They had fled the conditions of Europe in hopes of securing, for themselves, money to return home with or in some cases a permanent position in a country of abundant opportunity.

Between the years of 1870 and 1910, the United States saw its greatest influx of immigrants. More than twenty million immigrants entered the country during those forty years. This phenomenon resulted, at least partly, from the gains of the industrial revolution. American industries were experiencing one of their greatest booms (and that translated into a demand far more and more workers). At first the new immigrants, with much needed industrial skills and arriving mostly from northern and western Europe, were welcomed. However, the later immigrants arriving from southern and eastern Europe were not welcomed by the “native born” Americans. These immigrants—lacking skills, “good breeding” and undesired—came at a time when a large influx of unskilled labor was no longer a xenophobia that saw their “way of life” being threatened by the constant arrival of new immigrants with different values and ideas. These Americans saw their job security challenged by immigrants that were willing to except lower wages to secure jobs.

Some of these immigrants had the extra burden of having noticeable characteristics that could be exploited by anyone seeking justification to do so. Some had different skin color and/or language and then there were some with religious views that conflicted with established Protestant views. The large number of immigrants into the urban cities also put a severe strain on the housing situation. This strain—coupled with discriminatory practices—eventually led to the creation of ghettos.

The hatred and prejudice towards these immigrants led to the passing of immigration laws that greatly restricted the flow of immigration. May of 1882 saw Chinese Exclusion Act check Chinese immigration for a period of ten years. This restriction was renewed in 1892 and again in 1902. August, of the same year, the first federal immigration law, of a general nature, was adopted. This law put a head tax on all immigrant passengers and excluded the undesirables that might become a burden on society. February, 1885 a law prohibiting the importation of contract labor was inacted (called the Foran Act). The late 1880’s saw a rebirth of nativism. Finally, around 1906 leaders of the “Boston Immigration Restriction League” used the arguments of racial superiority to limit immigration. (Assimilation they argued, would weaken the old stock and rejuvenate the undesired).

As much as these immigrants were hated or disliked by the established groups, it is generally agreed that they performed a much needed service. It was their willingness to provide a cheap source of labor and to work the most difficult and menial jobs that helped enable the United States to make the economic gains that she made. It was the clashing of old world views with those of new world ideas that forced compromises that helped to advance social and political thoughts.

In this unit we will study three of those ethnic groups that made their way to the urban and industrializing cities of the Northeast (and midwest). The three groups are; Italians, Slavs and blacks. Some of the questions we intend to deal with are: What made these immigrants leave their homes and emigrate to these cities? How were they greeted and how well were they allowed to assimilate? Our time period is from the post Civil War era to the start of the first World War.

ITALIANS

The economic condition in Italy, from 1870 to 1914, were no different that those of most countries of southern and eastern Europe. That is, conditions were so terrible that the allure of opportunity in the Americans caused some four million Italians to emigrate during those years. Italy was faced with overpopulation; it lacked needed resources for industrialization, land suitable for farming was scarce and social/economic mobility was limited.

The average Italian from southern Italy (where conditions were worst) at first saw his trip abroad as temporary. Italians, after working the outdoor season in Italy, often traveled abroad (usually France and Argentina) to work the off season. They would work the fields of those countries until the work season began in Italy. There they would return laden with monies saved abroad. The United States was to be no different. Their Italian predecessors from the northern part of Italy had come for the purpose of “making it” in the new land. They came from the more industrial cities of the north. They had families and skills to offer. They were not migrant. They had planned to stay.

These “new” Italian immigrants were not accepted by the “native born” Americans, as were their neighbors from the north. They were often the objects of prejudice and contempt. They were seen as “unlettered, unskilled ghetto dwellers” that were destined to destroy the moral fibers of American society (or so the Dillingham Commission thought).

The Italian newcomers would inhabit the houses vacated by their northern predecessors whose skills (and timing) had allowed them the economic and social success necessary for residential mobility. They quickly began to move to the middle-class sections of town. The newcomer did not inhabit these buildings out of choice (old and closed factories and mansions quickly converted to tenement houses; makeshift dwellings of discarded materials; four to a room; attic and basement quarters and garage conversions). They went there for a variety of reasons; they were all that the “broke” immigrant could afford; they had established institutions to look after the newcomer (Italian); it was the neighborhood that their countrymen lived in; and it’s where their family and/or friends had beckoned them from.

