



Two Paths to Citizenship: Achille Murat & Joseph M. Hernández



Ashby Culpepper, Dr. Benjamin Gunter, and Idy Codington

Introduction & Abstract:

In the early 19th century, those people seeking naturalization in the United States faced varied experiences and processes, as exemplified by the paths of Achille Murat and Joseph M. Hernández. Murat embarked on a five-year naturalization process, adhering to the Naturalization Law of 1802. He applied for citizenship in 1823, eventually becoming a citizen of the U.S. in Quincy, Florida, in 1828 after relinquishing his European titles. Murat's journey to citizenship underscored the formal and lengthy nature of the naturalization process, highlighting the requirement for immigrants to meet residency and other criteria before being granted citizenship. In contrast, Hernández, born in Spanish-controlled St. Augustine, quickly obtained U.S. citizenship after Florida was ceded to the United States in 1821. His decision to remain in Florida, coupled with a change to a more "American" name (Joseph), likely facilitated his assimilation and acceptance within the American community, leading to his election as Florida's first Delegate to the United States House of Representatives in 1822. Hernández's swift naturalization and subsequent political career illustrate how the political circumstances of the time could impact one's path to citizenship, showcasing the diverse experiences of those seeking to become U.S. citizens during this era.

Methodology:

- My research was primarily used to shed light on Tallahassee's bicentennial. To begin, my first couple of weeks consisted of reading primary and secondary sources to gain some sort of information of how territorial Florida was founded as well as the more advanced historical context.
- To hone into a more specific topic of interest, I created a large annotated bibliography that accounted for all that I have read, as well as annotations to help me decipher what I wanted to go into as an area of interest. My annotations helped me figure out an area of significance which I wanted to pursue further within my research.
- I then focused on primary sources that were more revealing about the foundations of Florida as a U.S. territory. Once such source was the Adams-Onís Treaty of 1819, which captivated my interest since this Treaty governed Florida's transition from Spanish province to US territory.
- Now that I had a primary source in mind that I could dive deep into, my goal was to find one Article within the treaty that mapped a path to citizenship. I found Article VI (quoted in the background panel), and launched an in-depth case-study of Achille Murat and Joseph Hernández to get a better understanding of how the article worked.
- In conclusion, extensive research in primary and secondary sources on Achille Murat and Joseph M. Hernández helped me discover the divergence in the process of citizenship both men went through during the time period of 1821-1828.



Portraits of Achille Murat & Joseph M. Hernández

Background:

- Article VI of the Adams-Onís Treaty 1819: "The inhabitants of the territories which His Catholic Majesty cedes to the United States, by this treaty, shall be incorporated in the Union of the United States as soon as may be consistent with the principles of the Federal Constitution, and admitted to the enjoyment of all the privileges, rights, and immunities of the citizens of the United States."
- Naturalization Law of 1802: "The alien had to declare, at least three years in advance, his intent to become a U.S. citizen and the previous 14-year residency requirement was reduced to 5 years." ("Early U.S. Naturalization Laws" *Constitution Annotated*)
- Naturalization Law of 1816: requiring "every applicant for naturalization who arrived in the United States since June 18, 1812, to produce a certificate of report and registry as evidence of the time of his arrival in the United States, as well as a certificate of his duly filed declaration of intention." (Congress. "Naturalization Law of 1802." *National Archives*)

