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# Land of the Free? Immigration in the Gilded Age, An Annotated Bibliography of Selected Sources

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**Annotated Bibliography of Selected Sources  
In the Gilded Age, 1877-1900  
By Alex Voigt**

**Primary Sources:**

Aldrich, Thomas Bailey. "Unguarded Gates." From the book *Unguarded Gates and Other Poems* by Thomas Aldrich Bailey. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and, 1895. 15-17.

This is a poem focusing on the themes of U.S. immigration and nativism. According to tertiary research, the poem's author was a long-time editor of *The Atlantic*, a literary and cultural commentary magazine of the Gilded Age. According to a letter Aldrich wrote to a friend that published in a book titled *The Life of Thomas Aldrich Bailey*, Aldrich considers the poem misanthropic and wrote it in protest against "America becoming a cesspool of Europe." The first stanza begins by stating that America's gates are unguarded, implying they should be guarded against the danger lurking outside of them. The rest of the stanza establishes America as a land of beauty, purity and prospects, with Aldrich describing it as "A later Eden planted in the wild" and place with "fields of living gold." Aldrich also describes America as a virtuous place where hard work pays off and those who remain humble can rise to the top. In the second stanza, the author turns his attention toward immigrants, whom he considers to be dangerous to American ideals. Aldrich describes immigrants as a "wild motley throng" of people with unknown religious and moral ideals who have come to abuse the gifts of freedom in the U.S. Aldrich warns Americans to be careful their morals are not trampled upon by unwanted guests, pointing to a historical example of Rome being trampled by "Goth and Vandal" as an indication of what could happen if gates remain unguarded. This poem would feature prominently in a lesson about Gilded Age immigration, as it expresses the nativism themes that were popular during that time. Students would read and analyze the poem to determine what the author is saying about immigration, America and other countries. It would likely be used as a companion poem to a pro-immigration poem like "The New Colossus" by Emma Lazarus to help students understand that immigration was a highly controversial topic.

Fernandez, Wallace. "My Mississippi Home." Brooklyn, 1882. From the "Music for the Nation: American Sheet Music, Ca. 1870-1885" collection. The Library of Congress. Accessed October 14, 2015. <http://www.loc.gov/item/sm1882.12572/>

This is a minstrel song sung from the perspective of a post-Civil War African American in Mississippi. There isn't much tertiary information available about the composer of this song, but according to the sheet music cover, the song was part of the Nonpareil Colored Troubadour, a minstrel show that originated in Brooklyn. The person depicted in the song believes their life is worse off since the abolition of slavery and longs for the days where "darkies" lived so "happy, gay and free" in the cotton fields. For them, life was simpler during slavery and they were able to find happiness because of that simplicity. They are downtrodden that those days are never coming back and they no longer hear music in the fields or feel happy enough to play in the woods or groves. The person's relationship to their master is implied to be a positive one because

the master's absence has resulted in their lives being worse. The overall theme of the song, as is the case with most minstrel songs, is nostalgia for the "simpler" times of slavery and the African Americans lamenting that they are unhappy and overwhelmed with their new station in life. The song will be used as part of lesson on Gilded Age culture, in which students will read and analyze the lyrics of the song to determine the theme of it and who they believe the intended audience was. Students will also look at the titles of the song and minstrel show and discuss why the composers chose those particular title words.

Keller, "Capital Stocks." Illustration. *The Wasp*, March 31, 1882. From the University of California Berkley Chinese in California collection.

<http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/hb596nb0dh/?query=capital&brand=calisphere> (accessed October 20, 2015)

This is a political cartoon that published shortly before the Chinese Exclusion Act passed into law on May 6, 1882. The cartoon features a Chinese man locked in stockade in front of a crowd, with the stockade labeled "Anti Chinese Bill," the lock being labeled "U.S. Senate." The man is wearing a stereotypical Chinese outfit including a shirt labeled "The White Labor Destroyer," indicating the author's opinion that Chinese immigrants steal American jobs. The only visible members of the audience are a woman holding a spear dressed in an ancient Roman-style guard outfit, and a man in a suit holding a rolled up sheet of paper that says "Senator Miller." The paper likely refers to John Franklin Miller, a senator in California at the time and one of the leading proponents of the Chinese Exclusion Act. The guard's presence is likely an indicator of classic Roman ideals and the approval those ideals have of the exclusion act. According to tertiary research, *The Wasp* was a weekly satire magazine based out of San Francisco featuring color illustrations by lithographer G. Frederick Kelly and the writing of Ambrose Bierce, a well-known social critic of the Gilded Age. Like the previous cartoon, this would be used in a classroom to show students the sharp contrast in opinions about U.S. immigration during the Gilded Age, more specifically about the Chinese Exclusion Act. Both cartoons form radically different opinions on the topic context surrounding the cartoons, along with the content of the images themselves, help indicate how those opinions were formed.

