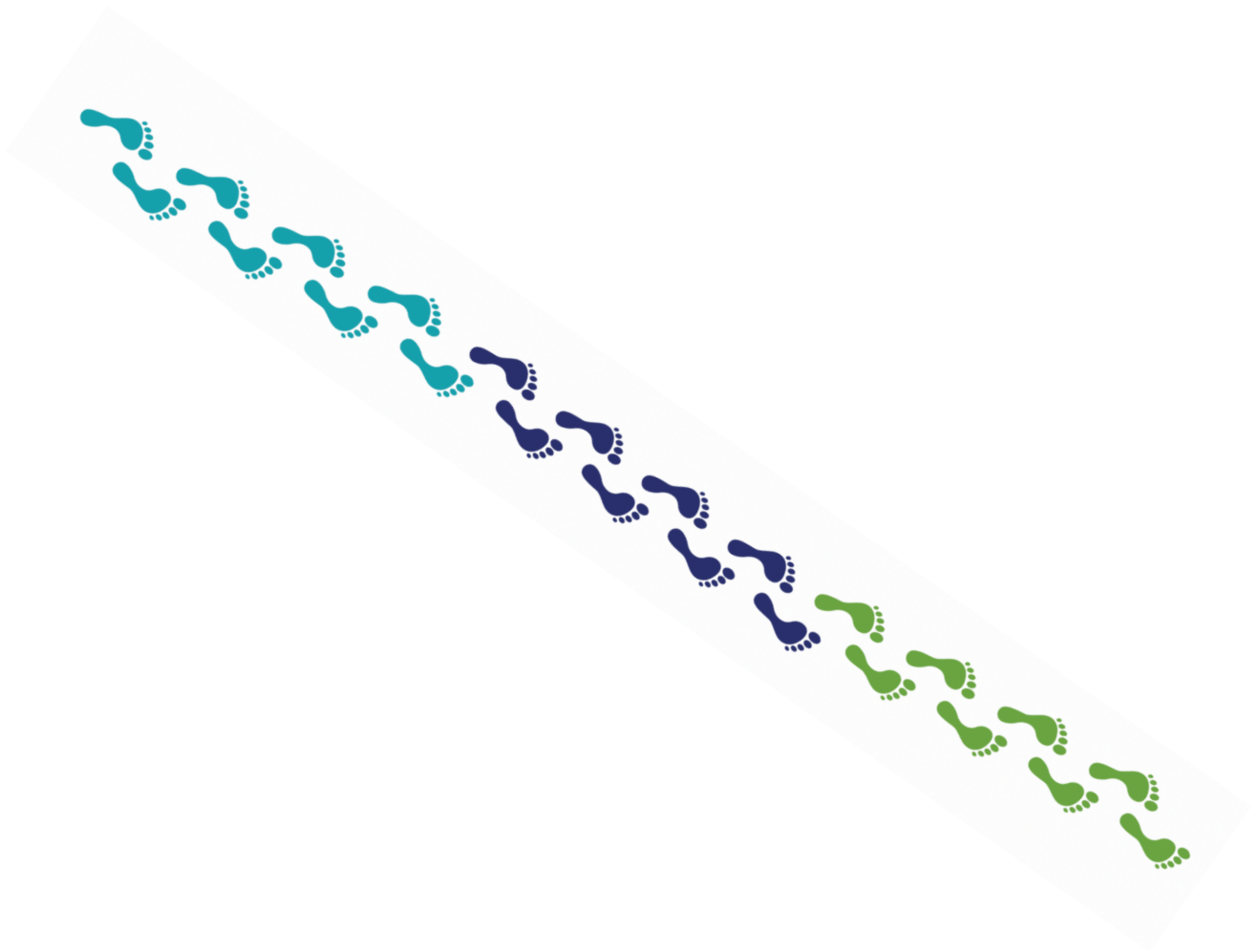


Understanding Migration:

