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CONTAGION FROM ABROAD: U.S. PRESS FRAMING OF IMMIGRANTS AND EPIDEMICS, 1891 TO 1893

by

HARRIET MOORE

Under the Direction of Dr. Leonard Ray Teel

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines press framing of immigrant issues and epidemics in newspapers and periodicals, 1891 to 1893. During these years, immigration policies tightened because of the Immigration Act of 1891, the opening of Ellis Island in 1892, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1892, the New York City epidemics of 1892, the National Quarantine Act of 1893, and the nativist movement. The research questions are: 1) How did articles in newspapers and periodicals frame immigrants and immigration issues in the context of epidemics from 1891 and 1893?; 2) How did the press framing of immigrants and immigration issues in the context of epidemics from 1891 to 1893 reflect themes of nativism? This thesis contributes to the discourse of immigration because Americans historically have learned about immigration from the press.

INDEX WORDS: Immigration, Nativism, Epidemic(s), Nineteenth century press, Framing theory, Frame

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by

HARRIET MOORE

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2008

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Georgia State University
December 2008

DEDICATION

Throughout this seven-year journey to obtain my Master's Degree, I began a new job, experienced the death of my father-in-law, and welcomed into the world my second son. Needless to say, the journey has not always been easy. At times, I contemplated quitting graduate school, but my husband always convinced me continue.

I dedicate this thesis to my husband, Sean Moore, for his unwavering encouragement and confidence in my abilities. He always believed that I would earn a Masters Degree, and without him, I would not have finished this work. I am eternally grateful to him for his continuous guidance, love, support, and for being an exceptional father to our children, particularly when I was busy with school-related tasks.

I express deep gratitude to my sons, Elias Bailey Moore and Aidan Jack Moore, because of the many hours I sacrificed being with them to achieve my goals. I hope they will one day understand why I needed "quiet time" to finish my work. My greatest hope is that they will one day recognize the importance of my aspirations and view me as a role model.

I would like to thank my parents, Harry Zakula and Sharon Birchard-Zakula, because they gave me self-confidence, an invaluable gift.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

> With the danger of cholera in question, it is plain to see that the United States would be better off if ignorant Russian Jews and Hungarians were denied refuge here. These people are offensive enough at best; under the present circumstances they are a positive menace to the health of this country. Even should they pass the quarantine officials, their mode of life when they settle down makes them always a source of danger. Cholera, it must be remembered, originates in the homes of human riffraff.[1]
>
> – Excerpt from a lead article of the *New York Times*, 29 August 1892.

In the late nineteenth century, immigrants became associated with deadly epidemics, such as cholera,[2] smallpox,[3] typhus,[4] and leprosy.[5, 6] Because many immigrants lived in poor conditions or arrived from faraway ports known for having epidemic outbreaks, America's

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[1] "Progress of the Cholera," *New York Times*, 29 August 1892, p. 2.

[2] *Cholera*, or *Asiatic Cholera*, is an acute intestinal infection caused by ingestion of contaminated water or food. Source: WordNet: a lexical database for the English language, Definition of "cholera"; available from http://wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn?s=cholera; Internet; accessed 1 June 2008.

[3] *Smallpox* is a highly contagious viral disease characterized by fever and weakness and skin eruption with pustules that form scabs that slough off leaving scars. It can be passed from one person to another through coughing, sneezing, or breathing, or by contact with the scabs or the fluid from blisters. It can even spread from an infected person's personal items and bedding. Source: WebMD, "Definition of "smallpox"; available from http://www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/smallpox-topic-overview; Internet; accessed 2 June 2008.

[4] *Typhus* is an acute, infectious disease transmitted by lice and fleas, usually occurring in the summer months – it is an intestinal inflammation and ulceration caused by contaminated water or food. See Biddle, p. 165, for a full description. Typhus is not to be confused with *typhoid fever* (the name came from the disease's similar symptoms to that of typhus). Press coverage of typhoid fever is not included in this study because it was not a reported major epidemic from 1891 to 1893.

[5] *Leprosy*, also known as *Hansen's Disease*, is a chronic disease caused by the bacteria Mycobacterium leprae, a distant relative of the tuberculosis bacillus. The bacilli tend to gravitate to the nerves and near the cooler parts of a person's body. They commonly affect such areas as a person's skin, the mucosa of their upper respiratory tract, their eyes and/or their peripheral nerves, causing severely infected feet and hands, sometimes with bumps on the face. See Biddle, p. 105.

[6] Currently in 2008, cholera, smallpox, typhus, and leprosy have been nearly eradicated in the developed world. See Biddle, p. 169.

newcomers often took the blame for spreading diseases. In the 1890s, the term "immigrant" became synonymous with "contagion" and fears coincided with tightened immigration laws. The above excerpt from a lead *New York Times* article captures the essence of this thesis, illustrating a typical depiction of immigrants and epidemics in the U.S. press in the 1890s.

In the era of yellow journalism of the 1890s, the U.S. press provided an outlet for the discourse surrounding immigration issues. In keeping with the sensationalist style of yellow journalism, newspapers and periodicals regularly reported stories about sick foreigners with deadly diseases "invading" the country. Some headlines include: "Keep the Scum Out," and "Invaded by Filth and Dirt," "Rejected Immigrants", "Put up the Bars," and "Imported Disease." Other commonly used adjectives include: "scourge," "death," "disease," "problem", "evil," "scum," "refuse," "quarantine," "foolish," and "undesirable."

Anti-immigrant sentiment had been prevalent in the United States since at least the 1840s and epidemic outbreaks exacerbated America's fear of newcomers. Many argued that America should "close its doors" to new immigrants. As new arrivals came, sometimes ships carrying people with cholera, typhus and smallpox from foreign ports disembarked in New York or San Francisco. In several cases in the 1890s, new arrivals suspected of bringing epidemics from Europe flocked to cities throughout the country.[7] These illnesses had been a public health problem prior to the influx of immigrants, but newcomers often took the blame. The press reports brought anti-immigration sentiment to the forefront of U.S. society and politics.

In addition to lead articles about immigration and epidemics, physicians, health officials, politicians and the general public expressed their opinions in the press. In a letter to the editor of the *New York Times*, a reader cautioned against admitting "dangerous foreigners": "We do not

[7] The actual figures for confirmed cases of epidemics among immigrants are historically unclear. See Markel, p. 128.

want and we ought to refuse to land all or any of these unclean Italians or Russian Hebrews. We have enough dirt, misery, crime, sickness, and death of our own, without permitting any more."[8]

Through an historical lens, this thesis focuses on three years of press coverage of immigrants and epidemics, from 1891 to 1893, and is concerned with the manner in which newspapers and periodicals, including editorials, special columns, and medical reports, framed immigration issues in the context of epidemics and how the framing reflected themes of nativism. Following this introduction, this thesis states the research questions that guide this work, and follows with a discussion of the significance of the research, methodology, and framing theory. The literature review sets the context for nineteenth century immigration through a discussion of immigration history, legislation, key political figures, ethnic groups, nativism, immigration inspections, and explains the scientific concepts of bacteriology and modern germ theory. The majority of this thesis is an historical analysis of immigration and epidemics in 140 articles from newspapers and periodicals. The framing analysis section discusses framing techniques of the studied articles. Lastly, the conclusion discusses the overall findings of the study, its limitations, and suggestions for future research.

Significance

This thesis contributes to the historical dimension of the discourse about immigration because many Americans historically have learned about immigration issues through news articles and editorials. This study of press framing is significant because historical studies of such press coverage and immigrants in the context of epidemics and nativism are limited.

Immigration is still at the center of many political and social debates and continues to be a topic in contemporary media. Today's media uses framing devices that are similar to those

---

[8] "Restricting Immigration: Is it Not Time to Set up Some Sort of Barriers?," *New York Times*, 21 February 1892, p. 20.

being studied in this thesis. Thus, this historical examination can be useful in future immigration and framing studies.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide this thesis:

1) *How did articles in newspapers and periodicals frame immigrants and immigration issues in the context of epidemics from 1891 and 1893?*
2) *How did the press framing of immigrants and immigration issues in the context of epidemics from 1891 to 1893 reflect themes of Nativism?*

Methodology

This study is guided by the methodology described in James D. Startt and Wm. David Sloan's *Historical Methods in Mass Communication*. They point out the importance of studying communication history:

> Historians are interested in communication history for many reasons. Just as the media today help the public to gain understanding of current issues, so the media of the past enlighten historians about past public problems.[9]

… and the value of interpretation in history:

> The most valuable historical writing is, in a sense, always interpretive. Every time a historian selects material or advances a generalization based on that material, interpretation occurs. Every time one attempts to probe the nature of change, one interprets. Without interpretation, historical study remains superficial, with no probing beneath the surface of facts to determine why events occurred and why people acted as they did. With no attempt to determine why, historical study provides mere chronology.[10]

Startt and Sloan also point out that good communication history does not use a theory to

[9] James D. Startt and Wm. David Sloan, *Historical Methods in Mass Communication* (Alabama: Vision Press, 2003), 18.
[10] Ibid., 22.

choose a topic – the topic chooses the theory, based on initial research of primary sources.[11] After a brief investigation of this topic, I chose framing theory as a theoretical model (see next section).

Other scholars also recognize the value of historical interpretation. In *Practicing History*, Barbara Tuchman's concept of "good" history is not just a regurgitation of cold, dry facts, but an actual narrative.[12] Following Tuchman's advice, this thesis will interpret the history of the immigrant experience in the context of epidemics, through a narrative guided by framing theory followed by a framing analysis.[13] Like Startt and Sloan's work, Tuchman's *Practicing History* will be a useful resource throughout this project.

I chose to study the years 1891 to 1893 because of the following events: the Immigration Act of 1891, the opening of Ellis Island as a port of entry in 1892, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1892 (an extension of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882), the New York City Epidemics of 1892, and the National Quarantine Act of 1893, and the nativist movement of the nineteenth century. In this three-year period of study, the U.S. press regularly reported issues and events surrounding immigration and epidemics.

This thesis examines press framing of immigration in the context of epidemics in 140 articles from eight major daily U.S. newspapers: the *New York Times*, *Boston Daily Globe*, *Milwaukee Sentinel*, *Daily Inter Ocean-Chicago*, *Galveston Daily News*, *Daily Picayune-New Orleans*, *San Francisco Bulletin*, and the *Los Angeles Times.* These newspapers represent the North, South, East, and Western regions of the United States, also the locations of the four major

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[11] Ibid.
[12] Barbara Tuchman, *Practicing History* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1981), 5.
[13] In their opinion of handling causation in an historical analysis, Startt and Sloan say that "the matter of handling causation involves major problems. It is much more complex than many researchers might suppose. Ascertaining causes in history is thus a precarious matter." (p. 203.) I do not intend to prove the causation of framing.

U.S. entry points with immigration inspection stations – Ellis Island in the East (New York); Angel Island in the West (San Francisco); the Canadian/Michigan border in the North; and the Texas/Mexico border in the South. [14]

Articles from the following U.S. periodicals are also included: *American Journal of Politics, California Illustrated Magazine, Christian Advocate, Christian Union, Forum, The Independent… Devoted to the Consideration of Politics, Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, *Life Magazine, Medical News, The Nation, The North American Review, Times and Register.* These publications are included because of their broad, national audience reach and their discursive nature.

The majority of articles came from the following electronic databases: the *Historical New York Times*, *Historical 19th Century Newspapers*, the *Readers' Guide Retrospective*, and the *Nineteenth Century Masterfile*. The searches resulted in a broad range of articles, letters to editors, editorials, and special columns by experts such as physicians, health officials, and immigration officials.

The articles were further parsed by searching the text of each article for a number of criteria. The term(s) "immigration," or "immigrant" (and any 'wildcard' versions), or "emigrant" is usually combined with other key words or terms to locate only articles that focus on immigration in the context of epidemics. The other search terms are: disease, health, epidemic, cholera, typhus, smallpox, typhoid, tuberculosis, Nativism, quarantine, North Brother Island, Angel Island, Senator William E. Chandler, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Senator J.H. Gallinger, Ellis Island, Russian, Hebrew, Jewish, Jew, Chinese, Japanese, Massilia, New York City, Immigration Act of 1891, New York City Epidemics, Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the Geary

[14] Smaller inspections stations existed, but these were the main stations. See Markel's "Whose face? Whose Nation?," p. 1324.

Law, The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1892, the World's Fair of 1893, Mexico, Mexican(s), American Protective Association, President Benjamin Harrison, President Grover Cleveland, and the National Quarantine Act of 1893. Some articles may not have key words that directly refer to epidemics or contagious diseases, but focus on legislation that has direct relevance to the subject.

Framing Theory

Framing theory is a classic mass communications theory used for investigating and understanding communication and communication-related behavior. A media "frame" has been variously defined as "a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to reports about an issue,"[15] or a pattern for interpretation,[16] or a means by which to classify and process information[17] and make sense of events.[18] While these definitions are similar, there is not one central definition for framing, and some researchers have considered framing theory a "fractured paradigm" because of its many definitions.[19]

Current media framing literature proposes two levels of frame analysis: the micro-level, individual, psychological frame, described as "mentally stored clusters of ideas that guide individuals' processing of information,"[20] and a macro-level frame that describes the central idea of news stories. Essentially, there are two ways to analyze news frames: from the perspective of the news receiver (audience interpretation), and from the perspective of the news creator (the messenger). This thesis uses framing theory to examine frames in texts from the point of view of

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[15] Robert M. Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm," *Journal of Communication* 4, no. 4 (1993): 53.
[16] Dietram A. Scheufele and David Tewksbury, "Framing, Agenda Setting, and Priming: The Evolution of three media effects models," *Journal of Communication* 57 (2007): 2.
[17] Ibid.
[18] William A. Gamson and Andre Modigliani, "Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach," *American Journal of Sociology* 95 (1989): 5.
[19] Entman, " Framing: Toward Clarification," 53.
[20] Ibid.

the news creator or communicator.[21] These distinctions about framing are important because this thesis focuses attention on the ways in which the news creators in the press framed immigrants and epidemics in news reports.

Framing is an organizing device that can help journalists present information in ways that give salience to some news and events over others. For Entman, framing as an organizing device essentially involves "selection and salience – to frame is to select some aspects of reality and make them more salient in a communicating texts."[22] Framing is the selection of a perceived reality "in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described."[23] Thus, a frame has the ability to determine how people understand and interpret an issue.

Pan and Kosicki viewed news texts as "systems of organized signifying elements that both promote the advocacy of certain ideas and provide devices to encourage certain kinds of audience processing of the texts.[24] Entman believed that, "texts contain frames that provide sense and give coherence to symbolic information in texts."[25] Tuchman even suggested that the act of framing the news not only shapes people's perceptions of events,[26] but also ultimately constructs reality in a society.[27] Tuchman first applied a frame analysis to the study of news reporting, and believed that frames organize everyday reality for people.[28] He also felt that the mass media set

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[21] This method locates frames in texts for interpretation rather than examine the media-audience relationship part of framing. But a discussion of frames as news organizing devices for audiences is important to understanding framing theory as a whole.
[22] Entman, " Framing: Toward Clarification," 52.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Zhongdang Pan and Gerald M. Kosicki, "Framing analysis: An approach to news discourse." *Political Communication* 10 (1993): 55.
[25] Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification," 53.
[26] Gamson, "Media Discourse and Public Opinion," 5.
[27] Gaye Tuchman, *Making news: A study in the construction of reality* (New York: Free Press, 1978), 10.
[28] Ibid., 11.

frames of reference that readers and viewers use to interpret and discuss public events.[29] Clearly, the application of particular frames in the press is an important part of the news making process.

Understanding how newsmakers frame information is a significant role for communications research. According to Pfau, in the process of framing news, journalists give stories meaning. [30] Framing is about the choices that journalists make in the reporting of stories, and these choices affect the ways in which stories are interpreted.[31]A key part of news reporting is a journalist's "selective perception" – what he or she chooses to describe to audiences.[32] Gamson also points out that there may be no motive other than a conscientious effort to frame events in a way that the sponsor considers most meaningful.[33] He also recognizes that at other times, news framing can favor the interests of a particular organization whom the source represents, helping it to further its programs or agendas.[34]

Although the specific reason behind framing choices, whether conscious or unconscious, are infinite, Scheufele names five factors that potentially influence how journalists frame issues: social norms, organizational pressures, pressures from interest groups, journalistic routines, and journalists' ideology or politics.[35] Frames highlight some facts while obscuring others, thus determining how issues are communicated to audiences. The ideas outlined are useful to this thesis because this analysis focuses on the historical facts that contributed to the social climate in the 1890s and ultimately set the tone for stories about immigrants and epidemics. Understanding the relationship between framing and the social and political climate in which journalists

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[29] Ibid., 10.
[30] Michael Pfau, Michel Haigh, Mitchell Gettle, Michael Donnelly, Gregory Scott, Dana Warr, and Elaine Wittenburg, "Embedding Journalists in Military Combat Unites: Impact on Newspaper Story Frames and Tones," *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 81, no. 1 (2004): 76.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Gamson, "Media Discourse and Public Opinion," 5.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Scheufele, "Framing, Agenda Setting," 2.

reported these stories will be helpful in this framing analysis.

Several framing devices can "construct reality in a society." First: some research indicates that negatively framed messages may have a greater impact on judgments than positively framed messages, and messages emphasizing losses may be more persuasive than those emphasizing gains due to action.[36] Negative messages may be perceived as more "important, salient, vivid, fear-inducing, and/or consequential" in comparison to positive frames.[37] Second: repetition of frames can perpetuate certain images and ideas. Entman believed that, "messages that appear more often in the media become more salient for the public and determine political and social priorities."[38] Third: omitting certain facts/details while excluding others creates concepts that impact public opinion and audience interpretations.[39] Entman points out: "audiences are clearly affected if they perceive and process information about one interpretation and possess little or incommensurable data about alternatives – this is why exclusion of interpretations by framers is as significant to outcomes as inclusion."[40] Considering these framing devices is important in understanding how the press framed immigrant issues in the context of epidemics in the 1890s.

In a framing study, a researcher must know how to uncover patterns of frames in news reports in order to classify and organize them. Pan and Kosicki classified framing devices in news into four categories: syntactical structure, script structure, thematic structure, and rhetorical structure, in which lexical choices are located.[41] Entman also emphasized that in order to understand how frames work, researchers must know how to locate frames in texts:

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[36] Joel Davis, "The effects of message framing on response to environmental communications," *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 72, no. 2 (1995): 286.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification," 54.
[41] Pan, "Framing analysis," 56.

> News frames are constructed from and embodied in key words, metaphors, concepts, symbols, and visual images emphasized in a news narrative. Frames can be detected by probing for particular words and visual images that consistently appear and convey thematically consonant meanings across media and time. By repeating and reinforcing some words but not others, frames work to make some ideas more salient than others.[42]

Framing theory is relevant to understanding how the press framed messages about immigrant issues in the context of epidemics from 1891 to 1893. A broad understanding of framing helps in the analysis of the articles in this study. I focus on the framing devices described by Entman –key words, metaphors, concepts, symbols, and visual images – in an historical analysis of articles, editorials, and letters to editors to answer the proposed research questions (see page 5).

