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## Who are the Immigrants? Let's Look in a Mirror

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# WHO ARE THE IMMIGRANTS? LET'S LOOK IN A MIRROR

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A Short History of Immigration in the USA

Foothills Humanists

August 28, 2018

Derek Wilmott, Chair

CU Commission on Latino Affairs,

# IMMIGRATION

- Why do people immigrate?
- A brief history of immigration law and policy in the United States
- Persisting immigration myths
- Immigration debate today
- How does this affect Secular Humanism?



# WHY DO PEOPLE MIGRATE?

- People immigrate for many reasons
  - Religious, political and societal persecution (real and perceived)
    - Traditionally this falls under *refugee* status
  - Lack of economic opportunities and environmental degradation
    - Few job opportunities or resource poor countries
  - War, conflict, and social unrest
  - Drought, famine, and other catastrophic events

# NEW COLOSSUS

“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  
sordid 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!”

*“When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe.” – John Muir*

## Famous Immigrants

John Muir (Naturalist and Environmentalist) – Family immigrated 1849 to join the Disciples of Christ. This sect was a stricter offshoot of the Church of Scotland. Muir was co-founder of the Sierra Club and helped establish Yosemite National Park.



reprints.longform.org John Muir and Strickeen



# IMMIGRATION LAWS AND POLICIES

- **Naturalization Act 1790**, strengthened in 1802
- 1819 Congress establishes a way to report immigration to the US
- In 1864 first commissioner overseeing immigration into the US under the Secretary of State
- Page Act 1875 Congress enacts a law prohibiting prostitutes and convicts from entering the US
- **Chinese Exclusion Act 1882** established to stop a specific ethnic group from entering the US
- **1891 Bureau of Immigration** established under the Dept. of Treasury
- Naturalization Act 1906 English language requirement for naturalization

*“A cynical, mercenary demagogic press will in time produce a people as base as itself.” – Joseph Pulitzer*

## **Famous Immigrants**

Joseph Pulitzer (Newspaper Publisher) – 1847-1911

He crusaded against big business and corruption, and helped keep the Statue of Liberty in New York.

Publisher of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch and the New York World.

A fierce competitor of William Randolph Hearst’s New York Journal.



thoughtco.com



*“Life is 10 percent what you make it, and 90 percent how you take it.” – Irving Berlin*

## **Famous Immigrants**

Irving Berlin (Composer and lyricist) –  
1888-1989

Born in Imperial Russia, arrived in the  
US at the age of 5.

His first major international hit,  
“Alexander’s Ragtime Band” in 1911.

Do you recognize these famous  
tunes? “Easter Parade,” “White  
Christmas,” “Happy Holiday,”  
“Anything You Can Do (I Can Do  
Better),” and “There’s No Business,  
Like Show Business.”



gettysimages.com



# IMMIGRATION LAWS AND POLICIES

- **1907 Immigration Act**
- 1917 Immigration Act (aka Literacy Act; imposed literacy tests and barred immigration from the Asia-Pacific Zone as well as homosexuals – sometimes known as the Asiatic Barred Zone Act)
- **1921 Emergency Quota Act** (aka Immigration Restriction Act or the Johnson Quota Act) In 1929 the quotas were made permanent
- **Mexican Repatriation** – Mass deportations of Mexicans & Mexican-Americans from the US, 1929-1936
- **1942-1964 Bracero program** – An agreement between the US & Mexico to bring migrant workers into the US (farmers and miners mainly)

*“Puerto Ricans are many colors – we are Spanish, we’re French, we’re Thai, Indian, we’re almost black, some of us.” – Rita Moreno*

## Famous Immigrants

Rita Moreno (Actress, Singer, and Dancer) – 1931-

Puerto Rican (technically not an immigrant, but an American citizen).

Her career has spanned over 70 years. *The King and I* (1956), *West Side Story* (1961), *Singin’ in the Rain* (1954), *The Four Seasons* (1981), and many TV and theatrical appearances and roles (including a role in the remake of *One Day at a Time*, 2017-)



[muppet.wikia.com](http://muppet.wikia.com)

*“I am not ashamed to say that no man I ever met was my father’s equal, and I never loved any other man as much.” – Hedy Lamarr*

## **Famous Immigrants**

Hedy Lamarr (Actress and Inventor) – 1914-2000

Lamarr was born Hedwig Eva Maria Keisler in Vienna, Austria-Hungary. She put “Hebrew” as her race when she left Nazi controlled Austria.



