



Topic #1: USA Immigration 1830-1930 (2-3 page essay)

“Remember, remember always, that all of us, and you and I especially, are descended from immigrants and revolutionists” – Franklin D. Roosevelt.

I love this!

Between 1870 and 1920, approximately 20 million Europeans, primarily from Germany, Ireland, Scandinavia, England, and Italy, as well as over 1 million Asians, primarily from China and Japan, arrived in the United States. While some immigrants were lured by the promise of a better life, others sought to escape difficult conditions, such as famine, poverty, civil war, and religious or political persecution. Though many claimed that the influx of immigrants was a crisis of American identity, the immigrants were an indispensable and strategic factor in the economic growth of the United States, contributing to technological progress and competitiveness. In fact, these immigrants have not only made it possible for the United States to fulfill its role in the world – enhance global cooperation, lead the international community as the world hegemony, and foster innovation – but they have also enriched the American culture and defined the American identity.

Wonderful Thesis

Without these millions of immigrants who contributed significantly to innovation, technological progress, and competitiveness of the US market, America would not have been able to fulfill its role of enhancing global cooperation, leading the international community as the world hegemony, and fostering innovation. US's rising population due to the influx of immigrants provided a solid basis for its economic expansion, which was crucial to its rise to world-power status. For instance, hundreds of thousands of Chinese immigrants constructed the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869. Similarly, faces of immigrants from all over the world could

be found in nearly every factory across the nation, providing the backbone for the Industrial Revolution. In fact, according to a census from Brookings, the immigrants made up roughly 13% of the US population but 16% of the labor force in the 1900s. Without this tremendous pool of labor force, the US Industrial Revolution, hence its rise to world hegemony, would not have been possible.

On the other hand, countless foreign-born scientists embodied the innovative spirits that allowed the US to fulfill its role of fostering innovative spirits and leading the international community as the world hegemony in the field of technology. These foreign-born scientists – such as Nobel Prize-winning physicist Albert Einstein, physicist credited for the expansion of AC current Nikola Tesla, cofounder of Google Sergey Brin, and founder of SpaceX and Tesla Motors Elon Musk – have won more than a third of the nation's Nobel Prizes in STEM fields. Even the renowned inventor of the telephone and pioneer in communications for the deaf, Alexander Graham Bell, was a Scottish-born scientist who immigrated to the US in 1882. Without these foreign-born scientists who have made significant technological progress, the Industrial Revolution would not have occurred and the US would not even be able to lead the world as the sole superpower.

Aside from fostering the Industrial Revolution and allowing for the US's rise as world hegemony, the immigrants invented various iconic images – fast food, cheese, and basketball – that have been so deeply engrained in the American culture that in fact define the American identity today. For instance, in 1865, German immigrant Charles Feltman sold the first hot dog on a roll in the coastal Brooklyn neighborhood of Coney Island. In 1895, the Library of Congress credited Danish immigrant Louis Lassen of selling the first hamburger and steak sandwich in the US. Furthermore, in 1916, James L. Kraft, a Canadian-American entrepreneur, patented

processed cheese; by 1930, more than 30 percent of the cheese consumed in America was sold by Kraft. On the other hand, modern-day basketball, though originated from US, was actually invented in 1891 by a Canadian physical education teacher, James Naismith. Last but not least, even the America's unofficial national anthem "God Bless America" was written by a Siberian immigrant, Irving Berlin, in 1918 at Camp Upton, Long Island. The immigrants, who have invented these iconic images of the US culture – fast food, cheese, and basketball, have undoubtedly contributed significantly to the forming of American identity.

Undeniably, the millions of immigrants were a crucial factor that allowed the US to fulfill its role as the world hegemony, fostering innovation and taking the lead in technological progress. Contrary to what many referred to as the "American identity crisis," the influx of immigrants has actually enriched the American culture and defined the American identity today, seeing that many iconic images associated with *Americaness*, such as fast food, cheese, and basketball, were products of the immigrants' innovative spirits. As Franklin D. Roosevelt once asserted, "Remember, remember always, that all of us, and you and I especially, are descended from immigrants and revolutionists." Undoubtedly, America has always been a "nation of immigrants" – the immigrants have been a crucial force in America's rising as world hegemony and in the formation of its identity.