

Immigration to Baltimore, 1883: The Rebecca Novitsky Story
Teacher's Guide
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Objectives:

At the completion of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Describe the history of an immigrant family from the late 1800s

MSPAP Outcomes and Indicators:

Social Studies, Grades 4-5

Peoples of the Nation and World

- Analyze the diverse cultural contributions that influenced the development of Maryland and the United States

Skills and Processes

- Obtain, interpret, organize, and use information from reading, asking questions, observing, and listening.
- Obtain, interpret, organize and use print and non-print sources of information such as pictures, graphics, maps, globes, and artifacts.

Reading/Language Arts, Grades K-8

Reading

- Students will demonstrate their ability to read to be informed.

Writing

- The students will demonstrate ability to write effectively to inform by developing and organizing facts to convey information.

Student Worksheets:

Immigration to Baltimore, 1883: The Rebecca Novitsky Story

Other Materials Needed:

Pencils, paper

Key Web Sites Referenced in this Lesson:

The National Museum of American History

- <http://americanhistory.si.edu/sweatshops/index.htm>
- <http://americanhistory.si.edu/sweatshops/intro/floorplan.htm>
- <http://americanhistory.si.edu/sweatshops/history/history.htm>
- <http://americanhistory.si.edu/sweatshops/history/1880.htm>
- <http://americanhistory.si.edu/sweatshops/history/1880b.htm>
- <http://americanhistory.si.edu/sweatshops/history/1880c.htm>
- <http://americanhistory.si.edu/sweatshops/history/1880d.htm>
- <http://americanhistory.si.edu/sweatshops/history/1880e.htm>

Teacher Background Information:

This lesson is based on the Maryland Historical Society character, Rebecca Novitsky. Rebecca is one of the six historical characters in the “Maryland Through My Eyes” program of the Society, characters that can come to your classroom and brings history to life! Through an interactive 45- to 60-minute presentation features drama, hands-on activities, and the opportunity for students to analyze primary sources, students learn about history through a personal narrative. For more information about the Maryland Historical Society’s Maryland Through My Eyes program, contact them by calling 410-685-3750.

Immigration to Baltimore, 1870-1900

The immigrations to the United States of over 41,500,000 persons, of whom 34,000,000 came from Europe between 1820 and 1960 is the greatest movement of population in Western history. For convenience sake, historians usually divided the study of immigration into three time periods: (1) the colonial, 1607-1776; (2) the “old” immigration, 1790-1890; and the (3) the “new” immigration 1890 to the present.

From the era of Reconstruction to the end of the 19th century, the State of Maryland underwent an economic transformation that involved the maturing of the industrial economy, the rapid expansion of big business, and the rise of national labor unions and pronounced industrial conflict. The last third of the 19th century witnessed unprecedented immigration and urbanization, both of which were indispensable to industrial expansion. American society became more diverse as immigrants arrived not only from southern and eastern Europe but also from Asia, Mexico, and Central America, creating a new American mosaic. Related to this continuing theme of immigration was the search for national unity amid growing cultural diversity. The State of Maryland, and especially the City of Baltimore, was destined to feel the impact of these newly arriving 19th century immigrants.

Students should be able to demonstrate understanding of the sources and experiences of the new immigrants by

- Analyzing the obstacles, opportunities, and contributions of different immigrant groups.
- Evaluating how Jewish newcomers responded to discrimination and internal divisions in their new surroundings.

In this *Exploration*, students read text and examine historical photographs to investigate immigration history related to Maryland. Students will also have the opportunity to take a virtual tour of a museum, and they will write their own script for a historical character. This *Maryland Exploration* might work well as an introductory lesson to 19th century urban life, cultural diversity, family history and genealogy, and the establishment of the garment district in the City of Baltimore.

Teaching Tips:

This *Maryland Exploration* should take at least two 30 minute class periods to complete. The first half of the *Exploration* is a reading selection. Students will read the Rebecca Novitsky story on-line. To help students be successful with this reading, teachers should review the reading selection prior to using the *Exploration* with students to identify important vocabulary to be instructed before reading.

The beginning of the lesson includes a Preview Guide (or anticipation guide) to help students access prior knowledge before they begin to read. . If you visit the Maryland State Department of Education’s School Improvement Web Site,

http://www.mdk12.org/practices/support_success/specific/tips/reading/gary_d/anticipation_guides.html

you can learn more about Anticipation Guides and other reading strategies. If you would like some more information on helping your students improve their writing, visit this link:

http://www.mdk12.org/practices/support_success/specific/tips/writing/bonnie/literary_express-writing.html

If students need help understanding how to interpret visual sources of information, The Maryland Historical Society provides a variety of different on-line worksheets that will help students examine photographs and other primary sources. Download these worksheets at

<http://www.mdhs.org/psource.html>.

Introduction/Motivation:

To connect the students’ contemporary experience with this *Maryland Exploration*, ask students to determine how many students they know that have recently arrived in Maryland, and locate the places that these people have come from on a world map. (This activity could be extended to a graphing activity if students live in a community with a diverse immigrant population.)

Explain that in this lesson, students will be learning about the immigration of one family to Baltimore in 1883. Explain that “Maryland is often called the United States in miniature” and that people of many different ethnic and cultural backgrounds live here.

Use the Preview Guide as an introductory activity before using the on-line reading. After students have completed reading the *Exploration*, review the Preview Guide questions again. Encourage students to revisit the text to check the accuracy of the statements. Encourage discussion of the statements, and further research if necessary to check the answers (although all of the statements can be checked just by re-reading this *Exploration*).