[42] Robert E. Entman, "Framing U.S. coverage of international news: Contrasts in narratives of the KAL and Iran air incidents," *Journal of Communication* 141, no. 4 (1991): 7.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

"Old" Immigrants vs. "New" Immigrants

The landscape of U.S. immigration changed in the late nineteenth century.[43] The first major wave of immigrants, mostly from England to the United States, began early in the seventeenth century and ended around 1820. They totaled no more than 100,000.[44] The second wave began around 1820 and ended in 1880. During this period, most immigrants came from Germany, Scotland and Ireland, totaling 10 million.[45] From 1880 to 1930, the third major wave brought 27 million immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe, Asia, and Mexico, marking a shift from "old" to "new" immigrants.[46]

In order to distinguish the new arrivals from Europe and Asia in the 1880s from earlier migrations of the English, Scot, and Irish, many American commentators began to make distinctions between "old" and "new" immigrants.[47] These new arrivals looked different and exhibited cultural values that were distinct from those of the old immigrants.[48] These striking differences further divided the old and the new, and heightened the growing anti-immigrant sentiment of the late nineteenth century.

The number of immigrants who came to the United States increased sharply in the 1880s with the advent of steamships that reduced travel time. In the thirty-year period from 1870 to

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[43] Thomas J. Curran, *Xenophobia and Immigration, 1820-1930* (Boston: G.K. Hall and Co, 1975), 93.
[44] Leon F. Bouvier, *Peaceful Invasions: Immigration and Changing America* (NY: University Press of America, 1992), 13-14.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Roger Streitmatter, "The Nativist Press: Demonizing the American Immigrant," *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 76 (1999): 674.
[48] Ibid.

1900, the population of the United States had doubled to 76 million.[49] Between 1885 and 1898, 6 million people came to the United States from Eastern, Central, and Southern Europe.[50] As newcomers flocked to American cities, many Americans became alarmed over increased immigration because they feared newcomers would take their jobs, spread anti-American rhetoric, and spread contagious diseases.[51] Immigration became a divisive issue, galvanized by economics, politics, and public health. [52] These changes coincided with what Frederick Jackson Turner later considered the "closing of the American frontier in 1890, and the end of the optimistic view of America's future."[53]

The United States has had a history of exclusion and hostility toward foreigners, dating back to the eighteenth century.[54] The Alien and Sedition laws passed in 1798 during the administration of John Adams bear further testimony to the hostility felt toward the alien.[55] Under the Alien Law, the president of the United States was invested with power to send away all such aliens as he judged dangerous to the peace and safety of the country, or had reasons to think were hatching treason or laying plots against the government.[56] As Roy L. Garis pointed out: "Historical facts thus seem to refute the contentions of the past and present advocates of unrestricted immigration that we have always welcomed the immigrant with outstretched arms."[57] It is important to note that in the late nineteenth century, anti-immigration sentiment

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[49] The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, Inc., "Ellis Island": available from http://www.ellisisland.org/genealogy/ellis_island_history.asp; Internet; accessed 17 July 2007.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Curran, *Xenophobia*, 93.
[52] Ibid.
[53] John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (News Brunswick, New Jersey: Routledge, 1994), 35.
[54] Roy L. Garis, *Immigration Restriction: A Study of the Opposition of Immigration to and Regulation of Immigration into the United States* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1927), 32.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid., 33.

was not a new idea. The exclusionary laws of the 1880s and 1890s mirrored the early ideals that immigration should be controlled.

Considered the first general immigration law, the Immigration Act of 1882 established a system of central control of immigration through state boards under the Secretary of the Treasury and broadened restrictions on immigration by adding to the classes of inadmissible aliens to include persons likely to become a public charge. The 1882 act essentially only banned polygamists and contract laborers from entering the United States, but the new provisions of the 1891 act nine years later established stricter immigration guidelines.[58]

The Immigration Act of 1891 updated the earlier law by adding provisions that gave the powers to the authorities to deny entry to "convicts (except those convicted of political offenses), lunatics, idiots, and persons likely to become public charges," or those suspected of having "dangerous and loathsome diseases."[59] The new law also introduced a tax of fifty cents on each passenger brought to the United States[60] that defrayed the expenses of regulating immigration and caring for immigrants. The law also made responsible commanding officers of vessels bringing immigrants to the United States to report to the officials the "name, nationality, last residence, and destination of all such aliens."[61]

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[58] The Immigration Act of 1891 established the Superintendent of Immigration office that later became the Office of Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in 1906. See Markel, "Whose Face? Whose Nation?," 1324.

[59] Ibid.

[60] U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, "Immigration Legislation from 1790-1900"; available from http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.5600b9f6b2899b1697849110543f6d1a/?vgnextoid=6b7389eef3d4b010VgnVCM10000045f3d6a1RCRDandsearchQuery=1790andradioSearch=entireSite; Internet; accessed 26 May 2008.

[61] Howard Markel, *Quarantine! East European Jewish Immigrants and the New York City Epidemics of 1892* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 164.

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1892 extended the provisions of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882,[62] the only nineteenth century law to restrict a specific ethnic group. Sparked by white workers' fears of competition from Chinese immigrants, they lobbied actively for extension of the Chinese Exclusion Act when it came up for congressional renewal in 1892.[63] Essentially, the law suspended immigration of Chinese laborers to the United States for ten years; permitted Chinese laborers already in the United States to remain in the country after a temporary absence; called for the deportation of Chinese illegally in the United States; barred Chinese from naturalization; and permitted the entry of Chinese students, teachers, merchants, or those "proceeding to the United States ... from curiosity."[64] A person of Chinese ancestry caught without such certification was to be deported by a federal judge unless he could prove with the aid of "at least one credible *white* witness" that he was a resident of the United States at the time of the passage of the law and that he had not, for a valid reason, been unable to obtain the required document.[65]

In 1893, The National Quarantine Act created a national system of quarantine while still permitting state-run quarantines, and codified standards for medically inspecting immigrants, ships, and cargoes, and created the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization.[66, 67] The new law gave port officials more discretion to detain newcomers as a means for preventing the spread

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[62] Ibid.
[63] Roy Rosenzweig, Nelson Lichtenstein, Joshua Brown, and David Jaffee, *Who Built America? Working People and the Nation's History, Volume Two: 1865 to the Present* (University of California: Santa Barbara, 2000), 146.
[64] U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, "Immigration Legislation from 1790-1900"; available from http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.5600b9f6b2899b1697849110543f6d1a/?vgnextoid=6b7389eef3d4b010VgnVCM10000045f3d6a1RCRDandsearchQuery=1790andradioSearch=entireSite; Internet; accessed 26 May 2008.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid., 113.
[67] Markel, *Quarantine!*, 143.

of disease, and gave the president the authority to halt immigration if necessary.[68] Many newcomers suspected of having a contagious disease were quarantined under the 1893 law. The bill essentially made immigration restriction a public health policy,[69] and some scholars have argued that *nativism* also influenced restrictive immigration laws.[70]

The Nativist Movement

The *nativist* movement—also known as *nativism*—has been historically linked to nineteenth century immigration restriction. Nativism has been defined as "every type and level of antipathy toward aliens, their institutions, and their ideas."[71] Nativism appeared long before the phrase was coined in 1840, a label given to the nativists by their critics.[72] The movement developed in American culture in the early 1800s during the first major wave of immigration.[73] The movement comprised of families who had been in the United States for more than a generation and gave voice to "anti-immigrant attacks."[74] By the 1890s, nativism had evolved into explicit hostility towards new immigrants.[75] Nativists fed on fears of foreign-born radicals and Catholicism.[76] The hostility was sparked by Americans' fear of losing territory[77] and an economic depression in the late 1880s that threw millions of people out of their jobs.

As hostility intensified, many nativist associations developed. These groups stressed American ideals, as indicated by their names: *American Patriotic League, Order of Native Americans, Patriotic League of the Revolution, The Loyal Men of American Liberty, Sons of the*

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[68] Ibid., 175.
[69] Ibid., 138.
[70] Alan Kraut, *Silent Travelers: Germs, Genes, and the Immigrant Menace* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 2-5.
[71] Ibid, 4.
[72] Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 4.
[73] Ibid., 3.
[74] Streitmatter, "The Nativist Press," 673.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Rosensweig, *Who Built America?*, 147.
[77] Ibid., 3.

Revolution, and *Daughters of the American Revolution*.[78] The *American Protective Association* (APA) became the dominant nativist organization.[79] As an anti-catholic, anti-immigrant organization, the APA's platform gained considerable power in the 1890s because many people feared that Catholics would spread anti-protestant propaganda and try to control education through parochial schools.[80] State efforts to control parochial schools increased the controversy.[81] The APA's anti-immigrant rhetoric appeared in their publication, the *Patriotic American*, one of nearly 100 such nativist publications.[82]

By 1892, the *American Protective Association* (APA) became the dominant nativist organization.[83] As an anti-catholic, anti-immigrant organization, the APA's platform gained considerable power in the 1890s because many people feared that Catholics would spread anti-protestant propaganda and try to control education through parochial schools.[84] State efforts to control parochial schools increased the controversy.[85] The APA also argued that immigrants would never assimilate, or fit into American culture.[86] The APA's anti-immigrant rhetoric appeared in their publication, the *Patriotic American*.

The Patriotic American was one of the many nativist publications in the nineteenth century. Nativists spread their ideals through more than 100 publications, with the sole purpose of expressing concerns about immigrants in the United States.[87] Curran discusses the nativist press in *Xenophobia and Immigration, 1820 – 1830,* and points out that the xenophobia towards

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[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid., 103.
[80] Ibid., 95.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid., 674.
[83] Ibid., 103.
[84] Ibid., 95.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Streitmatter, "The Nativist Press," 673.

"foreigners" in the 1890s was characterized in these lesser-known publications. Many editors of these publications feared repercussions and remained anonymous.[88]

Communications research suggests that negative coverage in the nativist press set the tone for the creation of restrictive legislation against immigrants in the late nineteenth century.[89] According to Rodger Streitmatter, "the ubiquity of anti-immigrant discourse, especially discourse directed at immigrants from Asia and Eastern and Southern Europe, fostered the creation of a nativist press."[90] In his analysis of four nativist publications, Streitmatter concluded that these publications prominently featured anti-immigrant rhetoric. He identified derogatory language in headlines that referred to immigration as a "problem" and a "disease", and terms describing immigrants as "immoral", "stenchful", and "troublesome."[91] Since this study asks how press framing of immigrants and epidemics reflects themes of nativism, Streitmatter's study of the nativist press has been helpful for understanding the historical roots of negative treatment of immigrants in the major publications to be studied in this thesis.

Other research suggests that when some members of an immigrant group may or may not have a contagious disease that can cause others to become sick, the entire group is stigmatized by "medicalized nativism." Each newcomer is reduced from a "whole and unusual person to a tainted, discounted one," because of association with diseases.[92] In *Silent Travelers: Germs, Genes, and the Immigrant Menace*, Alan Kraut, professor of history and scholar in ethnic history at American University in Washington, D.C., argues that there has been a strong relationship between health, disease, and nativism in the United States.[93] When some members of an

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[88] Ibid., 674.
[89] Ibid., 680.
[90] Ibid., 673.
[91] Ibid., 675.
[92] Kraut, *Silent Travelers*, 2.
[93] Ibid.

immigrant group may or may not have a contagious disease that can cause others to become sick, the entire group is stigmatized by medicalized nativism, each newcomer being reduced from a "whole and unusual person to a tainted, discounted one," because of association with disease in the minds of the native-born."[94] In the 1890s, there was a fear of contamination from the foreign-born.[95]

Nativism has been closely linked to the concept of "xenophobia", a fear and hatred of strangers, foreigners, or of anything that is foreign, and "racism", a hostility of one race toward another because of different appearance customs and beliefs – it presupposes that race determines human traits and capacities.[96] In the nineteenth century, nativists used these concepts to bolster anti-immigration rhetoric.

Nativists also embraced the Eugenics movement of the late nineteenth century to support their argument that immigrants were inherently inferior. Eugenics developed in the 1860s by Sir Francis Galton, a British scientist who was the cousin of Charles Darwin, the English naturalist famous for proposing the theory of evolution.[97] Galton believed that intelligence, talent, and a propensity for disease were hereditary traits passed from parents to their children.[98] The Eugenics principle asserted that people could be bred to be smarter, just like animals were bred to be larger or smaller.[99] Eugenicists argued that only exclusion and careful education in right choices of human breeding could dilute the potentially American physical and mental vitality.[100]

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[94] Ibid., 3.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Jules Becker, *The Course of Exclusion: San Francisco Newspaper Coverage of the Chinese and Japanese, 1882 – 1924* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1991), 197.
[97] Troy Duster, *Backdoor to Eugenics* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 134.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Kraut, *Silent Travelers*, 5.

This ideology supported the nativist argument in favor of exclusion of immigrants, based on inferiority.

A natural extension of the Eugenics movement was the effort to restrict U.S. immigration on the basis of genetic inferiority of immigrants that could lead to the spread of deadly epidemics. James Tyner argued that U.S. immigration policy was founded on the discourse of Eugenics,[101] and in the nineteenth century, the Eugenics movement effectively combined racist and nationalist sentiments not only to identify differences in human populations, but also to control those populations.[102] Restrictive immigration laws of the nineteenth century can be viewed as an extension of Tyner's assertions about Eugenics.

Some politicians allied their beliefs with the nativist movement. Senator William Eaton Chandler (Republican - New Hampshire), Chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Immigration is considered the "lynchpin" in the Immigration Act of 1891. He also lobbied for the Quarantine Act of 1893.[103] Nicknamed the "Stormy Petrel" after the seabird regarded as a harbinger of trouble, Chandler was one of the most powerful men in the federal government.[104] He is perhaps the most notorious politician responsible for the passage of restrictive immigration laws in the nineteenth century. Chandler used his senatorial power to restrict immigration, and also used his journalistic power to inflame the immigration debate.

In his biography of Chandler, Leon Burr Richardson characterized him as a journalist, first and foremost, who regularly voiced his staunch anti-immigration opinions in the press.[105] Chandler owned the *Statesman* in the 1860s, and later purchased enough shares to control the

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[101] James A Tyner, *Oriental Bodies: Discourse and Disciplines in U.S. Immigration Policy, 1875-1942* (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2006), 2.
[102] Ibid., 11.
[103] Markel, *Quarantine!*, 77.
[104] Ibid., 76.
[105] Leon Burr Richardson, *William E. Chandler, Republican* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1940), 99.

daily *Concord Monitor*, both of which he used as instruments of party politics to voice his opinion to his opposition.[106] He was concerned with newspapers both in and out of New Hampshire all his life.[107] In his later years, Chandler corresponded with editors of newspapers and periodicals throughout the country on various issues.[108]

Other writings about Chandler reveal a different side to his politics and personality. In her compilation of Chandler's personal letters regarding family, business, and political matters,[109] Harriet S. Lacy wrote:

> There were two subjects in which he [Chandler] was intensely interested, civil rights and railroads….. President Hayes' accommodation with the South infuriated Chandler…. Booker T. Washington corresponded with Chandler on the subject [civil rights] in 1913. And in 1917, Chandler was still maintaining that the Southern states should observe the 15th amendment to the constitution.[110]

Lacy's synopsis of Chandler's correspondence reveals an interesting dichotomy. On one hand, Chandler favored immigration restriction, often penning nativistic, anti-immigrant editorials and articles in popular periodicals and journals. On the other hand, his conviction for civil rights for "negroes" shows another side to his beliefs. As for his desire to halt immigration, this begs the question: Why did Chandler, an "avowed opponent of entry of undesirable Jews and Italians"[111] favor equal rights for American Negroes? The answers are not clear, but it is clear from Lacy's compilation and Harrison's biography that Chandler was an important figure, as a politician and a journalist, to the history of nineteenth century immigration. The works of Lacy and Harrison will be integral to understanding Chandler's role as a senator *and* the way he used the press as a

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[106] Harriet Lacy, "The William E. Chandler Papers," *Historical New Hampshire*, Autumn (1968): 55.
[107] Ibid, 56.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Lacy's work is a collection of over 25,000 of Chandler's personal letters and published articles.
[110] Lacy, "The William E. Chandler Papers," 56-57.
[111] Ibid.

publicity vehicle. These are key points to understanding his impact on American immigration in the late nineteenth century.

Like Chandler, other nineteenth century politicians lobbied for immigration restriction. California Republican Thomas J. Geary focused on restricting Chinese immigrants across all U.S. borders that resulted in the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1892, also known as the Geary Law. Like Senator Chandler, Geary voiced his opinion in the press, and penned articles about Chinese and Japanese immigrants in publications like *California Illustrated Magazine* and the *North American Review*. He often used 20-year old Reconstruction rhetoric to support his case, [112] likening the Chinese to the African slaves."[113]

Senator Henry Cabot Lodge and his Immigration Restriction League connected an immigrant literacy test with protection of American character and citizenship and "fitness for industrial participation."[114] If incoming immigrants did not pass a literacy test, they could be denied citizenship. The Immigration Restriction League also lobbied for immigration inspection tests to ensure newcomers to be physically "fit" and healthy to work and earn a living.[115] Illness was viewed as a liability, and proponents of immigration restriction worried that foreigners would come to the United States and adversely affect the economy by not supporting themselves. A person unfit to work became a "public charge", a nineteenth century term for what is now called "welfare". Anti-immigration politicians were undoubtedly aided by the fact that then President Benjamin Harrison (Republican – Indiana)(1888 – 1892) was also a staunch supporter of immigration restriction.

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[112] Becker, *The Course of Exclusion*, 79.
[113] Thomas J. Geary, "The Law and the Chinaman," *California Illustrated Magazine* 4, August (1893): 312.
[114] Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 103.
[115] Amy L. Fairchild, "Policies of Inclusion: Immigrants, Disease, Dependency, and American Immigration Policy at the Dawn and Dusk of the 20th Century," *American Journal of Public Health* 94 (2004): 529.

Under Harrison's presidency, the Immigration Act of 1891 and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1892 both became laws, imposing harsh restrictions on new immigrants. Howard Markel has noted that President Benjamin Harris was probably more successful in temporarily halting immigration more than any other U.S. president, before and since, using the ground of risk of infectious disease.[116]

Harrison's unsympathetic, nativistic comments about "Russian Hebrew" immigrants outraged the Jewish American community.[117] In his third annual address to Congress in 1891, Harrison warned that the "sudden transfer of such a multitude under conditions that strip them [Russian Hebrews] of their small accumulations and… depress their energies and courage is neither good for them nor for us."[118] Later that year, several presidential administration appointees met with several prominent Jewish community members to counteract what people perceived to be White House insensitivity to the plight of East European Jews.[119] Harrison's unsuccessful re-election platform (in which he lost to Stephen Grover Cleveland) also contained strong calls for immigration restriction of Russian Hebrews.[120]

Of all newcomers in late nineteenth century America, Russian Jews[121] became most associated with filth and contagious diseases. Throughout history, Russian Jews have been persecuted in the context of epidemics. French scholar Rene Girard argued that medieval literature revealed Jewish persecution during outbreaks of the plague in the fourteenth-century.[122]

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[116] Markel, *Quarantine!*, 145.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Benjamin Harrison, "Third Annual Address to the Congress, December 9, 1891," in J.D. Richardson, ed., *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Congress, 1899), 188.
[119] Markel, *Quarantine!*, 144.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Russian Jews were also referred to as "Russian Hebrews" in the press.
[122] Rene Girard, *The Scapegoat*. Translated by Yvonne Freccero. (Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 46.

