

Reading No. 4: Personal and Family Migration Stories

It is a truism that the United States is a country of immigrants, whether from Europe, Latin America, Asia, or Africa, regardless of the century. Human migration is a major theme of this course and not simply memorizing what people went where, but analyzing the reasons (called push and pull factors) that cause people to move long distances, and what impact these migrations have on all places involved, and the world in general.

In that spirit, I want you to tell the story of your own family's migration from wherever to the current town you find yourself living. You can either speak from personal experience (if you came to this country during your life), or speak with family members. Below are a series of prompts to guide your story.

These are just prompts to get you started. I want the written paper to flow in an essay like format. In other words, don't list 1, 2, 3, etc. and answer the question.

1. From what country did your family originate?
2. When did the migration take place (approximately what year)?
3. For what reasons did the migration take place? What were the push factors (economic reasons, political/cultural reasons, family, etc.)?
4. What were the pull factors to the U.S. specifically? In other words, for whatever reason they left their country, why did they end up in the United States and not Canada, for example?
5. Why did they come to California (and ultimately the town which you currently live) specifically? Why not another state, or region of California?
6. Did they come directly to the United States or migrate elsewhere first?
7. By what means did they migrate (plane, boat, car, etc.)?
8. Did they (or you) face any challenges when they (or you) reached the new destination? If so, what were the challenges? (Language barriers, job opportunities, attitudes towards immigrants, school, etc.)?