

**Title:** Immigration to Baltimore at the Turn of the Twentieth Century

**Lesson Developed by:** Jennifer Jones Frieman

**Overview of the Lesson:**

**Grade Level:** 4, 8

**Duration:** 60 minutes

**MARYLAND VSC:**

**People of the Nation and World: Grade 4**

B. Cultural Diffusion

2. Describe cultural characteristics of various groups of people in Maryland.

**People of the Nation and World: Grade 8**

B. Cultural Diffusion

1. Analyze how America continued to evolve into a society consisting of diverse cultures, customs, and traditions
- b. Examine how the diversity of the United States represents a blending of cultures and ideas from around the world.

**Skills & Processes: Grade 3-5**

D. Acquire Social Studies Information

1. Identify primary and secondary sources of information that relate to the topic/situation/problem being studied
- c. Locate and gather data and information from appropriate non-print sources, such as music, artifacts, charts, maps, graphs, photographs, video clips, illustrations, paintings, political cartoons, interviews, and oral histories

**Skills & Processes: Grade 6-8**

D. Acquire Social Studies Information

1. Identify primary and secondary sources of information that relate to the topic/situation/problem being studied
- c. Locate and gather data and information from appropriate non-print sources, such as music, artifacts, charts, maps, graphs, photographs, video clips, illustrations, paintings, political cartoons, multimedia, interviews, and oral histories

**Objectives:**

Students will be able to:

- Use primary sources, students will be able to describe the types of people who immigrated to Baltimore around the turn of the twentieth century.

**Vocabulary:**

architect – a person who designs buildings

brewer – a person who makes beer

confectioner – a person who makes and sells candy

cooper – a person who makes barrels  
florist – a person who sells flowers  
hatter – a person who makes and sells hats  
immigrant – Non-native born residents of a country.  
immigrate – to come to a new country to live permanently  
locksmith – a person who makes or repairs locks or keys  
machinist – a person who operates, makes, or repairs machines  
manifest – a list of passengers carried by a ship  
mason – a person who builds with stones or bricks  
plasterer – a person who applies plaster to walls to make a smooth, white finish  
port – a place where ships may dock or anchor, that has facilities for loading and unloading  
porter – a person hired to carry packages or baggage  
saddler – a person who makes, repairs, or sells saddles and other equipment for horses  
spinner – a person who makes yarn or thread  
tinsmith – a person who makes things with tin

### **Materials/Resources::**

- Photocopy the primary sources
- (OPTIONAL) "America's Largest Immigrant Pier," Book of the Royal Blue, Volume VII (July 1904), p. 3.
- Photograph "Waiting Room," MC4733(2), Baltimore City Life Museum Photograph Collection, Maryland Historical Society
- Photograph "Deck of Ship in Harbor," MC4733(3), Baltimore City Life Museum Photograph Collection, Maryland Historical Society.
- Photograph "Pens for Destinations Separation," MC4733(4), Baltimore City Life Museum Photograph Collection, Maryland Historical Society
- Photograph "Group After Unloading," MC4733(6), Baltimore City Life Museum Photograph Collection, Maryland Historical Society
- Worksheet "Immigration to Baltimore at the Turn of the Twentieth Century" - one for each student
- Passenger Summary from the "*Steamship Munchen*", July 7, 1893," Microfilm 247, Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at Baltimore, Maryland 1891-1948, Roll 4, Maryland Historical Society. (separate file, legal-size paper)
- Transcription of Passenger Summary (separate file, legal-size paper)
- Prepare transparencies of the following sources:
  - Photograph "The North German Lloyd Steamer 'Neckar' Alongside the Pier," Book of the Royal Blue, Vol. VII (July 1904), p.2, Maryland Historical Society
  - "Chart Showing a Journey between Bremen and Baltimore, 1884," Vertical File, Maryland Historical Society
- Worksheet "*S.S. Munchen* Immigrants" - one for each student