Italians were thought to be of a clannish nature. This tendency to move and settle, as a group, in Italian communities was thought to be a detriment to assimilation. Those communities, however, served a very useful function both for the immigrant and the community at large. They served to ease the transition from a

rural lifestyle to that of an urban dweller. There the new arrivals lived and worked among fellow countrymen until they learned the ways of urban life and were ready to make the advance to something “better.” In addition to reeducating the rural man, it also handled a lot of the social services that would have normally been the responsibility of society. It also helped to stop conflict between the two groups.

In Italy the family was primary. In the urban cities where problems were many (and complicated) the immigrant had to look beyond the immediate family for help. The family was relegated to a position of lesser importance and elevated to fill its position was the concept of the community (the Italians had begun the transition from “immigrant to ethnic”).

Some of the groups seeking to aid and lead the Italian community were the mutual benefit societies, the church and the Italian language newspapers. These groups stepped in to fill the void—in terms of socialization—left by a society that sought to forget, not aid the newcomers.

In spite of all the prejudice, discrimination and hatred heaped upon him, the Italian was able to overcome those obstacles in time to see the second generation Italian began to realize the fruits of their fathers’ labor. Communities like those in San Francisco, New York and Chicago all boasted having extensive list of successful Italians in banking, fish brokerage, truck farming, food processing, wine making, trade, medicine and law, etc.

The early 1890’s saw Italian become involved in public employment. Machine politics dominated the immigrant community. Ward bosses were expected to take care of the people in the district and those people often supported them at the polls. Since Italian success in the political arena depended heavily on the “machine” their success was limited mostly to victories on the ward or city level.

SLAVS

Slavic immigrant groups, like the Italians from southern Italy, were viewed by “Americans” as being a group comprised mostly of men that were unskilled, illiterate and transient. Slav—in this case Poles (excluding Jews from southern Poland) and Slavaks—were seen as a bigger threat to American institutions than any of the other European ethnic groups. Polish immigrants tended to keep to themselves—whenever possible. They took care to see that their communities were as self sufficient as possible. The Polish immigrant—for the most part—worked in or near the community. They built schools and created social institutions, (fraternal orders) that organized social events within the community. Central to the community was the church. The Catholic Church. This was at a time when the nativists were attacking Catholicism. To the typical Pole living in one of these communities there was absolutely no reason to venture (out) beyond the borders of the community. Everything they could possibly desire was there.

The Slavic immigrants were opposed to the American idea of materialism. Out of fear that these ideas would be taught to their children the Polish groups withdrew their children from public schools (by allowing a high rate of dropouts). These sentiments were quickly echoed by the Slavaks. Since they distrusted American public schools, Poles and Slavaks deemphasized the importance of a formal education and encouraged their sons to seek training in a trade. Most of the Polish boys followed their fathers’ choice of a trade (they usually took their sons to work with them and trained them on the machines that they operated). In communities that could effort to support it, there was a Catholic school available.

As a group of basically unskilled laborers the Slavs took the unskilled jobs vacated by the group that preceded them.

The Slavic groups were not overly ambitious people (or so some thought). Slavic workers, as mentioned, were anti-materialistic. Survival was upper most on their minds. Work was simply a means to an end. Consequently, they opted for lowpaying, but steady unskilled work as opposed to higher pay, but oftentime temporary work. They were a practical people who felt that work should be used to pay bills only. That, if needed, women and children should work to contribute to the survival of the family (old world views that led to wholesale exploitation of child labor).

Slavs lacked upward job mobility. The lack of upward job mobility was not a result of a complete lack of interest in bettering their lot, but in addition to what has already been said, a result of unskilled immigrants coming into a community where the Irish and German—before them—had already secured the skilled jobs. (The latest immigrant group nearly always took the worst, the leasepay and most unskilled jobs available. Meanwhile, the groups before them advances a notch in most cases). Their ability to take the worst jobs and stick with them enabled them to become, by 1900, one of the top two ethnic groups representing employees of America’s leading industries.

