

## Immigration Timeline, The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation

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**March 26, 1790:** Congress passed the first law about who should be granted U.S. citizenship. The Naturalization Act of 1790 (signed by President George Washington) allowed any free white person of “good character,” who had been living in the United States for two years and one year in the state of residence to apply for citizenship.

**The Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798:** Citizenship requirement was increased to 14 years and permitted President John Adams, to deport foreigners deemed to be dangerous.

**The Naturalization Law of 1804:** Women’s access to citizenship was increasingly tied to their state of marriage. Overriding consideration to determine women’s citizenship or ability to naturalize was her marital status.

**1815:** Peace is re-established between the United States and Britain after the War of 1812. Immigration from Western Europe turns from a trickle into a gush, which causes a shift in the demographics of the United States. This first major wave of immigration lasts until the Civil War.

**Between 1820 and 1860,** the Irish—many of them Catholic—account for an estimated one-third of all immigrants to the United States. Some 5 million German immigrants also come to the U.S., many of them making their way to the Midwest to buy farms or settle in cities including Milwaukee, St. Louis and Cincinnati.

**1819:** Many of newcomers arrive sick or dying from their long journey across the Atlantic in cramped conditions. The immigrants overwhelm major port cities, including New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Charleston.

**Steerage Act of 1819:** Signed March 2, 1819 by President James Monroe was designed to improve steerage conditions for immigrants. The Secretary of State was also required to prepare annual reports to Congress on immigrants describing age, sex, occupation, country of citizenship, intended residence, and the number of immigrants who died enroute. The report was prepared by the Captain or Master of the ship and delivered to the Collector of the Customs.

**1824** – Castle Garden opened as a resort.

**1842:** Before this time there was no official national immigration policy. Rules differed from state to state.

**1847:** With the support of the German and Irish Emigrant Societies, the New York State Legislature created a Board of Commissioners of Emigration with the purpose of regulating immigration practices.

**1855:** Castle Clinton/Castle Garden became the Emigrant Landing Depot.

**1875:** Following the Civil War, some states passed their own immigration laws. In 1875 the Supreme Court declares that it's the responsibility of the federal government to make and enforce immigration laws.

**The Fourteenth Amendment of 1868:** Citizenship was granted to people born within the US and subject to its jurisdiction, irrespective of race, but it excluded untaxed "Indians" (Native Americans living on reservations).

**The Naturalization Act of 1870:** Extended citizenship to "aliens of African nativity and to persons of African descent" while also revoking the citizenship of naturalized Chinese Americans.

**1880:** As America begins a rapid period of industrialization and urbanization, a second immigration boom begins. Between 1880 and 1920, more than 20 million immigrants arrive. The majority are from Southern, Eastern and Central Europe, including 4 million Italians and 2 million Jews. Many of them settle in major U.S. cities and work in factories.

**1882:** The Chinese Exclusion Act passes, which bars Chinese immigrants from entering the U.S. Beginning in the 1850s, a steady flow of Chinese workers had immigrated to America. The 1882 Act is the first in American history to place broad restrictions on certain immigrant groups.

**1890: The federal government took control of immigration processing and Castle Garden was closed. During the construction of the Immigration Station on Ellis Island, immigration took place at the Barge office in Castle Clinton at Battery Park.**

**1891:** The Immigration Act of 1891 further excludes who can enter the United States, barring the immigration of polygamists, people convicted of certain crimes, and the sick or diseased. The Act also created a federal office of immigration to coordinate immigration enforcement and a corps of immigration inspectors stationed at principle ports of entry.

**January 1892: Ellis Island, the United States' first immigration station, opens in New York Harbor.** The first immigrant processed is Annie Moore, a teenager from County Cork in Ireland. More than 12 million immigrants would enter the United States through Ellis Island between 1892 and 1954.

**United States v. Wong Kim Ark in 1898:** By virtue of the Fourteenth Amendment, the Supreme Court recognized US birthright citizenship of an American-born child of Chinese parents who had a permanent domicile and residence in the US, and who were there carrying on business, and were not employed in any diplomatic or official capacity under the Emperor of China.

**The Immigration Act of 1924:** Ended mass immigration to the United States, diminishing the role of Ellis Island.

**Indian Citizenship Act of 1924:** Native Americans were granted blanket citizenship whether they belonged to a federally recognized tribe or not, though by that date, two-thirds of Native Americans had already become US citizens by other means.

**1950:** Castle Clinton was named a National Historic Monument.

**The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952:** Prohibits racial and gender discrimination in naturalization.

**1954 - Ellis Island closed and placed under the General Services Administration.**