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U.S. Naturalization Records Indexes, 1794-1995

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Source Information

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Original data: National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Microfilm Publications; Records of District Courts of the United States, Record Group 21; National Archives, Washington, D.C. Scroll down to the bottom of this page for NARA microfilm details.

About U.S. Naturalization Records Indexes, 1794-1995

Introduction to Naturalization Records:

The act and procedure of becoming a citizen of a country is called naturalization. In the U.S., *naturalization* is a judicial procedure that flows from Congressional legislation. From the time the first naturalization act was passed in 1790 until 1906, there were no uniform standards. As a consequence, before September 1906, various federal, state, county, and local courts generated a wide variety of citizenship records that are stored in sundry courts, archives, warehouses, libraries, and private collections. After 1906 the vast majority of naturalizations took place in federal courts.

Naturalization laws have changed over the years. These acts are important to understand as they would have greatly impacted when your ancestor was able to become naturalized, as well as the exact process he or she had to go through to become a citizen. For example, some naturalization acts required residency in the U.S. for a certain number of years, some excluded certain ethnicities from being able to become citizens, and others helped expedite the citizenship process for those who served in the military.

The Naturalization Process:

The first responsibility for an immigrant wishing to become an official U.S. citizen was to complete a *Declaration of Intention*. These papers are sometimes called *First Papers* since they are the first forms to be completed in the naturalization process. Generally these papers were filled out fairly soon after an immigrant's arrival in America. Due to some laws, there were times when certain groups of individuals were exempt from this step.

After the immigrant had completed these papers and met the residency requirement (which was usually five years), the individual was able to submit his *Petition for Naturalization*. Petitions are also known as *Second* or *Final Papers* because they are the second and final set of papers completed in the naturalization process.

Immigrants also took a *naturalization oath* or *oath of allegiance*. A copy of this oath is often filed with the immigrant's first or second papers. After an immigrant had completed all citizenship requirements he was issued a *certificate of naturalization*. Many of these documents can be found in the records of the court in which they were created. Other naturalization records include *naturalization certificate stubs* and *certificates of arrival*. See further below for a description of these two documents.

Many immigrants took out their *First Papers* as soon as they arrived in America, in whatever county and state that may have been. Later they would file their *Second Papers* in the location in which they took up residence.

What's Included in this Database:

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Related data collections

Selected U.S. Naturalization Records - Original Documents, 1790-1974 (World Archives Project)
This database contains images of original U.S. naturalization records (primarily Declarations and Petitions) from U.S. District and Circuit courts. Naturalization records included in this database cover areas from the states of Alabama, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Montana, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and Washington, and cover the years 1790-1974.

U.S. Naturalization Records - Original Documents, 1795-1972
This database contains images of original U.S. naturalization records (primarily Declarations and Petitions) from U.S. District and Circuit courts. Naturalization records included in this database cover areas from the states of Alaska, Arizona, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Washington, and West Virginia, and cover the years 1791-1995.

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Search New York Passenger Lists, 1820-1957

Search all Passenger Lists on Ancestry.com

This database contains indexes to naturalization records (primarily Declarations and Petitions) for various courts (primarily U.S. District and Circuit courts) and years. Indexes are lists of names, with the associated volume and page number, compiled from the records by the court where the file was located. Ancestry.com has begun posting original naturalization records here. However, this is a huge undertaking and many original records are still not available online. For this reason, if you find a name in this *"Naturalization Indexes"* database and are unable to locate your ancestor's record in the database above, you will need to write for a copy of the original paperwork. The regional offices of the National Archives most often are the repository where the records are now located. This index will give you the information you need to obtain that copy, specifically - the person's name, sometimes the certificate number, but almost always the volume and page number. Please see below for the address to write to with the information you obtain from the index.

This database includes the following:

- **Alaska**, District and Territory, U.S. District Court: Index to Declarations filed in Skagway, 1904-1917, and in Juneau, 1900-1929 (**NARA Roll Series M1241**)

  For copies of the original file, write to:
  National Archives – Pacific Alaska Region
  654 W. Third Avenue
  Anchorage, AK 99501
  Phone: 907-271-2441
  Fax: 907-271-2442
  Email: archives@alaska.nara.gov

- **California**, Northern District, U.S. Circuit Court: Index to Applications for naturalization 1879-1903, Certificates of citizenship 1855-1912; U.S. District Court: Index to Declarations 1851-1904, Naturalizations 1853-1867, Certificates of naturalization 1854-1906, Declarations and Petitions 1906-1928 (**NARA roll series T1220**)

  For copies of the original file, write to:
  National Archives - Pacific Region (San Francisco)
  1000 Commodore Drive
  San Bruno, CA 94066-2350
  Phone: 650-876-9001
  Fax: 650-876-9233
  Email: sanbruno.archives@nara.gov

