

WHO IS AN AMERICAN?

1600-1800: Over half of all immigrants to the British colonies arrive as indentured servants.

1776: Full citizenship to white male property owners, with six states granting it to all white males whether they had property or not. Some states some require membership in a specified religion.

1789: Secretary of War is placed in charge of Indians.

1790: All foreign "free white persons" naturalized. Women carry the legal status of their husbands.

1793: First Fugitive Slave Act passed.

1812-21: Six western states join the union with full white male suffrage. Four of the original states abolish property requirements.

1830: Indian Removal Act calls for relocation of all Indians west of the Mississippi River. Cherokees contest it. **1832:** the Supreme Court decides in their favor, but Andrew Jackson ignores the court.

1831-39: the Five Civilized tribes of the Southeast are relocated to the Indian Territory.

1850: Second Fugitive Slave Act enables enslavement of many free Blacks.

1853-56: United States acquires 174 million acres of Indian lands through 52 treaties, all of which it will subsequently break.

1856: North Carolina is last state to abolish the property requirement. Previously barred Catholics and non-Christians are enfranchised. Some states allow immigrants not yet naturalized to vote.

1857: Under *Dred Scott* decision, no black person can be a U.S. citizen. Oregon admitted as a state with a law (not abolished until 1927) that excludes all Blacks from settling there.

1866: Civil Rights Act declares all persons born in the U.S. (except Indians) to be natural citizens.

1869: Territory of Wyoming grants women suffrage in state elections.

1870: 15th Amendment enfranchises Blacks. The South responds with poll taxes, literacy tests, grandfather clauses and terrorism. Naturalization of black immigrants (but not Asians) is permitted.

1871: Residents of the District of Columbia lose the right to vote for mayor and city council. Western Indians forbidden to leave reservations without permission.

1874: The Supreme Court rules that it is not unconstitutional to deny women the right to vote.

1875: Congress bars entry of Chinese, Japanese, prostitutes, felons, and contract laborers, to "end the danger of cheap Chinese labor and immoral Chinese women." It effectively bars all Asian women.

1882: The Chinese Exclusion Law suspends immigration of laborers for ten years. Later laws will include anarchists, communists and the illiterate.

1888: Supreme Court affirms (repeatedly re-affirmed) that corporations have all the rights of people.

1890: Federal government assumes control of immigration, begins construction of Ellis Island Inspection Station. It will process 12 million immigrants, who become the ancestors of 100 million Americans.

1896: *Plessy vs Ferguson* decision ("Separate but equal") legalizes segregation.

1901: The "Insular Acts": The Supreme Court decides that full citizenship rights do not extend to all places under American control, especially islands where people of color live ("savage" and "alien races") who could not understand "Anglo-Saxon principles."

1902: Chinese exclusion is extended for another ten years; made indefinite in 1904.

1918: Servicemen of Asian ancestry who served in World War I receive right of naturalization.

1919: American Indian soldiers and sailors receive citizenship.

1920: The 20th Amendment, giving women the right to vote, is ratified.

1921-1965: The National Origins Formula restricts immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe and Jews, and *prohibits* the immigration of Arabs, East Asians, and Indians. Its intention is "to preserve the ideal of American homogeneity."

1923: Asian Indians ruled not eligible for naturalized citizenship.

1924: Congress gives the right to vote to Native Americans. Border patrol established on the Mexico-U.S. border.

1925-1931: Over a million Mexicans (60% of them U.S. citizens) deported without due process.

1929-1933: During the Depression, more people emigrate from the United States than to it.

1930s: Until this decade, most legal immigrants are male.

1936-1945: The U.S. refuses to admit most Jewish refugees of the Nazis.

1941: 110,000 Japanese-Americans are interned in camps. German-Americans are not affected.

1942: U.S. imports (ultimately) hundreds of thousands of temporary laborers from Mexico in the Bracero Program.

1943: Chinese Exclusion Act repealed. Annual immigration quota for Chinese is set at 105.

1945: War Brides Act permits immigration of Asian spouses and children of American servicemen. 1,500 German scientists, including many Nazis, admitted to U.S.

1946: Naturalization rights and small immigration quotas granted to Asian Indians and Filipinos.

1949: 5000 educated Chinese in the U.S. granted refugee status after Chinese Revolution.

1950: The Internal Security Act of 1950 bars members of communist or fascist organizations from immigrating to the United States. By then, the former Nazis have been safely admitted.

1952: Right of naturalization and a small immigration quota granted to Japanese.

1954: U.S. deports over a million undocumented Mexicans in Operation Wetback. Ellis Island closes.

1957: Utah becomes the last state to permit Native Americans to vote.

1965: The Voting Rights Act enfranchises racial minorities. The Immigration and Nationality Act abolishes "national origins" as the basis for allocating immigration quotas, thus opening the doors to immigrants from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. However, it also introduces immigration quotas to Latin Americans and prohibits entry of homosexuals.

1967: Bracero Program ended

1974: Residents of the District of Columbia regain the right to vote for mayor and city council but still lack voting representation in Congress.

1980-2000: Congress allows massive immigration of Cubans while turning back Haitians and those seeking political refuge from El Salvador and other right-wing regimes.

1986: President Ronald Reagan gives amnesty to 3 million undocumented immigrants in the country.

1990: Congress increases the limits on legal immigration and revises all grounds for exclusion and deportation, including homosexuality and AIDS. Numbers of female legal immigrants reach parity with numbers of males.

1991 to 2000: The U.S. admits more legal immigrants, (ten to eleven million), than in any previous decade.

2005: State of California officially apologizes for deporting Mexicans in 1925-1931

2013: The Supreme Court strikes down the heart of the Voting Rights Act, claiming that racism is history, and effectively enabling many states to disenfranchise minorities once again.

2015: The Obama administration successfully opposes full voting rights for Samoans, citing the 1901 Insular Acts. Four Million Americans living in Puerto Rico (with a greater population than 21 U.S. states), Guam, American Samoa, Virgin Islands, etc, still cannot vote for President.

Today: Legal immigrants are at their highest level ever, at just over 37,000,000. Although all its constituent sections have long been repealed, Chapter 7 of Title 8 of the United States Code is still headed, "Exclusion of Chinese."