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**Soundex Index to  
Naturalization Petitions for  
the United States District and  
Circuit Courts, Northern District  
of Illinois, and Immigration  
and Naturalization Service  
District 9  
1840-1950**

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**Records of the Immigration  
and Naturalization Service  
Record Group 85**



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SOUNDEX INDEX TO NATURALIZATION PETITIONS  
FOR THE  
UNITED STATES DISTRICT AND CIRCUIT COURTS,  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS, AND  
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE  
DISTRICT 9,  
1840-1950

INTRODUCTION

On the 179 rolls of this microfilm publication (M1285) are reproduced the Soundex Index to naturalization petitions from the U.S. District and Circuit Courts, Northern District of Illinois, which had jurisdiction over the northern quarter of the state; the Circuit, County, Criminal, and Superior Courts of Cook County; and county and municipal courts in the old Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) District #9, which comprised northern Illinois, northwestern Indiana, southern and eastern Wisconsin, and eastern Iowa. There are no records for Cook County, Illinois, predating 1871. This index is a part of the Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, in the custody of the National Archives-Great Lakes Region, Chicago, Illinois.

Background

The process of naturalization has been a concern of the people of the United States since colonial times. One of the grievances against George III in the Declaration of Independence charged that "he has endeavored to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws of Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migration hither . . . ." This concern was addressed in the United States Constitution, which provided that "Congress shall have the Power . . . to establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization . . . ." (Art. 1, Sec. 8).

Congress passed the first naturalization act on March 26, 1790 (1 Stat. 103). The law allowed any free, white alien over the age of twenty-one to apply for citizenship after two year's residency in the United States. The process simply required an applicant to visit "any common law court of record," prove to the satisfaction of the court that he or she was of good moral character, and take an oath of allegiance to the Constitution. A judge then ruled

on the applicant's petition. Married women and children under the age of twenty-one derived citizenship from their husband or father respectively. Children of unsuccessful applicants could apply for citizenship in their own right, at the age of twenty-one.

Feeling that it had set the standards for citizenship too low, Congress repealed the 1790 act and passed a more stringent law on January 29, 1795 (1 Stat. 414), which, except for a brief period (1798-1802) established the eligibility and procedural requirements that have since been the foundation of United States naturalization policy and legislation. The new act increased the residency requirement to five years, including one year in the state or territory in which the court of application was located. The naturalization procedure was changed from a one-step to a two-step process, requiring the alien to first file a "declaration of intention" (sometimes referred to as the "first paper") at least three years prior to entering a "petition for admission to citizenship" (also known as the "second" or "final paper"). The new law also required the applicant to renounce any title of nobility.

An exception to the generally liberal 1795 naturalization process--the Alien and Sedition Act of 1798--accompanied a wave of xenophobia that arose in the United States during the undeclared naval war with France, and lasted from 1798 until 1802. The 1798 act increased the waiting period between filing the declaration of intention and entering the petition from three to five years, and extended the residency requirement to fourteen years, including five years in the state where the court of petition was located (1 Stat. 566). The law also required the clerk of each court to forward copies of declarations of intention, a report of registry (some courts combined the declaration of intention and the registry), and a report of naturalization proceedings to the U.S. Secretary of State. Negative reaction to the law became so strong that on April 14, 1802, Congress finally supplanted it with a new naturalization act (2 Stat. 153) that basically reestablished the provisions of the 1795 act but retained the 1798 registry requirement, which continued until 1828.

The act of 1802 was the last major change in naturalization law until 1906. During the

intervening 104 years a number of minor revisions were made, including a reduction in the waiting period between filing the declaration of intention and the naturalization petition from three to two years, and the requirement that petitioners attest they were not anarchists. Most of the changes, however, merely altered or clarified details of evidence and certification without changing the basic nature of the admission procedure.

By the turn of the twentieth century, the steadily increasing number of immigrants entering the United States each year had increased the demands upon clerks of the courts, who did most of the work relating to naturalization. To relieve this burden and also to standardize the naturalization procedure, Congress passed an act on June 29, 1906 (32 Stat. 596) that established a Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization (BIN) and put some of its officers (working under the direction of the Justice Department) in charge of examining all citizenship petitions. Although the court judges kept their independence, the findings and recommendations of the new agency became the basis for the final determinations of the courts regarding admission, denial, or continued investigation of alien petitioners. The 1906 law also required that the names of minor children be included on petitions and that duplicate records be furnished to the BIN.

In 1918 an act of Congress (40 Stat. 542) consolidated two previous acts that had waived the filing of declarations of intention for aliens with honorable discharges from the United States military service (an 1862 act for the Army and an 1894 act for the Navy and Marine Corps; 12 Stat. 597 and 28 Stat. 124, respectively). The new act eliminated the declaration of intention for aliens with three years military service.

