



Unit 12: Immigration in the Industrial Age

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Section 1: Introduction

America is often seen as a land of immigrants. In the 19th century, millions of immigrants came to this country from Europe. Many of them settled in New Hampshire and took up jobs in the factories and mills that had recently been built throughout the state. Immigrants faced many challenges, but their traditions and cultures helped make New Hampshire the way it is today.

As you learn more about immigration in the industrial age, ask yourself the following questions:

- How has immigration shaped New Hampshire?
- Why did people come to New Hampshire?
- What was it like to be an immigrant?
- How did people respond to immigrants?



Section 2: The Great Wave

Why did people immigrate to a new country, and when did they come to America?

There have been three periods of time when many immigrants came to New Hampshire.

The first period was when the colony of New Hampshire was settled by Europeans in the 1600s and 1700s. Most of these immigrants came from England or Scotland.

The second period was during the 1800s and early 1900s when the development of big factories and mills offered jobs for many newcomers. So many people came to New Hampshire during this period that it is often called the Great Wave of immigration.

Most of the people who came during the Great Wave were also from Europe, but they came from many different countries, including Ireland, Italy, Sweden, Finland, Norway, Germany, Poland, Russia, and Greece. Another large group of immigrants came from Canada during the Great Wave. Their families had immigrated to Canada many years before from France, so they were known as French-Canadians.

The third period is happening right now! Many immigrants to New Hampshire in the past few decades have come from Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

Push-Pull Factors

Why would people leave their homes and come to America?

People left their native countries for lots of reasons, but usually they felt pushed out of their native land. This is called a push factor. They immigrated to the United States for lots of reasons too, but usually there was something in America that pulled them here. This is called a pull factor.



Video: Mason Explains: Push-Pull Factors

Why People Immigrated! Moving from one country to another in the 1800s and early 1900s was very hard, but millions of people still choose to become immigrants and come to the United States to start new lives. This video explains the push factors that made immigrants want to leave their home countries and the pull factors that brought immigrants to America.

Why did they come to New Hampshire?

The United States was a big place, and most of it was unsettled in the 19th century, with lots of opportunities for those who were willing to work hard.

Immigrants could choose to live almost anywhere in the country, so why did they come to New Hampshire? The main reason so many immigrants came to the Granite State was because New Hampshire offered lots of jobs during this period. Factories and mills had recently been built all over the state, and new industries had been started in New Hampshire, all of which required workers to keep them going.

The Irish

The first large group of immigrants to arrive during the Great Wave were the Irish in the 1840s. They were pushed out of Ireland because of a terrible famine. Famines happen when there isn't enough food to feed everyone.

In Ireland, the famine was caused by a plant disease that killed most of the potatoes in Ireland. Potatoes had been the main source of food for most of the people living there. Over 1 million people died in Ireland from the potato famine, and about 1 million more emigrated to America. Some of these Irish immigrants settled in Manchester and got jobs working in the mills.



French-Canadians

Another large group of immigrants to arrive in New Hampshire during the Great Wave were the French-Canadians, who traveled to New Hampshire in special trains hired to bring workers from Canada to the Granite State's mills and factories. Over 300,000 French-Canadians came to New Hampshire between 1850 and 1900.

Europeans

During those same years, hundreds of thousands of immigrants came to New Hampshire from other countries too, like Germany, Russia, Italy, Greece, and the Scandinavian countries of Norway, Finland, and Sweden. These people worked in big mills and factories in places like Manchester, Nashua, Claremont, Dover, and Rochester.

Where did they settle in the Granite State?

Groups of immigrants also worked together in specific industries.

- Many Russians worked in the paper mills of the north country.
- Swedish immigrants settled around Concord to work in the granite quarries.
- Greeks opened restaurants, coffee houses, and candy stores in the seacoast region.
- Scandinavians cut timber and worked in the logging industry in the northern part of the state.

Smaller groups of immigrants from one country or another formed in other parts of the state as well.



Let's Review!

What are the big ideas in this section?