In his exposé, *How the Other Half Lives*, published in 1890, Jacob Riis described New York's Lower East Side tenements as a "breeding ground for pestilential disease."[123] Riis's investigation revealed the overcrowding, lack of running water in tenements, and raw sewage in the streets. But despite Riis's sympathetic view on the Lower East Side living conditions, many Americans still blamed that Russian Jews for their filthy living conditions and epidemics.[124]

Some scholars of Jewish history have examined the press's impact on the Jewish immigration experience. Professor Alan Kraut illuminated the xenophobic treatments of Jews in the newspapers during the cholera outbreak in 1892, and said: "Newspapers in the United States, including the *New York Times*, indignantly condemned steamship lines for not voluntarily curbing the transportation of immigrants and continuing to rush its filthy Russians and Poles across the ocean and into the United States after cholera had become epidemic in Hamburg."[125,126] He also pointed out that "the *New York Times* was owned and operated by the German Jewish Ochs/Sulzberger family, financially charitable but equally as unwilling to mute its distaste for the unclean and unhealthy appearance of new arrivals from Eastern Europe, most of whom were eastern European Jews.[127] These historical examinations provided background information for much of this research that focuses on press coverage of Russian Jews, typhus, and cholera in 1892. This period was later known as the New York City epidemics of 1892.

Other historians have studied the Jewish immigrant experience focusing on the New York City epidemics. In his book, *Quarantine! East European Jews and the New York City Epidemics*, Howard Markel, M.D., Director of the Center for the History of Medicine at the University of

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[123] Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1890), 143.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid., 142.
[126] Cholera outbreaks in Europe, including Hamburg, occurred from 1881 to 1896. See Richard J. Evans, "Epidemics and Revolutions: Cholera in Nineteenth century Europe." *Past and Present* 120 (1988): 125.
[127] Kraut, *Silent Travelers*, 142.

Michigan, examined how the epidemics of 1892 that surrounded East European Jews laid the groundwork for the passage of restrictive legislation.[128] On several occasions Markel pointed out how Eastern newspapers, such as the *New York Times* and the *New York Sun,* seized the theme of Russian Jews as diseased scapegoats and published articles and cartoons that graphically depicted them as the vectors of typhus fever to the United States.[129] He argued that "Jews became the symbol of the public health dangers of unregulated immigration" which spilled over into the press.[130] Press framing of immigration is a small part of his historiography, but his work provided a context for much of the research of Jewish immigrants included in this thesis.

As a physician and a medical historian, Markel studied epidemics and immigrants in several other books and journal articles. In *The Foreignness of Germs*, Markel and Stern argued that "public health and medicine have been crucial to immigration and the immigrant experience in American society," and "that immigrants in the late nineteenth century were consistently associated with germs and contagion."[131] They also asserted that much of the discrimination that surrounded immigrants stemmed from the belief in biological inferiority in non-white groups, which was relatively easy to attribute to the weary condition of some immigrants.[132]

Like Russian Jews in the late nineteenth century, large numbers of Italians immigrated to the United States. They, too, suffered discrimination in the press, but the negative descriptors were different than the ones used for other ethnic groups. While Jews were typically described as "filthy, dirty, menaces" to society, Italians were often characterized as "criminally minded."[133] In an account of the press's influence on public opinion (and behavior) surrounding Italian

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[128] Markel, *Quarantine!,* 73.
[129] Ibid.
[130] Ibid., 151.
[131] Howard Markel and Alexandra Minna Stern, "The Foreignness of Germs: The Persistent Association of Immigrants and Disease in American Society," *The Milibank Quarterly* (2002): 757.
[132] Ibid., 761.
[133] Markel, *Quarantine!*, 75.

immigrants in 1891, Curran wrote:

> Italians throughout the nineteenth century suggested violence in the minds of nativists. In 1890, this idea was exemplified in the New Orleans Italian community. Two factions of Italian dock workers [sic] were struggling for control of their piers. Later, the superintendent of police was murdered by a gang of six. Before he died, he is supposed to have reported, "The Dagoes did it". The result was a hysterical mass of Italians. Nine were selected to stand trial, but six were acquitted and three were given a mistrial….. As a result, an angry mob, ***convinced by the local press*** that the jury has been bribed, marched on the jail and slaughtered all nine. Congressman, Henry Cabot Lodge wrote that the incident was proof of Italian danger.[134]

In his reaction to the Italian lynchings, Senator Lodge indirectly exonerated the mob's brutal killings in the *North American Review* and blamed public sentiment:

> Americans are a law-abiding people, and an act of lawlessness like the lynching of these Italians is sure to meet with their utmost disapproval. The mob would have been impossible if there had not been a large body of public opinion behind it… The mob was deplorable, but the public sentiment which created it was more deplorable still, and deserves to have the reasons for its existence gravely and carefully considered.[135]

Of this incident, Higham wrote: "With apparent unanimity local newspapers and business leaders blessed the action."[136] This example illustrates the press's ability to perpetuate xenophobia and violence through themes of nativism and is important to this study since part of this analysis includes a section on how the press criminalized Italians during a typhus outbreak in 1892.

On the West Coast of the United States, officials were concerned with Asian immigrants. Like other ethnic groups, Asian immigrants also suffered negative treatment in the press. Considered racially inferior, some of the more colorful ethnic slurs for the Chinese include: "yellow-bellied", "coolie", "moon-eyed leper", "celestial," and "slant eyes."[137] In a content

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[134] Curran, *Xenophobia*, 115.
[135] Henry Cabot Lodge, "Lynch Law and Unrestricted Immigration," *North American Review*, May (1891): 602.
[136] Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 91.
[137] Becker, *The Course of Exclusion*, 57.

analysis of Asians in the press from 1882 to 1924, Jules Becker found that in 1892, both the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *San Francisco Examiner* published derogatory articles about Chinese suffering from smallpox or being quarantined.[138] He also found that the press treatment of the Japanese was just as harsh, and on several occasions they were linked with Chinese "as though they were one people."[139] These anti-immigrant articles helped characterize the identification for immigrants, effectively marginalizing them and bolstering the nativist argument that foreigners should be excluded on the basis of inferiority.[140] Becker's study has been helpful in the analysis of Asians in the press in San Francisco.

The United States also had a great deal of immigration from Mexico. Mexicans entered with relative ease through Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California, many on foot. Unlike Asians, Mexicans were continuously waived from the requirements of restrictive immigration laws, because they provided cheap labor to U.S. industries in American cities in the Southwest.[141,142] U.S-Mexican relations remained harmonious until the Mexican Revolution in 1911, causing alarm among American officials who became concerned with the open border and the growing number of insurgents, refugees, and temporary laborers, particularly in El Paso and Laredo, Texas. They, too, suffered negative treatment in the press in the context of epidemics.

The U.S. press reported stories about America's new ethnicities, many stories surrounding epidemics. Newspapers and periodicals regularly warned the public about sick foreigners entering the country and spreading cholera, smallpox, or typhus. The news reports may have led to an increase in public perception of immigrants and disease. In her study of

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[138] Ibid.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Markel, *Quarantine!*, 5.
[141] Ibid., 1324.
[142] Other ethnic groups from Europe, such as Greeks and Syrians, often learned enough Spanish to enter America as Mexicans. See Markel, *Quarantine!*, 1324.

disease perception and the media, Nancy Tomes pointed out, "The historical study of disease teaches us, if nothing else, that a culture's attentiveness to a perceived health risk is determined not only by statistics but also by a broad range of other factors, such as whether a disease is deemed newsworthy, if media cover it and reinforce its importance."[143] Tomes's work illuminates the relationship between the press and the immigrant experience in the 1890s.

The dominant style of popular journalism in the 1890s known as yellow journalism affected immigrant framing in the press. Yellow journalism shifted the earlier reporting style of objectivity in favor of more entertaining, shocking, and sensationalist reporting. Most historians feel sensationalism peaked during the 1890s with Pulitzer and the *New York World* and Hearst and the *New York Journal*.[144] This style became popular, and with the rising literacy rates among old and new immigrants in the late nineteenth century, these papers sold well.

Sensationalist papers appealed to the class of people considered "quarter-educated." In his 1891 novel, *New Grub Street*, George Gissing wrote about the decline of print culture, in which cynical entrepreneurs produced trivial journalism for the quarter-educated, or "the young men and women who can just read, but are incapable of sustained attention."[145] The concepts of yellow journalism and a quarter-educated society are important to understanding how press framed sensationalist stories of America's newcomers and epidemics.

Immigration Inspections

New immigrants usually arrived at one of four U.S. entry points. Officials at U.S. immigration inspection stations in the New York, Texas, Michigan, or San Francisco determined if incoming ships brought people infected with epidemics and/or other physical or mental

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[143] Nancy Tomes, "The Making of the Germ Panic, Then and Now," *American Journal of Public Health* 90, no. 2, (2000): 192.
[144] Markel, *Quarantine!*, 100.
[145] George Gissing, *New Grub Street* (London: Penguin, 1968), 496.

ailments. In addition to routine medical examinations, which sometimes lasted about 60 seconds,[146] quarantine procedures were instituted as a way to keep infected people from entering the United States. Incoming people suspected as having a contagious illness were taken to a quarantine location for further observation. Many unfortunate immigrants spent countless nights at quarantine facilities, only to later be determined "disease-free."

On the East coast, immigrants entered through Ellis Island in New York Port. Of all U.S. immigration points, Ellis Island inspected the largest number of immigrants in the late nineteenth century. Most new arrivals at Ellis Island were Eastern European Russian Jews, Hungarians, Polish, and Italians, many of who later settled in New York City. Many Russian Jews and Eastern and Southern Europeans suspected of having a contagious illness upon arrival to the Ellis Island were detained on North Brother Island, Swinburne Island, or Staten Island, all located in New York Port.

West Coast immigration authorities feared the Chinese and Japanese immigrants entering the United States. American organized labor viewed Chinese as a threat since they would often work for low wages.[147] The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1892 established special registration for Chinese laborers residing in the United States as well as stricter deportation regulations, and they needed to have certificates of work to obtain legal employment.[148] Ronald Takaki argued that Americans had a far easier time supporting legislation that halted Chinese and Japanese immigration than they would limiting European immigration, perhaps because they believed that

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[146] Markel, "Whose Face?," 1324.
[147] Curran, *Xenophobia and Immigration*, 81.
[148] Ibid., 90.

"the racial separateness between whites and Asians could never be blurred because Asians were so dissimilar to whites, particularly in appearance."[149]

Like newcomers from Europe, Chinese and Japanese immigrants suspected of carrying a "dangerous or loathsome" disease could automatically be turned away at Angel Island, the main immigration processing station in San Francisco Bay off the coast of California. Statistically, Asians were turned away more than any other immigrant group in the late nineteenth century.[150] Newcomers suspected of having an illness were sent to the Twenty-sixth street hospital or a quarantine station on Angel Island in San Francisco Bay known as the "Pest-House."[151]

In the Southwest, Mexicans had a different immigration inspection experience than that of other newcomers. Inspection stations along the U.S.-Mexico border in the late nineteenth century had no standardization of physical examinations.[152] Standardized medical tests for Mexican immigrants were not put in force until the early twentieth century.[153] Mexicans could enter the United States after they had been cleansed and disinfected, but full examinations were not required.[154] This process made entry in the United States easy, but some scholars have argued that it worked to associate Mexicans with filth and disease.[155]

Immigration stations located on Michigan-Canadian border differed from stations in other regions. Europeans entered the United States with relative ease through the immigration inspection stations at Port Huron and Detroit, Michigan. Newcomers who passed through these

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[149] Ronald Takaki, *Strangers From a Different Shore: A History of Asian-Americans* (New York: Penguin Books: 1989), 15.
[150] Markel, "Whose Face?," 1320.
[151] "The China Passengers," *San Francisco Bulletin*, 2 May 1891, p. 3.
[152] Markel, "Whose Face?," 1323.
[153] Ibid.
[154] Ibid., 1325.
[155] Ibid.

gates were considered "the more desirable northern or western Europeans.[156] In 1892, newspapers reported that U.S. officials accused Canada of being too lax with their immigration inspections. And because only a small number of people entered through Michigan, the stations lacked proper medical equipment and hospital facilities,[157] which meant that those who were held for medical observation upon arrival were held in substandard quarantine facilities.[158]

Contagion, Bacteriology, and Modern Germ Theory

Before the nineteenth century, the concept of a *contagion,* a bacterium or a virus that causes a contagious (communicable) disease,[159] was not a widely accepted theory in the medical community. Educated physicians considered many diseases that we now know to be contagious to be *non-contagious*.[160] Early systems of medicine did not explain the transmission of disease as a result of a disease-causing agent, but instead claimed that diseases were based on the results of individual susceptibilities and interactions with the environment. The causes of epidemics and disease were commonly based on genetically inherited propensities for disease,[161] and a belief in *contagion* was associated with folk traditions and unsophisticated laypeople.[162] But by the late nineteenth century, the concepts about disease transmission came to be understood differently than prior beliefs held.

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[156] Ibid., 1326.
[157] Ibid., 1326. Markel reported that the Michigan immigration stations did not have proper medical instruments, medicines, and facilities until the 1920s.
[158] Ibid., 1327.
[159] Harvard University Library Open Collection Program, "Contagion: Historical Views of Diseases and Epidemics"; available from http://ocp.hul.harvard.edu/contagion/germtheory.html; Internet; accessed 23 May 2008.
[160] Ibid.
[161] Duster, *Backdoor to Eugenics*, 10.
[162] Harvard University Library Open Collection Program, "Contagion: Historical Views of Diseases and Epidemics"; available from http://ocp.hul.harvard.edu/contagion/germtheory.html; Internet; accessed 23 May 2008.

Between 1870 and 1900, remarkable advances in scientific knowledge changed the understanding of contagious disease transmission. *Bacteriology*, the branch of medical science that studies bacteria in relation to disease,[163] asserted that a tiny microbe could be responsible for a devastating epidemic.[164] The development of bacteriology coincided with the *modern germ theory*, also called the pathogenic theory of medicine, which associates most diseases with specific entities, such as bacteria.[165] Dr. John Snow contributed to the formation of the modern germ theory when he traced the source of the 1854 cholera outbreak in the Soho neighborhood of London to drinking water from a main water pump.[166] Later in 1875, Dr. Robert Koch devised a series of proofs to verify the germ theory of disease, demonstrated by his discovery that anthrax is caused by the bacterium *Bacillus anthracis*.[167] He later discovered the germ that causes tuberculosis. These scientific discoveries changed the way the people understood how germs travel between people, and fueled the immigration debate between old and new immigrants. Along with an increased incidence of epidemics, the discovery that germs could travel among people affected immigration legislation and public health policy.

Literature Review Conclusion

In the late nineteenth century, an influx of immigrants, a division between "old" and "new" immigrants, the rise of Nativism that fostered a belief that persons born outside of the United States were inferior to native-born Americans, and a new scientific understanding of the transmission of disease led to a distrust of the foreign-born and heightened anti-immigration sentiment. New arrivals increasingly faced hostility and anger from old immigrants. This distrust

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[163] Markel, *Quarantine!*, 4.
[164] Ibid.
[165] Harvard University Library Open Collection Program, "Contagion: Historical Views of Diseases and Epidemics"; available from http://ocp.hul.harvard.edu/contagion/germtheory.html; Internet; accessed 23 May 2008.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Ibid.

of newcomers resulted in heightened security at America's borders, and tightened immigration in. Press coverage of immigrants and epidemics mirrored these events.

The articles in this literature review illuminate the historical roots of the treatment of immigrants in American newspapers and periodicals from 1891 to 1893. Some of the literature examines immigration in the context of epidemics, but historical research that examines press framing of immigrants in the context of epidemics and nativism is limited. This gap in the literature underscores the importance of this historical examination.

CHAPTER THREE

1891 – IMMIGRATION LAWS TIGHTEN: "KEEP THE SCUM OUT"

The winter of 1891 opened with a smallpox outbreak along the Rio Grande, close to the Texas-Mexico border in the towns of San Antonio, Austin, and El Paso. Smallpox had been a sporadic problem in this region for months.[168] Texas governor, Lawrence Sullivan Ross, declared a state of quarantine, and people could not leave cities unless they showed certificates of health.[169] Mexican immigrants, long believed to be harbingers of smallpox because of their "filthy habits,"[170] took the blame for the outbreak.

Newspapers in Texas and across the country reported the stories of Mexicans and smallpox. With the headline, "Vaccinating the Mexicans: Efforts to Stamp Out an Epidemic of Smallpox Along the Rio Grande," the *Milwaukee Sentinel* reported that the "Mexican government will use the soldiery to compel Mexicans to 'submit' to vaccination if objection is made."[171] On January 30, the *Galveston Daily News* reported that there could be "no doubt of the present visitation [smallpox] coming from Mexico."[172] The article did not, however, present any evidence to support these assertions. The press portrayed Mexicans as unwilling and resistant to vaccination, framing them as criminals.

By the beginning of February, the smallpox scare in Texas subsided, but the issue of immigration was still at the forefront of American society and politics. The *New York Times* described the immigrant situation as, "…evident to anybody who goes about with his eyes open

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[168] "Vaccinating the Mexicans: Efforts to Stamp out an Epidemic of Smallpox along the Rio Grande," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 4 January 1891, p. 14.
[169] "Smallpox in Texas: It is Becoming Epidemic and a Shotgun Quarantine Prevails," *New York Times*, 6 January 1891, 2.
[170] "Smallpox in Texas," *New York Times*, 13 February 1886, p. 1.
[171] Ibid.
[172] "The Smallpox Scare," *Galveston Daily News*, 30 January 1891, p. 6.

that the immigrants who are now coming over in great numbers, are for the most part not desirable citizens."[173] By 1891, many Americans viewed immigration as a "problem." The *San Francisco Bulletin* called New York City a "dumping ground for the refuse of Europe," and said that San Francisco "occupies the same position as regard to the countries of Asia."[174] As anti-foreign sentiment became more widespread,[175] a call for stricter regulations resulted in the Immigration Act of 1891.

