

sense here," Dobbs announced on *The Situation Room*, assuming the grave-yet-contemptuous look he reserves for this issue. "We have a border that is the source of the principal amount of cocaine, heroin, marijuana and meth coming into this country," he proclaimed. "Six thousand National Guardsmen in an adjunct support role is pure cotton-candy nonsense.... We should also be holding the government of Mexico accountable.... They are exporting poverty. They are overcrowding the major schools in Los Angeles. They are creating a crime wave in point of fact in certain parts of the country." (According to experts like Harvard sociologist Robert Sampson, the opposite is true: The nationwide decline in violent crime throughout the 1990s was correlated with a sharp increase in immigration; others have shown that immigrants appear to be less violent than non-immigrants and have the lowest rates of incarceration.)

Dobbs's concerns go far beyond illegal immigration. When he accepted the Katz Award from CIS—after a glowing introduction from Congressman Tom Tancredo, the leading anti-immigration extremist in Washington and a frequent Dobbs guest—he explained that illegal immigration "spans a broad range of fundamental issues that should be of concern to all Americans who are worried about the direction of this country." After noting that the US population has doubled in forty years, Dobbs warned his audience, "We are importing the population growth of other countries, whether it's China or Mexico or any country in the world."

Dobbs's fears about the cultural impact of immigration on the United States apply to Latino American immigrants across the board, legal or illegal. That some sang the national anthem

in Spanish while protesting the Sensenbrenner bill this spring, for example, seemed to hit at the heart of his concerns: What will this nation look like, and sound like, in the future?

That anxiety, fueled in part by demographic studies showing that white Americans will be a minority within the next two decades, may well explain why Dobbs connects with such a large and loyal audience. The anchor takes care not to discuss immigration issues in explicitly racial terms. But he schedules guests on his show to make the demographic point.

After Diane West, a columnist for the conservative *Washington Times*, wrote that the United States would "cease to be a nation" if the Senate's immigration reform bill passed, Dobbs invited her on his show and gave her ample time to elaborate. Projected immigration "has the effect of a demographic tsunami, and it will be mainly Hispanic," West said. "It will be mainly Mexican. And so, what the question becomes is, Do we want to become a northern section of Latin America? Do we cease to become literally an English-speaking people, become bilingual, and/or Spanish-speaking? And with these questions, you really begin to get at the heart of the matter ... a new demographic."

Dobbs prudently eased away from West's "demographic" concern. But not completely. "The issue of multiculturalism, however, and the issue of multi-language," he said. "That becomes a very serious issue, doesn't it?"

For the hundreds of thousands who tune in faithfully to watch Lou Dobbs, securing our "broken borders" may be as much about preserving white American culture as about security or economics. It's a cause white nationalists have long advanced. But it's a new role for television news. ■

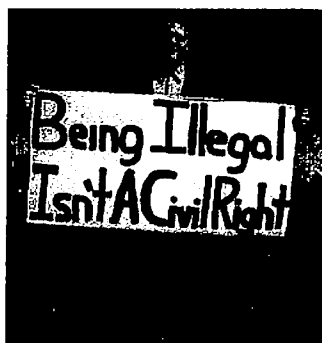
FOR AMERICA'S NEW NATIVISTS, WHAT'S PAST IS PROLOGUE.

Same Old Song

DANIEL TICHENOR

A noted political figure unleashes a blistering attack against new immigrants who "swarm" into our neighborhoods without regard for our laws, customs and shared values. Why, he asks, should we suffer outsiders who prefer ethnic enclaves where they "establish their Language and Manners to the Exclusion of ours?" The painful truth, he adds, is that these newcomers are so culturally different from the rest of us that they will never assimilate like past immigrants, posing a grave threat to the society we cherish.

