1870-1927: Arriving in a New Land (eps. 1)

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This new land was France, which became at the turn of the 1920s the first country for immigration in the world, ahead of the United States. An immigration of choice governed by the 1927 law, the most liberal in the history of the country in terms of rights of residence and rights to citizenship.

First though, the Third Republic had to learn the lessons of the defeat at the hand of the Germans in 1870, and that of the 'Commune' - two events which had revealed the state of disunity of the country and its fragile sense of national bonding. So, France decided to embark on a new programme: producing French citizens!
To do so, the country had to reform conscription and develop secular and compulsory education, invent common Gallic ancestors and establish the right of soil for granting citizenship. At the same time, the nation was torn by the Dreyfus affair, invented false racial arguments to justify its empire and rushed into the first great massacre of nations...WW1.

In this first episode, the descendants of Italians and Polish, but also those from the French regions of the Auvergne or Brittany, retrace the path of their families who'd arrived during the country's first industrial revolution. They recall how their ancestors built this New - but still colonial - France and how this foreign workforce helped reconstruct the country after the First World War.

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