The four waves of American immigration.

"Once I thought to write a history of the immigrants in America. Then I discovered that the immigrants were American history." - Oscar Handlin.

The first wave: 1607-1830. As later immigrant groups came to America, older English Americans would memorialize Plymouth Rock as the birthplace of America, thus confirming an Anglo-Saxon stamp on the American character. In reality, of course, the early immigrants arrived all over the different ports up and down the East Coast.

Reasons for Immigration: The early immigrants came here for a variety of reasons: Economic Opportunity. Europe offered little opportunity for most people to advance economically during this period of aristocratic control of wealth and power.