Documents and Quotations



Collected by Re-Imagining Migration



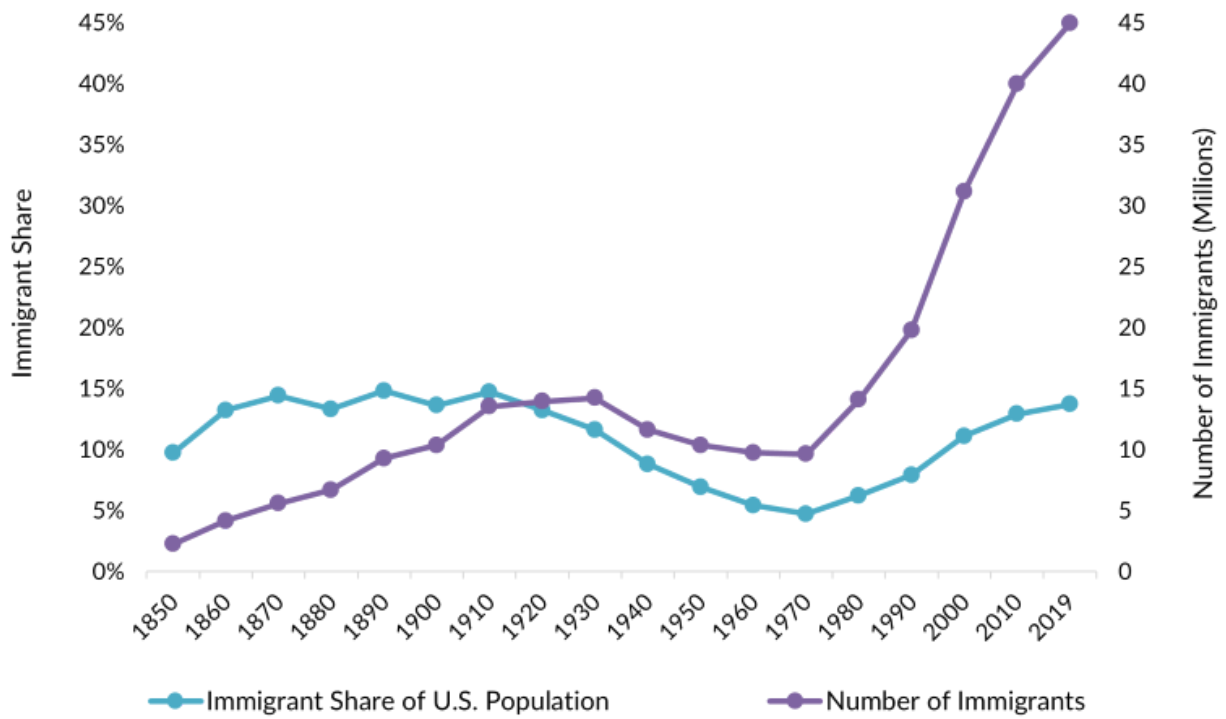
**Re-Imagining
Migration**

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This is a living document and we encourage you to share your favorite resources for us to consider adding to this collection. Because these documents are curated for teaching purposes and we selected them to represent the attitudes towards migration and immigration from the period in which they were written, many include words or ideas that we might find offensive today.

Size and Share of the Foreign-Born Population in the United States, 1850-2019 from the Migration Policy Institute



I Want to Live in America, 1961

Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

ANITA

Skyscrapers bloom in America

ROSALIA

Cadillacs zoom in America

TERESITA

Industry boom in America

BOYS

Twelve in a room in America

ANITA

Lots of new housing with more
space

BERNARDO

Lots of doors slamming in our
face

ANITA

I'll get a terrace apartment

BERNARDO

Better get rid of your accent

ANITA

Life can be bright in America

BOYS

If you can fight in America

GIRLS

Life is all right in America

BOYS

If you're all white in America

GIRLS

Here you are free and you have
pride

BOYS

Long as you stay on your own
side

GIRLS

Free to be anything you choose

BOYS

Free to wait tables and shine
shoes

BERNARDO

Everywhere grime in America
Organized crime in America
Terrible time in America

ANITA

You forget I'm in America

BERNARDO

I think I'll go back to San Juan



High Tide of Migration, 1903 Louis Dalrymple from Judge Magazine

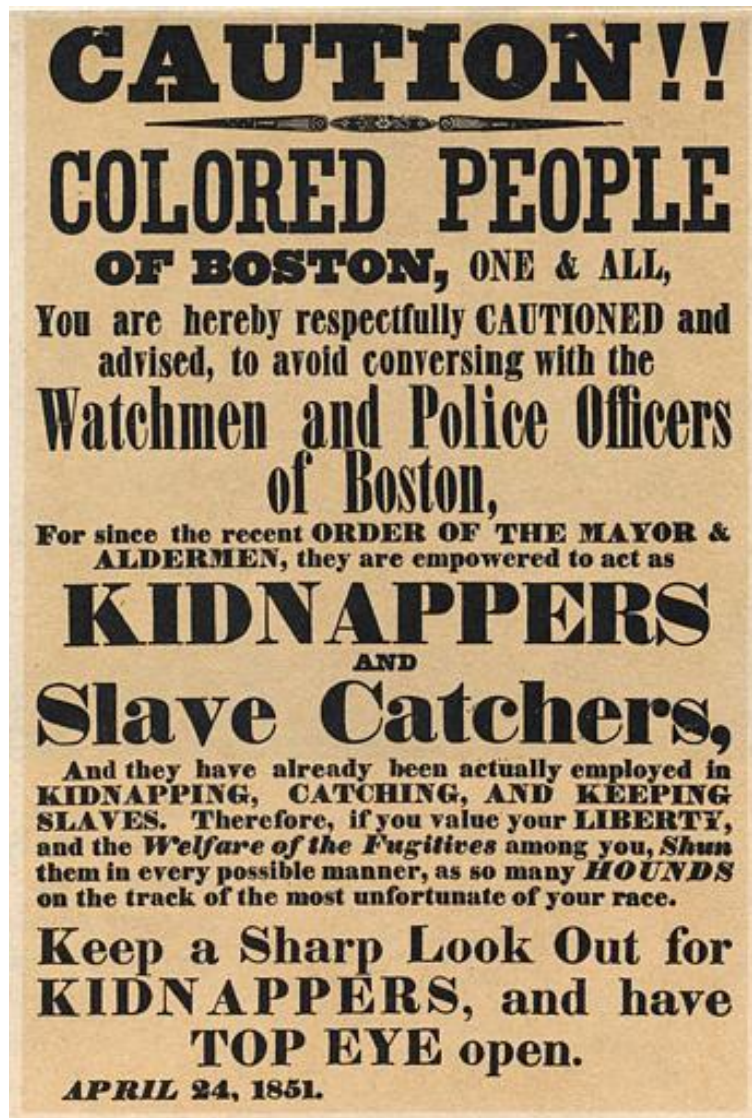
Excerpt from the Bintel Brief, 1933

Letter Asking for Advice from the Editor of the Forward

"My parents, who have been readers of your paper for years, came from Europe. They have been here in this country over thirty years and were married twenty-eight years ago. They have five sons, and I am one of them. The oldest of us is twenty-seven, and the youngest twenty-one.

