

# Ethnic group in america term paper example

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## **Ethnic group-Croatians**

Emigration of Croatians in the USA is a part of European migration and period when they started migrating is between 1890 and the beginning of the First World War. The reason for this was mainly because they had a difficult life and had trouble providing their family with food. The only chance that they had was to migrate to America and try to earn money for their families. Croatia is an independent country settled in the Balkan Peninsula and exiting the Adriatic Sea. Since 1918, they lived in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians and after the Second World War, Croats became a part of Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia which was a pro-communist country and consisted of six republics and two autonomies. It was a community of South Slav ethnic groups who shared similarities and also differed in religion, history and customs. Conflicts in this country that occurred between 1990 and 1995 and civil war resulted in another higher wave of migrants to the USA. Nowadays, according to the statistics of U. S. Census Bureau there are 413, 188 Croats living in the USA. The main reason of their migration to the USA was a difficult life and pursuit for a better one. The first who started migrating were people settled in Dalmatia who had open access to the sea and to trans-Atlantic boats. Substantial number of Croats arrived in a town called Calumet, Michigan. According to Balch (1969), " when people from a village Lipa had been immigrating to America since 1885, we were told that of population of 3400, 1800 were in America. So many of their people are in Calumet, Michigan, that they refer to it as " New Lipa" (p. 176). The reason for populating this area was because it was rich in natural resources, and the advanced process of industrialization

was present there. States that were inhabited by Croatian immigrants, besides Michigan, included Pennsylvania, Ohio and Illinois. People, mostly young men, were working in American mines and metal industry. Living conditions were difficult. They lived in wooden cabins that they shared with other workers and conditions were very poor. Those who had an opportunity to raise money for their families often returned home, and written evidences suggest that there was not a village in Croatia that did not have someone who was in America.

Croatians also left a significant mark in American history. In 1913, workers in the Copper Country went on strike. According to MTU Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, “Croatians more than any other ethnic group, distinguished themselves by their support for strike and the leadership they provided their fellow striking workers”. Two of these workers were killed and the press tried to hide this fact, because they were on the side of the factory owner and these killings could cause them damage. But, there was a Croatian woman who becomes a symbol of rebellion. “Ana Clemenc or “Big Annie” emerged during the strike as a symbol of labor’s resolve as she and her ever-present American flag led near daily marches of strikers and their supporters through the streets of Calumet” (MTU Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections). She became one of three women in Michigan who entered Hall of Fame.

This ethnic group is similar to groups who live in this part of Europe.

Originally, Croatians came to Balkan Peninsula together with South Slavic ethnic groups from the mountain Karpaty and started populating it in the seventh century AD. Therefore, they share many similarities with other

nations originating from there. They are very similar with Serbs, their language is similar, but at the same time they differentiate in the religion and history. As Croats were for many years under Austro-Ugrians influence, they become Roman Catholics, while Serbs are orthodox Christians. They try to stick together and help their people who are in need. They have a strong sense of social responsibility and cherish and nurture their cultural inheritance. Ever since their first arrival in America they have started to help developing centers that promote Croatian history and assist people who come to America for the first time. They are religious and every Sunday morning they gather in church and use this opportunity to spend time together and exchange information. When talking about their sense of duty, it is essential to emphasize that almost every city in the USA has at least one church that was built by Croats. According to the article published by the Embassy of Republic Croatian in the USA, " some 250 different newspapers, periodicals, almanacs, and magazines have emerged since 1884, when the first publication appeared".

Based on the fact that Croats came to America in the 19th century, it may be concluded they have immigrated in the American lifestyle well. As mentioned above, the Croats have a strong sense of duty to help their fellow citizens, so they helped everyone who later came to America and provided them with essential information on how to integrate in this new country. Since Croats lived in former Yugoslavia, historians often referred to them as South Slavs, making it difficult to distinguish how well did this ethnic group integrate in America. Ifkovic states that " by 1919 a study showed that 60 to 65 percent of the immigrants had taken out naturalization

papers. The Yugoslav Central organization—formed in Detroit in 1932 to promote unity among Slovenians, Serbians, and Croatians—had as one of its chief goals the encouragement of U. S. citizenship”. By realizing that acceptance of American life style will only benefit them, they embraced new customs and kept to the old ones at same time. They slowly developed from working class to middle class, recognizing the value of education and assimilation. Nowadays, they are accepted and acknowledged members of American society with strong educational and professional background. However, they also cherish and try to maintain their connections with their motherland. In many cases, it is difficult because the third or fourth generation of immigrants hardly speaks the Croatian language. Even though it is difficult, they try to cherish their cultural heritage and preserve it much as they can. There are many organizations that are established in America that promote Croatian culture and they succeed in this through folklore, exhibitions of Croatian artists, promotion of Adriatic Sea and many more. They frequently bring to big cities popular musicians to entertain American Croats. According to the Embassy of the Republic of Croatia “ Many immigrants preserved their culture through the formation of folklore groups and Croatian schools for their children, and founded academic groups such as the Croatian Academy of America, the Alumni and Friends of Croatian Universities (AMAC), and the Croatian Ethnic Institute to encourage scholarly pursuits relating to Croatia”. Also, even though Croatia is a small country in Europe, they managed to introduce studying of their language in American University and as such ensure that their language can be learned by other who find it interesting. Ifković also says that “ several American colleges

and universities teach Serbo-Croatian, including Stanford University, Yale University, and Northwestern University". These facts suggest that Croatians keep to their traditional and are proud of their origin.

When discussing acceptance of Croatians by other American population, it may be noticed that Croatians are well accepted by others. The fact that they originate from Europe is only a benefit for them because they do not represent any threat to Americas. They see other Americas as their fellow citizens and try to make a bridge between America and Croatia. Everyone who has visited Croatia, returns satisfied with these kind people, who are good hosts and this only proves that they have a capability to accept everyone regardless of their religion, or skin color. Other ethnic groups see this and accept Croatians as their equals. The only misbalance that can be seen is Between Croatians and Serbs. However, after the civil war, the gap between these two ethnic groups was bigger, and now they slowly overcome their issues and returned to promoting tolerance between Serbians and Croats.

In addition to this it may be concluded that history of ethnical minority of Croatians in America is long and its path have been difficult, but they managed to assimilate and become a part of America and its citizens.

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