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Article Summary: In an article written in 1912, Williams describes the naturalization of Russian German aliens in Lancaster County from 1867-1910. Often aliens filed incomplete or inaccurate declarations of intention to become naturalized. Some filed appropriately but then failed to complete the citizenship process. Williams recommends a change in the state constitution from alien to citizen suffrage.

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Photographs / Images: Dr Hattie Plum Williams, January 2, 1901; early Burlington Railroad depot complex in Lincoln; Burlington Road immigrant house; German Russian immigrants arriving in Lincoln; Longfellow School, 503 South First Street, in Lincoln's German Russian district; adult education class of German Russian women at Longfellow School; inset Declaration of Intention used in Lancaster County prior to the passage of the naturalization law of 1906; unpaved street in German Russian settlement in Lincoln; table of papers issued under the old and the new law; German Russian family in front of a summer kitchen in Lincoln; German Russian citizenship class in a Lincoln night school, 1916; German Russian group in Lincoln; post-1906 Declaration of Intention that required detailed personal information

THE ROAD TO CITIZENSHIP: A STUDY OF NATURALIZATION IN A NEBRASKA COUNTY

By Hattie Plum Williams

Edited by Anne Polk Diffendal

INTRODUCTION

This article is reprinted by permission of *The Political Science Quarterly*, where it was published in 1912. Its author, Hattie Plum Williams, received her bachelors (1902), masters (1909), and Ph.D. (1915) degrees from the University of Nebraska, where she was a professor of sociology and served as chair of the department from 1915 until 1945. She was a leading figure in the field of social legislation in the 1930s and 1940s.

As a graduate student, her research concerned immigration to the United States in the late nineteenth century, focusing on the Germans from Russia, who came to Lincoln, Nebraska, in significant numbers. The ancestors of these people had left several of the German states in the late eighteenth cen-

tury to take advantage of inducements offered by Catherine the Great. In order to create a buffer zone on the western border of Russia, she granted the Germans land in the Volga River Valley. Although citizens of Russia, they were allowed to maintain their own schools and churches and retain their language. With the loss of much of their local autonomy a century later, many of the Germans left Russia — some returning home, others coming to North America.

Williams's study of the Russian-Germans who settled in Lincoln produced an important body of research material on this group. It also led her to investigate the means by which these and other immigrants adapted to and became a part of American society.

This article offers an account of the administration of the federal law regarding naturalization of aliens in one particular locality and links this process to electoral politics. For the most part still fresh and informative to the modern reader, it is dated in the use of the concept "race" where we today

would refer to either ethnicity or nationality. It also reflects its time and the training of the author in the occasional prescriptive tone, as well as in her attitudes toward contemporary social issues, such as her support for rapid assimilation through education, for the prohibition of alcohol, and her disapproval of bloc voting by ethnicity.

Five graphs have been omitted because the information included in them was well summarized in the text. The author's footnotes are numbered with editor's additions in brackets. Explanatory notes added by the editor are interspersed with those of the author and identified as the work of the editor.

THE ROAD TO CITIZENSHIP

One hundred and twenty-two years have passed since the first naturalization act was put upon the federal statute books. During all but the last six years of that period, the naturalization laws of the United States were scant

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and inadequate, and their administration was committed in great part to the perfunctory care of state courts without any federal assistance. The act of 1906 established a central supervisory agency in the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization under the Department of Commerce and Labor, and otherwise greatly improved and strengthened the naturalization law. Under the administration of the new law, a well-coordinated system is supplanting the earlier laxity, and the conferring of citizenship bids fair to become invested with a dignity and impressiveness commensurate with its significance.¹

The following account of naturalization as administered in Lancaster County, Nebraska, from 1867 to 1910 inclusive, illustrates the workings of both the old and the new law, seven-eighths of the declarations of intention having been made under the earlier and one-eighth under the later law. The facts are presented, not because they are unique, but because they are believed to be typical of the average American community, and especially characteristic of Nebraska, one of the few states still clinging to alien suffrage.

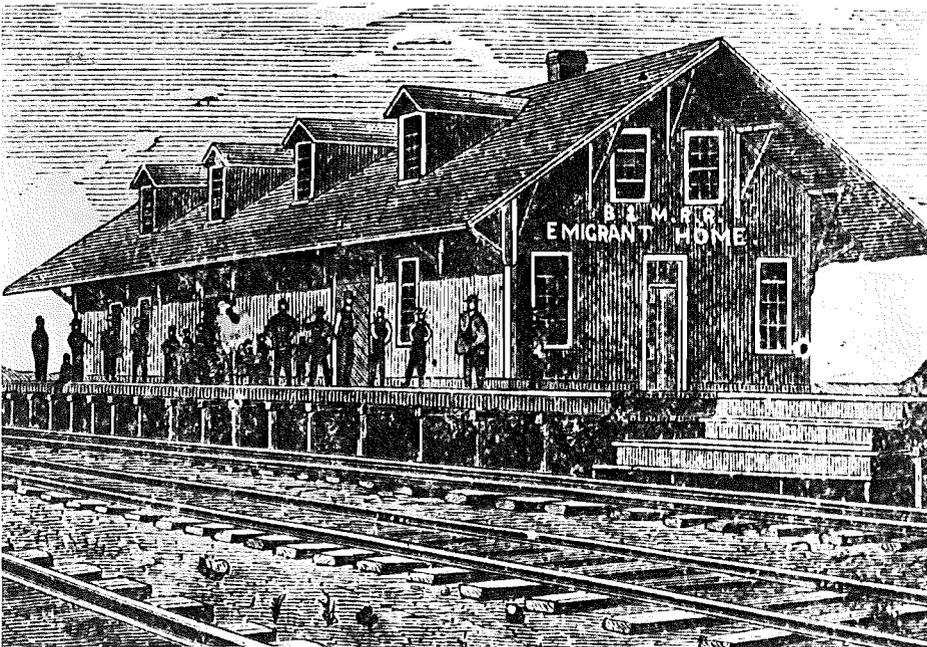
Naturalization is one of the comparatively few subjects upon which the Constitution expressly gave Congress power to legislate. Notwithstanding its importance in a country which, like ours, has been made up entirely of foreigners, it has until recently received slight recognition. Until 1906, foreigners were naturalized under the act of 1802 and its subsequent amendments. This law was practically a reenactment of the statute of 1795, which had been repealed by the Alien Act of 1798. Its terms were most simple. Any free white person, except an alien enemy, was eligible to citizenship. He must declare his intention on oath, before the proper court, at least three years preceding his admission. When he had lived five years in the United States and one year in the state in which he applied, he was declared an



Dr. Hattie Plum Williams, January 2, 1901.



Early Burlington Railroad depot complex in Lincoln, including immigrant house (left) and eating house (center).



Burlington Railroad immigrant house in Lincoln.

