

AMERICAN IMMIGRATION:

Our History, Our Stories



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American Immigration: Our History, Our Stories

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TIMELINE



- ★ **1565**—St. Augustine is founded by the Spanish in present-day Florida.
- ★ **1607**—English arrivals found the Jamestown settlement in the Virginia Colony.
- ★ **1620**—The *Mayflower* arrives with English Pilgrims landing at Plymouth Rock. Africans begin to be kidnapped and forced to the colonies to be sold into slavery.
- ★ **1630**—Protestant Puritans from England found the Massachusetts Bay Colony; by now, white arrivals outnumber indigenous peoples in their initial areas of settlement.
- ★ **1717–1775**—The early frontier is settled by new arrivals, especially a wave of Scots-Irish washing over the Appalachian region in 1763.
- ★ **1763**—Great Britain issues a Royal Proclamation discouraging newcomers, wanting to make their colonies easier to control. This helps to ignite the Revolutionary War, in which America becomes an independent nation.

- ★ 1776—With the Declaration of Independence, anyone who moves here is officially an immigrant, not someone moving from one part of Great Britain to another.
- ★ 1790— The Naturalization Act, the first immigration law, states that “free white persons” of good character can apply to be citizens after living here for two years.
- ★ 1798—The Alien and Sedition Acts make it harder for an immigrant to become a citizen.
- ★ 1800–1802—President Thomas Jefferson brings most of the Alien and Sedition provisions to an end, ushering in a roaring wave of migration.
- ★ 1848—America wins the Mexican-American War and takes over present-day Texas, Arizona, California, New Mexico, and more. Most of the residents choose to stay, becoming the country’s first Mexican Americans.
- ★ 1861–1865—Immigration slows during the Civil War.
- ★ 1868—The Fourteenth Amendment to our Constitution, not always enforced, grants citizenship to people born within the United States.
- ★ 1882—The Chinese Exclusion Act, lasting until 1943, bars immigrants because of their race for the first time in American history.
- ★ 1886—The Statue of Liberty, a symbol of America’s openness to European immigrants, is installed in New York Harbor.

★ **1892**—Ellis Island opens off the coast of Manhattan. By the time it closes in 1954, it has processed twelve million immigrants, sometimes as many as ten thousand people a day.

★ **1910**—Angel Island Immigration Station starts operating in San Francisco Bay for the purpose of monitoring the flow of Chinese immigrants. The station closed in 1940.

★ **1914**—With the beginning of World War I, anti-immigration feeling surges, and immigration slows.

★ **1921**—Immigration falls sharply after the Emergency Quota Act, the first law to set numerical quotas to determine who can and can't enter.

★ **1941–1945**—World War II stops American immigration for the duration.

★ **1942**—President Franklin Roosevelt authorizes the military to remove Japanese people, including American citizens, and intern them in camps. The last camp closes in 1946. President Gerald Ford issues a formal apology to the surviving internees in 1976.

★ **1948**—The Displaced Persons Act allows refugees from war-torn Europe to start immigrating here.

★ **1965**—The Immigration and Naturalization Act, also known as the Hart-Celler Act, finally ends the quota system that favored certain European immigrants.

★ **2002**—After the terrorist attacks of 9/11/01,

immigration policy changes from a guiding principle into a weapon against terrorism. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), which had been operating since 1933, is folded into the new Department of Homeland Security, with its Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

★ **2006**—A path to citizenship for the undocumented is first proposed by President George W. Bush.

★ **2012**—President Barack Obama establishes the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (DACA), giving deportation reprieve to some undocumented young people who came to the country as children.

★ **2016**—Donald Trump is elected president and rapidly issues numerous orders and harsh new rules tightening immigration policy.

★ **2020**—Immigration becomes a major issue in the presidential campaign.