



Child Labor For many working-class families, children's wages—even though they were low—made up an essential part of the household income. These boys worked the night shift in a glass factory in Indiana. Lewis Hine, an investigative photographer for the National Child Labor Committee, took their picture at midnight, as part of a campaign to educate more prosperous Americans about the widespread employment of child labor and the harsh conditions in which many children worked. Library of Congress.

young as twelve to labor with a family member, but turn-of-the-century investigators estimated that about 10,000 additional boys, at even younger ages, were illegally employed in the mines.

Also at the bottom of the pay scale were most African Americans. Corporations and industrial manufacturers widely discriminated against them on the basis of race, and such prejudice was hardly limited to the South. After the Civil War, African American women who moved to northern cities were largely barred from office work and other new employment options; instead, they remained heavily concentrated in domestic service, with more than half employed as cooks or servants. African American men confronted similar exclusion. America's booming vertically integrated corporations turned black men away from all but the most menial jobs. In 1890, almost a third of black men worked in personal service. Employers in the North and West recruited, instead, a different kind of low-wage labor: newly arrived immigrants.

AP PRACTICES & SKILLS

CHANGE OVER TIME

How did conditions change for industrial workers in the late nineteenth century, and why?

IN YOUR OWN WORDS What new business practices arose in the late-nineteenth-century United States, and what impact did they have on employees, consumers, and the environment?

Immigrants, East and West

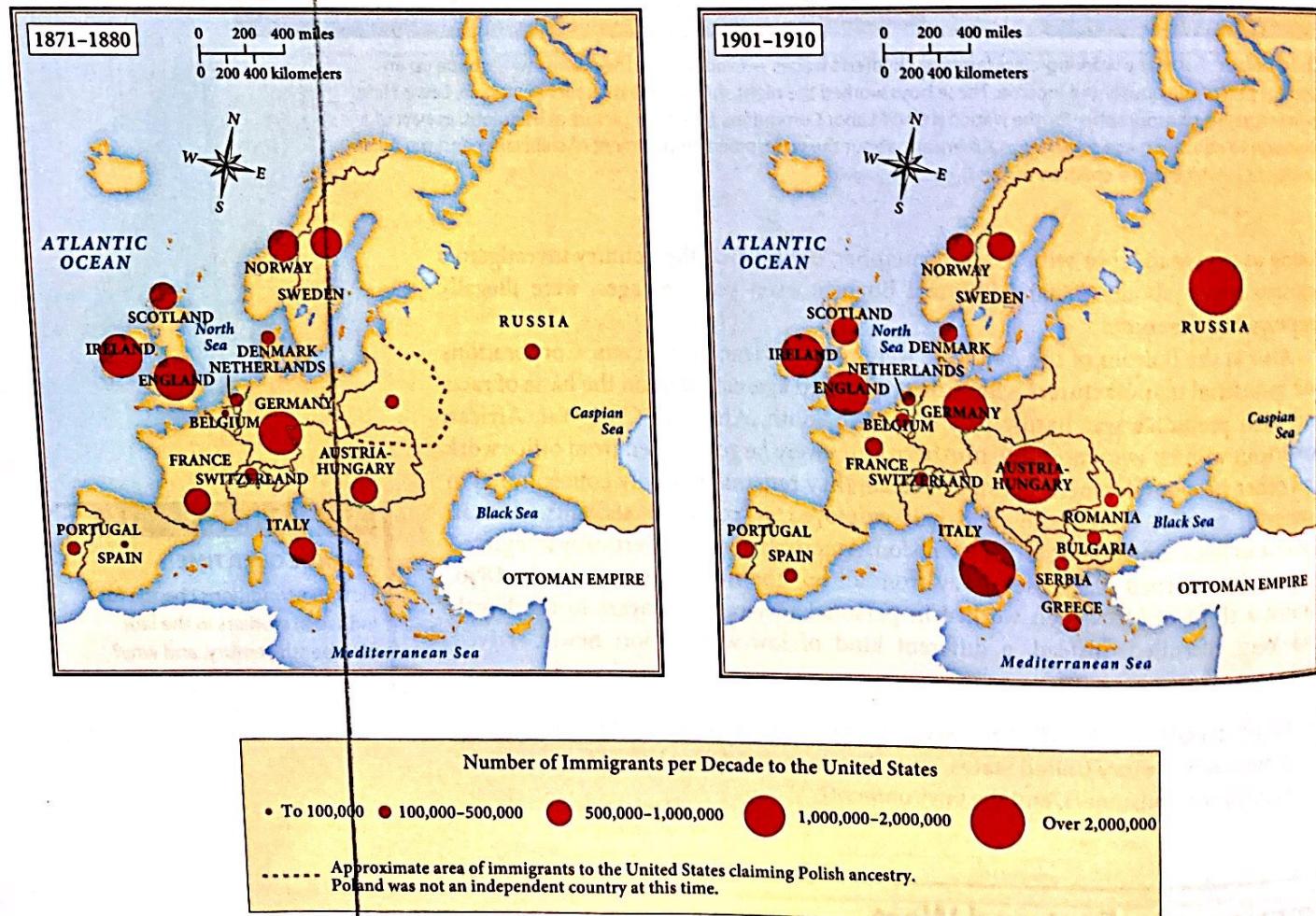
Across the globe, industrialization set people in motion with the lure of jobs. Between the Civil War and World War I, over 25 million immigrants entered the United States. The American working class became truly global, including not only people of