### **Teacher Background:**

When one thinks about immigration during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, images of New York Harbor and Ellis Island immediately spring to mind. Baltimore, however, was a major port of entry – by many estimates the second largest in the nation. Between 1820 and 1989, almost 2 million immigrants came to Baltimore, most between the years 1861 to 1930. Earlier in the 1800s, the

immigrants came mostly from Ireland, Germany, and England. By the late 1800s, however, the majority of immigrants to the city were German, Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, Czech, Greek and Italian. Many of these newcomers settled in Baltimore with the help of immigrant aid societies and family and friends who had made the journey earlier. Baltimore quickly became a “City of Neighborhoods,” a patchwork of ethnic neighborhoods like Highlandtown and Little Italy where immigrants settled and worked. The Port of Baltimore provided ready job opportunities for the immigrant labor force in the form of heavy industry and other maritime-related operations. An even greater number of immigrants, however, only passed through Baltimore on their way to final destinations in the Midwest and Great Plains states, carried along their way by the B&O Railroad’s immigration machine.

In 1868, the B&O Railroad\* forged a business partnership with the North German Lloyd (Norddeutscher Lloyd) Steamship Line based in Bremen, Germany. Baltimore had long had commercial ties to the port of Bremen, Europe’s center for the importation of tobacco. Now, immigrants could purchase a single ticket that included both passage on a steamship from Bremen to Baltimore and rail transportation to their destination in the central United States. (The steamship voyage cost \$16, or the equivalent of \$352 today.) To handle the influx of thousands of immigrants, the B&O Railroad built new, larger immigration passenger cars and an immigration arrival center on piers 8 and 9 in Locust Point, which they replaced with an even grander facility in 1904.

Despite this streamlined process and the state-of-the-art processing center, the ordeal of immigration was an exhausting one. The sea voyage took about 14 days. Conditions aboard the steamship were crowded, dirty, and poorly ventilated as hundreds of people cramped into the steerage accommodations, basically a large open space near the bottom of the ship. Illness was common. After such a long and difficult journey, the immigrants’ spirits must have been lifted by the sight of the American flag waving over Fort McHenry as they entered Baltimore Harbor. Upon arrival at Locust Point, the immigrants were herded into “separation pens” and given a cursory medical inspection. Doctors checked primarily for trachoma, a contagious eye disease, and for symptoms of serious illnesses that would warrant a more thorough inspection and possible hospitalization or deportation. Immigrants were then interviewed by a government agent who counted and recorded the money the immigrant brought with him. Next, his baggage was inspected and weighed. If the immigrant planned to remain in Baltimore, he was placed in a final pen to await pick-up by friends or relatives as listed on his immigration card. If the immigrant planned to travel farther west, he picked up his pre-paid railroad ticket or purchased one, and then waited in a large waiting room for his train. Immigrants not staying in Baltimore were not permitted to leave the facility except to board their trains. Fortunately for those with a long wait, the new reception center included a money changing station and a food stand that featured familiar dishes from the homeland.

\* The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (B&O) had been founded in 1827 by investors in the Port of Baltimore who wanted to protect the port’s share of the lucrative western trade following the construction of the Erie Canal.

### **Lesson Development:**

1. Ask students whether they know anyone who has immigrated to the United States from another country and whether they know the story of their own family’s immigration to the U.S. Have students share some of these stories with the class.
2. Explain that the United States is a nation of immigrants. Except for the descendants of the Native

Americans living on this continent before the arrival of other people, everyone living in the United States today is the descendant of someone who came to this country from somewhere else.

