A NATION OF IMMIGRANTS

ARRIVAL
Imigration Act of 1924

Gaining Entry Legal and Illegal
How has the door opened and closed?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:
How have attitudes and policies towards immigrants changed over the years?
In what ways have different groups been excluded and why?
How can the law act as an instrument of exclusion?

Who was shut out and why?

AIM
The students will...
• Explain why “the new immigration” came to an end after the First World War
• Explore the motivations for the immigration quota system.
• Imagine how the immigration law of 1924 would affect a family of immigrants from Southern or Eastern Europe

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE:
This lesson will work best if the students are familiar with the “new immigration” of the 1880s–1910s, World War I and its aftermath in the United States, particularly the fears of communist infiltration.

MATERIALS
Cartoons
1. The Only Way to Handle It
2. Close the Gate

DOCUMENTS
B: Race of Immigrants, Fiscal Year 1906
C: Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer Makes “The Case against the Reds”
D: Immigration Act of 1924
E: An “Un-American Bill”: A Congressman Denounces Immigration Quotas
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I. Opening activity
Show the students the cartoon #1 “The Only Way to Handle It” and #2 “Close the Gate.”

Cartoon #1
• What is the main message of the cartoon?
• What does this cartoon tell you about immigration laws after World War I?

Cartoon #2
• What fears does this cartoonist have about immigration?

Connection:
Imagine you are someone who plans to immigrate to the United States. How do the cartoons make you feel?

Review answers with the students.

Math connection: Draw a pie chart on the board with a very small slice representing the 3% in cartoon #1.

II. Background: What is a quota?

1. Explain to the class that after World War I the United States government passed a series of laws that restricted immigration by a system of quotas based on national origins.
2. Pass out the chart map “Races of immigrants” and the chart “Who was shut out?” and ask the students to work in pairs to figure out the answer to the following questions:
   a. What is a quota?
   b. How did quotas affect immigration to the United States?
   c. How did the immigration quotas affect the numbers of immigrants admitted to the United States? Which groups were most affected?
   d. According to the background text, what was the motivation for the quota system?

Review the answers with the students. For this activity, you may want to read aloud some selected statements in Document D based on arguments of Senator David Reed (R-PA) co-sponsor of the Immigration Act of 1924. Ask students if they feel that the motivation for the quotas is fair or reasonable.

III. Role play: How would this have affected me?
Now you are ready to put yourself in history.
Divide the students into groups of three to five. Each group will represent a family of immigrants making a statement to Congress about the proposed legislation to restrict immigration through a national quota system.
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Role Play Scenario: Immigration Act of 1924
Group C. Family of immigrants from Italy, Czechoslovakia, Russia, etc.

You are a family of immigrants from the European country of ________________. You came to the United States in 1910, leaving behind the youngest brother, who was too sickly for the journey and stayed behind with relatives. Thankfully, he survived World War I and has overcome his health problems. You can’t wait for him to join you in America and help with the family business!

There is only one problem: After World War I, Congress passed legislation that severely restricted the number of immigrants from your country. What do you do?

Task: You must testify before a Senate committee on immigration restriction.
1. Tell the story of why your family immigrated to the United States.
2. How might the immigration law of 1924 affect your family?
3. How do you respond to Senator Ellison DuRant Smith’s and Attorney General Palmer’s statements about immigrants?
4. Do you agree with Congressman Clancy’s assertion that the bill is “un-American”?

IV. Conclusion / Wrap up / Presentation
Groups should present their “testimonies” to Congress. During a group’s presentation, the audience should act as members of Congress and take careful notes.

Closing questions:
• What were the motivations of the immigration quotas of 1924?
• Who was shut out by the quotas?

EXTENSION IDEAS
1. A meatier way to approach this project is to assign more specific roles earlier in your study of immigration. That way, the students can undergo more profoundly the specific experiences of different groups of immigrants. A good way to do it would be to:
   • Assign groups of students different countries of origin.
   • Have them research factors that made them want to emigrate from that country between 1880 and World War I.
   • Research communities of immigrants in New York during the late 19th and early 20th centuries: What kinds of work did they do? Where did they live? What were some of their contributions to American culture?
   • What happened in their country of origin during World War I?