We are all making a decent living. One of us works for the State Department. A second is a manager in a large store, two are in business, and the youngest is studying law. Our parents do not need our help because my father has a good job.

We, the five brothers, always speak English to each other. Our parents know English too, but they speak only Yiddish, not just among themselves but to us too, and even to our American friends who come to visit us. We beg them not to speak Yiddish in the presence of our friends since they can speak English, but they don't want to. It's a sort of stubbornness on their part, and a great deal of quarreling goes on between our parents and ourselves because of it."



1851 Poster warning black Bostonians about the dangers of "Kidnappers and Slave Catchers" after the Fugitive Slave Act.

Before the Civil War, the Negro was certainly as efficient a workman as the raw immigrant from Ireland or Germany. But, whereas the Irishmen found economic opportunity wide and daily growing wider, the Negro found public opinion determined to 'keep him in his place.'

W. E. B. Du Bois, 1901

Why should Pennsylvania, founded by the English, become a Colony of Aliens, who will shortly be so numerous as to Germanize us instead of our Anglifying them, and will never adopt our Language or Customs, any more than they can acquire our Complexion?

Benjamin Franklin, 1755

When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending the best. They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists, and some, I assume, are good people...

Donald Trump, 2015

Through this "Golden Door," under the gaze of that "Mother of Exiles," has come millions of men and women, who first set foot on American soil right there, on Ellis Island, so close to the Statue of Liberty.

These families came here to work. They came to build. Others came to America in different ways, from other lands, under different and often harrowing conditions...They brought with them courage, ambition, and the values of family, neighborhood, work, peace, and freedom. We all came from different lands, but we share the same values, the same dream.

Ronald Reagan, 1980

Americanism is not a matter of creed, birthplace or national descent, but of the soul and of the spirit. If the American has the right stuff in him, I care not a snap of my fingers whether he is Jew or Gentile, Catholic or Protestant. I care not a snap of my fingers whether his ancestors came over in the Mayflower, or whether he was born, or his parents were born, in Germany, Ireland, France, England, Scandinavia, Russia or Italy or any other country. All I ask of the immigrant is that he shall be physically and intellectually fit, of sound character, and eager in good faith to become an American citizen... The children and our children's children of all of us have to live here in this land together. Our children's children will intermarry, one another, your children's children, friends, and mine....The effort to keep our citizenship divided against itself by the use of the hyphen and along the lines of national origin is certain to breed a spirit of bitterness and prejudice and dislike between great bodies of our citizens.

Theodore Roosevelt, 1915

Every immigrant who comes here should be required within five years to learn English or leave the country.

Theodore Roosevelt, 1919

Poems from the Angel Island Immigration Station 1910-1940s

The poems were inscribed on the walls of the detention facility and were anonymous.

For a year and a half after I had been refused entry, I heard no news.
Who was to know that today I would be deported and sent back to
Tang?

On the ship, I will have to endure the waves; teardrops fall.
On a clear night, thinking it over three times, the bitterness is difficult to
bear.

Instead of remaining a citizen of China, I willingly became an Ox.
I intended to come to America to earn a living.
The Western-style buildings are so lofty, but I have not the luck to live in
them.
How was anyone to know that my dwelling place would be a prison?

While I am American by virtue of the fact that I was raised in this country, I am Indian thanks to the efforts of two individuals. I feel Indian not because of the time I've spent in India or because of my genetic composition but rather because of my parents' steadfast presence in my life. . . .

I have always believed that I lack the authority my parents bring to being Indian. But as long as they live they protect me from feeling like an impostor. Their passing will mark not only the loss of the people who created me but the loss of a singular way of life, a singular struggle. The immigrant's journey, no matter how ultimately rewarding, is founded on departure and deprivation, but it secures for the subsequent generation a sense of arrival and advantage. I can see a day coming when my American side, lacking the counterpoint India has until now maintained, begins to gain ascendancy and weight...

Jhumpa Lahiri, 2006

Remember, remember always, that all of us, and you and I especially, are descended from immigrants and revolutionists.

Franklin Roosevelt, 1938 to the Daughters of the American Revolution

I was leaving the South
To fling myself into the unknown. ...
I was taking a part of the South
To transplant in alien soil,
To see if it could grow differently,
If it could drink of new and cool rains,
Bend in strange winds,
Respond to the warmth of other suns
And, perhaps, to bloom.

Richard Wright, 1945, From American Hunger

Somos Más Americanos, 2001

Translated lyrics originally written in Spanish by Enrique Valencia

Performed by Los Tigres del Norte

They have shouted at me a thousand times I should go back to my
country

Because there's no room for me here

I want to remind the gringos: I didn't cross the border, the border
crossed to me

America was born free, but men divided it

They marked a line so that I jump it

And they can call me "invader"

And that's a very frequent mistake

They took from us eight states

Who's then the invader?

