BACKGROUND

While immigration to this country began with the Spanish in Florida and the southwest in the 16th century and the first English in 1607, by the early 1700s Europeans had begun to dominate the American Indian inhabitants. In the 19th century, later immigrants from Europe and other areas of the world faced resistance from the descendants of earlier colonizers as they began to have a profound impact on the identity and growth of the country. By the year 1900, the US foreign born population was 14.7% of the total population, the highest level it’s been since, even as of the 2010 census.

People coming to this country have suffered everything from lack of jobs, persecution because of skin color, political or religious beliefs, even, as in the case of Japanese immigrants, wrongful imprisonment. Yet America’s promise of a new life in a free country still draws hundreds of thousands of immigrants each year.

But perhaps now this promise is being revoked even before immigrants reach American soil. The current administration has attempted to enact unconstitutional and deeply harmful reforms that would dramatically change our policy and traditions, including restricting the award of green cards; eliminating protections for children of new arrivals; enacting a Muslim travel ban; separating families at the border and encouraging a for-profit detention facility industry where abuse and neglect go unchecked.

Related Films

Brooklyn (2015): An Irish immigrant lands in 1950s Brooklyn, where she quickly falls into a romance with a local. When her past catches up with her, however, she must choose between two countries and the lives that exist within.

Desierto (2015): A group of people trying to cross the border from Mexico into the United States encounter a man who has taken border patrol duties into his own racist hands.

Frozen River (2008): A struggling mom turns to smuggling immigrants over the border as a source of income.

In America (2002): An Irish couple bring their two young daughters to America in search of a better life.

The Namesake (2006): American-born Gogol, the son of Indian immigrants, wants to fit in among his fellow New Yorkers, despite his family’s unwillingness to let go of their traditional ways.

Sin Nombre (2009): A Honduran young girl and a Mexican gangster are united in a journey across the American border.

The Visitor (2017): A college professor travels to New York City to attend a conference and finds a young couple living in his apartment.

Which Way Home (2009): A feature documentary that follows unaccompanied child migrants on their journey through Mexico as they try to reach the United States.

Related Podcasts

- Redirect (2019)
- Immigrantly (2016)
- Only in America (2019)
- Tempest Tossed (2019)
**READ**

**Nonfiction**
- *Becoming Maria* - Sonia Manzano
- *A Cup of Water Under My Bed* - Daisy Hernandez
- *Dear America: Notes from an Undocumented Citizen* - Jose Antonio Vargas
- *Enrique's Journey* - Sonia Nazario
- *The Farway Brothers* - Lauren Markham
- *A Hope More Powerful Than the Sea* - Melissa Fleming
- *The Good Immigrant* - ed. Nikesh Shukla and Chimene Suleyman
- *In the Country We Love* - Diane Guerrero
- *The Line Becomes a River* - Fransisco Cantu
- *The Newcomers* - Helen Thorpe
- *Tell Me How It Ends* - Valeria Luiselli

**Fiction**
- *The Best We Could Do* - Judith Frank
- *Behold the Dreamers* - Imbolo Mbue
- *Brooklyn* - Colm Toibin
- *Exit West* - Mohsin Hamid
- *Immigrant, Montana* - Amitava Kumar
- *The Lost Children Archive* - Valeria Luiselli
- *Lucky Boy* - Shanthi Sekaran
- *Refugee* - Alan Gratz
- *A River of Stars* - Vanessa Hua
- *The Sun Is Also a Star* - Nicola Yoon
- *Threads From the Refugee Crisis* - Kate Evans

**Childrens**
- *La Frontera/ My Journey* - Alfredo Alva
- *Me and My Fear* - Francesca Sanna
- *Mustafa* - Marie-Louise Gay
- *Spectacularly Beautiful* - Lisa Lucas

**ENGAGE**

**Suitcase Stories: Unpacked!**

**Tell Your Story**

**Join us for a live showcase of stories,**
**Friday, October 18, 7PM**

**Sign up now for 2 free storytelling workshops**
**September 14 and 21, 1PM**

**COME TOGETHER**

**Friday Lecture: US Policy in Syria and Iraq with Gregory Aftandilian**
**Friday September 13 at 1PM**

**Immigration 101: The people and the process explained, with USCIS official John McCarthy**
**Monday, September 23 at 7PM**

**Ranked Coice Voting with Voter Choice MA and The League of Women Voters**
**Wed., September 25 at 7PM**

**Call Me American: The true story of a boy who escaped war-torn Somalia to become an American citizen, with Abdi Nor Iftin**
**Wednesday, October 2, at 7PM**

**Let’s Talk: Immigration in America, a moderated discussion led by Keith West**
**Tuesday October, 8 at 7PM**

**Friday Lecture: Cyber Conflict and Geopolitics with Keith West**
**Friday, October 11 at 1PM**