As a creative project idea, the students could
• Make a mock-up of a tenement apartment in a shoebox
• Pack a suitcase for one family member for his or her trip to the United States.

This sort of activity would take a week or two, but it would make the student reactions to the immigration law of 1924 much more visceral.
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2. Have the students compare 19th- and early 20th-century anti-illegal immigrant statements today.

Examples:

a. From a CNN report on the immigration protests of 2006:

Once again, the streets of our country were taken over today by people who don’t belong here....Taxpayers who have surrendered highways, parks, sidewalks and a lot of television news time on all these cable news networks to mobs of illegal aliens are not happy about it .... America's illegal aliens are becoming ever bolder. March through our streets and demand your rights. Excuse me? You have no rights here, and that includes the right to tie up our towns and cities and block our streets. At some point this could all turn very violent as Americans become fed up with the failure of their government to address the most pressing domestic issue of our time.

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b. An anti-Chinese pamphlet from the Knights of Labor:

MEN FROM CHINA come here to do LAUNDRY WORK. The Chinese Empire contains 600,000,000 (six hundred millions) inhabitants.

The supply of these men is inexhaustible.

Every one doing this work takes BREAD from the mouths of OUR WOMEN.

So many have come of late, that to keep at work, they are obliged to cut prices.

And now, we appeal to the public, asking them will they be partners to a deal which is only one of their many onward marches in CRUSHING OUT THE INDUSTRIES OF OUR COUNTRY from our people by grasping them themselves. Will you oblige the AMERICAN LAUNDRIES to CUT THE WAGES OF THEIR PEOPLE by giving your patronage to the CHINAMEN?

We invite you to give a thorough investigation of the STEAM LAUNDRY BUSINESS of the country; in doing so you will find that not only does it GIVE EMPLOYMENT TO A VAST NUMBER OF WOMEN, but a great field of labor is opened to a great number of mechanics of all kinds whose wages are poured back into the trade of the country.

If this undesirable element “THE CHINESE EMIGRANTS” are not stopped coming here, we have no alternative but that we will have California and the Pacific Slope’s experience, and the end will be that our industries will be absorbed UNLESS we live down to their animal life.

We say in conclusion that the CHINAMAN is a labor consumer of our country without the adequate returns of prosperity to our land as is given by the labor of our people to our glorious country.

Our motto should be: “OUR COUNTRY, OUR PEOPLE, GOD, AND OUR NATIVE LAND.” Pioneer Laundry Workers Assembly, K. of L. Washington, D.C.

— Thos. Magee, Knights of Labor, 1878
Source: Library of Congress
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ARRIVAL
Immigration Act of 1924

“The Only Way to Handle It”
A 1921 cartoon commenting on the immigration debate
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ARRIVAL
Immigration Act of 1924

“Close the Gate”
The Chicago Tribune
July 5, 1919
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ARRIVAL
Immigration Act of 1924

