

## Effects of Migration

*It shall not be lawful for any Chinese laborer to come, or having so come after the expiration of said ninety days to remain within the United States.*

—Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882

**Essential Question:** How and why did patterns of migration affect society between 1750 and 1900?

**M**igration in the 19th century—whether undertaken freely to escape poverty or seek opportunity or coerced as part of an imperialist labor system—led to demographic changes with long-lasting results. Laborers tended to be male and from particular ethnic groups, such as the Indian indentured servants brought to work on sugar plantations in the Caribbean or the Chinese laborers recruited to complete the transcontinental railroad in the United States. These migrants often formed ethnic enclaves and created cultural groups that maintained elements of their native culture and religion while absorbing the influences of their new locations. For example, many Indians in **Trinidad and Tobago** practiced Hinduism and contributed to Caribbean musical traditions. These migrants also left behind women who sometimes took on the roles formerly filled by men and thus brought about change in migrants' home societies.

Migrant groups often experienced racial and ethnic prejudice. The Chinese Exclusion Act, noted above, was the first major U.S. federal legislation that specifically suspended immigration of a specific ethnic group.

### Changes in Home Societies

The experiences of migrants and the families they left behind varied widely depending on the norms of their home cultures. Migrant laborers were more often male than female, so in some places their migration—whether internal or external—brought a shift in demographics and gender roles in the societies they left. In some societies, males waited to emigrate until a male relative was available to live with and help support the women and children who did not emigrate with the males. In these places, women's roles were much the same as before their husbands left. However, in other places, women gained some autonomy and authority as they took on responsibilities once filled by their husbands and took a meaningful place in society outside the bounds

of family responsibilities. If they later followed their husbands to another country, they often participated more fully, though far from equally, in family decision-making than women who had not been on their own. If their husbands returned, women who had taken up their husbands' responsibilities sometimes continued to play a role outside of domestic life, while those who had been put in the care of male relatives remained in traditional gender roles.

Most male migrants sent remittances, funds from their foreign earnings, back home. If the remittance were large enough, women often reduced their hours working outside the home and spent more time with family responsibilities while also exercising considerable decision-making power over how the money was spent. In some places, the receipt of remittances correlates to girls' longer school attendance; in other places boys seem to have been the greater beneficiaries of remittance-supported education.

## Effects of Migration on Receiving Societies

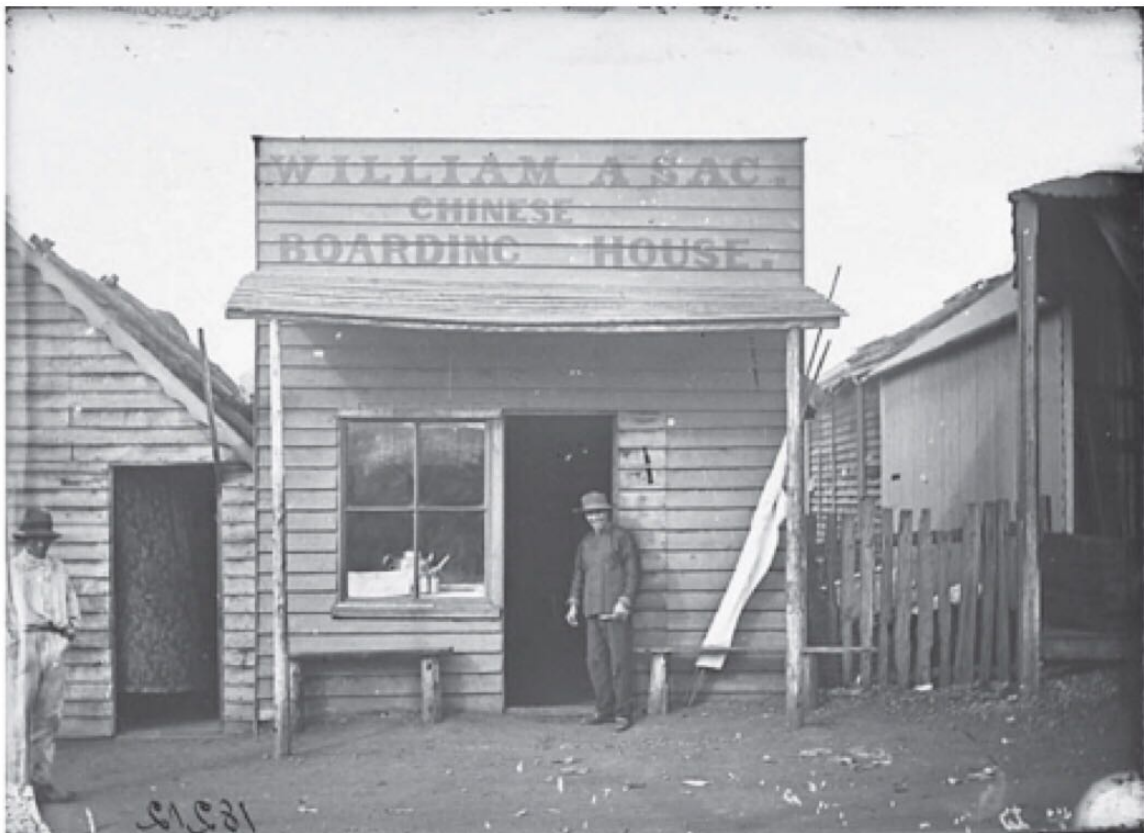
Immigrants were interested in a new economic start but intent on carrying with them their own traditions and culture. **Ethnic enclaves**, clusters or neighborhoods of people from the same foreign country, formed in many major cities of the world. In these areas inhabitants spoke the language of their home country, ate the foods they were familiar with from home, and pursued a way of life similar to that they had known in their home countries. At the same time, they influenced the culture of their new homes which absorbed some of the migrants' cultural traditions.