Lazarus, Emma. "The New Colossus." 1883. Accessed October 22, 2015.

<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/175887>.

This is a sonnet written by American poet Emma Lazarus that was later engraved on a bronze plaque mounted to the Statue of Liberty in 1903. According to tertiary research, the poem was written as a donation to an auction of art and literary works to raise money for the Statue of Liberty's construction, which was completed in 1886. The poem is about a hypothetical statue welcoming immigrants into the New York harbor that closely mirrors the eventual design of the Statue of Liberty: "A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame is the imprisoned lightning." Lazarus calls the statue the Mother of Exiles and says it will be in sharp contrast to the "brazen giant of Greek fame," likely referring to the Colossus of Rhodes, a statue erected in ancient Greece to celebrate victory over Cyprus. Instead of being a symbol of triumph, Lazarus says the Mother of Exiles will be a symbol of welcoming for all incoming immigrants, a beacon of hope for those hoping to escape the "storied pomp" of ancient lands. The Mother of Exiles doesn't

care if those immigrants happen to be tired, poor or in some other way less than sterling. According to Lazarus, all that matters is they are yearning to be free. This poem would feature prominently in a lesson about Gilded Age immigration, as it expresses an opposing opinion to the nativism that was prevalent at the time. Students would read and analyze the poem to determine what the author is saying about immigration, America and other countries. It would likely be used as a companion poem to an anti-immigration poem like "Unguarded Gates" by Thomas Bailey Aldrich to help students understand that immigration was a highly controversial topic.

"Business Aspects of Baseball: Commodore Wiman Sees Great Profits in the National Game."

New York Times, 1886, News sec. Accessed October 11, 2015.

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9B05E2DD1F39E533A25752C0A9679C94679FD7CF>.

This is an article reporting on a speech given by prominent Staten Island developer Erastus Wiman at a dinner put on by the directors of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroads. Wiman's speech focused on the increased traffic and business in the area created by investments in a railroad line and the local baseball club. Wiman points to high attendance numbers and high initial profits as proof of professional baseball's drawing power, stating it has arguably had a bigger impact on the area than the railroad. He then goes on to mention the rapid growth of the "leisure class" and how employment in amusement industries like theaters, operas and concerts have increased as a result of that growth. Wiman obviously sees great potential in the business opportunities of baseball, as he believes it to be dominating newspaper headlines and, by extension, the American consciousness more than anything being written about "the balance of power in Europe." According to Wiman, baseball appealed to the masses not because of the physical skills required of its players, but because of the "discipline, temperance, self-control, decision of character and clear head essential to success." Because of that appeal and potential for profit, Wiman hopes to invest further in baseball and elevate the game to a status equal to "Roman and Grecian games." The end of the article reports that a member in the crowd disagreed with Wiman's claims about baseball by comparing him to Colonel Sellers, the fictional *Gilded Age* character who had lofty goals but rarely accomplished those goals. For the purposes of my lesson on Gilded Age culture, students will read and analyze this article to determine what the cultural beliefs were about baseball in the time period and draw conclusions about what the new "leisure class" meant for new business opportunities.

"Caring for German Immigrants." New York Times, 1881, News sec. Accessed October 11, 2015.

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9D07E3D7123FEE3ABC4953DFB566838A699FDE>

This is an article reporting on annual meeting of the German Society of the State of New York that took place at Liederkrantz Hall. The meeting was a recap of the past year for the society and German immigration in general. According to the article, 70,690 Germans immigrated to America in 1880, mostly coming from the regions of Prussia, Wurtemberg, Bavaria and Baden. By and large, the new immigrants were reportedly able to find employment

in either the New York area or out west and most belonged to what the article called a “good class.” The article also detailed some of the actions taken by the society to assist German immigrants in the past year. Some of those included finding work for 16,424 Germans in the labor bureau at Castle Garden, persuading western farmers to give employment to immigrants, providing medical aid to 602 persons and giving out more than 2,500 prescriptions. According to the article, the society’s membership stood at 908 members as of the end of 1880 and their account balance was at \$11,342 when factoring in revenue and expenses. The article concludes with an announcement of men elected to the society’s Board of Trustees. For the purposes of my lesson on Gilded Age immigration, students will analyze this article in contrast to those projecting immigrants as having a negative impact on society. This will help students gain a better understanding of the controversy surrounding immigration during that time period and give them an example of societies that attempted to make America more accommodating to new immigrants.

Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, 22 Stat. 58 (1882). Accessed November 10, 2015.

<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=47&page=transcript>

This is a proposed bill to restrict the immigration of Chinese laborers that was signed into federal law by President Chester Arthur on March 6, 1882. The law begins with a preamble stating that the 47<sup>th</sup> Congress believes the influx of Chinese laborers to be harmful to the “good order of certain localities” within the United States. From there, the document goes into various procedural measures that will be instilled to enforce the law. The first provision establishes a time period for which Chinese immigration would be restricted, which spans from 90 days after the passage of the law until 10 years after its passage. The next section details the legal consequences for ship captains found to be smuggling Chinese immigrants, which includes a \$500 fine per immigrant and up to one year in prison. From there, the law describes a certification process for Chinese laborers already in the United States. Specifically, the process consists of obtaining documentation from U.S. customs that includes a person’s name, age, occupation, last place of residence and any distinguishing physical marks. The law states Chinese laborers need documentation to stay in the U.S. and also that they need to obtain certification for re-entry if they leave the country. The next few provisions detail the consequences for U.S. citizens who falsify or forge information on Chinese laborer documentation – a fine of up to \$1,000 and up to five years in prison – as well those who are found aiding and abetting the smuggling of Chinese laborers as well as those, which includes a fine of up to \$1,000 and up to one year in prison. Of the remaining provisions, the most prominent include Chinese people being prohibited from obtaining U.S. citizenship and the identification of Chinese immigrants that will not be allowed in the U.S., namely skilled and unskilled laborers, as well as Chinese miners. The reason these provisions are prominent are because they establish the Chinese as being less than regular citizens and clearly identify the law as being aimed at Chinese people who are seeking to make a living in America. Considering its relevancy to the topic, this document will be an essential addition to my lesson on Gilded Age immigration. Students will take turns reading excerpts of the document out loud and will then analyze its content to determine what the 47<sup>th</sup> Congress is saying with this law and what they think motivated congress to enact such a law. The document can also be used as a starting off

point for students to conduct additional research on the social issues involving Chinese immigrants, as well as engaging the class in an overall discussion on the controversy surrounding immigration.

“The Only One Barred Out.” Illustration. *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, April 1, 1882, p. 96. From Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online Catalog. Accessed October 20, 2015. <http://loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3b48680/>.

This is a political cartoon that published shortly before the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed into law on May 6, 1882. The cartoon depicts a despondent Chinese man left outside the “Golden Gate of Liberty,” a clear indicator of the United States made obvious by the American flag flying in the distance on the other side of the gate. The Chinese man is presumably working class judging by the quality of his clothes and the luggage surrounding him. Assuming the author of the cartoon intended the man to represent all Chinese immigrants, the labels on his luggage are meant to describe the qualities and traits of immigrants that are also being excluded: Industry, Order, Peace and Sobriety. The notice next to the gate reflects the author’s disdain for other immigrants being let into America over the Chinese, as it informs all approaching that “communists, nihilists, socialists, fenians and hoodlums” are allowed while “Chinamen” are not. The passage at the bottom of the cartoon – “Enlightened American Statesman...’We must draw the line somewhere, you know” – gives further indication of the author’s dissenting opinion of the Chinese Exclusion Act, depicting government officials as lacking in judgement and thoughtfulness. According to tertiary research, the *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* was based out of New York and its publisher at the time was Miriam Leslie, an advocate for women’s suffrage. In the classroom, the main theme I would try to emphasize with this image is how controversial immigration and the Chinese Exclusion Act were during the Gilded Age. Political cartoons like this will help encapsulate that controversy and engage students in discussion about those opinions and what they meant on a larger scale in society.

### **Secondary sources:**

Levine, Peter. A.G. Spalding and the Rise of Baseball: The Promise of American Sport. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.

