

To the Editor January 6, 2020

Fix the Immigration System Now!

Our country, The United States of America, **is not full!** According to the US Bureau of Land Management, there are about 2.4 billion acres of land in U.S. According to the US National Weather Service, as of 2003 we have only developed about 108 million acres or about 4.47% of this total.

We do have some room leftover. The city of Detroit alone has had a loss of 1.2 million in population over the past sixty years. Shrinking cities include, Pittsburg, Birmingham, Memphis, Chicago, Rochester, Hartford, Cleveland, Buffalo, Milwaukee, Baltimore, and St. Louis.

We need to continue to constantly refresh our population, to grow our country. Immigrants benefit our social and economic growth. They always have. The naysayers spout mistruths, but the truth is:

- Undocumented Immigrant crime occurs at a rate lower than natural born citizens
- Undocumented immigrants fund a social security system they will never collect from, provide an energized and ambitious work force, pay taxes, cannot vote, and are not eligible for most public assistance programs.

Young men like my Great Grandfather, and others with families and young children, leave everyone and everything they know behind to come here. They suffer great hardships along the way, and continue to do this today solely because of the promise of America.

This segment of an Emma Lazarus sonnet is both aspirational and defines the ambitions of a young nation. It can be found on a plaque attached to the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty.

*"Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"*

My own Great Grandfather came to Wisconsin in the late 1800's to escape the militarism, and mandatory conscription of the German Empire.

In 1894 he applied for citizenship in Sheboygan County Circuit Court. Swearing to renounce forever all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty and in particular the German Emperor William II. He gave a further assurance that he was not an anarchist, a polygamist nor a believer in the practice of polygamy, and that it was his intention in good faith to become a citizen of the US and permanently reside therein. Supported by two character witnesses, he received a Certificate of Naturalization in 1906. These witnesses swore that they were well acquainted with the petitioner and that to their knowledge and belief, he has resided in the state of Wisconsin for the past one year and during this same period he has behaved himself as a man of good moral character, attached to the principles of the Constitution of the US and well-disposed to the good order and happiness of the same.

My Great Grandfathers legacy includes three children, dozens of grandchildren, and hundreds of great grandchildren and more great, great grandchildren than I can count. They are my family and are our fellow citizens, our neighbors, our leaders, our factory workers, doctors, teachers, nurses, writers, police officers, professors, salesmen, artists, farmers, welders, mechanics, fishermen, boat builders, and firefighters.

In the past, this was the process to obtain a better life in a young America brimming with promise. It was enough then, and should be enough now. For our own futures, and those of our children and grandchildren, we need to become that promise again.

The story of America is the story of heroism.

We in the US, unless Indigenous or enslaved, are descendants of the DNA that had the courage to choose to leave famine, religious intolerance, militarism, war, etc.

We are the DNA of those who left to search for something better. Those who did not leave are dead, their DNA is gone.

We are the DNA of those who survived arduous trips to escape points. Those who did not survive are dead, their DNA is gone.

We are the DNA of those who survived horrific trips across oceans, deserts, or frozen tundra. Those who did not survive are dead, their DNA is gone.

We are the DNA of those who came here with nothing and built a life and a family. Those who did not survive are dead, their DNA is gone.

The majority of those of us here now, have the DNA of Americans and we are capable of doing anything.

It is after all, part of our DNA.