

# **Borders of Change**

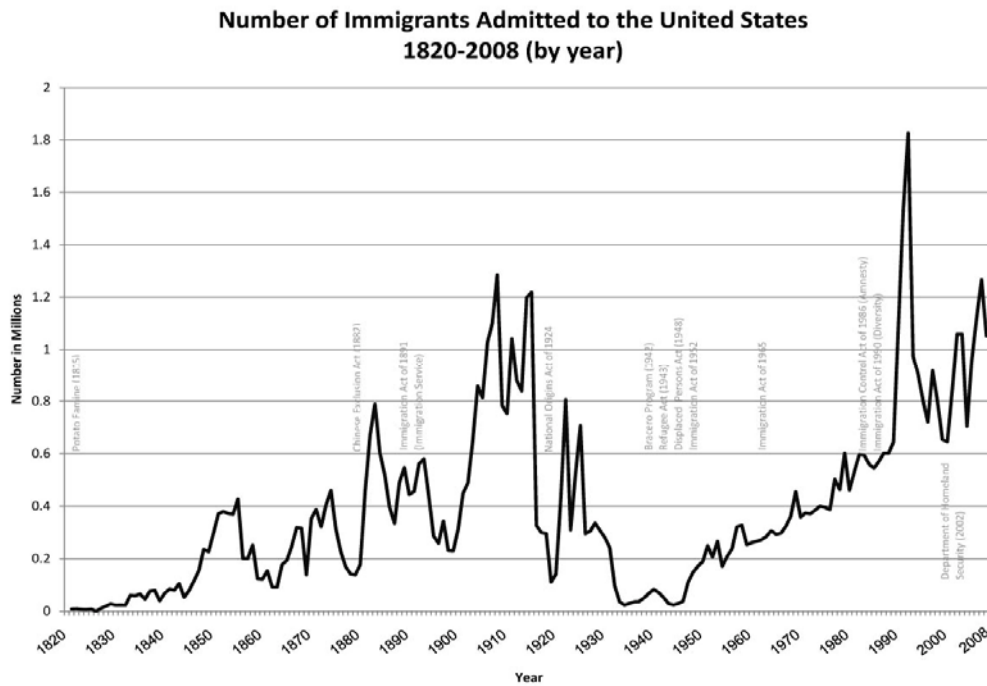
**A Drama about Immigration and the  
Immigration Act of 1965**

**Teaching American History Project  
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## Borders of Change A Drama about Immigration and the Immigration Act of 1965 Background Narrative

Early foreign immigration to the United States was dominated by people from Western Europe (including Great Britain, France and Germany). Therefore, the culture and religion (Protestantism) of Western Europe dictated early political, social and economic development. By 1900, America was one of the strongest industrial powers in the world. To support the rise of industry and business, however, great amounts of cheap labor were needed. Beginning around 1880, in conjunction with industrialization, immigration to the United States by those looking for new opportunities and riches began increasing rapidly from countries outside of Western Europe. By the 1920s popular opinion began turning against the tide of this new immigration trend and severe restrictions were implemented. These restrictions remained until the 1960s.



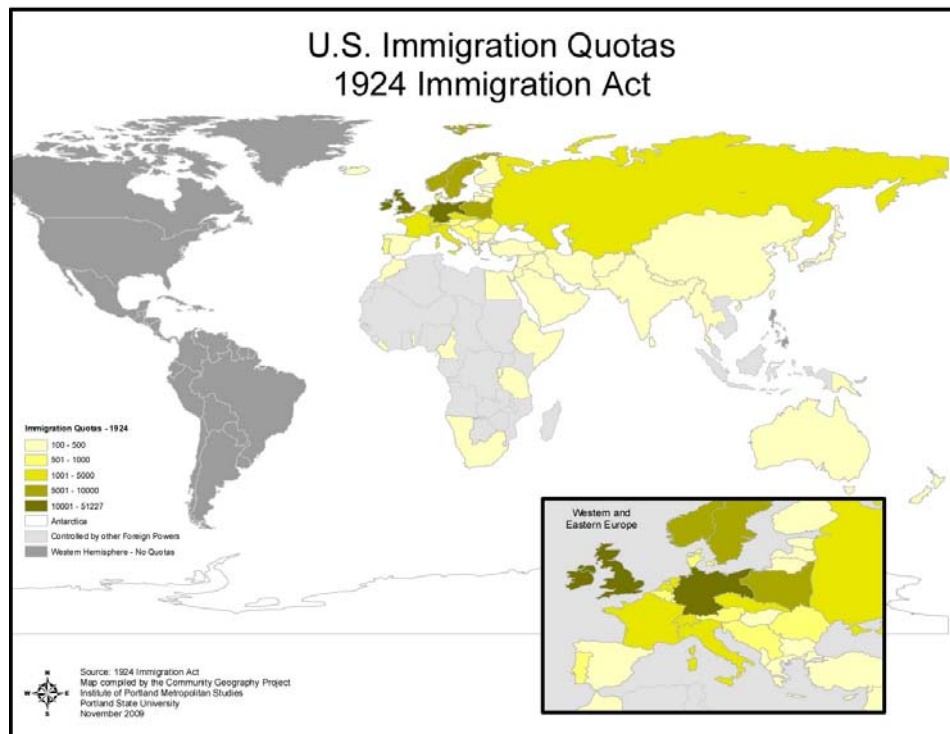
Source: Immigration & Naturalization Service, Statistical Yearbook (2008)

Citation: Graph prepared by the Teaching American History Project, Portland State University based on data from the Immigration & Naturalization Service (available for download at [http://www.upa.pdx.edu/IMS/currentprojects/TAHV3/Immigration\\_Act.html](http://www.upa.pdx.edu/IMS/currentprojects/TAHV3/Immigration_Act.html)).

Most new immigrants during this industrialization period came from Eastern and Southern Europe due to negative conditions in their home countries that “pushed” them out or opportunities or promises of a better life that “pulled” them toward the United States (these are referred to as “push/pull factors”). For example, organized massacres in Russia against Jews -- called *pogroms* -- compelled many to seek asylum in the United States. Similarly, many Polish Catholic peasants wanted to escape a bleak existence of forced conscription (like a military draft) and Irish immigrants sought to find land for farming that was unavailable in their home country. Family members that had already settled in the United States, the availability of land, and the pull of potential new jobs made America a popular destination.

