
Publisher's Note

Opinions Throughout History: Immigration is the second title in a new series from Grey House Publishing. Single, in-depth volumes are designed to follow the path of public opinion on current, controversial topics as they have evolved throughout history. Each volume includes a range of primary and secondary source documents, including newspaper and magazine articles, speeches, court decisions, and other legislation. These documents are accompanied by expert commentary and analysis to guide the reader through the process of understanding how each document contributed to, or is a reflection of, changing attitudes on important issues of public interest.

Opinions throughout History: Immigration starts with a detailed, 12-page *Introduction*, that follows immigration throughout history, what it means to be an American, and why it's important. This is followed by a comprehensive *Timeline* of significant events related to immigration, and 30 related documents, arranged in chronological order. Most of them are reprinted in their entirety, and are clearly distinguished by a shaded title bar. Often, the document is broken up into sections to better demonstrate the points discussed in the 1,500 words of analysis and commentary that accompany it, detailing the significance of the document and how it reflects the ongoing tension between opposing priorities of immigration in America.

The time period covered is sweeping. The content starts with the *1798 Treaty With the Delawares*, which established a nation-to-nation relationship between European colonists (the first immigrants) and various indigenous American societies, and ends with the Smithsonian article, "*America's True History of Religious Tolerance.*" Each chapter starts with a valuable *Introduction* and list of *Topics Covered*, and

ends with a *Conclusion*, *Discussion Questions*, and *Works Used*. Each chapter is further enhanced by photos and other images, quotations, and sidebars. Footnotes referenced in the text begin on page 583.

Back matter includes *Historical Snapshots* that provide broad overviews of political, social and cultural developments that give the reader an understanding of the political and social climate of the time. Also included is a list of *Primary and Secondary Sources* that appear in this volume, and a *Glossary* of terms frequently used when discussing immigration. A *Bibliography* and detailed *Index* complete the volume.

The first title in this series is *Opinions Throughout History: National Security vs. Civil & Privacy Rights*. Following this second volume on *Immigration* are works that tackle *Gender Roles* and *Drug Use & Abuse*.

Historical Timeline

- 1492:** Christopher Columbus arrived in the United States during an effort to reach India, mistakenly named the native residents he encountered “Indians”
- 1606:** Colony of Virginia was founded, becoming the anchor for later European immigration to North America
- 1614:** The Chickahominy Treaty between the Virginia colony and a branch of the Pequot nation established the sovereignty of the Virginia Colony through a mutual defense treaty with the Pequot
- 1722:** The Great Treaty of 1722 became the first ratified treaty in U.S. history between the colonies of New York, Virginia, and Pennsylvania and the Five Nations (Mohogs, Oneydes, Onondages, Cayauges, and Sinnekees)
- The treaty helped to defend the colonies against the encroachment of Spanish and French colonists
- 1775:** The American Revolution began with the Thirteen Colonies fighting for independence from the British monarchy
- 1776:** The Declaration of Independence was signed
- 1778:** The United States ratified the Treaty with the Delawares between the U.S. government and the Delaware Nation, the first nation-to-nation treaty recognizing the sovereignty of the United States government
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Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 1, several years after the signing of the Treaty With the Delawares, that established the nation-to-nation relationship between indigenous Americans and the Federal government, the United States began efforts to determine how to regulate the flow of foreign arrivals into the United States. This effort was informed by the American Revolution (1775–1783) and the Declaration of Independence (1776) and then in the debates that led to the drafting and ratification of the U.S. Constitution (1789). The year after the Constitution was adopted, the nation adopted its first immigration law, the Uniform Rule of Naturalization (1790), establishing the initial rules for how a foreign-born person would be allowed to become a United States citizen.

The document discussed in this chapter is the full text of the 1790 Uniform Rule of Naturalization, a concise law determining that any free white person who lived in the nation for at least two years could become a citizen so long as they appeared in any court and were judged to be of good character. The simplicity of the law reflects an American culture that had not yet begun to contend with many of the issues that would later define the nation's immigration debates, as well as the effort to extend the founding principles of the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution to the citizenship process.

Topics covered in this chapter include:

- Indigenous American society
- The American Revolution
- Constitutional law
- Institutionalization of racism
- Centralization of political power
- Naturalization law
- George Washington Administration

Becoming American

The Naturalization Process (1790-1798)

America was born when the Thirteen Colonies controlled by radical militants fought a centuries old power for control of a burgeoning agricultural empire fueled by slavery and the exploitation of the indigenous culture. The American Revolution (1775–1783) established sovereignty for the Thirteen Colonies, and with this began a long-term process of building the machinery of the central government from the remnants of the colonial administrations then in place. Part of this effort involved determining how the benefits of citizenship would be bestowed upon all those already living in the United States and those who wished to join in the new, governmental experiment taking place. This meant building the nation's first immigration laws, deciding the rules, laws, and customs that would govern the process of becoming American.

