



PROMISE

Emigration to Latin America

CHRONOLOGY: 1900-1930



DESCRIPTION:

The Spanish emigration to America for labour reasons had its highest point during the first few years of the 20th century. More than one million people went to “do the Americas” between 1904 and 1913. The majority kept their Galician, Canarian, Asturian and Cantabrian identity, and were anxious to achieve social promotion which was almost impossible in some regions with a surplus of rural population. These emigrants settled mainly in Cuba, Argentina, Venezuela, Brazil y Uruguay. More than a half returned to Spain.

There are several aspects to point out in this migratory process:

- Only men used to emigrate to Cuba.

CAUSES:

-INTERNAL

- * Lack of employment due to the increase in population
- * Young people escaping from compulsory military service
- * Agriculture was unable to give work and stability to the increasing rural population

EXTERNAL

- * Tropical production needed cheap manpower because of the recent abolition of slavery.
- * Economic expansion of countries such as Argentina, due to the improvement of transport.

- At the beginning only men emigrated to Argentina, but little by little the number of complete families increased.
- Most of the emigrants were farmers.
- The level of illiteracy of the emigrants was lower than the average in Spain, and this fact allowed them to occupy jobs in commerce and industry easily.



At the beginning the Spaniards tried to keep together to protect each other and keep their customs. For that reason

they founded hospitals, old people's homes, schools, and voluntary subscription funds to repatriate the emigrants if necessary. In the same way, they founded several newspapers in Cuba and Argentina.



In Spain, public opinion was in general opposed to emigration, as it was identified with the decadence the country was suffering from since the 1898 crisis, and it was also thought to be an antipatriotic attitude. In addition, the different governments of Alfonso XIII tried to oppose emigration by encouraging the colonization of the interior of the peninsula and of the African colonies.

The main consequences of this migratory process have to be found in the economic contributions of the emigrants sending



money to Spain. It was used to satisfy social necessities, to carry out modernization works in the cities and also in the country and, above all, it allowed a better understanding between Spain and Latin America with the promotion of cultural exchanges between both peoples.

A negative consequence was the constant demographic drain suffered by the country during this period since a large number of the emigrants were young people old enough to work and procreate.

WEB PAGES:

- <http://www.espamundo.org/memoria.HTM>
- <http://www.rebellion.org/economia/040130zamora.htm>
- http://perso.wanadoo.es/jcabanas1/emigrantes_de_ayer_y_de_hoy.htm
- http://www.elparchedigital.com/INFO_BalbuenaEmigracion.htm

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA:

- Oficial: 320.000
- Real: 430.000

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- VV.AA.: *Historia General de la Emigración Española a Iberoamérica*. 1992.
- VV.AA.: *Antropología de los Pueblos de España*. 1991.