Lesson 1 Finding Jobs, Finding Problems

Main Ideas

— Former farmers moving to cities and immigrants coming to the United States found the jobs they needed in the automobile industry. However, in some ways these jobs created problems for migrant and immigrant workers because of their prior experiences, class, race, language and culture.

Key Concepts

— Migration

— Immigration

— Emigration

— Urbanization

— Changing nature of work

— Naturalization

— Basic Naturalization Act of 1906

— Immigration restrictions

— National Origins Act of 1921

— Great Migration

Digitized Artifacts from the Collections of **The Henry Ford**

Lesson 1
Finding Jobs, Finding Problems

— Short Biography of Ford Motor Company Employee Byron Moore, circa 1943 (page 1 ID# THF68288) (page 2 ID# THF68289)

— Language and Citizenship of Ford Motor Company Employees, According to Nationality, as of January 12th, 1917 ID# THF68283

— First Official Ford Motor Company Portrait of Henry Ford, 1904 ID# THF36449

— Crowd of Applicants Outside Highland Park Plant after Five Dollar Day Announcement, January 1914 ID# THF67496

— Byron Moore, Head of Ford Rouge Plant Aircraft Engine Inspection and Repair, 1943 ID# THF68290

— Hay Wagon Coming Up from a Meadow, Flushing, NY, circa 1900 ID# THF38312

— Fordson Tractor #1, Made 1917, Used by Luther Burbank ID# THF72058

— Gas-Steam Engine, 1916, Used to Generate Electricity at Highland Park Plant ID# THF52667

— Mattox House in *Greenfield Village* ID# THF70905

— Crops at Firestone Farm in *Greenfield Village* ID# THF53081

— Time Clock, Made 1916-1925, and Used by the Shelby Division of Copperweld ID# THF72059

— Letter to Henry Ford from the Wife of an Assembly Line Worker, 1914 ID# THF32100

— Workers in Ford Rouge Plant Cyanide Foundry, 1931 ID# THF68318

— Workers at the Ford Motor Company Rouge Plant Foundry, 1935 ID# THF68317

Lesson 1 Finding Jobs, Finding Problems Continued

Materials

- Computer with access to Internet; digital projector and screen (preferred) OR printed handouts of digital resources' images and abstracts
- Sign: What influence do prior experiences, class, race, language and culture have on people's lives?
- Lesson 1 Slideshow Finding Jobs, Finding Problems
- Scrap paper
- Student Activity Sheet 1: World Map
- Answer Key 1: World Map

Duration 2 class periods (45 minutes each)

Instructional Sequence:

1 Relevance

Take a poll of students to see how many of them have moved to a new place because of a family member's job situation. Ask them to share stories about how the family member adapted to the new job and how the family as a whole adapted to the new place.

Share with students that millions came to the Detroit area in search of jobs during the first decades of the 20th century. Just as the students themselves may have experienced when moving to a new place, these new Detroiters experienced positive and negative changes. In this lesson, students will examine the movement of different groups of people who found work in the auto industry as an example of similar migrations that took place all over the United States at that time.

This lesson explores what was pulling people to metro Detroit from the American South, from the rural United States and from other parts of the world.

2 Finding Jobs, Finding Problems Slideshow—Part I: Slides 1-14
Finding Jobs at Ford Motor Company

Review Part I, slides 1-10 with students. For slide 5, ask students to develop definitions for the words *migration, emigration* and *urbanization* based on their prior knowledge and the content of the previous slides. Refer to the Glossary in the Teacher Guide for assistance. For slide 6, the Byron Moore story, show on the projection screen or distribute printed copies of the artifact Short Biography of Ford Motor Company Employee Byron Moore, circa 1943 (page 1 ID# THF68288) (page 2 ID# THF68289).

Next, review slides 11-14 to study workers emigrating from abroad. Ask students to develop their own definition of immigration based on their prior knowledge and the content of the previous slides. Refer to the Glossary in Teacher Guide for assistance.

