CHAPTER I

Ethnic Groups

"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she with silent lips.

"Give me your tired, your poor,

Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,

The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.

Send these, the homeless, tempest tossed to me

I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

- Emma Lazarus (Jewish American)

EUROPEAN IMMIGRATION

The Irish

In the predominantly agricultural Ireland of the early 19th century, it was those without land who began seriously to consider migrating to the New World. In 1816, some 6,000 Irish sailed for America and within two years this figure had doubled.

The Irish Famine, beginning in 1845, was a catastrophe for the approximately four million people dependent on the potato crop. The blight returned in 1846, and over the next year an estimated 350,000 people died of starvation. The figures for that period show a dramatic increase in Irish migration to the United States:

1846 - 92,484

1847 - 196,224

1848 - 173,744

1849 - 204,771

1850 - 206,041

(*1860-1914* - 2.4 million)

The Irish settled along the East Coast of the United States and were the first large group of immigrants to experience the ridicule and discrimination that many others would later endure. Although they spoke English, a great advantage to their assimilation, their style of dress and accent was "foreign," they were poor, unskilled, often uneducated, and many doors were closed to them. They were willing to work, but many "IRISH NEED NOT APPLY" signs kept them from better jobs. Nevertheless, they were ready to take on most jobs, usually any manual work that was available. Gradually, they were able to

improve their conditions and began to expand their influence and power. They were very instrumental in the growth of the Catholic Church in America and emphasized the importance of a Catholic education.

The Irish usually remained in the areas where they disembarked, such as New York and Boston. Later, a sizable Irish-American population developed in Chicago. Even today, these three cities still have huge Irish-American populations.

The Germans

The Germans left home due to overpopulation pressure, the desire to own their own land, and the search for political freedom. Around 1710, they settled mainly in Pennsylvania, where William Penn had established a colony with religious tolerance. Calling themselves "Deutsch," their name was shortened to "Dutch" and they became known as the Pennsylvania Dutch. Many had the resources to travel to the Midwest and buy land where they settled near Milwaukee, St. Louis, Cincinnati, and in the farming regions of Texas.

In 1860, New York became popular among German immigrants and over 100,000 lived in the city, giving rise to 20 churches, 50 schools, 10 bookstores, and two German language daily newspapers. Chicago with 130,000 German-born immigrants similarly became a center of German culture.

Between 1830 and 1930, the period of the greatest migration from Europe, Germany sent six million people to the United States. However, the World War I changed attitudes towards them. Although they played their role in the war-effort, it did not stop hostility toward anything German in the States. Towns, streets and buildings with German names were commonly renamed.

In the 1990 Census nearly a quarter of the American people (population in 1990 was 248 million) considered themselves to be of German or part German descent. These Germans have impacted on many aspects of everyday life. To them America owes the idea of the kindergarten, the concept of a state-endowed university, a program of physical education in the schools, and, of course, the ever present hamburgers and frankfurters.

The Swedes

In the 19th century, the Swedes started to consider emigration to America. In Sweden there had always been a shortage of good land to farm. According to estimates at the time, over 40 percent of Swedish soil was unproductive. Industry and communications were less developed in Sweden than in most other west European countries. The situation became even more pressing due to an increase of population caused by a fall in the infant mortality rate from 21 percent in 1750 to 15 percent in 1850.

Sixty thousand people left Sweden at the end of the 1860s, when Sweden was struck by a series of severe food shortages.

The following three years were called the "starvation years":

- 1867 – "the wet year" of rotting grain
- 1868 - "the dry year" of burned fields
- 1869 - "the severe year" of epidemics and begging children

They were the impetus for the mass emigration that, with short intervals, was to continue up to the World War I.

During the period up to 1930, the Swedish farmers destined for Iowa and Illinois were followed by almost 1.3 million countrymen. The first organized groups started to arrive in New York in the mid 1840s. The effect of this exodus from Sweden reached its climax around 1910, when 1.4 million Swedish first and second-generation immigrants were listed as living in the U.S.

Comparing this to Sweden's population at the time (5.5 million), roughly one fifth of all Swedes had their homes in America just before the start of World War I.