### **Chinese Enclaves**

Many Chinese emigrated in search of work during the latter half of the 19th century—some to work on sugar plantations or for other agricultural endeavors, others to work in industry and transportation. Together, they spread Chinese culture around the world.

**Southeast Asia** The Chinese who migrated to Southeast Asia thrived under colonial rule. In Indochina, the French encouraged them to engage in commerce. In Malaya, they managed opium farms and controlled opium distribution for the British. In the Dutch East Indies, some Chinese held posts with the colonial government. As time went on, many Chinese throughout the region became business owners and traders, often founding family businesses. Some Chinese acquired great wealth as moneylenders or through international trade. By the end of the 19th century, the Chinese controlled trade throughout Southeast Asia and were a significant presence in the region.

**The Americas** Chinese immigrants first came to the United States in large numbers during the height of the California **gold rush**. Many worked in mines, but others found work on farms or in San Francisco's garment industry. Chinese laborers became indispensable during the construction of the first transcontinental railroad.



Source: Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales

William A. Sac's Chinese Boarding House in the gold mining town of Gulgong, New South Wales, 1871–1875.

Between 1847 and 1874, some 225,000 Chinese laborers were sent to Cuba and Peru on eight-year contracts. Almost all of them were male, and 80 percent of them were sent to work on sugar plantations alongside African slaves in Cuba and replacing slaves in Peru, where slavery had been abolished. Other Chinese in Cuba were employed as servants, in cigarette factories, and in public works projects. Several thousand contract laborers in Peru helped build the Andean railroad and worked in the guano mines. In the 1870s, some Chinese built settlements in the Peruvian Amazon, where they were active as merchants and grew rice, beans, sugar, and other crops.

In each area they lived, Chinese immigrants left their cultural stamp. Some Peruvian cuisine is a fusion of Chinese foods and ingredients and cooking styles of Peru. As in other areas, Chinese immigrants sometimes married local people and thus contributed to the multicultural diversity of populations.

### ***Indian Enclaves***

The British Empire abolished slavery in 1833. However, it was replaced with a system that was little better, indentured servitude. Indians were among the first indentured servants sent to work in British colonies.

**Indians in Africa** Many Indians went to **Mauritius**, islands off the southeast coast of Africa, and **Natal**, a colony that is today part of South Africa, as indentured servants on sugar plantations. In Natal and British East Africa, they built railways. Nearly 32,000 indentured Indian workers went to Kenya to work on railroad construction between 1886 and 1901, but only about 7,000 chose to stay. Today, Indians continue to make up significant parts of the population of these regions.

Both Hindus and Muslims emigrated from India to South Africa. The Hindus brought with them their caste system and the social laws that stem from it, but they soon abandoned the caste system. In contrast, many kept up Hindu traditions and had alters in their homes to honor deities.