In 1919 the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization was divided and transferred to the Department of Labor as two agencies: the Bureau of Immigration and the Bureau of Naturalization.

Derivative citizenship for married women was eliminated by an act passed September 22, 1922 (42 Stat. 1021), which required them to be naturalized in their own right. The residency requirement was reduced to one year and the declaration of intention was waived for alien wives of U.S. citizens.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, public support for liberal immigration and naturalization policies had begun to turn to opposition. Congress responded with the passage of the Immigration Act of 1924 (433 Stat. 153), which put a ceiling on the number of immigrants allowed to enter the United States each year from countries outside the western hemisphere. Within this ceiling it established a "national origins quota" system. The total number of immigrants allowed into the United States each year was divided among eastern hemisphere countries in proportion to the number of people already in the United States from those countries. The 1890 (and later the 1920) United States census was used as a basis for establishing these quotas. Census counts of blacks, East Asiatics, and American Indians were excluded from the quota computations, which eliminated any further need for the courts to determine racial eligibility for citizenship. The verified immigration visa of an alien petitioner became evidence of fulfillment of this requirement.

Executive Order 6166, issued June 10, 1933, reunited the Bureaus of Immigration and Naturalization to form the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), which was transferred to the Department of Justice in 1940.

#### Records Description

The Soundex Index to naturalization petitions reproduced here indexes records generated by several courts. These include both civil and military petitions from the United States District and Circuit Courts, Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division; the Circuit, County, Criminal, and Superior Courts of Cook County, Illinois; and county and municipal courts in the old INS District #9 (at one time called District #14), which comprised the northern third of Illinois, northwestern Indiana, southern and eastern Wisconsin, and eastern Iowa. The following counties are indexed:

Illinois: Boone, Bureau, Carroll, Champaign, Cook, De Kalb, Du Page, Ford, Fulton, Grundy, Henderson, Henry, Iroquois, Jo Daviess, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Knox, Lake, La Salle, Lee, Livingston, Marshall, McHenry, McLean, Mercer, Ogle, Peoria, Putnam, Rock Island, Stark, Stephenson, Tazewell, Vermilion, Warren, Whiteside, Will, Winnebago and Woodford.

Indiana: Benton, Fulton, Jasper, Lake, La Porte, Marshall, Newton, Porter, Pulaski, St. Joseph and Starke.

Iowa: Allamakee, Appanoose, Benton, Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Cedar, Chickasaw, Clayton, Clinton, Davis, Delaware, Des Moines, Dubuque, Fayette, Floyd, Grundy, Hardin, Henry, Howard, Iowa, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnson, Jones, Keokuk, Lee, Linn, Louisa, Mahaska, Mitchell, Monroe, Muscatine, Scott, Tama, Van Buren, Wapello, Washington and Winneshiek.

Wisconsin: Adams, Brown, Calumet, Columbia, Crawford, Dane, Dodge, Door, Florence, Fond du Lac, Forest, Grant, Green, Green Lake, Iowa, Jefferson, Kenosha, Kewaunee, Lafayette, Langlade, Manitowoc, Marinette, Marquette, Menominee, Milwaukee, Oconto, Outagamie, Ozaukee, Portage, Racine, Richland, Rock, Sauk, Shawano, Sheboygan, Walworth, Washington, Waukesha, Waupaca, Waushara, Winnebago and Wood.

The index consists of 162 cubic feet of 3- by 5-inch cards arranged in Russell-Soundex order, and thereafter alphabetically by given (first) name. To search for a particular surname (last name) it must first be coded. A Soundex code consists of a letter and three numbers (for example, M425). The letter is always the same as the first letter of the surname; numbers are assigned to the remaining letters of the surname according to the Soundex coding guide found below. Adjacent letters falling into the same numeric group are coded only once. Those separated by vowels or disregarded letters are coded separately. Zeros are added if necessary to produce a four-character code. Additional letters are disregarded.

#### SOUNDEX CODING GUIDE

| The Number | Represents the letters |
|------------|------------------------|
| 1-----     | B P F V                |
| 2-----     | C S K G J Q X Z        |
| 3-----     | D T                    |
| 4-----     | L                      |
| 5-----     | M N                    |
| 6-----     | R                      |

Disregard the letters A, E, I, O, U, W, Y, and H.

## EXAMPLES OF SOUNDEX-CODED NAMES

Washington  
W252

Kuhne  
K500

After locating the desired Soundex code on the appropriate reel, the user should search under that code for the given name of the person being sought. Entries in the index are listed alphabetically: first, by Soundex code; then by given name. Do not overlook initials, alternate spellings, and "old country" versions of names.