By 1920, the Swedish land-hunger had resulted in the fact that the area of farmland owned by Swedes in the U.S. equated to 2/3 of all arable land in Sweden. In some counties, such as Isanti, and Kanabec in Minnesota, Swedes owned the land almost solely. Not all Swedish immigrants settled on farmland, however. The labor markets of the big cities often had more and better offers for cash-less immigrants than had the farm regions. In 1910, a little over 61 percent of the 665,000 Swedish-born Americans lived in cities. Many Swedes combined the move to another country with the step from farm to town. Chicago became the center of this urbanization process. Swedes had their own communities, and it was possible for them to live and die in Chicago or Minnesota without ever speaking anything but Swedish.

The Dutch

Although the Dutch did not show much interest in immigration to America before the 19th century, by the 1850s the situation had changed. Taxes in Holland were high and wages low, so emigration became popular among agricultural laborers. Others decided to leave for religious reasons.

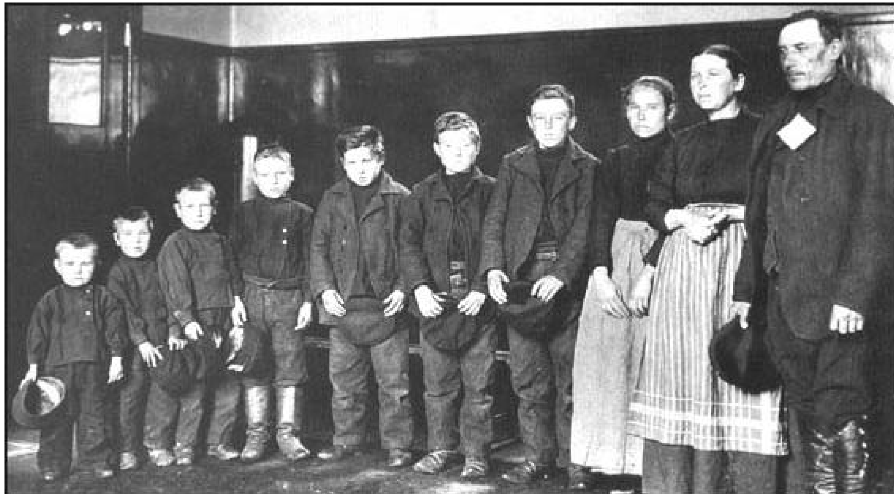
By 1860, half of the 30,000 Netherlands-born residents of the USA were living in Michigan, Iowa and Wisconsin, where Dutch Catholic emigrants had settled in the fifties. From that point on, Dutch emigration continued, but it was an emigration of individuals. Federal statistics give a figure of 340,000 Dutch immigrants in the period from 1820 to 1920. After the World War II, Holland was the most densely populated country in the world. As a result, the Dutch government encouraged emigration to America, which has resulted in another 165,532 immigrants arriving between 1921 and 1998.

Today there are approximately eight million Americans of Dutch descent in the United States. The majority live in just ten states: California, New York, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Texas, Illinois, Florida, Washington, and Iowa.

The Italians

There was little Italian immigration to the United States before 1870. Although one of the most overcrowded countries in Europe, Italy struggled with the same obstacles as other European countries. The land was dry, the tools old and the technique of cultivating not modernized in any way. Disease and starvation were the main causes for migration. Italians arriving as poor, illiterate, and unskilled immigrants attempted to soften the hardship of relocation by moving close to people they knew, people who understood their dialect and shared their life history and that of their ancestors.

Italians came to compete with the Irish for the same occupations, and as their number increased, they began to dominate. Living in the industrial cities, especially in the northeastern part of the U.S., they worked in woolen mills and shoe factories. In East Coast cities, like Philadelphia and New York, they opened stores and restaurants featuring food from home. Italian neighborhoods have endured, often called "Little Italy."



The Eastern Europeans

In 1867, when Austria and Hungary united under the leadership of Emperor Franz Josef, more than 51 million people lived in the newly established Empire. The government decided to allow those who were not happy to emigrate to the United States. From the 1880s to the 1920s, a heavy flow of Hungarian, Austrian, Czech, Yugoslavian, and Polish immigrants poured into America. Later, the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, poverty, religious persecution and World Wars I and II were the impetus for exodus.

Another phase of immigration from Eastern Europe began in 1968, when Soviet tanks rolled into Czechoslovakia and crushed the country's freedom movement. When the Berlin Wall came down and the Soviet Union dissolved in the early 1990s, people previously barred from emigrating went west in search of better jobs and lives.

