During World War I, people everywhere clamored for maps. They pored over atlases, tore maps out of newspaper supplements, and even gathered around kiosks in town squares. They were looking for the war, of course, curious to find Sarajevo and Gallipoli, Verdun and Versailles, hopeful that tracing the shifts of battlefronts could make sense of the conflict’s human devastation and political significance. But, perhaps without even knowing it, they were also looking for themselves, and their own place in the world war. For Americans, the impulse to locate oneself was both a reflection and a cause of changing mappings of citizenship during and after World War I. And it was not without consequences. By the war’s end, Americans increasingly found themselves—culturally, legally, and geopolitically—in only one place on the world’s maps, as the war transferred a web of cultural sentiments and formal political attachments into single pinpoints.¹

World War I marked a fundamental transformation in the political structures and cultural meanings of U.S. citizenship that shaped the American polity for two generations and indeed continue to resonate a century later. From day to day, the changes that Americans experienced were varied and unpredictable—lurching expansions and contractions of citizenship that can be difficult to categorize collectively in retrospect. But by 1924, ideas and rules of citizenship had become increasingly uniform, focused around a single allegiance, articulated in paperwork, and managed by a federal government that had greater power to regulate the borders of citizenship and alienage after—and because of—World War I.

This essay draws on recent work in the history of political culture that sees citizenship not only as a formal legal category but also as a set of cultural and discursive practices. While it is centrally concerned with the institutional history of U.S. citizenship, it also asks how laws structured social dynamics outside of the state. It links diplomatic, immigration, and social histories, attending to non-state actors as historical agents who remade U.S. foreign relations by enlisting,
migrating, marrying, or gossiping. While states wielded decisive power over citizens during and after World War I, individuals played crucial roles in shaping the course of events at home and abroad.2

The wartime pinpointing of citizenship was a global phenomenon, but it had specific dynamics in the United States, where the political equality promised by the Constitution’s Fourteenth Amendment—ratified in 1868 but unevenly applied in the generations that followed—struggled toward redefinition in an era of mass migration and social upheaval. This essay tells this history in three parts. First, it traces the legal and political history of citizenship during wartime, focusing in particular on immigration and naturalization policy in the decade between the war’s outbreak in August 1914 and the adoption of the Immigration Act of 1924 a decade later. Second, it explores the ways that World War I militarized U.S. citizenship. Paths to inclusion increasingly depended on one’s willingness—even solely in theory—to serve the nation’s war aims, and honorable service could yield political rewards and occasionally even disrupt the logics of racial discrimination that structured formal and informal political inclusion. At the same time, those who refused or were excluded from service found it more difficult than ever to access U.S. citizenship, and all noncitizens fell under the gaze of surveillance and policing that emerged from wartime practices. Third, this essay reminds us that expansions of citizenship were not always victories for equality. At times, proponents of enacting a uniform citizenship law and the privileging of a single allegiance trumpeted the triumph of Americanism over the other—the alien, the radical, the melting pot. It was inclusive without being egalitarian. Inclusions did not eliminate hierarchies within the national polity. Nor were incorporations always welcome, as will be shown by the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924, one of the more paradoxical cases of the expansion of U.S. citizenship after World War I.

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During World War I, the terms of American citizenship—like the terrain of the western front itself—were uneven, often muddy, and when crossed, could even be deadly. But taken collectively, we can see actions that reflected the impact of war, asserted an increased federal power, relied more heavily on official documentation, and privileged a single allegiance mediated through Uncle Sam’s wartime authority. Immigration from Europe dropped; migration from the western hemisphere and mobility within the United States increased. The state regulated more closely the movements of aliens, and clarified the status of groups—among them women, colonial subjects, and dual citizens—that had stood in ambiguous relation to U.S. nationality law.

