**Becoming a Citizen**

The Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America defines **citizenship** as follows: “All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and the state wherein they reside.”  So the means of obtaining citizenship are by either:

**Birth**



**Maternity Ward**

Or

**Naturalization**



Click on picture for video on Ellis Island.

Immigration and **naturalization**, particularly in the twentieth century, have led to an increasingly diverse society. Because of **immigrants** coming into the United States, and becoming naturalized citizens, the country has become diverse due to its various ethnic populations.  With that diversity, many benefits have come to the United States like food, clothing, and music.

To become a citizen through **naturalization**, a person must:

* be at least 18 years old
* be a legal resident of the United States for 3-5 or more years
* be of good moral character and be loyal to the United States
* be able to read, write, and speak basic English
* pass a naturalization test
* Take the *Oath of Allegiance* at a naturalization ceremony

In the 20th century there were surges of **immigrants** entering the United States.  The following bar graph gives you an idea how the numbers of immigrants from different regions changed over time.



 The United States has long been known as a country for immigrants to come to.  They come to the U.S. for a better life, fleeing their countries for various reasons (violence, poverty, natural disasters).