THE NEW JERSEY
ITALIAN HERITAGE COMMISSION

Italian Immigration to New Jersey, 1890

Grade Level: 6-12

Subjects: United States History / New Jersey History / Language Arts / World
Languages
Categories: Immigration and Prejudice **/** History and Society / Arts and Sciences

Standards:
Please see page 6 of the lesson plan for complete New Jersey Student Learning Standards
alignment.
Objectives:
Students will be able to:
1. read and analyze a chart/map for information.
2. understand the history of immigration patterns of Italians in New Jersey in the
   broader context of immigration patterns in American History at the turn of the
   century.

Abstract:
Reasons for Italian Immigration to New Jersey in 1890 and corresponding settlements are
explored.

Key Terms:
Mezzogiorno	*Italian*	Southern Italy
Padrone	*Italian*	A man who exploitatively employs or finds work for Italian immigrants in America.
Paesani	*Italian*	Peasantry from the same families and the same village or area.

Background:
Italians make up the largest single ethnic group in New Jersey. The name New Jersey
itself derives from the Latin *Nova Caesarea. Nova* is Latin for "new" and *Caesarea*
comes from the Roman name given to the Jersey Islands off of England, in honor of
Julius Caesar. After Italian unification in 1861, Italians began to arrive in New Jersey in
large numbers. Approximately ¾ of these immigrants came from the Mezzogiorno (a
pseudo-region of Italy stretching down the Italian peninsula south of Rome) and also
from Sicily. The majority of the people emigrating from Italy were impoverished
peasants, living in a near subsistence economy that was moving towards a cash market
economy. The search for cash in the new economy led many Italians into the cities or to
foreign lands. They came to America in search to work in the burgeoning factories of the
American Industrial Revolution. These factories included silk and cotton mills. Some

Italians were skilled masons, stonecutters, and sculptors. Many men found work building new Catholic churches in New Jersey; women were seamstresses in the garment factories.   Many settled in large urban centers such as Trenton, Newark, Paterson, and Jersey City. By the 1930s, Italian agrarian colonies were present in Vineland, Hammonton, and Woolwich where Italians worked on farms as seasonal workers. In each area where Italians were present, smaller regional communities existed, with "paesani" from one area or village would settle together for social or economic security.

Procedures:
I.   Explain to students that one of the immigration groups of the late 1800s about which they will be learning are the Italians.

II.   Find Italy on a world map or globe.
   a.   Have students trace with their finger the route the Italians would have taken (probably from Naples, just south of the capital, Rome).

III.   Class Discussion
   a.   *Why are so many people from Europe immigrating to the USA at this time in history?*
        i.   The new market economy demanded cash for the first time, and the Industrial Revolution held the promise of more jobs and a chance to earn cash for many poor people in Europe.
   b.   *Where did the Italian immigrants land in the USA?*
        i.   Their ship usually docked in New York Harbor. Some other Italians who settled in New Jersey landed in Philadelphia or Baltimore.

IV.   Divide students into groups or pairs.
   a.   Hand out the copies of Map #1, "Italians per County, 1890."
   b.   Students may also need a current NJ map, find and print one out at https://geology.com/state-map/new-jersey.shtml or get one from your local AAA office.

V.   Ask students:
   a.   *Where were the most Italians settling in NJ in 1890?*
        i.   Passaic, Essex, Hudson, and Atlantic Counties
   b.   *Why do you think they chose Passaic, Essex, and Hudson counties?*
        i.   Passaic, Essex, and Hudson are close to New York.
        ii. These counties all have big cities where immigrants they could more easily find work.
   c.   *Why do you think the Italians chose to settle in Atlantic County?*
        i.   Italians settled in Atlantic County because there were jobs on the area farms.
   d.   *What were they coming to America looking for?*
        i.   Italians came to America for jobs and cash.
VI.   Review New Jersey's geography by using a topographical map of the state.
   a.   Point out that there are major urban centers in the counties of Essex

(Newark), Passaic (Paterson), and Hudson (Jersey City).
   b. These cities all housed major industries and industrial centers, where Italian immigrants could work in factories.
   c. Atlantic County was home to fertile soil and open space to grow crops such as blueberries, so many Italians settled there to work on farms.

VII.   Have students play the role of a padrone, or a work agent who is trying to recruit Italians to take jobs in New Jersey.

VIII.   Pick a city or county in New Jersey and design a help-wanted poster or write a help wanted ad for a newspaper to get immigrants to settle in cities/counties in New Jersey.
   a. Include where in the state the job is located, what type of work, skills needed for the job, and why this is a good place to settle.

Assessment:
As students present their help-wanted posters/advertisements, evaluate them on the language used to convey their message, accuracy of factual information included, and appeal to the reader/viewer. Create a teacher-made checklist for scoring.

Extension:
Students can interview Italian families in their city to find out more about how, when, and why they settled in New Jersey.

