

## Landmarks in Immigration History

- 1795 Naturalization Act restricts citizenship to "free white persons" who reside in the United States for five years and renounce their allegiance to their former country.
- 1798 The Alien and Sedition Acts permit the President to deport any foreigner deemed to be dangerous. A revised Naturalization Act imposes a 14-year residency requirement for prospective citizens.
- 1802 Congress reduce the residency requirement for citizenship to five years.
- 1808 The importation of slaves into the United States is prohibited.
- 1831 Pennsylvania permits bilingual instruction in English and German in its public schools.
- 1840s Irish Potato Famine; crop failures in Germany; the onset of industrialization; and failed European revolutions begin a period of mass immigration.
- 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, concluding the Mexican War, extends citizenship to approximately 80,000 Mexican residents of the Southwest.
- 1849 California Gold Rush spurs immigration from China.
- 1850s Know Nothing political party unsuccessfully seeks to increase restrictions on naturalization.
- 1854 Chinese immigrants are prohibited from testifying against whites in California courts.
- 1870 Naturalization Act limits American citizenship to "white persons and persons of African descent," barring Asians from U.S. citizenship.
- 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act restricts Chinese immigration.  
Immigration Act of levies a tax of 50 cents per immigrant and makes several categories of immigrants ineligible to enter the United States, including "lunatics" and people likely to become public charges.
- 1885 Alien Contract Labor Law bars prohibited any company or individual from bringing foreigners into the United States under contract to perform labor here. The only exceptions are those who were brought to do domestic service and skilled workmen who should be needed here to help establish some new trade or industry.
- 1891 Congress makes polygamists, "persons suffering from a loathsome or a dangerous contagious disease," and those convicted of "a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude" ineligible for immigration. The act establishes the Bureau of Immigration within the Treasury Department.
- 1892 Ellis Island opens; serves as processing center for 12 million immigrants over the next 30 years.
- 1901 After President William McKinley is assassinated by a Polish anarchist, Congress enacts the Anarchist Exclusion Act, which allows immigrants to be excluded on the basis of their political opinions.
- 1907 Expatriation Act declares that an American woman who marries a foreign national loses her citizenship.  
Under the Gentleman's Agreement with Japan, the United States agrees not to restrict Japanese immigration in exchange for Japan's promise not to issue passports to Japanese laborers for travel to the continental United States. Japanese laborer are permitted to go to Hawaii, but are barred by executive order from migrating from Hawaii to the mainland.
- 1913 California's Alien Land Law prohibits "aliens ineligible for citizenship" (Chinese and Japanese) from owning

property in the state. It provides the model for similar acts in other states.

- 1917 Congress enacts a literacy requirement for immigrants over President Woodrow Wilson's veto. The law requires immigrants to be able to read 40 words in some language. The law also specifies that immigration is prohibited from Asia, except from Japan and the Philippines.
- 1921 Quota Act limits annual European immigration to 3 percent of the number of a nationality group in the United States in 1910.
- 1922 Cable Act partially repeals the Expatriation Act, but declares that an American woman who marries an Asian still loses her citizenship.
- 1923 In the landmark case of *United States v. Bhaghat Singh Thind*, the Supreme Court rules that Indians from the Asian subcontinent could not become naturalized U.S. citizens.
- 1924 The Johnson-Reed Act limits annual European immigration to 2 percent of the number of nationality group in the United States in 1890.
- Oriental Exclusion Act prohibits most immigration from Asia, including foreign-born wives and children of U.S. citizens of Chinese ancestry.
- 1934 The Tydings-McDuffie Act, which provided for independence for the Philippines on July 4, 1946, strips Filipinos of their status as U.S. nationals and severely restricted Filipino immigration by establishing an annual immigration quota of 50.
- 1940 The Alien Registration Act requires the registration and fingerprinting of all aliens in the United States over the age of 14. The act classifies Korean immigrants as subjects of Japan.
- 1942 Filipinos are reclassified as U.S. citizens, making it possible for them to register for the military.
- Executive Order 9066 authorizes the military to evacuate 112,000 Japanese Americans from the Pacific coast and placed them in ten internment camps.
- 1943 The Chinese Exclusion Act is repealed. By the end of the 1940s, all restrictions on Asians acquiring U.S. citizenship are abolished.
- Congress creates the Bracero Program a guest worker program bringing temporary agricultural workers into the United States from Mexico. The program ended in 1964.
- 1944 In the case of *United States v. Korematsu*, the Supreme Court upholds the internment of Japanese Americans as constitutional.
- 1945 The War Brides Act allows foreign-born wives of U.S. citizens who had served in the U.S. armed forces to enter the United States.
- 1946 Fiancés of American soldiers were allowed to enter the United States.
- The Luce-Cellar Act extends the right to become naturalized citizens to Filipinos and Asian Indians. The immigration quota is 100 people a year.
- 1948 The Displaced Persons Act permits Europeans displaced by the war to enter the United States outside of immigration quotas.
- 1950 The Internal Security Act, passed over President Harry Truman's veto, bars admission to any foreigner who is a Communist or who might engage in activities "which would be prejudicial to the public interest, or would endanger the welfare or safety of the United States."

- 1952 McCarran Walter Immigration Act, passed over President Harry Truman's veto, affirms the national-origins quota system of 1924 and limits total annual immigration to one-sixth of one percent of the population of the continental United States in 1920. The act exempts spouses and children of U.S. citizens and people born in the Western Hemisphere from the quota.
- 1953 Refugee Relief Act extends refugee status to non-Europeans.
- 1954 Operation Wetback forces the return of undocumented workers to Mexico.
- 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act repeals the national origins quota system and gives priority to family reunification.
- 1980 Refugee Act, enacted in response to the boat people fleeing Vietnam, grants asylum to politically oppressed refugees.
- 1986 The Immigration Reform and Control Act gives amnesty to approximately three million undocumented residents and provides punishments for employers who hire undocumented workers.
- 1988 The Redress Act provides \$20,000 compensation to survivors of the World War II internment of Japanese and Japanese Americans.
- 1990 The Immigration Act of 1990 increases the number of immigrants allowed into the United States each year to 700,000.
- 1995 California voters enact Proposition 187, later declared unconstitutional, which prohibits providing of public educational, welfare, and health services to undocumented aliens.
- 1996 The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act strengthens border enforcement and makes it more difficult to gain asylum. The law establishes income requirements for sponsors of legal immigrants.  
The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act, Congress makes citizenship a condition of eligibility for public benefits for most immigrants.
- 1997 Congress restores benefits for some elderly and indigent immigrants who had previously received them.
- 1998 The Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act and the the Noncitizen Benefit Clarification and Other Technical Amendments Act restore additional public benefits to some immigrants.  
The American Competitiveness and Work force Improvement Act increases the number of skilled temporary foreign workers U.S. employers are allowed to bring into the country.