Perhaps the first and most significant transformation in the membership of the American polity came when the war’s outbreak brought a sudden end to the era of transatlantic mass migration. Wartime mobilization among the European powers demanded the registration and military service of young men across Europe, many of whom would otherwise have been among the millions of migrants who came to the United States in search of work in the decades before the war. Industrial and agricultural mobilization created jobs in Europe that made the ocean journey economically less imperative, and submarine warfare certainly made the Atlantic passage less appealing. European migration dropped from a peak of 1.06 million in 1914 to just one hundred and ninety-eight thousand in 1915; after April 1917, Ellis Island sat nearly empty. Overall rates of immigrant entry to the United States would not return to pre–World War I levels until the 1990s—and adjusted for the base population of the United States, have never matched those of the 1910s.

The drastic downturn in European migration both generated and accommodated new migratory streams. Revolution and civil war in Mexico between 1910 and the 1920s prompted more than one hundred thousand Mexican nationals to flee across the border as political refugees. Even more entered the United States as economic migrants, seeking to fill new jobs that opened at the same time that European migrants disappeared from northern and midwestern cities. These were not only spontaneous choices in dynamic labor markets, but reflections of public policies, including importation of Mexican migrant labor that began with the formal recruitment of seventy thousand Mexican workers during World War I and would continue until the 1950s. New political configurations followed in turn, as Mexican Americans articulated claims to political equality in U.S.-based organizations, some of which would later coalesce as the League of United Latin American Citizens, founded in Corpus Christi, Texas, in 1929.

It was likewise the war and its economic impacts that ignited the twentieth century’s mass migration of nearly nine million white and black Americans from the rural South to urban regions of the North and West. Migration was underway before 1914, and for African Americans in particular was prompted by a complex mix of political and economic pressures and attractions. But it was the war and its

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disruption of the southern agricultural economy—particularly the labor shortages wrought by conscription, the recruitment of labor by northern enterprises, and the infusion of dollars into a cash-poor southern economy—that generated migrations on such a large scale. By relocating, African American southerners remapped the terms of political participation.\(^5\)

The mass mobilization of nationals of the warring states required clear documentation of the political status of people, especially draft-age men in countries that raised armies by conscription. While the trend had already shifted toward more systematic documentation of identity, in 1914 those technologies were uneven in their quality and patchy in their coverage. By 1918, the terms of citizenship increasingly required a clearly authorized identity, most notably in the provisions of the Selective Service Act of 1917 that required all male citizens between eighteen and forty-five years to register for the draft and carry on their persons at all times their draft registration cards—the first mass, state-issued identity documents in U.S. history. Much could ride on the documentation. Selective Service practice assumed that draft-age men were liable for service unless they could prove they were not. Little surprise, then, that some two hundred thousand noncitizens ended up entering the Army, sometimes simply because they were unable to document to local draft boards their status as nationals of other states. Paperwork increasingly defined border crossing as well. In July 1917, the State and Labor departments issued new rules requiring passports and visas for all aliens entering the United States; Congress turned the order into a law in May 1918 and in August of that year the State Department established a visa office. Identities were more rigorously documented, and that rigor was imposed primarily by the federal government.\(^6\)

As important as it was for states to find their citizens so that they could draft them, it was also important for governments to identify aliens—to pinpoint them on the map—so that they could keep an eye on them. Days after the U.S. declaration of war in April 1917, President Woodrow Wilson invoked the Alien Enemies Act of 1798—a forgotten relic of the xenophobic moment of the Quasi-War with France—to impose obligations on German citizens that required them to register and restricted their movements and employment. By war’s end, some six thousand had been interned as enemy aliens. Systematization of the laws of war at the turn of the century subjected enemy aliens around the world to registration and internment; U.S. policies were hardly unique. But wartime innovations also reflected


prewar concerns about the influence of noncitizens on American politics and society. A system that had accommodated multiple allegiances with relative ease came to view dual citizenship with skepticism. In the United States, attention focused in particular on a 1913 provision of German law that extended German citizenship to Germans abroad, even when—like second-generation Americans born after the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment—they were also citizens by birth of another country. After 1917, German Americans’ dual status made them vulnerable to discrimination and even assault. The war’s antialien mood also accelerated the closer coupling of citizenship and voting rights. In the nineteenth century, not all voters were citizens (nor, of course, were all citizens voters) and political machines such as Tammany Hall relied on immigrants’ easy access to the ballot. But with only a handful of exceptions, the last remaining state and local alien suffrage provisions were repealed during or immediately after the war.  

