Activity Guide

Yankees and Immigrants

University of Massachusetts Lowell
Graduate School of Education

Lowell National Historical Park

Connections to National Standards and State Curriculum Frameworks

Yankees and Immigrants is an interdisciplinary program designed to help students achieve state and national standards in History/Social Science and English/Language Arts. The working of standards varies from state to state, but there is substantial agreement on the knowledge and skill students should acquire. The standards listed below, taken from either the national standards or Massachusetts standards, illustrate the primary curriculum links made in *Yankees and Immigrants*.

History/Social Science

Students learn about the sources and experiences of America's immigrants. (National Standards)

Students understand how the factory system affected gender roles and the lives of men, women, and children. (National Standards)

Students understand the meaning of historical events and the unpredictability of history; frame questions that can be answered by historical study; identify major immigrant groups that live in Massachusetts; explain the emergence and impact of the textile industry in New England; and describe the causes of immigration and describe the major roles of these immigrants in the industrialization of America. (Massachusetts)

English/Language Arts

Students decode and understand new words encountered in reading materials; identify basic facts and ideas in what they have read or heard; recognize use of arguments for and against an issue; identify evidence used to support an argument; and role play a specific character. (Massachusetts)

Yankees and Immigrants

Program Description

Yankees and Immigrants includes a 60-minute interpretive tour, a 30-minute "Town Meeting," and a 90-minute hands-on workshop providing students with the opportunity to explore what it was like for newcomers from many different cultures to move to an industrial city. On the tour, students discover Lowell's unique historic resources. The hands-on workshop complements the tour by bringing the significance of historic resources to life in exploration of the topic.

Students tour the Boott Cotton Mills Museum weave room and the "Mill Girls and Immigrants" exhibit at the Boott Boardinghouse. At the "Town Meeting," students explore multiple points of view on an issue related to diversity. In the workshop students are processed through immigration and receive a new identity as one of sixty actual immigrants to Lowell to role play. In small groups, students unpack artifacts from "immigrant luggage" to find background information about their ethnic group, homeland, and reasons for immigrating to Lowell. Students discover the common threads which drew people together, creating a social fabric, the pattern of which changes over time.

Theme

The Industrial Revolution was a defining era in American history. All that we consider "modern" was significantly shaped by this period, whether it be in technology, politics, art, culture, or the nature of work itself.

Machines and technology are often the focus when students explore the history of the Industrial Revolution. In many ways, the real story of the Industrial Revolution is the story of its impact on the people who tended the machines and the everyday drama of their lives outside of the factories.

Program Objectives

After visiting the Park and the Tsongas Center and completing the activities in this guide, students will be able to:

- Identify the two different labor forces in the Lowell mills, and explain some of the reasons why they left home to come to Lowell.
- Describe some of the ways in which mill workers experienced life in their free time outside of the factory.
- Recognize the richness of cultural diversity, and describe similarities concerning why various immigrant groups left their homelands and what they brought with them to Lowell.
- Describe some of the ways in which immigration continues to affect our lives today.

Immigration Time Line

1822 Led by Hugh Cummisky, 30 Irishmen walk from Charlestown to Lowell to build canals and mills. They camp near their work in an area called the "Paddy Camp Lands." This area later becomes known as the Acre.

1823 Mill agents begin recruiting young women and men from New England farms to work in the mills. They live in boardinghouses run by the corporations for which they work.

1831 St. Patrick's Church opens in the Acre. It is the first ethnic and first Catholic Church in Lowell.

1840s Waves of Irish immigrants come to Lowell fleeing starvation from the Potato Famine in their homeland. Irish immigration continues throughout the nineteenth century.

1844 The Ten Hour Movement begins. Workers petition the state legislature to pass a law limiting the workday to ten hours.

1850s "Know Nothing" movement flourishes in northern states. This nativist backlash against immigration is caused by Protestant fears about increased numbers of Catholic voters.

1865 Mill agents send recruiters to Quebec to find new workers. Starvation and lack of work cause French Canadians to leave their homeland and immigrate to Lowell in large numbers. Many go back and forth between the US and Canada.

1882 Congress passes Chinese Exclusion Act. Virtually no Chinese are admitted to the United States until its repeal in 1943.