Who Was Shut Out? Immigration Quotas, 1925–1927

In response to growing public opinion against the flow of immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe in the years following World War I, Congress passed the Quota Act of 1921 and the even more restrictive Immigration Act of 1924 (the Johnson-Reed Act). Initially, the 1924 law imposed a total quota on immigration of 165,000 — less than 20 percent of the pre-World War I average. Ceilings on the number of immigrants from any particular nation were based on the percentage of each nationality recorded in the 1890 census — a blatant effort to limit immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe, which mostly occurred after that date. In the first decade of the 20th century, an average of 200,000 Italians had entered the United States each year. With the 1924 Act, the annual quota for Italians was set at less than 4,000. This table shows the annual immigration quotas under the 1924 Immigration Act.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Northwest Europe and Scandinavia</th>
<th>Eastern and Southern Europe</th>
<th>Other Countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country Quota</td>
<td>Country Quota</td>
<td>Country Quota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>51,227</td>
<td>Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain and Northern Ireland</td>
<td>34,007</td>
<td>Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish Free State (Ireland)</td>
<td>28,567</td>
<td>Czechoslovakia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>9,561</td>
<td>Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>6,453</td>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>3,954</td>
<td>Romania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>2,789</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>2,081</td>
<td>Hungary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>1,648</td>
<td>Lithuania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>785</td>
<td>Latvia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>Spain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>Estonia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free City of Danzig</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>Albania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Greece</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (Number)</td>
<td>142,483</td>
<td>Total (Number)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (%)</td>
<td>86.5</td>
<td>Total (%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Total Annual immigrant quota: 164,667)

ARRIVAL
Immigration Act of 1924

From “Aliens or Americans” by Howard Grose

(EDITORIAL SECRETARY FOR THE AMERICAN BAPTIST HOME MISSION SOCIETY AND AN ORDAINED BAPTIST MINISTER.)
SOURCE: http://www.gutenberg.org/files/19198/19198-h/19198-h.htm
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ARRIVAL
Immigration Act of 1924

Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer Makes “The Case against the Reds”

The climate of repression established in the name of wartime security during World War I continued after the war as the U.S. government focused on communists, Bolsheviks, and “reds.” This anticommunist crusade climaxed during the “Palmer raids” of 1919–1921, when Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer’s men, striking without warning and without warrants, smashed union offices and the headquarters of Communist and Socialist organizations. Palmer believed that communism was “eating its way into the homes of the American workman.” Palmer charged in this 1920 essay that communism was an imminent threat and explained why Bolsheviks had to be deported.

In this brief review of the work which the Department of Justice has undertaken, to tear out the radical seeds that have entangled American ideas in their poisonous theories, I desire not merely to explain what the real menace of communism is, but also to tell how we have been compelled to clean up the country almost unaided by any virile legislation. Though I have not been embarrassed by political opposition, I have been materially delayed because the present sweeping processes of arrests and deportation of seditious aliens should have been vigorously pushed by Congress last spring. The failure of this is a matter of record in the Congressional files.

The anxiety of that period in our responsibility when Congress, ignoring the seriousness of these vast organizations that were plotting to overthrow the Government, failed to act has passed. The time came when it was obviously hopeless to expect the hearty cooperation of Congress in the only way to stamp out these seditious societies in their open defiance of law by various forms of propaganda.

Like a prairie-fire, the blaze of revolution was sweeping over every American institution of law and order a year ago. It was eating its way into the homes of the American workmen, its sharp tongues of revolutionary heat were licking the altars of the churches, leaping into the belfry of the school bell, crawling into the sacred corners of American homes, seeking to replace marriage vows with libertine laws, burning up the foundations of society.

Robbery, not war, is the ideal of communism. This has been demonstrated in Russia, Germany, and in America. As a foe, the anarchist is fearless of his own life, for his creed is a fanaticism that admits no respect of any other creed. Obviously it is the creed of any criminal mind, which reasons always from motives impossible to clean thought. Crime is the degenerate factor in society.

Upon these two basic certainties, first that the “Reds” were criminal aliens and secondly that the American Government must prevent crime, it was decided that there could be no nice distinctions drawn between the theoretical ideals of the radicals and their actual violations of our national laws. An assassin may have brilliant intellectuality, he may be able to excuse his murder or robbery with fine oratory, but any theory which excuses crime is not wanted in America. This is no place for the criminal to flourish, nor will he do so as long as the rights of common citizenship can be exerted to prevent him.
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Our Government in Jeopardy

It has always been plain to me that when American citizens unite upon any national issue they are generally right, but it is sometimes difficult to make the issue clear to them. If the Department of Justice could succeed in attracting the attention of our optimistic citizens to the issue of internal revolution in this country, we felt sure there would be no revolution. The Government was in jeopardy; our private information of what was being done by the organization known as the Communist Party of America, with headquarters in Chicago, of what was being done by the Communist Internationale under their manifesto planned at Moscow last March by Trotzky, Lenin and others addressed “To the Proletariats of All Countries,” of what strides the Communist Labor Party was making, removed all doubt. In this conclusion we did not ignore the definite standards of personal liberty, of free speech, which is the very temperament and heart of the people. The evidence was examined with the utmost care, with a personal leaning toward freedom of thought and word on all questions.

