Throughout history, immigrants came to America for a wide variety of reasons. One of these reasons was to seek economic prosperity in the land where “the streets were paved in gold,” but for many immigrants the only opportunities were in difficult jobs demanding in both their time and labor. Learn about five different industries in which new immigrants historically found employment through this primary source driven archival exploration.

In this activity, your students will learn about the following industries:

- Garment Industry
- Canning Industry
- Scrap Industry
- Laundry Industry
- Grocery Industry

This packet corresponds with the classroom activity in the Scrap Yard: Innovators of Recycling Educator’s Guide. For instructions, please download the Guide.
Garment Industry
Questions for the Garment Industry Photograph

This picture illustrates women who worked in the **garment industry**, or the clothing making industry. These women were part of a Baltimore organization that fought for better pay and cleaner workplaces. Many members of this organization were Jewish women from Eastern Europe who immigrated to the United States.

1. When do you think this photograph was taken?

2. Where do you think this photograph was taken? Is it in a home, a factory, or outside?

3. Who is in the photograph? What are they wearing? Do they look happy, sad, etc.?

4. What do you think the people in the photograph are doing?

5. What skills do you think these people needed for their jobs?
Canning Industry

Courtesy of the Library of Congress
hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/fsa.8c33081
Questions for the Canning Industry Photograph

This photograph depicts an individual working in the **canning industry**, where food is packaged in tin cans and sold. This person worked for the Phillips Packing Company in Cambridge, MD which supplied many meals for soldiers during both World Wars.

1. When do you think this photograph was taken?

2. Where do you think this photograph was taken? Is it in a home, a factory, or outside?

3. Who is the person in the photograph? What is his wearing? Does he look happy, sad, etc.?

4. What do you think the individual in the photograph is doing?

5. What do you think this person did for a living?

6. What skills do you think the person needed for this job?
Scrap Industry

Questions for the Scrap Industry Photograph

This photograph shows a person working in the **scrap industry**. In the scrap industry, **peddlers** would buy discarded items, break them down, and sell their parts. Scrap peddlers would travel across the country to find items and could deal in materials such as metal, cloth, or paper.

1. When do you think this photograph was taken?

2. Where do you think this photograph was taken? Is it in a home, a factory, or outside?

3. Who is the person in the photograph? What is his wearing? Does he look happy, sad, etc.?

4. Why do you think this individual is holding a bag over his shoulder? What do you think the bag is for?

5. What do you think this person’s job was?

6. What skills do you think the person needed for this job?
Laundry Industry

Courtesy of the Library of Congress

https://www.loc.gov/item/2016820431
Questions for the Laundry Industry Photograph

This photograph shows two people working in the **laundry industry** where people washed, dried, and repaired clothing. Immigrants often found jobs in this industry either working in large factories or in their own homes. These two people worked at Tolman Laundry in Washington, D.C.

1. When do you think this photograph was taken?

2. Where do you think this photograph was taken? Is it in a home, a factory, or outside?

3. Who is in the photograph? What are they wearing? Do they look happy, sad, etc.?

4. What do you think the people in the photograph are doing?

5. What do you think their job was at the time of this photograph?

6. What skills do you think they needed for their jobs?
Questions for the Grocery Industry Photograph

This photograph depicts Joseph Weiner’s first store in the grocery industry, in which people owned and worked in small stores that sold food and other products. Weiner’s store in Baltimore, was one of 400 grocery stores owned by Jewish immigrants in the Maryland, D.C., and Virginia area.

1. When do you think this photograph was taken?

2. Where do you think this photograph was taken? Is it in a home, a factory, or outside?

3. Who is in the photograph? What are they wearing? Do they look happy, sad, etc.?

4. What do you think the people in the photograph are doing?

5. What skills do you think these people needed for their jobs?