African and Western European descent but also Southern and Eastern Europeans, Mexicans, and Asians. In 1900, census-takers found that more than 75 percent of San Francisco and New York City residents had at least one parent who was foreign-born.

In the new industrial order, immigrants made an ideal labor supply. They took the worst jobs at low pay, and during economic downturns tens of thousands returned to their home countries, reducing the shock of unemployment in the United States. But many native-born Americans viewed immigrants with hostility, through the lens of racial, ethnic, and religious prejudices. They also feared that immigrants would take more coveted jobs and erode white men's wages. For immigrants themselves, America could be disorienting, liberating, and disappointing.

Newcomers from Europe

Mass migration from Western Europe had started in the 1840s, when more than one million Irish fled a terrible famine. In the following decades, as Europe's population grew rapidly and agriculture became commercialized, peasant economies suffered, first in Germany and Scandinavia, then across Austria-Hungary, Russia, Italy, and the Balkans. This upheaval displaced millions of rural people. Some went to Europe's mines and factories; others headed for South America and the United States (Map 16.2; AP® America in the World).



MAP 16.2 Sources of European Immigration to the United States, 1871–1910

Around 1900, Americans began to speak of the "new" immigration. They meant the large numbers of immigrants arriving from Eastern and Southern Europe—Poles, Slovaks and other Slavic peoples, Yiddish-speaking Jews, Greeks, and Italians—who overwhelmed the still substantial number of immigrants from the British Isles and Northern Europe.

Emigrants and Destinations, 1881–1915

The United States received more new residents than any other nation during the era of industrialization, but it was not the only place where emigrants (those departing) became immigrants (those arriving). The graph below shows six major destinations for emigrants from four European countries.