I'm a foreigner in my own land

And I didn't come here to cause you trouble

I'm a hard-working man

Source:

<https://lyricstranslate.com/en/somos-mas-americanos-we-are-more-american.html>

What does it mean to be an American? Is it about having a flag hang from your front porch? Being able to trace your lineage back to the Mayflower? Or is it defined by something more complicated—like where you were born and if you have the papers to prove it? For me, an immigrant from the Philippines, it's a question I'll never stop contemplating.

I was only twelve years old when I was brought to the United States to live with my grandparents. I had no idea that my family had done it illegally. It wasn't until the day I applied for a learner's permit that I discovered the shocking truth. For more than fourteen years I hid in plain sight, keeping my immigration status a secret while reporting and writing for some of the most prestigious news organizations in the country.

But I reached a point where I could no longer hide my truth. Only after publicly admitting that I was undocumented could I begin to challenge what it means to be American when the country I've called home doesn't consider me one of its own.

Jose Antonio Vargas, 2018

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Emma Lazarus, 1883, The New Colossus

Chinese Exclusion Act, 1882

Whereas in the opinion of the Government of the United States the coming of Chinese laborers to this country endangers the good order of certain localities within the territory thereof: Therefore,

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That from and after the expiration of ninety days next after the passage of this act, and until the expiration of ten years next after the passage of this act, the coming of Chinese laborers to the United States be, and the same is hereby, suspended; and during such suspension, it shall not be lawful for any Chinese laborer to come, or having so come after the expiration of said ninety days to remain within the United States.

SEC. 2. That the master of any vessel who shall knowingly bring within the United States on such vessel, and land or permit to be landed, any Chinese laborer, from any foreign port or place, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and on conviction thereof shall be punished by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars for each and every such Chinese laborer so brought, and maybe also imprisoned for a term not exceeding one year.



The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African. Written by Himself. Vol. I.

The first object which saluted my eyes when I arrived on the coast was the sea, a slave ship, which was then riding at anchor, and waiting for its cargo. These filled me with astonishment, which was soon converted into terror, when I was carried on board. I was immediately handled, and tossed up to see if I were sound, by some of the crew; and I was now persuaded that I had gotten into a world of bad spirits and that they were going to kill me. . . indeed, such were the horrors of my views and fears at the moment, that, if ten thousand worlds had been my own, I would have freely parted with them all to have exchanged my condition with that of the meanest slave in my own country. When I looked round the ship too and saw a large furnace of copper boiling and a multitude of black people of every description chained together, every one of their countenances expressing dejection and sorrow, I no longer doubted of my fate...