The Russians

The first Russians reached America in 1747 when fur traders arrived in Alaska. The Russian-American Commercial and Hunting Company was established at Fort Ross in northern California in 1812, and members of both nations did business in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska for almost 100 years.

Russian immigration to the Pacific Coast subsided, when Russia sold Alaska to the United States in 1867 for $7 million.

The next wave of Russian immigrants came through New York in the later 1800s, pressured by the 1891 famine and Russian government pogroms against Jewish villages.

The Russian Revolution in 1917 also sent people running for shelter in America, as did the subsequent establishment of the Russian Communist Party. Soon after, it became difficult to get permission to leave Russia. Many yearned for political, artistic, and intellectual freedom but the numbers escaping were small.

The Second World War and the Cold War added to the desire to emigrate as standards of living in Russia lagged far behind those of America.

The Jews

Jews in Germany and Russia were poor and lived in ghettos, surrounded by prejudice and with zero opportunity. Having nothing to lose, they moved to the "promised land" to improve their life and to find religious freedom. After the failed German Revolution in 1848, many German Jews emigrated in search of democracy.

The first major wave of Jewish emigration from Russia, however, began in 1882 when the Russians blamed the Jews for the assassination of Czar Alexander II. The Russian pogroms (1881-84 and 1903-06) resulted in heavy Jewish immigration to both Western Europe and the United States.

The second large wave of Jewish immigration came during and after World War II. Many German and Austrian Jews who recognized Hitler's threat escaped to America. Some of these were the top thinkers and scientists of Europe.

The third large wave of Jewish immigration came in 1989 when Russia relaxed its laws that previously prohibited Jews from leaving the country. These people came to both America and to Israel.

Most of the Jewish people living in America today are second or third generation Americans and their integration within mainstream America is complete. At the same time, their commitment to their own religion and culture has remained strong.

ASIAN IMMIGRATION

Asian immigration to the United States never approached the nearly 33 million people who arrived from Europe in the hundred years prior to 1929. One reason for the smaller number of Asians was the discriminatory legislation passed by the United States Congress and several states that referred to them as "Mongolians."

The Chinese

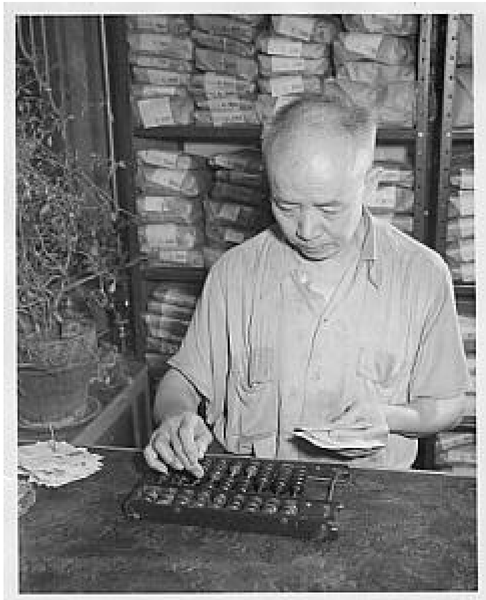
Immigrants from China came from totally different cultures and, therefore, their adjustment was more difficult. Nearly all of them were young, poorly educated males who wanted to earn some money and return to China. Immigration to the United States began primarily in the middle of the 19th century and it can be divided into three periods: 1849-1882, 1882-1965 and 1965 to the present.

The California gold rush brought the first wave of Chinese immigrants to Gum Son (The Golden Mountain) in 1848. In the 1850s, some 15,000 Chinese immigrants played an essential role in building the transcontinental railroads. An estimated 1,800 to 2,000 Chinese died of accident, disease, or poor living conditions during the construction.

In 1851, there were about 25,000 Chinese miners on the West Coast of the United States. But the differences in language, customs, clothing, and religion made them stand out, becoming objects of ridicule and mistrust among the other miners. After 1869, when the railroad was completed, Chinese laborers either joined their fellow countrymen already working in the towns or they settled in rural areas. By 1870, they accounted for almost 20 percent of California's farm labor.

