

## **Westward Movement, Economic Expansion, and the Forming of an American Identity (Post War of 1812 to 1860)**

### **I. Westward Expansion**

- Victory in the War of 1812 and the Texas/Mexico struggle in the 1830s opened up the West for settlement
- A trend emerged to settle past the Allegheny Mountains and Ohio River
- Life on the frontier was miserable for settlers (disease, depression, premature death, overall living conditions-----pretty much on your own)
- Benefits to Expansion----allows nation to expand economically and accommodate huge population growth
- Negatives to Expansion---- (very little guidelines, most of the frontier not accurately scouted, clashes with Native Americans)
  - **Ecological Imperialism** (George Catlin)---killing off of beavers, bison, sea otters, etc. and exploiting the land
  - Catlin proposed the creation of National Parks to protect and preserve

### **II. Growth of the Nation (By 1860)**

- ½ of Americans under the age of 30
- population doubling every 25 years
- 33 states
- tremendous urban growth (many major cities emerge----problems)
- 1840s, immigrants began pouring into the U.S. (Irish and Germans)
  - persecution in Europe
  - Europe's population exceeded its need
  - Steamboats made ocean travel easier
  - desire to gain freedom and opportunity in America

### **III. History of Immigration**

- Push Factors (revolution, famine, ethnic cleansing, religious persecution, economics)
- Pull Factors (chain migration, employment, free or cheap land, upward mobility, religious freedom)
- America has always encouraged immigration (cheap labor pool) except during times of economic depression
- Old Immigrants (1820-1880)—Northern and Western Europe
  - Irish, German, Scandinavians, English were largest groups
- New Immigrants (1880-1920s)—Southern and Eastern Europe
  - Italians, Greeks, Russians were largest groups

#### IV. 1840s-1850s Immigration (Irish and Germans)

- Irish immigrants
  - 1830-1900, 4 million immigrated
  - stereotyped by Americans (poor, Catholic, drunks)
  - Worked worst jobs (i.e. digging canals)
  - shared basement of social ladder with free blacks
  - Americans feared that they would become a “public charge”
- German Immigrants
  - 1830-1900, 5 million immigrated
  - some wealthy, mostly protestant
  - settled in the Midwest
  - assimilated and succeeded rather easily
  - most successful in maintaining ethnicity

#### V. Nativism

- In general, a fear of immigrant influence on American life (has occurred and continues to occur today in America)
- Cultural Clashes between Americans and new immigrants
- Protestant vs. Catholic
- Mob violence against Catholics (i.e. burning of churches)
- Drinking habits of both Germans and Irish fuel the temperance movement (prohibition)
- **“Know Nothing Party”** (Order of the Star Spangled Banner)
  - secret Anti-Catholic society
  - wanted restrictions put on immigration and naturalization

#### VI. First Phase of Industrial Revolution (prior to Civil War)

- Embargo Act, Non-Intercourse Act, War of 1812 forced Americans to find substitutes for imports by making their own products
  - Inventions and patents prior to Civil War
    - 1800 (306 patents)
    - 1860 (28,000 patents)
  - Early Factories
    - Hours long
    - Conditions despicable (unsanitary, unsafe)
    - New laws protecting workers were sought
    - Strikes/labor unions were initially illegal
- Commonwealth vs. Hunt** (1842) Supreme Court Case--- essentially made labor unions and strikes **legal** (voice for workers)