

Immigration

[History](#)



Immigration Immigration Immigrants who came to the United States were prompted by several reasons including famine, to provide labor and in search of a better life. Handlin argues that previously, most of the immigrants were from Northern and Western Europe, but a different trend emerged, as most of the new immigrants originated from Southern and Eastern Europe. In as much as a substantial number of immigrants came to the United States from 1900 to 1929, it is important to note that the number of immigrants slightly reduced in 1914 due to the occurrence of World War One.

According to Handlin (2002), the process of immigration to the United States was somewhat easy before 1929, as there were no serious legal impediments. This is because the immigrants were to leave their homelands and either travel on foot through the thick forests or through ships, which plied the water bodies. Upon arrival in the United States, the immigrants would settle within localities occupied by most of their compatriots. This would make it easy for them to settle, and would help them avoid loneliness, for they would converse in their own language, practice their own religion and at the same time continue celebrating their cultural beliefs. The 1917 immigration act nonetheless came into play to standardize the number of people who visited the United States based on literacy levels. This is because it was mandatory for each immigrant entering the United States to be subjected to twenty-nine literacy questions, before being screened by a team of physicians that comprised of doctors and nurses for any serious health condition. After which they were free to link up with their fellow citizens.

Handlin asserts that the process of immigration into the United States

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became much difficult following the enactment of the 1924 immigration law, which came into play in 1929. This is because the law authorized immigration based on the national origin structure and created different quotas for immigration. In as much as the United States still opened its doors to immigrants, they were to comply with tighter regulations. Another consequence of the law according to Handlin (2002) is that it restricted a considerable number of immigrants from specific regions of the world, particularly inhabitants of Eastern and Southern Europe and those who came to the United States through slavery and slave trade. The 1924 immigration law made it mandatory that immigrants would primarily seek permission from the U. S consulates within their countries before embarking on the journey to the United States. They would similarly apply for visas and attach their photographs, and at the same time submit a head tax of \$9, which was an increase by \$1 from the \$8 set by the 1917 immigration act. Once all the documents were approved, an individual would have earned citizenship into the United States, but not before successfully completing the literacy test and being given a clean bill of health by the physicians who would screen them to ascertain their health status. That notwithstanding, it is important to note that immigration into the United States became an extremely difficult process for inhabitants of Southern and Eastern Europe nations, because of the dynamics the world politics had taken by then.

Reference

Handlin, O. (2002). *The uprooted*. Philadelphia, Pa: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press.