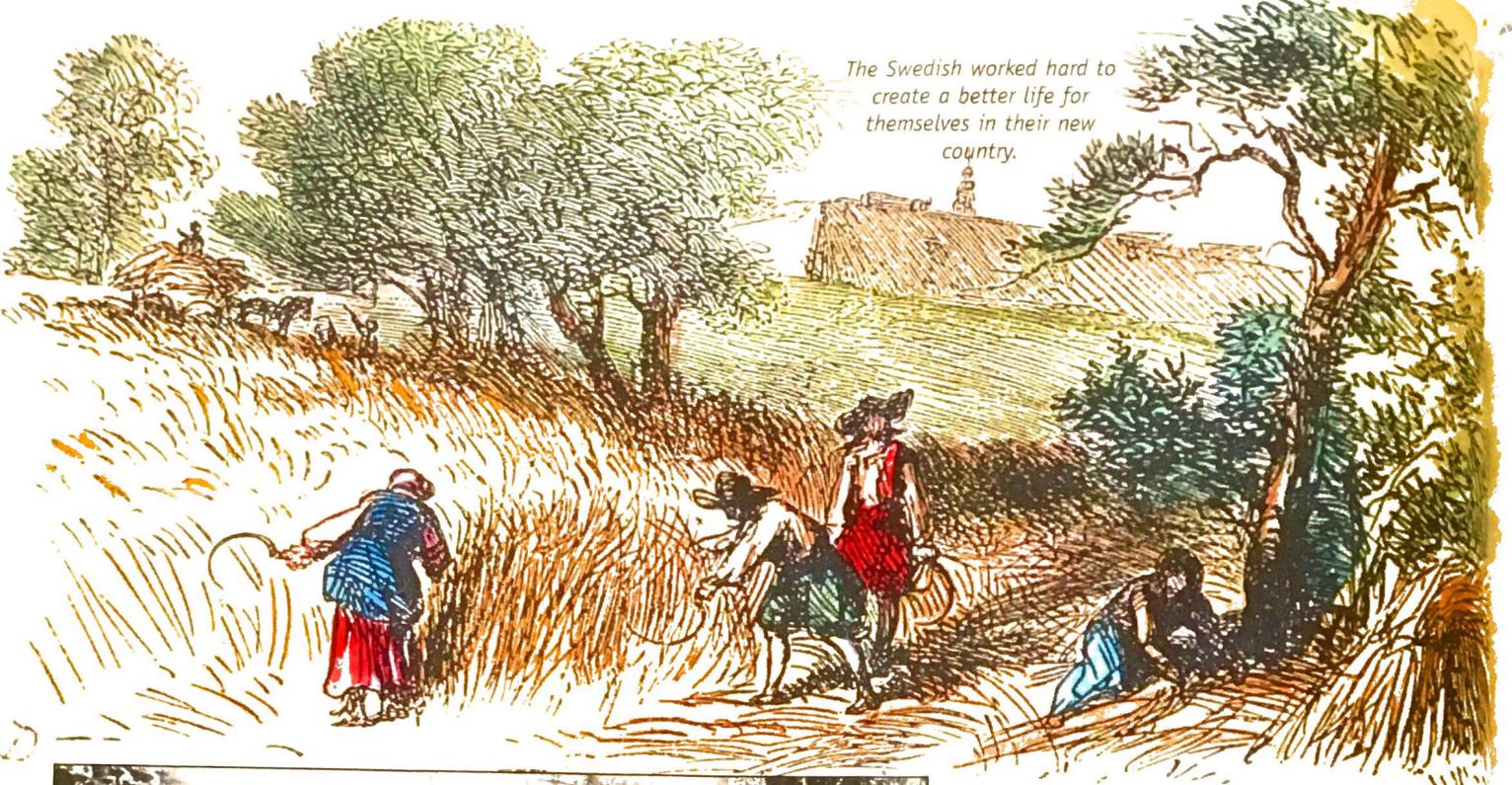


The Swedish worked hard to create a better life for themselves in their new country.



In this photo, New Sweden celebrates its 40th anniversary. How old is New Sweden today? Does your town celebrate its founding?

## Linking the Past to the Present

What Swedish influences are still evident in Aroostook County today? Search the Internet to find foods, festivals, traditions, or buildings of Swedish origin in Aroostook County.

## Immigration Into Maine

A soldier and politician named William Widgey Thomas was worried about the decrease in population in Maine. He gave a speech in which he said,

*... what elements of empire do we lack? Fertile lands, exhaustless quarries, noble rivers, colossal water power and harbors countless and unrivaled, all are ours. We lack labor ... we lack men!*

Thomas headed to Sweden, a country in northern Europe, to recruit settlers. He thought people from cold and rugged Sweden would love to make a new home in Maine.

In 1870, Thomas brought 51 men, women, and children across the Atlantic on a steamship from Sweden. They settled on land the state government gave them in Aroostook County. They called their settlement New Sweden. Within just three years, more than 1,200 Swedes lived in Aroostook County. They worked hard as farmers and were happy to be in their new country, which reminded them so much of their old one.

## Patterns of Immigration

Many people call the United States a “nation of immigrants.” This is because the ancestors of everyone who lives here came from somewhere else. Even the Native Americans are the descendants of ancient tribes that scientists believe walked over a land bridge from Asia at the end of the last Ice Age.

Closer to our own time, historians have been able to identify patterns of immigration. These patterns are influenced by two factors. One factor is based on the reasons why people leave one country for a new country. The other factor is based on why the new country needs immigrants. This is called the push and pull factor because there are factors that “pull” people to a place and factors that “push” them out of a place.

From the time between Maine’s statehood and the end of the Reconstruction, most immigrants came to our country from western Europe. They boarded ships in Ireland, Great Britain, France, Germany, and Sweden, and headed west across the Atlantic. Many of them were farmers who had suffered famine and crop failures. They had also suffered political repression as democratic revolutions were crushed throughout western Europe. They came to America hoping to find cheap land and a lively democracy. Poor farmers were also coming from China for similar reasons. However, many of them went to work building railroads in the West or starting small businesses in large cities.

In about 1880, and continuing for the next 40 years, the pattern of immigration to the United States shifted. More people began migrating from central and eastern Europe. They arrived from countries like Italy, Poland, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and Russia. Most of them were poor peasants who had no economic opportunities in their own countries. They hoped to get jobs in the booming factories of the United States. People also came here from Asian countries, like Japan. They were farmers who had no hope of buying land in Japan. In the United States, they could have small farms near large cities and supply fresh vegetables to people who worked in factories. Still, more people came from Canada. Many English-speaking Canadians went to big cities, where they could get jobs working in business. French Canadians usually headed to New England, where they went to work in the cotton and paper mills.

As conditions in the rest of the world and in our own country continue to change, so do patterns of immigration. People still come here from Europe, but now, more and more immigrants come from Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Patterns of immigration also change as new technology develops. For example, many people who speak English in countries like India and the Philippines can now stay in those countries and work for American companies. They no longer have to move to the United States to work because they can do their jobs using telephones and computers.

## What do you think?

Can you think of an example of a push factor?  
Can you think of an example of a pull factor?

*Political repression is when a government denies all rights to its citizens.*



*These immigrant students are dressed in costumes as part of their Americanization class in school. Do you attend this kind of class today? What does it mean to become Americanized?*