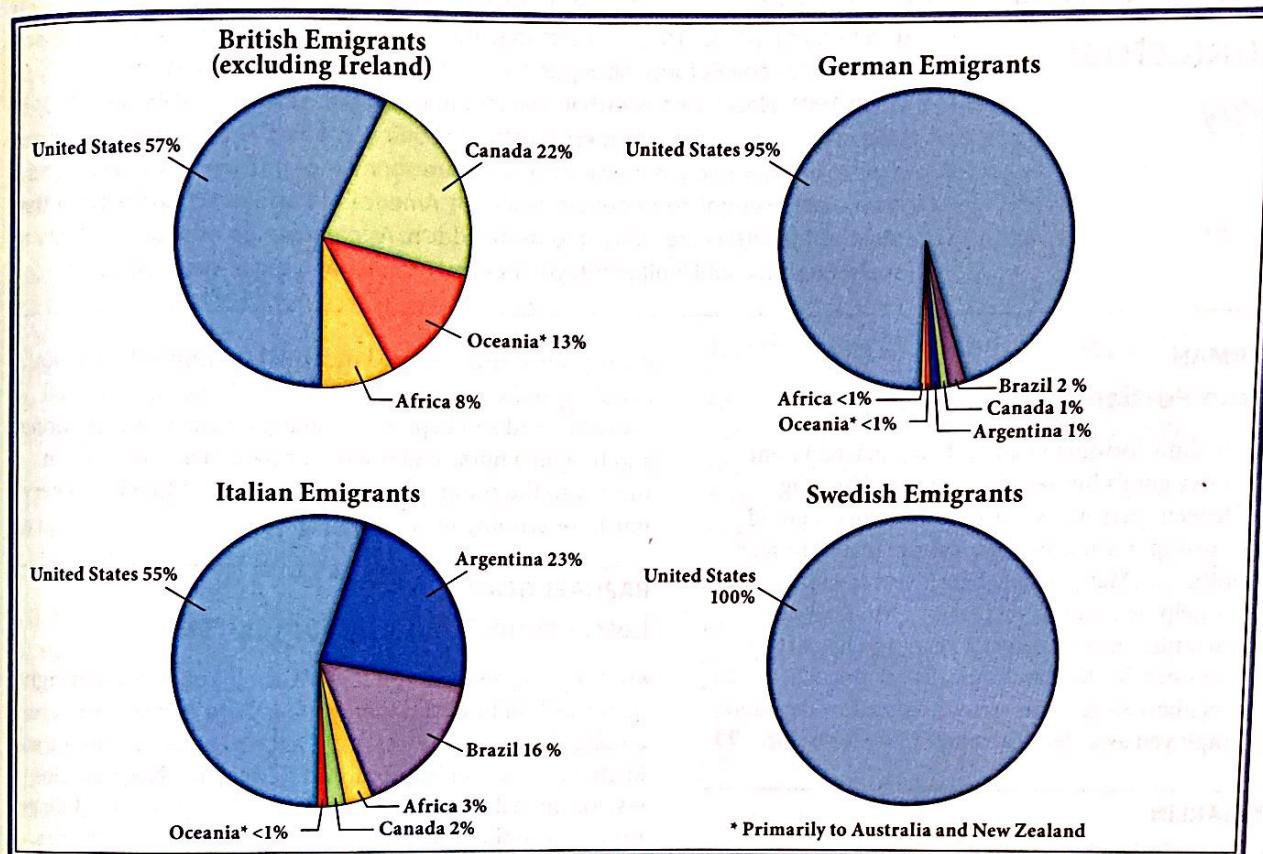


FIGURE 16.2 Major Destinations for Emigrants, 1881–1915

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

- What might account for the different emigration patterns shown here?
- What choices and limitations might each group of emigrants have faced in choosing the country to which they emigrated?
- Do these figures suggest anything about the conditions various groups may have encountered in different countries, upon arrival?

"America was known to foreigners," remembered one Jewish woman from Lithuania, "as the land where you'd get rich." But the reality was much harsher. Even in the age of steam, a transatlantic voyage was grueling. For ten to twenty days, passengers in steerage class crowded below decks, eating terrible food and struggling with seasickness. An investigator who traveled with immigrants from Naples asked, "How can a steerage passenger remember that he is a human being when he must first pick the worms from his food?" After 1892, European immigrants were routed through the enormous receiving station at New York's Ellis Island.

Some immigrants brought skills. Many Welshmen, for example, arrived in the United States as experienced tin-plate makers; Germans came as machinists and carpenters, Scandinavians as sailors. But industrialization required, most of all, increasing

Jewish Immigrants in the Industrial Economy

Following anti-Semitic violence in Russia during the 1880s, thousands of Jews fled to the United States. Almost a quarter million came between 1881 and 1890, the majority settling in New York City. These poverty-stricken newcomers posed problems for New York's assimilated Jews, most of whom were German- or American-born. Community support networks were quickly overwhelmed; New York's United Hebrew Charities almost went bankrupt. Jewish leaders watched with dismay the expansion of tenement wards. They worried that the presence of so many Eastern European "beggars," as one Reform rabbi put it, would heighten American anti-Semitism.