With the onset of hard economic times in the 1870s, other immigrants and European Americans began to compete for the jobs traditionally reserved for the Chinese. With this economic competition came dislike and even racial suspicions and hatred. The tendency toward segregation peaked with the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act preventing further immigration from China. The law was the first in U.S. history to ban a specific racial group from entering America. Only diplomats, merchants, and students were allowed access into the country. Chinese Americans were also denied the right to apply for naturalization. The "Chinese Must Go" movement was so strong that immigration to the U.S. declined from 39,500 in 1882 to just 10 in 1887.

Because of the isolationist atmosphere and the hostile attitude of Americans, the Chinese formed communities known as Chinatowns in virtually every major U.S. city to preserve their language and culture. Assimilation was never a viable choice for them. Since Asians were forbidden by law to marry whites, there was little opportunity to have families. In 1900, Chinese men in the U.S. numbered about 85,000 while the number of Chinese women was less than 2,000. By 1924, the total number of Chinese in the States had dropped to fewer than 62,000.



Laundry Manager Using Abacus

Finally, in 1943, a repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act allowed immigrants already in the U.S. to bring family members over from China.

After World War II and the 1949 Communist takeover of China, many Chinese immigrated to America. This new wave, together with younger Chinese Americans, has moved away from the "Chinatowns," and joined mainstream America, becoming very successful in their endeavors. Today, strong Chinese communities exist in the West, especially in Los Angeles, which has become a contemporary Ellis Island for the Pacific Rim.

The Japanese

In 1868, the first group of Japanese laborers arrived in Hawaii. A year later the first Japanese settlement on the American mainland was founded; however, the Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony in Gold Hill, California failed as an enterprise within two years.

Like the Chinese, the Japanese were welcomed as laborers when they arrived. They lived in small colonies, especially in San Francisco and in Los Angeles, working in lumber camps, railroads, fisheries, small factories and agriculture as farmers or migrant workers. Some started small businesses. Unlike the Chinese, many planned to remain in the United States in spite of the denial of naturalization privileges.

By 1885, following the Chinese Exclusion Act, large numbers of young Japanese laborers began arriving on the West Coast where they replaced the Chinese.

The Filipinos

The United States won control over the Philippines in the Spanish-American War in 1898 and established a colony there; however, the islands were not granted independence until 1946. Because of high poverty after the war, many Filipinos flocked to America, being allowed to bypass the usual immigration procedures.

Many Filipinos replaced the Japanese laborers both in Hawaii and on the mainland, particularly after the 1924 Immigration Act. While many of them

assimilated well in America, the economic pressures of the Great Depression increased American animosity toward them. As non-citizens, Filipinos could not own land. In 1934, the U.S. government restricted Filipino immigration as a part of the Philippine Independence Act, which redefined them as aliens and set a quota on them (50 immigrants per year).

Since the passage of the 1965 Immigration law, the Philippines have become one of the major points of origin of immigration to the U.S.

The Koreans

The focus of Korean immigration from 1900 to 1946 was Hawaii. The first 100 Koreans arrived on the Islands in 1903 to work on the sugar plantations. The reasons for emigration from Korea were more internal than external. The country, from the time of the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95, was in almost constant turmoil. This was then followed by both the Russian-Japanese War and, a few years later, by the Japanese takeover of Korea itself.

Early immigrants had been mostly peasants, but later many intellectuals arrived. After 1905, only limited numbers of Koreans came to the United States so there was less agitation against them. They were, however, subjected to the San Francisco school segregation rule of 1906 when, along with the Japanese, they were not allowed to become naturalized citizens. Arrivals from Korea ceased after the 1924 Immigration Act was passed.

Even though prior to 1970 there were hardly more than 70,000 Koreans in the United States, by 1990, due to the provisions of the 1965 Immigration Law, this number had grown dramatically (to 798,000).

The Southeast Asians

Between 1975 and 1985, 100,000 Southeast Asians came to America every year. Unlike other Asians, who migrated to make their fortunes, most Southeast Asians were escaping from refugee camps. While many Vietnamese immigrants were highly educated, those from Cambodia and Laos were farmers with no previous knowledge of Western culture.

HISPANIC IMMIGRATION

A high rate of immigration and a high birth rate have combined to make Hispanic Americans one of the fastest-growing minority groups in the United States. Between 1980 and 1990, the Hispanic population of the United States increased five times faster than that of the total population. Since 1990, it has increased by 58 percent (from 22.4 million in 1990 to 35.3 million in 2000) compared with 13 percent for the total U.S. population.