1890s The first Greek immigrants to work in the mills arrive. Most are young, single men living in tenement houses in the Acre. Many hope to save money and return to Greece, but few do.

1892 Ellis Island opens. Annual immigration to the US averages about 1,000,000 over the next two decades.

1890s Polish immigrants begin to arrive in Lowell. Fleeing starvation and mistreatment, many hope to return to their homeland. They settle in tenement houses near the mills, and are forced to take low-paying jobs because they do not speak English.

1905 Greek women, brought over by their fathers and brothers, begin to settle in Lowell. Many single women take jobs in the mills. Once married, most work in the home, raising children. The Greek community grows stronger.

1910s Portuguese immigrants begin arriving in large numbers. Most are from the Azores Islands, and settle in the Chapel Hill neighborhood of Lowell.

1914-1918 World War I disrupts ocean travel and dramatically decreases immigration.

1921 Congress passes law restricting immigration. Annual quota is about 150,000.

1924 Congress passes National Origins Act, drastically reducing immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe (14% of 150,000, or about 20,000 annually).

1950s People from Puerto Rico begin their migration to Lowell.

1960s People from Columbia begin immigrating to Lowell. Many are skilled textile workers recruited by the few remaining mills.

1970s-1980s Southeast Asians, including Cambodians, Laotians, and Vietnamese begin to settle in Lowell. Most are refugees forced to leave their homelands because of the Vietnam war.

1990s Immigration and migration continue to shape the face of Lowell. Many immigrants come from Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, India, Central and South America, and Africa.

Pre-Visit Activities

1. Playing a Role

When students come to the workshop, they are asked to take on the role of an immigrant who came to Lowell. This activity gives students the opportunity to gather information about another person and to role-play that person in a small group.

Selecting a Character
Have each student select a character from a book or a person from history. Tell students to choose someone about whom they can locate information. Post the following questions on the board to help students do their research.

- Who are you?
- What is your family like?
- How old are you?
- Where do you live?
- What is your occupation?
- What do you like to do for fun?
- Are you well-educated?
- How well do you get along with other people?
- What is your financial situation?
- Are you usually cool, calm, thoughtful, objective or easily stirred up?
- What have you done that makes you special?
- What makes you an interesting character?

Role-playing Your Character
Have students form groups of four and interview each group member playing his/her role. Have students use the questions above to get them started, but tell them to be creative in their questions.

2. Making Choices and Taking Chances

Over the past 160 years, tens of millions of people have chosen to leave their country and move to the United States. Making the decision to leave family and friends is not an easy one. This activity has students look at excerpts from four oral histories to think about the reasons for leaving one's homeland.

Using Oral Histories
Copy and distribute the oral histories presented on pages 7 and 8 of this activity guide. Tell students that these are real people who emigrated from their homeland and came to the United States and to Lowell. While each person has left because of a specific circumstance, the general reasons for leaving are shared by millions of

immigrants.

Discussing As a Group

Divide the class into groups of four students. Have each group read the oral histories and discuss the reasons for leaving. Have each group come up with one word to describe the reason each immigrant moved to the United States. Are there any similarities between the experiences of these people?

Acting As an Immigration Official

Tell each group to pretend to be an Immigration Panel that must decide who will be allowed to enter the United States. Only one of these four people can be admitted to the the United States. Who should it be? Be sure to state the reasons for your decision.

Sharing the Decision

Ask each group to select one member to be part of an Immigration Commission. This Commission must make the final decision as to which immigrant will be allowed to enter the United States. The remaining members of each group must present their case before the Commission. The Commission will make the final ruling after hearing the evidence from each group.

Oral Histories

- "In my village, there were forty or fifty families and now there are two hundred. The land has not changed but it has to feed many more mouths. That's why most of us left our country. My uncle had fields . . . but when his children grew up, they had to divide it and each one got a small share of the land. They had to earn their living from the soil. There were very few factories; there was a small silk factory nearby but not enough for all of us."

  Demetrios Palavras
  born in Greece, 1893
  emigrated, 1912

- "My father died, and my mother had seven kids, and [there] was no way to take care of that. So I had a sister over here in Lowell, and when I get to be sixteen years old, she told me I could come over and get a job here and send little by little what I was making. That's what I did to my mother to take care of my sisters."

