



## GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY ACTIVITY 17 (continued)

### Cities Within Cities: Ethnic Enclaves

At the time of the Civil War, most people in the United States worked on farms. As industrialization grew, people moved to the cities where new jobs were available. Just 50 years after the Civil War, more people worked in factories or in other urban workplaces than on farms. This change had begun in the northeastern United States where the first water-powered textile mills were located. Industrialization eventually spread to the Midwest, where Chicago became an important manufacturing city.

In addition to people migrating from farms to cities, immigrants from many countries came to the United States to work in the factories. Between 1860 and 1880, about 5 million immigrants, which included many Chinese and French Canadians, came to the United States. That figure increased to 9 million between 1880 and 1900. Many of the immigrants during those years were from Eastern Europe. (See the table below.)

#### Immigrant Neighborhoods

When they arrived in the United States, many immigrants settled in cities because jobs were more abundant there. Their experiences in large cities such as New York, Boston, or Chicago were similar. Immigrants were often financially poor and lived

**Immigrants Entering United States from Selected European Countries, 1820–1909**

	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900
<b>Millions of immigrants</b>	0.1	0.5	1.4	2.7	2.1	2.7	5.2	3.7	8.2
<b>% of total from:</b>									
<b>Ireland</b>	40.2	31.7	46	36.9	24.4	15.4	12.8	11	4.2
<b>Germany*</b>	4.5	23.2	27	34.8	35.2	27.4	27.5	15.7	4
<b>United Kingdom</b>	19.5	13.8	15.3	13.5	14.9	21.1	15.5	8.9	5.7
<b>Scandinavia</b>	0.2	0.4	0.9	0.9	5.5	7.6	12.7	10.5	5.9
<b>Russia*</b>					0.2	1.3	3.5	12.2	18.3
<b>Austria-Hungary*</b>					0.2	2.2	6	14.5	24.4
<b>Italy</b>					0.5	1.7	5.1	16.3	23.5

\*Continental European boundaries prior to 1919.

Sources: *Ellis Island and the Peopling of America*, NY: The New Press. U.S. Bureau of the Census.

*The first row shows the total number of immigrants from Europe for each decade. For example, between 1820 and 1829, .1 million Europeans immigrated to the United States. The rows below the total show the percentages of immigrants from each country listed.*

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in overcrowded neighborhoods under bad conditions. Usually these neighborhoods were in industrial areas where jobs could be found.

In addition, new immigrants often settled in areas of the city where other people from their home country lived. These neighborhoods were called ethnic enclaves. *Ethnic* describes a group of people with common customs, characteristics, and language. In geography, an *enclave* describes a small country or territory surrounded by a larger country or territory. Ethnic enclaves were like small foreign cities within the larger cities. People followed the same customs as they had in their homeland. Their language, dress, food, houses of worship, newspapers, and even games were from the old country.

**Chicago's West Side**

An example of an ethnic enclave on Chicago's West Side was at South Halsted and Maxwell Streets, south of West 12th Street. In the 1880s, large numbers of Eastern European Jews, mostly from Russia, began living around Maxwell Street. The area became the center of Jewish life on the West Side. People spoke Yiddish and read newspapers printed in Yiddish. The food sold at the markets and bakeries included the familiar meats and breads of their ancestors. Peddlers pushing carts and selling goods, a common practice in Eastern Europe, could be seen in the neighborhood streets. Over 40 synagogues—or Jewish houses of worship—were within walking distance of the corner of Halsted and Maxwell Streets.

Around 1900, most Jews living on the West Side worked as peddlers or in the garment industry. The working conditions in the garment industry were unsanitary and overcrowded, and workers toiled long hours for low pay. Some people produced clothing in factories, but many others worked in sweatshops. The sweatshops made products for the garment factories, but they were located in unventilated apartment buildings in the neighborhood.

**Directions:** On a separate sheet of paper, answer the following questions.

1. What are ethnic enclaves?
2. During which decade shown on the table did the most Russians immigrate to the United States?
3. Why did immigrants move into neighborhoods that had poor living conditions?
4. **Predicting** How would you predict that immigrant experiences working in factories and living in tenements would affect politics?

## Answer Key

### Geography & History Activity 17: Cities Within Cities: Ethnic Enclaves

1. The word *ethnic* describes a group of people with common customs, characteristics, and language. An *enclave* describes a small country or territory within another country or territory. When people keep their customs and language from another country within a neighborhood, it is as though a small foreign city exists within a larger city. These communities are referred to as ethnic enclaves.
2. The table shows that the most Russians entered the United States during the years 1900–1909.
3. Many of the immigrants were poor, so they could not afford to live in a better location. They moved to industrial areas where they could find jobs. Also, they settled in the areas where people from their homeland already lived.
4. Answers will vary, but students should mention that immigrant experiences working in factories and living in tenements contributed to the Socialist and Progressive movements and the call to reform government. These experiences also helped fuel the labor movement.