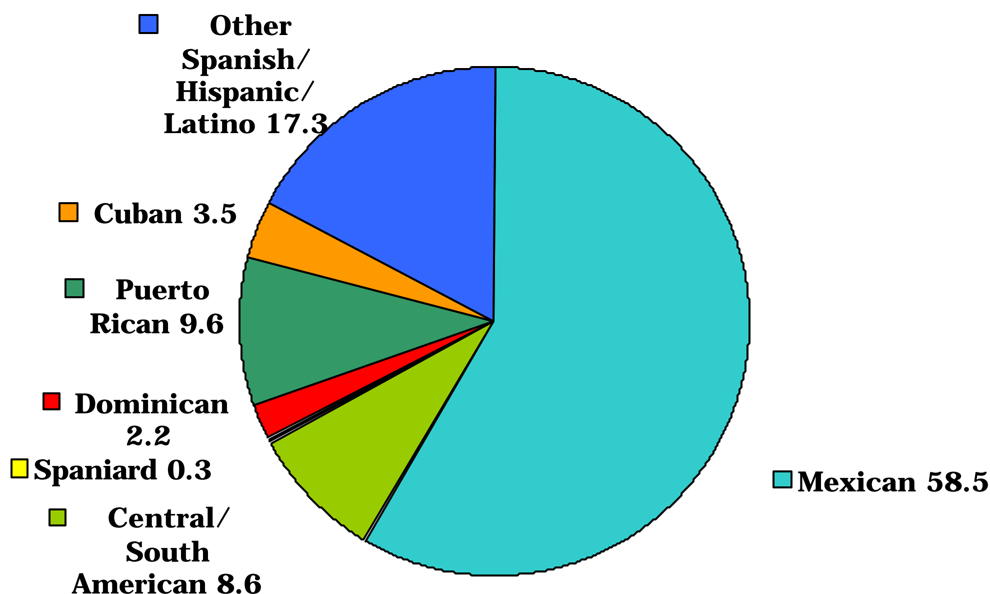
In 2000, more than three-quarters of Hispanics lived in the West or South and half of them lived in just two states: California and Texas. Outside of these regions, Hispanics were concentrated in a few metropolitan areas such as Miami, New York, New Jersey, and Chicago.

The Hispanic population is becoming more diverse. Of the 35.3 million Hispanics (12 percent of the total U.S. population), Mexicans accounted for nearly 60 percent and added more than seven million people over the decade (1990-2000). While Central and South Americans were the second largest group in 1990, they were superseded by the group identified as "other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino" in the 2000 Census.

PROJECTED HISPANIC P OPULATION GROWTH (2000 U.S. Census Report)

2000	35.3 million (12% of the total U.S. population)
2020	52.7 million
2040	80.2 million
2050	96.5 million (24.5% of the total U.S. population)

PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF THE HISPANIC POPULATION (Census 2000)



The Mexicans

When the Mexican-American War ended in 1848, America gained 500,000 square miles of Mexican territory, including all or a part of the future states of California, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, Wyoming, Colorado, and part of Texas (Texas became the 28th state of the USA on December 29, 1845). Those Mexicans already living in these areas (approximately 80,000) were offered U.S. citizenship and they, of course, eventually invited family members to join them. This was the first wave of Mexican immigration to America.

Thereafter, for most of the 20th century, the difference in economic conditions between the United States and Mexico has induced subsequent waves of immigration. Both pull and push factors have been at work.

In 1902, the Newlands Irrigation Act created a demand for agricultural workers and attracted immigrants. Later, the Mexican Revolution (1911-1917) brought political and economic instability to Mexico, prompting about 700,000 people to migrate to America over the next 20 years. During that period, there was little enforcement of the U.S.-Mexico border, so it was relatively easy to cross. Undocumented migration was quite common until the 1917 Immigration Act, which made it a political and legal issue. Further, the strict enforcement of the 1917 Adult Literacy Law led to a decline in Mexican immigration in the late 1920s. In 1924, the U.S. Bureau of Immigration established the Border Patrol to control the border.

During the Great Depression many Mexicans and their children were forcibly sent back to Mexico because they were thought to be getting the jobs that native-born Americans felt they should be given. Over the course of World War II, Mexicans were again recruited to fill jobs left vacant by the many American men and women involved in the war effort. In 1942, the “Bracero” program began. Before it ended, hundreds of thousands of Mexicans had been employed as temporary farm workers. At its peak in 1956, a total of 445,197 Mexican workers gained entry to the United States. Later, the mechanization of the U.S. agricultural industry gradually reduced the need for temporary workers, and support for the program eventually waned. Although the program officially ended in 1964, Mexicans and their employers continued their working relationship.

