

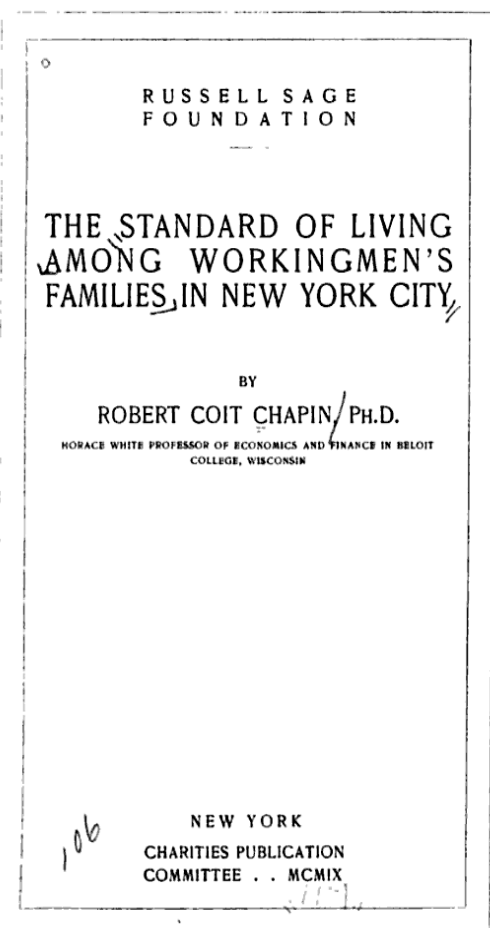
TEACHER'S GUIDE

Primary Source Document Collection

MISSION 4: "City of Immigrants"

Report on Food Expenses for a Working Family in 1909

In 1909, a charitable foundation compiled a report on food expenses for working-class families in New York City. This document details the weekly expenses for an Italian family living on West Houston Street. The father of this family worked as a longshoreman (a person who loads and unloads ships).



5. An Italian family living on West Houston Street makes the report of food-expenditures that follows. The father is a longshoreman, earning \$14 a week, or allowing for unemployment, \$672 a year. The family consists of the parents, the woman's father, a girl of 13, a boy of 9 and a boy of 14 months. The nutriment required amounts to 4.2 in terms of an adult man, and the weekly requirement is the equivalent of food for 1 man for 29 days. The dietary analysis shows 106 grams of protein and 3888 calories per man per day, at a cost of 24 cents per man per day, or of 20 cents for everything except beer.

	WEEKLY EXPENDITURE.	
Meats and fish:		
11 lbs. beef.....	\$0.90	
3 lbs. fish.....	\$0.30	\$1.20
Eggs, dairy products, etc.:		
7 lbs. lard.....	.50	
1/2 lb. cheese.....	.15	
8 eggs.....	.20	
7 qts. milk.....	.35	1.20
Cereals:		
21 loaves bread.....	1.05	
4 lbs. flour.....	.14	
14 lbs. macaroni (American).....	.98	2.17
Carried forward		\$4.57
159		
THE STANDARD OF LIVING		
Brought forward		\$4.57
Vegetables, fruit, etc.:		
3 qts. potatoes.....	.15	
Onions.....	.05	
Fresh vegetables.....	.10	
2 lbs. dried beans.....	.15	
Fresh fruits.....	.10	.55
Sugar, tea, etc.:		
1 lb. coffee.....	.35	
3 lbs. sugar.....	.18	
1 qt. olive oil.....	.20	.73
Alcoholic liquors:		
14 pints beer.....	1.40	1.40
Total		\$7.25

Source: Robert Coit Chapin, "The Standard of Living Among Workingmen's Families in New York City," Russell Sage Foundation, 1909.