Nativist politics at the time opposed these new immigrants and most of the new arrivals faced racial and cultural prejudice and discrimination. Nativism typically means opposition to immigration or efforts to lower the political or legal status of specific ethnic or cultural groups because the groups are considered hostile or alien to the “natural” culture, and it is assumed that they cannot be assimilated. In addition, labor leaders and various other groups believed that these immigrants competed for jobs and possibly brought in radical political ideas (like socialism or communism). The Ku Klux Klan (KKK), for example, experienced a revival in membership in the late 1910s/1920s in response to negative attitudes about immigration. The group not only targeted African Americans, but also Jews, Catholics, and other “undesirable” immigrant groups.

Congress passed the Emergency Quota Act of 1921 in response to nativist pressures and anti-immigrant sentiment. This Act set up a quota system that established a maximum number of people who could enter the U.S. each year from a particular country. Each country was granted an annual quota not to exceed 2% of the number of the country’s nationals living in the U.S. in 1890 (Brinkley, 266). Because immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe didn't arrive in large numbers until around 1900, this Act deliberately and severely reduced the number of new immigrants allowed from these regions and gave preference to immigrants from Western Europe. In 1924, the National Origins Act reaffirmed and refined the 1921 Quota Act in order to limit non-European immigration as well (primarily from Asia). Further revisions in 1929 reduced the total immigrant limit to 150,000 annually (from a high of about 1.3 million in 1900) and excluded all Japanese immigrants (Brinkley, 267). Rates of immigration plummeted (see graph above). For the next forty years, these laws defined who was allowed to immigrate to the United States.

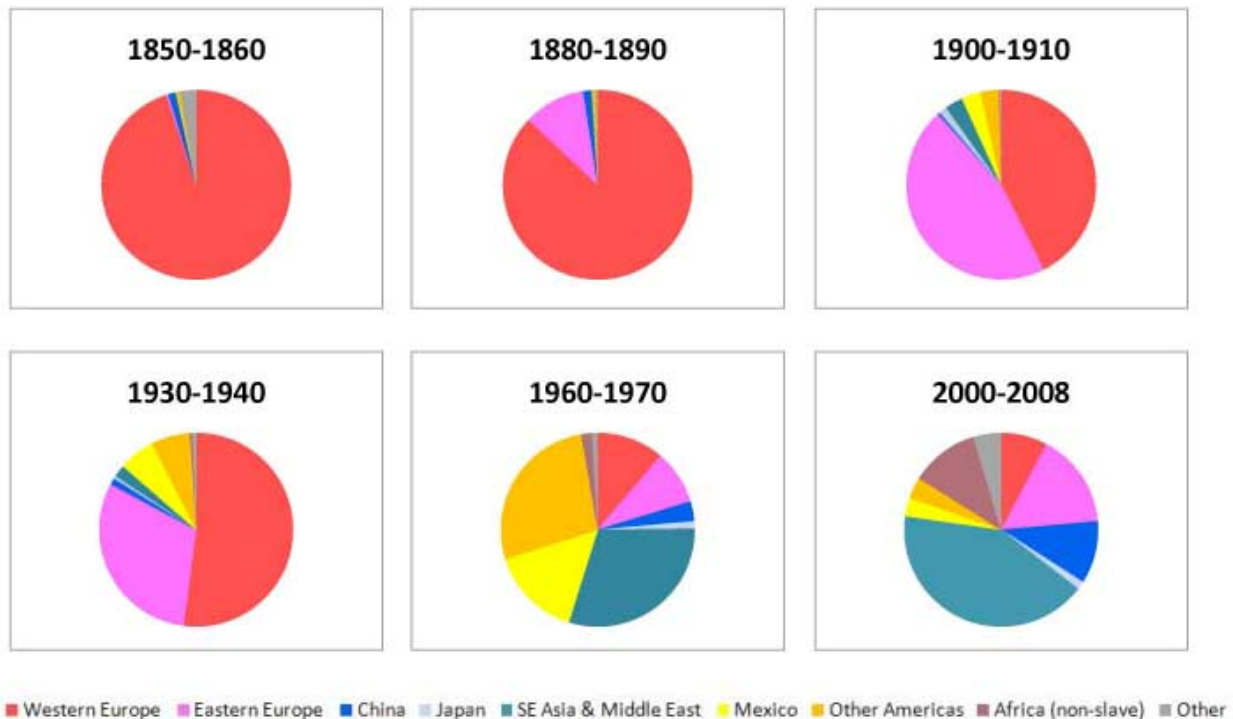


Citation: Map shows the total quota allowed from particular countries. Prepared by the Teaching American History Project, Portland State University (available for download at [http://upa.pdx.edu/IMS/currentprojects/TAHv3/Immigration\\_Act.html](http://upa.pdx.edu/IMS/currentprojects/TAHv3/Immigration_Act.html)).

After WWII, the U.S. modified its immigration policy to include refugees and displaced persons, such as immigrants fleeing the now communist-controlled Eastern European countries and Holocaust survivors, from countries that had previously been restricted. Thousands of “war brides” (from Asia and Europe) also immigrated and reunited with their American husbands. These trends foreshadowed radical changes made to immigration policy in 1965 by slowly replacing the idea of preset immigration quotas with an immigration policy based on foreign interests and domestic political strategies.

The Immigration Act of 1965 represented radical change in U.S. immigration policy. It was passed at the height of enormous domestic civil rights change. In the context of the Cold War, as well, the Immigration Act attempted to make the United States a “beacon of democracy” and a place of refuge and escape for those suffering under Communism. A major provision in the Act abolished the national origins quota system and eliminated national origin, race, or ancestry as a basis for immigration into the United States. Over the next few decades, immigration rates increased and the U.S. population, once dominated by people with Western European (and to a lesser extent Eastern European) ancestry, became much more diverse. The following graphs show the region of origin for the foreign-born population of the United States and demonstrate this tremendous change from 1850 to 2008.

