



Yale-New Haven
Teachers Institute®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1999 Volume III: Immigration and American Life

The Italian Immigrant Experience in America (1870-1920)

Guide for Curriculum Unit 99.03.06

by Joan A. Rapczynski

The curriculum unit presented, The Italian Immigrant Experience in America (1870-1920) is to be incorporated into the U.S. History II survey course required of all eleventh graders. The unit will focus on the Italian immigrant experience between the years 1870 and 1920. The unit is divided into five main categories; reasons for leaving their birthland, experiences during the crossing, treatment and procedures followed while at Ellis Island, immediate settlement, and examples of prejudice and discrimination. As the general school population of certain high schools in New Haven is rather diverse, it is imperative that teachers embrace as many ethnic and racial groups as possible. I believe that by studying the various groups students will learn not only about the differences in their cultures and backgrounds, but shared experiences as well. America has become a nation of immigrants; person's of many nationalities, languages, customs, and religions. To tell their story is also to tell the story of the United States. Oscar Handlin in *The Uprooted* begins his introduction, "Once I thought to write a history of the immigrants in America. Then I discovered that the immigrants were American history."

(Recommended for U.S. History, grade 11.)

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