

20 Reasons to Declare Your Intent & Research Naturalization Records

Do you research naturalization records? No? Why not? Does the thought of going through paper files in dusty court basements turn you off? Well – I'm here to tell you that it is worth it – and with recent digitization efforts – more and more original documents have been scanned and been made available via microfilm or even online.

Some of the larger subscription sites have made some source documents available – as well as index cards that can lead you to the court that handled the proceedings.

Whatever! It is worth the effort – no matter what. The amount of information on naturalization records is in a word – Outstanding! Take a look below at the 20 or so types of information that can be found.

To get educated first about all of these documents and the naturalization process – please read these two terrific summaries:

- The U.S. Archives [Naturalization Records](#)
- FamilySearch's Wiki entry [United States Naturalization and Citizenship](#)

And check out the U.S. Naturalization Rules and Laws Quicksheet at [Naturalization Rules Quicksheet](#)

Okay – now that you are educated and know that post-1906 – about 4 awesome documents just drip with great information: Declaration of Intent, Petition for Citizenship or Naturalization, Certificate of Arrival, and the Certificate of Naturalization. Many of the online genealogy websites may not have all of these documents available, but do have index cards that are searchable – which has information regarding the court handling the proceedings. With this information you might be able to track down some of the source documents. So lets' go – what types of information are included in these documents?

- **Name** (often includes middle name which is useful). Can help with spelling of more complex names for future searching as well.
- **Age**
- **Occupation**
- **Physical Characteristics** – color/race, complexion, height and weight, hair and eye color, and scars or other distinctive marks.
- **Birth Location**
- **Birth Date**
- **Current Address**
- **Emigration Information** – port of departure, name of ship/vessel, and date of departure
- **Immigration Information** – port of arrival and date of arrival
- **Last Foreign Residence**
- **Marital Status**
- **Marriage Date**
- **Marriage Location**
- **Spouse Information** – Name of spouse and their birth location and current address. Also when they entered the U.S. May include their naturalization information if applicable
- **Signature** – (always fun to see how they signed their name)
- **Name and Location** of court handling the proceedings
- **Children** – names, place of birth and current residence
- **Witnesses** – names, occupations, and addresses – always useful (and underappreciated) – may provide means of alternative research if the same surname – or if a friend – possible clues.
- **Former Names** – if they changed their name or if they got married in the U.S. may provide great clues for additional research, especially in their birth country or former country of residence
- **Photo**