In March, President Benjamin Harrison signed the Immigration Act of 1891, replacing the earlier act of 1882. The legislation expanded the powers to the federal authorities to deny entry to "convicts (except those convicted of political offenses), lunatics, idiots, and person likely to become public charges," or those suspected of having "dangerous and loathsome diseases." [176] The law sent a clear message: people with illnesses were undesirable and should be excluded from the United States. A *New York Times* article on April 1, 1891 commended the new law:

> The new immigration law has been remarkably fruitful in good results during the short period it has been in operation. If, under its provisions, the work of excluding undesirable immigrants is kept up as well as it has begun, the law cannot but have the excellent affect of diverting from those shores the outcasts of Europe.[177]

The new law contained provisions to exclude newcomers who might carry diseases, and regular depictions of "sick" immigrants appeared in the press. These depictions reinforced the growing fear of foreigners and framed immigrants as dangerous carriers of disease. A *San Francisco Bulletin* article applauded the 1891 law as a solution to the "lax administration" of

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[173] "The Question of Immigration," *New York Times*, 2 February 1891, p. 4.
[174] "Undesirables: Another Phase of Immigration," *San Francisco Bulletin*, 4 May 1891, p. 1.
[175] Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 99.
[176] The Immigration Act of 1891 established the Superintendent of Immigration office that later became the Office of Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in 1906. See Markel, "Whose Face?" for details.
[177] "The New Law Keeps Them Out," *The New York Times*, 1 April 1891, p. 2.

previous years.[178] The article also said, "The country is full of those who should have never been permitted to land…. crowding the slums of our great cities, breeding want, disease, and crime."[179] The story does not highlight what types of "diseases" the immigrants brought, but focuses on "those who should have never been permitted to land." This article illustrates how the press framed immigrants using themes of inferiority, danger, and exclusion.

Senator William E. Chandler, Republican stalwart from New Hampshire, played a pivotal role in the act of 1891.[180] Through the Chandler Bill, he took charge of the Senate's first standing committee on immigration and, together with a House committee, launched a determined drive for stiffer controls, which resulted in the new law.[181] Chandler's comments received attention in the press. In a *New York Times* article on April 17, Chandler said, "It is a great question just how far to go in restricting the foreign 'element.' We have not yet reached the stage in this country's growth when we want to keep out 'good' immigrants."[182] Chandler did not say that immigration should be entirely restricted, but differentiated between "good" and "bad" immigrants polarizing the situation.

Following the enactment of the new law, some immigrant incidents received a great deal of attention in the press. In April 1891, the steamship *Iniziativa* arrived with some Italians who bore symptoms of "loathsome diseases" although it was never specified which diseases they were suspected as having.[183] The *New York Times* depicted the rejected Italians as carriers of disease who "were debarred on account of loathsome diseases."[184] The following week, The *New*

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[178] "The New Immigration Law," *San Francisco Bulletin*, 1 April 1891, p. 2.
[179] Ibid.
[180] Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 99.
[181] Ibid.
[182] "Senator Chandler Talks: His Opinion of the Present Immigration Problem," *New York Times*, 17 April 1891, p. 1.
[183] Ibid.
[184] "The New Law Keeps Them Out," *The New York Times*, 1 April 1891, p. 2.

York Times reported that three Italians "escaped" while authorities attempted to take them back to the ship on which they arrived.[185] Newspapers portrayed the new law as a necessary constraint coming "just in time for its enforcement to feel the impulse of the public excitement over the 'Italian incident'."[186]

For several weeks, a manhunt ensued for the "outcasts of Europe" who had "scattered" throughout the country, and newspapers exposed the Italians' destinations, obtained through Ellis Records.[187] Other newspapers and periodicals across the country reported the events surrounding the Italians and the *Iniziativa*. On the West Coast, the *San Francisco Bulletin* alerted the public to "watch out for sick Italians: an objectionable class."[188] In Texas, the *Galveston Daily News* reported the events with the headline, "Undesirable Immigrants: The United States Not a Dumping Ground for Other Countries."[189] The following *Times Picayune-New Orleans* article also reflects a growing stereotype of contagious and dangerous Italians:

> Nineteen Italian immigrants have been debarred from landing at this port and placed in charge of the captains of the steamers in which they came for return. Four of them have tuberculosis, a dangerous and contagious disease, and 11 are suffering from an affliction of the scalp known as alopecia which is due to uncleanliness [sic].[190]

The New Orleans reaction was fueled by the lynching incident in 1890. The *Galveston Daily News* reported that the people of New Orleans wanted to "put a stop to Italian immigration."[191]

European steamship lines came under fire in the spring. In the nineteenth century, the

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[185] "The New Immigration Law: The Steamship Companies Reject to Receiving Passengers Back," *New York Times*, 8 April 1891, p. 8.
[186] "The New Law Keeps Them Out," *New York Times*, 1 April 1891, p. 2.
[187] Ibid.
[188] "An Objectionable Class," *San Francisco Bulletin*, 4 April 1891, p. 3.
[189] "Undesirable Immigrants: The United States Not a Dumping Ground for Other Countries," *Galveston Daily News*, 9 April 1891, p. 16.
[190] "Enforcing the Immigration Law," *The Daily Picayune-New Orleans*, 10 April 1891, p. 2.
[191] "Italian Immigration: The New Orleans People Want a Stop Put to it," *Galveston Daily News*, 15 May 1891, p. 2.

business of immigration increased for steamship companies and they earned a great deal of money charging premium ticket prices to bring newcomers to the United States. These companies were often viewed as profit-driven businesses with no regard for America's welfare. The law of 1891 made it the responsibility of the steamship companies bringing immigrants to the United States to report to the officials the "name, nationality, last residence, and destination of all such aliens."[192]

The press reported stories surrounding the steamship lines. On April 9, the *New York Times* reported that the *Florio* line in charge of the *Iniziativa* refused to immediately return the ship to Italy and printed a letter from Phelps Brothers and Company, legal agents of the *Florio* line:

> We hereby protest against your having put on the steamship Iniziativa a number of person that you have decided are to be returned to Italy on the ground that, under Section 10 of the last act, 'such persons are to be returned on the same ship, if practicable.' As this ship does not return to Italy, it is not practicable. We therefore decline any responsibility arising from their having been put on board, the same having been done, in the first instance without notice to us. We request you to take and keep them in charge until such time as we can send them back, which we will do as the earliest moment. [193]

The same article reported the reply of Dr. John Weber, Commissioner of Immigration at Ellis Island: "Colonel Weber stated in his reply that it might not be profitable to return the ship to Italy, but that in his opinion it was at least practicable…. The Colonel knew of no reason why the paupers of Europe should be hoisted on America simply because of the business interests of steamship companies."[194] In a different *Times* article on the same day, steamship lines received more criticism: "So long as the money is paid, it seems to be a matter of entire indifference to the

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[192] The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, Inc., "Ellis Island": available from http://www.ellisisland.org/genealogy/ellis_island_history.asp; Internet; accessed 17 July 2007.
[193] "The New Immigration Law: The Steamship Companies Reject to Receiving Passengers Back," *New York Times*, 9 April 1891, p. 8.
[194] Ibid.

officers of these immigrant steamers whether their steerage passengers are decent and healthy persons or paralytics, beggars, and criminals…"[195] The *Los Angeles Times* also revealed the growing dissatisfaction with the companies for "dumping the refuse of Europe in this country."[196] The *Christian Advocate* added its opinion to the discourse in the press:

> Every town of any considerable size in Europe has at least one agent of a steamship company who is industriously circulating false stories regarding the rates of wages in this country and the ease with which employment is obtained.[197]

These articles illustrate how immigration and epidemics intersected with issues of economics and business.

Enforcing the new law, authorities rejected many newcomers. In July, an immigrant named John Braml became the first reported person to have been "assisted" back to his home country from Milwaukee, Wisconsin.[198] Authorities in Bavaria had sent Braml with a small amount of money to United States. He made it through New York, but in Milwaukee, officials determined him to be "diseased" and "likely to become a public charge."[199] Reluctantly, the steamship line that brought him to the United States took him back to Bavaria. The *Milwaukee Sentinel* told Braml's story with the headline, "Sent Back to Bavaria: John Braml, a Pauper and Diseased Immigrant:"

> The law expressively prohibits the immigration to this country of all idiots, insane persons, paupers, and persons likely to become a public charge, and Braml is the first person coming to Milwaukee to feel its effects…. He suffered for nine years from fever sores and was helpless.[200]

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[195] "Rejected Immigrants," *New York Times*, 9 April, 1891, p. 4.
[196] "Keep the Scum Out," *Los Angeles Times,* 12 April 1891, p. 1.
[197] *Christian Advocate,* 1891.
[198] "Sent Back to Bavaria: John Braml: A Pauper and Diseased Immigrant," *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, 8 July 1891, p. 4.
[199] Ibid.
[200] Ibid.

Braml's story shows how new arrivals could be excluded because of "dangerous or loathsome" or the "public charge" clause. The above article uses frames of "inferiority", "exclusion", and "helplessness" to describe Braml, illustrating the growing anti-immigrant sentiment and nativism in the press.

By mid-summer, Senator Chandler's opinions about immigration made it to the papers. In an interview in Concord, Massachusetts, he discussed immigration restriction and assimilation. The *San Francisco Bulletin* reported Chandler's remarks:

> I am not sure that we may not, sometime in the not far distance future, reach a conclusion to limit the coming of good immigrants and exclude some of them, but so far as I am concerned that time has not arrived. For the present I am in favor of adhering to the old principle as satisfactory – to exclude the bad and allow the good to come in….. The good persons of these races [Chinese, Polish Jews, Hungarians, Italians] will assimilate, the bad we intend to keep out on other grounds.[201]

In September, the *Galveston Daily News* said Senator Chandler reasoned, "that for one Jew who becomes a public charge nine hundred and ninety-nine will add to the wealth of the country and then will not allow the odd one to remain a public charge five hours after their attention is drawn to the exceptional ease."[202] The reports do not reflect Chandler's desire to completely suspend immigration as he would later.

Throughout the year, news of smallpox outbreaks surfaced in various states across the country. In June, the *San Francisco Bulletin* reported that the steamship, *Oceanic*, arrived with a Chinese person infected with smallpox and had later been quarantined on Angel Island for fifteen

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[201] "Immigrants: Senator Chandler Talks of Assimilating Races," *San Francisco Bulletin*, 21 August 1891, p. 2.
[202] "Senator Chandler and the Jews," *Galveston Daily News*, 22 September 1891, p. 2.

days.[203] In July, the *Bulletin* again framed Asians as dangerous by reporting that smallpox had "made its appearance in the Japanese cities of Tokio and Kavagawa", and that "a society of people from these colonies had been formed in either California or Canada."[204] In September, thirty smallpox cases were reported in Texas, and the *Galveston Daily News* said that local authorities blamed Mexican immigrants who were later taken to the "pesthouse" for vaccination.[205] In December, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that the steamer *City of Peking* was quarantined in San Francisco with smallpox.[206] The *San Francisco Bulletin* reported the details in more depth:

> On the arrival of the steamer City of Peking, yesterday, the yellow flag, denoting that someone on board was sick with a contagious disease, was flying…The Peking was immediately ordered into quarantine and the two men were removed from the vessel to the lazarette at the quarantine station on Angel Island… The baggage of the cabin passengers was fumigated on board by hot air from the large boilers.[207]

Also that year, stories about lepers appeared in the news. A *Los Angeles Times* article with the headline, "A Leper Cook in a Hotel," appeared in March. The story reported that the proprietor of a hotel in Philadelphia had been arrested and charged for employing Charlie Wang, a Chinese leper who prepared food for guest and employees of the hotel.[208] The *Times* again reported a similar story in August with the headline "Lepers in the East: A Scare in New York—The Disease Declared Contagious," giving the names of three Chinese immigrants

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[203] "Quarantine: The Small-Pox on the Oceanic – Action Taken by the Board of Health," *San Francisco Bulletin*, 1 June 1891, p. 1.
[204] "The Orient: Anti-Christian Agitation in China—Smallpox in Japan—A Japanese Colony for California," *San Francisco Bulletin*, 31 July 1891, p. 1.
[205] "Smallpox at Del Rio: Effective Measures Taken to Stamp out the Disease," *Galveston Daily News*, 4 September 1891, p. 3.
[206] "In Quarantine: A China Steamer Arrives at 'Frisco With Smallpox Aboard," *Los Angeles Times*, 21 December 1891, p. 1.
[207] "In Quarantine: The Steamer City of Peking Arrives with Small-Pox on Board," *San Francisco Bulletin*, 21 December, 1891, p. 3.
[208] "A Leper Cook in a Hotel," *Los Angeles Times*, 13 March 1892, p. 1.

isolated on Angel Island in New York because they were suspected lepers.[209] All of these articles illustrate the press's heightened reaction to immigrants and epidemics.

By the end of the year, news from Europe reported typhus outbreaks among Russian Jews. On December, 26, 1891, the *San Francisco Bulletin* reported the situation in a prison in St. Petersburg, Russia:

> Typhus and typhoid fever were prevalent among the prisoners at Samara. The doctors whose duty it is to attend the sick prisoners are in despair, and have not visited their charges for a month.[210]

Reports such as this one may have set the stage for the public outcry against Russian immigrants during a major outbreak of typhus in New York City in early 1892 during which time they took the blame for typhus from Europe.

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[209] "Lepers in the East: A Scare in New York—The Disease Declared Contagious," *Los Angeles Times*, 16 August 1891, p. 4.
[210] "Great Distress," *San Francisco Bulletin*, 26 December 1891, p. 3.

CHAPTER FOUR

1892 – CONTAGION AND A HEIGHTENED FEAR OF ALIENS: "THE IMMIGRANT CURSE"

In 1892, several events and legislation negatively affected immigration in the United States. The opening of Ellis Island, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1892, a smallpox outbreak among Chinese immigrants in San Francisco, and deadly outbreaks of typhus and cholera in New York City increased national attention of immigration issues. With these events, the press reported a great amount of immigration news.

Because of the need to inspect and monitor the massive wave of immigrants, Ellis Island opened in New York port on January 1, 1892. The new facility replaced Castle Garden, in Manhattan, as the New York immigration center. Ellis Island was designed, its architects claimed, to handle more than 8,000 newcomers a day.[211] Of the four major U.S. entry points, Ellis Island registered 75 percent of all newcomers in the 1890s.[212] About 80 percent of those who entered Ellis Island received landing cards permitting them to board ferries for New York City.

The Island served as inspection site and medical facility.[213] Orderly lines funneled bewildered newcomers past doctors and officials who examined them for signs of disease. Under the 1891 immigration law, the physically and mentally ill could be refused admittance, forcing thousands of families to make the difficult decision to return home with a relative refused entry or continue on without them. A final interview by an immigration official determined whether

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[211] Markel, "The Foreignness of Germs," 790.
[212] Ibid.
[213] Ibid., 792.

the newcomers had already been promised jobs. Those immigrants suspected of having an illness would stay on Ellis Island for observation and treatment or quarantine.[214]

The steamship, *Nevada*, was the first to arrive at the new landing place.[215] *A* young "rosy cheeked" Irish girl named Annie Moore became the first official newcomer from the *Nevada* to be registered. The *Boston Daily Globe* reported that Colonel Weber presented Moore with a $10 bill.[216]The *New York Times* reported the opening day's events:

> There were three big steamships in the harbor waiting to land their passengers, and there was much anxiety among the new-comers to be the first landed at the new station. The honor was reserved for a little rosy-cheeked Irish girl. She was Annie Moore, fifteen years of age….. Her name is now distinguished by being the first registered in the book of the new landing bureau.[217]

Although the average immigrant in 1892 came from Southern, Central, or Eastern European, the press highlighted the arrival of the "rosy-cheeked Irish girl," supporting the desire of many old immigrants to include those of similar ethnic backgrounds and exclude all others. Highlighting the arrival of Annie Moore exemplifies an omission in news framing. Profiling Moore, a person from Western Europe, (demographically similar to old immigrants) and omitting positive stories about newcomers from the far regions Europe, sent the message that she represented the average U.S. immigrant. In reality, people from Ireland and other Western European countries represented the fewest numbers of immigrants in the 1890s. This omission contributed to the inferiority frame because it added to the public perception that Eastern and Southern Europeans were *un*desirable while Western Europeans remained desirable.

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[214] Markel, *Quarantine!*, 27.
[215] "Moved Into New Quarters," *Daily Inter Ocean*, 2 January 1892, p. 1.
[216] "Annie Was the First," *Boston Daily Globe*, 2 January 1892, p. 2.
[217] "Landed on Ellis Island: New Immigration Buildings Opened Yesterday," *The New York Times*, 2 January 1892, p. 1.

Like Moore, others from Western Europe enjoyed preferential treatment in the press. A description in the *New York Times* of an inspection of a group of Dutch newcomers on Ellis Island illustrates how the press depicted Western Europeans as superior to Eastern Europeans: "They were a fine looking bunch, far above the average immigrant."[218]

After the immigration laws called for stricter inspection measure at U.S. immigration stations, politicians and officials criticized Canada for substandard immigration inspection procedures at Canadian borders. Although officials at Canadian-United States immigration stations did not process as many newcomers as U.S. stations, American politicians and health officials suggested ways to improve medical inspections. In a January 20 *Milwaukee Sentinel* article, Senator Chandler suggested stricter inspections of immigrants themselves, not just their baggage, at the Canadian and Mexican borders.[219]

But just after Chandler criticized Canada for lax medical procedures, Ellis Island experienced its first public health disaster. Shortly after Ellis Island opened, the steamship *Massilia* arrived from Germany on January 30, 1892, with approximately 100 Russian Hebrews and Italians suspected of having typhus, setting off a nationwide panic. Although U.S. officials had received telegrams that sick immigrants may be arriving, many infected people passed through immigration inspection without detention. [220] A manhunt for the sick foreigners ensued, and the newspapers capitalized on the opportunity to warn readers that typhus would quickly spread across the country. The *New York Times* reported "over 200 Italians were on the Massilia and they have become scattered all over the country and may develop typhus fever in the

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[218] "A View of Ellis Island," *New York Times,* 6 March 1892, p. 9.
[219] "Senator Chandler Letter," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 20 January 1892, p. 4.
[220] Markel, *Quarantine!,* 15.

communities where they have settled."[221] The *Galveston Daily News* reported that the typhus scourge was "increasing hour by hour" and that "the plague will spread, despite desperate efforts being made to suppress it."[222] The typhus outbreak marked the beginning of the period later known as the New York City epidemics of 1892.

Russian Jews and Italians immediately became associated with the typhus epidemic and the New York City epidemics. The *North American* reported: "there is not a doubt that the plague was brought by the Eastern Hebrew immigrants on the *Massilia*."[223] The *New York Times* wrote that of the 248 Russian Hebrews who arrived on the *Massilia*, at least one-third of them had been diagnosed with typhus, the "most virulent and menacing of the diseases which test the powers of sanitary officers."[224] The *Los Angeles Times* reported "seven cases of typhus fever were discovered in nine Italians who were smuggled off the train and into a macaroni factory at auburn Park… It is thought that any disastrous results will be prevented."[225] These examples illustrate how the papers focused on danger to report the issues.

The press regularly reported the typhus outbreaks surrounding Russian Jews, and they frequently blamed the typhus outbreaks on the Russians' poor living conditions in lower East Side tenements. The *New York Times* said, "Ignorance and dirt are the chief characteristics of the average immigrant." [226] The images of sick, infected Russian Jews gained credibility as letters to newspaper editors poured in, such as the following in the *New York Times*:

> We do not want and we ought to refuse to land all or any of these unclean Italians or Russian Hebrews. We have enough dirt, misery, crime, sickness and

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[221] "Typhus Fever in the City: Fifty-Seven Patients Sent to North Brother Island," *New York Times*, 2 February 1892, p. 5.
[222] "Typhus in New York," *Galveston Daily News*, 13 February 1892, p. 5.
[223] "Typhus Fever in New York: Sixty-Nine Well Developed Cases Reported Officially – The Terrible Disease Brought by Russian Hebrew Immigrants," *The North American*, 13 February 1892, p. 1.
[224] "Typhus and Immigration," *New York Times*, 13 February 1892, p. 4.
[225] "Imported Disease," *Los Angeles Times,* 15 February 1892, p. 6.
[226] "More Typhus Cases Found," *New York Times*, 13 February 1892, p. 2.