In 1901, New York's Jewish leaders founded an Industrial Removal Office (IRO) to help disperse Jewish newcomers. By 1922 the office sent over 79,000 Eastern European Jews to locations across the country. IRO correspondence provides a window on how newcomers sought to negotiate places in America's industrial economy. Note that most of the letters are translated from Yiddish. As one immigrant noted, inability to speak English could limit employment opportunities and cause "great distress."

ALEX GRUBMAN

Letter from Portland, Oregon, 1905

"I write you how fortunate I am in being placed in one of the largest dry goods houses in Oregon by Hon. Sig Sichel. . . . He went personally with me until he procured the present position for me as inside salesman and to start at \$60 a month. . . . [Many people here] wish me to thank the I.R.O. for helping them to success. . . . Mr. Lvov or Lvovsky, a tinsmith sent out direct 2 years ago has a stove and hardware store. M. Kaplan a tailor is earning \$20–25.00 a week. Mr. Nathan Siegel who arrived only a few days ago is already employed as a clerk earning \$10.00 for a start. " "

BARNET MARLIN

Letter from Atlanta, Georgia, 1906

"Dr. Wildauer secured a place for me to work, at wooden trunks. . . . I could not earn more than 60 cents a day and was working harder than a horse. . . . Atlanta does not pay to work, especially for a foreigner. . . . Several weeks passed by and at the end I was in debt. . . .

During that time I became acquainted with a Jewish policeman and he was the only one who took pity on me. . . . I told my friend the policeman that I had \$15.00 (sent to me by my brother) and he advised me to go out peddling. He took me to a store and told the storekeeper to furnish me for over \$30.00 worth of goods. He also acted as

my reference and prepared me with everything. I went out peddling and gradually I earned enough money to pay all my debts; and so I kept on peddling. I earned enough money and bought a horse and wagon. I now convey goods from the city to the country and sell them there. I thank you very much for sending me to Atlanta. " "

RAPHAEL GERSHONI

Letter from Atlanta, Georgia, 1905

"Why do you sent people to Atlanta? You give them eight days worth of food and then you let them starve in the street among Negroes. . . . I was given a job to work in a restaurant kitchen, to wait on Negroes, and to clean the Negroes' closets, for three dollars a week. . . . I was then given ten dollars for goods so that I might go around and peddle in Atlanta. But out of this ten dollars, I have to pay four dollars for lodging and three dollars a month for a place just to lay my head. . . . It is hopeless to work in Atlanta. The highest wage is 75 cents a day. And for what kind of work? . . . The competition is difficult here. Why should anyone hire a white greenhorn when they can get a black Negro, who is strong as iron. . . . Everyone says that the only choice here is to go out into the countryside and peddle. But one needs 40–50 dollars worth of goods. How do I get the money? . . . I would like to ask you to help me out. Help me crawl out of black Atlanta and go to Chicago. There I have friends and can make out better. " "

quantities of unskilled labor. As poor farmers from Italy, Greece, and Eastern Europe arrived in the United States, heavy, low-paid labor became their domain.

In an era of cheap railroad and steamship travel, many immigrants expected to work and save for a few years and then head home. More than 800,000 French Canadians moved to New England in search of textile jobs, many families with hopes of scraping together enough savings to return to Quebec and buy a farm. Thousands of men came alone, especially from Ireland, Italy, and Greece. Many single Irishwomen immigrants who had expected to settle permanently found themselves forced to leave

CHARLES ZWIRN

Letter from La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1913

“ [Mr. Goldfish] took me into his house and gave me a very nice welcome. He then led me to the synagogue and introduced me to all the members. Mr. Goldfish is a Jew with a real Jewish heart. He is religiously inclined and the biggest businessman in the city. If any controversy arises, it is always settled by Mr. Goldfish. . . . [He] took me to a shop and they paid me \$6 more than I earned in New York. When I wanted to thank him, he said that the only thing he expects of me is that I conduct myself properly and go on the right path so I can eventually succeed. This, he said, was the best reward I can give him. I did as he told me and saved a few hundred dollars. . . .

Another man sent here had been in the country two months. . . . He was sent to Mr. Goldfish, who found him a job sorting corks for \$2 a day. . . . He then left. By the way, . . . would you be so kind as to send to me a boy to drive a milk wagon on Mr. Jacob's farm and an older man to work at junk? They must be honest and respectable people.”

