Lecture 2.1: 19th and 20th Century Immigration

Pre-Civil War Immigration Trends:
- Pretty dominant groups shaping US immigrant population
    - Northern and western European mainly
    - Ireland, Germany, Great Britain, Scandinavian
    - British, German, Scandinavian were protestant, more skilled laborers → more welcomed
    - Irish → catholic, not viewed as White, not so much
- South doesn't get much immigration, people wanted to settle in more populated, urban areas

New Immigrant groups 19850-60s:
- Mainly focused in the West due to the Mex-Am war and the GR
- Chinese immigrants coming to CA first for GR, then transcontinental railroad
    - Population of minority groups skyrockets
- Mexican immigrants → mex-am war changed the border, 90% of the people affected chose to stay (Mex citizens to American citizens)
    - Some Mexican "actual" immigrants started working in mining, construction, and agriculture

Late 19th century shifts:
- Shifts in type of people coming to the country
- Instead of just northern and western Europe, there are now people from South and eastern Europe
    - Austria-Hungary, Poland, Italy, Greece → people start coming in much larger numbers
- People coming from poor, rural areas with not a lot of money, poor families, and not a lot of skilled labor outside of farming (not useful in urban areas)
- These people tend to be more heavily Catholic or Jewish, people in the US scared of that

Push and Pull Factors:
- Religious persecution
    - Mostly referred to Jewish immigrants fleeing from pogroms in eastern Europe → attacked because they are Jewish
- Political persecution
    - Era where socialists, anarchists, labor movements, nationalist movements (people that were fleeing, looked down upon) were on the rise → people that didn't agree with the dominant political power would leave to avoid being jailed
- Economic opportunity
    - US companies recruit immigrants with this incentive
    - Businesses Actively advertising prosperity to people in southern and eastern Europe
    - People moving the US to have a better life than being poor → want to make more money by immigrating

- Want to make more money and think they can make more money
  - #1 pull factor

Circular Migration:
- A lot of these people who don't want to stay
- They come to the US, make a ton of money, then go back to their home country
  - They can go buy their farm back at home instead of staying
- 11 million of 27 million go home
- 25-30% of Chinese immigrants go home as well
- Some people go home because of failure, but most go home on purpose (got rich and want to go stay with their families)

Immigrant Communities:
- Most immigrants end up in crowded urban communities with other immigrants
- If they can, they will settle with other people with their same ethnic group → ethnic, linguistic neighborhoods
  - Even if they can't, more likely to settle with other immigrants rather than US born people
  - Ex. Little Italy in NY, Chinatowns
  - Reason for this is because it makes life easier
  - It is a lot easier to get housing, jobs, and aid → shared background can be a benefit, easier to get a job when you speak the languages necessary or the same one as people around you
- Mutual aid societies
  - Religious center, community center → anything that can provide cultural, religious familiarity
  - Increase of synagogues and Catholic churches
  - To give support and comfort to these groups of peoples
  - Shared background can benefit people
- Lots of foreign language newspapers skyrocket as well

Immigrant Struggles:
- Since these people are less educated, less skilled, they take on more low-paying, dangerous work in the US
  - Coal mines, other people don't want these jobs, some people die → sometimes this work is more high paying than what they would get in their home country which is why they take it
- Because they are in these jobs, they tend to live in very crowded tenement buildings → laundry hanging outside, rooms with no windows, no bathrooms
  - Disease spreads very fast
  - Very unhygienic situations
  - Lots of poverty
  - Giving Mumbai slums
- Poverty caused people turn to crime → gangs and organized crime
  - Russian gangs, polish gangs, will fight each other
  - Organized crime → Italian mafia

- o This causes bad perceptions towards immigrants → now ALL immigrant communities are involved in all of these things (crime, unhygienic conditions), which encourages anti-immigrant sentiment

Resurgent Nativism:
- By 1910: about 1/3 of the US is foreign born (need at least 1 foreign born parent to be considered foreign)
- Speak different language, go to different religious places → this creates a lot of fear in. the white, native-born US population
  - o The first is labor competition
    - If you are US born and working really hard but foreigners are willing to work the same job for less money, you become threatened
    - Don't want to fight for their job with people that are dirty, unskilled, etc
  - o Socialism/anarchism
    - Some people (influential people. + businesses) are afraid of this very small vocal minority turning the world upside down
  - o Differences (assimilation)
    - People are afraid they won't uphold US ideas and institutions
    - How would they assimilate?
- Consequences of this: KKK gets a rebound in 1915 → start targeting jews, Catholics, other immigrant populations