- **District of Columbia**, U.S. Supreme Court: Index to Naturalization Records, 1802-1909 (**NARA Roll Series M1827**)

  For copies of the original file, write to:
  National Archives – Archives I
  700 Pennsylvania Avenue
  Washington, DC 20408
  Phone: 202-501-5410 (Genealogical Staff)
  202-501-5400 (Record Availability)

- **Delaware**, U.S. Circuit Court: Index to Petitions, 1795-1911; U.S. District Court: Index to Petitions, 1795-1928 (**NARA Roll Series M1649**)

  For copies of the original file, write to:
  National Archives - Mid-Atlantic Region
  900 Market Street
  Philadelphia, PA 19107
  Phone: 215-597-3000
  Fax: 215-597-2303
  Email: Philadelphia.archives@nara.gov

- **Maryland**, U.S. Circuit and District Courts: Index to Petitions, 1797-1951 (**NARA Roll Series M1168**)

  For copies of the original file, write to:
  National Archives - Mid-Atlantic Region
  900 Market Street
  Philadelphia, PA 19107
  Phone: 215-597-3000
  Fax: 215-597-2303E
  Email: Philadelphia.archives@nara.gov

- **Massachusetts**, U.S. Circuit Court: Indexes to Petitions and Records, 1906-1911; U.S. District Court: Indexes to Petitions and Records, 1906-1966 (**NARA Roll Series M1545**)

  For copies of the original file, write to:
  National Archives-Northeast Region (Boston)
  Reference Supervisor
  380 Trapelo Road
  Waltham, MA 02452

Phone: (781) 663-0130
Fax: (781) 663-0154
E-mail: waltham.archives@nara.gov

- **Michigan**, Eastern District, Southern Division, Detroit, U.S. District Court: Index to Petitions, 1907-1995 (**NARA Roll Series M1917**)

  For copies of the original file, write to:
  National Archives-Great Lakes Region
  7358 Pulaski Road
  Chicago, IL 60629
  Phone: 773-948-9001
  fax: (773)948-9050
  Email: chicago.archives@nara.gov

- **New York**, Southern District, U.S. District and Circuit Courts: Index to Petitions, 1824-1941 (**NARA Roll Series M1676**); Eastern District, U.S. District Court: Index to Petitions, 1865-1957 (**NARA Roll Series M1164**)

  For copies of the original file, write to:
  National Archives-Northeast Region
  201 Varick Street, 12th Floor
  New York, NY 10014
  Toll-free: 1-866-840-1752 or 212-401-1620
  Fax: 212-401-1638
  E-mail: newyork.archives@nara.gov

- **Ohio**, Northern District , Eastern Division, Cleveland, U.S. District Court: Index to Petitions, 1855-1967 (**NARA Roll Series M1893**)

  For copies of the original file, write to:
  National Archives-Great Lakes Region
  7358 South Pulaski Road
  Chicago, IL 60629
  phone: (773)948-9001
  fax: (773)948-9050
  e-mail: chicago.archives@nara.gov

- **Oregon**, U.S. Circuit Court: Indexes to Declarations 1859-1935, Petitions 1906-1935, Admissions to citizenship 1859-1907; U.S. District Court: Indexes to Declarations 1859-1956, Petitions 1906-1956, Admissions to citizenship 1859-1907 (**NARA Roll Series M1242**)

  For copies of the original file, write to:
  National Archives – Pacific Alaska Region (Seattle)
  6125 Sand Point Way NE
  Seattle, Washington 98115-7999
  Phone: 206-336-5115
  Email: seattle.archives@nara.gov

- **Pennsylvania**, Western District, U.S. Circuit and District Courts: Index to Declarations and Petitions, 1820-1906 (**NARA Roll Series M1208**)

  For copies of the original file, write to:
  National Archives - Mid-Atlantic Region
  900 Market Street
  Philadelphia, PA 19107
  Phone: 215-597-3000
  Fax: 215-597-2303
  Email: Philadelphia.archives@nara.gov

Information Available in the Records:

The amount of information that is contained on each naturalization document varies widely between time and place. Generally speaking, most pre-1906 naturalization papers may contain little information of biographical or genealogical value. In the absence of standardized naturalization forms, federal, state, county, and other minor courts of record created their own naturalization documents, which varied greatly in format. There are, however, wonderful exceptions, and records created after 1906 usually contain significant genealogical information, making them well worth the search to locate them.