Thoughtful Application

To check whether students have understood what they have read, the thoughtful application for this *Exploration* is to create a script for another character in the story. If necessary, provide further explanation on historical characters. (Arrange for Rebecca Novitsky to visit your classroom as you are completing this *Exploration*!) After students have completed a character map as a pre-writing, they may be encouraged to visit the Museum of American History’s web site to gather more information about immigration to the United States before 1904. Then, they will compose a script for a conversation between Rebecca and another character in the story. Your students may even want to act out the conversation!

Scoring Key for Sample Thoughtful Application:

A sample rubric is included below. You may wish to use MSDE’s Writing to Inform Rubric and the Language Usage rubric.

Writing To Inform

- 3 = You have created a well-written script for your character that includes accurate details from the story. Your character seems to come alive – the writing keeps the reader interested, and is filled with details that make it seem like the reader is having a conversation with the character. You have revised your work enough to truly turn in your best!
- 2 = You have created a script for your character that includes details from the story. Your script needs a few minor changes to make it better organized and more interesting to read. You could revise your work some more to make sure it is your best. You might want to review the Rebecca Novitsky one more time to make sure your details are accurate.
- 1 = You have completed the assignment, but your script does not include enough details and there are some facts included that are not accurate. You need to revise your work some more to make sure it is your best. You definitely need to review the Rebecca Novitsky story again to make sure your details are accurate.
- 0 = Your work is incomplete.

Extensions for further study:

1. Construct a family history project. Where did your family come from? Why don't you ask your parents and/or your grandparents about your family's history? Then you can write a paragraph telling where your family came from.
2. As a follow-up activity, you may want to visit *Life in the Canneries* http://www.intandem.com/NewPrideSite/MD/Lesson6/Lesson6_1.html and learn more about Child Labor in Maryland at the turn of the 20th Century.
3. Draw upon stories about the experiences of immigrants in the recent past in order to retell the stories and discuss the good and bad experiences of the people who have moved into their state or region. Possible sources are *Angel Child, Dragon Child* by Michele Maria Surat, *The Land I Lost* by Hyunh Quang Nhoung, *Making a New Home in America* by Maxine Rosenberg, *How Many Days to America?* by Eve Bunting, *I Speak English for My Mom* by Muriel Stark, and *Grandfather's Journal* by Allen Say.
4. Draw upon stories such as *The Drinking Gourd* by F.N. Monjo, *Next Spring an Oriole* by Gloria Whelan, *The Little Weaver of Thai-Yen Village* by Tran-Khanh-Tuyet, *Dancing with the Indians* by Angela Shelf Medearis, **and *I Speak English For My Mom*** by Muriel Stark in order to retell and analyze examples of people from different groups meeting, adjusting to, or helping one another. What problems did they have? What did they do to overcome them? How would students suggest dealing with them and why?
5. Interpret photographs and historical narratives that depict the obstacles encountered by various individuals and groups and their struggles to overcome them. Analyze a problem, considering the different perspectives of people involved, the options they had at the time for dealing with the problem, and the consequences of the decisions made. Possible sources include *Immigrant Kids* by Russell Freedman, *Strange New Feeling* by Julius Lester, *Immigrant Girl: Becky of Eldridge* by Brett Harvey, *Yonie Wondernose* by Marguerite De Angeli, *An Illustrated History of the Chinese in America* by Ruthanne L. McCunn, *The Black*

Americans: A History in Their Own Words by Milton Meltzer, *Mexican in America* by Jane Pinchot, *Dimitry: A Young Soviet Immigrant* by Joanne E. Bermstoem, and *In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson* by Bette Bao Lord.

6. Describe the ways in which immigrants learned to live and work in a new country. Draw upon excerpts from first-hand accounts, stories, and poems that describe living and working conditions. How did urban reformers like Jacob Riis (<http://www.cis.yale.edu/amstud/inforev/riis/chap10.html>) try to serve the needs of new immigrants? What role did public schools have in helping immigrants settle into their new communities?
7. Use old photographs, oral histories, and other sources to compile a history of the experiences of family members who immigrated to the United States. (NOTE: The Maryland Historical Society Library has an outstanding collection of oral history interviews of prominent Maryland citizens. Contact the Maryland Historical Society for more information, www.mdhs.org).
8. Examine the experiences of Jewish immigrants through children's stories such as *The Cat Who Escaped from Steerage* by Evelyn Wilde Meyerson.
9. Examine newspaper and magazine accounts and construct interview questions for a written, telephone, or in-person interview with a recent immigrant in order to discover why they came, what their life was like, and to describe some of the experiences that they have had in adjusting to Maryland.
10. Since this is 2000, the year of the census-taking, draw upon past census data using Web sites such as the US Census Bureau <http://www.census.gov/> or the US Historical Census Data Browser <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/census> and historical accounts in order to describe patterns and changes in population over a period of time in Baltimore or another town in Maryland.

Additional web sites:

The Jacob Riis Collection at Yale University

<http://www.cis.yale.edu/amstud/inforev/riis/chap10.html>

<http://www.cis.yale.edu/amstud/inforev/riis/chap11.html>

Ellis Island

<http://www.wallofhonor.com/>

http://cmp1.ucr.edu/exhibitions/immigration_id.html

<http://www.i-channel.com/features/ellis/>

The History Place Child Labor Archives

<http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/childlabor/finger.jpg>

<http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/childlabor/farrand.jpg>

<http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/childlabor/hiram.jpg>

<http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/childlabor/index.html>

The American Memory Immigration Lessons

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/lesson97/firsthand/main.html>

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/lesson97/oh1/ammem.html>

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/activity/port/teacher.html>

The University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center

<http://www1.umn.edu/ihrc/genweb.htm#top>

The Maryland Historical Society

<http://www.mdhs.org>

US Census Bureau

<http://www.census.gov/>

US Historical Census Data Browser

<http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/census>