IMMIGRATION

Processes of immigration have interacted with concepts and experiences of masculinity throughout U.S. history. As male immigrants moved from their countries and cultures of origin to the United States, both their notions of manliness and the dominant American culture's masculine ideals were sometimes challenged, and sometimes affirmed, by the encounter. Leaving one's country of origin and relocating over vast distances for economic betterment or to escape political or cultural persecution corresponded to traditional ideas about manliness, which portrayed a man as a successful provider, family caretaker, and guardian. This ideal was accepted by the immigrants themselves and by the larger American society. But while most immigrant men arrived in the United States prepared to embrace American definitions of manhood grounded in economic independence, productive effort and endeavor, and work, they also had to recast, renegotiate, and sometimes abandon some of their inherited definitions of manliness as they sought to mediate between their culture of origin and their newly adopted culture. Immigration, therefore, has created opportunities to articulate new understandings of manliness as it has forced immigrants to mediate between bonds of ethnicity, family, and kin networks on the one hand and the individualizing forces of city, market, and industry on the other.

Colonial America
As the American colonies became settlement societies, the British government and the joint stock companies that ran most of the early colonies appealed to men's desire for economic opportunity and to religious dissenters' desire for greater freedom of religious expression. Immigration, then, and the ideals of manhood that shaped it, were grounded in notions of economic opportunity and greater liberty.

The dynamics and demographics of immigration shaped the transfer of English ideals of patriarchal manhood to colonial America. In New England, the immigration of whole families allowed for a relatively stable transmission of social structures and relations, including patriarchal forms of family and political governance. In the Chesapeake region, however, a mostly male immigration and a low life expectancy due to disease produced clear departures from strict patriarchal household governance and economic power. In this setting, family structures were destabilized and women were allowed greater opportunities to own property. But as natural population growth gradually supplanted immigration, life expectancy increased, and the gender ratio became more balanced, patriarchal social patterns became more firmly entrenched.

The development of the American colonies into settlement societies encouraged more immigration, with significant consequences for notions of manliness. Coming from Germany, Sweden, and Switzerland, as well as Great Britain, colonial-era immigrants organized their ideas about manliness less around loyalty to British colonial forces and notions specific to British culture than around more abstract notions of political liberty, equality, religious freedom, and independent property ownership. The French aristocrat J. Hector St. John Crèvecoeur, for example, felt that coming to colonial America had made him into a new type of man, one who defined his manliness and self-worth around landownership and productive endeavor rather than aristocratic status. Such notions of manliness played a significant part in the development of proindependence sentiment during the 1770s.

Early National and Antebellum America
Immigration was disrupted by the American Revolution, and by European wars during the decades that followed, but it began to surge after the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815. It was further stimulated and facilitated by new developments in transportation and communication, such as canals, railroads, steamships, and the telegraph, as well as by such social and political crises in Europe as the revolutions of 1830 and 1848 and the Irish potato famine of the late 1840s. Between the 1830s and 1850s, German and Irish immigrants—by far the most numerous groups—relocated to the United States for differing reasons and developed different ideals of manhood.

Averaging twenty to twenty-five years in age, most of these immigrants were in early adulthood. Many of them became wage laborers and developed their mature masculine identities as industrial workers in an expanding urban population. Manhood for them was typically grounded in class awareness and in a world of taverns, theaters, and other urban amusements. Affected by urbanization and industrialization in greater proportions than native-born men, immigrant men were the first to reconcile their expectations with a rapidly changing social reality, and also the first to articulate new notions of manhood

suitable to an urbanizing and industrializing society. In this way immigration helped catalyze emerging models of urban and industrial masculinity in antebellum America.

The Irish in particular, who came to the United States in increasing numbers in the 1840s, were likely to be poor and unskilled, to join the ranks of an emerging urban proletariat, and to embrace working-class definitions of manliness. Male conviviality based on alcohol consumption formed an important part of these definitions. Yet their understanding of manhood was shaped by other aspects of the immigrant experience as well. Confronted by strong anti-Catholic, anti-immigrant, and nativist sentiments, they sought to demonstrate their Americannness and seek power through participation in urban politics. In Boston, New York, and other cities, they became a powerful force in city politics, joined urban police forces in substantial numbers, and developed a pragmatic ideal of manhood grounded in a clear understanding of the realities of urban life.

Along with the Irish, German immigrants pursued forms of leisure that emphasized alcohol, and male sociability in beer gardens characterized urban culture in cities such as Milwaukee, St. Louis, and Cincinnati until prohibition in 1919. Yet in other ways the experiences of German men differed from those of Irish men. Drawn by the desire for economic opportunity and to escape political persecution, Germans coming to the United States after 1830 (and especially after 1848) brought with them notions of manliness that were grounded in strong traditions of political and religious dissent, and these meshed well with U.S. notions of republican and democratic manhood. Those Germans who brought sufficient financial resources to purchase land embraced the ideals of agrarian manliness promoted by Thomas Jefferson.