BLACKS

Blacks cannot be viewed as immigrants in the same sense of the term as applied to Italians and Slavs (blacks were already “citizens” of the country). However, the trip north, as a mass movement allowed us to refer to it (as one historian did) as “in-migration.” This immigration to the north (and midwest) occurred around 1914. At that time urban industries were running full steam and demanding a labor force that was cut short by the events of World War I. With immigration slowed to a trickle agents began encouraging blacks to head north. This was an opportunity that blacks had been awaiting since the end of the Civil War. The war had given blacks freedom in a “legal” sense. However, blacks, in the south, were completely left out of everything. Segregation was complete; hate groups succeeded in keeping blacks out of political matters; economic and social freedom was also denied; blacks were paid lower wages than their white counterparts in the same fields; less money was spent on education for blacks and they were often “the last hired and the first fired.” In the south blacks were treated as second-class citizens. In 1914 blacks saw their life as being worthless in the eyes of the exslavemasters. They could be beaten, kidnapped and/or killed and no authority would care.

Responding to this call for unskilled labor blacks came into contact with the same forces that had greeted other immigrants to the cities. They were seen as uneducated, unskilled and a definite threat to job securities (blacks were paid less than most immigrants). They were hated by the Klans (as were the Jews and Catholics). They were considered to be the “wretched of the earth” as were the Italians and Slavs.

There were additional handicaps confronting black inmigrants that made assimilation much more difficult than the other groups. One was the fact of their past servitude (an experience that engendered certain feelings of racial superiority that would be hard to set aside). The other was their skin color. This made blacks noticeable and consequently easier to discriminate against (the racist treatment of nonwhites, or people with outward differences, was also demonstrated in the treatment of Orientals on the Pacific coast). In addition, blacks were dealing with the mental transition from slavery to freedom.

As the European immigrant underwent the transition from being a rural dweller in Europe to a life of city living, blacks had to make their transition. Slavery had prepared blacks for a life of dependency and service. Blacks had to be retaught the basic life-skills for survival; to read, write, negotiate and to even think as a free man.

In the urban cities, of the north, blacks found themselves still very much segregated into communities that would later be called ghettos. The “planned” ghettos was a response to the huge influx of blacks into cities where whites desired to maintain social purity in the neighborhood (or at least slow down the interaction between the races).

As mentioned earlier, native born Americans rejected the idea of Italians being clannish or of Slavs living in self-supporting communities instead of assimilating. The case with blacks was completely reversed. Blacks were systematically denied close interactions with Whites (on a social level). The separation of races in the schools, churches and neighborhoods, etc., helped to foster a sense of inferiority in black children. Whites did not fear close contact with blacks, as long as the superiority of Whites were evident. That is, blacks had always worked as house servants and “nannies” for Whites. It was only when the close relationship inferred a sense of equality that Whites rejected it.

As late as 1912, when the progressive movement was at one of its heydays in the fight for equality and political purity, the plight of blacks were still not given any serious consideration. When the progressives were arguing for freedom and equality it was understood that they were referring to freedom and equality for Whites.

Migration to the north was a first step in the climb to improve the lot of rural blacks. This obviously wasn’t enough to ensure successful integration into American society.

Blacks quickly learned that even though the North fought to abolish slavery they—blacks—were still viewed as being ‘free’ in a legal sense only. The north had its share of prejudice and exclusionary policies for blacks. However, it was still better than the south—for blacks.

CONCLUSION

In essence the promise of immediate employment, political and economic freedom were more than enough reasons to entice immigrants to emigrate to the United States. People that had given up all hopes of ever lifting themselves up under their previous conditions. Immigrants, from abroad, fled to the United States seeking opportunities promised them by relatives, friends, agents and a thriving industry. Improvements in steamship transportation helped to ease the fears of the journey.

When there was a shortage of labor the immigrants were welcomed. When the demand for laborers dried up so did the welcome dry up. The new immigrants now became competition for the existing population.

Xenophobia created a united appeal to the government to stop and/or curtail this flow. Xenophobia also helped to develop attitudes of prejudice, hatred, exclusion and racism. In spite of this most European—in the end—were allowed the freedom and mobility necessary to assimilate if they desired to do so.

Blacks, on the other hand, partly because their physical features set them apart were not allowed this opportunity. blacks were allowed the freedom to grow and prosper only within the boundaries of the black

community.