The whole mass of evidence, accumulated from all parts of the country, was scrupulously scanned, not merely for the written or spoken differences of viewpoint as to the Government of the United States, but, in spite of these things, to see if the hostile declarations might not be sincere in their announced motive to improve our social order. There was no hope of such a thing.

By stealing, murder and lies, Bolshevism has looted Russia not only of its material strength but of its moral force. A small clique of outcasts from the East Side of New York has attempted this, with what success we all know. Because a disreputable alien — Leon Bronstein, the man who now calls himself Trotzky — can inaugurate a reign of terror from his throne room in the Kremlin, because this lowest of all types known to New York can sleep in the Czar’s bed, while hundreds of thousands in Russia are without food or shelter, should Americans be swayed by such doctrines?

Such a question, it would seem, should receive but one answer from America.

My information showed that communism in this country was an organization of thousands of aliens who were direct allies of Trotzky. Aliens of the same misshapen caste of mind and indecencies of character, and it showed that they were making the same glittering promises of lawlessness, of criminal autocracy to Americans that they had made to the Russian peasants. How the Department of Justice discovered upwards of 60,000 of these organized agitators of the Trotzky doctrine in the United States is the confidential information upon which the Government is now sweeping the nation clean of such alien filth. . . .

Will Deportation Check Bolshevism?

Behind, and underneath, my own determination to drive from our midst the agents of Bolshevism with increasing vigor and with greater speed, until there are no more of them left among us, so long as I have the responsible duty of that task, I have discovered the hysterical methods of these revolutionary humans with increasing amazement and suspicion. In the confused information that sometimes reaches the people they are compelled to ask questions which involve the reasons for my acts against the “Reds.” I have been asked, for instance, to what extent deportation will check radicalism in this country. Why not ask what will become of the United States
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Government if these alien radicals are permitted to carry out the principles of the Communist Party as embodied in its so-called laws, aims and regulations?

There wouldn’t be any such thing left. In place of the United States Government we should have the horror and terrorism of bolsheviki tyranny such as is destroying Russia now. Every scrap of radical literature demands the overthrow of our existing government. All of it demands obedience to the instincts of criminal minds, that is, to the lower appetites, material and moral. The whole purpose of communism appears to be a mass formation of the criminals of the world to overthrow the decencies of private life, to usurp property that they have not earned, to disrupt the present order of life regardless of health, sex or religious rights. By a literature that promises the wildest dreams of such low aspirations that can occur to only the criminal minds communism distorts our social law. . .

It has been inferred by the “Reds” that the United States Government, by arresting and deporting them, is returning to the autocracy of Czardom, adopting the system that created the severity of Siberian banishment. My reply to such charges is that in our determination to maintain our government we are treating our alien enemies with extreme consideration. To deny them the privilege of remaining in a country which they have openly deplored as an unenlightened community, unfit for those who prefer the privileges of Bolshevism, should be no hardship. It strikes me as an odd form of reasoning that these Russian Bolsheviks who extol the Bolshevik rule should be so unwilling to return to Russia. The nationality of most of the alien “Reds” is Russian and German. There is almost no other nationality represented among them.

It has been impossible in so short a space to review the entire menace of the internal revolution in this country as I know it, but this may serve to arouse the American citizen to its reality, its danger, and the great need of united effort to stamp it out, under our feet, if needs be. It is being done. The Department of Justice will pursue the attack of these “Reds” upon the Government of the United States with vigilance, and no alien, advocating the overthrow of existing law and order in this country, shall escape arrest and prompt deportation.

