America’s Melting Pot - Program Overview

This program covers the second and third waves of immigration to the United States from 1820 through 1924. It also touches upon the time periods prior and post to this period so that your diverse student population can fully participate in all aspects of the program as activities. The program's content also encourages exploring various cultures, keepsakes, and memories, and how all of these factors make America a true melting pot. It is ideal for history students, the ESL classroom, current/family of immigrants, and many other groups.

Immigration is an integral part of the continuing saga that is America. Every decade of our history, “the tired, poor, huddled masses” coming to our shores have sought freedom from tyranny, want, religious persecution, and economic disparity. The immigrant countries of origin, economic situation, religious affiliation, social status, etc. may have changed (or not!) over the years, but the desire to come to America hasn’t.

“America’s Melting Pot” engages your students in their own appreciation and understanding of the immigrant experience. The historical content and many activities provided challenges and requires students to use critical thinking and research skills by looking at America as a land of immigrants from many different countries, perspectives, and cultures. The program personalizes each student’s own life with the immigration story.

As the teacher, this guide provides you with the program overview, immigration history content, activities, object information, Kansas curriculum standards, and discussion prompts to open up important dialogs into this country’s past and current immigrants. Please handle your suitcase and the objects within with care. Many are old and fragile. The items were either donated to Shawnee Town 1929 or purchased specifically for the America’s Melting Pot program.

The trunk contains:
1. Items that immigrants typically brought with them as mementos, for use in a trade or the household
2. Items used in processing immigrants as they came through Ellis Island, another port, or border station
3. Historical photographs, related books, flash cards, and other useful prop materials

The binder contains:
1. The historical immigration content with all the in-depth facts you need for this program
   a. Green text to indicate leading questions, prompts, or activities for the students
   b. Orange text to indicate local Shawnee, Kansas immigration examples
2. The lesson plan includes
   a. Program specifics and student learning objectives
   b. Curriculum correlations and the specific Kansas standards met by this program
   c. Pre- and post-program activity suggestions
   d. Eight activities for the students (you can choose to do one or all)
   e. Recommended resources to expand and continue your immigration education