Tell students that many workers were immigrants from other parts of the world, as evidenced by the document Language and Citizenship of Ford Motor Company Employees, According to Nationality, as of January 12th, 1917 ID# THF68283. This document is part of a report made by the Ford Motor Company's Sociological Department three years after beginning a profit-sharing plan that urged workers to learn English and become naturalized citizens. Ask students to use this document to determine how many workers came from each country.

Assign the Student Activity Sheet 1: World Map as homework if students have resources to complete it at home. Depending on your students' familiarity with maps, you might allow them to establish their own key for

Lesson 1 Finding Jobs, Finding Problems Continued

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interpreting the information they add to the map. Students may need help understanding which nationality matches which country name (i.e., Welsh people live in Wales, which is a country within the United Kingdom). Also, some of the countries or nations no longer exist (e.g., the former Bohemia is now part of the Czech Republic). Lastly, some nationality groups are what we now consider religious, ethnic or racial groups.

Follow up when the assignment is completed with review and discussion using the Answer Key 1: World Map.

3 Finding Jobs, Finding Problems
Slideshow—Part II: Slides 15-26
Finding Problems at Ford Motor Company

Begin Part II of the slideshow to discuss the following:

Influence of workers' prior experiences on workers' lives: Changing Nature of Work (slides 15–19)

– Discuss the questions on slide 16 with students to help them understand the issues related to the changing nature of work. Invite them to offer their own examples.

– Ask students to speculate about why workers became frustrated with work on the moving assembly line. Use slide 19 to show students Letter to Henry Ford from the Wife of an Assembly Line Worker, 1914 ID# THF32100. Read the letter to the students or invite one student to read the letter aloud to the class. Ask students to share their observations and reactions to the letter.

Influence of workers' languages on workers' lives: Language Barriers (slide 20)

– Choose four student volunteers to help with the demonstration. Assign one to be a supervisor and three to be assembly line workers. Assign one to role-play an English-speaking supervisor and three to each role-play a different non-English-speaking assembly line worker. Tell the rest of the class to observe what the supervisor and workers are doing and to evaluate their interactions and the quality of their product. Ask the supervisor to assign and teach each worker one step in assembling (making the folds for) a paper airplane. Limit the time the supervisor has to train the workers. Then have the workers assemble one airplane. Discuss the questions on slide 20.

Impact of immigration restrictions on worker's lives (slide 21)

– When mentioning the Basic Naturalization Act of 1906, remind students about the artifact Language and Citizenship of Ford Motor Company Employees, According to Nationality, as of January 12th, 1917 ID# THF68283, where they learned that among Ford workers, the groups with the greatest percentages of naturalized citizens were those who spoke English in their native land or who were part of the pre-1906 wave of immigration: American, Canadian, Jewish, German, English, Scotch, Irish, Negro, French, Belgian, Swiss, Welsh, Norwegian, Indian (American).

Continued…

Lesson 1 Finding Jobs, Finding Problems Continued

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Influence of workers' race on workers' lives: The Great Migration (slides 22-26)

– Introduce the Great Migration with slide 22.

– The information on slide 23 is taken from "The Negro in Detroit," a report written in 1920 by Forrester B. Washington, a founder of the Detroit Urban League. To help students understand that social conditions were the major factor in the Great Migration, have 83.6% of your students stand up to show how many African Americans left the South for this reason. (In a class of 30, 25 students would stand.) If you want to incorporate more math into this lesson, have students calculate percentages for each reason given in Washington's report (do not take into account the vague responses). You may also work with students to create a bar graph that visually shows reasons for migrating. Students can do research to find examples of conditions, threats, low wages and other reasons for leaving the South.

Slides 24-26 outline the opportunities that were available to African Americans in Detroit as well as the challenges they faced in a Northern city.

4 Summarizing Worker Problems (slides 27-28)

To end this lesson, the class will be summarizing the problems they think could occur at Ford Motor Company as a result of differences among workers in prior experiences, class, race, language and culture.