It is my belief that while they have stirred discontent in our midst, while they have caused irritating strikes, and while they have infected our social ideas with the disease of their own minds and their unclean morals we can get rid of them and not until we have done so shall we have removed the menace of Bolshevism for good.

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ARRIVAL

Immigration Act of 1924

The Immigration Act Of 1924

The following passage features the reasoning of Senator Reed (R-Pa), one of the authors of the Immigration Act of 1924. The current law, passed in 1921, restricted the flow of immigrants to 3% of the number of immigrants of any particular country that had been living in the United States in 1910. Reed wanted to stem the flow to only 2% and was successful in persuading Congress to pass this restriction under the new legislation. Excerpted from “Our New Nordic Immigration Policy,” Literary Digest, May 10, 1924: 12-13.

The purposes of the new law, we read in a New York Times article by Senator Reed (Rep., Pa.), author of The Senate Bill, are:

1. America realizes that she is no longer a desert country in need of reinforcements to her population. She realizes that her present numbers and their descendants are amply sufficient to bring out her natural resources at a reasonable rate of progress. She knows that her prosperity at this moment far exceeds that of any other land in the world. She realizes that unless immigration is numerically restrained she will be overwhelmed by a vast migration of peoples from the war-stricken countries of Europe. Such a migration could not fail to have a baleful effect upon American wages and standards of living, and it would increase mightily our problem of assimilating the foreign-born who are already here. Out of these thoughts have risen the general demands for limitation of the number of immigrants who may enter this country.

2. There has come about a general realization of the fact that the races of men who have been coming to us in recent years are wholly dissimilar to the native-born Americans; that they are untrained in self-government - a faculty that it has taken the Northwestern Europeans many centuries to acquire. America was beginning also to smart under the irritation of her ‘foreign colonies’ - those groups of aliens, either in city slums or in country districts, who speak a foreign language and live a foreign life, and who want neither to learn our common speech nor to share our common life. From all this has grown the conviction that it was best for America that our incoming immigrants should hereafter be of the same races as those of us who are already here, so that each year’s immigration should so far as possible be a miniature America, resembling in national origins the persons who are already settled in our country. . . ."

It is true that 75 per cent of our immigration will hereafter come from Northwestern Europe; but it is fair that it should do so, because 75 per cent of us who are now here owe our origin to immigrants from those same countries. . . .
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The following two maps from the New York Times illustrate how change from a 3-percent immigration restriction law to a 2-percent immigration restriction law would affect the flow of immigration to America from each European nation.

The flow of immigration under the current 3% law

The flow of immigration under the proposed 2% law
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ARRIVAL

Immigration Act of 1924

An “Un-American Bill”: A Congressman Denounces Immigration Quotas

At the turn of the 20th century, unprecedented levels of immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe to the United States aroused public support for restrictive immigration laws. After World War I, which temporarily slowed immigration levels, anti-immigration sentiment rose again. Congress passed the Quota Act of 1921, limiting entrants from each nation to 3 percent of that nationality’s presence in the U.S. population as recorded by the 1910 census. As a result, immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe dropped to less than one-quarter of pre-World War I levels. Even more restrictive was the Immigration Act of 1924 (Johnson-Reed Act) that shaped American immigration policy until the 1960s. While it passed with only six dissenting votes, congressional debates over the Johnson-Reed Act revealed arguments on both sides of this question of American policy and national identity. For example, on April 8, 1924, Robert H. Clancy, a Republican congressman from Detroit with a large immigrant constituency, defended the “Americanism” of Jewish, Italian, and Polish immigrants and attacked the quota provisions of the bill as racially discriminatory and “un-American.”

Since the foundations of the American commonwealth were laid in colonial times over 300 years ago, vigorous complaint and more or less bitter persecution have been aimed at newcomers to our shores. Also the congressional reports of about 1840 are full of abuse of English, Scotch, Welsh immigrants as paupers, criminals, and so forth.

