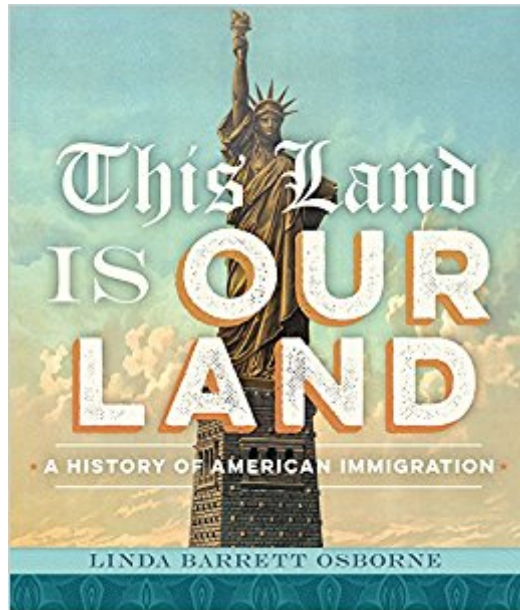




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# This Land Is Our Land: A History Of American Immigration



## Synopsis

A 2017 YALSA Excellence in Nonfiction finalist! American attitudes toward immigrants are paradoxical. On the one hand, we see our country as a haven for the poor and oppressed; anyone, no matter his or her background, can find freedom here and achieve the “American Dream.” On the other hand, depending on prevailing economic conditions, fluctuating feelings about race and ethnicity, and fear of foreign political and labor agitation, we set boundaries and restrictions on who may come to this country and whether they may stay as citizens. This book explores the way government policy and popular responses to immigrant groups evolved throughout U.S. history, particularly between 1800 and 1965. The book concludes with a summary of events up to contemporary times, as immigration again becomes a hot-button issue. Includes an author’s note, bibliography, and index. A

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## Customer Reviews

Gr 6-10-This exceptional work explores the history of American immigration from the early colonization of the continent to the contemporary discussions involving undocumented aliens. The so-called American melting pot has a history of exclusion, discrimination, and strife that has resulted in anti-immigration laws, segregation, and, in the case of the Japanese during World War II, unjustified internment. The author combines comprehensive history with anecdotal case studies to present the human side of the issue. Outstanding archival photographs and illustrations complement the comprehensive text and encourage thoughtful discussion. The author conveys the

attitudes toward new waves of immigration. As each new ethnic or national group arrived, it faced exclusion, aversion, and hostility from those who came earlier. The author outlines the motivations for these barriers and the political circumstances behind them. She also distinctly demonstrates the benefits immigrant populations have brought to the growth of this country. An excellent time line and end notes and a thorough bibliography make this an effective research tool. VERDICT Highly recommended for general purchase.-Eva Elisabeth VonAncken, formerly at Trinity-Pawling School, Pawling, NY  
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"Fascinating reading for both browsers and those seeking a more thorough understanding of immigration." (Kirkus)\*\*STARRED REVIEW\*\* "This exceptional work explores the history of American immigration from the early colonization of the continent to the contemporary discussions involving undocumented aliens...Outstanding archival photographs and illustrations complement the comprehensive text and encourage thoughtful discussion... An excellent time line and end notes and a thorough bibliography make this an effective research tool. VERDICT Highly recommended for general purchase." (School Library Journal)"Well researched, clearly written, and informative, the discussion is particularly useful in offering the broad look at immigration over time... Handsomely designed, the book offers many captioned period illustrations, especially photos. A strong introduction to American immigration." (Booklist)"Immigrants ranging from the first colonists to recent Syrian and Central American refugees are given a voice in this beautifully designed history." (School Library Connection)

good book

My first thought about this book was how timely it is. I hope you've been talking to your kids about immigration and how this country was founded by people who had been prosecuted in their country of origin. We're studying American History this year, and I'm so glad that I found this book. The layout is lovely and the content rich. Textbooks aren't my style, and this is a great compromise between a straight text and say historical fiction. I'd say Middle grade up through YA (high school) ages will enjoy it. It's easy to forget that we all came from somewhere else (some politicians could use a reminder about that) and this book walks the reader through our history. I found the narrative to portray our history of racism honestly. It's the kind of book that begs for discussion, and that's why it may be even more appropriate for high school depending on the maturity level of your student.

I very much enjoyed this book. It is marketed as middle grade, but I feel this is appropriate for both high school and adult readers as well. The views on immigrants actually has changed very little in some ways; new immigrants were always discriminated against for one reason or the other. Over history, there was always the sentiment that the newest group of immigrants, regardless of their ethnicity, race, language, or religion would never be able to assimilate into the American way of life. This book covers the years from when the United States first was settled by Europeans to modern times up through the 2015 or 2016. This book is very informative and reading it should be required during high school.

Powerful and timely, this history of immigration deals straightforwardly with the often conflicting balance between opportunities and legal and policy restrictions, which are often unrecognized by and non-obvious to citizens. But prejudices against newer immigrants has been remarkably consistent. Fearful of new arrivals, earlier US immigrants tended to see new ethnicities and religious groups as inferior and unassimilatable. Immigrants were often exploited as cheap and unskilled labor. Asian immigrants were even more limited. Starting in 1849 and the Gold Rush, they were needed for building railroads, but never expected to stay. By 1882 with the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act immigration of Chinese laborers was severely restricted. Until this time there were no major national restrictions on immigration and hence no illegal immigrants. In New York only steerage passengers, not first or second class passengers had to pass medical exams at Castle Garden or later at Ellis Island. Country quotas for Europe were established in the 1920s and existed until 1965. Many quotas for Western Europeans were never filled, while Italians and Russians among others, who had had millions of immigrants before were restricted to a few thousand a year. The final chapters bring the book up to the 21st century with touching stories of families and children succeeding against all odds. Not just for children, this book is highly recommended for all concerned about the complex challenges of immigration, what this country is all about and what makes an American. Mary Chitty, MSLS

Borrowed this from public library to review before purchasing it. Decided against it. While the book is very well-written, and presents a good overview of American immigration as a whole, it seems to be very one-sided, told from a particular perspective without giving equal time to others. For instance, the author writes about former President Obama's immigration policies and simply says ". . . many Republicans . . . and some Americans strongly objected." She does not explain the objections,

however, or point out that it is not simply a "partisan" disagreement. There are many other examples, which I won't list here. What the author fails to do is point out the problems inherent with unlimited immigration, which is why laws were enacted in the early part of the 20th century to cope with the flood of immigrants. Ours is a country of limited resources, and, especially today, filled with socioeconomic problems in our own backyards: poverty, crime, unemployment, housing (or lack thereof), equitable educational choices and overcrowded public schools, to name just a few. Her points are well-made about immigrants hoping and striving to make a better life for their families, but she doesn't propose solutions to deal with the mass of immigrants currently coming to this country, especially in light of our already existing problems. In fact, she seems to prey upon the emotions of the reader by consistently referencing the plight of the children. However, one cannot look at a topic like this in a bubble, out of the context of the times in which it occurs. Especially when writing to young people, who need a balanced perspective in order to reason out solutions. So, historically, her book is a decent overview with a fair amount of documentation (i.e., endnotes). I sense the author was trying to be equitable, but her personal bias comes through quite clearly.

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