1. **Great Wave:** There have been three different periods of immigration to America through the nation's history. The second period from 1840 to 1924 is known as the Great Wave because more immigrants came to America during those years than at any other time.
2. **Push and Pull Factors:** Push factors like war, poverty, famine, or intolerance cause immigrants to leave their home countries. Pull factors like jobs, education, and freedom cause immigrants to decide to come to America.
3. **Why New Hampshire?** Many immigrants came to New Hampshire during the Great Wave because there were lots of jobs and opportunities for a better life in the Granite State.
4. **Who Came to the Granite State?** During the Great Wave, Irish immigrants were the first big group who came to New Hampshire. French-Canadians were the second big group along with people from Germany, Russia, Italy, Greece, and the Scandinavian countries. Groups of immigrants worked together in specific industries.



Section 3: The Immigrant Experience in New Hampshire

What was it like to be an immigrant?

Leaving behind their homes and starting a new life in a different country was a difficult experience for most immigrants. The journey itself was often hard and expensive.

Video: Mason Explains: How Immigrants Traveled

The Long Journey. During the Great Wave of Immigration from 1840 to 1924, traveling wasn't easy. You couldn't just hop on an airplane. How did immigrants get from their native countries in Europe, on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, to New Hampshire? Watch this video to find out what the trip was like.

What could immigrants bring with them?

Most immigrants did not arrive in New Hampshire with very much. Usually they could only carry one bag or suitcase with them to hold all of their possessions. They often had to leave everything else behind. Sometimes people could bring their most treasured possessions, but only if the items were small and easily carried. Furniture, animals, household goods, books, and toys were too big to be carried and too expensive to ship. Most people only brought a few changes of clothes with them and maybe some photographs of loved ones. Children were often allowed to bring only one toy for the long trip.

How did immigrants get settled in America once they arrived?

Most immigrants did not have much money either. Finding good jobs and better opportunities for their families were why they came to America in the first place, but they had to work hard to get those things. Once they arrived in New Hampshire, they often found a neighborhood or community where other people from their country had settled. If they were lucky, they had



family members or friends already living in New Hampshire who would help them get settled. If they didn't know anyone, then strangers from their home country might let them stay in their homes for a few nights until they could find jobs and places to live.

Luckily, there were plenty of jobs, so it wasn't long before they could start earning money. Immigrants usually lived in a boardinghouse or shared an apartment with another family when they first arrived. They needed to save up money from their jobs before they could afford bigger and nicer places to live.

Most of them had to learn English and adapt to American ways, which were very different from the way people lived in Europe. They would, in time, become Americans, but leaving their old ways behind and learning new customs was very hard for some immigrants.

Let's Review!

What are the big ideas in this section?

1. **A Long, Hard Journey:** The journey to America usually took a long time. It meant going over great distances traveling by foot, by boat, or by train. The journey was likely expensive, difficult, crowded, and uncomfortable.
2. **Carry Their Possessions:** Immigrants could only bring with them what they could carry. This meant most people had just a few items of clothing and special keepsakes.
3. **When They Arrived:** While immigrants tried to find jobs and housing in America, friends or strangers from their old country might let them stay with them. Although immigrants came for a better life, it was hard work to start over in a new country.



4. Plenty of Jobs: In New Hampshire, there were plenty of jobs for new immigrants. While they started new jobs and found permanent housing, they also learned English and adapted to American ways.



Section 4: Immigrant Communities in New Hampshire

How did immigrants adapt to life in New Hampshire?

Once they arrived in New Hampshire and got settled with somewhere to live and jobs, immigrants still had to adapt to life in their new country. Often, immigrants found it easier to live in neighborhoods where other immigrants from their native country lived. These neighborhoods became known as ethnic communities, which were groups of people who have common interests, traditions, or needs all based on a common national heritage.

Many times, the people in these communities were related to one another, as families tended to emigrate to America and settle together. Grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins could move together to a neighborhood or community where others from their country lived. Sometimes entire villages from Europe would resettle in a neighborhood of a New Hampshire town or city.

Neighborhoods where many immigrants from one country settled sometimes became known by the name of their native country. For example, for many years a section of Epping was known as "Little Italy" because so many Italians lived there.

Foreign Languages

These ethnic communities were usually a mix of old traditions from Europe and new American customs. It wasn't unusual for foreign languages to be more common in these neighborhoods than English. Often there were foreign-language signs, menus, and even newspapers. Several of these ethnic communities had parks, buildings, or street names in their native language that still exist today.