This is a monograph about Albert Spalding, an early pioneer of baseball who served the game as a player, manager, owner and eventual president of the professional league. The book begins by chronicling Spalding’s early career as a pitcher with the Rockford baseball club that blossomed into a successful career in Boston and with the Chicago White Stockings, eventually becoming manager and owner of the White Stockings. The book then shifts into Spalding’s business contributions to baseball, both as a proprietor of sporting equipment and guidebooks and as a leading advocate to build awareness of the sport around the world. Spalding also contributed to establishing the legitimacy of the National League, as the book chronicles the power struggles he had with upstart leagues and his various attempts of “cleaning up” the game. In many parts of the book, the author goes to great lengths to juxtapose the rise of baseball with the industrialization and various social movements – temperance and prohibition, for example – of the time period. This aspect of the book will be a point of emphasis for my lesson. Chapters 5

and 6 of the book, chronicling the business aspects of the sport and its broad social appeal, reveal much about society at the time and would be extremely useful in a larger lesson about leisure and culture. Students will read passages from those chapters, in addition to other selected portions of it, to draw conclusions about the impact of professional sports on the social movements of the time period.

### **Websites:**

"Variety Stage: Vaudeville and Popular Entertainment, 1870-1920." Variety Stage: Vaudeville and Popular Entertainment, 1870-1920. October 19, 1998. Accessed October 18, 2015. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/vshtml/vshome.html>.

This is a collection of primary source images and documents detailing the development of vaudeville and other forms of popular entertainment. It is part of the "American Memory" project by the Library of Congress, a multi-faceted, far-reaching collection servicing various eras of American history through primary sources. This particular collection includes playbills and posters, sound recordings of theater and music, scripts from plays, images and advertisements for magician Harry Houdini and video clips of various dance, comedy and burlesque shows of the time period. The site includes browsing options for each of those categories – which can be searched by titles – and allows users to search by keywords, authors and subjects. Additionally, the site also has background information on the various types of sources in its collection. For example, the "Theater Playbills and Programs" category includes a brief history of programs and playbills, differentiates between programs and playbills and provides information on the various locations the programs and playbills originated from. This sort of information helps build important contextual knowledge of sources and would certainly be included in a classroom utilization of this site. The main use of this collection would be for students to closely analyze sources and determine their intended audience, what the underlying message of the source is and what the source says about the overall culture of the time. Students could also use the sources concurrently with information from a textbook to draw conclusions as to what made the depicted culture so popular during that time period. The biggest limitation of this collection is the somewhat narrow scope of its sources relative to the overall Gilded Age culture, as vaudeville shows and other forms of entertainment represented weren't necessarily revered by all socioeconomic classes and races.

"The Making of America." Cornell University Library Making of America Collection. Accessed October 18, 2015. <http://ebooks.library.cornell.edu/m/moa/>.

This is a collection of journals and monographs in America spanning from the years 1840 to 1900. The collection is a collaborative effort between Cornell University and the University of Michigan to develop a thematically-related digital library documenting American social history. The contents of the collection were determined by librarians, researchers and instructors at the two universities and are primarily in the form of scanned, full-issue copies of journals and monographs. Despite the comprehensiveness of the collection – nearly 1 million primary source pages between the two universities – it is intuitive to navigate for both teachers and students alike, as users can search by titles, authors, keywords and editions. The search engine proved

extremely useful for me while researching for my lesson on immigration. To find articles on immigration, I selected *The Atlantic Monthly* and *Harpers Weekly* – two major publications of the time period – and did keyword searches within Gilded Age date parameters for terms like “immigration,” “immigrants,” “Chinese” and “nativism.” This resulted in numerous articles on immigration that I was able to incorporate into my lesson to help students gain a better understanding of the controversy surrounding the topic. The biggest limitation of the collection is that it doesn’t provide much background information or context for journals and monographs, making it slightly less accessible in a classroom setting. However, most of the journals in the collection are well-known publications from the era, so background summaries and answers to contextual questions can be found on tertiary resource sites like Wikipedia. From there, students would closely analyze the content and determine what the article is trying to say, what the publisher is saying by including the article in its publication and what the source says about Gilded Age culture in general. Given the need of tertiary websites to find the necessary contextual information about sources, the best use of this collection for class would be to have students do independent research on it outside the classroom and report their findings as a homework assignment.