

Study of Naturalization Requirements

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IN ANSWER to many inquiries I have prepared a short synopsis of the requirements for naturalization.

The United States was the first nation to hold that a man has a right to choose his citizenship. We have consistently followed that doctrine by making it possible for all aliens of Aryan and African origin to become naturalized citizens of this country. Many of the governments of Europe have not yet conceded this right to their subjects, and on more than one occasion this difference of opinion and practice has been the cause of discussion and conflict.

From the foundation of the government until within the last few years it was not at all difficult to obtain citizenship, and no effort was made to prepare aliens for citizenship. The law required that the alien must be of good moral character, believing in organized government, having no more than one wife, having lived for five continuous years in the country, pledging obedience to our laws, and being able to speak English and sign his own name. That was all. A few perfunctory questions were asked and answered, and the alien became a citizen as a matter of course.

The rapid growth of radicalism and I.W.W. tendencies in this country, and particularly our experience with many foreign born residents who were not citizens during the World War, have taught the nation a lesson, and now night schools and day schools have been established in every state, and an effort is really being made to make our foreign born residents Americans at heart before they are admitted to citizenship. The old requirements are not only continued, but now the alien is also required to have a fair idea of our form of government, a general knowledge of our institutions, and to make a careful study of our Constitution, which he swears to support and defend, and to be able to pass a creditable examination along those lines.

The Circuit Judge of Clatsop County was among the first to take a more serious view of the requirements for naturalization, and when women were allowed the right of suffrage in the State of Oregon he was one of the first to hold that the wife should have like qualifications with her husband, and be able at least to speak, read intelligently and write the English language, since making her husband a citizen made her also a citizen, giving her the right to vote.

The alien must get two "papers" before he becomes a citizen of the United States. The first is secured when he makes his declaration of intention to become a citizen of this country, and may be made, if he so desires, the day after his arrival, or at any time thereafter. The first paper costs one dollar. At the expiration of two years, and not more than seven years from the date of the first paper, he can apply for his second, or final citizenship papers. Two witnesses who are citizens of the United States, either naturalized or native born, are required to testify to his good moral character, and five years' continuous residence. If the alien came into the country after June 29, 1906, a certificate of arrival is also required. The

second papers, or final citizenship papers, cost four dollars.

When the 19th Amendment to the Federal Constitution was adopted in 1920, giving women the right to vote in all states of the union, it became necessary to amend the naturalization laws. Formerly, if an American born woman married an alien she automatically lost her citizenship, and if an alien was made a citizen his foreign born wife automatically become a citizen. The new naturalization law was passed by the congress September 22, 1922, and it would perhaps be well to mention a few of the changes, particularly affecting women.

If a foreign born woman married a citizen of the United States, she does not automatically become a citizen, as formerly, but she must take out her citizenship papers. She is not required to take out first papers, that is, make a declaration of intention to become a citizen; she asks only for full citizenship. She must live for at least one year in the United States before asking for citizenship. It is not necessary that she live in one state during the entire time.

If a woman born in this country marries an alien she does not automatically lose her citizenship, as formerly, unless her husband belongs to the class of persons that are not allowed to become citizens under the law, or unless she goes before a court and declares that she does not care to remain a citizen. If the husband of a woman citizen dies or they are divorced, she remains a citizen.

A woman who was born in the United States and lost her citizenship before September 22, 1922, by marrying an alien, must apply for second papers to regain her citizenship under the new law. She does not need to have a certificate of arrival, if during her married period she lived in the United States.

A woman whose husband is not allowed by law to become a citizen can not herself become a citizen while married to him.

The new law does not handicap a woman whose husband has not received his final or second papers. If she desires to become a citizen she may do so, regardless of whether he becomes a citizen or not, by taking out her papers in the regular way fulfilling all the requirements imposed by law, that is, declaration of intention, application of citizenship, five years residence, two witnesses, examination in open court, etc., just as she would if she were a man or a single woman.

If other words, as women now have the right of suffrage, the law makes no difference between women and men, but all are treated alike. The woman must make her own application for citizenship, do the required study and pass the required examination in open court. The husband's application and the wife's application are separate and distinct, each standing on its own merits and degree of qualification.

I want to mention again the need of education and Americanization among our foreign born residents. As a matter of fact, no person should be allowed to

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