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Regulations concerning Immigration and Citizenship

by

C. V. Eberlin

(Translated by Casey & Lone Black)

Americans, both the native born and the immigrants, are proud of their country. It is their firm belief that there isn't a country in the world where the working class is so well off and has such a good lifestyle as over here, that America has far less illness and fewer cripples than most other countries, that America, morally, is far above any other country, and that no other country can show the same degree of freedom, equality, and brotherhood than the United States of America.

Because of this belief, many of the country's children fear that the continuous, ever increasing flow of immigrants will harm their country. They did not have this fear as long as the immigration consisted mainly of healthy, brave, freedom-loving northern Europeans—Scandinavians, Germans, Irish, and British—who in a short time become completely Americanized and who often surpass the country's own children in their enthusiasm for the American society and its institutions. But fear started when Italy started to send its ragamuffins, when the oppressed Jews from Russia, Poland, and Austria started their migration, and when China's excess workforce sought a new home in America. All of these people were for the most part of a lower class than Americans, especially in regard to living conditions, cleanliness, health and morals; in regard to morals, though, the Jews are an exception.

The fear of this immigration is the reason why year after year it becomes more difficult to get permission to land in America, and why a returning passenger ship rarely leaves without some of the immigrants it had brought to America but who were not allowed to land. It is therefore best that all who are thinking of traveling to America first seek clarification regarding the requirements for admission to the United States.

The current immigration laws do not seek to diminish this immigration, but only to prevent the landing of persons who could

harm the country morally, financially or in sanitary matters. America wants immigrants who will live an honest life and abide by the laws of the land. Felons and criminals are therefore adamantly denied entry to the country, and if they slip in anyway, they can at any time be sent back. Anarchists, who already refuse to submit to existing conditions and laws, are also firmly denied entry. America wants immigrants who want to live good moral lives. If it is the opinion of immigration authorities that a young girl gives the impression that she does not regard the moral laws seriously that alone is enough to send her back. America tries as much as possible to keep diseases away from the country-especially diseases caused by lack of cleanliness or insufficient nourishment. Entry to the country is totally denied people suffering from the eye disease "trachoma" or other contagious disease or who are not completely sane. If in a family just arrived there is a child who is sick or insane, that is enough to deny the entire family entry to the country.

Furthermore America seeks through its immigration laws to protect the country's workers against wage degradation. Many immigrant employers had for a long time the habit of importing their workforce, to offer friends and acquaintances in the old country to pay for their travel expenses and pay them a wage that seemed high compared to what they could earn at home, - but might only be half of what their work was worth in America.

If immigration authorities find out that some have come to America according to an agreement with an employer to offer them work, that person is denied entrance to the country and the employer is given a significant fine. Likewise, entrance is denied anyone who has accepted travel money or has a ticket sent to them from America except where the trip is paid for by a close relative. America also demands assurance that the immigrant will be able to support himself without any help from the public or private charity. Usually it takes several days or weeks for a newcomer to find a job, and usually no one will be able to enter if he doesn't bring money enough to support himself at least a couple of weeks-at least 100 kroner. A specific sum has not been determined; that depends solely on the immigrant's ability to find work. A craftsman can easily get work at his profession while an office worker or a commissioner, if

he doesn't have anyone to guide him, will search in vain week in and week out. If the immigrant no longer is young or agile,—if for example he is over forty—the immigration authorities will require him to bring more money with him. If he is over fifty he will most likely be denied entry, because at his age he is too old to make his way under new circumstances.

In the span of the first three years after he has arrived, the immigrant can be sent home if he seeks public or private charity or runs afoul of the law or commits an indecent act, or becomes insane or is completely unable to take care of himself.

Every year thousands of immigrants who have one or another of these psychic or physical defects are not allowed to set foot in America, but have to return on the same ship that brought them. But if an immigrant is young and fit to work and has lived an honorable and working life in his homeland, he will find that America is ready to open the country's doors for him, welcome him and give him the opportunity to make a living for himself and his family.

And not only is the country ready to receive him and give him work for good pay, it is also ready in a few years to give him the same civil rights as the country's own children. America wants new citizens – men and women who will set up house and grow roots in the country. It doesn't want immigrants who stay in the country a year or two and then return to where they came from still foreigners to the country, its language, culture, and society as the day they landed. No country is served by that kind of immigrant and no immigrants are served by living that kind of nomadic life.

The best an immigrant can do after having somewhat familiarized himself with circumstances here, and after the first homesickness is over, is then to decide if he wants this new country to become his permanent home. As soon as that decision has been made, he ought to seal it by visiting that place's court and declare that it is his intent to seek citizenship in America, and that he therefore renounces his nationality and citizenship to his country of birth. After having signed this declaration and received a copy of it, he immediately will have certain rights of citizenship - for example the right to serve as a soldier in the United States army and entry to smaller municipal jobs. In several western states he is also allowed to vote, while in

other states in the east he must wait for full citizenship before he has the right to vote. But the best of all is that he no longer feels as a foreigner in a foreign land; he has been completely freed from his previous citizenship, is beginning to look at America as his home country and is showing interest in the country, its government, laws, and social conditions.

Every honest individual can get full citizenship after five years of uninterrupted stay, if he or she three years earlier has signed the aforementioned declaration. Citizenship is granted by the nearest court after two citizens have declared that the applicant has lived an honest life and in every way is worthy of becoming an American citizen. The applicant must also show by examination that he knows the country's constitution, understands how the country's affairs are decided by elected officials and representatives and senators, and understands the rights and duties of an American citizen; that he understands that "the United States" is a federation of about fifty independent states, that each has its own publicly elected governors, its own legislature and its own laws and only in some common affairs is under the leadership of the president and government in Washington.

When the judge, through a few questions, is convinced that the applicant understands the importance of the power which the voting right grants to every American citizen, he then administers the pledge of allegiance to the new home country and gives him written proof that he has earned full citizenship and has the same civil rights as if he had lived all his life in America.