The "New" Immigration: 1880–1924

Between the 1880s and the early twentieth century, the social and economic impact of the commercialization of agriculture, industrialization, and urbanization in southern, eastern, and southeastern Europe stimulated growing Italian, Jewish, and Slavic immigration to the United States. This "new" immigration differed significantly from earlier currents of immigration. The majority of these immigrants were of Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, or Jewish background, and their religions and strongly patriarchal Old World cultures significantly shaped their notions of manliness. Notions of patriarchal family leadership also shaped the demographic patterns of immigration. Whereas earlier immigrants had tended to come unmarried or in nuclear family units, new immigrants often came as extended stem families, consisting of the conjugal (married) units of brothers. Furthermore, two-thirds of the immigrants relocating to the United States between 1880 and 1914 were men.

Culturally, as well as demographically, manliness played a very significant role in the immigration stream that arrived in the United States between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The complex impact of immigration on masculinity was particularly apparent in immigrants' family lives. Immigrant men understood their relocation to America as an expression of their patriarchal leadership, and they expected their authority to be preserved—even enhanced—by it. But the immigration process often weakened social hierarchies based on patriarchy. Since men usually came first, their wives and children learned to support themselves before following their husbands and fathers to the United States. Furthermore, sons caught between old traditions and a new social setting—often finding themselves subject to new behavioral demands— tended to reject their fathers' patriarchal ways and adopt new standards of masculinity, bringing them into conflict with their fathers. These sons, and their sons in turn, often combined traditional ethnic masculine styles with newer ones to create new hybrid models of manhood. Their fathers, meanwhile, either vigorously asserted their traditional patriarchal prerogatives or felt their manhood challenged and undermined (or both).

The cultural interaction between the experiences of "new" immigrants and their masculine identities also occurred in labor and work-related settings, where traditional social bonds and notions of manliness grounded in kinship and ethnicity helped to shape newly emerging ideas about working-class manliness. Whereas many earlier immigrants found that their skills transferred well to the United States, "new" immigrants more typically found it necessary to acquire new skills, and they viewed their ability to do so as a significant measure of their social worth and masculinity. One outlet for new work-related articulations of manliness was contract labor systems, such as the Italian *padrone* system, in which established Italian immigrants functioned as mediators between newly arrived Italian men and U.S. society. In this system, however, newer immigrants were also exploited as cheap labor. Grounded in Old World traditions of patriarchy, social reciprocity, and shared kin identity, the padrone system, and other contract labor systems like it, were highly exploitative, yet those immigrants who managed and gained from these systems were able to articulate a definition of manliness that joined shared ethnicity and individualistic entrepreneurial impulses.

Old World loyalties of kin, ethnicity, and stem family also shaped industrial work settings and unionization. Slavs, for example, were known in many industries as assertive and

aggressive unionizers, and they viewed their activities as expressions of manliness. The development of ethnically based, work-related masculinities was facilitated by the fact that, within certain communities, immigrants gravitated towards specific industries. In Newark, New Jersey, for example, the Irish dominated leather making, and in Buffalo, New York, Italians dominated construction. These occupations and the skills they required constituted important arenas in which immigrants assimilated and developed new definitions of manliness.

The Twentieth Century: 1924–Present

During the twentieth century, the social context for the interaction between immigration and notions of manliness changed considerably, as did the demographic profile of the immigration stream. The 1924 Johnson-Reed Act (also called the National Origins Act) supplemented and extended previous laws that had excluded Asian immigration, and it virtually cut off immigration from southern, eastern, and southeastern Europe. In so doing, the act helped to facilitate the assimilation of those immigrants who had already arrived, and thus heightened their aspirations to realize mainstream ideals of manliness. Furthermore, the rise of extremely racist fascist regimes in Europe, and their discrediting and defeat in World War II, made many native-born Americans less inclined to view immigrants from southern, eastern, and southeastern European backgrounds as racially different. Finally, the concentration of many immigrant men in the industrial working-class gave labor unions a significant role in integrating immigrant men into the wider culture, helping them to attain the financial resources necessary to effective breadwinning. The Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), formed in 1937, appealed to unskilled and semiskilled workers in industries with largely first- and second-generation immigrant workforces, and thus played a key role in this process.

The Cold War climate, including a U.S. desire to project an international image of promoting freedom and economic opportunity, prompted a greater openness to immigration, which culminated in the Immigration and Nationality Act amendments of 1965. This act overturned the 1924 National Origins Act and reopened the United States to immigration. The immigrants arriving under the new legislation were to a large extent nonwhite, including many African, Asian, and Hispanic (Mexican and Cuban in particular) immigrants. Their social profile, again, differed fundamentally from earlier generations of immigrants.

