

Summary: Newcomers in California

Moving to California

Millions of immigrants came to the United States during the 1800s and 1900s. Many went to California in search of jobs. Between 1848 and 1882, about 300,000 Chinese immigrants arrived, mostly in California. They worked in agriculture, mining, and industry. In the late 1870s, the number of jobs decreased, and many workers in California believed the Chinese were taking their jobs. In 1882, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act. Chinese workers could no longer immigrate. The government turned back about a third of the Chinese immigrants trying to enter the country.

Farm Workers from Asia

Farmers who had hired the Chinese now hired other Asian workers. By 1909, almost half of all farm workers in California were Japanese. Many became successful farmers, bringing new ways of farming and new crops, such as strawberries. By 1920, nearly 75,000 Japanese lived in California. Some Korean immigrants also arrived around 1900. From 1908 to 1910, Sikhs from India and Pakistan came to work on the railroads and then on farms.

Like the Chinese, the new groups faced discrimination. Korean and Japanese children had to attend separate schools. In 1924, Congress passed the Immigration Act, which limited immigration from all countries. But in 1898, the Philippines became a U.S. territory. Filipinos were now U.S. citizens and could freely move to the United States. In the 1920s, more than 30,000 Filipinos came.

A New Start

In the early 1900s, war in Mexico drove thousands of Mexicans north. Well-to-do Mexicans started businesses in California. Laborers worked in the booming farm industry. By 1930, nearly one and a half million people from Mexico lived in the United States. Many African Americans from southern states also came to California to work on farms and later in lumber mills. By 1900, nearly 8,000 lived throughout the state, some for a while in their own town. Mexicans and African Americans faced a great deal of discrimination.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

immigration *noun*, the movement of people from one country to another

exclusion *noun*, the practice of keeping people out



After You Read

REVIEW Why did Congress pass the Chinese Exclusion Act? Highlight the sentence that explains why Americans wanted to exclude the Chinese.

REVIEW Why were Filipinos allowed to move to the United States when other Asians were not? Underline the sentences that explain how Filipinos got the right to move to the United States.

REVIEW Why did Mexican immigrants come to the United States in the early 1900s? Circle the sentence that explains why Mexicans wanted to leave their country.