  John Falante
  born in Portugal, 1904
  emigrated, 1920

- "When I was [in Russia] the boys between ten and twelve acted as a lookout for the self defense that every community had. Defending themselves from the Russians, who, whenever they felt like it, made a little pogrom or a larger pogrom, which means just attacking Jews. And first it started breaking their windows, then breaking their skulls and this is what they did."

  Nathan Cohen
  born in Russia, 1897
  emigrated, 1912

- "My family had its own land, you know . . . [but] it got burned when the Vietnamese came in. I don't know who is taking that land now . . . I don't have anything left. Not even a picture of my father. I don't have anything at all, just a pair of clothes."

  Chanthy Duong
  born in Cambodia, ca 1960
  emigrated, early 1980s

3. Making a Move

When your students visit, they will learn about some of the people who left their homes and moved to Lowell to work in the textile mills and related businesses. Many of the people left behind family, friends, and the only way of life they had ever known. Making a Move challenges students to think about some of the reasons they would move, and asks them to think about the kinds of things they would bring with them.

Imagining the Situations
Ask students to imagine that they, like millions of people before them, must leave their homes and move to another country. Why must they leave? What will they bring? Use these questions for discussion:

- What are some of the reasons you would move?
- What would you need to take with you?
- What would you want to take with you?
- What might you have to leave behind?

Sharing Answers
Break the class into small groups to consider the questions. One person in each group should take notes, but the entire group must brainstorm to find answers to each of the questions posed above. Assure them that there are no wrong answers. Each student will have his/her own reasons for moving, and each will have different things s/he wants to bring along.

Presenting the Possibilities
Each group should present its reasons and decisions to the class. Students may want to take on roles and present their solutions as a skit, or as a newscast featuring special guests. Encourage them to use their imaginations! At the end of the presentations, the class should discuss similarities and differences between the scenes presented.

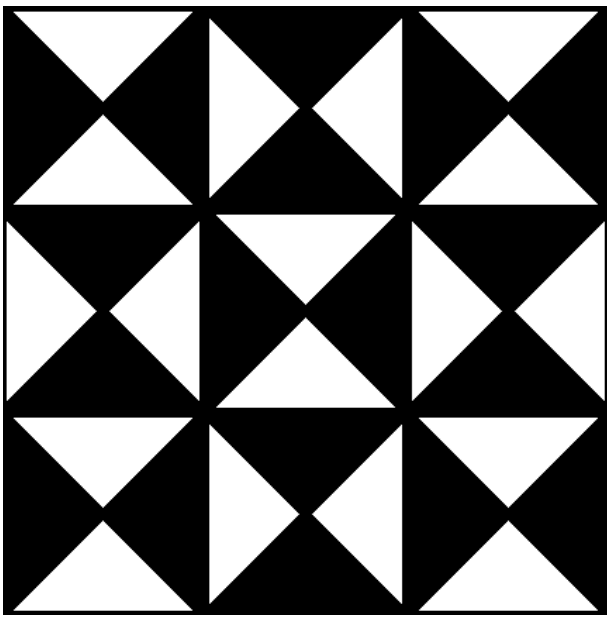
Post-Visit Activities

1. Creating an Ethnic Quilt

Distribute colored triangles made from construction paper or card stock to each student (cut 8" by 8" squares in half). Markers, crayons or colored pencils should be available.

Using images and words, each student is asked to present his/her character from the Immigrant workshop passports on the triangle. Students should write the name of their character and use visual and written clues to depict most of the information given to them. Basic identifying information such as name, native land, when they came, and age should be included, as well as other interesting facts such as why they left, what jobs they held, and family information. As often as possible, use pictures to give the information (e.g. draw a flag to represent the native country).

Combine the triangles to form a quilt, and tape them together. Compare and contrast the experiences of the immigrants. Discussions can include reasons for immigrants to leave, their journey over, initial hardships, types of jobs and working conditions, ways to assimilate, and preserving their ethnic cultures.