The Hindu and Muslim Indian population of South Africa was divided by class, language, and religion. However, Indians in South Africa shared the injustice of discrimination, which became central to the work of a young Indian named **Mohandas Gandhi**. He arrived in Pretoria, South Africa, in 1893, where he intended to practice law. After suffering repeatedly from racial discrimination, Gandhi became an activist. He founded the **Natal Indian Congress** and worked to expose to the world the rampant discrimination against Indians in South Africa. In 1914 Gandhi returned to India, where he became a leader in the Indian nationalist movement against British rule.

**Indians in Southeast Asia** Between 1834 and 1937 India was the major source of labor for the British Southeast Asian colonies of Ceylon, Burma, and Malaya. Many Indians went to Malaya as indentured laborers. Indentured servitude was eventually replaced by the **kangani system**, under which entire families were recruited to work on tea, coffee, and rubber plantations in Ceylon, Burma, and Malaya. Their lives were less restricted than those of indentured laborers, and they had the advantage of having their families with them. It is estimated that about 6 million Indians migrated to Southeast Asia before the kangani system was abolished. Because Southeast Asia was relatively close, Indian workers there often kept close ties with India.

Indian traders settled in many countries where there were indentured laborers. They also looked for business opportunities throughout the British Empire, such as British East Africa.

**Indians in the Caribbean Region** So many Indians were sent to work on the sugar plantations in and around the Caribbean that today they comprise the largest ethnic group in **Guyana** and **Trinidad and Tobago**, and the second largest group in Suriname, Jamaica, Grenada, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Martinique and Guadeloupe. In many of the other Caribbean nations Indians constitute a sizable proportion of the population. In addition, they have blended ethnically with migrants from other parts of the world, creating a unique culture, affecting national cuisines, film, and music. Many of the countries in the region celebrate the arrival of the Indians with annual holidays or festivals.

## ***Irish Enclaves in North America***

Before the American Revolution, most Irish who came to North America were Protestant descendants of Scots who had previously migrated to Ireland. They are often referred to as **Scots-Irish**. Most came as indentured servants. Those who paid their own passage often went west to the frontier.

After the American Revolution, most new Irish immigrants who came to the United States settled in northern cities. Many others went to British North America (Canada), where they were able to get cheap land grants. By the 1830s, most new Irish immigrants were poorer than earlier settlers, and Catholic. Most of those who settled in cities worked in factories. Many of the men who came to the United States helped construct the **canal system**. In Canada as well as the United States, many Irish farmed. Most Irish immigrants were able to create decent lives for themselves and their children.

Half of the 3 million Irish who fled Ireland during the Great Famine came to North America. Most of this huge wave of Irish immigrants faced many hardships, not the least of them anti-immigrant nativist and anti-Catholic sentiments in the United States. Nevertheless, immigration from Ireland continued strong after the Great Famine ended until the 1880s, when it gradually slowed. Many of these new immigrants were single women who came to the United States looking for work and husbands. More than half became domestic servants. Many of the men who came during this period were unskilled laborers.

Wherever they settled, the Irish in the United States spread their culture—their lively dance music and holiday traditions such as the celebration of St. Patrick's Day. They also had a strong influence on the conditions of laborers through their efforts at promoting labor unions, and their great numbers ensured the spread of Catholicism in the United States.

Second-generation Irish were often either **white-collar** or skilled **blue-collar** workers. Many became “stars” of the new **popular culture** that was taking root at the end of the century as boxers, baseball players, and vaudeville performers. Many second- and third-generation Irish, such as the Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys, became very wealthy and powerful.

## ***Italians in Argentina***

During the 18th and 19th centuries only the United States surpassed **Argentina** in the number of immigrants it attracted. The 1853 Argentine Constitution not only encouraged European immigration, but it also guaranteed to foreigners the same civil rights enjoyed by Argentine citizens.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Italians made up almost half of the European immigrants to Argentina. Today people of Italian descent make up more than 55 percent of the Argentine population. As a result, Italians have had an enormous influence on all aspects of Argentine culture and language. Argentine Spanish has absorbed many Italian words, and Italian is still widely spoken in Buenos Aires.

Argentina was underpopulated and had an enormous amount of fertile land, which appealed to Italian immigrants. Most of them were farmers, artisans, and day laborers. Wages in Argentina were much higher than in Italy. Agricultural workers, for example, could earn five to ten times as much in Argentina as in Italy. In addition, the cost of living, even in Buenos Aires, was much lower than that of many rural Italian provinces. Both of these factors allowed most immigrants to raise their standard of living greatly in a very short time. By 1909, Italian immigrants owned nearly 40 percent of Buenos Aires' commercial establishments.