MARY RUBIN

Letter from New Orleans, Louisiana, 1905

“ You have sent us out here to starve for hunger and live in the streets. . . . We have arrived in New Orleans about 12 o'clock in the night, and there was nobody to await us there, and we had to go around alnight and look for the address which you had given. . . . They put the nine of us all in one room, with out a bed or a pillow to sleep on. . . . Then they took Mr. Rubin and his wife up to the cigar factory and gave them both a job. Mrs. Rubin is getting about four (\$4) a week and Mr. Rubin five (\$5). Now we will ask you if a family man can make a living with that. And Mr. Rosenthal they told if he wants work he will have to look for it himself. . . . When he found work, they told him to bring his tools and come to work. He went to the office and asked for the tools; they told him that he can't have them.

“ . . . [The local Committee] sent mama to be a cook for \$4 a month, which she had never done before, and if she wanted to be a cook in N.Y. she could have gotten 3 times that much or more, but it did not suit us to let our mother be a cook, and now we should have to do.”

by an accident or sudden economic depression. One historian has estimated that a third of immigrants to the United States in this era returned to their home countries.

Along with Italians and Greeks, Eastern European Jews were among the most numerous arrivals. The first American Jews, who numbered around 50,000 in 1880, had been mostly of German Jewish descent. In the next four decades, more than 3 million poverty-stricken Jews arrived from Russia, Ukraine, Poland, and other parts of Eastern Europe, transforming the Jewish presence in the United States. Like other immigrants, they sought economic opportunity, but they also came to escape religious repression (AP® Analyzing Voices).

NATHAN TOPLITZKY

Letter from Detroit, Michigan, 1908

“ I, Nathan Toplitzky, sent to the above city 5 months ago, wish to inform you that a great misfortune has happened to me. Your committee has placed me to work in a machine factory where I have earned \$.75 a day, and being unskilled I have had 4 of my fingers torn from my right hand. I now remain a cripple throughout my life. For six weeks my sufferings were indescribable.

When the condition of my health improved a little, I called on the Committee and they advised me to go back to the old employer. I went back to him and he placed me to work at the same machine where the accident occurred. Having lost my fingers I was unable to operate the machine. . . . Kindly write to your Committee to find a position for me.”

S. KLEIN

Letter from Cleveland, Ohio, 1905

“ In the past week something terrible has happened here. Two men sent here by the Removal Office committed suicide out of despair. One took poison and the other hanged himself. . . . That shows the deplorable condition of those who are sent here by the Removal Office. The Cleveland Removal Office is managed by an inexperienced young man who maintains his position merely through favoritism. . . . It was told to me that the one who hanged himself came to this agent and implored him with tears in his eyes to provide some kind of employment.”

SOURCE: Letters from the Records of the Industrial Removal Office; 1-91; AJHS, NY, NY and Boston, MA as follows: Alex Grubman, Box 116, Folder 14; Barnet Marlin, Box 95, Folder 4; Raphael Gershoni, Box 95, Folder 4; Charles Zwirn, Box 120, Folder 9; Mary Rubin, Box 99, Folder 17; Nathan Toplitzky, Box 101, Folder 7; S. Klein, Box 114, Folder 5. Reprinted by permission of the American Jewish Historical Society.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Based on the accounts above, what factors contributed to a Jewish immigrant's economic success or failure in a new location?
2. In at least ten places, the immigrants above report on wages—daily, weekly, or monthly. For comparison, make a rough conversion of all of these to weekly wages and list them. What do you conclude about compensation for professional, skilled, and unskilled work?
3. Using information from this chapter, as well as the documents above, explain why Jewish immigrants sent to the South might have faced more difficulties, on average, than those sent to other parts of the country.

AP EXAM TIP

Evaluate the factors that accounted for the dramatic increase in immigration to the U.S. between the Civil War and World War I.



