

# Immigrants in the usa

Business



After the depression of the 1890s, immigration jumped from a low of 3.5 million in that decade to a high of 9 million in the first decade of the new century.

Immigrants from Northern and Western Europe continued coming as they had for three centuries, but in decreasing numbers. After the 1880s, immigrants increasingly came from Eastern and Southern European countries, as well as Canada and Latin America. By 1910, Eastern and Southern Europeans made up 70 percent of the immigrants entering the country. After 1914, immigration dropped off because of the war, and later because of immigration restrictions imposed in the 1920s. The reasons these new immigrants made the journey to America differed little from those of their predecessors.

Escaping religious, racial, and political persecution, or seeking relief from a lack of economic opportunity or famine still pushed many immigrants out of their homelands. Many were pulled here by contract labor agreements offered by recruiting agents, known as padrones to Italian and Greek laborers. Hungarians, Poles, Slovaks, Bohemians, and Italians flocked to the coal mines or steel mills, Greeks preferred the textile mills, Russian and Polish Jews worked the needle trades or pushcart markets of New York. Railroad companies advertised the availability of free or cheap farmland overseas in pamphlets distributed in many languages, bringing a handful of agricultural workers to western farmlands. But the vast majority of immigrants crowded into the growing cities, searching for their chance to make a better life for themselves.