The latest rant on illegal Mexican immigration by Pat Buchanan or Colorado Congressman Tom Tancredo? No—



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the political provocateur was Benjamin Franklin, and his unforgiving pen was aimed at Germans in eighteenth-century Pennsylvania. Franklin was convinced that his home had become "a Colony of Aliens, who will shortly be so numerous as to Germanize us instead of our Anglifying them." Franklin later mellowed on the subject, recognizing the economic benefits of immigration, but we can hear echoes of his original animus toward immigrants in every age of the American

experience.

Over the course of our history, xenophobic opinion has episodically crystallized into formidable nativist movements. Fueled by the economic stresses of working-class Americans, ethnic and racial animosities, security jitters and compelling demagogic leadership, earlier nativist movements underscore the Shakespearean insight that "what's past is prologue."

The first eruption came in reaction to unprecedented rates of Catholic immigration, especially from Ireland, from the 1830s through the 1850s. Anglo-American angst over the Irish Catholic influx, which soared during the Irish potato famine of the 1840s, was exacerbated by competition for jobs and housing in Northeastern cities. Anti-Catholic publications flourished, offering lurid accounts of sinister Roman Catholic crimes and plots that fed Protestant antipathy.

These dark tales spurred mob violence, from the 1834 burning of the Ursuline convent near Boston to the 1844 Bible Riots in Philadelphia, which led to twenty deaths and the destruction of more than 100 Catholic churches, schools and homes. As the ranks of anti-Catholic associations swelled in Seaboard cities, nativist leader Samuel Morse, newspaper editor and future inventor of the telegraph, organized an anti-immigrant party and ran strongly for New York City mayor in 1836. Morse also fed anti-Catholic venom through incendiary writings such as *Foreign Conspiracy* (1835), warning readers that “the evil of immigration brings to these shores illiterate Roman Catholics...the obedient instruments of their more knowing priestly leaders.”

Because of the nation’s insatiable appetite for immigrant labor—and the clout of Irish voters—nativists made little political headway until the 1850s. In 1849 secret nativist societies formed the Order of the Star Spangled Banner to furtively organize electoral support for an anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant agenda in cities around the country. The movement’s rank and file included Anglo-American workers, artisans and small entrepreneurs. Their

secrecy led Horace Greeley to mock their members in the *New York Tribune* as “know-nothings”—a label that stuck.

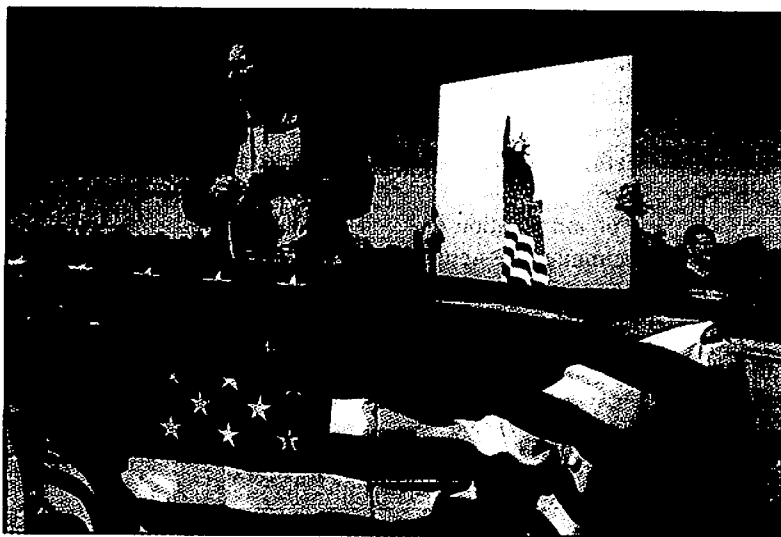
The Know-Nothing movement formed the American Party in the 1850s, devoted to strict limits on immigrant admissions, twenty-one-year waiting periods for citizenship and restrictions on voting rights and officeholding. The party benefited enormously from a political vacuum created by the gradual demise of the Whig Party and balkanization of the Democrats over slavery. In the 1854 and 1855 elections the American Party elected seven Know-Nothing governors, gained control of eight state legislatures and established a strong presence in Congress. In 1856 the Know-Nothings tapped former President Millard Fillmore for the top of their national ticket, and he won 22 percent of the popular vote.