The immigration of blacks were sparked by conditions similar to those of the European immigrants. That is, in the south blacks occupied the lowest strata of society with virtually no hope of overcoming that situation.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this unit is to afford students the opportunity to learn more about their country by understanding the ethnic groups that make it up. For our purpose we will look at the three above mentioned groups as they arrived in the urban, industrialized cities of the north.

OBJECTIVES

1. To know how three ethnic groups were introduced to urban, industrialize, northern cities.
2. To understand how these groups were greeted and accepted by the “native born” Americans.
3. To know how successful they were in assimilating with that “native born” population.
4. To understand how economic developments in the United States influenced immigration.
5. To understand how immigrants influenced economic, political and social change in America.
6. To compare how three different ethnic groups confronted and responded to similar conditions in society and overcame them.
7. To be able to discuss the effects of prejudice, xenophobia and fear of job security on the population.
8. To gain an appreciation of the contributions made by these three groups towards the development of the United States.

SKILLS

1. To understand and use vocabulary words associated with the topic under study.
2. To compare and contrast.
3. To read and interpret maps, graphs and pictographs.
4. To be able to use a variety of reference materials to research a topic.
5. To be able to identify landforms and bodies of water associated with the area under study.

APPROACH

1. Discussion (of materials from text, magazines and/or their sources depending on the material available at the individual school).
2. Discussion and study of maps and graphs.
3. Readings from text and other materials.
4. Oral and/or written reports.

PROCEDURE

During the study of the United States (the land of immigrants) assign—as homework—the task of looking up for discussion on inscription written on the Statue of Liberty. Introduce unit with a discussion of what the

inscription meant to post Civil War, industrial American (U.S.). Also discuss what it meant to the immigrants that read it as they passed.

The first week of the unit should be dedicated to introducing the lesson, providing background material and meeting with students to discuss and assign research topics that will be due the final week.

SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR RESEARCH

1. The black migration north
2. Italian immigrants to the United States
3. Slavic immigrants to the United States
4. The Dillingham Commission
5. The immigrant and the northern job market
6. Assimilation and the American immigrant
7. Immigrant religions
8. Prejudice and its effects on the immigrant⁹.
10. Report on successful individual from one of the groups studied
11. Political machines and immigrant communities
12. Contributions of one of the groups studied
13. Student choice—with approval
14. Have student(s) choose a city that one of the immigrant group settled in the report on conditions that might have attracted them to the area.

The invention
of steamship
travel

SOME VOCABULARY WORDS

Immigrant
Xenophobia
Urban
Rural
Stereotype
Ghetto
Assimilation
Political machines
Native born American

Prejudice
Emigration

This unit is intended for eighth grade students engaged in the study of United States history. It can be tailored to fit the needs of all students. It can be adapted to any text on United States with a section on immigrants.

The unit should last a minimum of five weeks. In five weeks, the unit may be broken down as follows (weekly topics are not written in behavior terms):

Week 1: Introduction and background information

Week 2: Italians as urban immigrants to America

Week 3: Slaves as urban immigrants to America

Week 4: Blacks and the northern migration to urban cities

Week 5: Review, evaluation and presentation of reports and/or projects.

SAMPLE BREAKDOWN OF TOPICS ON DAILY BASIS

I. *Week 2: Italians as Urban Immigrants to American*

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|-------------|---|
| First Day: | To know two reasons why Italians emigrated from Italy |
| Second Day: | To discuss attitudes of Americans towards the Italian immigrant |
| Third Day: | To know what skills and ideas first generation Italians brought with them |
| Fourth Day: | To compare ideas and attitudes of first and second generation Italians. To know how well second generation Italians assimilated |
| Fifth Day: | To appreciate the contributions of Italians to society. |

II. *Week 3: Slavs as Urban Immigrant to America*

(teacher will decide which Slavic country is to be viewed)

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|-------------|--|
| First Day: | To understand reasons why Slavs came to America |
| Second Day: | To discuss attitudes of Americans toward the immigrants |
| Third Day: | To discuss the type of jobs these unskilled laborers were forced to take |
| Fourth Day: | To compare skills and attitudes of first and second generation Slavs |
| Fifth Day: | To appreciate the contributions of Slavs to American develop. |

Week 4: *Blacks and the Northern Migration to Urban Cities*

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|-------------|--|
| First Day: | To understand reasons why blacks left the South in such large numbers |
| Second Day: | To discuss northern attitudes towards blacks |
| Third Day: | To know what conditions created the need for unskilled labor at that time |
| Fourth Day: | To discuss conditions that might have hindered blacks attempts at assimilation |
| Fifth Day: | To appreciate the contributions of blacks towards the development of America. |

SAMPLE LESSON PLANS

Week 2, First Day:

Objective To know two reasons why Italians emigrated from Italy.