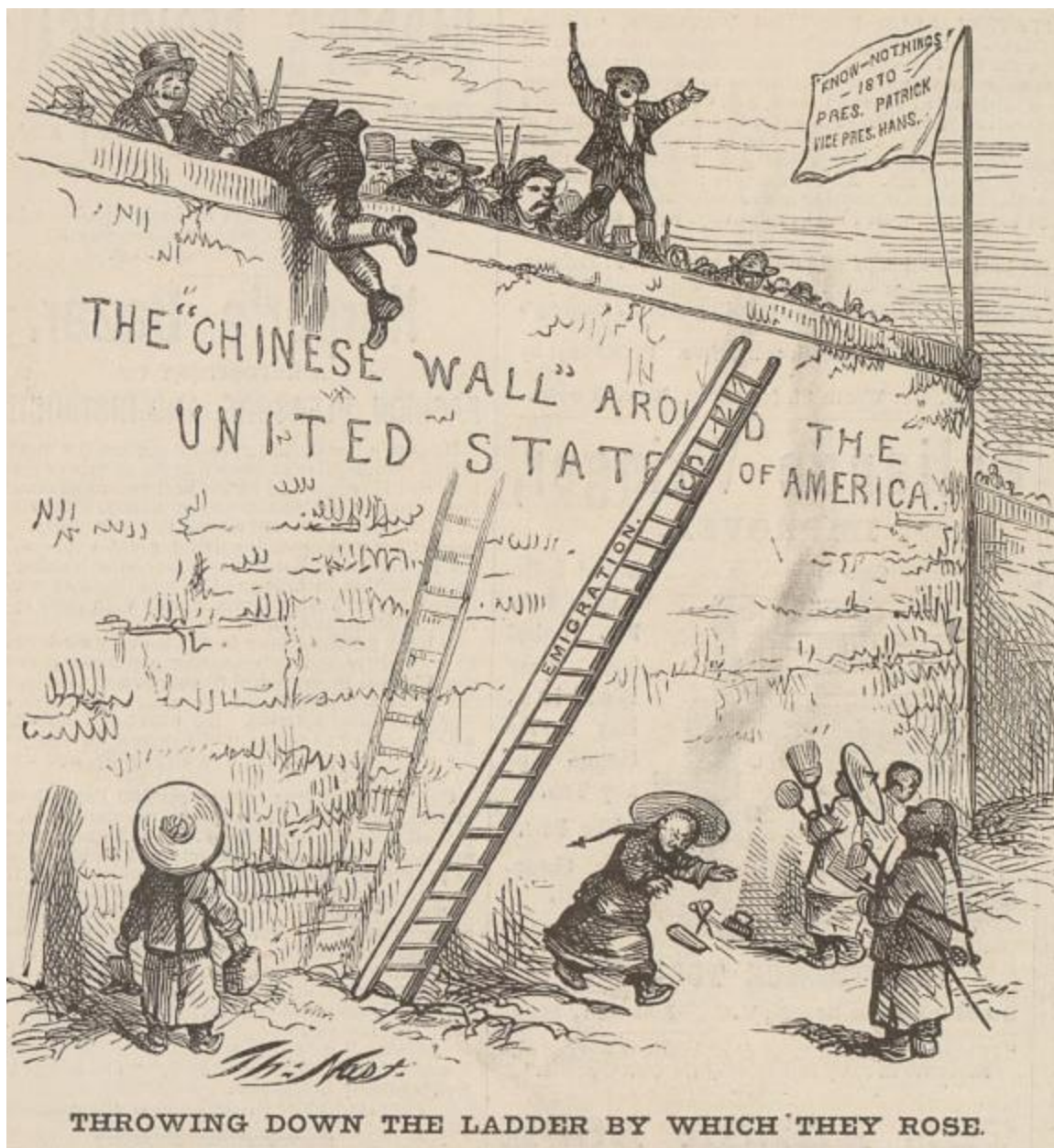
Olaudah Equiano, 1789

From where I stood, the Statue of Liberty was a fluorescent green fleck against the sky, and beyond her sat Ellis Island, the focus of so many myths; but it had been built too late for those early Africans - who weren't immigrants in any case - and it had been closed too soon to mean anything to the later Africans like Kenneth, or the cabdriver, or me.

Teju Cole, 2012 from Open City

1889, Mortar of Assimilation, Macia Kass from Puck Magazine





Thomas Nast, 1870

Description of the aftermath of pogrom from the 1906 Cowen Report on Jewish Migration from Russia for the US Government

550 homes representing 2,300 persons, were burned or plundered and the loss was over a million roubles. As the immediate result of the pogrom 100 families went of themselves to the United States, and 31 to Argentine and Canada, 150 houses were burnt, representing the best in the place, 75 were directly killed, 200 wounded, of whom 25 died subsequently, and 70 were rendered incapable of self-support. The only non-Jew hurt was a German who had sought to defend the Jews. For his pains his home, one of the finest in the place, was burnt to the ground. He was given a little financial relief by the Jewish committee, but is ruined and cannot rebuild.

May 11th, 1848.

Dear Mother, I should like to have you come over here very much if you think that you would be strong enough to stand the voyage. I hope you will leave that starved country and come over here in the spring. I am happy now but I should be still more happy if I could see you once more and have you here with me. [Crossed out: "But I don't want you to come if you don't think of yourself strong enough to work"]

Mary Garvey, 1850, writing from Hightstown, New Jersey, to her mother in Ireland.

I didn't want to be an immigrant. I was forced to be an immigrant.
Alexis de Tocqueville, the French writer, said that the powerful and the happy never go into exile. He was right.

Jorge Ramos, 2016

And then it occurs to me. They are frightened. In me, they see their own daughters, just as ignorant, just as unmindful of all the truths and hopes they have brought to America. They see daughters who grow impatient when their mothers talk in Chinese, who think they are stupid when they explain things in fractured English. They see that joy and luck do not mean the same to their daughters, that to these closed American-born minds "joy luck" is not a word, it does not exist. They see daughters who will bear grandchildren born without any connecting hope passed from generation to generation.

Amy Tan, *The Joy Luck Club*, 1989

In America, my voice is only powerful within our home. The moment I exit our front door and enter the paved streets, my deep voice loses its volume and its strength. When I speak English, I become like a leaf in the wind.

Kao Kalia Yang, *The Song Poet: A Memoir of My Father*, 2017

In 1797 a member of Congress argued that, while a liberal immigration policy was fine when the country was new and unsettled, now that America had reached its maturity and was fully populated, immigration should stop—an argument which has been repeated at regular intervals throughout American history.”

“The famous words of Emma Lazarus on the pedestal of the Statute of Liberty read: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." Until 1921 this was an accurate picture of our society. Under present law it would be appropriate to add: "as long as they come from Northern Europe, are not too tired or too poor or slightly ill, never stole a loaf of bread, never joined any questionable organization, and can document their activities from the past two years.

John F. Kennedy, A Nation of Immigrants, 1958

"They told us to strive for assimilation. The quicker we transformed into one of the many the better. But how could we choose? The U.S. was the land that saved us; Colombia was the land that saw us emerge."

Ingrid Rojas Contreras, *Fruit of the Drunken Tree*, 2018

"Yet it is said that our present movements are our own voluntary acts — such is not the case. We found ourselves like a benighted stranger, following false guides, until he was surrounded on every side, with fire and water. The fire was certain destruction, and a feeble hope was left him of escaping by water. A distant view of the opposite shore encourages the hope; to remain would be inevitable annihilation. Who would hesitate, or who would say that his plunging into the water was his own voluntary act?"