Old citizens in Detroit of Irish and German descent have told me of the fierce tirades and propaganda directed against the great waves of Irish and Germans who came over from 1840 on for a few decades to escape civil, racial, and religious persecution in their native lands. The “Know-Nothings,” lineal ancestors of the Ku-Klux Klan, bitterly denounced the Irish and Germans as mongrels, scum, foreigners, and a menace to our institutions, much as other great branches of the Caucasian race of glorious history and antecedents are berated to-day. All are riff-raff, unassimilables, “foreign devils,” swine not fit to associate with the great chosen people — a form of national pride and hallucination as old as the division of races and nations.

But to-day it is the Italians, Spanish, Poles, Jews, Greeks, Russians, Balkanians, and so forth, who are the racial lepers. And it is eminently fitting and proper that so many Members of this House with names as Irish as Paddy’s pig, are taking the floor these days to attack once more as their kind has attacked for seven bloody centuries the fearful fallacy of chosen peoples and inferior peoples. The fearful fallacy is that one is made to rule and the other to be abominated. . . .

In this bill we find racial discrimination at its worst — a deliberate attempt to go back 84 years in our census taken every 10 years so that a blow may be aimed at peoples of eastern and southern Europe, particularly at our recent allies in the Great War — Poland and Italy.

Jews in Detroit Are Good Citizens

Of course the Jews too are aimed at, not directly, because they have no country in Europe they can call their own, but they are set down among the inferior peoples. Much of the animus
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against Poland and Russia, old and new, with the countries that have arisen from the ruins of
the dead Czar’s European dominions, is directed against the Jew.

We have many American citizens of Jewish descent in Detroit, tens of thousands of them — ac-
tive in every profession and every walk of life. They are particularly active in charities and
merchandising. One of our greatest judges, if not the greatest, is a Jew. Surely no fair-minded
person with knowledge of the facts can say the Jews or Detroit are a menace to the city’s or the
country’s well-being. . . .

Forty or fifty thousand Italian-Americans live in my district in Detroit. They are found in all
walks and classes of life — common hard labor, the trades, business, law, medicine, dentistry,
art, literature, banking, and so forth.

They rapidly become Americanized, build homes, and make themselves into good citizens. They
brought hardihood, physique, hope, and good humor with them from their outdoor life in
Sunny Italy, and they bear up under the terrific strain of life and work in busy Detroit.

One finds them by thousands digging streets, sewers, and building foundations, and in the
automobile and iron and steel fabric factories of various sorts. They do the hard work that the
native-born American dislikes. Rapidly they rise in life and join the so-called middle and upper
classes. . . .

The Italian-Americans of Detroit played a glorious part in the Great War. They showed them-
selves as patriotic as the native born in offering the supreme sacrifice.

In all, I am informed, over 300,000 Italian-speaking soldiers enlisted in the American Army,
almost 10 percent of our total fighting force. Italians formed about 4 percent of the population
of the United States and they formed 10 percent of the American military force. Their casualties
were 12 percent. . . .

Detroit Satisfied With the Poles

I wish to take the liberty of informing the House that from my personal knowledge and observa-
tion of tens of thousands of Polish-Americans living in my district in Detroit that their Ameri-
canism and patriotism are unassailable from any fair or just standpoint.

The Polish-Americans are as industrious and as frugal and as loyal to our institutions as any
class of people who have come to the shores of this country in the past 300 years. They are es-
sentially home builders, and they have come to this country to stay. They learn the English lan-
guage as quickly as possible, and take pride in the rapidity with which they become assimilated
and adopt our institutions.

Figures available to all show that in Detroit in the World War the proportion of American
volunteers of Polish blood was greater than the proportion of Americans of any other racial
descent. . . .