Statement Economic conditions in Italy and high hopes encouraged many Italians to emigrate

Materials Standard classroom atlas with two or more of the following maps in it: political, topography, agriculture, industrial and resources.

Discuss, with students, the above maps. Have students locate Italy on the maps. Choose two other countries (for comparative purposes) and locate them. Have students make list—while discussing orally—of the landforms found in Italy, the resources, industry, etc. The discussion questions should be designed to lead students to the following conclusions:

The capital of Italy is Rome.

More than 2/3 of the country is mountainous.

The mountainous regions only encouraged sheep herding.

Vineyards are found mostly in the northeast.

Italy's main resources are: natural gas, water power, sulfur, mercury and bauxite.

Italy lacked major industries.

Less than 1/3 of the land was suitable for farming.

Italy was facing overpopulation at time of emigration.

Teacher will help student to understand data to infer that those conditions, among others, made it difficult for most Italians to achieve economic prosperity. That and the lure of abundant opportunities encouraged Italians to emigrate in large numbers.

Week 3, Fourth Day:

Objective Using quotes and statements student will discuss and compare skills and attitudes of first and second generation Poles.

Statement Second generation Slavs showed very little progress (advancement) over that of their parents.

Materials Statements based on bibliography. In particular the essay by John Bodnar, "Immigration and readings from teacher's Modernization; the case of Slavic Peasants in Industrial American".

Discuss with students the prose section of unit on Slavs. After discussion randomly pass out index cards to groups of students. Inform student that he/she will have one minute to study the statement given in group. He will then be called on to lead a four minute class discussion on that theme. Suggested statements:(a) "Like their fathers, second generation Slavs showed an aversion to change positions once he was established in his job." (b) The immigrant parent exerted a great deal of influence in shaping the career aspirations of the child. (c) The continuation of working-class Slavic attitudes was insured by the absence of social mobility. (d) "Work was still conceived as an instrument of survival rather than a means to . . . advancement." (e) Second generation Slavs continued to live in Slavic communities where they were educated in the old values of first generation Slavs.

Teacher should end lesson with summary that ties everything together.

Week 4, First Day:

Objective To know why blacks left the South for northern cities.

Statement Frustrated with their efforts to advance in southern cities (rural areas) blacks headed north in search of jobs and a better lifestyle.

Materials Text (or handouts if text is not available), "The AfroAmerican In United States History".

Begin lesson with a discussion of the objective (written on board). Based on discussions during week of introduction, have student infer as to why they think blacks migrated north.

Student and/or teacher will read and discuss pages 230233 of chapter 21.

POST READING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why did blacks leave their homes for the migration north?

Why do most people dislike living in the ghetto?

What was the Niagara Movement?

Who were blacks treated in the big cities of the South?

How did the decrease in European immigration help or hinder blacks?

Did blacks find the “good life” that they were seeking in the northern cities?
Which European group was forced to live in ghettos in Europe?
What was the role of the KKK in southern thinking?

The following materials—taken from the student bibliography—are part of the school system’s Social Studies book inventory. They may be found, at least one copy for duplication, in most schools or at the supervisor’s office.

The pages and chapters listed below all teach or reinforce the daily objectives listed earlier. These materials will greatly facilitate the teaching of this unit. Two or more of these sources are adequate to cover the objectives. The AfroAmerican book should be one of those selected.

“The AfroAmerican In U.S. History”, Chapters 19, 21, 24 and 26.

“Many Americans—One Nation”, units VI, VII and VIII.

“The United States and the Other Americans”, pages 124-134.

“The United States: Past and Present”, units VI and VII.