> death of our own without permitting any more to be thrust upon us by any of the foreign powers and it is only such that they are desirous of getting rid of and send to us.[227]

As more cases of typhus emerged along the eastern seaboard, newspapers printed the names of Russian Jews and Italians who became ill or died. Long suspected as being the harbingers of the deadly disease, these reports reinforced the fear of new ethnic groups through frames of danger and inferiority. The *Boston Daily Globe* reported the names and ages of five "New York Jews" who moved to Boston to "flee from Typhus,"[228] and three days later, reported that the "danger signal was raised in the village of Ackworth, in North Oxford, where four more of the immigrants who arrived on the ill-fated Massillia have been located. One of the four is down with the dreaded typhus fever. The four emigrants are Hirsch Greenburg and wife and David Scarefski and his bride of four months."[229] The *New York Times* also reported the whereabouts of a man suspected of carrying typhus:

> Max Busch, a Russian Hebrew, who on last Tuesday night walked into Bellevue Hospital sick and was isolated as a dangerous patient, has been removed to the Reception Hospital on Sixteenth Street for purposes of observation.[230]

The *Los Angeles Times* also reported typhus outbreaks in four U.S. cities:

> New York – Two Italians, supposed to be suffering from typhus, were brought here last night from Trenton, and are now under observation by the health authorities. The total number detained is 68.
> Albany – There are five cases of typhus fever in Velatie, Columbian County, in a family of Russian Hebrews. The village is wild with excitement. The

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[227] "Restricting Immigration: Is it Not Time to Set up Some Sort of Barriers?" *New York Times*, 21 February 1892, p. 20.
[228] "Fled From the Typhus: Five Hebrews Come to Boston From New York and Seek Lodgings in This City," *Boston Daily Globe*, 17 February 1892, p. 8.
[229] "Danger Signal Raised," *Boston Daily Globe*, 20 February 1892, p. 4.
[230] "More Cases of Typhus," *New York Times*, 22 February 1892, p. 8.

> stricken family came over on the steamer Massilia. Workmen in the cotton mill have been exposed, together with five other Russian Families.[231]

The next day, the *Los Angeles Times* wrote:

> Newcastle, Pennsylvannia – Garvone Mazetto, an Italian living near here, today reported that his brother, one of the Massilia's passengers died today… There are threatening chances of an epidemic among the colony of Italians at Carbon, where Mazetto lived, they being crowded all together in small huts, and it is thought they have been exposed to the disease from which Mazetto's brother was suffering.
> Oakdale, Massachussets – There is considerable excitement here over five cases of typhus fever. The victims are Jews, a mother and five children, who came here about ten days ago.[232]

By the spring, some groups and citizens called for a ban on immigration. The U.S. government instituted several measures to avert the spread of disease from Europe.[233] In an effort to keep infected persons from bringing typhus to U.S. shores, the government urged European families to keep their citizens from coming to the United States. Steamship lines were also encouraged to refuse Jewish passengers. The *Boston Daily Globe* reported, "The agents of the White State Line have cabled their agents in Hamburg not to take any Jewish passengers for the present on account of typhus."[234]

The 1891 law affected steamship lines as well as newcomers. Some steamship lines required that all prospective immigrants submit to a full physical examination by a medical doctor prior to embarking on journey to the United States.[235]The companies did not want to be known for bringing European passengers with diseases. The *Christian Advocate*, linking typhus to the issues of contamination and filth, called for a total ban on immigration from "infected"

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[231] "Typhus Spreading: Fresh Cases Discovered in Various Cities in the East," *Los Angeles Times*, 17 February 1892, p. 1.
[232] "More Typhus Cases," *Los Angeles Times*, 18, February 1892, p. 1.
[233] "More Typhus Cases Found," *New York Times*, 13 February 1892, p. 2.
[234] "Typhus Stops Immigration," *Boston Daily Globe*, 1 March 1892, p. 4.
[235] "To Examine Russian Emigrants," *New York Times*, 4 March 1892, p. 6.

ports of Russia, in which famine and fever were rampant because of the "notoriously filthy life of the Russian peasant.[236]

In addition to keeping new immigrants from arriving as a public health measure, the new scientific understanding of how germs travel resulted in the push for decontamination as a typhus prevention. In the press, the "dirty" frame coupled with the concept of "decontamination" bolstered the negative image surrounding immigrants. After a young Russian Hebrew, Joseph Siegler, became sick with typhus after visiting a synagogue, President Harrison ordered all the east side synagogues be fumigated.[237] In another case, the *New York Times* described the typhus decontamination procedures of a Russian immigrant's home:

> The house, in which a large number of fever cases developed, is now vacant. It will be thoroughly cleansed and disinfected and fumigated and the ceilings whitewashed and painted before the sanitary authorities will permit it to be again occupied.[238]

Decontamination procedures at European ports were publicized as models for U.S. ports. The *Los Angeles Times* reported that a U.S. official returned from an educational junket in Hamburg touting the decontamination procedures used there. This opinion from a government official gave credence to the public fear of contagious disease. The report illustrates the use of the "dirty" frame:

> Assistant Secretary Spaulding, who has just returned… was much pleased with the system of inspection of immigrants at the ports named, and especially with precautions taken against the introduction of contagious or infectious diseases… Not only are the immigrants compelled to take baths in tanks especially provided for that purpose, they are compelled to submit their clothing and personal effects to thorough disinfection.[239]

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[236] "Health: Famine and Fever," *Christian Advocate*, May 67 (1892): 320.
[237] "Still Finding Typhus: Two New Cases Yesterday Bring the Total up to 116," *New York Times,* 28 February 1892, p. 11.
[238] Ibid.
[239] "Proper Immigration Precautions," *Los Angeles Times*, 14 August 1892, p. 1.

In the spring, smaller epidemic outbreaks occurred across the country. Smallpox was reported in New York and San Francisco. The *Los Angeles Times* reported another "pest ship at New York," from Liverpool with Russian passengers taken into quarantine.[240] The *New York Times* reported that an "unknown immigrant afflicted with the disease escaped from a hospital."[241]

Sparked by the *Massilia* disaster, a Congressional investigation of Ellis Island practices and procedures began in March 1892. The *Massilia* incident also triggered a proposition submitted by Senator Chandler, head of the investigation, to "prohibit immigration for one year."[242] Some newspapers outlined the steps of the investigation and the need for more manpower to inspect the vast number of arriving immigrants.[243] Throughout the investigation, Chandler blamed the wrongdoing on Ellis Island officials, particularly Ellis Island Commissioner John Weber. On February 16, 1892, the *New York Times* said in an article entitled, "An Investigation Wanted: Senator Chandler Sharply Attacks Commissioner Weber":

> Senator Chandler is after Commissioner of Emigration [sic] Weber… It was perfectly clear that those immigrants infected with that dangerous and deadly disease should not have been allowed to land. They should have been excluded by the Commissioner of Emigration in the performance of strict and imperative duty under the statute of the United States.[244]

Two weeks later on March 6, in another *New York Times* article, Chandler described the "undesirable classes", marking a shift from his earlier, less derogatory descriptions to a more caustic view of immigrants:

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[240] "Another Pest Ship at New York," *Los Angeles Times*, 28 February 1892, p. 1.
[241] "Smallpox at Hoboken: An Unknown Immigrant Afflicted with the Disease Escapes from a Hospital." *The Daily Inter Ocean* (Chicago, IL), 21 March 1892, p. 2.
[242] "Total Restriction Talk," *The New York Times*, 1 December 1892, p. 5.
[243] "A View of Ellis Island," *New York Times*, 6 March 1892, p. 9.
[244] "An Investigation Wanted: Senator Chandler Sharply Attacks Commissioner Weber," *New York Times*, 16 February 1892, p. 2.

> The alarm springs from the constantly increasing influx within our borders of classes of immigrants of a most undesirable character. The danger is the reduction of wages to the injury of the American workman, and of his home and family, the debasement of the suffrage, and wide contamination of society.[245]

The press publicized the battle between Chandler and Weber. A long-time critic of Chandler, Weber voiced his feelings about Chandler's reforms. In a letter to the *New York Times* on February 19, Weber discussed the state of health of some arriving Russian Hebrews and criticized Ellis Island inspection practices:

> I happened to be standing at the entrance through which they [Russian immigrants] passed on reaching here and saw what seemed to me to be a clear case of inhumanity on the part of the ship's surgeon in permitting these cases to be brought down [for inspection], as it was evident that they should not have been directly transported or transferred but sent directly to a suitable hospital for treatment and care.[246]

As tragic and sympathetic as this recollection is, this editorial portrays the Russian immigrants using the "helpless" frame.

Following the typhus epidemic in the winter, immigration laws continued to tighten. On May 5, the United States Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1892, which required Chinese in the United States to be registered and carry an identity card or face deportation. Also that month, a U.S. quarantine station opened on Angel Island in San Francisco Bay. This law had far-reaching negatively affect Chinese for years to come, and some scholars argue that the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1892 was an outcome of the anti-immigration fervor during the first half of 1892 during the typhus epidemics in New York City.[247] Introduced into Congress in February, the *Los Angeles Times* reported the bill for the new law:

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[245] William E. Chandler. "Restricting Immigration." *New York Times*, 6 March 1892, p. 4.
[246] Letter to editor from Colonel John Weber, *New York Times,* 19 February 1892, p. 4.
[247] Markel, *Quarantine!*, 85.

> The presence here of Chinese is inimical to our institutions and deemed injurious and a source of danger. Recently the Pacific Coast was a new country and Chinese might have been a necessity at one time, but our own people are fast filling up and developing that rich and highly-favored land, and American citizens will not and cannot afford to stand idly by and see this undesirable race carry away the fruits of labors which justly belong to them.[248]

Some articles criticized the Chinese Exclusion Act. In an article entitled, "Mr. Harrison's Chinese Blunder," the *Boston Daily Globe* reported that Harrison mismanaged funds to enforce the records part of the new law:

> The request for more office holders, and more funds to be expended chiefly in California and Oregon, is made at a time when money is urgently needed to provide against the importation of infectious diseases from the East. The dread "famine fever", commonly known as typhus, is rampant in Russia, and the government health officers need all the available appropriations to keep it from getting a foothold here through the heavy immigration from southern Russia.[249]

Just when the country thought it had recovered from public health disaster, in the summer of 1892, a cholera epidemic threatened the nation. Exacerbated by the typhus epidemic earlier in the year, Americans panicked and newcomers from Europe and Asia who had moved across the Midwest caused widespread fear. Newspapers from coast to coast reported their arrival in various cities. The *New York Times* described Russian and Polish immigrants were described as "an ideal medium for the diffusion of cholera germs because of their extreme filth."[250] The *Daily Inter Ocean* reported "alarm in Kansas over the arrival of Russian immigrants because of the fear they bring cholera."[251] The *New York Times* warned that the "United States would be better off if ignorant Russian Jews and Hungarians were denied refuge":

> With the danger of cholera in question, it is plain to see that the United States would be better off if ignorant Russian Jews and Hungarians were denied refuge here. These people are offensive enough at best; under the present

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[248] "More Anti-Chinese Legislation," *Los Angeles Times*, 11 February 1892, p. 1.
[249] "Mr. Harrison's Chinese Blunder," *Boston Daily Globe*, 1 June 1892, p. 10.
[250] "The Only Safe Course," *New York Times*, 1 September 1892, p. 4.
[251] "Fear They Bring Cholera," *Daily Inter Ocean*, 15 August 1892, p. 1.

> circumstances they are a positive menace to the health of this country. Even should they pass the quarantine officials, their mode of life when they settle down makes them always a source of danger. Cholera, it must be remembered, originates in the homes of human riffraff.[252]

As the fear of cholera heightened, many wanted stricter quarantine laws to check immigrants for diseases before they entered the United States. A letter from New York mayor Hugh J. Grant to President Harrison, reprinted in a *New York Times* editorial, urged "every reasonable precaution":

> As Mayor of the City of New York, I deem it my duty to call your attention to the present condition of sanitary affairs in this city. While there is no cause for alarm in the present condition, and while everything is being done by the authorities to prevent the spread of the cholera, every reasonable precaution should be taken to prevent its further introduction into this community….I therefore request that you, as President of the United States, exercise all the authority you possess to prevent further immigration to this country until all fear of the introduction of cholera shall have disappeared.[253]

Again, like other official statements in press, the mayor's letter has frames of "danger" and "exclusion," and once again, bolsters the idea that immigrants should be excluded.

Medical experts expressed their opinions in the newspaper columns. Printed in an August 7, 1892 *New York Times article,* Dr. Cyrus Edson, a New York physician and important figure in the New York City Health Department, gave a jaundiced view of Italians and Russian residents, portraying them as sneaky and underhanded in the face of authority during the cholera outbreaks:

> They are sullen and suspicious and refuse all [health] information asked by Americans. When it comes to questions of disease, they will hide in closets, burrow in cellars, run away, do anything to avoid the visit of a physician and lie with the most magnificent elaboration as to all matters touching their own sickness or those of their neighbors.[254]

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[252] "Progress of the Cholera," *New York Times*, 29 August 1892, p. 2.
[253] "City Officer Confer: Mayor Grant Asks the President to Prevent Further Immigration," *New York Times*, 17 September 1892, p. 2.
[254] Cyrus Edson,"Averting a Pestilence," *New York Times*, 7 August 1892, p. 1.

Immigrant "round ups" were a regular part of the quarantine process. If officials in New York heard of an epidemic outbreak in a neighborhood, Dr. Edson would send out his henchmen to "round" up immigrants as a means to collect sick and dangerous persons for medical examination and/or quarantine. They also conducted regular tenement inspections. Newspapers depicted immigrants as uncooperative and stubborn, evident from a *New York Times* excerpt from Dr. Edson, in which he stated, "They throw every possible obstacle in the way of the Board of Health in its regular rounds of the inspection of the tenements where they live."[255] He viewed "round-ups" as a necessary step in separating the sick from the healthy, the dirty from the clean.[256] Edson's comments were in response to the difficulty he encountered when trying to "round up" frightened immigrants who feared that they and their families would be quarantined if suspected of carrying typhus. He also wrote in the *North American Review* that if unrestricted immigration from Russia were to continue, that the United States would be "threatened by a very serious and real danger."[257] Expert opinions in the press, such as Edson's, reinforced the "danger" frame and added to the growing belief that immigrants were troublemakers.

In the late summer, sporadic outbreaks of the cholera were reported across the country. These outbreaks were traced back to passengers from European steamships *Fulda*, *Rugia*, *Normannia*, *Pennsylvania*, and *Stubenhak*, and *Moravia*. On August 29, the *Milwaukee Sentinel* reported that a sensation was caused by a report that cholera had been discovered among immigrants in Detroit who had arrived from New York.[258] Three days later, the *Sentinel* reported

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[255] Ibid.
[256] Ibid.
[257] "Typhus Fever," *The North American Review* 154 (1892): 205.
[258] "Cholera Scare in Detroit: An Immigrant who was Thought to Have the Disease," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 29 August, p. 1.

that twenty-two deaths on the steamer *Moravia* had been traced back to Hamburg.[259] The *Daily Inter Ocean* wrote, "Detroit is in grave danger of receiving a visit from the dread epidemic. Hundreds of German and Russian immigrants are landed weekly direct from foreign ports at Quebec and Montreal and take the trains at once for the United States, passing through here without inspections or quarantine."[260] Later in September, the *Los Angeles Times* asserted "the New York press thinks that between September 6 and 16 Asiatic cholera was present in the city without the public being aware."[261]

The cholera outbreaks resulted in strict quarantine rules at all U.S. borders. A quarantine inspection commission was appointed to enforce the rules at all U.S. stations. The commission reported that coastal inspection stations were inadequate in many places and it would be part of the duty of the commission to hunt out these weak places and see that proper steps were taken to prevent the possibility of the disease being brought in.[262] The *Daily Inter Ocean* reported that the Commission accused New York immigration officials of permitting smallpox to be brought into the United States earlier in the year.[263] On August 31, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that a special cordon of inspection and disinfection had been established on the seaboard from Louisiana to Maine and along the Canadian and Mexican frontiers.[264] In Mexico, the *Galveston Daily News* reported a state officer "placed a guard" on the Texas-Mexico border:

> Dr. Turpin, state quarantine officer at this point, has placed a guard at the international bridge, whose duty it will be to take the oath of all strangers coming into the state that they have not been within twenty days previous in any

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[259] "Cholera—Stop Immigration," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 1 September 1892, p. 4.
[260] "Point of Danger: Cholera apt to be Introduced from Canada," *Daily Inter Ocean*, 29 August 1892, p. 1.
[261] "The Crisis Past," *Los Angeles Times*, 23 September 1892, p. 4.
[262] "State Boards of Health," *New York Times*, 27 August 1892, p. 5.
[263] "Want Immigration Stopped," *Daily Inter Ocean*, 27 August 1892, p. 1.
[264] "America's Cordon," *Los Angeles Times*, 31 August 1892, p. 2.

> place infected with yellow fever or cholera. This precaution was taken on account of a report that cholera has broken out in Vera Cruz [Mexico].[265]

The epidemics in 1892 continued to affect immigration laws that year. On September 1, President Harrison issued a circular (ruling) holding that "no vessel from any foreign port carrying immigrants shall be admitted to enter any port of the United States until such vessel has undergone quarantine detention of twenty days, and such greater number of days as may be fixed in each special case by the State authorities." To ensure that only healthy people entered the country, entire shiploads of people were sometimes detained off shore for weeks. As part of the plan, physicians would journey out to the quarantined ships to inspect the passengers and from there, the sick would go to other quarantine facilities; others would stay on the ship until quarantine expired.

Health officials across the country took extra precautions to inspect immigrants. The *New York Times* reported that west-bound passengers on railways needed clean bills of health signed from marine hospital officials at immigration inspection stations[266] and that immigrants and their baggage would go through rigorous examinations as they traveled across the country.[267]

As part of President's Harrison's circular, baggage, clothing, and belongings on all arriving ships were fumigated and thoroughly disinfected.[268] Like the typhus epidemic earlier that year, the terms "decontamination" and "disinfection" became popular in the press. Daily newspapers reported how clothing and belongings should be disinfected, as did medical journals with long reports by physicians on how to stamp our cholera through proper decontamination procedures.

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[265] "Quarantine on the Border," *Galveston Daily News*, 6 August 1892, p. 5.
[266] "Railroads and Immigrants," *New York Times*, 13 September 1892, p. 2.
[267] "Immigrants in the West," *New York Times*, 15 September 1892, p. 5.
[268] "The Cholera," *New York Times*, 26 August 1892, p. 4.