American citizen, upon taking the oath to support the Constitution and renouncing allegiance to the sovereign of whom he was a subject. The children of the applicant, if under twenty-one years at the time of the parent's naturalization and if dwelling in the United States, were declared to be American citizens. In 1824 the time intervening between the declaration and the final certificate was reduced to two years; and a provision was added whereby a person who had lived in the United States during the three years preceding his majority could take out both papers at once after establishing his residence in this country. This provision has been the occasion of numerous evils.

The act of June 29, 1906, which took effect October 1 of the same year, is in many ways similar to, though far more stringent than, the much maligned Alien Act of 1798, except as to establishing a state and national residence. The Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization which it created has charge of all matters relating to the naturalization of aliens. Under its organization, uniform and complete records are kept, while inspectors are maintained in the field who check up the work of the courts and represent the federal government at the hearing for final papers. The most important additions and changes made by this law are as follows:

(1) A limit of seven years' validity is placed upon the first paper.

(2) A petition for hearing on the final paper must be filed ninety days in advance, accompanied by the declaration of intention and the certificate of landing. During the interval preceding the hearing, the name of the petitioner must be posted in a public place; and the inspector may verify the records to ascertain whether the applicant is eligible. At the hearing before the court, the candidate is subjected to an examination in the rudiments of government by the presiding judge, and must satisfy the court and the inspector that he is fully qualified for citizenship.²

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(3) No certificate of naturalization may be issued within thirty days preceding a general election.

(4) The petitioner for final papers must speak the English language and must sign the papers in his own handwriting.

(5) Aliens may make their declaration at the age of eighteen.

(6) All fees are assessed by the general government: one dollar for the declaration and two dollars each for the petition and certificate, with a deposit for witnesses, which is returned if not used.

A supplementary law, known as the Expatriation Act of March 2, 1907, renders a certificate of naturalization invalid after two years' residence in the country of birth, or after five years' residence in another foreign country, unless the naturalized citizen registers at an American consulate every five years.

Lancaster County, the naturalization records of which are the subject of this study, is a rural community almost as large as Rhode Island, and is

situated in the rich agricultural section of southeastern Nebraska. The county has existed as a political entity since 1855, but its naturalization records go back only to 1867, when Nebraska was admitted to statehood. In the latter year, Lancaster, a town of about thirty inhabitants located in the center of the county, was chosen as the capital, and its name was changed to Lincoln. The community experienced a remarkable growth. In 1870 the census gave to Lincoln 2441 inhabitants and to Lancaster County 7074; today the capital city, together with its suburbs, has a population of over 50,000, while the remaining inhabitants of the county, numbering 21,284 by the census of 1910, are distributed among the dozen or more small villages and the farms. In accordance with the modern law of population, the urban growth has been much more rapid than the rural increase. In 1870 Lincoln contained 34.5 percent of the population of the county; in 1880, 46.3 percent; in 1890, with its suburbs, it was credited with 73.5 percent;³ in 1900, it had 68.2 percent; in 1910, 71.2.

More important for the present study than the increase in the total population of the urban as compared with the rural community is the fact that a larger proportion of the foreigners coming to the county now settle in the city. In the first half of the forty-four years involved, the foreign population was scattered somewhat evenly over the county. Dutch, Bohemian, Irish, Danish, Norwegian and German settlements were established in the rural districts, while many immigrants of the same nationalities settled in the city. But when cheap land no longer existed in the county and the city had grown large enough to support great numbers of unskilled workmen, this even distribution of immigration ceased,¹ and the last half of the period involved shows the great majority of incoming foreigners settling in the city. Hence, while the statistics for the first half of the period pertain equally to Lincoln and to the county, those for the second half relate almost wholly to Lincoln.

While the federal law has designated various courts under which naturaliza-

German Russian immigrants arriving in Lincoln.



tion may take place, the process has always been performed here by the district court in and for Lancaster County. This tendency to appeal to state courts is characteristic of the whole of Nebraska, in which, out of 2025 declarations of intention filed in the year ending June 30, 1910, only two were filed in federal courts. Resort to the state courts in preference to the federal courts by people in semi-rural communities is largely a matter of convenience. From 1867 to 1878, the United States district and circuit courts sat only in Omaha; and, although sittings have been held in Lincoln since 1878, it was not until 1907 that a federal judge and a clerk were located there. On the other hand, since 1867 there has been a state district court established in the city. The office of the clerk has

been conveniently located and has been open to the public every day of the year, except Sundays and holidays. In many instances the clerk himself has been personally interested in obtaining declarations. Some of the most bitter political contests in this community have been over county offices; and as the clerk in this district is a county officer, his interests have been involved in these struggles. Formerly, he was in the habit of inserting in the press a notice such as the following:

District Clerk _____ suggests that foreigners who wish to become naturalized in time to vote should do so before October 3. The law requires that the first papers be taken out thirty days before the election.

Ordinarily this reminder was not expected to reach the foreigner himself, but it served as a notice of the time limit to interested politicians. It never

failed to bring its response in a demand for a new batch of first papers.

The carelessness with which naturalization records were kept in the Lancaster County district court under the old law indicates that the bestowal of citizenship upon the foreigner was regarded as lightly by the clerk as it could possibly have been by the foreigner himself. The declaration of intention is simply an affidavit made before the clerk of the court. The original document is given to the declarant, and a copy of it is placed in the record. While the certificate of naturalization is given by order of the court, yet in many instances not even ordinary pains were taken in recording it, to say nothing of the degree of care bestowed upon all other legal documents of the court.

Longfellow School, 503 South First Street, Lincoln, was in the city's German Russian district. Courtesy of American Historical Society of Germans from Russia.



The date of the paper was frequently omitted. The report was copied out of chronological order, papers being recorded as much as six months or a year after they had been issued. This suggests the possibility, if not the intent, under this slipshod method, of dating back the paper for the convenience of the applicant.

In other papers the name of the sovereign to whom allegiance was renounced was left blank. On November 2, 1874, seven foreigners received final papers, in which they renounced allegiance to _____. In the seventies many declarations were issued in this defective form. And even when the sovereign to whom allegiance was renounced was designated, no uniformity existed in naming him. This was, of course, a mere technicality; but in view of the strictness of the federal government upon this point at present, it is interesting to note the former laxity. The new law is almost word for word the same as the old law in this respect, yet today the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization insists upon absolute correctness. It issues to each court which naturalizes foreigners a list of all the countries whose subjects are eligible to American citizenship and the official name of the sovereign of each. Every change is marked by issuing a new list and calling the attention of the courts to the changes. In this way uniformity of records and historical accuracy are maintained. Neither is found in the earlier records. No less than fourteen different forms are found by which the subjects of the United Kingdom have renounced allegiance to their former sovereign. As late as 1898, one applicant declared his intention to renounce allegiance to the emperor of Poland, and another to the king of Bohemia. When the wrong country or sovereign was named, the error became more serious. In 1878, in one day, eleven German Russians declared their intention of renouncing allegiance to the emperor of Germany instead of to the czar of Russia. At various times (the last as late as 1903) eleven others did



Adult education class of German Russian women at Longfellow School in Lincoln. Courtesy of American Historical Society of Germans from Russia.

the same thing, and at least four of these have taken out their second papers in the same form. Frequently the names Prussia and Russia were confused, not only in the declarations but even in the registration books. One man took out his first paper as a subject of Russia and his second as a subject of Prussia; another reversed the process.