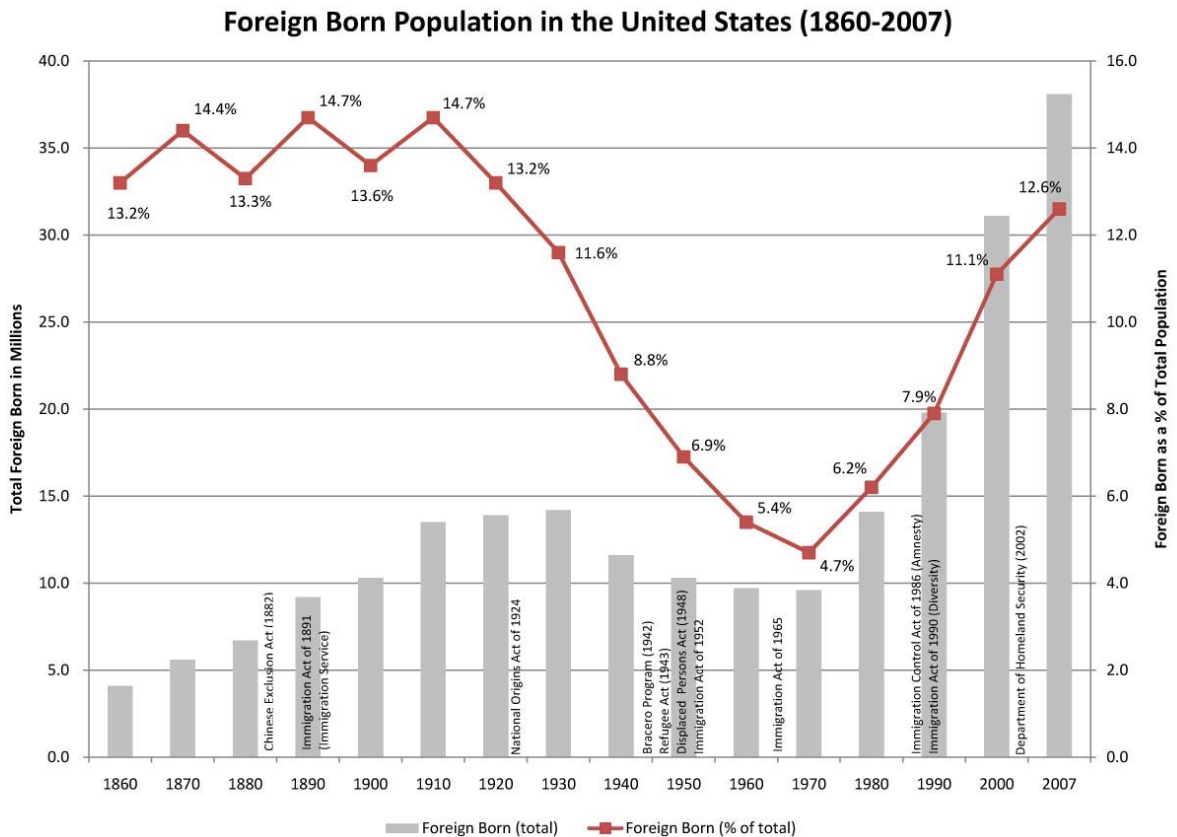
**Immigrant’s Region of Origin for Selected Key Decades  
1860-2008**



Citation: Graphs prepared by the Teaching American History Project, Portland State University, from U.S. Census data (available for download at [http://www.upa.pdx.edu/IMS/currentprojects/TAHV3/Immigration\\_Act.html](http://www.upa.pdx.edu/IMS/currentprojects/TAHV3/Immigration_Act.html)).

The Immigration Act of 1965 went into effect on July 1, 1968. Much of the motivation for passing the Act was to end racial discrimination (similar to the Civil Rights legislation also being considered during this era). Instead of quotas, the Act stipulated a preference system: unmarried adults whose parents are American citizens; spouses and offspring of permanent residents; gifted professionals, scientists, and artists; married offspring of American citizens and siblings of adult citizens; skilled/unskilled individuals of occupations lacking workers in America; and refugees from either communist or communist-controlled countries or from the Middle-East (Center for Immigration Studies).

Immigration levels slowly rose after implementation of the Immigration Act. By 2007, over 12% of the U.S. population was foreign-born as compared to a low of only 4.7% in 1970. Fewer Europeans were immigrating to the United States than in past immigration periods, but push/pull factors were still strong in other parts of the world. Wars and civil conflicts in Latin America, Africa and Asia, extreme poverty in many parts of the world, and a rising level of “chain migration” (which is the process of foreign nationals immigrating to a new country under laws permitting their reunification with family members already living in the destination country) contributed to a rise in the number of immigrants entering the U.S. each year.

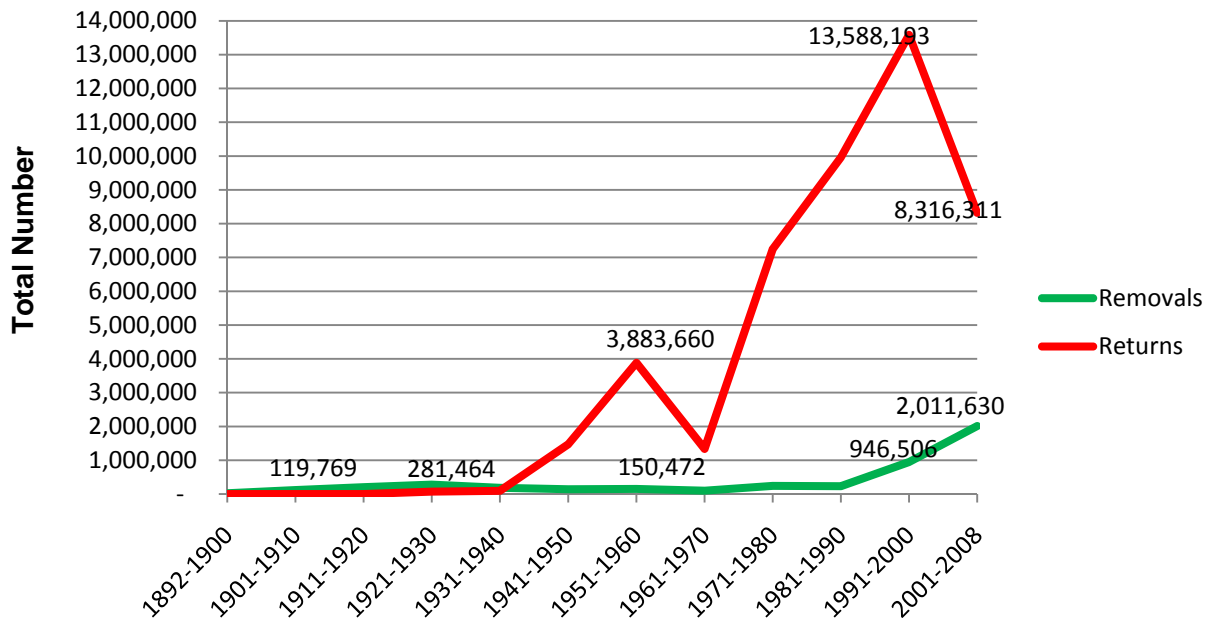


Source: U.S. Census (1860-2000); American Community Survey Population Estimates (2007)

Citation: Graph created by the Teaching American History Project, Portland State University, from US Census Data (available for download at [http://www.upa.pdx.edu/IMS/currentprojects/TAHv3/Immigration\\_Act.html](http://www.upa.pdx.edu/IMS/currentprojects/TAHv3/Immigration_Act.html)).