From coast to coast, the press reported the twenty-day circular, many interpreting the new rule as a way for the government to completely halt immigration. The *Daily Inter Ocean* reported that immigration had been "stopped" through "vigorous measures adopted to keep out the cholera."[269] The *Christian Union* wrote, "President Harrison's proclamation has had an excellent effect in stopping the coming of thousands of Polish and Russian Jews, and other dangerous and undesirable immigrants.[270] With the headline, "Putting Up Bars," the *Milwaukee Sentinel* wrote that that federal government put forth all its power to prevent cholera into the United States.[271]

Similar to the typhus outbreaks in the winter, Canada received a great deal of criticism during the cholera outbreak. U.S. officials urged Canada to adopt the circular.[272] After the twenty-day circular slowed immigration through U.S. ports, health officials worried that immigrants would "smuggle themselves" via circuitous routes to the United States through Mexico and Canada.[273] Referred to as America's "back door", U.S. health officials criticized Texas-Mexico border towns for lax sanitation and medical examinations - ill equipped to handle cholera coming from immigrants via Mexico.[274] Delegates of the international conference for quarantine inspection concluded that Canadian immigration stations were deficient, but that the Canadian government had no intention of prohibiting immigration through its ports.[275] As a

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[269] "Officials Act: Vigorous Measures Adopted to Keep Out the Cholera," *Daily Inter Ocean*, 2 September 1892, p. 1.
[270] "The Outlook," *Christian Union*, 10 September 1892, p. 441.
[271] "Putting Up Bars," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 2 September 1892, p. 1.
[272] "Canada is Preparing: Supervision of Immigration From Cholera Pots Urged," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 4 September 1892, p. 4.
[273] "Means of Preventing the Invasion of Cholera," *Times and Register*, 10 September 1892, p. 300.
[274] "Mexico and the Cholera: The Border People Watching Their Neighbor," *Galveston Daily News*, 8 September 1892, p. 1.
[275] "Canada Careless: The Government Will Allow Immigrants to Come," *Los Angeles Times*, 4 September 1892, p. 5.

result of the conflict between governments, Michigan notified railways that the state would refuse all immigrants via Canada if they came from infected ports.[276]

Detroit health officials did not always agree on how to handle incoming immigrants from Canada. They sometimes faced difficult situations with the new twenty-day rule. On September 11, The *Los Angeles Times* reported that sixty immigrants from Windsor, Ontario, Canada had been quarantined in Detroit in two train cars:

> The situation of the immigrants is pitiful. The two cars were sidetracked on the river bank at Walkerville, Ont., Saturday night, and this morning the passengers awoke fairly famished. But few of them possessed money, and the rest bid fair to starve. There is not a morsel of food on the cars and not one has had a warm meal since Thursday. At 4 o'clock hunger drove them out of the cars and they flocked to the neighboring houses for food, begging from door to door for what bites they could get. As soon as their condition was made known as number of kind-hearted ladies went to their relief.[277]

Like other stories highlighted in this research, this disturbing account illustrates how a frame of "helplessness" surrounded immigrants in the press.

Physicians and politicians across the country favored the twenty-day quarantine rule. They met regularly to discuss its implementation.[278] Many of their opinions appeared in press. In a *Medical News* article, A.C. Abbott, physician at the University of Pennsylvania, gave explicit instructions on how to guard against cholera, including disinfections procedures.[279] Another physician in Philadelphia, Edward O. Shakespeare, wrote an article that appeared in same *Medical News* issue, stating that "the national government should have supreme control of quarantine at all frontiers," for the welfare of the all nations.[280] Certain that cholera could only

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[276] "Detroit Shuts Immigrants Out," *Boston Daily Globe*, 7 September 1892, p. 4.
[277] "Another Clash: Detroit Health Officials Disagree—Quarantined Immigrants Starving," *Los Angeles Times*, 12 September 1892, p. 1.
[278] "Prophylactic Measures Against Asiatic Cholera," *Medical News*, 61 (1892): 287.
[279] "The National Government Should Have Supreme Control of Quarantine at all Frontiers," *Medical News* 61, (1892): 281.
[280] Ibid.

introduced to North America via immigrants, Shakespeare wrote: "In their enormous numbers [immigrants], their poverty and their squalor, and in their mode of transportation of all sorts of infections and contagions, these emigrants can be likened only to the Oriental pilgrims, in whose track pestilence has so frequently followed."[281] In a *New York Times* editorial on September 8, Dr. Cyrus Edson that in "view of Asiatic cholera in Europe at the present time, and the constantly-increasing number of foci of infection, immigration from European counties in which cholera exists should be temporarily suspended, as this action affords in our opinion, the only certain means of averting a threatened invasion of the countries of the American Continent by the disease."[282] The *New York Times* reported that a "prominent politician" applauded President Harrison for new rule:

> There would be no such danger in giving the President the such power [to halt immigration]. No president would dare abuse it. Everyone knows that there is a deadly menace to the health of the people of the United States in the ships now nearing New York and other Atlantic ports from cholera-infected regions of Europe. The great majority of the passengers are ignorant and unclean. They know nothing of hygiene and sanitary requirements… The emergency is great, and if Mr. Harrison could order United States ports closed absolutely to vessels from every country in which cholera is known to be raging, he would absolutely protect Americans from a dreadful scourge.[283]

By late September, the cholera crisis had passed.[284] The *New York Times* reported that Dr. John T. Nagle, The Registrar of Vital Statistics, said, "The total number of deaths from cholera for the week of September 25 was seven, and that cholera cannot not become an epidemic if the rules of the Board of Health were carried out… the very few cases should not cause alarm.[285] Even Surgeon General Walter Wyman reported in the *North American Review*

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[281] Ibid.
[282] "Dangerous Immigration," *New York Times*, 8 September 1892, p. 4.
[283] "The President Has No Power," *New York Times*, 28 August 1892, p. 1.
[284] "Crisis Past: Cholera Gains No Ground in New York," *Los Angeles Times*, 19 September 1892, p. 1.
[285] "Some Cholera Statistics," *New York Times,* 25 September 1892, p. 2.

that with proper safeguards against cholera, the disease would not gain a foothold in the United States.[286]

But even after the danger of cholera had passed, anti-immigration sentiment continued in the press. The *Boston Daily Globe* printed the report of John Crowley, the secretary of the Anti-Tenement Housing League, who warned that the tenement houses were so overcrowded, that the "public health was threatened through the danger from cholera germs manufactured in the sweating dens of that city."[287] The *Daily Picayune-New Orleans* referred to the cholera situation as "the immigrant curse."[288] *Life* magazine blamed the cholera outbreaks on "Hindoos" because of their "heaps of objectionable matter sufficiently vast and nasty enough to poison the whole world."[289] The article, accompanied by an image of dozens of skulls stacked atop one another, concluded with, "We have as much right to clean out the Hindoos [sic] with bullets as they have to clean us out with plagues."[290]

Following the president's circular, some nativist groups expressed their opinion about immigration in the major newspapers. The *American Patriotic League*, a known nativist group, complained about the "foreign plague" in a *New York Times* article, illustrating how nativism appeared in the press:

> A foreign plague is at our doors and threatens with destruction our homes and all we love… Unrestricted immigration is the cause of all our woes… The American Patriotic League for the three last sessions of Congress has unsuccessfully endeavored to secure the passage of laws to restrict undesirable immigrants… we demand from the lawmaking powers and from the executive officers of this Government the adoption and enforcement of such measures as will effectually protect our loved ones and ourselves from foreign contagion,

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[286] "Safeguards Against the Cholera," *North American Review*, 155 (1892): 483.
[287] "Dirty Streets of New York," *Boston Daily Globe*, 17 September 1892, p. 8.
[288] "The Immigrant Curse," *The Daily Picayune-New Orleans*, 14 December 1892, p. 6.
[289] No Title, *Life*, 29 September 1892, 20(509), p. 172.
[290] Ibid.

> whether it be in the form of Asiatic cholera or in the importation of the undesirable elements of the Old World's population.[291]

Since the danger of cholera had passed, President Harrison received criticism for the twenty-day rule. People questioned why shiploads of newcomers were still being detained offshore. With the headline, "Why are they Detained," even the usually pro-restrictionist *New York Times* expressed "considerable astonishment" about the detainment of ships in New York port:

> There was considerable astonishment in the cabins of both vessels when it was learned that the ships were held pending the pleasure of certain individuals in Washington. No one among them attempted to find any excuse for the proceeding, and it is not likely that they would have discovered any if they had. There was no sickness on board, and after the Health Officer had given clearance papers there was no good reason why the ships should not have been allowed to land their passengers. [292]

At the end of the year, Senator Chandler emerged again with more anti-immigration bills. Following the presidential election in which Stephen Grover Cleveland (Democrat) was elected president for a second, non-consecutive term,[293] Chandler proposed the Alien Exclusion Act.[294] He may have viewed the "transfer from one great party to another"[295] as an opportunity to introduce his plan to keep immigrants out. The Alien Exclusion Act had three propositions, the last being the most important to Chandler.[296] For entering persons, they must: 1) be literate (with the exception of young children); and 2) possess at least $100; and 3) called for a suspension of

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[291] "Immigrants Not Wanted," *New York Times*, 2 September 1892, p. 5.
[292] "Why Are They Detained? Ocean Liners Held in the Bay by Government Order," *New York Times*, 7 November 1892, p. 4.
[293] Cleveland defeated President Harrison and becoming both the 22nd and 24th U.S. president to serve. He defeated the Republicans and the Populists.
[294] "Shutting off Immigration," *Boston Daily Globe*, 4 December 1892, p. 4.
[295] "Time to Close the Doors," *Galveston Daily News*, 30 November 1892, p. 6.
[296] Ibid.

immigration for at least one year beginning March 1, 1893.[297] He estimated that such a law would take a year to execute.[298]

Following the introduction of the bill for the Alien Exclusion Act, newspapers reported the provisions. The *Boston Daily Globe* warned those "foreigners who contemplate emigrating will have to start before March or find America's ports willingly closed to them."[299] A few days later, the *Globe* reported that "Senator Chandler says it is likely congress will pass the Alien Exclusion Act for one year on sanitary grounds."[300] The American Public Health Association supported Chandler, saying, "We shall do our best to have a law to this effect passed."[301]

But unfortunately for Chandler, Congress did not pass his bill, but preferred the bill proposed by Dr. J.H. Gallinger, another senator from New Hampshire. In an a rather unfavorable article toward Chandler, using the headline, "Chandler Put Out," the *Boston Daily Globe* wrote:

> There has never been any love lost between Senator Chandler of New Hampshire and his colleague, Senator Gallinger… Chandler's hobby for the past year has been the immigration question, and during that time he has introduced innumerable bills on the subject, none of which has yet become law. Senator Chandler thinks that prohibition is necessary to prevent cholera from visiting us… As few days ago, Dr. Gallinger, who knows a great deal more about cholera than Senator Chandler will know, no matter how long he lives, introduced a bill to suspend immigration from any country or port where cholera is raging, and when, in his opinion, immigration from such places might cause cholera to be brought to this country. The Gallinger bill is regarded as a sensible measure… It is very galling to Senator Chandler to have Senator Gallinger occupy his own field, and to have him introduce a bill which is much more highly regarded than his own.[302]

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[297] Ibid.
[298] Ibid.
[299] "To Close the Gates," *Boston Daily Globe*, 30 November 1892, p. 8.
[300] "Shutting off Immigration," *Boston Daily Globe*, 4 December 1892, p. 4.
[301] "Immigrants Bring Disease: American Public Health Association Wants Immigration Stopped." *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, 29 August 1892, p. 1.
[302] "Chandler Put Out," *Boston Daily Globe,* 17 December 1892, p. 4.

This article suggests that the press eagerly publicized the controversy surrounding immigration legislation sensationalizing the immigration debate and giving the issues importance.

Like Chandler's ill-fated bill, Gallinger's bill was later rejected, but at the end of 1892, Senator Isham Harris (Republican – Tennessee) and Congressman Isador Rayner (Democract – Maryland) began writing the Harris-Rayner Compromise bill that was considered a compromise for all parties involved. A vocal opponent of Harris-Rayner bill, at the end of 1892, Chandler retreated with his Immigration Committee to re-write his bill known as the Chandler Suspension bill.[303]

It would seem that Chandler saw the epidemics of 1892, the newly elected president, and the fact that the Republicans still controlled the Senate, as vehicles to serve his political agenda to restrict immigration. Undoubtedly, these events set the stage for immigration history the next year, in which Chandler found more opportunities to argue his cause.

At the end of 1892, with cholera no longer a threat during the winter months, coverage of public health issues declined.[304] But with the fear of another cholera outbreak during the upcoming World's Fair in Chicago in the spring of 1893, and several immigration bills in Congress that could result in severe immigration restriction, the U.S. press continued to report immigration news.

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[303] "To Stop Immigration," *Los Angeles Times*, 8 January 1893, p. 1.
[304] Markel, *Quarantine!*, p. 136.

CHAPTER FIVE

1893 – NATIONAL QUARANTINE: "AVERTING A PESTILENCE"

With several immigration bills in the Congress, a new president in the White House, and the possibility of another cholera outbreak in the spring, the immigration debate continued to intensify in the winter of 1893 and appear in the press. The nation prepared for the Chicago World's Fair (also known as the World's Columbian Exposition), to begin in the May 1893 and continue through the summer. Because foreign visitors typically traveled from around the world to attend World Fairs, the possibility of a contagious disease outbreak that year became both a public health and economic concern. Americans were most worried about the dangers of visitors from the Baltic and North Sea, where cholera had prevailed in the early winter of 1893.[305]

Since many immigrants became associated with epidemics in 1892, it was impossible to ignore the complexities surrounding the Exposition. With immigration suspension (as many politicians argued), foreign visitors may have been less likely to attend the events – this would have grave economic effects on the Exposition. But an epidemic would also keep people from attending. Thus, the situation proposed a major political challenge – should immigration be suspended or continue with the same provisions? Once again, Senator Chandler tackled the challenge.

On the morning of January 6, 1893, Senator Chandler delivered a three-hour speech to the 52nd Congress (1891-1893) on addressing what the *Los Angeles Times* called the "public health evils of immigration,"[306] and proposed his Immigration Suspension Bill calling for the suspension of all immigration for one year in order to protect the nation against "the danger from

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[305] "The World's Fair: Director General Davis' Report on Cholera Quarantine," *The Daily Picayune-New Orleans*, 7 February 1893, p. 2.
[306] "Fifty-Second Congress, Second Session," *Los Angeles Times*, 7 January 1893, p. 2.

cholera in 1893." Upon the surface, Chandler's bill seemed as if it would hurt the economics of the Columbian exposition since it depended on European visitors for income. Chandler addressed the issue, saying the Columbian Exposition would be a "failure" if immigration continued as it had been and that protection to the Exposition required suspension,[307] but also added that European visitors would be essential to its success.

In his bill, Chandler used his political adroitness to craft the provisions in such as way that the new law would exclude lower classes of immigrants while welcoming the upper Echelon of Europe by restricting *steerage* passengers (usually considered lower class passengers), but not *cabin* passengers, or the higher paying passengers. The *Nation* gave its interpretation of the bill:

> The year 1893 being fixed for the World's Fair at Chicago, and great preparations having been made for a rush of visitors from abroad, it is to be hoped that Mr. Chandler will give the people of the Old World very exact information of the steps to be taken to distinguish between those who come hither to remain and those who come with the intention of returning.[308]

For weeks following Chandler's immigration suspension speech, the press reported Chandler's anti-immigration rhetoric. Chandler continued to differentiate between steerage passengers and cabin passengers. Cabin passengers were also referred to as *Europeans*, not *immigrants*. The *Milwaukee Sentinel* reported that Chandler saw a ban on immigration as the only way to safeguard the Exposition from financial ruin.[309] In an article he penned for the *North American Review*, Chandler wrote:

> The Columbian Exposition at Chicago can only be protected from cholera, and made a success so far as foreign visitors are concerned, by the proposed suspension of immigration. We are inviting and we very much desire, European visitors to the World's Fair. They will not come on the same steamships with swarms of immigrants, nor will they come even in the steamships bringing no steerage passenger passengers if they

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[307] William E. Chandler, "Shall Immigration be Suspended?" *North American Review* 156 (1893): 1.
[308] No Title, *The Nation*, 8 December 1892, p. 1.
[309] "To Keep out Cholera: Senator Chandler Says Immigration Must Stop a Year," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 7 January 1893. p. 5.

> are to encounter the immigrants upon the docks of steamship companies. Two currents, one of cabin passengers coming as visitors, and one of immigrants, will not cross the ocean side by side... The suspension of all immigration for one year will give the much needed time for the discussion and preparation of suitable permanent measures of restriction.[310]

By printing Chandler's distinction between Europeans and "swarms of immigrants", the press framed common immigrants (those who came as steerage passengers) as inferior. These reports also continued to frame the issues as dangerous.

Physicians and public health workers, anticipating the daily arrival of thousands of visitors to the Exposition, began plans to stand guard against the possible incursion of a "foreign cause of cholera."[311] In Chicago, the *Daily Inter Ocean* warned of the dangers of giving the president the power to suspend immigration and said, "such power would be liable to almost illimitable abuse."[312] But in support of Chandler's argument that associated steerage passengers with contagion, the article added: "It may be set down as reasonably certain that that there is no danger of cholera in Chicago or the United States generally in 1893 except as it may be brought over in the steerage of steamships.[313] Again, danger surrounded the issues.

Because the Columbian Exposition would take place in Chicago, Midwestern newspapers reported the issues surrounding immigration and the possibility cholera during the Exposition. The *Milwaukee Sentinel* devoted a great deal of ink to the Exposition and immigration. Milwaukee is near Chicago and was probably closely connected to the Exposition, especially financially. On January 5, the paper urged caution against total immigration suspension, but wrote, "We want all healthy and reputable immigrants who have within them the elements of

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[310] Chandler, "Shall Immigration be Suspended?," p. 3.
[311] "No Fear of Cholera," *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* 20 (1893): 164.
[312] "Immigration and the Exposition," *Daily Inter Ocean*, 11 January 1893, p. 4.
[313] Ibid.

good citizenship."[314] The *Sentinel* ran a story on page 4 with the headline, "They Should be Excluded," describing the "undesirable class of immigrants coming to this country, a dark, swarthy race, with long, dark, unkempt hair. The clothes they have on are invariably old and dirty, and the people themselves are never clean, not even their hands and faces."[315]

Some articles about immigrants illustrated immigrants in a positive light. In a refreshingly pro-immigrant article entitled, "What Immigration Has Done For Us," the *Sentinel* wrote: "Before immigration began, it [United States] wasn't much of a country… When immigration set in, things began to improve. No one can dispute that immigration has done much for this country."[316] The article also discussed the nativistic thinking of old immigrants:

> No greater contrast can be imagined than imagined than is afforded by the comparison of its condition before immigration began and its condition now after nearly three centuries of immigration. The immigrants have pretty much exterminated the original inhabitants who, at an early period, began to develop a nativistic feeling, and to manifest a decided tendency to suppress immigration… We are all immigrants, or the descendants of immigrants.[317]

This article exemplifies how the press sometimes printed immigration issues with a more liberal viewpoint than most of the other articles of the time.