Most cards that index naturalizations taking place after 1906 provide space for the following information: name of petitioner; address; name of the court in which naturalization occurred; certificate, petition, or other identifying document number; country and date of birth; date and place of arrival in the United States; date of naturalization; and name and address of witnesses. Not all of this information, however, is provided on every card. Index cards for naturalizations taking place prior to 1906 typically contain only the name of the petitioner, the name of the court in which naturalization occurred, document number, country of origin, and date of naturalization.

### Related Records

The Soundex Index is a record of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. But declarations of intention, petitions for citizenship, and other naturalization documents are court records. The federal court system was established by the Judiciary Act of September 24, 1789. It established district courts, which heard principally criminal, admiralty, and bankruptcy cases; and circuit courts, which heard the mass of litigation between individuals and corporations, either because of the amount involved or because of diverse citizenship. Both courts could naturalize aliens.

Illinois was divided into two judicial districts in 1855 (Act of February 13, 1855, 10 Stat. 606). The Northern District, which comprised the northern quarter of the state sat at Chicago; the Southern

District, which served the remainder of the state, sat at Springfield.

Further reorganization took place in 1887 when the Northern District was separated into two divisions (Act of March 2, 1887, 24 Stat. 442). Chicago was designated the seat of court for the Northern Division, and Peoria that of the Southern Division. In 1937 a third district--the Eastern--was established, which encompassed much of the southern third of the state as well as the eastern counties (Act of August 12, 1937; 50 Stat. 624). Peoria was shifted to the Southern District, and the Northern District was realigned when the divisions were changed to Eastern and Western, the principal courts being Chicago and Freeport, respectively.

The following records are in the custody of the National Archives--Great Lakes Region:

United States Circuit Court,  
Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division

(Naturalized aliens until 1911, when the federal circuit courts were abolished, 36 Stat. 1167)

Declarations of Intent, 1906-1911  
\*\*Petition Books, 1906-1911  
Certificate of Naturalization Stubs,  
1907-1911

United States District Court,  
Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division

Index to Declarations of Intention,  
1906-1960  
Declarations of Intention, 1872-1982  
Naturalization Orders, 1872-1903  
Naturalization Order Books, 1921-1976  
Naturalization Depositions, 1909-1964  
Naturalization Journals, 1925-1959  
Records of Repatriation, 1936-1939  
Index to Petition Books, 1906-1960  
\*\*Petition Books, 1906-1959  
\*\*Military Petition & Record Books,  
1918-1926; 1942-1946; 1954-1956  
Certificate of Naturalization Stubs,  
1912-1918  
\*\*Petitions, 1872-1902  
Naturalization Case Files, 1928-1978



Most of the above records are arranged by document number; and some volumes are self-indexed. The Soundex Index may provide identifying numbers that allow other documents to be located. Many petitions are filed with the corresponding declaration of intention, and sometimes a certificate of arrival. Records that pre-date 1906 typically contain little information.

#### Copies of Circuit, County, Criminal, and Superior Court Records

The National Archives--Great Lakes Region also holds dexagraph (negative photostat) copies of petitions and orders filed in Circuit, County, Criminal, and Superior Courts in Cook County, 1871-1906. These records are also indexed by the Soundex Index. The original records, including those dating after 1906, are in possession of the Circuit Court of Cook County. For additional information, researchers should contact:

Law Division, Circuit Court of Cook County  
Richard J. Daley Center, Room 1201  
50 West Washington  
Chicago, IL 60602

**\*\*These records are indexed by the Soundex Index.**

#### Other Court Records

For information about other naturalization records referred to in the Soundex Index, researchers should contact the court in which the naturalization occurred. Some courts retain custody of these records, others have been transferred to state and municipal archives.

Additional information about naturalization law and process is available in Frank George Franklin, The Legislative History of Naturalization in the United States (New York: Arno Press & the New York Times, 1969) and John J. Newman, American Naturalization Processes and Procedures 1790-1985 (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1985). George B. Everton, Sr., ed., Handy Book for Genealogists (Logan, Utah: Everton, 1981) provides a concise guide for determining county and other geographical boundaries at a given time. For related

records relevant to Chicago, see Loretto Dennis Szucs, Chicago and Cook County Sources: A Genealogical and Historical Guide (Salt Lake City: Ancestry, 1986); and for a comprehensive discussion of other records held by the National Archives-Great Lakes Region as well as the other ten regional depositories, see Loretto Dennis Szucs & Sandra Hargreaves Luebking, The Archives: A Guide to the National Archives Field Branches (Salt Lake City: Ancestry, 1988).

These introductory remarks were written by Shirley J. Burton and the records were filmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah. There are no rolls 95, 96, 97, and 98.

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