One of the most serious faults has been carelessness about the applicant's name. It is not strange that foreign names are misspelled. Even with the great care taken by the bureau under the new law and its insistence upon technical uniformity, an error may occur, especially if the applicant be illiterate. But an entire change of name within the limits of one paper is scarcely admissible in any document. Yet a paper which began, "I, Elias Stinmate," was signed "George Stinmate." It is not uncommon to find a name spelled one way in the first and another way in the second paper. For instance, Peter Fost in the declaration became

Peter Farb in the final certificate. There is reason to believe that neither spelling was correct, but that Peter Fast was the man who received these papers. This incorrectness in the spelling of names makes the indices of the records entirely untrustworthy. Names beginning with *p* are indexed under *b*; with *y*, are found under *g* or *j*; *e* has been exchanged for *i*; etc. Thus it becomes necessary sometimes to leaf through the entire record to locate a man's paper.

A curious error was discovered at the fall election of 1910. A foreigner rushed into the district clerk's office and demanded to know why he was not being allowed to vote on his father's paper today, when he had voted on it for ten years. The clerk asked if it was his father's second paper and the young man replied that it was, at the same time handing the certificate to the clerk. The latter glanced at it and replied: "That is his first paper." "Why," exclaimed the young man, much excited, "my father paid three

DECLARATION OF INTENTION

I, _____, do declare on oath, that it is
(name)
 bona fide my intention to become a Citizen of the United States, and
 renounce and adjure forever all Allegiance and Fidelity to all and any foreign
 Prince, Potentate, State and Sovereignty whatsoever, and particularly to
 _____ of whom I am a subject.

(name of applicant)

Subscribed in my presence and sworn to before me, at my office in Lincoln,
 this _____ day of _____ A.D. _____.

 Clerk of the District Court
 for Lancaster County

A correct copy of
 original.

SEAL

_____ Clerk,

_____ Deputy.

Declaration of Intention used in Lancaster County prior to the passage of the naturalization law of 1906.

dollars for that paper. During a presidential campaign some man brought fifteen men up here to get their papers. The clerk charged them three dollars apiece and this is what he gave them." The record substantially verifies the young man's story, for it shows that his father received his *first* first paper in 1888 and his *second* first paper in 1896.

As has been stated, until 1906 naturalization was practically a state affair, as was also immigration until 1882. The federal government kept no records; and in case the courthouse was destroyed, as sometimes happened, there were no duplicates to prove the applicant's claim for new papers. In not a few instances the records in Lancaster County show notice of an affidavit on the final paper to the effect that the declaration had been lost. At present, a duplicate of every paper delivered by the clerk must be forwarded to the

Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization within thirty days after its issue.

The absence of federal supervision led to a lack of uniformity in the records of the various courts which have had charge of naturalization. Each court had its forms printed according to its own liking or interpretation of the law, and no special care was exercised in the use of these papers. Under the new law, the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization issues all records, and it holds the clerk responsible for their custody in the same manner in which the state guards its official ballots . . .

This form of declaration [see above] called for no statement of the applicant's age. Except the vigilance of the clerk, there was nothing to hinder the foreigner under twenty-one years of age from declaring his intention;⁴ and, as the majority of papers were issued under political pressure, it is not probable that great care was exercised in

this regard. Indeed, this fact is being brought to light under the new law. A goodly proportion of the certificates denied in Lancaster County have been refused upon the objection that the applicant secured his first paper while yet a minor. But a much larger number are stopped by the clerk before they get into the court, and the applicant is sent back to begin the process all over again. There is not a shadow of doubt that dozens of men have obtained first papers while minors and that some of them are voting on these papers today. Only within the past few weeks, an obituary in a daily paper gave the deceased's birth-year as 1857. He secured his papers in 1877, and, in the language of the patent-medicine testimonial, "since then he had not taken any other."

In this declaration, again, no residence address was given. This form of record was prepared when there were less than forty inhabitants in the capital city, and it was perhaps safe to assume at that time that the district clerk would know personally every applicant for naturalization papers. But the form was retained without change for almost forty years, and was still in use after the city had passed the 40,000 mark.

Until October, 1906, all fees connected with naturalization were imposed by state law. In 1866, the statutes empowered the district clerk to charge fifty cents for the declaration and the same amount for the final paper. In 1899, the latter fee was raised to three dollars, the former remaining at fifty cents. In spite of the fact that the suffrage in Nebraska cost but fifty cents under the old law, it is stated on competent authority that many foreigners received first papers during this regime without themselves paying a cent for them. These "special sales" seem to have been most frequent in presidential years. During the last national campaign, an applicant came in to secure his final paper. After his petition had been made out, he was informed by the clerk that the total cost

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would be four dollars. The man replied: "Not this year. Taft pays for this." But if Taft paid for it, the court received the fee from the applicant and not from the hands of any political agent. During the same campaign another man inquired at the office if a person couldn't get his papers cheaper that year. And yet it is said that men are not interested in bargains! Before a recent election, an applicant for his first paper said: "A fellow down there will pay for it." "Not much," replied the clerk, "you pay for it yourself." The man returned the next day, paid his fee and got his paper. But not so a former clerk. He issued his papers on time instead of for cash. As a result, his fee book shows a memorandum charging one of our worthy citizens with thirty dollars' worth of declarations which have never been paid.

The Nebraska Legislature of 1899 attempted to correct this evil; it inserted in the Corrupt Practices Act a section forbidding candidates or political committees to pay, either directly or indirectly, any fees connected with the naturalization of aliens. Yet it is stated on trustworthy authority that both the Democratic and the Republican parties have paid for declarations within the past few years. If this practice persists, at least it is not now carried on with the connivance of the court officials.

The possibilities for illegal applications under the old law were unlimited; and, so far as the records show, no one was ever denied any paper for which he asked. The questions of insufficient age and unknown residence have already been noticed. In addition to these, inadequate provision was made for proving the required five years' residence in the United States. The act of 1802 had provided for the registration of all aliens in the district courts upon their arrival in the United States; but this section was repealed in 1828. However, the unsupported oath of the applicant was not accepted to prove residence; and it was the custom to require two witnesses. But even

these were often accepted carelessly, and the testimony required of them was inadequate, as is apparent from the fact that in the year ending June 30, 1910, under the operation of the naturalization law of 1906, thirty-two percent of all the certificates denied in Nebraska were withheld on account of incompetent witnesses.

