Documents related to immigration, late 19th century

NAME: ______________________________________ BLOCK: _____ DATE: ____________

INSTRUCTIONS: There are nine documents here. They are a combination of primary and secondary sources. Your job is to read/interpret each document and answer the questions after each document. Once you have finished with all eight, consider the question of how the United States treated immigrants from various parts of the world in the late 1800’s.

Document 1:

“New plague threatens us,” warned a headline from the San Francisco Gazette. The story below, which cautioned against what West Coast alarmists would soon be referring to as the Japanese Question, the Japanese Problem, the Japanese Menace, the Yellow Peril, and the Yellow Scourge, was more than a bit premature. The year was 1869, a full three decades before the Japanese would emigrate to America in any visible numbers. “These people came to literally take root in the ground,” said the newspaper story, referring to the handful of immigrants who had just arrived in Southern California to start the Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony. “Shall Los Angeles be made a tea garden and Santa Barbara a mulberry field?”


1. Is this a primary or secondary source?
2. Does this document show the perspective of immigrants or native-born Americans?
3. Does this document show immigration as a good thing or a bad thing?
4. What does this document show about the attitudes, beliefs, or values of the author?
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Document 2:

_The New Colossus_, by Emma Lazarus

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Note: This is the poem on the Statue of Liberty

[http://www.nps.gov/stli/historyculture/colossus.htm](http://www.nps.gov/stli/historyculture/colossus.htm)

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Note: the caption at the bottom says “The mortar of assimilation—and the one element that won't mix.” A mortar was a kind of cup in which ingredients for food or medicine would be ground and mixed. Assimilation means when minority group or newcomers become like the majority group around them. The figure standing on the edge of the cup is supposed to be Irish.


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Document 4:

Note: Sign in front of ship (U.S. Ark of Refuge) reads: “NO oppressive taxes, NO expensive KINGS, NO compulsory military service, NO knouts in dungeons.”

Compulsory means forced, knouts means whips.

J. Keppler cartoon, Puck, April 28, 1880. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, DC 20540. LC-USZC4-954

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Document 5:


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White & Bauer. *The Great Fear of the Period That Uncle Sam May Be Swallowed by Foreigners: The Problem Solved.*

Print shows a one panel, three scene cartoon showing, in the first scene, an Irish man with the head of Uncle Sam in his mouth and a Chinese man with the feet of Uncle Sam in his mouth, in the second scene they consume Uncle Sam, and in the third the Chinese man consumes the Irish man; on the landscape in the distant background are many railroads.


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Document 7:

Third phase, burning of Old South Church, Bath, 1854

_During the summer of 1854 anti-Catholic sentiments were running high. A mob in Bath, incited by a street preacher, ransacked and burned the Protestant church that had been rented by Catholics as a place of worship._

_The Know-Nothing party, a Nativist party, was held responsible for this act._

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MEN FROM CHINA come here to do LAUNDRY WORK. The Chinese Empire contains 600,000,000 (six hundred millions) inhabitants. The supply of these men is inexhaustible. Every one doing this work takes BREAD from the mouths of OUR WOMEN...If this undesirable element "THE CHINESE EMIGRANTS" are not stopped coming here, we have no alternative but that we will have California and the Pacific Slope's experience, and the end will be that our industries will be absorbed UNLESS we live down to their animal life. We say in conclusion that the CHINAMAN is a labor consumer of our country without the adequate returns of prosperity to our land as is given by the labor of our people to our glorious country. Our motto should be: 
OUR COUNTRY, OUR PEOPLE, GOD, AND OUR NATIVE LAND.

Pioneer Laundry Workers Assembly, K. of L. Washington, D.C.


Inexhaustible means unable to be used up.

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This poem is one of many carved by Chinese immigrants onto the walls of the Angel Island Immigrant Station in San Francisco, California.

Originally, I had intended to come to America last year. Lack of money delayed me until early autumn. It was on the day that the Weaver Maiden met the Cowherd¹ That I took passage on the President Lincoln. I ate wind and tasted waves for more than twenty days. Fortunately, I arrived safely on the American continent. I thought I could land in a few days. How was I to know I would become a prisoner suffering in the wooden building? The barbarians² abuse is really difficult to take. When my family's circumstances stir my emotions, a double stream of tears flow. I only wish I can land in San Francisco soon. Thus sparing me the additional sorrow here.

¹ Better known as the "Festival of the Seventh Day of the Seventh Moon," the Qiqiao Festival is widely celebrated among the Cantonese (Chinese people from the area of the city of Canton in southern China).
² A Cantonese term for Westerner.

Angel Island Immigrant Station was where immigrants waited to be allowed entry into the US, equivalent to Ellis Island in New York.


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Document 9:
Number of immigrants to United States by region, 1871-1880

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Origin</th>
<th>Europe</th>
<th>Asia</th>
<th>Africa</th>
<th>America</th>
<th>Pacific Islands</th>
<th>All other, not specified</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of immigrants</td>
<td>2,261,904</td>
<td>123,838</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>404,024</td>
<td>10,895</td>
<td>11,182</td>
<td>2,812,191</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data taken from:

1. Are these primary or secondary sources?
2. Do the documents show the perspective of immigrants or native-born Americans?
3. Do the document show immigration as a good thing or a bad thing?
4. What do the documents show about when and why people came to America?

Overall analysis:

1. Why did immigrants come to the United States in the late 19th century? List and explain at least three reasons why immigrants came here.

2. What kind of reception did immigrants receive when entering the United States in the late 19th century? List and explain at least two ways that Americans reacted to immigrants in the late 19th century.