

## **US immigration rules from 1800s-1900s**

[http://www.flowofhistory.org/themes/movement\\_settlement/uspolicytimeline.php](http://www.flowofhistory.org/themes/movement_settlement/uspolicytimeline.php) Excellent time line for immigration rules The following information is from that site.

1790 – any free white person could apply for citizenship after 2 years of residency

1798 – Alien and Sedition Acts required 14 years of residency before citizenship and provided for the deportation of dangerous aliens

1800 – a five year residency is required

1857 – declared free Africans non-citizens

1864 – Contract Labor Law allowed recruiting of foreign labor

1868 – 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment gave citizenship to African Americans

1875 – Henderson v. Mayor of New York decision declared all state laws governing immigration unconstitutional. Congress prohibits convicts and prostitutes from entering the country

1882 – Chinese Exclusion Act – suspended Chinese immigration for 10 years. Barred Chinese in US from citizenship. Barred convicts, lunatics, those unable to care for themselves. Head tax placed on immigrants

1885 – Contract Labor Law – unlawful to import unskilled aliens from overseas as laborers. Regulations did not pertain to those crossing land borders

1888 – Provisions are adopted for the expulsion of aliens

1890 – Foreign born in US is 15% of the population

1891 – Bureau of Immigration is established. More classes of aliens are restricted including those who were monetarily assisted by others for their passage. Steamship companies were ordered to return ineligible immigrants to county of origin

1892 – Ellis Island opens. Women traveling alone must be met by a man or they were immediately deported.

1902 – Chinese Exclusion Act renews indefinitely

1903 – Anarchists,, epileptics, polygamists, and beggars ruled inadmissible

1906 – For naturalization knowledge of English becomes a basic requirement

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[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naturalization\\_Act\\_of\\_1906](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naturalization_Act_of_1906)

1906 - The Naturalization Act of 1906 was an act of the United States Congress signed into law by Theodore Roosevelt that revised the law from 1870 and required immigrants to learn English in order to become naturalized citizens. The bill was passed on June 29, 1906, and took effect September 27, 1906.

The legislation established the federal government as the arbiter of naturalization policy. It created the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, which provided for the first uniform naturalization laws in the country. Prior to 1906, an alien could be naturalized in any U.S. "court of record." State-level naturalization courts managed proceedings and had varying standards across the country. After September 26, 1906, naturalization could only be done in courts having a seal and a clerk, and exerting universal competence.

The Act established standardized naturalization forms, requiring, inter alia:

verification of arrival thus,

names and details of wives and children

Generally, the Basic Naturalization Act of 1906 addressed Roosevelt's commission's concerns, with one specific recommendation that was not specifically addressed. There was no specific form issued for the oath of allegiance, as was recommended by the commission. Another recommended provision insisted that naturalized citizens be able to speak English.

Through the centralization of all naturalization and immigration records the Federal Government was able to command more control over the naturalization process. The centralization mandate produced a uniform process as well as causing the number of courts processing applications to fall throughout the country." This centralization also included the dispersal of standard naturalization documents following the law's enactment. On September 27th of 1906, the United States Federal Naturalization Bureau began keeping copies of all American naturalization records. The naturalization certificate files would come to be known as C-Files. Additionally, those who had acquired their citizenship on questionable legal grounds, are now subject to additional scrutiny, as a direct result of this law.

Particularly, significant about this legislation is that it clearly asserts greater Federal jurisdiction over the naturalization process in America. If the existence of the act, on its own, does not elicit that impression, then Section 11's assertion that the United States can appear "before any court" as it relates to Naturalization proceedings makes it more explicit. This provision does not technically strip the states of any jurisdiction, but it specifically asserts that the Federal Government holds the ultimate powers relating to naturalization, under the law.