Even under the new law, a declaration may be made under an assumed name, and the clerk has no way of discovering the deception until he receives from the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization the certificate of landing. This gives the name of each immigrant, the port at which he landed, the date of his arrival and the name of the steamship upon which he came. A young man recently asked to file a petition for his final paper. He stated that he had made his declaration in New York City under his uncle's name, but that he wished to take out his certificate in his own name. Another applicant in making his declaration said that he could not remember the name of the vessel upon which he came. The clerk offered to send for the desired information, but the applicant insisted that he should not bother, as "they would not remember, either." However, the clerk sent the inquiry and was informed that

no person of that name had arrived at any port at the date given. The man did not return for his declaration, probably fearing deportation, since the records failed to show that he had been legally admitted.

The laws designed to conserve the nation's health are sometimes made ineffective by the protection which the federal government affords to declarants. During the campaign waged against trachoma in Lincoln, in 1909-1910, a man wearing large blue glasses applied for his first papers.⁵ In making out the personal description, the clerk asked the applicant to raise his glasses, so that he could get the color of his eyes. The man hesitated but finally complied with the request. The eyes were in a fearful condition, which the foreigner explained by saying that he had been working in a strong wind on the cinder pile in the railroad yards. There was some reason to suspect that the man had trachoma, and feared that he might be sent back to his own country, since he had been here less than the three years' time which gives immunity from deportation. On another occasion a foreigner rushed into the office and demanded his first paper in a great hurry. After the declaration had been made out and given to the applicant,

Unpaved street in German Russian settlement in Lincoln.



PAPERS ISSUED UNDER THE OLD AND THE NEW LAW

	Total Number of Years	First Papers		Petitions ^a		Certificates	
		Total Number	Average Per Year	Total Number	Average Per Year	Total Number	Average Per Year
Old law	39%	5989	150.6	1358	34.1
New law	4¼	853	200.7	182	42.8	165	38.8

^aSee footnote 1. — Ed.

the latter handed to the clerk a telegram asking him what he thought of it. The message read: "Wife and two children held here for trachoma. Have you taken out your first paper? Answer at once." When the clerk had read it, the man asked what reply he should make. The official was forced to say that the only possible reply was that he had his paper. Another would-be citizen asked if there was not some way in which a man could get his second paper in less than five years' time. His wife had twice been refused entrance into this country on account of sore eyes (trachoma), and he hoped that, if he could get his final paper, he might be able to secure her admission.

Compared with the old law, the new law is unusually stringent. Yet this does not seem to have made any difference as regards naturalization in Lancaster county, for a higher average number of both first and second papers have been taken out under the new law than under the old.

The high average for first papers under the new law (200.7) is explained chiefly by the intense political activity in the city in 1908 and 1910, and will probably not be maintained; although so long as Nebraska permits alien suffrage the average in the future will remain as high as it has been under the old law. The pending constitutional amendment abolishing alien suffrage, which was voted upon in the fall of 1910, brought in a few of these declarants, since they could vote for five years on their first papers even though the

amendments were adopted.

The average number of final papers or certificates granted under the new law shows an increase over the former regime, even after counting out the certificates denied, which have numbered seventeen. Several causes have produced this growth. An article written for a Sunday paper by the inspector shortly after the passage of the new act brought several pseudo-American citizens to the courthouse in haste for both first and second papers. An attempt to take a homestead, made by a young man whose father had only his first paper, brought in several others. The increasing vigilance forced upon election boards, especially in the foreign wards, during recent campaigns induced a number of "minority" voters — i.e. persons claiming the right to vote because their fathers had acquired this right while they themselves were minors — to take out both papers. In the next few years the number of first papers will probably increase. Within the next seven years, the 853 persons who have declared their intention since October 1, 1906, must complete their citizenship or forfeit their vote. Allowing for loss by removal, which will be offset by those applicants who have declared their intention under the old law in Lancaster county or elsewhere, and considering the fact that a minimum of those who have applied under the new law will be denied final papers, the average number of second papers issued within the next few years should be at least one hundred per annum.

The composition of the body of foreign voters, enfranchised in Lancaster county from 1867 to 1910 inclusive, is shown by an analysis of the declarations of intention Of the total number, subjects of Germany comprise 25.2 percent; United Kingdom, 21.6; Scandinavian states, 20.2; Russia, 17.7; Austria-Hungary, 9.3; Holland, 2.7; Switzerland, 1.1; all others (9), 2.2.

The period during which each nationality has predominated is shown by an analysis of the proportion of the various nationalities for each year from 1867 to 1910 inclusive. . . . In 1867 all the first papers issued were taken out by subjects of the United Kingdom. In 1868 these immigrants formed 51 percent of the total number; in 1871, 44 percent; in 1891, 34 percent; in 1903, there were none of them; and in 1910 they constituted but five percent of the total number of declarants. German subjects entered in 1868 with 23 percent. This element increased in waves, reaching its high tide in 1882 with 58 percent, although the largest number (216) received first papers in 1890, forming 43 percent of the total declarants of that year. Since then, the Germans also have gradually decreased until, in 1910, they formed but five percent of the total. The Scandinavians, including Swedes, Norwegians and Danes, also entered in 1868, and since that time they show the most even proportion of any of the nationalities that are represented. Their greatest proportionate increase was in 1897, when they formed 39 percent of the total. The subjects of Austria-Hungary, including not only Germans and Magyars, but also Bohemians, Poles and Jews, show a large proportion in the seventies, reaching 40 percent in 1875. Since then, they have been a comparatively small factor, except in 1898, when they reached 18 percent of the total. The Hollanders, most of whom live in their settlement in the south part of the county, have been a small but constant factor since 1868. The subjects of

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Russia made their first appearance in 1876. Up to the present time, they include Finlanders, Poles, Russians, Jews and Germans, with the latter very greatly in the majority. In 1878, the Russian Germans formed 24 percent of the total declarants. They showed no greater percentage until the nineties, when they formed a large proportion of a very heavy naturalization. Since 1900, Russian subjects, mainly Germans, have formed the chief foreign element among newly made voters, reaching 74 percent in 1910. It should be noted that almost without exception these live in the city of Lincoln.

A further analysis by races would be profitable, but is impossible, for, under the old law, the declaration specified only the name of the applicant and the sovereign to whom he renounced allegiance. There is nothing on the face of the record to distinguish the English from the Scotch, Irish, Welsh, Canadian or other peoples subject to the British crown; and the same is true of every other sovereignty whose subjects sought American citizenship up to 1906

In the earlier period, the English-speaking foreigners predominated; the middle period, the Empire Germans; and in the later period, the Russian Germans. This change is shown . . . by an analysis of the year, in each of these periods, which presents the largest number of declarants. These years are 1871, 1890 and 1910. In the first period, the year 1871 produced 504 alien voters in Lancaster county. Of these, 200 were subjects of the United Kingdom and 94 were subjects of Germany. In the second period, the year 1890 produced 500 alien voters, of whom 66 were subjects of the United Kingdom, 216 were Empire Germans and 37 were Russian Germans. In the third period, here represented by the year 1910, 363 first papers were issued, of which 17 were given to subjects of the United Kingdom, 16 to Empire Germans and 244 to Russian Germans.

