

# Senior Seminar-History of Chicago

## **Reading Guide: City of Big Shoulders, Chapter 7; The New Immigration (1880-1920)**

Use this guide to take notes as you read the chapter. You should be able to address the following thematic questions...

### **Major Themes:**

1. Much is made today of the selfishness, or “radical individualism”, of Americans. Compare this selfish attitude to the selflessness of Chicago immigrants between 1880 and 1920.
2. In what ways did Chicago’s “new immigrants” work together in order to reach their respective goals?
3. What roles did the various ethnic institutions (bars, churches, etc.) play into the role of survival of immigrants in Chicago?

1. “Old immigration” refers to US immigration prior to 1880. What characteristics did these “old immigrants” possess? (123)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Came from Northern and Western Europe</li><li>2. Already spoke English and familiar with Anglo-American culture</li><li>3. Easier to assimilate and compete in business and politics</li><li>4. Possessed valuable skills for growing city</li></ol>
2. “New immigration” took place between 1880 and 1920. What characteristics did “new immigrants” possess? (123-124)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Came from Southern and Eastern Europe</li><li>2. Poles, Italians, Bohemians, Russians, Jews</li><li>3. Spoke no English, poor, undeducated</li><li>4. Possessed few job skills</li><li>5. Created tight-knit communities and stuck together for support</li></ol>
3. What background did most Polish immigrants have, and what effect did that have on their job choices? (124)	Came from feudal society, only minor agricultural skills; took jobs in steel mills, stockyards, factories
4. In what ways did the Poles show that they were resistant to assimilation to American culture? (125)	“Institutional completeness”—created institutions to assist them as they adapted to American life; continued for years
5. What system did Poles put in place which allowed them to own homes? How did this system work? (126)	Building and loan associations—men contributed \$\$ until they had enough to put a down payment down on a house; association gave low-interest loan
6. What conflict did the Polish have with the Irish when it came to their role	Irish controlled administrative positions; Polish wanted their own churches

in the Catholic church? (128)

7. How did the Polish community's sense of closeness hurt them politically? (129)

8. From what part of Italy (and, consequently, what economic status), did most Italians come from? (130)

9. What three immigration patterns distinguished Italians from other immigrants? (130-131)

10. In what parts of the city did most Italians settle? (131)

11. What was Chicago's Jewish population in 1930? (133)

12. What was the economic heart of the Jewish community? (133-135)

13. How did poor Jews make their money, if they could not afford to set up on Maxwell Street? (135)

14. How did the hard work of first-generation Jewish immigrants pay off for their children? (136)

15. Where was "Greek Town" located? (137)

16. Czechs were known for their ability to save money. How did most do this?(139)

17. Much different from the Poles, how did Czechs find success in the political

They refused to ally themselves with other groups and tried to vote as a bloc; winners needed to create coalitions of different ethnic groups; Polish had no majority

Poor, illiterate farmers (*contadini*) from southern and central Italy

1. Planned temporary stays in America; underrepresented in politics.

2. Found work through *padrone* system; found work with help of labor broker (no need to assimilate)

3. Practiced *campanilismo*; whole villages emigrated as one group

Near West side, near Taylor Street and Hull House; south Loop, Near Northwest Side (Little Sicily/Little Hell)

275,000 (Third largest Jewish population in the world behind New York and Warsaw)

Maxwell Street market

Became door-to-door salesmen

Most fared very well

Bounded by Halsted, Harrison, Blue Island, and Polk.

1. Saved money to buy a house

2. Paid off house, added a story to it and rented it out

3. Built house out further back, containing a shop, store, or more rooms to rent

4. Landlord finally moves into nice part of house

Created coalitions with other ethnic groups (80 public officials elected between 1890 and 1920)

world?(140)

18. Where is the only enduring Swedish community in Chicago?(141)

19. Chicago has always been known as a city of great ethnic diversity. By 1900, what ethnic groups had their greatest US population in Chicago?(141)

20. In what ways was the saloon important to immigrants? (143-144)

Andersonville (Clark and Foster)

Poles, Swedes, Czechs, Dutch, Danes, Croatians, Norwegians, Slovaks, Lithuanians, Greeks

1. Informal employment service
2. Ethnic bank
3. Quick lunch with ethnic newspaper
4. Hall for weddings, dances, etc.
5. Room on hot nights