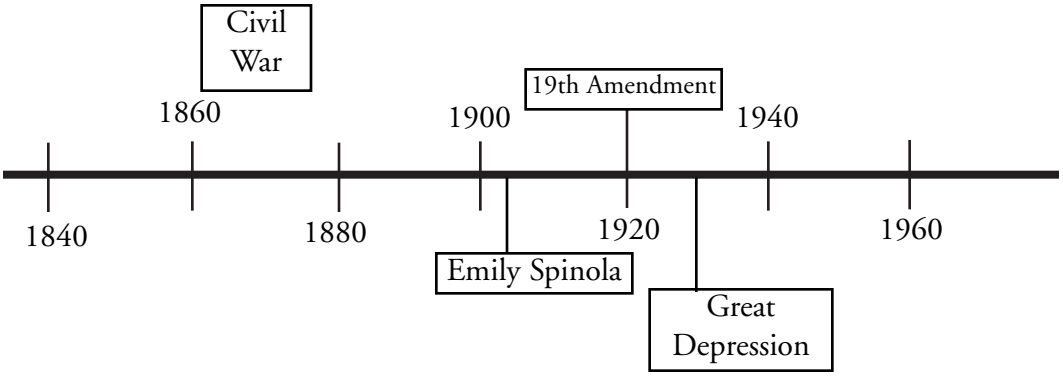


2. Making a Historical /Immigrant Timeline

When students participated in the workshop they were given the role of a person who came to Lowell between the 1840s and 1980s. Because the immigration activity spans 150 years, students need to place their character in the context of major events in United States history.

Researching 50 Years
Have each student review the role that s/he played in the workshop and identify the year of immigration. Then students should research five events in U.S. history that occurred between 25 years prior to their character's immigration and 25 years following it. Encourage students to be creative and look for events other than just military or political events. Suggest that students look at events like the changes in the civil rights laws, or a walk on the moon, or an important medical breakthrough, or other changes in technology. If possible, include regulations that affected immigration as one category for research.

Making the Timeline
As a class, create a timeline that extends around the perimeter of the classroom. Have each student enter the name of his/her role character on the correct spot on the timeline. Then have each student add those events researched.



3. Keeping A Diary

Pretending to Be a Yankee Mill Worker
Have students pretend they are fourteen years old. It is 1838, and they have just left their family's farm to work and live in Lowell. You may need to refresh their memories about Lowell mill life in the mid-1800s. If so, as a class, have students list on the blackboard everything they remember about their visit to Lowell.

Developing a Character
Challenge students to find out more about their fourteen-year-old character. To help them develop their character, ask these questions:

- Why did you move to Lowell?
- What did your family think of your coming to Lowell?
- What do you expect to gain from your experience in Lowell?
- Do you miss your family?
- Did you know anyone in Lowell when you first arrived?

Writing a Diary Entry
Assign students the task of writing a one-paragraph diary entry about their first week in Lowell. Make sure they include three terms from the list of terms on page 15, and answer the following questions:

- Where do you live?
- Do you like the people with whom you live?
- Where do you work?
- What do you do at work?
- Do you like your job?
- What do you like about living in Lowell?
- What don't you like about life in Lowell?
- What do you hope to accomplish in Lowell?

Sharing Characters
Encourage students to share their imaginary selves. Develop your own format for doing this, or have students:

- post diary entries on a bulletin board
- have students exchange diary entries with another classmate
- ask students to read their entries aloud to the class
- discuss the similarities and differences between the diary entries
- make a newsletter or magazine using the diary entries

4. Climbing your Family Tree

During your group's visit to Lowell, students learned about people who left their homelands and moved here. This activity challenges students to trace their own roots to find out about their family's immigrant history.

Conducting an Oral Interview
As a class, discuss how to conduct an oral interview for collecting family history. Make a list of questions to use during the interview. Include the following:

Who in my family first came to the United States?
Where was s/he born?
From what country did s/he come?
Why did s/he decide to emigrate?
Whom did this person marry?
What is my relationship to the person who immigrated?
What did this person do for work?

Tracing Roots
Have students interview family members to discover one person who came to the United States. Have students ask family members about photographs, special holiday traditions, favorite family recipes, songs, and family artifacts from the old country. Ask each student to tell a family story, make an ethnic recipe to share, present a holiday custom, or share family photographs.