Thus it appears that the first foreigners in Lancaster county to be

vested with the elective franchise, upon their declarations of intention, were men of English speech. They were, as a rule, literate, being able to read and to write as well as to speak the English language. There was a minimum of danger in placing the ballot in their hands after six months' residence in the state. Nothing was ever heard in the county of the English, Scotch or Canadian vote; and only once or twice in those days do the newspapers mention the Irish vote. From the first, they have been, as a nationality, independent in politics.

Twenty years later, the predominating element was German. The newcomers of this nationality could neither speak nor read the English language, and it was not reasonable to suppose that they could learn it in six months. True, they had their German newspapers, which most of them were able to read; but either in spite of this fact, or on account of it, we read of the

"German vote" from the earliest day of their entrance into Lancaster county. If the German voted at all, he was obliged, of course, to depend upon someone's advice, and naturally he sought out, or was sought out by, one of his own countrymen. In this way, racial cohesion, which is strong among the Germans, was supplemented by political cohesion, and, especially in the early days of the county, produced solidarity of voting — one of the few unfortunate contributions which the Germans have made to life in America.

Contrary to a prevalent impression — which may be better founded in other parts of the country — the Germans in Lancaster county have, from the first, evidenced a lively desire to hold office. In the early days they were found in city, county and state offices. No ticket of the prevailing party was ever made up without German representatives, because both the Germans and party policy demanded it.

German Russian family in front of a summer kitchen in Lincoln.



The "German vote" was always counted upon by the politicians for a German candidate or for a "personal liberty" advocate. At present, this tendency toward solidarity of voting is being broken up by assimilation. Not many candidates today are appealing for votes on the strength of their German nationality, although part of the German press in Lincoln always urges this fact, and the "liberality" of the aspirant, as sufficient recommendation for his election. At the present time, however, an increasing number of German voters are daring to be independent even upon the liquor question, which, as has been suggested, is still the chief cause for their solidarity in voting.

Another twenty years has changed the type of immigrant coming to Lancaster county, and the predominating element is now the Russian-German. In contrast to the earlier comers, who were scattered over both the urban and rural communities of the county, the Russian Germans are segregated in the city, in two colonies. In general more clannish, less educated and less progressive than the Empire Germans, they are also more in need of, and more susceptible to, "influence." The "ward boss" of the monthly magazine type has found in the Russian-German settlements a virgin field for his labors, and the task of "rounding up the

sheep" furnishes a living to certain members of the communities. Possessed of all the good racial characteristics of the German, but imposed upon on account of his political ignorance and indifference, the Russian German shows the worst side of his character in his relation to politics. The "Russian vote" of today is more compact than the "German vote" has ever been, although even among the Russian Germans are found some independent and intelligent voters.

Twenty years from now, the character of immigration to the county will be changed again. From present indications, the element then predominating will be the Russian-Jewish. Our naturalization records show that a few papers were issued to men of this race each year since 1883, but seventy percent of the total number of Russian-Jew declarations have been made within the past ten years. The increase of this element in the city is even more rapid than the naturalization records reveal; it is more adequately shown in the school censuses, which provide one of the best available indices of immigration to the city. One of the chief reasons for this increase is the opening of Galveston as a port of entry, in 1906, and the activity of the Hebrew Society of Kansas City in distributing the Jews throughout the Middle West. The fact of a nucleus having been formed here

will attract the friends of the Lincoln colonists. The Russian Jew brings his family and settles down in business prepared to stay; while the Syrians and the southern Europeans — Greeks and Italians — who are now coming to Lincoln, comprise the floating foreign population. The Russian Jew will be the least competent of all these large foreign elements to exercise the right of suffrage without preparation. No matter how eager he may be for an education nor how apt he may prove at politics, six months in Nebraska will be all too short a time for him to throw off the educational and political lethargy which Russia has imposed upon him for years.

In view of the fact that Nebraska grants the elective franchise to foreigners who have declared their intention of becoming citizens, the tendency of various nationalities toward citizenship becomes differentiated from their tendency toward the suffrage. The latter is indicated by a comparison of the number of aliens — a term used in the census to designate foreigners who have taken out neither first nor final papers — with the total number of the foreign-born. The census of 1900 gave to the city of Lincoln 2427 foreign-born males 21 years old and over, of whom 217 were aliens — an alienage of a trifle less than nine percent. Distributed among the various

German Russian citizenship class in a Lincoln night school about 1916.





German Russian group in Lincoln.

nationalities, the percentage of aliens to foreign-born is as follows: United Kingdom, 2.5; Germany, 2.9; Scandinavia, 4.3; Austria, 14.6; and Russia, 31.4. Despite the political pressure which has been brought to bear upon the subjects of Russia, almost one-third have shown their indifference to the suffrage by their failure even to declare their intention to become citizens. It will be recalled that the majority of these are Germans, since the chief Jewish immigration has occurred during the last decade.

The tendency of the various nationalities toward full citizenship is shown . . . by a comparison between the number of first and second papers taken out by each nationality. . . . The Germans show the greatest tendency toward completing their citizenship, having taken out 36.2 percent as many second as first papers. They are closely followed by the Swiss, with 34.9 percent. In the next group, the figures are: Holland, 26.7; United Kingdom, 25.3; and Scandinavia, 20.8 percent. The third group shows "all others," includ-

ing nine different nationalities, to have taken out 11.4 percent; Austrians, 11.2 percent; and the Russian Jews, 11.3 percent. The Russian German stands in a class by himself, with only 4.7 percent as many second as first papers.

The most striking thing . . . is not the fact that the Empire Germans show the greatest, and the Russian Germans the least, tendency toward citizenship; but rather the fact that all nationalities show so little tendency toward taking out their second papers, the average being only 22.2 percent The explanation is to be sought chiefly in the legal and political rights which accrue to the foreigner in the two stages. The right to protection in person and property is granted to resident aliens by every civilized government, but citizenship ordinarily carries certain peculiar privileges to which aliens are not admitted. Yet so far as it has been within her power, Nebraska has accorded to unnaturalized foreigners rights equal to those of full citizens. It is only in his relation to the federal government that the alien in Nebraska

is placed on a footing different from the citizen.

The state constitutions of 1866 and 1875 granted the right of suffrage to aliens who had declared their intention of becoming American citizens. Since Nebraska citizenship is established by six months' residence in the state, and the alien could take out his first paper on the day of his arrival, it is evident that, from the beginning of her history, the state of Nebraska has offered a share in government to the alien but six months removed from his native land. Until 1875, the law permitted him to vote as soon as he had declared his intention. Since then, thirty days must intervene. But with the looseness characteristic of early Nebraska elections, as late as 1879 foreigners voted in Lincoln on the day on which they took out their first papers.

