

In Praise of Immigrants

Written by Jon Basil Utley.

Three new technologies of the last 20 years made America's economy great again: the iPhone, Google search, and horizontal drilling and fracturing. All came from first-generation immigrants. Steve Jobs was the son of a Syrian immigrant; Google came from two young men, one a Russian immigrant; and fracking came from the son of a Greek goatherder. There is a simple reason: immigrants, to paraphrase Frankie Laine's great song, do not have an "ace in the hole"—somewhere to get a free meal or a pad for the night. I too was one, from Russia. Immigrants didn't have any ace in the hole; when I looked over my shoulder there was nothing except, sometimes, an imaginary hungry wolf. My mother got me a good education but as a child, I was among the poorest in almost any group of children. That's the real incentive immigrants have.

Steve Jobs's father was a poor Syrian—yes, an Arab of all people. Google's co-founder was Sergey Brin, who came to America as a six-year-old. Google's search engine is compared to Gutenberg's invention of printing for its impact on mankind. George Mitchell's father was a Greek goatherder, hardly a favored category for the anti-immigrants. George himself grew up in an apartment over a shoeshine stand which his father managed; he graduated first in his class from Texas A&M University. Quoting *The Economist*, "few businesspeople have done as much to change the world as George Mitchell."

Since the 1940s an oil or gas well was drilled vertically in oil sands maybe 200 to 400 feet thick; then the pipe was perforated with holes (fracked), exposing some 400 feet on all sides to flowing oil/gas. Horizontal drilling allows the drill stem and pipe to go outwards up to a couple of miles following the directions of the oil sands or rock. This meant that a single well could expose *tens of thousands of feet* of oil-rich rock in several directions to fracking and production! This put America back as the world's top oil and gas producer. America is now building more and more gas export facilities and already earns billions of dollars from new gas exports to Mexico, Asia, and Europe. We will soon become the world's third-largest liquid natural-gas exporter. It has created hundreds of thousands of well-paying new jobs as giant petrochemical plants are also built to take advantage of our low cost gas. New pipelines are also bringing cheap natural gas to the East Coast and Northeast. America is one of the very few countries which can so prosper because of our network of pipelines and railroads in the producing states and our private ownership of mineral rights.

It's immigrants who have always been vital for America; yes even the lowly, illiterate Mexican laborers upon which California and much southern agriculture depends. In Wisconsin, which is second to California in milk production, about 60 percent of immigrants

on dairy farms are undocumented, according to a Bloomberg report. I worked a summer on a dairy farm when I was 16. It's tough work.

And half of all illegal immigrants are Europeans, South Americans, and Asians who overstayed their visas. Immigrants from India are leaders of tech startups in Silicon Valley. According to *Forbes*, "It's not just Silicon Valley. We found that Indians start more companies than any other immigrant group in California (26%), Massachusetts (28%), Texas (17%), Florida (17%), New York (27%), and New Jersey (57%)." Half of all the *Fortune* 500 largest companies in America were founded by immigrants or children of immigrants! At the other end of entrepreneurship are the thousands of tiny lunch shops and services which provide convenient meals and snacks and other services in our great coastal cities. They are an immense convenience to office workers and are almost always run by Asians or Latinos. Then there is the vast amount of child care for working mothers and well-off career women provided mainly by Asian and Latin immigrant women.

The adoration of the anti-immigrants for assembly-line factory jobs is a fantasy. I suggest trying it. Or construction, where millions of unemployed Americans are supposedly chomping at the bit for jobs. I used to do it in my twenties and thirties. It's tough.

Trump's "millions of dangerous criminal aliens" now turn out to include all those who are paying Social Security taxes into U.S. citizens' accounts or have a broken tail light in traffic. Trump just moved the goal posts!

Bin Laden's Dying Wish

In 2009 I wrote "How Bin Laden Bankrupted America," pointing out that his ultimate dream was to create chaos inside America, to get Americans to fight each other. We are getting closer to that time with Trump's anti-immigrant rhetoric and proposals. Trump's vitriolic language and his splitting off immigrants from old-line nationalists are putting America on a downward path. Remember that Mexicans are less than half of our immigrants. There are also millions of Asians, Irish, Polish, and others who all now feel and fear that they could be next. If Trump also curtails world trade and damages America's high-tech manufacturing and service sector in a vain attempt to bring back old blue-collar jobs, we will surely descend into chaos.

Originally published at TheAmericanConservative.com.