## Prejudice and Regulation of Immigration

Because they competed for jobs with native people and were willing to work for less, immigrants became targets of resentment and institutionalized discrimination.

### ***Regulation in the United States***

Because Chinese workers were hired for so many jobs in California, the California constitution of 1879 included several provisions that discriminated against the Chinese:

- It prohibited the state, counties, municipalities, and public works from hiring Chinese workers.
- It prevented them, and others who were not considered white, from becoming citizens on the grounds that they were “dangerous to the well-being of the State.”
- It encouraged cities and towns either to remove Chinese residents from within their limits or to segregate them in certain areas.

With many thousands of Chinese living in the United States by 1882, Congress banned further Chinese immigration by passage of the **Chinese Exclusion Act**. Initially limited to a ten year period, the policy was extended periodically and made permanent in 1902. This act, which was finally repealed in 1943, showed the discrimination in the United States.

After the U.S. Congress excluded Chinese immigrants, some of them began to move to Mexico. Mexican President **Porfirio Díaz** promoted immigration as well as development, especially in the northern area bordering the United States. Rather than working as laborers in the mines or railroads, most worked as truck farmers, shopkeepers, or manufacturers.

### ***White Australia***

Before the Australian gold rushes of the 1850s and 1860s, most of the Chinese in Australia were indentured laborers, convicts, or traders. During the gold rushes, the Chinese population grew to around 50,000. In response to the influx of Chinese miners, the parliament of the province of Victoria passed a **Chinese Immigration Act** in 1855 that limited the number of Chinese who could come ashore from each ship. Many Chinese got around this law by landing instead in South Australia.



In December 1860, white miners in the goldfields of New South Wales attacked the area where Chinese miners were quartered, killing several and wounding many others. Several other attacks followed. One of the worst occurred on June 30, 1861, when several thousand white miners attacked the Chinese and plundered their dwellings.

In response to this violence, the New South Wales Legislative Council passed the **Chinese Immigration Regulation and Restriction Act** in November of that year. The act, eventually repealed in 1867, was an attempt to restrict the number of Chinese immigrants from entering the colony. By the end of the gold rushes in 1881, New South Wales passed the **Influx of Chinese Restriction Act**, which attempted to restrict Chinese immigration by means of an entrance tax.

After the gold rushes, the Chinese in Australia turned to other sources of income, such as gardening, trade, furniture making, fishing, and pearl diving. While **Chinatowns** (Chinese enclaves) developed in cities across Australia, the Chinese made their biggest economic contributions in the Northern Territory and north Queensland regions. Eventually, however, anti-Chinese sentiment grew. Because the Chinese artisans and laborers would work for less than white Australians, resentment increased. Anti-Chinese leagues also began to develop.

Although the number of Chinese in Australia was declining, they were becoming more concentrated in Melbourne and Sydney and thus more visible. After six separate British self-governing colonies in Australia united under a single centralized government in 1901, the new parliament took action to limit non-British immigration. The new attorney general stated that the government’s policy was to preserve a “white Australia.” The **White Australia Policy**, as it was known, remained in effect until the mid-1970s. (Connect: Compare the experiences in Australia of Chinese and Japanese immigrants. See Topic 6.6.)

KEY TERMS BY THEME		
<p><b>GOVERNMENT: Leaders</b>            Mohandas Gandhi            Porfirio Díaz</p> <p><b>GOVERNMENT: Countries</b>            Trinidad and Tobago            Mauritius            Natal            Guyana            Argentina</p>	<p><b>GOVERNMENT: Laws</b>            Chinese Exclusion Act            Chinese Immigration Act            Chinese Immigration Regulation and Restriction Act            Influx of Chinese Restriction Act            White Australia Policy</p> <p><b>ECONOMICS: Activities</b>            gold rush            white-collar            blue-collar</p>	<p><b>TECHNOLOGY: Transportation</b>            canal system</p> <p><b>CULTURE: Classifications</b>            Scots-Irish            popular culture</p> <p><b>SOCIETY: Organization</b>            ethnic enclaves            Natal Indian Congress            kangani system            Chinatowns</p>