3. Tell students that the period of heaviest immigration happened about 100 years ago, between about 1870 and 1910. People came from all over Europe in search of a better life, more freedoms, and economic opportunity. Many of these newcomers arrived in the United States at Baltimore's Locust Point, where the B&O Railroad built a large immigration facility. On one ticket, immigrants could get passage on a steamship across the Atlantic Ocean and then travel by railroad to their final destination.
4. Show students the transparency of the immigrant pier and the steamship "*Neckar*."
5. Read aloud the excerpt from "America's Largest Immigrant Pier", page 3: "The first glimpse from the dock of an arriving ship is bewildering in its vast bulk of people, packed closely together. It seems impossible that so many could find sleeping accommodations, for the immensity of the ship is lost sight of. Great bundles of baggage everywhere on the deck serve as seats, and around and through all are the children, a constant moving, shifting kaleidoscope of color. Some line the rail and look with wondering eyes at their strange new surroundings, while others stand and sit in stolid indifference. . . Now and then can be picked out a joyous face of welcome from among the few who have friends on the pier, but as a whole there are none to welcome, no cries of recognition; the silence is strange and oppressive, for to the vast majority it is only the beginning of the end."
6. Ask students what they think the experience of immigration might have been like. Was it difficult? Pleasant?
7. Ask students what types of people they think might have immigrated. Wealthy people? Poor people? Families or single men? People who faced persecution? What countries did they come?
8. Tell students that they will be examining some photographs and documents relating to immigration to Baltimore around 1900 to help answer these questions.

**Procedure:**

1. Distribute the immigration photographs to students. You may choose to distribute all of the photos to all students, or you may group students and assign one photo to each group. In pairs, ask students to analyze the photographs to answer the following FOCUS QUESTION:
  - How would you describe the people who are immigrating based on these photographs?Provide the following guide questions:
  - What do you notice about the immigrants' gender and ages?
  - What do you notice about the immigrants' faces?
  - What do you notice about the immigrants' clothes?
  - What do you notice about the immigrants' belongings?
2. Allow students 5-10 minutes to examine the photos and formulate answers to the focus question.
3. Share answers and discuss student responses.
4. Next tell students that they will learn much more about the types of people who immigrated by ana-

lyzing a summary of the list of immigrants from a ship called the *S.S. Munchen* (German name for Munich), which sailed from Bremen, Germany on June 22, 1893 and arrived in Baltimore on July 7.

5. Show students the overhead transparency “Chart Showing the Journey Between Bremen and Baltimore” and point out the locations of Bremen and Baltimore.
6. Distribute the summary list and, in pairs, have students use it to answer the following questions on the *S.S. Munchen* Immigrants Worksheet:
  1. How many immigrants traveled aboard the *S.S. Munchen*? (531)
  2. From which countries did people aboard the *S.S. Munchen* immigrate? (*Germany, Russia, Sweden, Hungary, Austria, Bohemia, and Australia*)
  3. From which country did the most people come? (*Germany*)
  4. From which country did the second most people come? (*Russia*)
  5. Were the immigrants mostly men, mostly women, or were there about the same number of men and women? (*About the same number*)
  6. Were the immigrants mostly children, mostly adults, or mostly elderly people? (*Mostly adults*)
  7. Do you think that many families immigrated together or that it was mostly individuals? (*Families*) How do you know? (*Based on the presence of so many children and the roughly equal numbers of men and women, it seems that there were many family groups.*)
  8. How much money did most people bring with them? (*Less than \$100*)
  9. Of those who listed an occupation, what two occupations did the most immigrants list? (*Laborer and farmer*)
  10. Do you think that most of the immigrants were wealthy or poor? (*Poor*) How do you know? (*Most brought relatively little money with them and performed manual labor or farm work.*)
  11. What was the final destination of the most immigrants? (*Illinois*)
  12. How many immigrants were going to the Midwest (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, Nebraska, and Ohio)? (256)
  13. How many immigrants planned to stay in Maryland? (59)
7. Allow students about 20 minutes to analyze the list and answer the questions.
8. As a class, discuss the findings and draw generalizations about the immigrants aboard the *S.S. Munchen*. (*They were mostly poorer people from Germany and Eastern Europe who worked as laborers or farmers. Many traveled with their families, and most wanted to settle in the Midwest.*)

**Assessment:**

Have students pretend that they are newspaper reporters covering the first ships to arrive at the B&O Railroad’s new immigration facility in 1904. Direct students to write an article that describes the scene as the immigrants unload from the steamship and enter the reception center. Students may choose to draw a picture to accompany their article.

**Closure:**

Have students present their articles as if they were delivering a news broadcast. These accounts will summarize the content covered in the lesson.