



America was considered the land of opportunity! It attracted millions of immigrants from across the globe throughout the 19th and early 20th century.

WHY?

- It seemed to offer **freedom from political persecution**, freedoms of speech and religion were guaranteed.
- It offered an **escape from poverty** with its booming industries and promise of the 'American dream' it seemed the 'land of opportunity'
- It seemed to have bountiful **land**, unlike crowded Europe.
- There was industrialisation and therefore jobs.
- It was an adventure

America was a true 'Melting pot' of different races, cultures, languages and religions. It was after all considered the 'land of the free'

There was **OPEN DOOR** immigration in the **19th century** concentrated on **Northern European countries like Britain, Ireland, Germany and Scandinavia.** Up to 30 million people had arrived in the US in the 1800's

HOWEVER, waves of new immigrants were coming from elsewhere in the early **20th century.** Up to **13 million** arrived from 1900-1914

Many **Jewish refugees** came to escape the Pogroms (attacks against them) in Eastern Europe and Russia in particular. Lots of **Southern Europeans** such as Greeks or Italians came to America to escape poverty.

This led to fears that the **mostly white, Anglo Saxon and Protestant nature of America was being threatened by these new Catholic, Jewish and poorer refugees.** This fed **prejudice** and led to fears which stoked up **anti immigrant tensions** and led to the rise of groups such as the **KKK.**



ECONOMIC CONCERNS

- Many immigrants were **poorly educated** and **illiterate** suggesting they would be a **burden on the American state.**
- **Jobs** were an issue and many feared their jobs being taken by immigrants prepared to **work for little money** therefore **reducing wages.**
- Immigrants were also **used by employers to break strikes.**

POLITICAL CONCERNS

- Many people took action against **German immigrants** during and after WWI. Many viewed them as spies and unreliable.
- immigrants were also stereotyped for being **Communists** and **anarchists** (eg Red scare)

SOCIAL CONCERNS

- They were blamed for social problems such as **alcoholism**
- They were concentrated in **ghetto** areas which were **poor and crime ridden** with high prevalence of **diseases** such as cholera.
- They were different **religions** such as **Jews, Catholics or Orthodox.**
- Many Americans wanted immigrants to **assimilate** (speak English, adopt American culture)



1921 EMERGENCY QUOTA ACT

Capped at 357,000 a year
Immigrants capped to **National origins formula** (3% of 1910 origins) **aimed at keeping Immigration linked to traditional countries**

1924 REED JOHNSON ACT

Capped at 150,000 and heavily linked to national origins.

After World War One there was a marked change in attitude to immigration. People began to **question the Open Door policy** and began to fear through impact of immigration - **WHY?**

Many politicians began to campaign for a more restrictive **CLOSED DOOR POLICY**

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1917 IMMIGRATION LAW

Immigrants **must be able to read English**
They have to **pay more tax to enter**
Asian immigration banned (except Japan)

1918 DILLINGHAM HARDWICK ACT

Bans **anarchists** from entering USA

1918 SEDITION ACT

Bans people from **criticising the government**

BACKGROUND

WHY OPPOSITION TO IMMIGRATION?

ANTI IMMIGRATION POLICIES

CHALLENGES FACED BY IMMIGRANTS TO USA

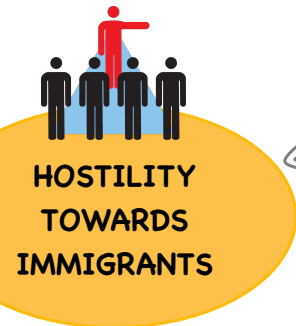
LIVES OF IMMIGRANTS

Immigrants tended to be poor and many spent most of their savings on a ticket to get to the USA

Therefore many stayed local in New York for example and stayed in areas linked to their national group eg

- Little Italy'
- 'Chinatown'

These areas were often overcrowded with high levels of alcoholism, disease and prostitution. Employment was sometimes dangerous and poorly paid.



HOSTILITY TOWARDS IMMIGRANTS

RED SCARE 1919

After WWI anti immigrant tensions were particularly high. The Russian Revolution in 1917 made many Americans fearful about a potential a communist takeover. Communism was an idea which was considered very anti American. It was anti capitalist and atheist.

Many Americans were caught up in hysteria about a takeover in 1919. This led to many immigrants being targeted especially from Eastern Europe. This led to the sedition act.



PALMER RAIDS 1919-20

A series of 36 mail bombs were sent to American politicians. Most were found but one exploded. 8 bombs went off in 8 cities. One in New York killed 30 people The Attorney General Mitchell Palmer had his house bombed ... he believed a revolution was coming and ordered that thousands of suspects be arrested without trial and many deported.

Many Jews communists and trade unionists were arrested. The revolution never materialised and this discredited Palmer who had to release those he had not deported!



SACCO and VANZETTI CASE

These two Italians were blamed for the murder of 2 guards in a shoe factory in 1920 They were known to be anarchists opposed to harsh governments

- both had alibis suggesting they were not at the crime scene
- another person claimed to have done the crime!
- The judge even suggested they were not guilty of the crime but were guilty of plotting against American institutions
- Despite a huge international campaign they were both executed in 1927