Community Organizations

The people in these communities also started organizations for immigrants from a particular country, ethnicity, or culture. For example, clubs called mutual aid societies provided food, housing, and money to those of their members in need. They hosted dances and parties so people could listen to music from the old country, eat traditional food, and speak their native language. Children often took classes at these clubs so they wouldn't forget the language and traditions of their parents and grandparents.

Some examples of mutual aid societies in New Hampshire are the Pericles Club for Greeks in Manchester, the Finnish Society Hall in Newport, and the Polish American Citizens Club in Nashua. Immigrants also gathered in less formal locations like Greek coffeehouses or Italian restaurants.

Schools

Ethnic schools were another way that children could learn about the culture of the old country. French schools were particularly popular since there was such a large number of French-Canadians in New Hampshire. Many of these schools taught half their classes in French and half in English so their students would become fluent in both.

Religious Organizations

Churches were particularly important for these ethnic groups because many immigrants belonged to a different religion from the people who were already in New Hampshire, who were mostly Protestant Christians. The Irish, French-Canadians, and Italians were Catholic Christians. Russians, Poles, and Germans could be Jewish, Catholic, or Orthodox Christian. Immigrants from Greece were generally Greek Orthodox.

All of these faiths had their own beliefs, practices, holy days, and traditions. Many churches started their own schools, mutual aid societies, or social clubs to build a stronger sense of community.



Businesses

Lots of immigrants started their own businesses once they arrived in New Hampshire.

One of the most successful was a bank organized by French-Canadians called La Caisse Populaire, Ste-Marie, which means in French “the people’s bank.” It was founded to help French-Canadians get loans for things like buying houses or starting businesses. It still exists today, only now it is known as St. Mary’s Bank.

Another popular business started by an immigrant was Swenson Granite. John Swenson started the company shortly after he arrived in America from Sweden in 1883. A family owned business for generations, it became one of the biggest granite countries in the United States.

These ethnic communities were comforting for immigrants who were trying to learn about their new country but didn’t want to forget their heritage. Eventually, these immigrants learned English, embraced American food and customs, and adopted American ways alongside their own traditions.

Unfortunately, though, Americans did not always welcome these new groups of people.

Let’s Review!

What are the big ideas in this section?

1. Ethnic Communities: Immigrants tended to settle in neighborhoods with other people who had come from their home country. Being with people who shared their culture helped them make the transition to America.
2. Mixing New World and Old World Culture: Ethnic neighborhoods had lots of reminders of immigrants’ home countries. These areas honored Old World traditions while embracing new American ways as well.



3. Organizations for Immigrants: There were many types of organizations in ethnic neighborhoods to help immigrants in New Hampshire. Schools, aid societies, churches, social clubs, stores, and businesses were just a few. Many places in ethnic neighborhoods spoke English as well as the immigrants' native language.

4. Bridging Old and New: Children often took classes in the languages and traditions of their parents so they wouldn't forget Old World ways. They also helped their parents and grandparents adapt to new languages and customs of the New World.



Section 5: Responses to Immigration

How did the people already living in New Hampshire feel about the immigrants?

Before the Great Wave of Immigration, most people who lived in New Hampshire were descended from English or Scottish settlers. Some of their families had lived in New Hampshire for generations. Most of the people who lived in the state shared a language, a religion, and a culture.

When large numbers of Irish and French-Canadian immigrants began arriving in the Granite State in the 1840s and 1850s, many people living in New Hampshire were afraid that their way of life would become overwhelmed by these new cultures. Even as the immigrants were trying to become more American, the Americans could only see how different the immigrants were from the people who were already living here.

Some Americans decided to help the new immigrants get used to life in this country by teaching them English and showing them American ways. Other Americans simply went about their lives and didn't pay much attention to the new arrivals, especially as the immigrants tended to settle in cities while most people in New Hampshire still lived on farms in the country. Their paths simply didn't cross very often.

But many Americans had a poor opinion of immigrants, even though they might not have known very many of them. For example, some people looked down on the Irish, believing they were lazy and more committed to the Catholic Church than American democracy. They refused to give jobs to Irish workers and sometimes wouldn't do business with anyone who was Irish.

Manchester Riot of 1854

By the early 1850s, so many Irish had arrived in Manchester that people feared the city was being taken over by them.