Alien suffrage was a drawing card used by western states to attract foreign immigration. Although the occasion for such a policy has long since passed, the practice has been retained by nine states in the Union — Arkan-

sas, Indiana, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, South Dakota, Oregon, Texas and Wisconsin. The failure of alien suffrage to accomplish its original purpose appears from the fact that foreigners do not hesitate today to leave Nebraska for Colorado, Montana, Wyoming and other states in which they cannot vote, provided they can better their economic condition. Not only has the practice failed to subserve any positive interest of the state, but it has removed the chief incentive to the acquisition of complete citizenship by the foreigner.

It is not in Nebraska alone that this phenomenon is observed. The report of the commissioner-general of immigration of 1910 points out that

in Indiana [which has alien suffrage] there were filed last year about 5000 declarations, while but 276 petitions were made for citizenship and 208 were naturalized. In Ohio, on the other hand [which has citizen suffrage], where about the same number declared their intention to become citizens, 1676 petitions were filed and 1086 certificates of citizenship were issued [page 221]. These two states, whose foreign population appears to be about the same, thus present a wide difference in the proportion of second papers issued, the state which requires citizenship for suffrage having granted five times as many certificates as the state permitting alien suffrage.

It is common knowledge, theoretical if not practical, that citizenship is not synonymous with suffrage. The great majority of American citizens, including children under 21 years of age, women, idiots and criminals, have no vote. On the other hand, many adult males who are foreigners have the suffrage in the nine states mentioned above. However, it is the common practice to make the two terms identical, so that it is not strange that, to the foreigner, citizenship means suffrage. If he does not gain the right to vote until he becomes a citizen, he does not hesitate to pay the price demanded by the state; if he receives this privilege upon his mere declaration of intention, he is indifferent about completing his citizenship.

And why should he not be indifferent? To the foreigner in Nebraska,

practically the only advantages which accrue from American citizenship are protection abroad, certain homestead rights and the inheritance of citizenship by minor children. While a few aliens, especially Turkish and Russian subjects, have acquired citizenship as a means of protection, the number of foreigners in Lancaster county who procure papers from that motive is a negligible quantity. A larger number have taken out final papers in order to secure homestead rights.

The acquisition of citizenship by inheritance during minority has been claimed in Lancaster county for years, sometimes rightfully, but in the great majority of instances wrongfully. Yet so far back as the registration records go, accommodating election boards have honored the claim without ascertaining whether it was based upon the father's first or second paper. Foreign-born Swedes, Austrians, Germans, English, Irish, Danes, Russian Germans and Russian Jews have voted on their fathers' first papers in practically every ward in the city. Almost without exception, the registration boards have enrolled them and failed to ask the vital questions: Has your father taken out his second paper? Was it secured before you became of age? Furthermore, the boards have been upheld in their laxness by the police court, which has dismissed prosecutions for illegal voting where these questions were involved. At one election, a single nationality registered as many as fifty "minority" voters, and, following investigations made by a committee of citizens which was conducting a "no saloon" campaign, two-thirds of these registered voters stayed away from the polls for fear of arrest.

Now the federal law has always been clear on the question of citizenship by minority, and, if it were not so, enough cases have been brought before the courts to clarify the atmosphere. The only Democratic governor whom Nebraska elected in the first forty years of statehood was kept out of office the greater part of his term by a contest

raised upon this issue⁶ In *Haywood v. Marshall*⁷ it was held

that, while a mere declaration of intention . . . may, under the constitution of Nebraska, constitute a resident alien an elector . . . yet that, by implication, this status cannot be extended to the son of such alien merely because the declaration above referred to was made before such son had attained his majority.

But with the lax enforcement of a lax law, why should the foreigner go to the trouble of completing his citizenship? If a marriage license gave to the contracting parties the chief privileges of the married state, how many would visit the minister or judge, secure witnesses and pay the marriage fee? And if to the children, illegitimate though they might be, should be accorded all the social and legal rights of legitimate children, how much less would the parents bother themselves about a meaningless form? And so with the foreigner. The mere declaration of intention is vested with the sanctity of citizenship by the state. What more should the alien desire?

A second unfortunate result flowing from alien suffrage is that the first step toward the acquisition of citizenship is not voluntary but encouraged; not a natural desire and act on the part of the foreigner, but the result of pressure brought to bear upon him by selfishly interested parties. This is shown by . . . the number of first papers issued year by year from 1867 to 1910. The variation in the number taking out papers each year is due in the main to two causes: immigration and political pressure. While there are no available records in which the course of the former may be easily followed, it is probable that immigration, especially into the city, has been much more evenly distributed through the years than one might suppose. Hard times, during which immigration to the United States usually falls off, brought to Lincoln one of its largest groups of foreigners. Some of these were located on farms throughout the state, and the loss of their crops led them to congregate in Lincoln, where they were able to secure work. Again, through the influence of

the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railway Company, Lincoln has been, from the earliest days, a clearing house for Nebraska immigrants, both American and foreign. At the present time many of the latter are brought here directly from their European homes, remain a few years in the city, and then go out upon farms in other parts of this state or in other states. It is clear, therefore, that the chief cause for the variation in the number of foreign voters in Lancaster county has been, not immigration, but political pressure. Almost every presidential year shows a rise in the temperature of the political thermometer. Two of these years, 1872 and 1892, had been preceded by an unusually heavy demand for first papers, and while the increase in numbers is not so great, the proportionate increase is apparent.

Political zeal for manufacturing voters during presidential years seems not to have been able to satisfy itself by resort to the district court alone, and the Nebraska supreme court was called into service. In 1900, twenty foreigners were enfranchised before the clerk of the supreme court, with blanks secured from the district court of Lancaster county. This action seems to have been based upon a precedent set in 1888, when two aliens declared their intention in the supreme court with similarly borrowed blanks. From 1876 to 1904 this court issued forty-four final certificates. It does not seem originally to have planned to accept declarations, since printed forms are found for only the final certificates. The naturalization papers issued by the supreme court of Nebraska are probably invalid, as it is not a court of "common-law jurisdiction" within the meaning of the federal statutes. Therefore these papers have not been included in the totals given above; but so far as the declarations are concerned, they have served the purpose of the presidential committees just as well as if their legality were unquestioned.

But it takes a liquor election to raise the thermometer to the boiling-point.

In 1890 Nebraska voted on a prohibitory amendment to the constitution. It was the last election held in the state before the Australian ballot law went into effect, and all the pernicious forces proceeding out of the old political system seemed gathered for the struggle.⁸ One of these forces appeared in the abnormal number of foreign voters manufactured in Lancaster county preceding that election. In 1908, the unusually large number of declarations made was divided almost equally between the presidential election of the fall and the municipal election of the spring, when the excise question was the chief issue. But in 1910 almost the entire number of papers was issued in time for the spring election, when another municipal struggle was waged over the excise question. Practically every liquor fight, whether limited to precinct, ward or city, or waged throughout the state, shows an appeal on the part of the saloon for the foreign vote.