The 1965 Act ended overt discrimination against immigration because of race and national origin, but its preference system had unintended consequences. Prior to 1965, the U.S. government welcomed laborers through the Bracero Program, a set of policies that solicited unskilled, cheap farm and factory labor from Latin America (primarily Mexico) by issuing temporary work visas. The 1965 Immigration Act abolished the Bracero Program and limited the number of unskilled laborers to 5,000 annually as of 2010 (Solis). However, the demand for these jobs continued to grow and were not easily filled by domestic workers. The number of undocumented immigrants attempting to enter the U.S. illegally -- and being returned to their country of origin -- jumped as much as 900% after the implementation of the Act (U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service). According to Doris Meissner, a former commissioner of the INS and now a senior fellow at the non-partisan Migration Policy Institute, “There are only 5,000 visas in the system for people to come that way. There are probably 500,000 people added to the illegal population each year, and the large majority are unskilled” (Solis). This discrepancy has motivated many immigrants (primarily from Latin America and Asia) to cross the U.S. border without legal documents in search of economic and educational opportunities. In retrospect, the 1965 Immigration Act succeeded in remedying racial and ethnic discrimination, but economic inequity persists.

### Illegals Removed (Deported) or Returned by US Authorities, 1892-2008



Citation: Graph prepared by the Teaching American History Project, Portland State University from U.S. Immigration & Naturalization Service data (available for download from [http://www.upa.pdx.edu/IMS/currentprojects/TAHv3/Immigration\\_Act.html](http://www.upa.pdx.edu/IMS/currentprojects/TAHv3/Immigration_Act.html)).

When the National Origins Act of 1924 was passed, Americans were locked in a civil discourse about what it meant to “be an American.” That collective debate about legal immigration found some resolution with the 1965 Immigration Act. However, the 1965 legislation pushed the issue of illegal immigration to the forefront, and this issue continues to divide the nation as it has yet to be resolved. Citizens concerned with illegal immigration believe that undocumented

immigrants that come to the U.S. deserve a path to legal permanent residency because they fill jobs that no one else wants, pay into the system through taxes, and are rarely eligible for any form of government assistance such as unemployment benefits, welfare or food stamps. Some Americans believe that undocumented immigrants strain the schools and health care system and that more efforts should be taken to strengthen the U.S. borders and deport undocumented persons. When President Lyndon B. Johnson announced the passage of the 1965 Immigration Act, he said “When the earliest settlers poured into a wild continent there was no one to ask them where they came from. The only question was: Were they sturdy enough to make the journey, were they strong enough to clear the land, were they enduring enough to make a home for freedom, and were they brave enough to die for liberty if it became necessary to do so” (President Lyndon B. Johnson). When the U.S. government passed the landmark 1965 Immigration Act, it was intended to have immigration policy reflect the values of courage, work ethic, and contributions to the United States. The question remains: can the Immigration Act of 1965 be used as a foundation to establish a new immigration policy that simultaneously recognizes national interests while offering a just system for those seeking a better life in the United States?

**Sources:**

Brinkley, Allen, *American History: A Survey*, McGraw Hill, 11th Edition, pp. 266-267; 2003.

President Lyndon B. Johnson, *Remarks at the Signing of the Immigration Bill*, Liberty Island, New York, October 3, 1965.

Solis, Dianne, “Work Visas Scarce for Unskilled Laborers,” *The Dallas Morning News*. December 27, 2006.

Center for Immigration Studies, *Three Decades Of Mass Immigration: The Legacy of the 1965 Immigration Act*, September, 1995 (available at <http://www.cis.org/articles/1995/back395>).

**Borders of Change**  
**A Drama about Immigration and the Immigration Act of 1965**  
Background Narrative: Modified

**Vocabulary**

industrial	national origin
urban	ancestry
immigrant/immigration	policy
population	reform
push/pull factors	Communism
prejudice	Cold War
racism/racist	asylum
assimilate	diversity
Congress	demographics
quota	visa
exclude	illegal alien
criteria	inequity

**Main Ideas**

- With the rise of the industrial revolution in the mid- to late-1800s, many immigrants from Europe and Asia came to the United States to work at new jobs; people already living in the United States began to worry that these immigrants would take their jobs because they would work for lower pay.
- In order to control the number of immigrants, the 1924 National Origins Act set quotas for immigrants based on their home nation; this restricted immigrants from “undesirable” countries (Eastern Europe and Asia) and allowed more immigrants from Western Europe.
- The 1965 Immigration Act changed the law to allow immigration based on an immigrant’s individual merits (refugee status, work skills), not their home nations; this eliminated the quota restrictions on most countries and dramatically changed the population demographics of the United States (much more diversity).

**Background Narrative**

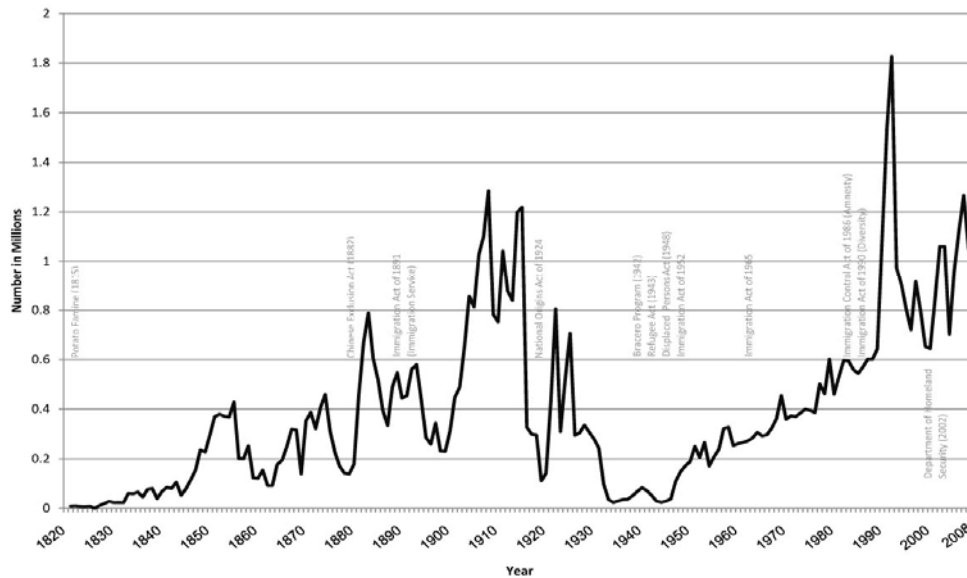
Early foreign **immigration** to the United States of America was from Western Europe (which included England, France and Germany). The language, culture and religion of these countries influenced the early political and social way of life of the U.S. **population**. By 1900, America was the strongest **industrial** nation in the world. Many large businesses created millions of new jobs, mostly in **urban** areas — large American cities like Chicago and New

York City. During this time, many **immigrants** came to the United States to work and live in these American cities.