Charting Family Immigration Patterns
Once the students have tracked down one family member who immigrated to the United States, have them chart their findings, and look for patterns. Post a large, flat world map on the bulletin board, and have students do the following:

- on a small label write their last name, the name of their immigrant ancestor, and date s/he came to this country;
- glue the label to the end of a piece of yarn;
- use thumbtacks to attach one end of yarn near a point on the map where the student lives, and the other end to the country from where the student's ancestor came.

Discussing the Patterns
Once all the students have strung their yarn on the map, discuss any visible patterns. What can the students discover about their classmates? About historical immigration trends?

5. Celebrating Ethnicity

Organize an ethnic festival using the information gathered in the previous activity. As a class, decide how to celebrate. You may want to prepare traditional foods, bring in different types of music, learn various dances, dress in traditional clothing, and decorate the classroom.

- Divide students into groups based on ethnic and/or cultural heritage.

- Each group should decide what part its members should play (i.e. preparing food, collecting music, learning dances to teach to the class, decorating the classroom).

- Students should make sure to find out the origins of particular cultural practices. You may want to challenge them to explore the connection between their country's physical environment and the particular cultural practices they choose to explore.

- On the day of the celebration, have students set up a buffet of all the various foods, make labels to indicate the country of origin, and identify the maker of the recipe. Make sure students let one another know if there is a traditional way to eat the food. Have groups take turns playing ethnic music and teaching the dance steps.

- Create an "Ethnic Cookbook" using the recipes students have brought in for the celebration.

TERMS

acculturation - The process of cultural exchange between different cultural or ethnic groups in close contact with one another; the influence of different cultures on one another, leading to the development of new cultural traditions common to both.

acre - A section of Lowell first settled by Irish in the 1820s. It later became home for Greeks, Hispanics, and Southeast Asians.

assimilation - The process by which a minority culture adopts and adapts traditions of the dominant culture.

boardinghouse - Large dormitory-style building owned by the mill owners. Factory workers lived there.

ethnic group - A group of people, often from the same country, who are united by common customs, traditions, and language.

immigrant - A person who leaves the country in which she or he was born to settle in a different nation.

immigrate - To come into a new country with the intent of staying.

"**mill girls**" - Young women who were recruited to work in the mills in the early part of the Industrial Revolution. Most came from farms in New England.

speed up - Increase the speed of machinery in order to increase production.

Ten Hour Movement - Beginning in the early 1840s, an effort started by female mill workers in Lowell and other cities to pass a law limiting mill work to ten hours a day; law passed for women and children in 1874.

tenement house - Crowded, often dirty, three- or four-story wooden apartment building located close to the mills. Originally built by mill companies for new immigrants.

turn-out - Strike or walk-out; a form of protest used by early mill workers.

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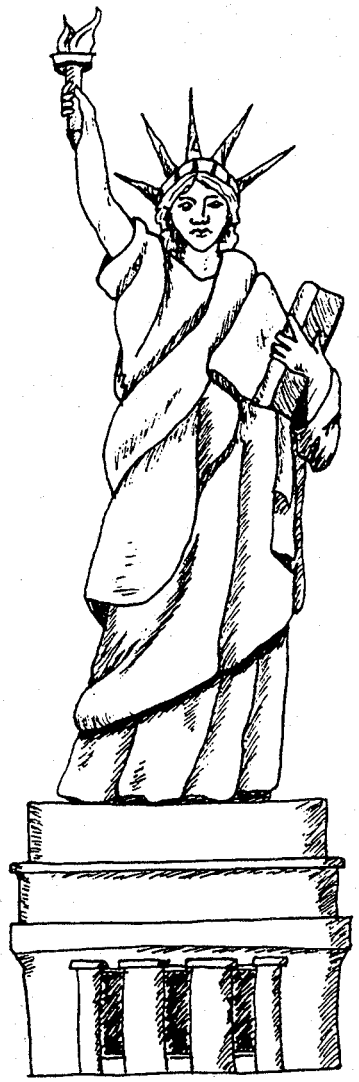
Tsongas Industrial History Center web site. http://www.uml.edu/tsongas



"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-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door."

Emma Lazarus

The Tsongas Industrial History Center is a joint educational enterprise sponsored by the University of Massachusetts Lowell and Lowell National Historical Park. Established in 1987, its goal is to encourage the teaching of industrial history in elementary and secondary schools.

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