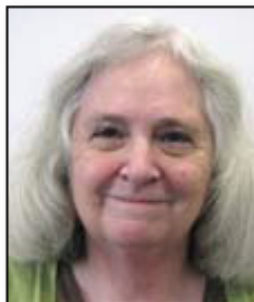


Genealogy Rocks!

Naturalization Records Can Trace Your Ancestors!

Becoming an American citizen was a very big event in our ancestors' lives, and finding the records that document that event



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can be a very rewarding event in a genealogist's life. However, naturalization records are not always easy to locate. This is because before 1906, the naturalization process was not standardized.

Although the process varied over the years, most immigrants filed two sets of papers: Declarations of Intent, or First Papers, and Petitions or Final Papers. The Declaration of Intent was generally filed soon after an immigrant arrived in the U.S. and announced an immigrant's intent to become a citizen. Petitions for citizenship could only be filed after an immigrant had resided in the U.S. for a set period of time of five or seven years. Before the federalization of the process in 1906, the two sets of papers could be filed in whatever city, county, state or federal court the immigrant wished, and the two types of documents needn't be filed in the same county or state. This makes

finding an ancestor's records tricky, but the National Archives, state and county archives and the LDS Family History Library catalog are good places to begin searching.

The content of the First Papers and the Final Papers varies substantially depending on the time period they were filed. Many of them merely give the immigrant's name and state that he is renouncing the ruler of whatever country he came from, but it's worth seeking out these records because some do give more information concerning place of origin and exact date of arrival in the U.S. Post 1906 records supply much more information including the date of arrival in the U.S., the name of the ship traveled on, previous address in the "old" country, present address and names of other family members.

Whether the records give a great deal of information or very little, naturalization records are an exciting find for a descendant of an immigrant and are definitely worth searching for.

❖ *Carol Stetser is an instructor, speaker, and researcher for Larimer County Genealogical Society. Please visit our website at www.lcgsc.org and our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/lcgsc for our upcoming events.*