Abstract:

This curriculum unit introduces students to the immigrants’ journey from various parts of Europe to Philadelphia during the “Golden Door” period between 1815 and 1924. This unit is to be used in social studies classes or American history courses. The unit is designed for all ages although it was developed in accordance with the 5th Grade School District of Philadelphia core curriculum. Students will develop an understanding of the immigrant experience in Philadelphia through the use of primary documents, photographs, immigrant interviews, and children’s literature.

Between 1815 and 1985 over 1.3 million immigrants arrived in Philadelphia to begin new lives. Northern and Western Europeans arrived in the late 18th and early 19th centuries followed by Southern and Eastern Europeans in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Students will learn and understand the reasons immigrants decided to come to the United States and about their long and difficult journey to Philadelphia. Students will also focus on the “Lazaretto”, which was an immigrant ship checkpoint just south of Philadelphia. Finally students will experience the obstacles immigrants faced upon their arrival to Philadelphia due to cultural opposition and the United State’s immigration laws.