



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. Therefore, it is often difficult to positively identify individuals listed in those records. 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 a \$9 check so we may search the "Soundex Index to Naturalization Petitions" published by the National Archives (M1285) and also available online. We will send a copy of the naturalization record that matches your request. If you already have a Soundex card or petition number, send the search form with this information with \$3. Pursuant to federal law, the Archives can only provide informational copies, and **not certified copies**, of Naturalization Records. Please see Title VIII, Section 1454, Paragraph D of the United States Code for further information.

On some soundex 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 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 complete our **Record Search Request Form (CCG 0026A)** and include the Declaration, Volume and Page Number along with the individual's name and whether Circuit or Superior Court. Enclose a check for \$2 made payable to "Clerk of the Circuit Court".

Unfortunately, the Archives cannot specifically search for pre-1906 "Declarations of Intentions" due the fact that these records are not indexed, and holdings are incomplete. Please note that these pre-1906 Declarations of Intentions do not contain the same genealogical information as other counties & states include. In general, they list the name, date & *country* of origin.