Polish-Americans do not merit slander or defamation. If not granted charitable or sympathetic
judgment, they are at least entitled to justice and to the high place they have won in American
and European history and citizenship.
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The force behind the Johnson bill and some of its champions in Congress charge that opposition to the racial discrimination feature of the 1800 quota basis arises from “foreign blocs.” They would give the impression that 100 percent Americans are for it and that the sympathies of its opponents are of the “foreign-bloc” variety, and bear stigma of being “hyphenates.” I meet that challenge willingly. I feel my Americanism will stand any test.

Every American Has Foreign Ancestors

The foreign born of my district writhe under the charge of being called “hyphenates.” The people of my own family were all hyphenates — English-Americans, German-Americans, Irish-Americans. They began to come in the first ship or so after the Mayflower. But they did not come too early to miss the charge of anti-Americanism. Roger Williams was driven out of the Puritan colony of Salem to die in the wilderness because he objected “violently” to blue laws and the burning or hanging of rheumatic old women on witchcraft charges. He would not “assimilate” and was “a grave menace to American Institutions and democratic government.”

My family put 11 men and boys into the Revolutionary War, and I am sure they and their women and children did not suffer so bitterly and sacrifice until it hurt to establish the autocracy of bigotry and intolerance which exists in many quarters to-day in this country. Some of these men and boys shed their blood and left their bodies to rot on American battle fields. To me real Americanism and the American flag is the product of the blood of men and of the tears of women and children of a different type than the rampant “Americanizers” of to-day.

My mother’s father fought in the Civil War, leaving his six small children in Detroit when he marched away to the southern battle fields to fight against racial distinctions and protect his country.

My mother’s little brother, about 14 years old, and the eldest child, fired by the traditions of his family, plodded off to the battle fields to do his bit. He aspired to be a drummer boy and inspire the men in battle, but he was found too small to carry a drum and was put at the ignominious task of driving army mules, hauling cannons and wagons.

I learned more of the spirit of American history at my mother’s knee than I ever learned in my four years of high school study of American history and in my five and a half years of study at the great University of Michigan.

All that study convinces me that the racial discriminations of this bill are un-American. . . . It must never be forgotten also that the Johnson bill, although it claims to favor the northern and western European peoples only, does so on a basis of comparison with the southern and western European peoples. The Johnson bill cuts down materially the number of immigrants allowed to come from northern and Western Europe, the so-called Nordic peoples . . . .

Then I would be true to the principles for which my forefathers fought and true to the real spirit of the magnificent United States of to-day. I cannot stultify myself by voting for the present bill and overwhelm my country with racial hatreds and racial lines and antagonisms drawn even tighter than they are to-day. [Applause.]

http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5079
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To what extent were Americans justified in limiting immigration?

DISCOVERING HISTORY IN TODAY’S NEW YORK TIMES

1. In times of celebration or in times of need, immigrants have participated in activities that reinforce ties to their birth country and/or to their national heritage even if they were born in the United States but their relatives or immediate family were not. Locate two articles from The New York Times that make reference to the relationships between immigrants and their birth country, either in terms of assistance monetarily, assistance in the aftermath of a calamity, or in celebration of religious events or festivals. Prepare a cartoon indicating a position either for or against maintaining these ties. List several points in narrative format that you would make to further your position, based on the articles you selected.

2. Go to the government database on immigration at www.dhs.gov/ximgtn/statistics/publications/yearbook.shtm and review recent statistics on immigration totals. Also review the statistics presented during this lesson and compare these statistics to those that you have located at this Web site. An analysis of statistics is often only a starting point, with more information or qualifiers required by the researcher to make meaningful commentary. What further information would be useful to you in order to compare these sets of statistics?

3. Locate two articles from The New York Times that present information on immigration and the various positions of individuals in leadership positions on the issue of border security and/or immigration. Some might present the problems of or solutions to undocumented immigration. Others might concentrate on the security of United States borders and the problems of reunification of families. For each article create a “Who, What, Where, When, Why and How” chart on the information presented. If statistics are cited, determine if further inquiry is required to verify the basis of the numbers presented and their authenticity.

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