In the summer of 1854, a group of angry Granite Staters attacked a Catholic church where many Irish immigrants worshipped. They threw stones at the church and smashed all the windows in the building.

A man who lived near the church known as “Uncle John” (his real name was John H. Maynard) raced to the steps of the church and talked to the crowd of people. He convinced them to leave the church alone and go home without hurting anyone or doing any more damage. Luckily, the Manchester police arrived to prevent any further violence.

This riot was small, and it was one of the few anti-immigrant events in New Hampshire. In other American cities, like Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Boston, immigrants were treated much worse.

But people in New Hampshire were still worried about the number of immigrants coming to the state. As each new group came—the Irish, the French-Canadians, the Italians, the Russians, the Poles, the Greeks—Granite Staters would become more worried, but eventually all these groups became part of New Hampshire society. As people got used to these new cultures and adopted some of their traditions, these immigrants didn’t seem so foreign anymore.

Let’s Review!

What are the big ideas in this section?

1. **New Hampshire Had One Culture:** Before the Great Wave of immigration started in 1840, most people living in New Hampshire shared one language, religion, and culture.
2. **Scared of Differences:** When people of different cultures arrived during the Great Wave of immigration, many people in New Hampshire were afraid their way of life would be overwhelmed by the new ways.



3. Various Reactions: Some people helped the new immigrants, while some didn't pay much attention to them since they didn't see them that often.

4. Negative Reactions: But some people had a poor opinion of the various groups of immigrants who had newly arrived and were different from people in New Hampshire. They refused to help them and even participated in riots against immigrants.



Section 6: How Immigration Shaped New Hampshire

Did immigrants change New Hampshire?

By the middle of the 20th century, the immigrant groups who came to New Hampshire during the Great Wave had become part of New Hampshire's heritage. By then, those immigrants had raised their children and grandchildren in the state, and those kids—many of whom were born in New Hampshire—were as American as anyone else.

At the same time, some of the traditions and customs that the immigrants brought with them from the old country had become part of New Hampshire life—things like sports, games, holidays, and food.

See if you recognize any of these foods that were all introduced to America by immigrants during the Great Wave:

- poutine (French-Canadian)
- baklava (Greek)
- bagels (Jewish)
- ice cream (Italian)
- pasta (Italian)
- piroshki (Russian)
- potato pancakes (Jewish, German, & Polish)
- kielbasa (Polish)

The descendants of immigrants from the Great Wave made many contributions to New Hampshire. They started businesses and organizations like Grappone Automotive, Swenson Granite, Van Otis Chocolates, St. Mary's Bank, Saint Anselm College, and many, many more.

Many of the churches founded by immigrants during the Great Wave are still functioning, and some hold cultural festivals to celebrate their heritage. Greek festivals have stayed particularly popular, with Manchester's annual Glendi festival as the biggest in the state.



As the immigrants became Americans, they no longer needed the mutual aid societies and some of the other clubs and organizations that had been formed during the Great Wave. Many of those groups ceased to exist by the middle of the 20th century.

Nevertheless, reminders of these immigrant groups to New Hampshire are all around us. How many examples of New Hampshire's multicultural past can you find in your community? Here's a hint: start by looking at people's last names and what country those names likely came from. How many nations are represented by our last names?

Video: Mason Explains: Melting Pot versus Salad Bowl

How Do We All Come Together? American culture is a mixture of different cultures from around the world. Traditions, food, clothing, art, and beliefs from many different countries mixed together during the Great Wave to produce a culture that was unique to America. But how exactly do these cultures mix together? Do they blend together as they would in a melting pot? Or are different parts of these cultures tossed together like the ingredients in a salad?

Let's Review!

What are the big ideas in this section?

1. New Hampshire Culture: By the middle of the 20th century, the cultures of Great Wave immigrant groups had become part of New Hampshire heritage.
2. Traditions Remain: Many traditions and customs the Great Wave immigrants brought with them are now part of New Hampshire life. Sports, holidays, games, and food in the Granite State have all been influenced by immigrants.



3. Organizations Remain: Many businesses and churches that were started by descendants of immigrants from the Great Wave are an important part of New Hampshire today.

4. Melting Pot or Salad Bowl?: American culture is a mix of many cultures brought by immigrants. Some people think the cultures blend together like ingredients in a melting pot. Some people think the cultures mix together like ingredients in a salad bowl.