The war also shook up debates about citizenship and political participation in policy areas that had stagnated or hardened into partisan battles. Dramatic changes in women’s suffrage, U.S. colonial policy, and immigration restriction would have the greatest impact on the terms of belonging for American citizenship, and in each case led to the adoption of a clearer and more uniform standard of inclusion, managed by the federal government. The century-long struggle for women’s suffrage came to a head during and because of the war. In 1913, the movement was trapped in a slow state-by-state strategy that saw little possibility for a constitutional amendment. But new political configurations during the war and a new dynamism for federal power in Washington changed this outlook dramatically. The millions of women active in the mainstream National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) and the thousands who picketed with the more radical National Woman’s Party tapped into wartime politics to stake claims for suffrage. In September 1918, President Woodrow Wilson endorsed the suffrage amendment, which was ratified in August 1920. Whether the Nineteenth Amendment made American women into equal citizens, or merely extended the voting rights of elite women, women’s suffrage marked an expansion of citizenship that was inclusive without being egalitarian.

Making U.S. citizenship more uniform also required clarifying the status of transnational marriages. Wartime efforts to amend the Marital Expatriation Act of 1907—under which an American woman who married a foreign man lost her U.S. citizenship—came to naught, even as advocates pointed to cases of American-born women forced to register as enemy aliens because they had married German citizens. On Capitol Hill, one representative defended the 1907 law as “a good lesson

to our American girls to marry American boys.” But peace and suffrage changed the political dynamic, and the Cable Act of 1922 eliminated derivative citizenship provisions, except for American women who married Asian men, who continued to be barred from naturalization. Legal provisions and military policies aimed at facilitating the migration of over five thousand war brides also reflected the war’s impact on citizenship and marriage law.9

In the two decades after the wars of 1898—in which the United States defeated the Spanish Empire, seized its colonies in the Caribbean and Pacific, and suppressed indigenous independence movements—U.S. colonial policy had been a thicket of partisan controversy. The terms of colonial belonging were marked by a complex web of inclusions and exclusions, articulated by the U.S. Supreme Court in a series of rulings known as the Insular Cases, which affirmed Congress’s claim that Puerto Ricans and Filipinos were neither citizens nor aliens, but American “nationals,” who nonetheless owed allegiance to the United States. The wartime push toward a uniform single national allegiance did not overturn the Insular Cases but it did disrupt their logic. America’s colonial subjects seized on the war’s rhetoric to make claims for national self-determination, particularly after the Jones Act of 1916 promised independence to the Philippines “as soon as a stable government can be established therein,” a distressingly vague point in the distant future. The next year, the Jones Act of 1917 announced—without giving Puerto Rico any voice in the matter—that all Puerto Ricans were citizens of the United States, a status also accorded to residents of the U.S. Virgin Islands, acquired from Denmark in 1916. America’s colonial subjects could now be located more precisely, and citizenship and allegiance more closely matched territorial boundaries. But the Puerto Rican experience shows that inclusion in the U.S. polity not only could come without equal rights, it could happen without consent.10

Finally, much as it did with woman suffrage and colonial policy, the war broke a decades-long impasse on the question of immigration restriction, beginning with piecemeal reforms and culminating in the passage of the Immigration Act of 1924. The shift on Capitol Hill began with the Immigration Act of 1917 (passed over Woodrow Wilson’s veto), an omnibus bill that contained three key provisions: the institution of a literacy test, designed to make entry harder for poor and illiterate migrants from Southern and Eastern Europe; the establishment of an “Asiatic Barred Zone” that extended the restrictive provisions of the 1882 Chinese