Investigation proves that the great majority of declarations made in Lancaster county have been the direct result of encouragement in some political campaign. Someone had an ax to grind. He got the foreigner to turn the grindstone awhile. Then, like Franklin's benefactor, he dismissed the alien voter with a curt command to "run along." The causes back of this political pressure did not always rise to the dignity of a state or national issue. Sometimes it was a county fight, as in the fall of 1893; sometimes a ward fight, as in 1898, when the larger part of the declarants were used to elect a "gas" councilman in the second ward;⁹ sometimes a mere precinct issue, as in 1904, when the bonds for a new school building in a foreign settlement were voted upon. The issue was not the important thing; it was the temperature to which the politician's blood arose that impelled him to go out into the highways and hedges and compel the foreigner to "come in." Is it any wonder that the latter gets the idea that he is doing someone a favor by taking out his

first paper and voting? Who has ever suggested to him that he is assuming any responsibility in his "new birth" into the American commonwealth? Considering the circumstances under which he becomes a voter, it is surprising, not that he is dependent upon influence and so ignorant of his responsibilities, but that he is as honest and as competent as he proves to be.

Much of the force of the foregoing facts would be lost if naturalization in Lancaster county had been carried on in an unfavorable environment. The opposite is the case. The city of Lincoln throughout its history has been marked among communities of its size for the excellent quality of its citizenship. It is a prosperous residence city, a city of schools and churches, and the seat of the state university. Other state schools of a denominational character are found in three of its suburbs. The life of the city is not dominated by the University of Nebraska, as would be the case in a smaller community; nor, on the other hand, does business bulk so large as to dwarf the influence of the University. With Omaha as the commercial metropolis of the state, Nebraskans value Lincoln as a place in which to live; and many look to it for leadership in letters and in moral and political reform.

The city is the favorite headquarters and meeting-place for advocates of every cause sought to be furthered in the state as a whole. It is significant that, in not a few instances, ordinances of the city of Lincoln, in their passage and enforcement, have anticipated state legislation along similar lines — a fact no doubt in part due to local observations made by the lawmakers during the legislative sessions. Thus the high-license liquor law of 1881 was preceded by a high-license ordinance in Lincoln;¹⁰ and, three decades later, a state law closed saloons at eight o'clock in the evening a year or two after Lincoln had closed them by ordinance at seven o'clock. Lincoln nominated its officials at a direct primary ten years before the state enacted its direct-primary law. A

No. 641 ORIGINAL 241

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
 Department of Commerce and Labor
 BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION
 DIVISION OF NATURALIZATION

DECLARATION OF INTENTION
(Invalid for all purposes seven years after the date hereof)

I, Harry Schneider, aged 27 years, occupation shoemaker, do declare on oath that my personal description is: Color white, complexion dark, height 5 feet 6 inches, weight 150 pounds, color of hair black, color of eyes brown, other visible distinctive marks none.

I was born in Saratoff, Russia on the 23rd day of February, anno Domini 1883. I now reside at 112 So. 7th St., Lancaster, Neb. I emigrated to the United States of America from Liverpool, England on the vessel* "Kaiser Wilhelm"; my last foreign residence was Saratoff, Russia.

It is my bona fide intention to renounce forever all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, and particularly to Nicholas II, Emperor of all the Russias, of which I am now a citizen subject; I arrived at the port of Boston, in the State Territory of Massachusetts on or about the 1st day of July, anno Domini 1907. I am not an anarchist; I am not a polygamist nor a believer in the practice of polygamy; and it is my intention in good faith to become a citizen of the United States of America and to permanently reside therein:

SO HELP ME GOD.

Harry Schneider
(Original signature of declarant.)

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 2nd day of March, anno Domini 1912

J. S. Baer
 Clerk of the District Court.
 By Geo. H. Berg, Deputy Clerk.

[SEAL.]

*If the alien arrived otherwise than by vessel, the character of conveyance or name of transportation company should be given.

similar sequence may be observed in municipal and state policies concerning the social evil,¹¹ and, no doubt, as to numerous other questions. The "Holy City" is the derisive appellation Lincoln has received from elements within and without its borders that resented its advanced positions.

It is true, as in any community, that some sections of the population have been persistently averse to social betterment, and more than once the city has relapsed into conditions from which it had striven to free itself. As in other American cities, there has been more or less petty graft in the administration. But when all is said, the assertion still holds good that in Lincoln and in Lancaster county opportunities for the proper enforcement of the naturalization laws have been as good as, if not better than, in the average American community; and it is believed that the characteristics and deficiencies noted in this local study will be found to be typical of the enforcement of naturalization laws the country over.

Typical, therefore, in all probability, is the fact that this community is ignorant of the process by which aliens are made citizens, and is wholly indifferent to the matter except when an unusual issue of first papers causes the opposition to raise a hue and cry about the "foreign vote." After the heat of the election has passed, concern subsides, and no suggestion is made that the political disease be diagnosed and prescribed for. The present study leads to some very obvious conclusions.

The greatest need is a change in the state constitution from alien to citizen suffrage. An amendment to this effect was submitted by the legislature of 1909 and voted upon at the following state election. Instead of being considered on its merits, it was entangled with the liquor issue, which was the

Declarations of intention issued after the act of 1906 required the applicant to supply detailed personal information.

most important feature of that campaign. The saloon forces openly opposed it, and surreptitiously secured the support of such organizations as the German American Alliance to further their selfish interests. Although the proposed constitutional amendment was submitted by a Democratic legislature, the 1910 state convention of that party repudiated it. Certain candidates on the Republican ticket traded it off for "wet" votes in the foreign wards of the capital city. The amendment was overshadowed by the personal nature of the campaign; it was not generally understood; and there was no organized effort made for its defense, although it was one of the most important questions Nebraska has voted on for years.¹²

The importance of the proposed change from alien to citizen suffrage is shown by a number of facts.

(1) The change in the type and character of the average foreign immigrant demands a period of preparation longer than six months.

(2) By alien suffrage Nebraska virtually nullifies the federal naturalization law, which contemplates a five-year residence, probationary and preparatory to citizenship.

(3) The federal law demands proof upon oath of the "good moral character" of the prospective citizen when he secures his final paper, and recent prosecutions in the state show that an honest attempt is being made by the general government to enforce this provision. But the first paper makes no such challenge to the alien in Nebraska, and not until 1906 did it debar the polygamist or the anarchist.

(4) Under the new naturalization law, which limits the validity of the declaration to seven years, the following complication will arise. In 1913 declarations made under the act of 1906 will begin to become invalid, and it will fall to the lot of the registration and election boards to detect and exclude this class of illegal voters. Judging from experience this will not be done, and there is presented the possibility, or rather the

probability, of an increasingly large number of illegal votes.