Most new immigrants came from Eastern and Southern Europe. They came because of bad conditions like wars and poverty in their home countries that “pushed” them out and promises of jobs and a better life in America that “pulled” them into the U.S. (these are called “push/pull factors”). Many of these immigrants were Jewish refugees from Russia who were trying to escape terrible violence against them. Others were peasant Catholics from Poland and Ireland who were looking for land to farm because they were not allowed to own land in their own countries. These immigrants faced **prejudice** from some Americans who believed that they did not belong here because they were so different. They didn’t feel like these immigrants could **assimilate** into American culture. They also believed that that they took away jobs from Americans. Some **racist** groups like the Ku Klux Klan gained many more members and they targeted immigrants, Jews, Catholics and African-Americans with violent and hateful words and actions.

The Emergency Quota Act of 1921 was a law passed by Congress because they recognized that many Americans did not like immigrants. This law had a **quota** system that set a maximum number of people who could immigrate to the U.S. each year. The number was based on how many people from a particular country were already in the U.S. in 1890. This law purposefully restricted the number of people that could come from Eastern and Southern Europe (because they didn't arrive in large numbers until around 1900). In 1924, the U.S. Congress passed the National Origins Act and another revision in 1929. These were laws that further limited the total number of immigrants. The law also **excluded** Japanese immigrants. Look at the graph below to see just how much immigration dropped after 1920 because of these new laws.

### Number of Immigrants Admitted to the United States 1820-2008 (by year)



Source: Immigration & Naturalization Service, Statistical Yearbook (2008)

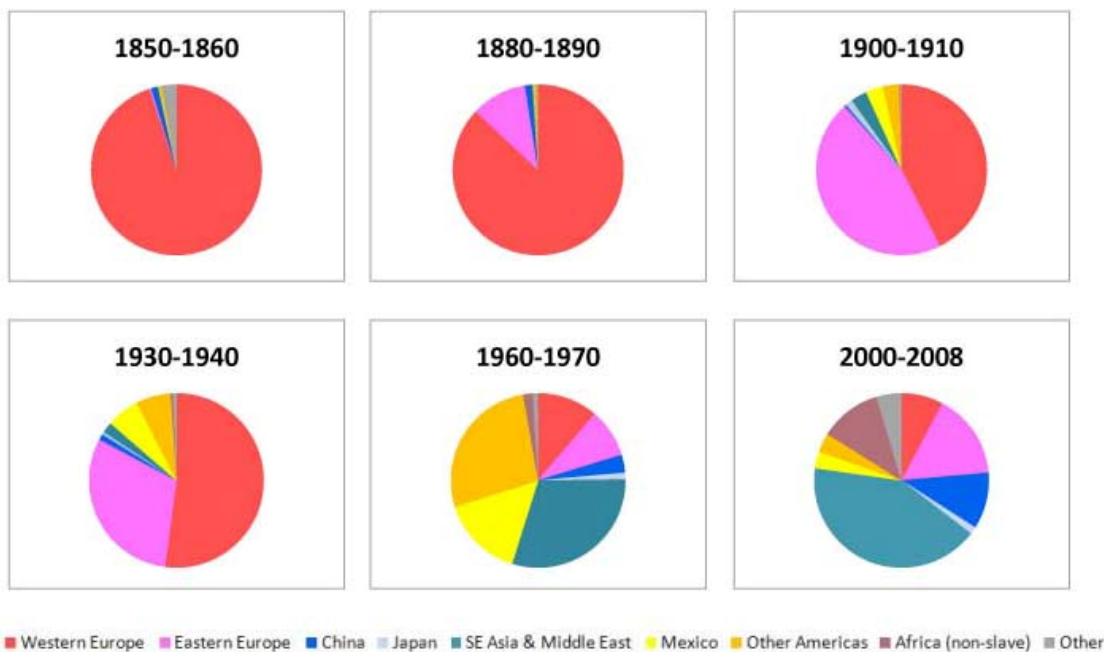
Citation: Graph prepared by the Teaching American History Project, Portland State University based on data from the Immigration & Naturalization Service (available for download at [http://www.upa.pdx.edu/IMS/currentprojects/TAHv3/Immigration\\_Act.html](http://www.upa.pdx.edu/IMS/currentprojects/TAHv3/Immigration_Act.html)).

When the U.S. Congress passed the Immigration Act of 1965, forty years later, it opened the door for many people to move to the United States. The law did away with the quota system. It created different **criteria** for immigration that did not use **national origin**, race or **ancestry** as a way to approve or deny entry. Immigrants would be allowed to enter if they were marrying a U.S. citizen, escaping a **communist** nation or a nation fighting a war, or if they had specific job skills that an employer needed.

When the Immigration Act of 1965 was passed, the United States was in a period of many changes. Immigration **policy reforms** were passed as part of the Civil Rights Movement – an effort to bring about equality and a good life for all people, including immigrants. Also, the United States was fighting a **Cold War** with the Soviet Union — a war of ideas between Soviet Communism and American Democracy. The Immigration Act of 1965 was part of an effort to show the rest of the world that the United States was a nation based on principles of justice and equality. The law intended to encourage people from other nations to seek **asylum** in a free and welcoming country such as America.

Immigration levels rose steadily after 1965. But, more important, many different people were now entering the U.S. from many different countries. This changed the amount of **diversity** in the American population. The pie charts below show just how different and diverse U.S. **demographics** are today as compared to 1850.

**Immigrant's Region of Origin for Selected Key Decades  
1860-2008**



Citation: Graphs prepared by the Teaching American History Project, Portland State University, from U.S. Census data (available for download at [http://www.upa.pdx.edu/IMS/currentprojects/TAHv3/Immigration\\_Act.html](http://www.upa.pdx.edu/IMS/currentprojects/TAHv3/Immigration_Act.html)).

Prior to 1965, a special program allowed people from Latin America (mostly Mexico) to come to the U.S. temporarily to work in the fields and factories. Temporary work **visas** were no longer easy to get after 1965. However, the demand for these kinds of jobs continued to grow. The number of **illegal aliens** entering the United States in search of economic and educational opportunities grew rapidly. The 1965 Immigration Act succeeded in reducing racial and ethnic discrimination against immigrants, but economic **inequity** persists.