The movement’s meteoric rise transcended the ballot box. Know-Nothing candy, tea and other merchandise was successfully marketed. Buses, stagecoaches and clipper ships bore the popular name. But the decline of the American Party was as swift and dramatic as its ascent. Ironically, the same slavery contro-

versy that helped elevate anti-Catholic xenophobia in antebellum America was the driving force behind its rapid demise. The new Republican Party siphoned away nativist voters more devoted to excluding slavery from the territories than to the Know-Nothings’ “war to the hilt, on political Romanism.” By 1860 the movement had collapsed. To the chagrin of nativists, immigration from Northern and Western Europe flourished in subsequent decades, fueled by federal recruitment efforts, the Homestead Act of 1862 and spreading industrialization. Andrew Carnegie dubbed immigration “a golden stream,” a view echoed repeatedly over time by corporate America as it lampooned nativists as economic Luddites.

Chinese immigration of the late nineteenth century was minuscule compared with European inflows—just 4 percent of all immigration at its zenith—but it inspired one of the most brutal and successful nativist movements in US history. From the 1850s through the 1870s, Chinese workers were recruited to California as cheap contract labor for mining, railroad construction, manufacturing and farming. Like Latino

immigrants today, they inspired hostility among white workers for allegedly lowering wages and exacerbating working conditions; meanwhile, newspapers and magazines portrayed the Chinese as a race of godless opium addicts, prostitutes and gamblers. California politicians also learned that anti-Chinese speeches and policies translated into votes. The state’s first Republican governor, Leland Stanford, promised “to protect free white labor” from the “degraded” Chinese while at the same



New twist on a message as old as America

time his own farming and railroad enterprises employed them.

Economic distress inflamed the Sinophobic movement in the 1870s, when unproductive mines, the completion of the transcontinental railroad and a flood of new settlers to the Pacific Coast led to rampant unemployment. San Francisco union leaders initiated a grassroots network of Chinese Exclusion Leagues that spread across California and the Far West. From 1871 onward, California politicians raced to claim credit for a flood of reforms that included state-level barriers to Chinese entry, segregation laws and special taxes on Chinese businesses. One of the anti-Chinese movement’s most effective firebrands was Denis Kearney, an Irish immigrant who blamed Chinese immigrants for his personal failure at mining. His demagogic campaign, which began with race-baiting speeches in the San Francisco sandlots of the late 1870s, drew white laborers into a new Workingmen’s Party dedicated to the proposition that “the Chinese must go!” Kearney spurred a state constitutional convention in 1878 targeting the “Chinese menace,” as well as an 1879 state referendum that endorsed

Chinese exclusion by a remarkable margin: 150,000 to 900.

Fierce party competition in presidential elections of the Gilded Age transformed the anti-Chinese movement into a national political juggernaut. As the *New York Times* queried in 1880, "Which great political party is foolish enough to risk losing the votes of the Pacific States by undertaking to do justice to the Chinese?" Neither, as it turned out. Large bipartisan majorities in Congress suspended Chinese admissions for ten years with passage of the infamous Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. Brutal anti-Chinese riots soon followed, as Sino-phobes sought to purge Chinese communities altogether across the Far West. In the 1885 Rock Springs, Wyoming, massacre, twenty-eight Chinese were murdered and every Chinese-owned building, except one, was destroyed. Chinese residents of Tacoma and Seattle suffered looting, arson and violent riots until few remained. The Sinophobic fervor did not subside until the early 1900s; by then, a significantly reduced Chinese population was concentrated in a few self-sufficient Chinatowns.