(5) The assumption of the illegality of the votes of aliens whose declarations have lapsed is based upon the provision of the state constitution which grants the suffrage to "persons of foreign birth who shall have declared their intention to become citizens *conformably to the laws of the United States* on the subject of naturalization." While the federal law regards the declaration as void after seven years, there is apparently nothing to prevent the alien from renewing his declaration, and thus the state will continue to make the federal law of no effect.

(6) While it is probable that no great danger lies in the fact, it is none the less anomalous, that any office in the state, with the exception of governor, lieutenant-governor, supreme judge and district judge (and possibly state railway commissioner and municipal library director), may be held by a foreigner who has merely declared his intention of becoming an American.

(7) Under the act of 1906, a minor can declare his intention at eighteen years of age. What is to hinder him from voting? Nothing except the fact that the registration record should show him to be under age. But as a matter of fact, the registration records in one foreign precinct in the city have recorded the age only three times in fourteen years. What is true of this precinct is true of all the other foreign precincts of the city.

This fact suggests what is probably the second great need, especially in the urban communities of the state: careful and competent election and registration boards. Although there is a considerable foreign vote in this city, seldom if ever are the boards instructed upon the law governing this matter. The fact that a man has been voting for years is no reason *per se* that he is a legal voter. Yet when a new member of a registration board protested against a foreigner's right to vote, an older member replied disgustedly: "Aw, don't be so particular. He's voted down here for years. Let him vote."

Every foreigner who has the right to vote should be allowed and encouraged to do so, but those who have been voting illegally for years, more through the carelessness of the election boards than through their own dishonesty, should be debarred.

In addition to enforcing the law against illegal voters, the election boards can do more than any other existing agency to encourage the foreigner to complete his citizenship. The suggestion was made to a member of each of two different election boards that he tell every man who had taken out his first paper since 1906 that he must complete his citizenship within seven years or lose his vote. One of these men carefully explained the law to each voter concerned, and even urged the matter upon the other foreigners, by telling them they were failing to naturalize their children by not taking out their second papers. But the member of the other board to whom the suggestion was made replied: "Well, keep still, and let them lose their vote." But participation in politics, even though it is sometimes vicious, is a great factor in the assimilation of the foreigner; and it makes for the safety of the state, instead of denying him this privilege, to teach him how to exercise it independently and intelligently.

The exigencies of the new naturalization law have created a very definite demand upon the community for the education of the adult foreigner. Within the next seven years, more than 850 foreigners, most of whom live in the city of Lincoln, must be able to speak the English language and must pass an examination in civics before the district court in order to secure their second papers. Most of these men work in groups composed of their own countrymen and naturally converse almost entirely in their mother tongue. Their children learn English at school. Their wives learn it as they work in the homes about the city. But these men who are voting are unable in many instances to carry on even a limited conversation in the English language, although some of

them have lived in the city for six or eight years. Valuable assistance is offered them in preparing for their examination by the deputy clerk of the district court. He has secured copies of a pamphlet entitled, *The Law of Naturalization made easy to understand*, published in twelve different languages by the deputy clerk of Cook County, Illinois. He offers a copy of this to every declarant at its original cost of fifteen cents. In addition to this, he has frequently given his evenings in helping prospective citizens to gain the necessary information. What more patriotic service can an American citizen render?

But the community owes more than this to its alien voters. It is not called upon to create a demand, for this already exists, not only through the responsibility imposed by the new law but by the requests of the foreigners themselves. There is a pressing need for night schools for aliens. These schools should be under the immediate direction of the school board, in order to eliminate expense and to avoid any religious or political prejudice which might arise were they conducted by a private organization. Moreover, they should be located in those parts of the city where the demand exists. Workingmen and women should not be expected to walk two or three miles at night after a hard day's work in order to attend the schools. Instruction in the English language will assist the foreigners not only in their relation to politics but also in their relation to industry. There are not a few skilled workmen among them who are holding inferior positions solely on account of

their ignorance of the language.

In addition to preparing the foreigner for citizenship by education, some public recognition of the newly naturalized citizen is commendable. This is not best done by assisting in the celebration of individual nationalities, such as are held on Columbus Day, German Day and similar occasions. These are family affairs; and while their purpose within each race is perfectly legitimate, they naturally look to the past. A recognition of all nationalities, looking to their future as American citizens, would be better. Such is the unique program carried out by the City Club of Rochester, New York, which entertains at an annual banquet all the foreigners who have been naturalized during the preceding year. The meeting is held in connection with the celebration of Independence Day and is addressed by speakers of various political and religious tendencies. It seeks to bring together all the foreigners of the city and thus breaks down race prejudice among them.

No small benefit comes to the native American himself from such a gathering. He learns what it is to practice real democracy; for, after all is said, the ideal solution of the problem of the "foreign vote" is the personal, unselfish interest of the decent American in his foreign fellow-citizens. He gets a new appreciation of the drawing power of his land, to which a million strangers flock every year. And, finally he comes to a realization of the part his own country has played in its insistence upon freedom of expatriation — a right for which it has contended in war and diplomacy, and which it has induced

almost every civilized country to recognize.

NOTES

¹Aside from the federal and state statutes mentioned in the text, the principal source for this article is the Naturalization Records of the district court of Lancaster County, Nebraska. These are found in the courthouse at Lincoln, and consist of manuscript volumes, there being eight each of declarations of intention and of certificates of naturalization. In addition to these bound volumes, there are jacketed files of the original declarations, which must be returned when the final certificate is secured. Under the new law these are filed in the bound volumes. The declaration is popularly known as the "first paper" and the certificate of naturalization as the "second paper." The new law introduced an intermediate step, which is represented by a document called the "petition." [The Lancaster County Naturalization Records are now in the State Archives at the Nebraska State Historical Society in Lincoln. — Ed.]

²Under a recent ruling, hearings on final papers are held in this district but four days in each year.

³In the census of 1890 the reports from Lincoln were "padded," and the proportion for that year should be reduced to probably 57 or 58 percent.

⁴As indicated above, this was not permissible until 1906.

⁵Trachoma is a highly contagious viral disease that affects the mucous membrane of the eye. — Ed.

⁶State *ex rel.* Thayer v. Boyd, 31 Nebr. 682 and 143 U.S. 135. [The governor was James E. Boyd. — Ed.]

⁷53 Nebr. 220.

⁸An Australian ballot is one printed with the names of all candidates and the texts of propositions, distributed to the voter at the polls, and marked in secret. The various methods in use before the adoption of this form of balloting did not allow for the secrecy of a voter's choice. — Ed.

⁹This contest concerned whether a privately owned gas company or a municipal electric utility would supply lighting for the city. — Ed.

¹⁰These laws set a high minimum fee for liquor licenses and thus tended to restrict the number of saloons. — Ed.

¹¹"The social evil" was a common euphemism for prostitution. — Ed.

¹²A 1918 amendment to the state constitution prohibited alien suffrage. — Ed.