# **Borders of Change**

**A Drama about Immigration and the  
Immigration Act of 1965**

# **Borders of Change**

## **A Drama about Immigration and the 1965 Immigration Act**

**Time:** Scene 1: October 3, 1965; Scenes 2 & 3: The last week of March, 1992

### **Characters**

Narrator  
President Lyndon B. Johnson  
NY Times Reporter  
Washington Post Reporter  
INS Officer  
Davik Patel (India)  
Nigel Migillicuddy (Great Britain)  
Nigel's Wife  
Rafael Marquez (Mexico)  
Refugee (Somalia)  
Refugee's Translator  
Genaro Gonzalez-Cuenca (Guatemala)  
Genaro's wife  
Genaro's daughter  
Coyote  
Driver

All characters are either real or based on true immigrant stories. The character Genaro Gonzalez-Cuenca is based on a person of the same name killed crossing I-5 in March 1992.

### **Materials**

Card stock – 8.5 x 11”  
Front: India (Reverse: ACCEPTED)  
Front: Great Britain (Reverse: ACCEPTED)  
Front: Mexico (Reverse: STILL WAITING)  
Front: Somalia (Reverse: ACCEPTED)  
Front: Guatemala (Reverse: REJECTED)  
5 sets of Paperwork (one for each immigration applicant in Scene 2)  
Family Crossing Sign (8-1/2 x 11”)  
Projector and a blank wall or screen in the back of the stage

# Scene 1

*PROJECT SLIDE #1: Statue of Liberty*

*It is October 3, 1965. With the Statue of Liberty in the background, President Lyndon Johnson speaks in New York just after Congress passed the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965. Johnson stands behind a podium on Liberty Island with grass under his feet. The sun is shining, but the air is cold and crisp with a fresh autumn breeze. A pool of press reporters stands on the side listening and taking notes. The narrator stands on the other side.*

## **Narrator**

The Immigration Act of 1965 was a pivotal event in American history. This act opened the door for many non-European immigrants to settle in the United States and radically changed the composition of the American population. The Immigration Act of 1965 replaced the National Origins Act and the Quota system. This quota system limited the number of immigrants from certain countries in Eastern Europe and Asia. Mostly, it was motivated by fear that these lower-class immigrants would take jobs away from Americans. The 1965 Act changed all that and opened the doors for many people to come to the United States from all over the world.

## **President Johnson**

“This bill that we sign today is not a revolutionary bill. It does not affect the lives of millions. It will not reshape the structure of our daily lives, or really add importantly to either our wealth or our power.”

## **Washington Post Reporter**

*(nudges the NY Times Reporter)* President Johnson just wants to make people believe that this new bill won’t change their lives. He thinks no one will notice all the problems in the bill.

## **President**

“Under the old Quota system, the ability of new immigrants to come to America depended upon the country of their birth. Only 3 countries were allowed to supply 70 percent of all the immigrants.”

“We can now believe that the new law will never again shadow the gate to the American Nation with the twin barriers of prejudice and privilege.”

**NY Times Reporter**

*(leans back towards Wash. Post reporter, whispering)* He's just trying to keep the nativists from worrying. Everyone knows he's completely opening up the floodgates to all kinds of new immigrants. This law's going to make huge changes!

## **Scene 2**

*PROJECT SLIDE #2 (world map) on back wall.*

*Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) office in March 1992. Cold, cloudy, with a light drizzle. A small room with one desk, chair behind the desk and two chairs on the other side of the desk. The desk is light wood, clean and polished. There are a few papers sitting on the desk with a phone and a desk lamp. There is a projection of a world map behind the desk. Five immigrants seeking different statuses of immigration wait outside the office (to the side) in line. Each character wears a sign. The front side states their nationality and should be visible to the audience. The back side is their immigration application status after the interview. Characters will turn the sign around after the interview and present to the audience.*

*NOTE: The questions asked by the INS Officer are taken from actual dialogue and immigration application interview forms.*

**INS Officer**

*(gestures to the first character in the line, Davik, and to the chair across the table)* – Please have a seat. Tell me your full name and reason you are here.

**Davik**

My name is Davik Patel. I am an Indian citizen. I am here to apply for a special H1B Visa so that I can work in the US for six years. I'm sponsored by an American company. I have specialized training that they need.

**INS Officer**

Which company do you currently work for?

**Davik**

I work for IBM in India.

**INS Officer**

How many years have been working for them?

**Davik**

Um, 8 years.

**INS Officer**

What are your current job responsibilities?

**Davik**

Chip design.

**INS Officer**

What is your current salary?

**Davik**

\$54,000 per year.

**INS Officer**

IBM is an excellent company, why are you leaving it?

**Davik**

For better growth and direct international exposure.

**INS Officer**

What is the name of the company you are going to work for in the USA?

**Davik**

Tektronix.

**INS Officer**

What is annual turnover of your US company?

**Davik**

Uh, I don't know.

**INS Officer**

Is this company founded by an Indian?

**Davik**

I don't think so. It's an American company.

**INS Officer**

Thank you for coming in today. I will make sure that Tektronix has submitted the proper forms for your visa. You will receive your visa when the forms are processed.

*Davik goes towards the door (on the opposite side of the stage). He turns his placard over which says ACCEPTED.*

*INS Officer signals to next in line. Nigel enters with his wife.*

**INS Officer**

Good morning, how are you? What's your name, country of origin, and situation?

**Nigel**

Good, thank you. My name is Nigel Migillicuddy, and I'm a cook from England. I'm applying for permanent residency as I've recently been married, and my wife here is an American citizen.

**INS Officer**

Congratulations to you both. Do you have a copy of the marriage certificate?

**Nigel**

Of course, here is the original and a copy. We went ahead and included all of the other forms and a copy of her social security card.

**INS Officer**

Great, thanks. You have nothing to worry about. The official residency card should arrive in 6-8 weeks.

**Nigel**

Cheers! Thanks, sir.

*Nigel walks out of the office and turns his placard over to show ACCEPTED.*

*After being cued, Rafael Marquez enters the office.*

**INS Officer**

Good morning, what can I do for you today?

**Rafael Marquez**

I come from Mexico, but I have been living in the United States with a temporary work visa for 7 years now. I have given you all my paperwork. I am waiting to obtain permanent residency. The United States is my home now. My children are getting ready to finish high school and cannot apply for financial aid for college until I get acceptance. I have been waiting so long and just want to make sure they can go to college. What can I do?

