

# Opposing immigration wasn't always racist

---

 [bostonglobe.com](http://www.bostonglobe.com) 11/27/2019 10:00 AM

BY MICK LEE

It was the 1930s, when the United States was still a young nation, and the country was still largely rural. At that time, many people in the United States were opposed to immigration, but not for the reasons you might think. In fact, many of the people who opposed immigration were immigrants themselves, or the children of immigrants. They were afraid that the country would be overwhelmed by the influx of new people, and that their own way of life would be lost.

But as the country grew and changed, the reasons for opposition to immigration also changed. In the 1950s and 1960s, opposition to immigration became more focused on issues of race and ethnicity. People began to fear that the country was being "overrun" by people of different colors and cultures, and that this would lead to the loss of the "American way of life." This fear was often based on a sense of entitlement, a belief that the country belonged to the people who had built it, and that they had a right to keep it that way.

Today, we often hear people who are opposed to immigration say that they are just "protecting the jobs" of American workers, or that they are "concerned about the strain on the welfare system." But these are often just excuses for a more fundamental fear: a fear that the country is losing its identity, its values, and its way of life.



