

The usa was not a melting pot but a mosaic of different cultures in the period 18...

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According to some historians, the USA in 1890 had become a 'melting pot' of different cultures, meaning that the people who had immigrated to America had left their old traditions behind to start a new country free from outdated laws; this idea was also linked to American Exceptionalism as America was 'Exceptional' for these reasons. Many historians argue against this idea as there is plenty evidence to suggest that the immigrants to America had not integrated with each other and stayed with people from their previous country with the same traditions. These different cultures lived alongside one another meaning the USA could be described as a 'mosaic'.

There is much evidence, for example with The American Protective Association that there was a social hierarchy with many people being a lower class because of their race going against the idea of America as a 'melting pot' with all cultures coming together. The idea of WASPS (White Anglo-Saxon Protestants) is an example of where despite the statement of no social class system to encourage immigration there clearly was a social pecking order with many being discriminated against, for example, black people who were segregated from much of society until integration came into place during the 1960s. This idea clearly goes against any idea of a 'melting pot' with all cultures and backgrounds 'mixed' together.

The idea of a 'melting pot' was used to show an optimistic view of America following the ideas of the poem, 'The New Colossus', shown on the statue of liberty stating that America would take the 'huddled masses' so they could be 'free'. This idea of people following the American Dream contributed to creating a view of America as modern and free from discrimination which

was a factor in the largest voluntary immigration recorded in history.

Between 1890 and 1950, 4.7 million Jewish had left their original countries for America which shows the idea of a melting pot contributed to the attractiveness of America.

The idea of a 'mosaic' seems to fit more appropriately to describe the social situation in America with many cultures, especially in the cities, creating their own communities side-by-side with little interaction. These communities set up their own churches, clubs and newspapers and were known as ghettos. In most industrial areas of America there was a 'Little Italy' which is a clear example of people from one culture living together. Living together in one community could be argued as necessary to introduce the immigrants gradually to the new life that America offered, however, many criticised the immigrants believing that immigration to America involved integrating into society. The idea of these ghettos supports the idea that the USA was more like a 'mosaic' of cultures living alongside one another rather than all these new cultures living in a new land as a 'melting pot'.

It is quite clear to see that the idea of a 'melting pot' was not one that could be sustained instantly or easily. The idea of a 'mosaic' is far more likely and realistic due to the evidence supporting the concept. Therefore, the USA in 1890-1910 was more likely to have been divided into cultures as a 'mosaic' with a social hierarchy.