



OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY

COOK COUNTY NATURALIZATION RECORDS- PLEASE READ BEFORE REQUESTING A SEARCH

The Archives holds Cook County Naturalization Records from October 1871 until 1929. All records prior to October 1871 were destroyed in the Great Chicago Fire. In Cook County, naturalizations were granted in the Circuit, Superior, Criminal, County Courts and the U.S. (federal) court. After 1929 all naturalizations were granted in the federal court system (i.e. U.S. District, U.S. Circuit). All U.S. District/U.S. Circuit requests should be forwarded to:

National Archives-Great Lakes Region; 7358 S. Pulaski, Chicago IL 60629 (773)948-9001

Naturalization, in most cases, was a three-step process producing two separate documents. First, a Declaration of Intention was filed, then a Petition for Naturalization. The Final Oath was noted on the bottom of the Petition. This is the date citizenship was granted. Certificates of Naturalization were given to the petitioners at the time of naturalization and the court did not maintain copies.

Before 1904, Cook County naturalization records contain little genealogical information. Until 1904, the only information that ***could be*** on a record is: name, date of naturalization, address, witness name and country of origin. Therefore, it is often difficult to positively identify individuals listed in those records. From 1904 until October 1906 the date and port of arrival, occupation and witness ***might be*** listed on some records.

Before 1906, wives & children were not named on naturalization papers of their husbands & fathers, although they did receive derivative citizenship through these men. Only after September 22, 1922 did the law require married women to file for naturalization on their own. Doing a search for a married woman's papers before that date will generally yield a negative result. Beginning in October 1906, the information listed in the petition includes: name, birthdate, town & country of birth, address, date & port of arrival, name of vessel, spouse's name, children's names and their birth information, witness name, witness address & date of naturalization.

When beginning your research, it is recommended that you search for a *Petition for Naturalization* case number because if the citizenship process was finalized in Cook County, the *Declaration of Intention* should be attached, as well as the final oath being noted on the bottom of the Petition. It is not recommended to request only a Declaration copy prior to determining whether or not a petition/final oath exist, as you may not obtain everything available for the individual.

To start a search, please email your request to jjmachnikowski@cookcountycourt.com and if known, include:

- Name of immigrant
- Approximate year of birth & country
- Approximate year of arrival & known address(es) in Chicago
- Spouse (maiden name not needed)
- Year of death
- Location of Court (i.e. Circuit, Superior, County or Criminal) & file number
 - A file number is generally found on "Soundex Index Cards" and if before 1906 may be a straight number or start with a Vol. or R. Those file numbers from 1906-1929 start with the letter "P".
- The Record Search Request Form (CCG0026A) can be used, but not necessary, as most of the historical information we require does not always fit into this form.
- Phone number



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The information provided will help determine if we have located the correct person or not. If a record has been located, our office will send an invoice by email bill for the search and scans of the record. Upon receipt of payment, scanned images will be emailed. If no record is found, an invoice will be sent for the search fee. Upon receipt of payment a "No Record Found" letter will be issued.

On some index cards the line "Court Order Only" will appear. This refers to the order entered by the court that naturalized the individual and is the only remaining record of naturalization. The record will only contain the person's name, date of naturalization and the *country* from which they are renouncing allegiance. Also, the word "Minor" appears on some index cards. This does not imply the petitioner naturalized as a minor, but rather he arrived in the U.S. as a minor. Minor's petitions include little genealogical information and no Declaration of Intention was filed in these cases. Please note that often times these records, especially before 1906, were filled out without the facts listed being verified by additional documentation, therefore many times the person's age, date of arrival, etc. may be "off" by a few years.

In some cases, the process of naturalization may have been started in Cook County with a Declaration of Intention, but not completed, therefore a Petition/Final Oath was not produced. If a Petition or Final Oath was not located, we encourage you to search our online database of Declarations of Intention containing records from 1906-1929 located at www.cookcountyclerkofcourt.org. If you wish to obtain a Declaration after determining that the naturalization process wasn't finished, please note this in your email request by stating "Declaration Only". At this time the Archives cannot search for pre-1906 "Declarations of Intention" due to the haphazardly indexed & often incomplete record series. As a rule, the pre-1906 Declarations *only* contain the person's name, date & *country* of origin in contrast to other counties & states that recorded much more historical information on these types of records.

CERTIFICATION & DUAL CITIZENSHIP

The Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County can only certify naturalization records entered before September 27, 1906.

Pursuant to Title VIII of the United States Code, Section 1454, Paragraph D, the Clerk's Office may only provide informational, non-certified copies, of naturalization records that are dated after September 26, 1906. Those patrons that may need a certified copy of a naturalization record that will be used for dual citizenship etc. must contact U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Copies of our records are in their possession starting on September 27, 1906. Please contact them via their website:

<https://www.uscis.gov/records/genealogy>

Due to the commonality of names, the use of aliases and sometimes minimal information given on naturalization records, the Clerk of the Circuit Court can only provide a non-certified No Record Letter (Letter of Non-Existence) if a record cannot be located for the individual in question.