

Stop #4: 2300 5 St SW
Eastern European Immigration to Canada

Mr. Burima's Notes

- At 2300 5 ST SW sits a school built in 1911 by the Calgary Public School Board.
- It was actually supposed to be temporary.
- Meet the needs of a rapidly expanding student population. Calgary was booming!
- The school was one of five small cottage schools built by the School Board in 1911.
- The school symbolises the optimism of the early real estate boom. Homesteading and a bit of oil, also annexed nearby towns (which included the Cliff Bungalow area)
- Between 1906 and 1910, attendance at Calgary public schools increased from 1,911 to 4,421 students. This increase was caused by an influx of newcomers to Calgary.
- School was incredibly *strict* back in 1911. Corporal punishment was used, which is when teachers or principals physically struck students as a form punishment.

Many students who started going to school in this time were not English or French.

- The Canadian Government initially only wanted English and French settlers. Generally, British, Scottish, or French men held positions of power.
- But guess what – they needed more people! There was lots of land available and they wanted to make sure that America wasn't going to come up and steal it!
- So they started encouraging people to come over from Eastern Europe (look at map).
- So this included people from Russia, Ukraine, Germany, and Poland. Is anyone Russian? Ukrainian? German, Polish? Now for our discussion, I am lumping together these large groups of people together. I am not saying that they are all the same, at all. What's that called? BUT, I am lumping them together because they came at the same time and, for the most part, were treated the same by the Canadian Government.
- So thousands and thousands of Eastern Europeans came over in the late 1800s and early 1900s.
- They were actually offered land called **homesteads**. These were plots of land that the Canadian government wanted the settlers to farm. **Why?**
- So there were lots of farmers. The Ukrainian settlers especially were mostly farmers. Big parts of Ukraine looks like the flat prairie of Alberta.
- There were also Russian and German settlers; many of them were Doukhobors or Mennonites. Those are religious groups that generally lived in the same area together, with houses close together and building their own communities.
- Remember - these are non-English speakers who came to a country where the police officers, government officials, immigration officials, the officials in charge of taxes, all spoke English (sometimes French) and many of the people that they interacted with all spoke English.

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Russian immigrants on ship, arriving to Canada



German family arriving in Canada, 1911