“We The People—A History of the United States”, pages 292-362.

STUDENT BIBLIOGRAPHY

GOLDSHLAG, Patricia, “ *Many Americans—One Nation* ”, Noble and Noble Publishers, Inc., 1974.

This textbook examines the roles of various ethnic groups as they blend to create a unified nation. Teaches children that we are all different but all of us contributed to the whole.

KELLY, Eric P., “ *The Land and People of Poland* ”, J.B. Lippincott Comp. 1972 (revised).

This book tells about the conditions in Poland and its people. It tells about the limited natural resources of

Poland and how that situation impacted on the lives of the Polish population.

KING , Allen Y., et. al., " *The United States and the Other Americans* " MacMillian Publishing Co., Inc., 1982.

This text examines the growth and development of the United States in comparison to the growth and development of the other Americans.

KONTOS , Peter G., et. al., " *The United States: Past and Present* ", Cambridge Box Company, 1975.

This text is a comparison of the United States as it existed in the past and as it exist today.

WINWAR , Frances, " *The Land and People of Italy* ", Lippincott, 1972 (revised).

This book examines the relationship between the land and people of Italy.

SANDIFER , Jawn A., ed., et. al., " *The AfroAmerican In United States History* ", Globe Book Comp., N.Y., N.Y., 1972.

This text discusses the plight of blacks from the empires of Africa to the Civil Rights movement as it related to the United States.

TEACHER BIBLIOGRAPHY

BROMEY , David G. & *LONGINO* , Charles F., " *White Racism and Black American s* ", Schenkman Publishing Company, Inc., Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1972.

This book examines the struggles of blacks in a society permeated with white racism. The book also discusses white attempts to dominate blacks and how blacks responded to those attempts.

DeSANTIS, Vincent P., " *The Shaping of Modern America: 1877-1916* ". The Forum Press, Inc., Arlington Heights, Ill., 1973.

This book discusses the economic, political and social forces and/or conditions that played important parts in the development of post Civil War America.

HANSEN , Marcus L., " *The Immigrant In American History* ", Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1940.

This book examines the roles that immigrants played in the creation and development of American society.

JONES , Maldwyn A., " *American Immigration* ", Univ. of Chicago Press, Chicago, Ill., 1960.

This book discussed the reasons for emigration and immigration by approaching the study from those two directions we can see the interrelationship of events around the world.

McDONAGH, Edward C., " *Ethnic Relations In the United States* ", Negro Universities Press, Westport, CT., 1953.

This book examines the statuses of various ethnic groups in the United States using social, educational, legal and economic success as a measuring stick. The book helps us to “understand”, “analyze” and “improve” ethnic relations.

MELTZER, Milton, “In Their Own Words—A History of the American Negro 1865–1915”, 1965.

This book is a collection of essays, diaries, speeches and letters, etc., that allows blacks to tell their own story from 1619 to 1865.

NELLI, Humbert S., “From Immigrants to Ethnic: The Italian In-Americans”, Oxford Univ. Press, 1983.

This book examines the transformation of Italians from a family centered immigrant to that of a communal thinking ethnic struggling towards a common goal.

SMITH, Richard M., “Emigration and Immigration”, Charles Scribner’s Sons, New York, N.Y., 1890.

This book studies the causes and effects of emigration and immigration. We must not only study the reasons immigrants came to the United States, but we must also know why they left their homes to start anew.

SOWELL, Thomas, “American Ethnic Groups”, The Urban Institute, Yale University Press, 1978.

This book discusses the historical development of ethnic groups in the United States. Its main focus is on how well these groups assimilated (how were they allowed to grow, prosper, create, participate and function) in the United States.

THOMAS, Brinkley, “Migration and Urban Development”, Methuen & Co., LTD., London, England, 1972.

This book examines the effects of migration on urban development and viceversa. It studies the effects, also, of migration on the cities. Case studies are international in scope.

THOMAS, Lydio F., “The Italian In American: The Progressive View, 1891 - 1914” Center for Migration studies of New York, Inc., New York, N.Y., 1972

This book studies the immigration of Italians to the United States from 1891 to 1914. It focuses on their role in a growing, urban, industrialized society. The book is a collection of essays on Italian life in America that can easily be studied in separate parts to address specific topics.

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