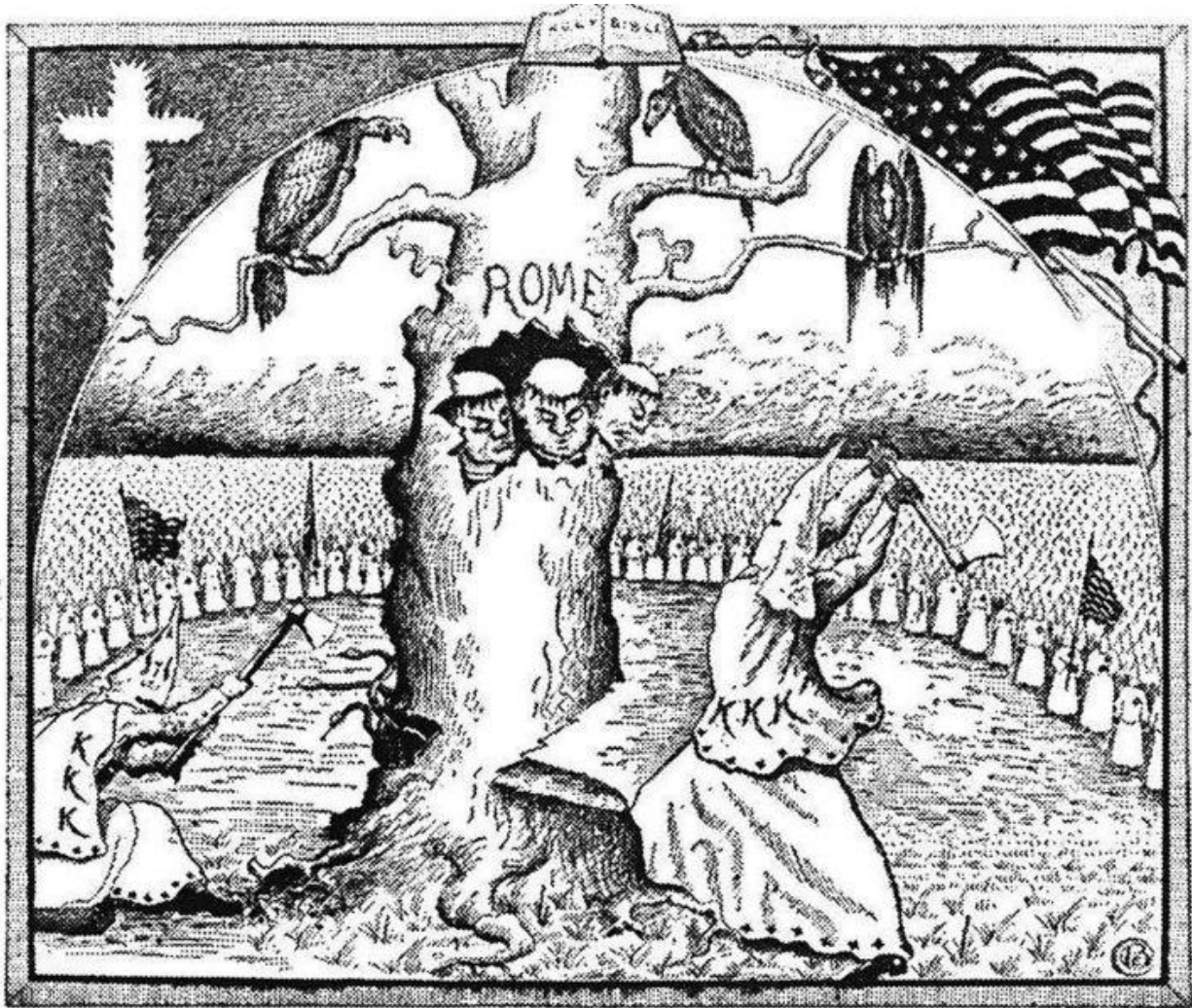
George Harkins, *Choctaw Chief, To the American People*, 1832