Scientific Racism:
- Construction of racial hierarchies by prominent biologists and anthropologists
  - o These people are considered educated, knowledgeable, and a mainstream science at the time
  - o Take Darwin's theory of evolution and applied it to human beings and examined peoples skulls, etc → believed that there are certain biological characteristics in certain groups
    - Pseudoscience known as phrenology
  - o Said that there was a hierarchy where northern Europeans were at the top because they were the most evolved, everybody else was somewhere lower. They did this by measuring skull size, other characteristics
    - Argue that immigrants are less evolved compared to northern Europeans → survival of the fittest
  - o Lots of debates over Catholic and Jews and whether they fit into race categories → racializing Catholicism and Judaism

Direct result of scientific racism: Eugenics:
- Some people thinking about this think if there are "better" and "worse" type of people, then they can better the world by limiting these peoples' reproduction and encouraging others to reproduce
- Selective breeding
  - o Encourage "desirable" and discourage "undesirable" races to reproduce
  - o Institutionalizing "mentally impaired" people → stuck in an institution, could not be apart of society, could not reproduce

- ▪ Targeting people with autism, developmental delay so they would stop causing problems in "better" races
  - o This spills over into sterilization (especially with women of color and native American women) → let's keep people from having children → many people are sterilized through medical procedures
    - ▪ Encouraged or against your will
    - ▪ To discourage undesirable race reproduction, want to stop these women from having kids
  - o Women of color were forcibly sterilized → didn't want more "dirty" people
    - ▪ To "protect and preserve" society
- This was a blueprint for Hitler → he actually said he used some of these eugenics tactics in the holocaust
- Logic: if all Italians are part of the mafia, they cause crime, they are bad, the world will be less crime without them, we get them to be less common, yay less crime

Assimilation:
- Not everyone responds to scientific racism with the same mentality in this time period
- For a lot of people the arg is: its not that they can't fit in, we need to make them more American
  - o Let's set up structures to help people blend in to the dominant culture → northern and western European
- Leads to Push for public education: if we get all those immigrant children into schools, we can teach them American values and teach them English they will become American
  - o Thanksgiving and Columbus day get a big push → if we get them to celebrate this, they will become more American
    - ▪ Which also causes Thanksgiving and Columbus day to become federal holidays
  - o Element of loyalty to the US → people don't want them to be loyal to their home country
  - o Why the pledge of allegiance was created → 1892
    - ▪ To encourage loyalty to the US
    - ▪ Would be recited in schools everyday to make students pledge their loyalty to the US
- Focus is on the children, but there are a lot of adults who can't speak English either
  - o Night classes start for adults for them to learn and also assimilate
  - o You should wear your hair like this, you should dress like this → this is how you become American
- How we get a "melting pot" idea
  - o We'll get everybody, melt away their previous culture, and then make them all American

Ellis Island, 1892:
- 1892 → Ellis island established in NY as an immigration processing center
  - o Want to weed out people who will obviously cause problems
  - o Decide who gets to stay

- o Immigrants had to undergo a medical exam and were questioned about their political leaning
- o Sometimes people were weeded out for health reasons, but most Europeans were able to pass in a day
- o Only 6% turned away
- o Would examine diseases, criminal behavior, political ideologies, etc
  - ▪ Could lie, but they were in a foreign country and scary place
- o Essentially a gatekeeping method for immigrants

1924 National Origins Act:
- Lots of debate over who is allowed to enter the US
- Starting around 1893 → people started advocating for a literacy test because they wanted to more concretely restrict who could enter the US
  - o If an adult can't even read in their native language, we don't want them here
  - o Only passed in 1917
- Another argument is for quotas
  - o Lets put a cap on how many immigrants are allowed from a certain race or religion
  - o Chinese are first to have this restriction put on them
- End up/culminate with National Origins Act that sets up quota system for immigration happening in the future
  - o We will allow only 2 percent of the population of x race living in the US in the 1890 census to enter the US each year
    - ▪ Northern + western Europeans were more prominent in 1890, making this targeted towards southern + eastern Europeans
  - o If there are 100 Italians in the US, then only 2% of that, or 2 people, were allowed to enter from that country every year
  - o Targeted Southern and Eastern European groups
  - o Does not apply to the Western hemisphere → no quota on people from Latin America or Canada
  - o Causes immigrants from Mexico, Italy, Canada, and Germany becoming dominant
  - o To cut down on people who were deemed "undesirable" to make assimilation easier
  - o This lasts all the way until 1965, with some minor tweaks
  - o Predominant quota, with the exception of the Chinese