Pre-1906 Declarations and Petitions:
Pre-1906 Declaration and Petition records may list:

- Name of individual
- Native country
- Date of naturalization

Post-1906 Declarations:
Post-1906 Declarations could contain:

- Name of individual
- Address
- Occupation
- Birthplace
- Birth date or age
- Nationality
- Country from which emigrated
- Personal description
- Marital status
- Last foreign residence
- Immigration info – port of entry, date of entry, name of ship
- Date of Intention

Post-1906 Petitions:
Post-1906 Petitions may include:

- Name of individual
- Current address
- Occupation
- Birth date or age
- Birthplace
- Physical description – complexion, eye and hair color, height, weight, visible distinctive marks
- Current and former citizenship
- Marital status
- If married, marriage and spouse information – name of spouse, marriage date, marriage place, birthplace and date of spouse, date and place of spouse's entrance to the U.S., current residence of spouse, whether the spouse was a naturalized citizen and if yes, where and when naturalized
- Children – number born to the individual, and/or their names and ages
- Where and when lawful admission for permanent residence in the U.S. took place
- Date of Intention
- Immigration info – date of immigration, country from which immigrated, last foreign residence, port and mode of entry, name of ship, date of entry
- Length of time in the U.S.
- Last foreign residence
- Date of Petition
- Photograph

A second part of the Petition consisted of an affidavit or witness. This section listed:

- Names of witnesses
- Witnesses' addresses
- Witnesses' sworn and signed statements of their knowledge of the applicant

Naturalization Oaths:
Post-1906 petitions were completed with a signed Oath of Allegiance. Some naturalization oaths survive in separate files in courthouses and archives; however, most of them were interfiled with petitions or final papers. The majority of naturalization oaths contain little detail.

Certificate of Naturalization:
After 1906, a certificate of naturalization was given to newly naturalized citizens, signifying their completion of the naturalization process and fulfilling of citizenship requirements. The amount of information provided on the certificate may vary greatly from one court to another and from one year to another. Most certificates contain only the name of the individual, the name of the court, and the date of issue. In some cases the certificate will also provide the citizen's address, birthplace or nationality, country from which emigrated, birth date or age, personal description, marital status, and names of spouse and children.

To Learn More:
Much of the above information was taken from:
Lorretto D. Szucs, *They Became American: Finding Naturalization Records and Ethnic Origins*, (Salt Lake City, UT: Ancestry, Inc., 1998).
To learn more about naturalization records and how to research them, please consult this book.

Original Data:

- Index to Naturalization Petitions in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York, 1865-1957; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1164, 142 rolls); Records of District Courts of the United States, Record Group 21; National Archives, Washington, D.C.
- Indexes to Naturalization Petitions to the U.S. Circuit and District Courts for Maryland, 1797-1951; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1168, 25 rolls); Records of District Courts of the United States, Record Group 21; National Archives, Washington, D.C.
- Indexes to Registers and Registers of Declarations of Intention and Petitions for Naturalization of the U.S. District and Circuit Courts for the Western District of Pennsylvania, 1820-1906; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1208, 3 rolls); Records of District Courts of the United States, Record Group 21; National Archives, Washington, D.C.
- Indexes to the Naturalization Records of the U.S. District Court for the District and Territory

of Alaska, 1900-1929; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1241, 1 roll); Records of District Courts of the United States, Record Group 21; National Archives, Washington, D.C.

- Index to the Naturalization Records of the U.S. District Court for Oregon, 1859-1956; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1242, 3 rolls); Records of District Courts of the United States, Record Group 21; National Archives, Washington, D.C.
- Index to Petitions and Records of Naturalizations of the U.S. and District Courts for the District of Massachusetts, 1907-1966; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1545, 115 rolls); Records of District Courts of the United States, Record Group 21; National Archives, Washington, D.C.
- Index to Naturalization Petitions for the U.S. Circuit Court, 1795-1911, and the U.S. District Court, 1795-1928, for the District of Delaware, 1795-1928; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1649, 1 roll); Records of District Courts of the United States, Record Group 21; National Archives, Washington, D.C.
- Alphabetical Index to Petitions for Naturalization of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, 1824-1941; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1676, 102 rolls); Records of District Courts of the United States, Record Group 21; National Archives, Washington, D.C.
- Index to Naturalization Records of the U.S. Supreme Court for the District of Columbia, 1802-1909; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1827, 1 roll); Records of District Courts of the United States, Record Group 21; National Archives, Washington, D.C.
- Index Cards to Naturalization Petitions for the United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio, Eastern Division, Cleveland, 1855-1967; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1893, 33 rolls); Records of District Courts of the United States, Record Group 21; National Archives, Washington, D.C.
- Index Cards to Naturalization Petitions for the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, Southern Division, Detroit, 1907-1995; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1917, 280 rolls); Records of District Courts of the United States, Record Group 21; National Archives, Washington, D.C.
- Selected Indexes to Naturalization Records of the U.S. Circuit and District Courts, Northern District of California, 1852-1928; (National Archives Microfilm Publication T1220, 3 rolls); Records of District Courts of the United States, Record Group 21; National Archives, Washington, D.C.

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