Illegal immigration, which had steadily increased since 1965, was reduced by the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986. Following the Act, some two million Mexicans received legal status under IRCA’s amnesty for long-term unauthorized residents, i.e., those who were in the United States as of January 1, 1982. Some relief was also provided by the Special Agricultural Worker program (SAW) for seasonal workers.

DIFFERENCES

Mexican immigration is very different from the ones usually symbolized by the Statue of Liberty, by Ellis Island, and nowadays by Kennedy Airport. Mexicans do not come across two thousand miles of ocean but across two thousand miles

of border. The relationship between the U.S. and Mexico in this regard is unique in many respects. The significance of this border is enhanced by the economic differences between the two countries.

It is relatively easy for Mexicans to come to the States to maintain contact with the family and friends and later to return to Mexico. In 1998, Mexican immigrants numbered over seven million and constituted 27 percent of the total foreign-born population in the country. These post-1965 waves of immigration differ from the previous ones in constituting a majority from a single non-English linguistic group.

Another important distinguishing characteristic is that a huge proportion of illegal immigrants have been Mexicans. In 1997, the INS estimated that 54 percent of the total illegal immigrant population in the United States was Mexican, being nine times the next largest group (from El Salvador).

In the past, a high concentration of immigrants in particular areas could be seen, such as the Irish in Boston or the Germans in Pennsylvania; however, over the course of the years they dispersed to different cities. Mexican immigrants are heavily concentrated in the Southwest and particularly in Southern California. The schools of Los Angeles are becoming predominantly Mexican. No major U.S. city has ever experienced such a large influx of students from a single foreign country.

The waves of immigrants from Europe to the Sates had been connected with wars and disasters. Immigration in the 1840s and 1850s from Ireland and Germany came to an end with the Civil War and with the easing of the potato famine in Ireland. The big immigration wave at the turn of the century came to an end with World War I and with restrictive legislation in 1924. This greatly helped to facilitate the assimilation of those immigrants already in the country.

In contrast, Mexican immigration has not yet been influenced in this way. It may eventually begin to subside as a result of shifts in the Mexican birth rate, which is going down, and long-term economic development in Mexico.

The Puerto Ricans

Being a U.S. possession since 1898, the inhabitants of the island have been U.S. citizens since 1917. As citizens, Puerto Ricans may enter the United States without restriction. Between 1940 and 1960, more than 545,000 Puerto Ricans came to the U.S. mainland to look for jobs. In New York City alone the 45,000 Puerto Rican residents of 1930 had increased to more than a quarter of a million in 1950, and to 720,000 in 1961.

DIFFERENCES

The early European immigrants knew they had to achieve some level of success, because they could not return to their native countries easily. It was too far, too costly, and in some cases (Russian Jews) politically impossible. But Puerto Ricans can always go back. This tendency to return frequently has caused many problems in housing, education and labor.

For many years, Puerto Ricans have remained one of the poorest groups in the United States. Their unemployment rate is about 50 percent higher than that of the general population and their poverty rate is almost four times as high.

The language difference has also divided Puerto Ricans from other immigrants. European and Asian immigrants knew that in order to obtain citizenship they had to learn English. Therefore, the emphasis was on learning the language as quickly as possible. But this requirement is not imposed on Puerto Ricans. They are American citizens regardless of what language they speak.

The Cubans

Cuban immigration to the United States picked up sharply during the late 1950s and early 1960s when about 200,000 anti-Castro people emigrated as a result of the increasing political turmoil in Cuba. Until then, only a few thousand Cubans had come to the United States each year.

The arrival of the Marielitos in 1980 constituted a major influx of Cuban immigrants. Numbering about 125,000, they were a group of people that the Cuban government wanted out of Cuba. They included many unskilled workers, criminals, and mentally ill people. The U.S. government allowed the Marielitos to enter the country. Some of the criminals were placed in U.S. prisons but many of them were rehabilitated and released. A few were returned to Cuba. Until 1994, the United States welcomed Cuban immigrants as victims of an oppressive regime.