



OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY

COOK COUNTY NATURALIZATION RECORDS
PLEASE READ BEFORE REQUESTING A SEARCH

The Archives Department holds Cook County Naturalization Records dating from October 1871 until 1929. All records prior to October 1871 were destroyed in the 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

Naturalization, in most cases, was a three-step process producing two separate documents. First, a Declaration of Intention (“first papers”) was filed, second a Petition for Naturalization, later the Final Oath, noted on the bottom of the Petition. Certificates of Naturalization were given to the petitioners at the time of naturalization and the court did not maintain copies.

Before 1904, Cook County naturalizations 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. From 1904 until October 1906 date and port of arrival, occupation and witness also *might be* available. The only possibility more information from that period would be available is if the person filed their Declaration of Intention in a different place other than Cook County, which may have required more information.

Also, before 1906 wives and children were not named on naturalization papers of husbands or fathers, although they did receive derivative U.S. citizenship through these men. Only after September 22, 1922 did the law require married women to file for naturalization on their own. Therefore, doing a search for a married woman’s papers before that date will generally yield no results. Beginning in October 1906, information listed in the petition includes the basic information mentioned above but also vessel of arrival, birthdate and place, wife and children’s names and their birth information.

When doing genealogical research we recommend that you search for a *Petition for Naturalization* because if the citizenship process was finalized in Cook County, the *Declaration of Intention* should be attached to that.

To start this search you may print our **Record Search Request Form (CCG 0026A)**. On the line that reads “Plaintiff”, please write “In Re Naturalization of” and on the “Defendant” line, please write the name of the person you are looking for. On the lines that read “Filing” and “Years to Be Searched”, you can write information such as birthyear, approximate year of immigration or naturalization, etc. that may help us determine if the person located is the correct individual. Enclose the initial \$9 check so we may search the microfilm, “Soundex Index to Naturalization Petitions” published by the National Archives (M1285). We will send a copy of any Soundex index card that match your request, and bill you for copies of the complete file. If you already have a Soundex card or petition number, send the search form with this information **without** the \$9 search fee. Our office will bill you for copies. Please note that pursuant to federal law, the Archives can only provide informational copies, and **not certified copies**, of Naturalization Records.

On some soundex 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. Also, the word “Minor” appears on some Soundex 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.

If you have reason to believe the process of naturalization was not finished in Cook County, or a search of the Soundex index reveals no record, we encourage you to search our online database of Declarations of Intention located at www.cookcountyclerkofcourt.org If a record is found please print our **Record Search Request Form (CCG 0026A)**. On the line that reads “Case Number”, please write the Declaration, Volume and Page Number. On the line that reads “Division”, please write the court in which the Declaration took place. On the “Plaintiff” line please write, “Declaration of” and on the “Defendant line”, please write the name of the individual making the Declaration. Enclose a check for \$17.42 made payable to “Clerk of the Circuit Court” and a copy will be mailed to you.

Unfortunately, the Archives cannot specifically search for “Declarations of Intentions” due the fact that these records are in the process of being indexed. Please frequently check our constantly growing database to see if a match is found.