Chinese ✦ 1870-1890 The Chinese arrived as laborers and worked in many regions of the U.S. Many moved East with new work on railroads. Some settled in Lewiston by 1896. Wing Chung Lung was the proprietor of a Chinese Laundry at 218 Main Street. A Chinese Restaurant –Low Hong Far – was located on Lisbon Street near Ash Street by 1914.

French-speaking Canadians ✦ 1845-1857 Initially, they came to farm better land, after depleting the soil in Quebec. In 1866-1873 they came for jobs that paid cash to take back home, but most stayed. Steady employment in the mills attracted whole families. More Canadians came from Quebec in the early 1880s and early 1890s. As thrifty people, they saved their money to bring more family and relatives.

Irish ✦ 1847-1857 Four hundred strong, Irish laborers came from Boston to build the railroad link to Lewiston, to blast the ledges, to build the canals, and to lay out the mill sites. In 1850, Lewiston had the highest ratio of Irish to its total population of any Maine city. Between 1865 and 1872 more Irish came to fill jobs in the mills.

Germans and Austro-Hungarians ✦ 1860-1910 They came to all parts of the U.S. in very large numbers from 1860 to 1910. Their emigration was motivated by the Prussian War, socio-economic problems, and population growth that resulted in smaller subdivisions of family lands, causing an agricultural crisis.

Scottish and Welsh ✦ 1886-1910 Due to increasing population, and following the Potato Famine, they fled from deepening poverty to the U.S. East Coast, first. Gradually they moved inland to good-paying jobs in industrial centers, like Lewiston.

English ✦ 1877-1930 English continued to populate America long after the Colonies won their independence. They arrived sporadically. New heavy industries in New England required large numbers of manual laborers mainly 1877-1930
Lithuanians ✦ 1900-1913 Lithuanian peasants were expelled from their land; they fled rather than starve there. Most planned to earn money and return home. Some stayed. A second wave of Lithuanians settled here from 1945 – 1955 after being displaced by the Second World War. Economic motives and cultural survival here would replace living in fear back home.

Greeks ✦ 1906-1920s They left Greece due to unemployment, low wages and high prices after a long history of warfare in the Balkan Wars and World War I. Most Greeks settled in cities where they could find unskilled work, especially textile towns, between 1906 and the 1920s. By 1910, more than 3,000 Greeks lived here working in the mills, operating shops, and a school.

Italians ✦ 1902-1920s The Italians were among the many immigrants coming from southern Europe between 1902 and the 1920s. Their goal in leaving was to preserve family, community, and a familiar way of life. Like the Quebecois, the whole family or village followed the first to settle in L-A. This is known as “Chain Migration.”

East European (Russian & Polish) Jews ✦ 1919-1924 Between 1919 and 1924 Jews from the greater Russian Empire came as political refugees and for economic motives. Many came for work — from a surplus of labor, to new economic opportunities. The Poles suffered great economic and cultural oppression. They craved political freedom and a better life in America. Another wave of Jews arrived after the Holocaust.

Somalis ✦ 2002-2008 Somalis are the largest, most recent group to settle in Lewiston from 2002-2008. After being displaced from their homeland and having survived in refugee camps in other nations, they found new homes and a new way of life in a different climate in Lewiston.