Materials:
- Map #1 "Italians per County 1890" – Map from p. 9 of Starr (see below)
- Current NJ Map
- (can be obtained from local AAA office or http://geology.com/state-map/new-jersey.shtml)
- Art materials to create poster

Resources:
Starr, Dennis J. *The Italians of New Jersey: A Historical Introduction and Bibliography.* Originally published Newark, NJ, 1985: The New Jersey Historical Society; reprinted Burlington, NJ, 2002: The New Jersey Italian and Italian American Heritage Commission.
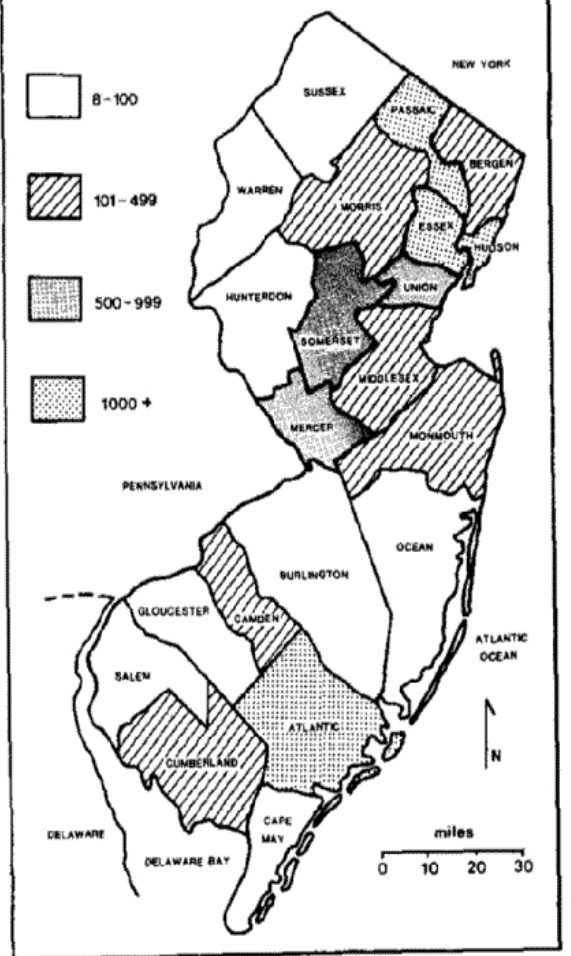
Todd, Anne M. *Italian Immigration 1880-1920.* Blue Earth Books, 2001.

Teacher Resources:
American Passage: The History of Ellis Island, Harper Collins Publishers, 2010, Vincent J. Cannato.

Teaching Italian American Literature, Film, and Popular Culture, The Modern Language Association of America, New York, 20120, Edited by Edvige Giunta and Kathleen Zamboni McCormick.

ITALIANS PER COUNTY 1890

8–100

101–499

500–999

1000 +

SUSSEX
PASSAIC
BERGEN
WARREN
MORRIS
ESSEX
HUDSON
HUNTERDON
UNION
SOMERSET
MIDDLESEX
MERCER
MONMOUTH
PENNSYLVANIA
OCEAN
BURLINGTON
GLOUCESTER
CAMDEN
ATLANTIC OCEAN
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DELAWARE
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tandards:

New Jersey Student Learning Standards

Social Studies

<u>6.1.8.D.4.a</u>   Analyze the push-pull factors that led to increases in immigration, and explain why ethnic and cultural conflicts resulted.

English Language Arts

SL.6.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

SL.6.1a Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.

SL.6.1c Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

SL.6.2 Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

SL.6.4 Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate speaking behaviors (e.g., eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation).

SL.6.5 Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, images, music, sound) and visual displays in presentations to clarify information.

SL.7.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

SL.7.1a Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.

SL.7.1c Pose questions that elicit elaboration and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant observations and ideas that bring the discussion back on topic as needed.

SL.7.2 Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study.

SL.7.4 Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with pertinent descriptions, facts, details, and examples; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

SL.7.5 Include multimedia components and visual displays in presentations to clarify claims and findings and emphasize salient points.

SL.8.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8

topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

SL.8.1a Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.

SL.8.1c Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.

SL.8.2 Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.

SL.8.4 Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

SL.8.5 Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.

SL.9-10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL.9-10.1a Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

SL.9-10.1c Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

SL.9-10.2 Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, qualitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.

SL.9-10.4 Present information, findings and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically. The content, organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with peers on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL.11-12.1a Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

SL.11-12.1c Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full

range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.

SL.11-12.2 Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, qualitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

SL.11-12.4 Present information, findings and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically. The content, organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience..

SL.11-12.5 Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

RH.6-8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital t texts.

RH.6-8.8 Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

RH.9-10. Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text, to analyze information presented via different mediums.

RH.9-10.8 Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims.

RH.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, qualitatively as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

RH.11-12.8 Evaluate an author's premises, claims, reasoning, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.