Lewis Hine, 1905 Italian Family at Ellis Island



1888 Newspaper notice describing a resolution not to hire Italian workers.

1920's Klan Anti-Catholic, Anti-Italian Image

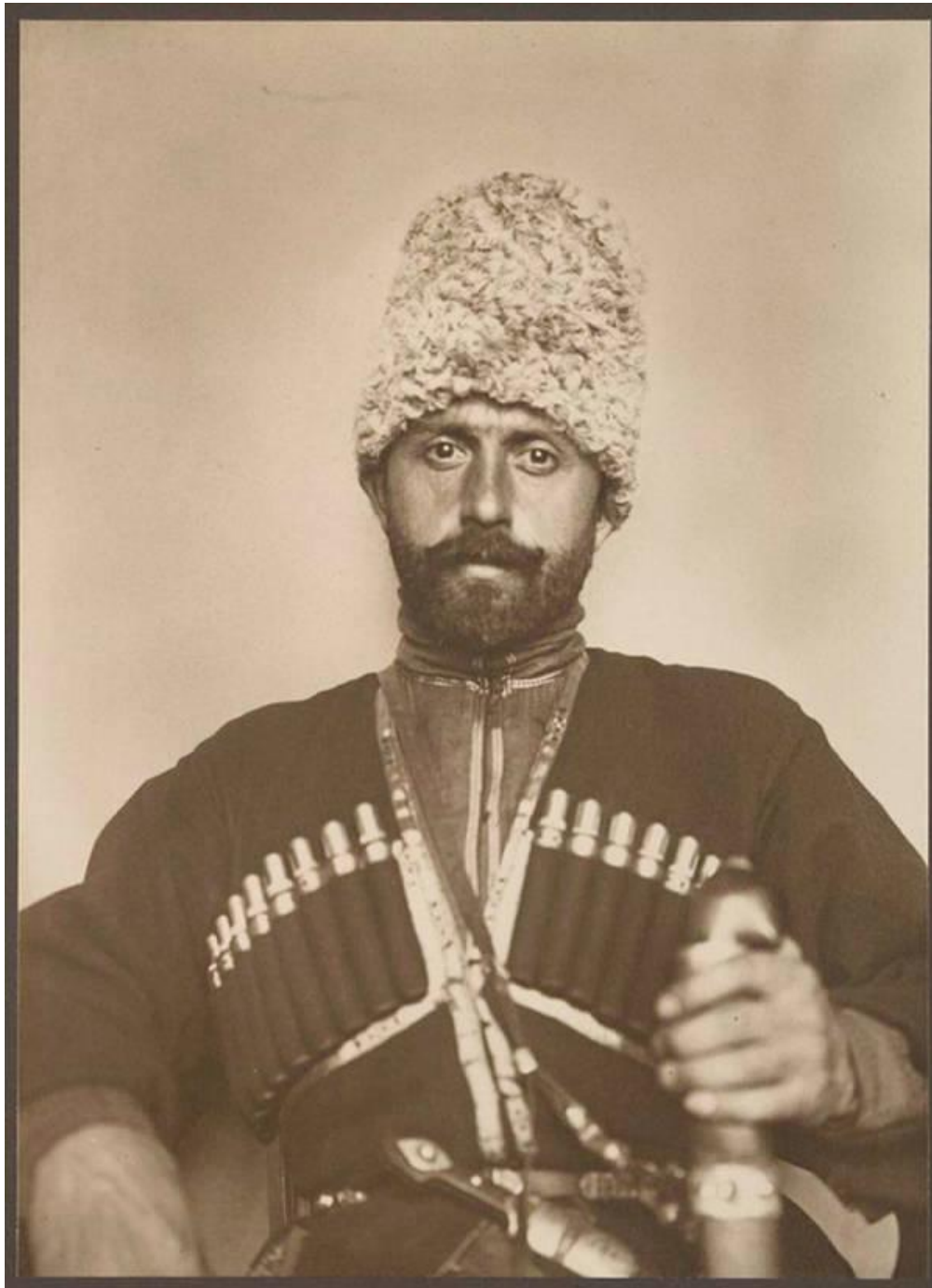


THIS TREE MUST COME DOWN

Augustus F. Sherman, 1906-1914, Thee women from Guadeloupe



Augustus F. Sherman, 1906-1914, A man from the Russian empire



Augustus F. Sherman, Algerian Man, 1906-1914



The Know-Nothing Platform 1856

- (1) Repeal of all Naturalization Laws.
- (2) None but Americans for office.
- (3) A pure American Common School system.
- (4) War to the hilt, on political Romanism.
- (5) Opposition to the formation of Military Companies, composed of Foreigners.
- (6) The advocacy of a sound, healthy and safe Nationality.
- (7) Hostility to all Papal influences, when brought to bear against the Republic.
- (8) American Constitutions & American sentiments.
- (9) More stringent & effective Emigration Laws.
- (10) The amplest protection to Protestant Interests.
- (11) The doctrines of the revered Washington.
- (12) The sending back of all foreign paupers.
- (13) Formation of societies to protect American interests.
- (14) Eternal enmity to all those who attempt to carry out the principles of a foreign Church or State.
- (15) Our Country, our whole Country, and nothing but our Country.

The Unwritten Letter From My Immigrant Parents, Muna Abdulahi, 2020

My daughter
When you came up to me at five years old
and told me you wanted to be just like me when you grew up
Parents are usually filled with joy
But me
My heart dropped to the floor because I wasn't my daughter
I couldn't bear to tell you at five years old I wasn't you
Are too young and too spoiled to understand
My daughter, I pray to god everyday you don't understand what it's
like to be me
How it feels to work endless hours day in and day out
and still have time to spend endless nights trying to know a
language
that doesn't even know how to pronounce you correctly
That tells you to go back to a country many die to escape from
My daughter I did not bring you here to be anything like me
You see the reason I push you to be a lawyer or a doctor isn't
because of the money
it was never about the money
It is because we live in a system that expects nothing but less from
you
so in this household I expect everything but less from you
My daughter
You are called the first generation for a reason
It is because the American dream was never meant for me
It was always, always meant for you
So my daughter take my culture and our native tongue
and speak, learn, jump, fail, fall, speak, learn, jump, fail, fall, and get
back up, my daughter
The best of me lives in you
So speak

"Here...is the dilemma, and it is a puzzling one, I admit. No Negro who has given earnest thought to the situation of his people in America has failed, at some time in life, to find himself at these crossroads; has failed to ask himself at some time: What, after all, am I? Am I an American, or am I a Negro? Can I be both? Or is it my duty to cease to be a Negro as soon as possible and be an American? If I strive as a Negro, am I not perpetuating the very cleft that threatens and separates Black and White America? Is not my only possible practical aim the subduction of all that is Negro in me to the American? Does my black blood place upon me any more obligation to assert my nationality than German, or Irish or Italian blood would?"