**INS Officer**

I am sorry, but we cannot rush any processing, you must wait until all of your documents are reviewed and cleared.

**Rafael**

Please, they just want to complete their education and cannot do so until we are permanent residents.

**INS Officer**

They will have to wait. Please be patient. At least they can work, and your family can continue living legally in the United States. You will have more information about your visa in the mail in 6-8 weeks.

*Rafael walks out of the INS office. Turns his placard to show STILL WAITING.*

*A Somalian Refugee and Translator enter.*

**INS Officer**

Good morning to you both. I do hope you've had safe travels.

**Somalian Refugee's Translator**

Thank you. Here is her form I-590, G-325C, our church's sponsorship affidavit, and her medical exam. She is applying for political asylum because of all the tribal conflicts with warlords have made returning to Somalia unsafe for her. She has been living in the Kenyan refugee camp for several years.

**INS Officer**

Will you tell me her story?

### **Somalian Refugee Translator**

Our church went to Kenya and found her in the refugee camp. She does not speak English and did not have anywhere else to go and no family left to care for her. Her entire family was killed in a tribal conflict shortly before she fled to Kenya. Do you think there will be any problems granting her asylum?

### **INS Officer**

I don't anticipate any problems with her gaining asylum in the US. Somalia is a dangerous place and a country that the U.S. accepts asylum requests.

*The Somalian woman and her translator walk out of the office. She turns her placard over to show ACCEPTED.*

*Genaro Gonzalez-Cuenca enters the office.*

### **INS Officer**

Hello. What is your complete name?

### **Genaro**

Genaro Gonzalez-Cuenca

### **INS Officer**

What type of visa are you looking for today?

### **Genaro**

I had this temporary work visa, (*shows an I-795*), but it is expiring. My cousin works in San Luis Obispo and he says there is lots of work there.

### **INS Officer**

What sort of work does your cousin do? Yes, I see you have a temporary work visa that's expiring. Does your employer want you to continue working with them?

### **Genaro**

No, they don't need me anymore with the economic slowdown. My cousin does though, he landscapes and works in the fields there.

### **INS Officer**

Does your cousin have documentation?

**Genaro**

*(pauses and looks down)* I have a family and I want to do this right, so they can stay and go to school. They have come up from Guatemala and are here at the border. It's unsafe in Guatemala with the Civil War, over 100,000 people have already died. And I cannot find work there. I thought I could bring them to me now since I had been working here.

**INS Officer**

*(Stops writing)* Sorry, but we have already given out all of the temporary visas for your labor category for the year. Since your employer no longer needs you, we cannot give you a renewed visa. You will have to go back.

**Genaro**

What can I do?

**INS Officer**

Well, *(sigh)* you can try again earlier next year.

**Genaro**

There are no jobs in Guatemala, isn't there anything you can do?

**INS Officer**

No, I'm sorry.

*Genaro walks out and turns his placard to DENIED.*

## **Scene 3**

*Project SLIDE #3 (Illegal Immigrant Crossing Sign)*

*The San Clemente check point is a checkpoint in California, 70 miles north of the Mexican border. The road is a 10-lane, face-paced highway running east-west, with a valley on the Eastern side and the Pacific coast on the West. It's nighttime with warm but a rapidly dropping temperature and clear skies as the stars are starting to become visible. The speeding headlights are creating an almost strobe-light effect. Genaro, his wife, and his daughter sit in a van on the left side as a driver and a coyote sit in front.*

**Narrator**

Genaro tried to get his temporary work visa renewed but could not. Beginning with his journey in Guatemala, Genaro traveled over 2,000 miles to get into the United States to work with his cousin. His wife and daughter also made the dangerous journey and are now at the border between Mexico and the United States. Genaro has to make a choice: go back to Guatemala with little resources to get them there or attempt to get his family into the US without a visa. They cannot wait another year at the border. They believe they have to make a move today. In desperation and using all the resources they have left, they hire a *coyote*, a person who smuggles people across the border. They easily get through the first border station between Mexico and the United States and even a second interior checkpoint. But here they are at a third border checkpoint. They don't know the Coyote's plan.

**Coyote**

*(Yelling as he opens the van door)* We are here. Run with your family across this road. There's a path down the ravine, take it around the bend and meet us on the side of the road 5 miles up. Get out of the car now and run across the road and down the ravine!

**Genaro**

*(Looking out the door frightened)* I thought you would take us all the way?

**Coyote**

This checkpoint is too dangerous. Now get out and run and we'll wait for you on the side of the highway!

**Genaro**

Ok, let's go mi'ijos. Quick but quiet.

*NOTE: Play out the highway scene slowly as the narrator speaks.*

**Narrator**

Genaro looks around, noticing headlights coming in their direction. But, he is unable to make out how fast the lights are moving in their direction. The family grabs hands and starts to run together.

As they start running, without warning the lights are upon them. There is a crash and Genaro collapses after being hit. The kids and their mother keep running, too afraid to stop as more lights are coming their way. They get across the 10 lanes and do not know what to do as they hear sirens heading towards Genaro. They hide.

*President Johnson comes back on stage. Project SLIDE #4 (Composite of Statue of Liberty, President Johnson, and the Illegal Immigrant Crossing Sign).*

### **President Johnson**

“While the earliest settlers poured into a wild continent there was no one to ask them where they came from. The only question was: Were they sturdy enough to make a home for freedom, and were they brave enough to die for liberty if it became necessary to do so?”

“And today we can all believe that the lamp of this grand old lady is brighter today – and the golden door that she guards gleams more brilliantly in the light of an increased liberty for the people from all the countries of the globe.”



SLIDE #1: Statue of Liberty, New York Harbor.



SLIDE #2: WORLD MAP



SLIDE #3: ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT CROSSING SIGN



SLIDE #4: Composite of Statue of Liberty, President Johnson and Immigrant Crossing Sign.

# **Borders of Change**

## **A Drama about Immigration and the Immigration Act of 1965**

### **Historiographic Essay**

#### *Key Resources:*

**Davis, Michael. *Magical Urbanism: Latinos Reinvent the U.S. Big City*. New York: Version 2000.**

We were first struck by the very idea of people risking their lives running across a busy 10 lane freeway hoping to gain their freedom. *Magical Urbanism* showed the length that people would go in search of a better life in the United States. His discussion of the families crossing the borders and sometimes dying on the ten lane freeway gave us a perfect dramatic moment for our play.