German Beer, Mexican Workers, c. 1900 Immigrants from Germany owned and managed most of the breweries in the United States. But workers at the Maier and Zoblein Brewery in Los Angeles came from many nations, including Mexico. At that time, about 4,000 Mexicans lived in Los Angeles County (about 4 percent of the population); by 1930, 150,000 Mexican-born immigrants lived in Los Angeles, making up about 7 percent of the city's rapidly growing population. Los Angeles Public Library.

AP PRACTICES & SKILLS

POINT OF VIEW

What factors accounted for the different expectations and experiences of immigrants in this era?

Wherever they came from, immigrants took a considerable gamble in traveling to the United States. Some prospered quickly, especially if they came with education, money, or well-placed business contacts. Others, by toiling many years in harsh conditions, succeeded in securing a better life for their children or grandchildren. Still others met with catastrophe or early death. One Polish man who came with his parents in 1908 summed up his life over the next thirty years as “a mere struggle for bread.” He added: “Sometimes I think life isn’t worth a damn for a man like me.... Look at my wife and kids—undernourished, seldom have a square meal.” But an Orthodox Russian Jewish woman told an interviewer that she “thanked God for America,” where she had married, raised three children, and made a good life. She “liked everything about this country, especially its leniency toward the Jews.”

Asian Americans and Exclusion

Compared with Europeans, newcomers from Asia faced even harsher treatment. The first Chinese immigrants had arrived in the late 1840s during the California gold rush. After the Civil War, the Burlingame Treaty between the United States and China opened the way for increasing numbers to emigrate. Fleeing poverty and upheaval in southern China, they, like European immigrants, filled low-wage jobs in the American economy. The Chinese confronted threats and violence. “We kept indoors after dark for fear of being shot in the back,” remembered one Chinese immigrant to California. During the depression of the 1870s, a rising tide of racism was especially extreme in the Pacific coast states, where the majority of Chinese immigrants lived. “The Chinese must go!” railed Dennis Kearney, leader of the California Workingmen’s Party, who referred to Asians as “almond-eyed lepers.” Incited by Kearney in July 1877, a mob burned San Francisco’s Chinatown and beat up residents. In the 1885 Rock Springs massacre in Wyoming, white men burned the local Chinatown and murdered at least twenty-eight Chinese miners.

AP EXAM TIP

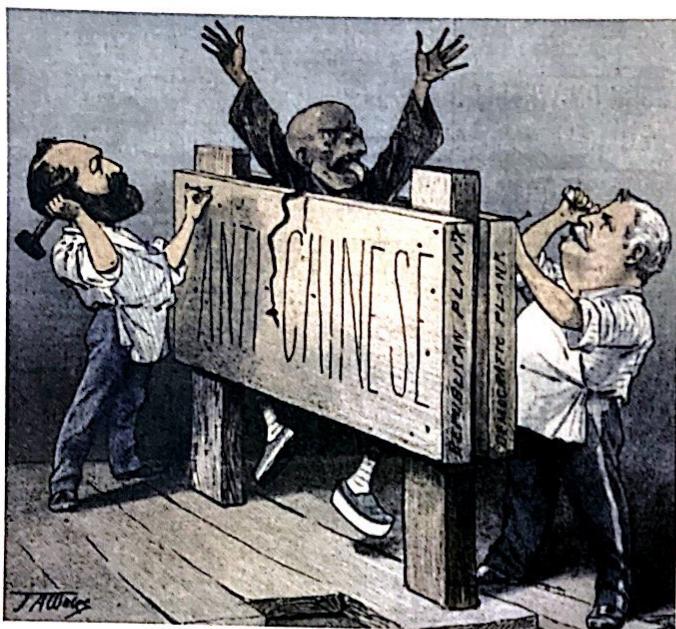
Compare the experiences of Asian and European immigrants in the U.S. in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.



Chinese Workers in a Salmon Cannery, c. 1900 Shut out of many fields of employment by racial discrimination, many Chinese immigrants founded their own restaurants, laundries, and other small businesses. Others, like these cannery workers in Astoria, Oregon, took on some of the most grueling and lowest-paid work in the American economy. Job segregation reinforced, in turn, racial prejudice. Visiting British author Rudyard Kipling, touring canneries along the Columbia River, described Chinese workers in the plants as "blood-besmeared yellow devils." These workers, refuting Kipling's slur, appear clean and respectable. Notice the man in an apron, on the left, who wears his traditional queue, or braided pigtail, tucked into his straw hat. Keystone-France/Gamma-Keystone via Getty Images.