Immigrants arriving after 1965 were not only predominantly nonwhite, but they also possessed, on average, more skills and a higher education than those who came between 1830 and 1924. While often discriminated against based on their race or skin color, these immigrants brought with them skills and resources that enabled them to aspire to definitions of manliness organized around breadwinning, economic independence, and entrepreneurial drive that white men had long embraced.

While there are considerable differences between immigrants according to their national background, Asians tend to have fewer children, to experience lower unemployment and poverty rates, and to obtain higher levels of education. These immigrants differ substantially from those of earlier generations, who expected to start at the bottom and possibly work their way up. Immigrants from the Far East and from South Asia, in particular, tend to be graduates of professional and graduate schools. Education, professional work, and sustaining middle-class lifestyles have been significant components of masculinity among these groups. Many other Asian immigrants, as well as many from Latin America, joined the ranks of a segment of petty entrepreneurs, owning restaurants and grocery stores, in many American cities. These men embraced traditional American notions of manliness based on property, business ownership, and economic independence.

Late-twentieth-century immigrants not only embraced pre-existing American models of manhood, but they began to change the cultural landscape of American masculinity as well. They tended to be in their family-forming and child-bearing years, they included many different ethnicities, and they have contributed to a demographic shift in the U.S. population that is generating the formation of multiple overlapping and layered identities of race, ethnicity, and manliness in U.S. society. Furthermore, as members of these groups intermarry with members of other groups, their offspring will define their cultural and gender identities in new and different ways. As such, immigration will continue to transform cultural constructions of masculinity and to serve as an important catalyst in changing definitions of manliness in U.S. society.

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RELATED ENTRIES

American Dream; Asian-American Manhood; Breadwinner Role; Citizenship; Crèvecoeur, J. Hector St. John; Ethnicity; Gilded Age; Individualism; Industrialization; Irish-American Manhood; Jewish Manhood; Latino Manhood; Nationalism; Nativism; Patriarchy; Postmodernism; Race; Urbanization; Whiteness; White Supremacism; Work

—*Thomas Winter*

IMPERIALISM

U.S. imperialism developed and peaked during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when the nation attempted to expand overseas and control the political and economic systems of lesser developed nations in the Pacific and the Caribbean. American activities in the Philippines, which came into the possession of the United States after the Spanish-American War of 1898, embodied the assumptions underlying this expansion. Among the factors driving American imperialism was a new gender dynamic that surfaced in the years after the Civil War. Overseas expansion and the acquisition of colonial territories provided opportunities for young men to prove their masculinity and affirm the male virtues of bravery, loyalty, and endurance. At the same time, expansionists believed that the new possessions in Asia, the Pacific, and the Caribbean created chances for men to fulfill their role as warrior/protectors and as paternal tutors of "inferior" peoples, to establish their manhood in American society in response to women's political activism, and to assert their supremacy in new colonial gender systems.

Challenges to American Masculinity in the Late Nineteenth Century

The notions of masculinity that influenced American imperialism drew on several cultural currents of the late nineteenth century. The first was the closing of the frontier and the end of western expansion. The image of the North American frontier as a cradle of American democracy and as a proving ground for generations of young American men to prove their masculinity (a thesis espoused by the historian Frederick Jackson Turner in 1893) sparked concern among white men at the end of the nineteenth century that an important source of American manhood had disappeared. For this new generation and its leaders, the disappearance of the strenuous labor of frontier life, and of the male icons associated with that labor (e.g., the yeoman farmer, the independent artisan, the frontiersman, the hunter, the Indian fighter), left them with few models of manhood and few chances to prove themselves either as provider or protector.

The romantic mystique that enshrouded the collective memory of the Civil War, including the national reverence felt toward both Union and Confederate veterans, further heightened American men's concerns about their masculinity. Veterans' sons and grandsons, feeling inadequate by comparison, sought new ways to conceptualize and demonstrate their manhood. From Darwinism, which suggested that the struggle for survival strengthened species, and social Darwinism, which held that nations gained strength through commercial, political, and military competition, American men concluded that war could be a means of personal, social, and national regeneration. Similarly, the notion of the "strenuous life" among the Victorian middle class promised that men turned soft by the domestication and materialism of an urban-industrial "overcivilization" could reinvigorate American masculinity through hunting, outdoor activity, athletic competition, and male camaraderie. All these concerns caused the intellectual and political leaders of the post–Civil War generation (such as the rising politicians Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge and the naval historian Alfred Thayer Mahan, whose 1890 book *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History* triggered a wave of navalism in the United States and Europe) to look overseas for new worlds to conquer.

Expansionist rhetoric—like that of Manifest Destiny, which was used in the 1840s to justify the acquisition of territory in the American West and white dominance over African Americans, Mexicans, and Native Americans—cast white American men as heroic republicans. The nonwhite peoples of the Caribbean, Latin America, and the Pacific, on the other hand, were described in feminine terms as undisciplined and indulgent savages who were incapable of self-defense or self-government and needed the benevolent supervision that only a paternalistic, white, and democratic society could bring them. White American men saw a close connection between