Exclusion Act to nearly all of Asia other than Japan and the Philippines; and a ban on entry by those deemed mentally ill, including men and women marked by “constitutional psychopathic inferiority,” a clinical euphemism for homosexuality. While the 1917 act excluded relatively few compared to the systems that would be put in place in the 1920s, it enacted a powerful drive toward restriction that silenced nearly all opposing voices.¹¹

A year later, the Immigration Act of 1918 expanded the definitions of anarchism—already an excludable category since 1903—to make it easier to bar entry to foreign anarchists or deport those already here. The Emergency Immigration Act of 1921 established quotas on migrants from Europe as well as overall limits on European migration. Intended as a temporary measure to handle the threats posed (if only in legislators’ imaginations) by postwar immigration and global radical movements, the act soon became a permanent feature of twentieth-century immigration law through the Immigration Act of 1924. Also known as the Johnson–Reed Act, the law as implemented limited overall immigration to one hundred and fifty thousand entrants per year, with a quota for each country of no more than 2 percent of the foreign-born of that nationality at the time of the 1890 Census. In practice, the law drastically reduced migration from Southern and Eastern Europe and an additional clause barred almost all Japanese immigrants.¹²

Histories of the Immigration Act of 1924 have often situated the law’s passage firmly in the cultural politics of the 1920s: a frothy mix of nativism, isolationism, eugenics, and a resurgent Ku Klux Klan. But the path to Johnson–Reed was set in motion during the war. It is perhaps no accident that on May 26, 1924, when President Calvin Coolidge signed the bill into law, General John J. Pershing, the military hero of the American Expeditionary Forces, looked on over his shoulder. And indeed we might see 1924 as the final year of a decade-long remaking of U.S. citizenship. That year marked the adoption of the Johnson–Reed Act and its quota systems, the demographic consequences of which were the most enduring—if least immediately visible—legacies of World War I for American society. But it was not only that. The 1924 Immigration Act’s ban on Japanese migrants completed four decades of agitation for Asian exclusion. The Indian Citizenship Act and the work of the Hawaiian Homes Commission reflected the coercive inclusion of all persons who lived under U.S. sovereignty as citizens of the U.S. state. And in the formation of the U.S. Border Patrol—rolled out on the Canadian and Mexican borders in the summer of 1924—we can see the power of the federal government to enforce its borders. This was, by 1924, a new nation, in terms of


both legal definitions of citizenship and state structures to implement and enforce borders of belonging.

Pinpointing citizenship during wartime also generated a linkage of citizenship and military service. Revised laws of war demanded that all soldiers were citizens. A more significant shift came from the legal obligation and cultural expectation that all citizens were at least willing to be soldiers. And new regulations of citizenship would also be upheld through an increasingly militarized enforcement regime.

In the United States, as in almost all the warring powers, military mobilization required a clear path to citizenship for men serving in the ranks in order to regularize the terms of recruitment, protect noncitizen soldiers from punishment as mercenaries, and control the distribution of welfare provisions to veterans and their dependents. When the Selective Service Act—following the norms of international law—exempted nondeclarant aliens from conscription, a howl ensued, and Congress proposed drafting them regardless. “The country that is good enough to live in is good enough to fight for,” one New York newspaper approvingly noted. The Military Naturalization Act of May 1918 made it easy for immigrant soldiers—who made up nearly 20 percent of the Army—to naturalize, relieving them of residency requirements and paperwork burdens. Nearly two hundred thousand soldiers naturalized during the war, the majority of their oaths taken in military camps. Provost Marshal General Enoch Crowder boasted after the war that the policy “resulted in the conversion of the ‘Foreign Legion’ of the Army into a host of loyal American citizen-soldiers.”

