

DIRECTORS' PERSPECTIVES (CONT.)

FEAR OF THE FOREIGNER

BY: STEVE SKYLAR

"They're taking our jobs."

"And look who they let in..."

I've overheard these words often enough during the 26 years I've been practicing immigration law. My ears are especially attuned to them, representing as they do a potential threat to the fate of my clients. But phrases like these are not hard to come by. They can be heard from liberals as well as conservatives, from the children of immigrants as well as from those whose ancestors came over on the Mayflower.

Even recent immigrants themselves are not immune to xenophobia. I once heard a man who started his journey toward lawful permanent U.S. residence by working without authorization, thereby violating his student visa status, declare that what's needed is for us to crack down on illegal immigration. The irony was lost on him.

The fact is, this country has long been deeply ambivalent about being a "nation of immigrants." Sure, we cherish our welcoming national persona. We take pride in the words adorning the base of the Statue of Liberty. "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free...." And Emma Lazarus's stirring sonnet reflects our dominant national attitude during the first 60 years of this country's existence. As Roger Daniels reports in his history of U.S. immigration policy, *Guarding The Golden Door*, back then, as a matter of policy, we mostly wanted people from other lands to settle here.

But, from the outset, we have also hosted another national attitude. Consider this assessment of German immigration, written in 1751:

"Why should the Palatine boors be suffered to swarm into our Settlements, and by herding together establish their Language and Manners to the Exclusion of ours? Why should Pennsylvania, founded by the English, become a Colony of Aliens, who will shortly be so numerous as to Germanize us instead of us Anglifying them, and will never adopt our Language or Customs, any more than they can acquire our Complexion."

So wrote Benjamin Franklin, co-author and co-signer of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

Although Franklin came to moderate his views on European immigration later in life, the attitude he expressed in 1751 toward German immigrants -- the attitude Daniels dubs "they are not like us" -- has pervaded the persecution of successive waves of

immigrants here. In the late 19th century, the Chinese were the target of our first restrictive Federal immigration legislation, the Chinese Exclusion Act. Around 1900, Japanese-owned shops were attacked and their owners assaulted up and down the West Coast. Filipinos, Irish people, Italians, Catholics in general, Jews and Mexicans are among those who have been reviled here, sometimes violently. To those of us who appreciate the cultural, literary, culinary, technological and aspirational gifts immigration brings us, such perennial hostility toward people with whom we share a common humanity is mystifying. Where does it come from? **(Cont. Page 10)**



CARBON, CLIMATE, AND COVID-19

BY: KRIS FEDER

In today's world, it seems that the only constant is change. From the COVID pandemic to environmental and social injustices, the thing we can agree on is that more change is needed -- positive change. RSF Board Member Kris Feder penned a three-part series that delves into the impact of hydrocarbons on our economy; the risks and cost of the Coronavirus; and the connection between energy and the food system.

The world experienced pandemics long before air travel and Big Oil. It is too early to say whether, despite medical advances, the risks and costs of epidemics will rise during the twenty-first century. As we observe future trends, we might ponder a further question that history has yet to answer: How would humanity manage a public health crisis in a world of justice and equality?

Read Kris' full series by visiting:

www.schalkenbach.org/carbon-climate-and-covid-19