The press continued to publish the immigration debate. In February, the *American Journal of Politics* ran two opposing articles about immigration laws being deliberated in Congress. Clearly some favored a law that would exclude all persons born outside the United States. In a nativistic diatribe about America's immigration problem, William H. Jeffrey, author of "Richmond Prisons, 1861-1862," suggested that immigration laws be further tightened:

> They [immigrants] are made up of three classes: the ignorant, the pauper, and the

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[314] "Senator Chandler Has Heard From The Country on His Bill to Prohibit Immigration," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 5 January 1893, p. 4.
[315] "They Should be Excluded: Continued Inflow of Classes of Undesirable Immigrants," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 14 September 1893, p. 4.
[316] "What Immigrant Has Done For Us," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 11 January 1893, p. 4.
[317] Ibid.

> criminal. That our immigration laws are loose and unsatisfactory has for a long time been painfully apparent… These persons who are born diseased, cradled in filth, reared in ignorance, and living in crime, are permitted to land upon our shores and enjoy the rights and privileges of freeborn American citizens and to compete in our labor markets with our intelligent workingmen. During the last few months, we have seen shiploads of filthy humanity landing on our shores with that deadly disease, cholera… Let us amend our immigration laws; let a more thorough system be employed to protect our fair land from becoming a "dumping ground" for the disease, filth, ignorance, and crime of all foreign nations.[318]

On page 156 of the same issue, A.A. Halbrook connected immigration to the issue of American labor and stated that immigrants contributed to U.S. prosperity:

> There seems to be a popular misapprehension concerning the character of immigrants, and a mistaken notion which personal contact with these people would correct. True, the average immigrant cannot speak the English language. No one of common sense would expect it. But he is not by any means the savage that he is often pictured… Open the gates and let them in… They are more than wood and steel, and from their prosperity, if not from them, we may expect a class of honest, capable, and respectable American citizens.[319]

While politicians hashed out the details of the new quarantine law, the press continued to report immigration news. Articles appeared in several periodicals in the early months of 1893, many with an anti-immigration slant, often by physicians who supported the new law.[320] Edward O. Shakespeare once again added his derogatory opinion to the press, blaming immigrants' inherent filthy habits on the epidemics in the United States, this being a reason to support anti-immigration legislation:

> The hundreds of thousands of European immigrants who annually reach our country, after starting from or passing through localities infected with contagious diseases, frequently, in their persons or in their pestiferous clothing and effects, carry with them the active germs of these diseases. The herding of these immigrants into the miserably ventilated and unsanitary quarters usually provided for the steerage passengers on Atlantic steamships, the modern

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[318] "A Solution to the Immigration Problem," *American Journal of Politics*, February (1893): 132.
[319] "The Other Side of the Immigration Question," *American Journal of Politics*, February (1893): 156.
[320] "Favor the Measure Illinois Physicians Discuss the Quarantine Bill*," Daily Inter Ocean*, 5 February 1893, col E.

> rapidity of ocean travel, and the great facility with which these swarms of people are soon distributed all over our country, combine to multiply the danger to the public health with which, under the incompleteness and the lax administration of our laws, this incessant influx ordinarily but not especially menaces our country.[321]

Others held sympathetic attitudes about America's newcomers, many of whom publicly opposed the fervent anti-immigration policies of the time. Senator Harris publicized his opposition to Senator Chandler's immigration reform in a January 1893 *New York Times* article:

> I shall vote against it and take great pleasure in voting against it. The question of immigration is a tremendous one and the question of sanitation is only one of a thousand considerations affecting it. It should not be considered with reference to sanitation alone as the provisions of Senator Chandler's bill seem to show that he so regards it.[322]

On January 11, 1893, the *Galveston Daily News* reported that Colonel John Weber also criticized the bill that proposed to give the president full authority to halt immigration at any time. Weber said, "It would be folly to stop immigration completely."[323]

Throughout the winter and spring, publications across the country continued to report the issues of cholera. The *New York Times* reported, "The success of the fair depends in no small measure on the prevalent sense of security from the danger of an epidemic either in Chicago or elsewhere in the country."[324] The *Los Angeles Times* reported that Dr. C. A Ruggles, President of the States Board of Health of California, warned that the "greatest danger anticipated from infection is from people crossing the line from Mexico," and "but that the danger of infection by way of China or Japan is believed to be at a minimum, for the reason that a steamer will require

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[321] Edward O. Shakespeare, "Necessity for a National Quarantine," *Forum* 14, no. 5 (1893): 579.
[322] Letter to editor from Isham Harris. *New York Times*, 1 January 1893, p. 7.
[323] "Weber on Immigration," *Galveston Daily News*, 11 January 1893, p. 4.
[324] "Quarantine and the World's Fair," *New York Times,* 8 February 1893, p. 2.

twenty or twenty-four days to reach the United States. Even should a ship have cases of the disease on board, they would have recovered or died by then."[325]

Ironically, as the country concerned itself with the dangers of cholera and the Columbian Exposition, the U.S. Bureau of Hygiene and Sanitation had an exhibit at the Fair showcasing the nation as a leader in sanitation and public health practices. The *Daily Inter Ocean* reported:

> The bureau continued with the assertion that the United States has been the pioneer and is still the leader in so many departments of the world's progress that it can scarcely be too enthusiastic to hope that she may rapidly forge to the front and assert her claim to be the leader in sanitation. [326]

Another irony of that year is the fact that the United States passed the most restrictive immigration law to that point, the very same year America showcased the Exposition, an international event that celebrated the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' discovery of the New World.

On March 3, the president approved the National Quarantine Act of 1893, effectively giving the federal government the power to halt immigration at any time. The law gave the federal government control of quarantine procedures, and most importantly, said that the president could ultimately suspend immigration as he deemed necessary. Control was no longer in the hands of the local authorities.[327] Quarantine had been a regular part of the immigration inspection process, but the 1893 law expanded governmental power to control those who wanted to enter the United States by virtue of health. Subsequently, port officials were given more

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[325] "The Public Health: Timely Precautions Against the Introduction of Cholera," *Los Angeles Times*, 16 June 1893, p. 4.
[326] "World's Fair Doings," *Daily Inter Ocean*, 11 November 1892, p. 5.
[327] "An Important Feature of the Quarantine Bill," *The Daily Picayune-New Orleans*, 11 January 1893, p. 2.

discretion to detain newcomers as a means for preventing the spread of disease, particularly if a ship arrived with immigrants who came from an infected European port.[328]

No part of Chandler's earlier Suspension bill, that would have excluded the poorer classes of Europeans, was adopted as part of the new law. The new quarantine law was chosen from the Harris-Rayner Compromise bill that began in 1892. But Chandler did, however, gain a major victory with the inclusion of the article that gave the president the power to suspend immigration on a temporary basis with the threat of an impending epidemic. Chandler was solely responsible for this article.[329] The *Boston Daily Globe* reported this article:

> Whenever it shall be shown to the satisfaction of the president that by reason of the existence of cholera or other infectious or contagious disease in a foreign country, there is serious danger of the introduction of the same into the United States, and that notwithstanding the quarantine defence [sic], the danger is so increased by the introduction of persons or property from such country, that a suspension of the right to introduce the same is demanded in the interest of public health, the president shall have the power to prohibit, in whole or in part, the introduction of persons and property from such countries or places as he shall designate and for such a period of time as he may deem necessary.[330]

The expansion of power that gave the president the power to suspend immigration was in place, but never employed.[331] Addressing this fact, Markel asserted that Americans still felt ambivalent about giving the president the power to halt immigration.[332] Even in the midst of such a turbulent period in immigration history, perhaps the necessity to halt immigration never presented itself.

With the new law, not all states readily adopted the national quarantine rules. New Orleans state officials wanted quarantine decisions to be made by the state and local authorities,

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[328] Ibid.
[329] Markel, *Quarantine!*, 176.
[330] "To Protect Public Health," *Boston Daily Globe*, 11 January 1893, p. 3.
[331] Markel, *Quarantine!*, 181.
[332] Ibid.

not the federal government. In January 1893, A *Daily Picayune-New Orleans* article exemplified the resistance to the new law:

> The state authorities have from long and attentive experience, evolved a system of quarantine measures and appliances far in advance of any previously known, and of such merit as have afforded an example for imitation by the national government, which have been followed, and the existing quarantine appliances are but copies of the Louisiana plant.[333]

Later that year, the *Daily Picayune-New Orleans* again reiterated the state's exemplary quarantine measures that had been "recognized as the most efficient, and had been taken as a model by both federal and state health authorities."[334]

As dirt and disease continued to be a public concern, in July, a reporter visited "Penitentiary Row" in the Old Seventh Ward, where the once "fashionable people" of the district were replaced by an "undesirable class" of immigrants.[335] His report about filthy living appeared in a July 20 *New York Times* article entitled, "Invaded by Filth and Dirt":

> Penitentiary Row is on the south side of the street on Rutgers Place. It is a long row of low brick houses and is owned by a Mrs. Goldstein. Russians and Poles occupy it almost exclusively. It is filthy to a degree and must breed disease in the neighborhood. Frequent complaints concerning it have been lodged with the Board of Health… The street is strewn with decayed fruit and vegetables. Here and there were stagnant pools of water in which dirty-faced children dabbled. The steps and front yards of the tenements were closely packed with Russians and Poles. The men had thin sharp features and black beards and were dressed in filthy clothing. The women were even less tidy and children were left to their own caprices.[336]

In an equally racist, xenophobic article of immigrants and cholera, Charles A. Leale, M.D., President of the St. John's Guild in New York City, blamed Hindus for the origins of cholera:

> Within the past three months, the inhabitants of the entire Western hemisphere

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[333] "Quarantine: Local Objections to its Being Placed Under Government Control," *Daily Picayune-New Orleans*, 5 January 1893, p. 2.
[334] "Quarantine Raised Against Fever Ports," *Daily Picayune-New Orleans*, 27 October 1893, p. 2.
[335] "Invaded by Filth and Dirt." *New York Times*, 20 July 1893, p. 10.
[336] Ibid.

> have been in dread of an invading foe [cholera], capable of destroying human life, depreciating property, and curtailing the commerce of the world… the U.S. Army deserve honorable remembrance as clearly prove that each epidemic has started in Hindustan… Whence did this bacillus originally come? Did it originate in the filth of the worshippers of Mecca, who always religiously defecated on the ground and who die by the thousands of Asiatic cholera?... How does Asiatic cholera reach America? Through commerce and the direct introduction of the cause, by means of polluted clothing, bedding of immigrants, such as filthy rags and hair that have been gathered by the most dirty people, and regions of filth, squalid poverty, and starvation where cholera is present.[337]

Dr. Leale's sensational article blames the cholera epidemics on dirt and filth of a foreign people, illustrates the "dirty" framing device often used in the medical press.

Medical periodicals sometimes recognized how the press sensationalized the issues. Recognizing how the press exacerbated the debate surrounding the immigration law and cholera, *Medical News* wrote:

> If the press is to be taken as the exponent of popular sentiment, it would seem to be settled that immigration will be interdicted for the next twelve months. This sentiment is in a measure founded upon the expression of medical opinion which is based on the belief that the greatest danger of importation of Asiatic cholera is through the immigrant-class and their baggage and personal effects. There are other reasons, practical and non-medical, why immigration should be restricted, and there are opposing arguments against restriction, but with these we have nothing to do in considering the subject from a medical and precautionary standpoint.[338]

In the opening paragraph of an article that ran in September, the *Medical and Surgical Reporter* also blamed the newspapers for much of the scare surrounding the cholera:

> "A year ago cholera was epidemic in Europe… This year seems to be little public dread of the disease becoming epidemic. That the country has recovered from it alarm is largely due to the fact that the newspapers have other material with which to fill their columns by stirring up public apprehension over the business outlook.[339]

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[337] "Asiatic Cholera," *The American Journal of Medical Sciences* 105, no. 6 (1893): 659.
[338] "The Necessity of the Restriction of Immigration," *Medical News*, 7 January 1893, p. 21.
[339] "Practical Quarantine," *Medical and Surgical Reporter* 69, no. 11 (1893): 417.

The entry point at Detroit from Canada to North America continued to be a concern for the United States. Some politicians argued that suspension of U.S. immigration would force steamship companies to take immigrants to North America via Canada. This had been an issue in 1892 during the typhus outbreak. On more than one occasion, the press publicized this concern. In a *North American Review*, Senator Henry C. Hansbrough (Republican – North Dakota) warned of the dangers of immigration through Canada:

> Immigration and quarantine are too closely allied, especially at this time, to admit of their discussion as separate questions... If we say to the intending emigrant, "You shall not come to this country through the ports within our jurisdiction," he will easily find a convenient and, during the summer season, a more agreeable entrance through the Gulf of St. Lawrence [in Canada]… He may come in with equal ease from Montreal or Toronto. I do not understand that it is the purpose of those who are advocating suspension to exclude immigrants who may come through Canada or Mexico. To cut off immigration from these sources, in case of suspension at the seaboard, would require the services of a mounted patrol equal in numbers to our regular army.[340]

This article does not portray Hansbrough as a "pro-immigrant" politician, but it illustrates that some experts and politicians preferred a less radical approach to immigration.

The National Quarantine Act of 1893 intertwined public health and maritime commerce. The quarantine measures that resulted from the new law further complicated issues of commerce and trade because incoming ships often brought goods to the United States. Part of the new law intended to stop steamship incidents like the one involving the *Iniziativa* in 1891 in which the *Floria* line refused to take a ship back to Italy. If immigrants were inspected before they actually arrived at a U.S. port, it would be less likely that sick immigrants would come to America. A quarantined ship could mean a lack of revenue for a company waiting to receive its products in the United States.

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[340] Henry C. Hansbrough, "Why Immigration Should No Be Suspended," *North American Review* 156, no. 435, (1893): 220.

As part of the new quarantine law, newcomers were required to prove that they were free from illness through "certificates of health" provided by physicians from their home countries. The *Los Angeles Times* outlined the consequences for falsifying health certificates:

> The U.S. Treasury Department has provided the steamship companies with blank forms containing a series of twenty-one questions which must be answered by immigrants before disembarking from the other side. The statement is made that a 'false oath will subject the immigrant to fine or imprisonment.'[341]

The same article also reported that the Michigan State Board of Health "made a new rule making it practically a "criminal offense" for immigrants from any infected ports to enter the state of Michigan without permission of the state inspector."[342] A neighborhood on New York's lower East Side known as "Penitentiary Row" was known among police for its "frequent complaints about the many Russians and Poles living there."[343]

After the immigration laws tightened, "smuggling," or illegal importation, of immigrants increased among some of the steamship companies. Newspapers commonly referred to illegal importing as "smuggling," a dehumanizing term that portrayed newcomers as objects rather than people. As a provision of the National Quarantine Act of 1893, the U.S. Treasury Department made it the responsibility of the steamship captains to ensure their vessels imported healthy passengers. If immigrants arrived sick, the steamship company or the captain incurred a fine.[344]

Quarantine of immigrants at U.S. immigration ports exemplified the government's treatment of immigrants as criminals. Physicians inspected newcomers upon arrival to U.S. ports, sending those believed to be ill to quarantine. Others who came through immigration inspection without being quarantined were rounded up by police and brought back to Ellis Island,

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[341] "New Rule of Health: Consumption a Dangerous Disease in Michigan," *Los Angeles Times*, 12 October 1893, p. 11.
[342] Ibid.
[343] "Invaded by Filth and Dirt," *New York Times*, 20 July 1893, p. 10.
[344] Ibid.

particularly during disease outbreaks. Again, the press used the "criminal" frame to depict the incoming "suspects" as dangerous criminals unwilling to cooperate with officials.

As the summer approached, the *Milwaukee Sentinel* reported epidemics, starting with a smallpox outbreak among a "negro" and an "Italian child" in Akron, Ohio.[345] The *Sentinel* also reported that a German immigrant, Engelbert Hoog, died of cholera in St. Paul, Minnesota but that those "emigrants" who accompanied him "bore clean health certificates from the New York city Health Department."[346] On January 25, the *Sentinel* blamed "lax quarantine regulation at New York" for a smallpox outbreak in Michigan.[347] It would seem the *Sentinel* anticipated a major epidemic outbreak like those of 1892. But these were isolated incidents and cholera did not become an epidemic that year.

With the Columbian Exposition about to begin and stricter immigration guidelines in place, a group of Chinese actors hired to perform at the Exposition were taken into quarantine in Chicago because it had been reported that they had smallpox.[348] The *Los Angeles Times* reported that the incident caused a "sensation" in Chicago. They came to the United States through Seattle, traveled to Chicago, where they stayed with a Sam Moy, a well-known Chinese merchant on South Clark Street. Once authorities learned of their supposed condition, police went to where they stayed, quarantined and vaccinated the men.[349]

Other issues involving Chinese immigrants appeared in the press. In one case, a group of Chinese men were deported from San Francisco under the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1892. The *Los Angeles Times* reported that "contraband Chinese attempted to land after arriving on the

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[345] "Akron Smallpox Epidemic," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 17 January 1893, p. 1.
[346] "Cholera in St. Paul," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 18 January 1893, p. 9.
[347] "Small-Pox in Michigan," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 25 January 1893, p. 2.
[348] "Smallpox Scare: Chinese 'Actors' Create a Sensation in Chicago," *Los Angeles Times*, 28 April 1893, p. 2.
[349] Ibid.

British steamer *Danube*," but were soon returned home.[350] Another case involving falsified Chinese certificates of health surfaced in papers. The *Times* reported that the health officer reported that in the course of his health examinations, "nearly all of the 600 Chinese have bogus health certificates," and that health officers advised, "exercise the greatest caution in examining the papers of this batch of celestials."[351]

Thomas Geary, the California politician responsible for the Chinese Exclusion Act, regularly published his anti-Chinese rhetoric. In an article for the *California Illustrated Magazine*, Geary compared Chinese immigration to "the curse of African slavery."[352] In another article for the *North American Review*, Geary wrote:

> The Chinese laborer brings no wife and no children and his wants are limited to the immediate necessities of the individual while the American is compelled to earn income sufficient to maintain his wife and babies…. If this immigration is permitted to continue, American labor must surely be reduced to the level of his Chinese competitor… The protection of the American laborer is an essential duty of the American government…[353]

In the same article, Colonel John Ingersoll, politician, lawyer, and "notorious atheist," who presented the position of the typical opponent of Exclusion,[354] debated Geary:

> These Chinese laborers are inoffensive, peaceable, and law-abiding. They are honest, exceedingly industrious… patient, uncomplaining, stoical, and philosophical… of no use to parties of politicians except as they become fuel to supply the flame of prejudice.[355]

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[350] "Forged Papers: Contraband Chinese," *Los Angeles Times*, 20 May 1893, p. 2.
[351] "Chinese Certificates: A Fresh Batch of Bogus Papers Arrive in Oregon," *Los Angeles Times*, 4 May 1893, p. 1.
[352] Thomas J. Geary, "The Law and the Chinaman," *California Illustrated Magazine*, 4 August (1893): 312.
[353] Robert G. Ingersoll and Thomas J. Geary. "Should the Chinese be Excluded?," *North American Review* 40, (1893): 63-64.
[354] Becker, *The Course of Exclusion, 78.*
[355] Ingersoll and Geary, "Should the Chinese be Excluded?," 64.