Cultural pressures toward military conformity and 100 percent Americanism could also generate protest: after the Army initially handed over care of soldiers’ leisure to the aggressively Protestant Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), Catholic and Jewish soldiers complained and the Knights of Columbus and Jewish Welfare Board joined the YMCA in service. And there were limits to the inclusiveness of military policies. Many Asian immigrant soldiers—barred from citizenship by provisions of the Naturalization Act of 1870 that restricted naturalization to “white persons” and “persons of African nativity or African descent”—hoped that the Military Naturalization Act would open the terms of citizenship to them. For some it did, until a series of appeals in the postwar period culminated in *Toyota v. U.S.* (1925), in which the Supreme Court ruled that a Japanese American veteran’s naturalization certificate was “illegally obtained.” Openness proved a temporary wartime measure: in 1920, Congress restored its

ban on military enlistment by new immigrants, and the War Department set down a rule requiring that all officers be U.S. citizens.¹⁴

The war’s impact on the citizenship regime also made it more difficult for those who refused military service—or were excluded from it—to claim citizenship, either as a legal status or in the broader sense of political belonging. Bureaucracy reflected changed mindsets: the requirement that naturalized citizens “support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic” had been part of U.S. citizenship law since the Naturalization Act of 1906, but only after 1922 was adherence explicitly asked on U.S. naturalization forms. Several high-profile cases made headlines in the interwar period, most notably U.S. v. Schwimmer (1929), in which the pacifist Rosika Schwimmer was denied naturalization on the grounds that she refused when asked if she would “take up arms in defense of country” (setting aside the relevance of the fact that as a fifty-one-year-old woman, Schwimmer would not have been allowed in the Army had she sought to enlist). The Court similarly refused the naturalization petitions of Douglas McIntosh and Marie Bland, the latter a Canadian-born woman who had actually spent nine months working as a nurse along the western front during the war. But far more significant than these high-profile cases was the systematic exclusion from naturalization of immigrant men who had claimed exemption from the draft during the war, either as conscientious objectors or as nondeclarant aliens. Some tens of thousands of men were denied citizenship for claiming rights that were legally theirs.¹⁵

Conscription’s linkage of citizenship and military service also shaped citizenship for those outside its reach. During the war, American women remade the meanings of political belonging through their wartime participation as volunteers. Under the leadership of Carrie Chapman Catt, NAWSA endorsed U.S. entry into war and insisted that its members “stand ready to serve our country with zeal.” But when pacifist women criticized the war, or when radicals in the National Woman’s Party insisted that “[w]e will not bargain with our country for our services,” they found themselves subject to prosecution, imprisonment, and even diagnosis of mental illness. Most remarkably, a decade after the war, the U.S. Supreme Court extended the logic of conscription to extreme ends when it used its ruling in Arver v. U.S. (1918)—which had upheld the constitutionality of the Selective Service Act—to justify the forcible sterilization of a young Virginia woman in Buck v. Bell (1927).¹⁶


Citizenship was not only more militarized in its principles and its connotations, but also in its enforcement, as a wide array of federal agencies took up the task of securing the borders, keeping watch on aliens, and excluding them in greater numbers. In 1918, Attorney General Thomas W. Gregory offered no understatement when he boasted that “[i]t is safe to say that never in its history has this country been so thoroughly policed.” That was primarily the work of civilian agencies, which often wielded wartime emergency authority—most notably the Espionage and Sedition Acts of April 1917 and May 1918—along with new powers of denaturalization and deportation that would be carried out by the Justice Department’s Bureau of Investigation, which grew dramatically between 1917 and 1920. The U.S. Army’s Military Intelligence Division kept watch on radicals, and paid particularly close attention to transnational movements, from Bolshevism to the syndicalism of the Industrial Workers of the World to the anticolonialism that motivated members of the Garvey movement, South Asians in the Ghadar Party, Japanese pan-Asianists in territorial Hawai’i, and Irish nationalists in New York. Ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment and implementation of Prohibition in the Volstead Act ramped up federal policing power, particularly along the U.S.-Canadian border, in South Florida, and the Caribbean. The linkage of citizenship with military service—and its increasingly rigid surveillance and enforcement—empowered the federal government through its emergency authority as a warmaking power, and while federal officials never worked alone, Washington increasingly set the terms.17