Publicity photo for the film *The Heavenly Body*, 1944 [wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hedy_Lamarr)



# IMMIGRATION LAWS AND POLICIES

- **1948 Displaced Persons Act** – Permanent residence of 200,000 displaced persons from European countries (mainly victims of Nazi persecution)
- **1952 Immigration and Nationality Act**
- 1953 Refugee Relief Act (A 2<sup>nd</sup> resettlement law for those fleeing Communist Eastern Bloc countries, admitted 214,000 DP)
- **1965 Immigration and Nationality Act – Ended quota limits**, set preference standards (set a limit of 170,000 immigrants)
- **1966 Cuban Adjustment Act** (from 1996-2017 “**Wet foot, dry foot**”); permanent residency after being in the US for 1 year; 55,000 visas for Cubans to enter US each year
- **1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act**
- **1990 Immigration Act** – Increased immigration to 675,000/year, family-based immigration visa, 5 distinct employment visas, a diversity visa program, and removed the English testing for naturalization and the ban on homosexuals.

*“Music is for people. The word ‘pop’ is simply short for popular. It means that people like it. I’m just a normal jerk who happens to make music. As long as my brain and fingers work, I’m cool.”*  
– Eddie Van Halen

## Famous Immigrants

Eddie Van Halen (Musician, Singer-Songwriter, and producer) – 1955-

Born in Amsterdam, Netherlands and became a US citizen in 1962.



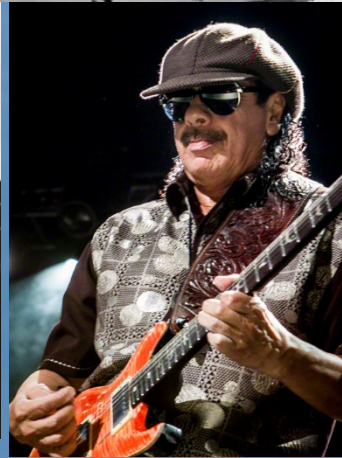
[flicker.com/photos/alan-light/211282672](https://www.flickr.com/photos/alan-light/211282672)



# IMMIGRATION LAWS AND POLICIES

- **1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act**
- 1998 Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA)
- **2002 Homeland Security Act** – Largest government restructuring since the Dept of Defense was created
- 2005 Real ID Act – New standard for state issued drivers licenses & ID cards; changing visa limits for temp workers, nurses, & Australian citizens; and waving laws that interfere with construction of barriers along the borders
- **2012 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA or Dream Act)**

# MANY OTHER FAMOUS IMMIGRANTS





# PERSISTING IMMIGRATION MYTHS

1. Immigrants don't pay taxes and "freeload" off the backs of the welfare system
2. Immigrants don't want to learn English because they want to make Spanish our national language and take over our culture.
3. Immigration to the United States has increased over the last century.
4. Immigrants on average are dramatically less educated than native-born Americans.
5. Immigrants cause unemployment because they take jobs from native-born Americans.



# IMMIGRATION DEBATE TODAY

According to the Council on Foreign Relations:

- Immigrants make up about 14% of the U.S. population: More than 43 million out of 323 million people (US Census Bureau). Immigration has steadily increased, since the 1970s. There are proportionally fewer immigrants today than in 1890.
- Undocumented population has remained flat since 2008 at 11 million people (3.4% of the entire US population)
  - More than half of this number have been here more than 10 years.
- Legal immigration is at 1.2 million each year (legal residency)
- A Gallup poll found that 71% of Americans think immigration is a good thing for the US, with 76% of Republicans favoring a path to citizenship.
- Current President has issued Executive Orders to reduce or ban immigrants:
  1. Construct a border wall between US and Mexico & expanded “expedited removal”
  2. Focused on interior enforcement: restricting federal funds to so-called sanctuary jurisdictions
  3. Banning nationals from Iran, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen for 90 days and Syria indefinitely, and suspended refugees for 120 days.



# Countries of origin for unauthorized immigrants in the U.S.

Vivian Yee, Kenan Davis, and Jugal K. Patel, 6 Mar 2017. "Here's the Reality About Illegal Immigrants in the United States," NY Times online, viewed 24 Aug 2018



# HOW DOES THIS AFFECT SECULAR HUMANISM?

- A Humanist Statement on [Separating Families at the US Border](#)
- [Resolution](#) on Global Community & International Affairs
- [Social Justice](#) “Regardless of race, ethnicity, economic status, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious beliefs or non-belief, or citizenship, all individuals have universal human rights that must be respected and protected.”
- American Atheists Statement on Supreme Court’s [Travel Ban Ruling](#)

**QUESTIONS?**

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