Despite such atrocities, some Chinese managed to build profitable businesses and farms. Many did so by filling the only **niches** native-born Americans left open to them: running restaurants and laundries. Facing intense political pressure, Congress in 1882 passed the **Chinese Exclusion Act**, specifically barring Chinese laborers from entering the United States. Each decade thereafter, Congress renewed the law and tightened its provisions; it was not repealed until 1943. Exclusion barred almost all Chinese women, forcing husbands and wives to spend many years apart when men took jobs in the United States.

Asian immigrants made vigorous use of the courts to try to protect their rights. In a series of cases brought by Chinese and later Japanese immigrants, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that all persons born in the United States had citizenship rights that could not be revoked, even if their parents had been born abroad. Nonetheless, well into the twentieth century, Chinese immigrants (as opposed to native-born Chinese Americans) could not apply for citizenship. Meanwhile, Japanese and a few Korean immigrants also began to arrive; by 1909, there were 40,000 Japanese immigrants working in



Anti-Chinese Racism This cartoon from the magazine *Puck*, drawn by James A. Wales during the 1880 presidential campaign, offers vivid evidence of the widespread and virulent American prejudice against Chinese immigrants. Republican candidate James Garfield, on the left, and Democratic candidate Winfield Scott Hancock, on the right, both nail up their party's "planks" in favor of restricting Chinese immigration. Asian immigrants were not permitted to apply for naturalization as U.S. citizens; they thus had no vote and no power in politics. Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, with bipartisan support, soon after Garfield's victory. Library of Congress.

AP PRACTICES & SKILLS

CAUSATION

What were the long-term consequences of the Chinese Exclusion Act for U.S. immigration policy?

IN YOUR OWN WORDS What factors encouraged immigrants to seek entry into the United States, and how did their experiences differ?

Labor Gets Organized

In the American political system, labor has typically been weak. Industrial workers cluster in cities, near factories and jobs; compared with small towns and rural areas, urban areas have been underrepresented in bodies such as the U.S. Senate and the presidential electoral college, in which representation is calculated by state, rather than (or in addition to) individuals. This problem became acute in the era of industrialization, and it has lingered. Even today, the twenty-two U.S. senators elected from Alaska, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Mississippi, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming represent a smaller number of people, *combined*, than the two U.S. senators who represent heavily urban California.

Faced with this obstacle, labor advocates could adopt one of two strategies. First, they could try to make political alliances with sympathetic rural voters who shared their problems. Second, they could reject politics and create narrowly focused trade unions to negotiate directly with employers. In general, labor advocates emphasized the first strategy between the 1870s and the early 1890s, and the latter in the early twentieth century. Across this era, while industrialization made America increasingly rich and powerful, it also brought large-scale conflict between labor and capital.

agriculture, 10,000 on railroads, and 4,000 in canneries. In 1906, the U.S. attorney general ruled that Japanese and Koreans, like Chinese immigrants, were barred from citizenship.

The Chinese Exclusion Act created the legal foundations on which far-reaching exclusionary policies would be built in the 1920s and after (Chapter 21). To enforce the law, Congress and the courts gave sweeping new powers to immigration officials, transforming the Chinese into America's first illegal immigrants. Drawn, like others, by the promise of jobs in America's expanding economy, Chinese men stowed away on ships or walked across the borders. Disguising themselves as Mexicans—who at that time could freely enter the United States—some perished in the desert as they tried to reach California.

Some would-be immigrants, known as paper sons, relied on Chinese residents in the United States, who generated documents falsely claiming the newcomers as American-born children. Paper sons memorized pages of information about their supposed relatives and hometowns. The San Francisco earthquake of 1906 helped their cause by destroying all the port's records. "That was a big chance for a lot of Chinese," remembered one immigrant. "They forged themselves certificates saying they could go back to China and bring back four or five sons, just like that!" Such persistence ensured that, despite the harsh policies of Chinese exclusion, the flow of Asian immigrants never fully ceased.