

History 346  
The Gilded Age  
T - TH 11:00 - 12:20  
GHH 108  
Roger Williams University  
Fall Semester 2011

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### Week of September 13

As I suggested last week, we'd flip the transportation revolution from short distance streetcars to long distance immigration. The gilded age marks the transition from voyaging by sail to voyaging by steam. So once again technological innovations are in the forefront. This week we'll also be experimenting with some useful tools, as well.

For ***Tuesday, September 13***

So You're Thinking of Immigrating?

**Download, and read, from the Internet.**

#### [Immigration Handbook \(1871\)](#)

During the Gilded Age the population of immigrants grew in absolute numbers, proportional numbers, and diversity. As we will see, in certain American cities the number of persons born abroad reached and may have exceeded 50 per cent. This was, of course, no accident. Agents of immigration agencies "sold" the United States to Europeans—but not only to Europeans: to Asians, and South Americans as well. The Handbook, of which I've reproduced the first section, will give you a sense of how the promise of the new world was extended, and what elements served to attract the new wave of Americans.

Immigrants didn't spread themselves equally across the United States. We're going to play with two tools to give us a little flavor of who came, from where, and to where. One of these tools is the [Panoramic Maps](#) collection which is part of the Library of Congress's American Memory website. I've introduced these in other classes, a bit. If you've not played with them before, you have a treat coming. The cities we'll be investigating with them include

- Boston
- Homestead, Pennsylvania
- Philadelphia
- Pittsburgh
- Cleveland
- Atlanta
- St. Louis
- New Orleans
- San Francisco
- Chicago
- Milwaukee and
- Omaha

I've chosen these particular cities not only because they have number of panoramic maps, but because they were magnets for immigrants, as well.

The second tool is a little more tricky. We won't really talk about it on Tuesday, but I want you to do some fiddling with it between now and Tuesday just to see if you can get it working for you. I'm referring to the [Historic Census Map Server](#), provided to us courtesy of the University of Virginia. Through it, you'll be able to trace the growth of immigrant populations from 1870 to 1900 or 1910...both generally (in terms of persons "foreign born" and specifically ("persons born in Bohemia", for example) and you'll be able to plot them in both numbers and as percentages of the total population.

I'd like to have each of you choose one of the cities above (I may add a couple of others). Homestead is actually there because of the famous (or infamous) Homestead Strike. The combined research of everyone will give us a mosaic of the development of cities and immigrant communities in the United States

For **Thursday, September 15**

The Immigrant Passage

**Download and Read, from the Internet.**

**[Report of the Immigration Service \(1873\) \(excerpts\).](#)**

These excerpts will give you a picture of what immigration was really like, and if you have relatives who made this kind of journey, I think your appreciation for their courage and fortitude will rise accordingly. If you choose to make your persona an immigrant, the documents this week will give your historic imagination plenty of fodder to chew upon.

I'll also see how you're doing playing with the historic census tools. We'll continue working with these until we get good at them. Don't let yourself get too discouraged too early.

The immigrant in the corner picture is Polish, but the story behind the picture is of a Norwegian immigrant gunsmith in the wild and wooly west. Check it out.

I think I have the blog tool working now. I'll try to give a little demonstration of it, either Tuesday, or Thursday. You'll be able to create a blogger's profile now, and, if I'm not mistaken, include a picture.