

The purpose of this holiday is to honor both, native-born and naturalized foreign-born citizens. In 1939, Randolph Hearst gave the day national prominence through his chain of daily newspapers when a movement to recognize new citizens began.

In 1940, Congress designated the third Sunday in May as ***I am an American Day***. Many cities continue to observe this holiday. On February 29, 1952, President Harry Truman signed a bill establishing September 17 as Citizenship Day replacing the May observance and moving the date to the one on which the U.S. Constitution was signed in 1787. The intent of the bill was to give recognition to those who had become American Citizens during the preceding year. The celebrations include pageantry and speeches to impress Americans with the privileges and responsibilities of U.S. citizenship.

Citizenship Day focuses on the rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizens both native-born and naturalized. The choice of September 17 for this observance commemorates the events of September 17, 1787 when the United States Constitution was signed by delegates from 12 states at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This day celebrates our Supreme Law of the Land as the oldest working Constitution in the world.