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'100% Americanism,' accusing 'hyphenated'
Americans of 'moral treason.'*

As Westerners put their chilling final touches on Chinese exclusion, a new anti-Catholic movement emerged in the nation's heartland in the late 1880s: the American Protective Association. The APA drew its lifeblood from Midwestern and Rocky Mountain communities where Catholics were gaining political and social clout. During the depression of 1893, the ranks of APA faithful surged to more than a half-million. APA rabble-rousers like William "Whiskey Bill" Traynor, a former saloon owner and nativist newspaper publisher, whipped up resentment with speeches blaming Irish Catholic immigrants for the economic crisis.

Although the APA had modest success in electing anti-Catholic Republicans, national party leaders eventually privileged immigrant labor and votes over their nativist agenda. By 1896 William McKinley's presidential campaign actively courted immigrant and Roman Catholic voters while purging the APA from Republican ranks.

As the APA crusade dissipated, a new anti-immigrant movement, led by the upper-class Immigration Restriction League (IRL), the American Federation of Labor and various patriotic societies, distanced itself from anti-Catholic nativism. Embracing the scientific racism of social Darwinism and the eugenics movement, these reformers argued that the real problem was Southern and Eastern Europeans arriving in record numbers from countries like Italy, Greece, Russia, Hungary and Poland—and hereditarily inferior to previous European immigrants. The IRL enjoyed a prominent champion in Massachusetts Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, who proclaimed that new European immigration posed "nothing less than the possibility of a great and perilous change in the very fabric of our race." Progressive Era nativists spurned party politics in favor of mass publicity campaigns, research and full-time Washington lobbying. Their efforts paid dividends when the 1911 Dillingham Commission, led by IRL allies including Lodge, produced forty-two volumes of findings that purportedly vindicated nativist claims about

Southern and Eastern Europeans. But a countermobilization of immigration defenders—led by employer and ethnic groups—yielded a policy stalemate.

The onset of World War I broke the logjam. In 1917 immigration restrictionists seized upon wartime anxieties to win passage of a literacy test for admission into the country. While the IRL and its allies were closing the gates, an Americanization movement attacked any hint of divided loyalties among the foreign-born already here. Theodore Roosevelt led the charge for "100% Americanism," denouncing "hyphenated" Americans as guilty of no less than "moral treason." Patriotic conformity was pursued by a government-sponsored network of local defense and patriotic associations, including 250,000 badge-wearing volunteers of the American Protective League (APL). German-Americans, celebrated for decades as the model ethnicity, endured the harshest treatment. They

were targets of vandalism, mob violence, surveillance and harassment (by APL watchdogs), job discrimination and arrests for unpatriotic speech. By 1918 public burnings of German books were commonplace, dozens of German-American newspapers and organizations dissolved and some states prohibited speaking German or playing German-composed music in public.

After the war, the immigration restriction movement mobilized for new reforms when the literacy test failed to curb Southern and Eastern European inflows. In 1921 and 1924, during the country's first Red Scare, Congress passed draconian national-origins quotas that slowed Southern and Eastern European immigration to a trickle and barred nearly all Asian admissions. "The day of unalloyed welcome to all peoples, the day of indiscriminate acceptance of all races, has definitely ended," proclaimed Representative Albert Johnson, a chief architect of the legislation.

The early twentieth century was the high-water mark of the American nativist tradition. Sweeping political successes eventually led the IRL to declare victory and disband. The national-origins quota regime they had built assured that few Jewish refugees would escape the Holocaust to the United States, while leaving the back door open to Mexican guestworkers described as "returnable," thanks to a contiguous border. Japanese internment after the attack on Pearl Harbor was an extension of the marriage of racist beliefs and national security imperatives during World War I and the Red Scare.

The infamous national-origins quota system survived until 1965, a testament to the fact that this country's nativist traditions are as durable as its immigrant foundations. More than two centuries after Franklin warned colonial Pennsylvania of German contamination, contemporary demagogues like Pat Buchanan are sounding similar alarms about Mexican newcomers. "Millions of Mexicans have no desire to learn English or become U.S. citizens," Buchanan warns in his book *Death of the West*. "Invading armies go home, immigrant armies do not." It is a familiar refrain in our uneasy nation of immigrants. ■