**Immigration Act of 1965. U.S. Statutes at Large, Public Law, 89-236, p. 911-922**

<http://tucnak.fsv.cuni.cz/~calda/Documents/Modern/ImmigAct1965.html>.

The actual Immigration Act of 1965 was the piece of legislation that finally got rid of the previous quota system, and opened up the country to a more diverse group of immigrants.

**Johnson, Lyndon B. Remarks at the Signing of the Immigration Bill, Liberty Island, New York, October 3, 1965**

<http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/speeches.hom/651003.asp>

We felt that Lyndon B Johnson's Speech added context and a general idea about how people were feeling about the act itself. It struck us as interesting that Johnson was selling something that would profoundly change the face of the country as something that "is not revolutionary," and "would not change the lives of millions."

**H1 Interview Sample Questions & Answers.**

<http://www.immihelp.com/visas/h1b/h1-visa-interview-sample-questions-answers.html>.

We wanted to inform people about the experiences that many immigrants must go through in order to attempt to come to this country legally. We wanted to incorporate actual visa interview questions in order to help people understand what the legal process of getting a visa was like.

**"Where U.S. Workers Come From." Remade in America. The New York Times. 7 April 2009.**

<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2009/04/07/us/20090407-immigration-occupation.html#view=30>.

We wanted the characters in our drama to reflect the diversity of people who were attempting to enter the United States and why they were coming. We used the NY Times website to help us see where immigrants were coming from, and what kinds of work they were seeking.

**Davis, Michael. "Policing the Third Border." COLORLINES. Fall 1999.**

<http://www.colorlines.com/article.php?ID=331&p=2>.

As we mentioned before we were very taken with the concept in *Magical Urbanism* of people risking their lives running across the highways. We wanted to add as much realism as possible

and we were able to find this article talking about how the only routes left to illegal entry are very treacherous and in many cases deadly.

### *Primary Sources:*

Immigration Help (immihelp.com). "H1 Interview Sample Questions & Answers." 21 June 2010.  
<http://immihelp.com/visas/h1b/h1-visa-interview-sample-questions-answers.html>.

This website has sample interview questions for immigrants applying for the H1B visa, which allows companies to sponsor immigrants with specialized educations for jobs that they cannot hire within the US work force.

Students of Balboa High School. *I Might Get Somewhere: Oral Histories of Immigration and Migration*. 825 Valencia, 2005.

This book contains student interviews of parents and family friends that have immigrated to the United States.

Documents of American History: *Immigration Act of 1965*.

<http://tucnak.fsv.cuni.cz/~calda/Documents/Modern/ImmigAct1965.html>

This site has the complete text of the act.

Library of Congress. "Interviews with Today's Immigrants."

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/immigration/interv/toc.php>.

This site has numerable interviews with immigrants moving into the United States during the late 1900's, sorted by geographic locations.

Johnson, Lyndon B. "Remarks at the Signing of the Immigration Bill, Liberty Island, New York." 3 October 1965. Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum.

<http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/Johnson/archives.hom/speeches.hom/651003.asp>

Lyndon Johnson gave a speech at the Statue of Liberty before the signing of the act explaining how he believed it would make our immigration policy less racist but would have little impact on the trends in immigration.

McDonnell, Patrick. "2 Immigrants Killed Crossing I-5." *Los Angeles Times*. 26 December, 1990.

[http://articles.latimes.com/1990-12-26/news/mn-6592\\_1\\_border-patrol-checkpoint](http://articles.latimes.com/1990-12-26/news/mn-6592_1_border-patrol-checkpoint).

The newspaper article covers an accident killing two immigrants and also gives background information about recent annual fatalities and various attempts to reduce the number of accidents such as building a chain-link fence.

New York Times. "Where U.S. Workers Come From." Remade in America. 7 April 2009.

<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2009/04/07/us/20090407-immigration-occupation.html#view=30>.

This site has interactive maps that allow for research about where U.S. workers have immigrated from, sortable by country of origin, profession, and percentage of overall immigrant workers in the sector.

## *Secondary Sources:*

Southeast Vermont Community Learning Collaborative. "A Brief Timeline of U.S. Policy on Immigration and Naturalization," 2009.

[http://www.flowofhistory.org/themes/movement\\_settlement/uspolicytimeline.php](http://www.flowofhistory.org/themes/movement_settlement/uspolicytimeline.php).

This page has a timeline of immigration policy moments from 1790 to 2001.

Brinkley, Alan. *American History: A Survey*. 11<sup>th</sup> Edition. 2003, pp. 266-267, 836.

This is a college level American History textbook with coverage of immigration policies and trends.

Bussel, Robert (ed). *Understanding the Immigrant Experience in Oregon*. University of Oregon.

<http://www.uoregon.edu/~lerc/pdfs/immigrationenglish.pdf>.

This document examines the immigration patterns and history for Oregon, which is an excellent source of local immigrant stories.

Daniels, Roger. "Immigration Act of 1965: Intended and unintended consequences of the 20<sup>th</sup> century." *America.gov*. 3 April 2008.

<http://www.america.gov/st/educ-english/2008/April/20080423214226eaifas0.9637982.html>.

This is a summary article about how the 1965 Act changed immigration and its intended and unintended effects.

Davis, Mike. *Magical Urbanism: Latinos Reinvent the U.S. Big City*. New York: Verso, 2000.

This book examines the economic and social impact of immigration on US cities and includes information about the road crossing signs south of the San Clemente checkpoint.

Davis, Mike. "Policing the Third Border." *COLORLINES*. Fall 1999.

<http://www.colorlines.com/article.php?ID=331&p=2>.

This article is a more detailed account of the internal border control area for San Clemente and other parts of the southern United States.

Ludden, Jennifer. "1965 Immigration Law Changed Face of America." *NPR*. 9 May 2006.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5391395>.

This article examines the intentions of the law to reduce racism and examines the expert testimony that underestimated the number of immigrants from countries that had previously had low numbers of immigrants.

Solis, Dianne. "Work Visas Scarce for Unskilled Laborers." *The Dallas Morning News*.

December 27, 2006.

This newspaper article discusses the problem between the demand for unskilled labor in the United States versus the low limit of these temporary work visas each year.

Center for Immigration Studies. "Three Decades of Mass Immigration: The Legacy of the 1965 Immigration Act." September 1995. <http://www.cis.org/articles/1995/back395.html>.

This page examines the impact of the bill on immigration statistics and includes many quotes from the President, legislators, and cabinet members at the time the bill passed.

Tindall, George Brown and David E. Shi. *America: A Narrative History*. New York: Norton, 1996.

This is another college-level textbook with good coverage of immigration issues for different periods of time.