Citizens could also be created without their consent, as was the experience of Native Americans during and after World War I. Wartime political circumstances accelerated ongoing trends, broke through seemingly intractable political impasses, and in the end generated a uniform system of citizenship with a single allegiance authorized by the federal government and linked to military service. Taking Native sovereignty and citizenship seriously, though, challenges assumptions about the relationship between citizenship and military service in this era. The standard story that white Americans told themselves about Indian participation in World War I highlighted Native people’s declarations of willingness to serve, documented high rates of military volunteerism, and praised the voluntary sacrifice of money and land to the war effort, all of which justified Indians’ quest for U.S. citizenship, which was duly granted, quid pro quo, in the Indian Citizenship

Act of 1924. The only problem with that narrative is that every aspect of it is wrong.¹⁸

Several Indian nations declared war on Germany during World War I, but their motivations were more complex than is represented in accounts that sometimes reduced expressions of national sovereignty to humorous anecdotes. Arthur Parker, a leading member of the Seneca Nation and president of the Society of American Indians, drafted the Onondaga declaration of war in July 1918. It asserted sovereignty guaranteed by a 1783 treaty and justified its declaration as a response to German mistreatment of members of the Onondaga Nation who had been displayed in circus sideshows in Germany. Later, Parker pressed the Senecas to declare war too. Doing so would “establish your independent right to act as a Nation and not as a ward-bound tribe that had no powers of a Nation. The Senecas have lost none of their sovereignty since 1812 and a war declaration would serve to emphasize our status.”¹⁹

Postwar tributes to Native American loyalty made much of their military service. And indeed some twelve thousand Native Americans bore arms during the war, most in the U.S. Army. While African Americans served in segregated units, the Army refused calls for distinct Indian regiments. Cato Sells, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, defended the Army’s policy on the deliberately assimilationist grounds that “the military segregation of the Indian . . . does not afford the associational contact he needs and is unfavorable to his preparation for citizenship.” In fact, about 40 percent of America’s three hundred and fifty thousand Native people were noncitizens, mostly those who lived on reservations or had not, in the eyes of the U.S. government, “adopted the habits of civilized life.” As noncitizens, they were thus exempt from the draft. Provost Marshal General Crowder offered up the fact that the “ratio of Indians claiming deferment was negligible” as evidence of Native American patriotism, but Indians’ own experiences were quite different. Because the Selective Service Act required all men in the territorial United States between eighteen and forty-five years—even noncitizens—to register, many Indians found themselves drafted against their will, or without knowledge of their rights.²⁰

Of course many Native Americans served eagerly and were proud of their enlistment. “The Indian is not a slacker, and I didn’t mean to be one,” wrote William Leon Wolfe, an Ojibwa student at the Carlisle Indian School. Sam Thundercloud, a Winnebago man from Wisconsin, was more sanguine: “I am fighting for the rights of a country that had not done right by my people.” Others, either individually or collectively, asserted their rights to sovereignty and exemption. On June 5, 1917, the first day of registration for the new draft, Navajos in Northwestern Arizona chased Selective Service agents off their lands; Ute in Colorado did the same, and performed a war dance in opposition. That August, several hundred people in Southeastern Oklahoma—including many from the Seminole and Muskogee-Creek Nations—joined the Green Corn Rebellion that hatched a plan to march on Washington and overturn the draft law. In early 1918, members of the Oneida Nation cited a 1769 treaty when they refused to register, and that February, rumors emerged from the tiny settlement of Ibapah, Nevada, where Goshute Indians had refused to register on the grounds that they had once made a treaty of peace with the Americans, “and now you come and want us to fight, but we won’t do it.” Federal officials disagreed about whether the Goshutes were being misled by German spies or Mormon troublemakers, but wasted no time in sending troops from Fort Douglas, Utah, to crush the rebellion and register draft-aged men.21