One Tyranny Ends and Another Begins

The American Revolution (1775–1783) is typically seen as the beginning of the American experiment, but it was also the culmination of more than a century of evolution. The American colonies started as an outgrowth of England and, for many years, wealthy elites in Europe profited from the labor and struggles of the American colonists, but provided (at least in the Patriots' eyes) little in return. It was unfair taxation that became the sticking point in the conflict, with the British government attempting to balance their growing colonial expenditures by increasing taxation among their colonies.

In 1776, the year that the Thirteen Colonies officially declared their independence from England, the fledgling United States was already becoming a blend of cultures. Nearly 85 percent of the colonists in 1776 were British or from one of the British colonies (Wales, Ireland, Scotland), whereas 10 percent were German, 4 percent were Dutch, and 2 percent





Signing of the Declaration of Independence, by John Trumbull, via Wikimedia Commons

were French.¹⁴ A new identity was beginning to emerge, representing the ways that European cultural and social traditions had changed from exposure to the rugged landscape of the Americas. Before the first musket ball was fired, the colonists were already becoming something different, but it wasn't until the revolution that they declared themselves Americans.

The Declaration of Independence (1776) expressed the ideological underpinnings of the American Revolution. Not only were the Patriots fighting against an exploitative colonial power, but they were fighting against the very idea of the hierarchies of power and wealth that propped up such regimes around the world. As Thomas Jefferson wrote eloquently:

_____ *“We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.”* _____

However, the inequities and stratification of European society endured the flames of the revolution. The Patriots of the Thirteen Colonies saw themselves as united against tyranny, but had become a tyrannical force in their own right. In general, the colonists were wealthier than their European counterparts, and income inequality (a severe crisis in the United States of the 2010s) was already emerging. In 1774, the top 1 percent of



American citizens controlled nearly 7 percent of the nation's wealth, and this wealthy elite profited not only from the underpaid work of whites, but also from the African slave trade.

In 1776, 20 percent of those living in the colonies were slaves, and it would be many years before the U.S. government would try to address the inherent inequity of this economic system. There is no justification for slavery that will meet with the approval of modern Americans. Those Africans brought to the nation were treated like human-shaped beasts of burden, dehumanized to such a degree that violence against them was no more prohibited than against a farm animal.¹⁵ However, even then, some Americans already had strong moral objections.

Historians have discovered evidence that Thomas Jefferson, in writing the Declaration, originally wanted to blame King George III for African slavery, calling it a "cruel war against human nature." Jefferson's objections were overruled and the statement was left out, but it is interesting to imagine how American history might have differed had the framers agreed that slavery was immoral this early in history. This did not happen because the wealthy were already dependent on slavery and would not have been nearly as wealthy had they been forced to pay for the labor they were using to increase their wealth. It would take a civil war, a labor movement, and a civil rights movement to upend the system that was already in place in the Thirteen Colonies and that created a hierarchy of value that divided America's racial minorities from white society.

The language of those foundational documents also clearly establishes the racial hierarchies that came to dominate American society into the twenty-first century. For instance, in the Declaration of Independence, the founders provide a list of complaints against King George III, essentially restating the reasoning behind their desire for separation. The very last of these complaints reads:

_____ *“He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare, is undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions.”*¹⁶

The very document that states “all Men are created equal,” also refers to an entire population of indigenous inhabitants as “savages,” and thus these people were *legally* “savages” in the U.S. government from this moment on. It is also worth pointing out that the indigenous people rarely practiced warfare that targeted men, women, and children, though this did occur. Depicting them as such was, even in 1776, political rhetoric and what might today be called “fake news,” designed to make King George seem evil. In the American Revolution, the indigenous Americans were caught between two powers, unable to win no matter which they backed. Nevertheless, many indigenous Americans fought alongside the Patriots and against the British, whereas others remained faithful to the British, having signed treaties in good faith with the British colonial government.