This published debate shows that some publications willingly expressed the opinions of those who did *not* favor restricted immigration, or the opinions of those who approached the immigration issue without a nativistic attitude. However, it has been argued that these opposing opinions rarely appeared in mainstream newspapers,[356] and represents an omission in press framing.

By the end of the year, only a few reports of typhus, smallpox, and cholera surfaced in the news. In January, reports of typhus and Mexican immigrants appeared in the newspapers.[357] The *Galveston Daily News* reported that the outbreaks in Texas surely came from Mexican immigrants. The *Boston Daily Globe* even blamed Mexicans for an outbreak of typhus in New York City in January 1893, saying "the origin of the disease has not been determined, but Dr. Roberts, chief of the bureau of contagious diseases, is inclined to believe that it was brought by way of Texas from Mexico, in some parts of which typhus is now said to be an epidemic."[358] Like the *Milwaukee Sentinel* earlier in the year, it would seem as though the press looked for sensational stories about immigrants and epidemics.

Closing in October, the Columbian Exposition was immensely successful, viewed as the model for all subsequent world fairs.[359] Although it was feared, cholera did not interfere with the success of the Columbian Exposition, with only one reported outbreak of cholera directly related to the fair.[360] Attendance had reached over 6.8 million paid visitors – doubling August's 3.5

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[356] Becker, *The Course of Exclusion, 80.*
[357] "Mexican Typhus Epidemic," *Galveston Daily News*, 2 January 1893, p. 1.
[358] "Notes from the Medical World," *Boston Daily Globe*, 15 January 1893, p. 2.
[359] American Studies at the University of Virginia, "The World's Columbian Exposition: Idea, Experience, Aftermath"; available from http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ma96/WCE/legacy.html; Internet; accessed 18 July 2008.
[360] The databases employed for this project have been queried for other articles pertaining to epidemics during the Columbian Exposition, but no other reports of epidemics have been found.

million.[361] The concession stands brought in over $4 million, the newly-invented Ferris Wheel turned a profit, and when all the calculations were complete, the Exposition itself more than broke even, with a $1 million surplus to be returned to its 30,000 stockholders.[362] The Exposition became the standard by which all future fairs were measured thereafter.

With the Exposition complete, in the fall, the press focused on the new immigration legislation, but the news of epidemics faded. Cholera never became an epidemic as some politicians and health experts had anticipated, as did no other epidemics during that year. Tighter quarantine procedures and the required health certificates probably accounted for fewer epidemics and contagious illnesses, and an overall decrease in the number of people who immigrated to the United States that year. Anti-immigration supporters, like Senator Chandler, continued to attempt to curtail immigration even further.

At the end of 1893, the new United States Commissioner of Immigration, Joseph Senner, told the public to trust the new immigration laws put in place by the Quarantine Act of 1893. In the *Independent*, Senner wrote:

> Should the gates be shut? Never before has this question been asked by so many Americans… To judge from the space devoted in the public press to immigration, it is a problem of the very highest importance to the welfare of the nation… At present, and for a long time to come, we still need immigrants… all attempts to create artificial barriers will result only in violent crimes…It would be more than unwise not to give the new law a full and fair trial.[363]

Also in November, the *Boston Daily Globe* reported that immigration figures for 1893 had decreased by over 100,000 as compared to the previous year, but warned that European

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[361] American Studies at the University of Virginia, "The World's Columbian Exposition: Idea, Experience, Aftermath"; available from http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ma96/WCE/legacy.html; Internet; accessed 18 July 2008.
[362] Ibid.
[363] "Immigration: The State of the Law," *The Independent… Devoted to the Consideration of Politics* 45, no. 2344 (1893): 1.

immigrants might still continue to enter the United States through the Southern ports where manufacturers offered "immense employment attractions."[364] The overriding message here is that immigrants would always find a way "in", no matter how hard some people worked to "keep the scum out."

[364] "Decreased Immigration," *Boston Daily Globe*, 15 November 1893, p. 4.

CHAPTER SIX

FRAMING ANALYSIS

As pointed out in the framing theory section, framing, as an organize device essentially involves "selection and salience – to frame is to select some aspects of reality and make them more salient in a communicating texts."[365] A media "frame" has been defined as "a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to reports about an issue,"[366] a pattern for interpretation,[367] a means by which to classify and process information,[368] and make sense of events.[369] Framing also involves the selection of a perceived reality "in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described."[370] The framing concepts outlined in the framing theory section guided the research questions

Framing Themes and Patterns

Research Question #1: *How did articles in newspapers and periodicals frame immigrants and immigrant issues in the context of epidemics from 1891 and 1893?*

Of the newspapers and periodicals studied, the coverage of immigrants and immigrant issues in the context of epidemics was predominantly derogatory, through framing themes, devices, and patterns as described by Entman: key words, metaphors, concepts, symbols, and visual images. Common framing themes found were: "exclusion", "inferiority", "dirtiness", "danger", "crime", and "helplessness." These frames dominated press coverage of immigrants in the context of epidemics. Within these frames, the most striking element is the overwhelming use

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[365] Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification," 52.
[366] Ibid.
[367] Scheufele, "Framing, Agenda Setting," 2.
[368] Ibid.
[369] Gamson, "Media Discourse," 5.
[370] Ibid.

of denigrating, hateful terms that portrayed immigrants in a negative light. Some research indicates that negatively framed messages may have a greater impact on judgments than positively framed messages, and messages emphasizing losses may be more persuasive than those emphasizing gains due to action.[371] Negative messages may be perceived as more "important, salient, vivid, fear-inducing, and/or consequential" in comparison to positive frames.[372] Thus a detailed analysis of the various framing themes and techniques is important.

The "exclusion" frame conceptualized the idea that outsiders were not worthy of citizenship and should be denied U.S. citizenship. Some key phrases/words used to support the exclusion frame were: "exclusion", "shut the gates", "put up the bars", "keep the scum out", and "stop them by all means," towards all immigrant groups. Much of the reported immigration legislation revolved around the theme of exclusion. In fact, the term "exclusion" was actually used in the name of the "Chinese Exclusion Act of 1892."

The "inferiority" frame was evident in the descriptions of all ethnic groups, including Asians, Russian Jews, Italians, and Mexicans. Metaphors such as "scourge" and "swarm" portrayed Russian Jewish groups as inferior. Asians and Mexicans were viewed as nothing more than cheap laborers for United States business, and the terms for Asians were particularly hateful. In the months that preceded the passage of the National Quarantine Act 1893, the press portrayed European immigrants as inferior by differentiating between *steerage* passengers and *cabin* passengers when referring to the new law. The negative term "smuggling" is another example of a description that illustrated the inferiority frame, evident in the *Los Angeles Times* article that reported that "nine Italians who were smuggled off the train and into a macaroni

[371] Davis, "The effects of message framing," 286.
[372] Ibid.

factory."[373] The term stripped these persons of their humanity and relegated them to the status of merchandise.

The use of the "dirty" frame is important to note since the growing understanding of bacteriology and the modern germ theory connected communicable diseases and contagion and germs. The press often depicted incoming Russian Jews as "dirty menaces to society."[374] Jews were consistently aligned with dirt, either as a group living in "squalor" or "filth" on New York's lower East side, or individually. A *Galveston Daily News* report accused them of breeding "dirt and disease germs." Mexican immigrants were also commonly depicted as "dirty" and "inferior." In 1891, the typhus outbreak among Mexican laborers was blamed on their "inherent uncleanliness." Not immune from this treatment in the press, Italians were framed as "dirty", evident in the a *Daily Picayune* article that reported that "nineteen Italian immigrants have been debarred from landing at this port … 11 are suffering from an affliction of the scalp known as alopecia which is due to uncleanliness [sic].[375]

The "danger" frame commonly depicted all ethnic groups, but in different ways. For Eastern Europeans, Mexicans, and Asians, the danger frame was typically used in the context of dangerous (or deadly) epidemics. Exaggerated headlines used key words such as "danger," "dangerous," "escape," "guard," "evil," to imply danger. A story in the *Milwaukee Sentinel* stated that Michigan made false health certificates practically a "criminal offense." The name, "Penitentiary Row", highlighted in the story about the reporter who visited New York's lower East Side, clearly implied crime since "penitentiary" is defined as, "a public institution in which

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[373] "Imported Disease," *Los Angeles Times,* 15 February 1892, p. 6.
[374] "The Immigration Law," *The Daily Inter Ocean*, 20 December 1890, p. 4.
[375] "Enforcing the Immigration Law," *The Daily Picayune-New Orleans*, 10 April 1891, p. 2.

offenders against the law are confined for detention or punishment."[376] The "danger" frame illustrated how the lines blurred between disease and criminality in the press.

While this "danger" frame often described Italians in the context of epidemics, the "criminal" frame also surrounded them. Literally portrayed as the most criminally-minded of all ethnic groups, common descriptors for Italians included: "suspect," "suspicious", "escaped," "sneaky," "underhanded," "fugitive," and "on the loose." Some papers associated them with the *mafia*, a known organized crime group. Numerous stories about "escaped" Italians appeared in newspapers across the country. Many of the descriptions that implied crime, like "criminal offense," and "penitentiary," also implied guilt. The issue of guilt was quite evident in the news reports beginning in the fall of 1892, when immigrants were required to provide certificates of health before entering the United States. In a sense, these certificates served as proof of innocence from disease, which illustrated the ease with which the lines blurred between crime and disease.

Quite often, the "criminal" frame intersected with articles about immigrant "smuggling," which was a lucrative business of illegally importing immigrants into the country. The term "smuggling" implied unlawfulness, and the press used this dehumanizing term to portray newcomers as objects rather than persons. "Smuggling" also portrayed immigrants as victims of the immigration process and business, which also framed newcomers as "helpless."

The press used the "helplessness" frame to describe immigrants, especially Russian Jews. In stories that may not have seemed derogatory on the surface, these frames were evident in descriptions such as, "poor", "pitiful," "helpless," "alone," "desperate," and "suffer." The *Milwaukee Sentinel* story about John Braml in July 1891 exemplified almost all of these

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[376] Merriam-Webster Dictionary, Definition of "penitentiary"; available from http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/penitentiary; Internet; accessed 21 July 2008.

descriptors. Braml was accused of being poor, suffering from fever sores for years, and helpless, all in a short article that consisted of only two paragraphs.[377]

In addition to negative descriptions as framing devices, framing patterns shaped the issue of immigration and epidemics in the American press. Repetition of these frames of exclusion, dirt, inferiority, danger, crime and helplessness stands alone a framing pattern.[378] Repetition of frames can perpetuate certain images and ideas, and Entman believed, "messages that appear more often in the media become more salient for the public and determine political and social priorities."[379] By repeating these themes, the issues probably gained importance in American society.

Another important framing pattern is the "omission" of facts. Omitting certain facts/details while excluding others created concepts that impact public opinion and audience interpretations.[380] The story about Annie Moore from Ireland, the first immigrant to arrive at the new Ellis Island facility in 1892, exemplified an omission in framing because the article implied that she represented the profile of the average immigrant of the 1890s, which was not the case. The average immigrant was usually from Eastern or Southern Europe.

The omission of facts as a framing device probably accounted for some of the negative portrayals of immigrants in the press, since much of the research of both primary and secondary sources reveals that the issues surrounding immigration and epidemics usually involved more complexities than what was presented to the public. It has been argued that pro-immigration

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[377] "Sent Back to Bavaria: John Braml: A Pauper and Diseased Immigrant," *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, 8 July 1891, p. 4.
[378] This thesis does not quantify these terms, phrases, etc., as a content analysis would, but the research reveals that many of the same descriptions are used throughout.
[379] Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification," 52.
[380] Ibid.

opinions rarely appeared in mainstream publications,[381] and that the negative coverage of the issues dominated. With fewer viewpoints being publicized, only one side of the immigration issue was visible.

As much of the coverage of these issues was negative, it is important to mention that some news reports treated immigrants sympathetically. Several politicians and physicians, many with longer articles containing by-lines, stated that they did not believe that immigrants were inherently evil, as much of the newspapers and periodicals implied. Still, due to the sheer quantity of the negative press reports, the less common opinion that immigrants were actually good, hard-working people was rarely highlighted in the newspapers and periodicals of this study. It is also possible that many sympathetic, positive reports never made it to print, a possibility that illustrates how omissions in framing can shape an issue.

It is difficult to speculate whether the negative framing of immigrants and epidemics that dominated in the press was due to an inherent anti-immigration sentiment of all publishers and newspapermen of the time. Realistically, the press probably mirrored the feelings of the majority of the public at the time. The derogatory framing devices undoubtedly gave salience to the issues and underscored the turbulent nature of immigration in the 1890s.

Framing and Nativism

Research Question #2: *How did the press framing of immigrants and immigrant issues in the context of epidemics from 1891 to 1893 reflect themes of nativism?*

The concept of nativism has been defined as "every type and level of antipathy toward aliens, their institutions, and their ideas"[382] that evolved into explicit hostility towards new

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[381] Becker, *The Course of Exclusion, 80.*
[382] Ibid., 4.

immigrants.[383] The work of Roger Steitmatter added invaluable insight to the side of this study that investigates nativism in the press. In his study of the nativist press, Streitmatter asserts that the nativist press of the 1880s and 1890s consistently spoke about immigrants in a harsh tone.[384] And, the hatred that the nativist press felt toward immigrants also came glaring through in the rhetoric the publications used, with word choices often communicating a sense of alarm and urgency.[385]

Overall, this study found that press frames of "exclusion", "inferiority", "dirtiness", "danger", "crime", and "helplessness" dominated press coverage of immigrants in the context of epidemics. The framing patterns of repetition and omission reflect themes of nativism because these frames foster anti-immigrant, xenophobic, racist ideology, the core concepts of nativism. Many of the same descriptions, key words, and patterns that Streitmatter found in his study of the nativist press are evident in the newspapers and periodicals in this study. Thus, this research renders strikingly similar findings to that of Streitmatter's research (as outlined in the literature review section). In fact, nativism, as it was represented in major newspapers and periodicals, probably reached a wider audience than that of the nativist press, making this study of framing and nativism significant.

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[383] Ibid.
[384] Streitmatter, "The Nativist Press," 675.
[385] Ibid.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

Newspapers and journals of the late nineteenth century told the stories of immigrants and epidemics in the United States during a time when immigration legislation tightened and increasing numbers of immigrants were excluded on the basis of medical criteria. Nativism and anti-immigration rhetoric dominated much of the coverage, especially as epidemics broke out and newcomers became more reviled by many Americans. In an era in which objectivity did not reign supreme in the publishing world, press framing in the articles studied in this research usually presented one side of the immigration issue, depicting immigrants in a negative light.

Scholars have pointed out that texts (in this case, news reports) are "systems of organized signifying elements that both promote the advocacy of certain ideas and provide devices to encourage certain kinds of audience processing of the texts.[386] In other words, the press can be influential.

This study of press framing of immigrants and epidemics is important to understanding the immigration experience from 1891 to 1893 and the laws and events in the decades that followed. Statistics show that between 1891 and 1898, the total number of immigrants excluded based on medical criteria was between 1 to 2 percent.[387] By 1915, the figure rose to 69 percent.[388] Although epidemics and contagious illnesses declined by the early 1900s, ironically, the number of rejected immigrants based on medical criteria increased.

What could have been the potential impact of these press frames on immigration history? While the American press cannot be held responsible for restrictive immigration legislation,

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[386] Pan, "Framing analysis," 55.
[387] Kraut, *Silent Travelers*, 3.
[388] Ibid.

derogatory, nativistic framing of immigrants with regard to epidemics and illnesses undoubtedly made these issues more salient to the public. This probably also led to increased scrutiny of America's newcomers and tighter immigration laws that followed. As both Markel and Kraut argued in their examinations of immigration laws and prejudice, it would be impossible to ignore the negative effects of the immigration laws of the 1890s on hundreds of thousands of immigrants.[389, 390] However, it is important to note the possible reasons behind the negative framing that dominated in American newspapers and periodicals during that time. As it goes with any complex issue, there is usually no simple explanation.

This research clearly supports the conclusion that the threat of deadly diseases impacted the press framing of immigrants. An undeniable threat of deadly diseases like smallpox, typhus, and cholera, and the scientific proof that diseases could be spread from person to person, certainly perpetuated the fear of immigrants. Undoubtedly, new immigrants also feared other newcomers for the same reasons. Stories of babies dying from continuous vomiting and diarrhea from cholera and piles of dead bodies stacked up in New York City streets contextualized much of this research.

The stories that illustrated the hardships faced by America's immigrants, like those "suspects" hunted down by health officials, then taken to quarantine and dying alone with no food or help, create an indelible impression of immigrant life in the 1890s. The journalistic literature illustrates the power of the threat of deadly disease and the complicated nature of society, politics, economics, and the press in the context of immigration and epidemics.

The events highlighted in this thesis took place more than 100 years ago. But in 2008, we continue to live in an era of immigration reform. In an attempt to restrict immigration, reform

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[389] Markel, *Quarantine!*, 182.
[390] Kraut, *Silent Travelers*, 2.

bills have been introduced in Congress annually for the past several years, some of which have been signed. Media coverage of immigration will increase as the public discourse surrounding the issues intensifies.

Today the press uses similar frames to that of the nineteenth century newspapers. Frames of exclusion, danger, inferiority, criminality, and helplessness contribute to the current immigration discourse. The manner in which newspapers use these frames is critical to understanding how the media shape messages about immigration in contemporary society.

Limitations

The wealth of material in newspapers and periodicals proved overwhelming at times during this study. Many events from 1891 to 1893 affected immigration history and policy, which resulted in a great deal of press coverage of the issues. I included nearly all articles I located, but I could not possibly search for articles in all newspapers and periodicals from 1891 to 1893. Thus, I narrowed my focus to include only epidemics of the time and relevant events in eight newspapers and a handful of periodicals. However, with more time and resources, there are numerous other possibilities for researching this topic.

Future Studies

A future study might compare the primary resources in this research to that of the nativist press to compare framing techniques. Or, one might compare coverage of immigration and epidemics in major newspapers to that of Jewish, Yiddish, or foreign-language newspapers, possibly including European publications. One could compare major publications to non-major publications for greater contrast in the framing techniques and devices and opposing viewpoints. One could examine the rhetoric of the legislation surrounding immigration laws in the 1890s, or focus on only one law. Research on the key political figures, such as William E. Chandler or

Isham Harris would be another angle for study. The relationship between politics, business, and steamship companies would also be interesting. This research could be approached quantitatively in a content analysis, to count the number of occurrences of specific terms, metaphors, or descriptors. A shorter time period, such as the year 1892, during the New York City epidemics, might result in a deeper investigation of some events that are included in this research.

This study of immigrants and epidemics in the U.S. press could be a useful reference for similar investigations into press framing. I hope that this research will lead to more such historical examinations, or similar studies in contemporary media.

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