Case Study: Achille Murat and Joseph Hernández

- Achille Murat (1801-1847):
 - The nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte, gained citizenship in Florida by becoming a naturalized citizen of the U.S. by first declaring his intent for refuge and hospitality in the country, renouncing his European titles to show his allegiance to the Union, then meeting his five-year residency requirement by settling in Florida and eventually marrying into a prominent American family.
 - How: Achille Murat applied for U.S. citizenship in 1823. Five years later (the time it took for Naturalization), Murat took the oath and became a citizen of the U.S. in Quincy, Florida, in 1828.
 - Achille Murat Letter to his Friend: "*I am beside the sea, 10 miles south of St. Augustine. I have called my place Parthenope [the old Greek name for Naples].... This name recalls to me my country if I could forget it.... I have a rather bad house but it will suffice.*" ("Achille Murat, the Prince of Tallahassee." *Shannon Selin*, 28 Oct. 2023)
- Joseph M. Hernández (1788-1857):
 - Born in St. Augustine, Fla. (then a Spanish colony), May 26, 1788; Many Spanish citizens decided to leave when Florida was given to the United States by Spain in the Adams-Onís Treaty of 1821. However, Hernández stayed, transferred his allegiance to the United States, changed his name to a more Americanized one, and obtained US citizenship.
 - Upon the formation of Florida Territory was elected as Florida's first Delegate to the United States' House of Representatives in 1822. He also gained the distinction of being the first person of Hispanic descent to hold a position in Congress. (Joseph M. Hernández: A Famous Florida First." *Florida Memory*, 9 Sept. 2020)

Conclusions:

Achille Murat & Joseph M. Hernández's difference in gaining U.S. Citizenship:

Residency Requirement: Murat applied for U.S. citizenship in 1823 and took the oath in 1828, indicating a five-year naturalization process. This aligns with the Naturalization Law of 1802, which required a 5-year residency. In contrast, Hernández's process of naturalization occurred when Florida was ceded to the United States in 1821, and he was elected as Florida's first Delegate to the House of Representatives in 1822. My research has not yet found documentation about the exact timing of his naturalization, but it appears to have been swift, potentially due to the political circumstances surrounding Florida's transfer.

Intent to Become a Citizen: The Naturalization Law of 1802 required an alien to declare his intent to become a U.S. citizen at least three years in advance. Murat declared his intent as by seeking refuge and hospitality in the U.S (New York). In Hernández's case, the decision to remain in Florida when it became a U.S. territory and to change his name to a more Americanized one suggests a clear intent to become a U.S. citizen.

In conclusion, Achille Murat gained U.S. citizenship through a five-year naturalization process, following the requirements of the Naturalization Law of 1802. In 1828, he gave up his European titles and became a citizen of Quincy after applying for citizenship in 1823. Joseph M. Hernández, in contrast, was born in St. Augustine, when it was a Spanish colony, obtained U.S. citizenship swiftly after Florida became a U.S. territory in 1821. He remained in Florida, naturalized his name, and was elected to the House of Representatives in 1822. Being a resident of Spanish Florida opened a fast-track to citizenship for Hernández compared to the non-native Murat. Their differing paths to citizenship highlight the varied experiences of those who were seeking naturalization in the U.S. during the 19th century.

References:

- Hanna, Alfred Jackson. "Of Revolution and Romance." *A Prince in Their Midst: The Adventurous Life of Achille Murat on the American Frontier*, University of Oklahoma, Norman Oklahoma, 1946, pp. 39–39.
- "Adams-Onís Treaty 1819." *A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774 - 1875*, Library of Congress, memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsp&fileName=005%2Fllsp005.db&recNum=138. Accessed 6 Mar. 2024.
- Congress. "Naturalization Law of 1802." *National Archives*, 14AD, govtrack.us.s3.amazonaws.com/legislink/pdf/stat/43/STATUTE-43-Pg153a.pdf.
- "Early U.S. Naturalization Laws | Constitution Annotated [...]" *Constitution Annotated*, constitution.congress.gov/browse/essay/artI-S8-C4-1-2-3/ALDE_00013163/. Accessed 6 Mar. 2024.
- "HERNÁNDEZ, Joseph Marion." *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, United States Congress, bioguide.congress.gov/search. Accessed 6 Mar. 2024.
- Memory, Florida. "Florida Memory • Joseph M. Hernández: A Famous Florida First." *Florida Memory*, Florida Memory, 9 Sept. 2020, www.floridamemory.com/items/show/346006.
- Selin, Shannon. "Achille Murat, the Prince of Tallahassee." *Shannon Selin*, 28 Oct. 2023, shannonselin.com/2016/06/achille-murat-prince-tallahassee/.