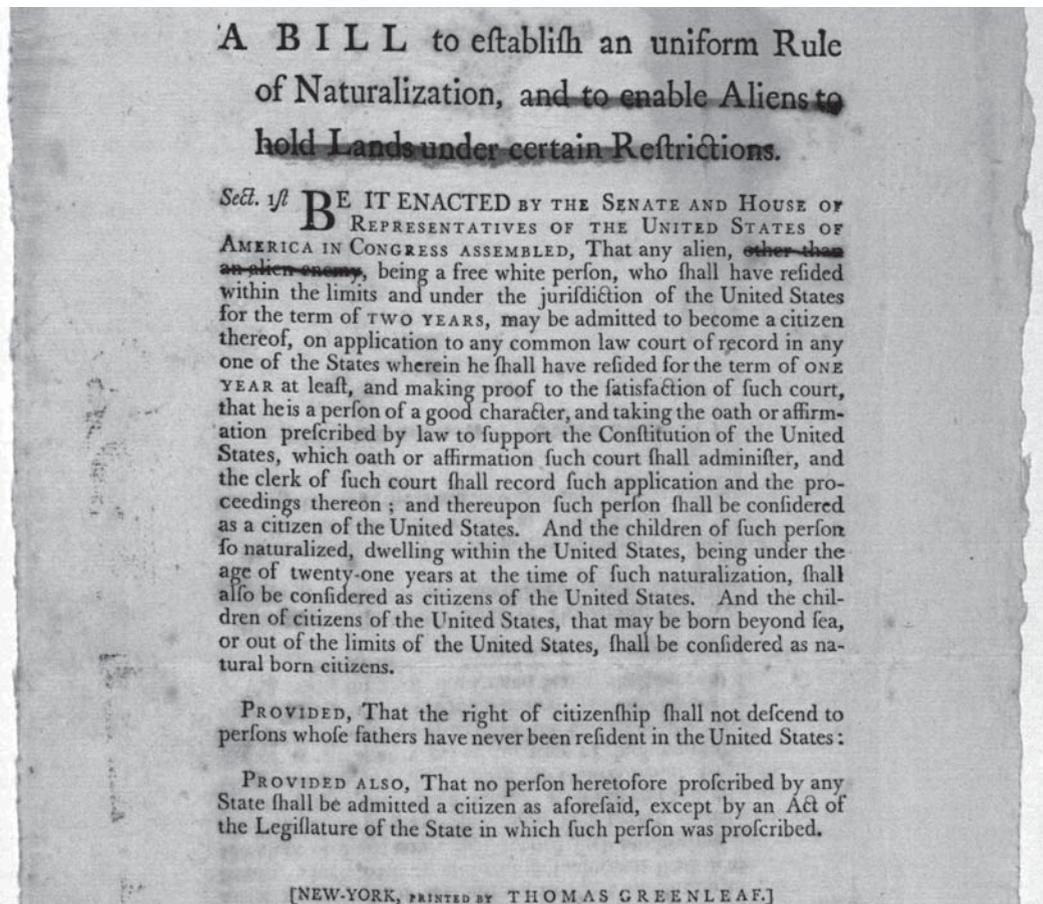
Of the fate of indigenous Americans in the American Revolution, historian Colin G. Calloway writes:

_____ *“Indians fought in the Revolution for Indian liberties and Indian homelands, not for the British empire. But the image of Indian participation presented in the Declaration of Independence prevailed: most Americans believed that Indians had backed monarchy and tyranny. A nation conceived in liberty need feel no remorse about dispossessing and expelling those who had fought against its birth.”*¹⁷



The Right to Become American

The year 1790 was an important one in the United States. President George Washington gave the nation's first State of the Union Address, Thomas Jefferson became the first Secretary of State, and the Supreme Court of the United States met for the first time in New York City. The Thirteen Colonies were flying under the Betsy Ross flag featuring a circle of thirteen stars (one for each colony) against the red and white stripes signifying valor and purity, and the framers were engaged in the exciting process of creating the legislative, judicial, and executive branches of the government.



Uniform Rule of Naturalization, 1790, Library of Congress

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is the difference between naturalization and immigration?
- Was the Declaration of Independence prejudiced by modern standards? Explain.
- How might the United States be different if the U.S. Constitution had banned slavery? Explain.
- How would you define tyranny? Give an example from the modern world.

Works Used

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Historical Snapshots

1793

- France declared war on England
- The “Reign of Terror,” a purge of those suspected of treason against the French Republic, began in France
- Louis XVI was executed by guillotine
- Jean Pierre Blanchard made the first balloon flight in North America, in Philadelphia
- The German Reformed Church was established in the U.S. by Calvinist Puritans
- China’s emperor turned away the British fleet and declared that China possessed all things in abundance and had no need of British goods
- Christian Sprengel published detailed descriptions of the manner in which different flowers are pollinated
- Claude Chappe established the first long-distance semaphore telegraph line
- Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin and applied for a patent
- French troops conquered Geertruidenberg in the Netherlands
- Noah Webster established New York’s first daily newspaper, *American Minerva*
- Tennis was first mentioned in an English sporting magazine
- The Republican calendar replaced the Gregorian calendar in France
- The first American fugitive slave law passed which required the return of escaped slaves
- President George Washington’s second inauguration speech was only 133 words long
- The Humane Society of Philadelphia was organized
- Benjamin Rush successfully treated an epidemic of yellow fever
- The Louvre in Paris opened as a museum