Wartime accounts also praised the monetary sacrifices of Indian communities and the steps they took to increase acreage under agricultural cultivation. Such histories, though, overlook the fact that a June 1917 law empowered officials of the Bureau of Indian Affairs to invest Native Americans’ funds in Liberty Loan war bonds—whether or not Native communities agreed. They omit the use of vagrancy laws against Native Americans who did not work for wages or in cultivation of cash crops, and the pressures that Indians felt during a time of rising crop prices, labor shortages, and a scramble for arable land. And narratives of loyalty obscure the ways that incorporating Indian lands into U.S. agricultural markets accelerated Indian dispossession. “When a nation is at war,” explained Commissioner Cato Sells, “ordinary considerations do not govern.” But for many observers of Indian affairs, it was business as usual.22


After the Armistice, some Indians and their allies clamored for full U.S. citizenship for Native Americans, echoing a December 1918 editorial in the *Literary Digest* that asked, “If the Red Man Can Fight, Why Can't He Vote?” Red Fox Skiuhushu of the Northern Blackfoot told a Seattle audience that “[w]e know not the hyphen... We are 100 per cent Americans.” Writing in the *American Indian Magazine*, Arthur Parker urged that “[i]f we are consistent in our aim to bring democracy to all the people of the earth let us deal with the Indians in a democratic way.” Native American veterans gained a clear path to citizenship: a November 1919 law granted citizenship to Indian men who served, and attributed that nationality retroactively to the date of enlistment. The law’s terms required that veterans seek out citizenship themselves, but few did so. Some did not know of the option, but others rejected the idea of U.S. citizenship. The campaign continued, as a rhetoric of service and reward framed the legislative debates surrounding the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924. The new law, which easily passed Congress and was signed on June 2—just a week after the Immigration Restriction Act—announced “that all noncitizen Indians born within the territorial limits of the United States [are] citizens of the United States.”23

During and after World War I, Native American political culture reflected a vigorous attempt to articulate and defend an understanding of citizenship at odds with the one that was developing in Washington. And also a spectacular failure: no one took Native sovereignty seriously; no one took their legitimate military exemption seriously; no one took their property rights seriously; and no one took seriously the idea that many Native Americans did not want to be citizens of the United States. Instead, the Indian Citizenship Act is best seen as a coercive inclusion into the U.S. polity that was a crucial aspect of this pinpointing moment in the history of citizenship: territorially inclusive without being egalitarian. When the logic of single allegiance got to the reservation, it did not merely pinpoint Native Americans at a single place on the map. It eliminated Indian Country from the maps altogether. For Native people after 1924, locating themselves on the map meant finding they belonged nowhere at all.

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The legacies for citizenship that emerged from World War I were legal, cultural, and demographic. Pressed by government officials and supportive constituents, policymakers pushed American institutions and cultural practices toward a citizenship premised on a single allegiance to one state bounded by the territorial limits of the United States. This despite the existence of millions of Americans

whose political loyalties, cultural and linguistic affiliations, and labor practices spanned a single nation-state. From Ellis Island to the Texas border and from Puerto Rico to the Goshute reservation, the terms of U.S. citizenship were remade, with legacies that would endure for generations. By 1924, persons in the United States—whether they were citizens or aliens—had mapped a new terrain of citizenship with clearer borders around the nation-state and a new landscape of boundaries within it. It was a story that few could have imagined as they gathered in the summer of 1914 and struggled to find Sarajevo on a world map.