W.E.B. DuBois, 1897. The Conversation of the Races

No Irish Need Apply, Song Lyrics 1862

So I went to see the blaggard with his 'No Irish Need Apply' [sign]
Some may think it a misfortune to be christened Pat or Dan
But to me it is an honor to be born an Irishman
I started out to find the house, I got it mighty soon
There I found the old chap seated, he was reading the Tribune
I told him what I came for, when he in a rage did fly
"No!" he says, "you are a Paddy, and no Irish need apply"
Well I gets my dander risin', I'd like to black his eye
To tell an Irish gentleman, 'No Irish Need Apply'
Some may think it a misfortune to be christened Pat or Dan
But to me it is an honor to be born an Irishman

Dorothea Lange, 1942



Note: The photograph shows the Wanto Co. store located at 401 – 403 Eighth and Franklin Streets in Oakland, California. The business was owned by the Matsuda family. December 8, 1942,

House Resolution 442, 1988

Title I: United States Citizens of Japanese Ancestry and Resident Japanese Aliens - Civil Liberties Act of 1988 - Requests the President, upon the recommendation of the Attorney General, to offer pardons to those convicted of violating laws or executive orders during the internment period because they refused to accept treatment which discriminated on the basis of their Japanese ancestry.

Provides that Federal departments and agencies that review applications for restitution of positions, status, or entitlement lost during the internment period shall review the applications with liberality, giving full consideration to the findings of the Commission and the declarations of the Congress.

Establishes within the Treasury a Civil Liberties Public Education Fund (the Fund). Terminates the Fund after all authorized funds have been expended or ten years after enactment of this Act, whichever occurs first. Authorizes appropriations.

Directs the Attorney General to: (1) identify and locate each eligible individual; and (2) pay from the Fund \$20,000 to each eligible individual. Makes a refusal to accept payment irrevocable. Declares that acceptance of payment shall be in full satisfaction of all related claims against the United States. Provides that payments shall be considered as damages for human suffering for purposes of Federal taxes and shall not be included in determining eligibility to receive certain income-based Federal benefits.

Fea, 2016, Lyrics to No Hablo Español,

When I was younger, I was told in order to succeed
What would I do, forget about my native history
To get this started, let's forget about the Spanish tongue
And learn the language now, and while you were young

To get ahead, you gotta play by the rules
Get rid of books about us and the U.S. fools
To get ahead, you'd have to be understood
Don't worry, honey, it's for your own good

This is what I remember: ("No hablo español")
My past did not surrender (No hablo español)
To all your bigotry (No hablo español)
The path is you and me (No hablo español)

Told to dilute ourselves just to fit in
Water down culture in hopes that we'll blend in
Still segregated means we'll feel ashamed
I won't be silenced, no, I won't be tamed

Do you ever see your parents, and you see the mortality in them? I'm looking at my dad and I see all five-seven of him. And that's when I realize I'm a darapok. I'm a scaredy-cat. We can speak two languages. We can speak at home and outside. I should have said something. I didn't. We sit down. I hear "thud, thud, thud" outside. Me and Dad run outside and all the windows on the Camry are smashed in. My backpack's open. "Fuck, they stole my stuff." I reach and I pull out my backpack. Pieces of glass get caught in my arm. Now blood is gushing down my arm, and I'm pissed, I'm fucking mad. Fuck this, man! These kids know where we live, they're timing this, so they're watching us. So I'm looking in the trees, the bushes... I look back in the middle of the street, my dad is in the middle of the road sweeping glass out of the road like he works at a barbershop. "We've got customers. Log kya kahenge? We've got to clean this up." Zen! Brown Mr Miyagi, just, like, not saying a word. I'm like, "Why aren't you saying something? I'm asking you, say something!" He looks at me and goes, "Hasan..." [speaking Hindi] [speaking Hindi] "These things happen, and these things will continue to happen. That's the price we pay for being here." That's when I was like, "We really are from two different generations."...My dad's from that generation where he feels like if you come to this country, you pay the American dream tax. You endure racism, and if it doesn't cost you your life, pay it. There you go, Uncle Sam. But for me, I was born here. So I actually have the audacity of equality. I'm like, "I'm in Honors Gov, I have it right here. Life, liberty, pursuit of happiness. All men created equal." It says it right here, I'm equal. I'm equal. I don't deserve this.

Hasan Minaj, 2017, Homecoming King

OHIO

HISTORICAL
MARKER

CINCINNATI'S GERMAN HERITAGE

Cincinnati, along with Milwaukee and St. Louis, is one of the three corners of the "German Triangle," so-called for its historically high concentration of German-American residents. During the 19th century, Cincinnati was both a destination for immigrants to the tri-state area and a hub from which many groups of Germans moved inland to settle new Ohio communities — many along the Miami and Erie canal corridor which began here. German-Americans have greatly influenced the social, cultural, economic and political life of the Cincinnati area. At the turn of the 21st century, approximately half of Cincinnati's population was of German descent.

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THE OHIO BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION AND THE LONGABERGER COMPANY
GERMAN-AMERICAN CITIZENS' LEAGUE OF GREATER CINCINNATI
THE OHIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2001

22-31



OHIO
HISTORICAL
MARKER

ANTI-GERMAN HYSTERIA

The United States' declaration of war on Germany in April 1917 resulted in a tragic display of hysteria directed against everything and anything German. In Cincinnati, German teachers were dismissed from public schools, German professors were censored, German collections and publications were removed from circulation at the Public Library, businesses with German names had their names "Americanized" and, by police order, only English language public meetings could be held.

(Continued on other side)
GERMAN-AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM,
UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI
AND
OHIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2006

11-31