Break the students into small groups. Ask them to make three lists: (1) problems faced by immigrant workers, (2) problems faced by workers from rural America and (3) problems shared by both groups. Tell the students to use ideas and information from their prior knowledge, from the slideshow or from any of the information from the curators of **The Henry Ford** (see bibliography in the Teacher Guide) to develop their lists.

As a class, combine lists and organize the class's answers into a Venn diagram (see slide 27). Save these lists to use as a reference and to revise or expand throughout the unit. General answers are on slide 28.

Assessment

Assess Student Activity Sheet 1 and students' participation in this lesson.
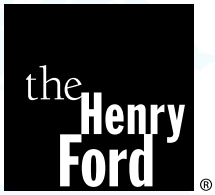
world Map

Name _____

Analyze the origins of Ford Motor Company employees in 1917.

Complete the attached map and then answer the following questions...

1. How does the number of American employees compare to the number of employees of other nationalities or from other groups?

    _____

    _____

2. What percent of employees are American?

    _____

    _____

3. Which parts of the world do the majority of non-American workers come from?

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

4. Which groups have the greatest percentages of English speakers?

    _____

    _____

5. Which nationalities/groups have the greatest percentages of naturalized citizens?

    _____

    _____

    _____

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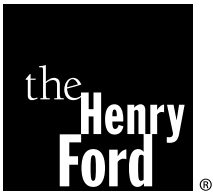
    _____

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MAP KEY

Use this blank world map to show the numbers of employees of
each nationality at Ford Motor Company. Use the artifact Language
and Citizenship of Ford Motor Company Employees, According to
Nationality, as of January 12th, 1917 ID# THF68283 to gather the statistics for your map. Establish a key
for your map.

world Map

1. How does the number of American employees compare to the number of employees of other nationalities or from other groups?

   There are significantly more American employees that employees of any other individual nationality, but there are more non-Americans than Americans.

2. What percent of employees are American?

   16,457 ÷ 40,903 = approximately 0.40, or 40%, of employees are American.

   * Do any of these nationalities/groups seem unusual to you?

      Some nationalities are what we would now consider religious or racial groups. Also, some of the words we use to describe groups have changed – e.g., Ruthenian people are now known as Ukrainian; Negro has been replaced by African American or Black. [This is an opportunity to discuss the changing conception of race.]

3. Which parts of the world do the majority of non-American workers come from?

   Most come from Europe.

4. Which nationalities/groups have the greatest percentages of English speakers?

   American, Canadian, Jewish, German, English, Hungarian, Austrian, Scotch [Scot], Armenian, Irish, Swedish, Finnish, Negro [African American], Danish, Hollander, Maltese, French, Belgian, Swiss, Welsh, Norwegian, Indian (American) [Native American], Arabian, Spanish, Macedonian, Japanese, Australian, Albanian, Egyptian, Hindu, Cuban, Mexican, Persian, Argentinean, Jamaican, Chinese, Brazilian, Portuguese, Manx, Philippino [Filipino], Porto [Puerto]-Rican, Luxemburger [Luxembourger], New Zealander, Boer.

4. Continued

★ *Why might these groups have high percentages of English speakers?*

Some groups spoke English in their native countries. Other groups had been settled in the Detroit area for a long enough time to become fluent in English. We don't know who was counted as "American" – maybe people who were born in America to German parents were counted as American, but maybe they were counted as German. To really understand the statistics, one must understand how the survey was developed, and we don't know that from this document. Also, some immigrant groups were very small, and people from small groups needed to learn English to survive in a foreign country whereas people from large groups could work, shop and live in places with only those who speak their language.

5. Which nationalities/groups have the greatest percentages of naturalized citizens?

American, Canadian, Jewish, German, English, Scotch [Scot], Irish, Negro [African American], French, Belgian, Swiss, Welsh, Norwegian, Indian (American).

★ *Why might this be the case?*

Some of these groups already spoke English in their native lands; in 1906 Congress passed the Basic Naturalization Act which made speaking English a requirement for citizenship. Others groups are of an older wave of immigration from western and northern Europe, so they may have been able to become citizens even without speaking English if prior to 1906.

★ *The starred questions do not appear on the activity sheets but are included here for discussion.*