



PRESS RELEASE

New York State
Unified Court System

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Chief Administrative Judge

Hon. Audrey I. Pheffer
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Queens County

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Date: June 29, 2023

Historical Naturalization Records from Queens, the Bronx Now Available Online

JAMAICA, NEW YORK—Queens County Clerk Audrey I. Pheffer today joined Bronx County Clerk Ischia Bravo, Queens Public Library President Dennis M. Walcott and other local officials at the Central Library in Jamaica, Queens to inaugurate www.NYnaturalizations.com, which provides remote access to naturalization records dating from 1795 to 1952 maintained by the County Clerk’s offices in Queens and the Bronx.

This online archive, comprising well over 250,000 historical records documenting the legal process of immigration to the U.S. by foreign-born citizens, was made possible by funding from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission and the expert guidance of the New York State court system’s Division of Technology.

Naturalization records typically contain the Declaration of Intention, Petition for Naturalization, Certificate of Naturalization and Oath of Allegiance, along with additional supporting information. These records have both personal and legal value. They are depictions of individuals who emigrated from their homes—setting sail for a new home with the hope of a better life—containing details such as the immigrant’s age, height, weight, eye color, occupation, distinguishable markings and even photographs. Additionally, these records are used by researchers, historians and genealogists for lineage purposes and by the public in instances where someone wishes to declare dual citizenship in their ancestral country.

The County Clerk’s offices in Queens and the Bronx secure, preserve and manage a multitude of court records, including pre-1952 naturalization records from their respective counties; post-1952 naturalization records are maintained by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Each year, the County Clerks in Queens and the Bronx receive hundreds of in-house requests for naturalization records, spending countless staff hours retrieving, imaging and certifying such requests.

Starting today, these historical documents can be instantly retrieved by the public—from researchers to family members—to view, save and print via an online database that allows users to search by petition number, the individual’s year of arrival or their country of origin, among other search fields. The Queens County Clerk’s Office and the Bronx County Clerk’s Office have public terminals dedicated to these records, and the Queens Public Library will have a link to the website on each of their computers.

“I am thrilled to announce that naturalization records from Queens and Bronx counties are available to be accessed online by the public for free. With an award from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission’s grant program, the two Counties were able to complete this exciting collaborative project. The public has been showing great interest in these records and learning more about their own family history. This will allow the public to research their own ancestry and learn more about the people of Queens and Bronx, such as the country they came from and what year,” said Queens County Clerk Pheffer.

“As Bronx County Clerk, it is my great privilege to announce free online access to the naturalization records at my office. With Bronx County currently having a 37 percent foreign-born population, this is a historic moment for ancestral access. There isn’t a better way to preserve the achievement of long-sought citizenship than having the ability find these documents. I am grateful to partner with Queens County to house

these records, and grateful to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission,” said Bronx County Clerk Ischia Bravo.

“These records, spanning three centuries, document the path to citizenship for thousands arriving in New York City in search of new opportunities and better lives. Thanks to a generous federal grant and the combined efforts of the Queens County Clerk’s Office, the Bronx County Clerk’s Office and the court system’s Division of Technology, this treasured collection of historical documents is now readily accessible to family members, genealogists and other interested parties seeking to discover or confirm vital facts about these early immigrants,” said Chief Administrative Judge Zayas.

"Queens Public Library is honored to provide an entry point to a trove of electronic records that will enable more people to deepen their understanding of the individuals who sought U.S. citizenship between the late 18th and mid-20th centuries and helped shape the most diverse place in the world,” said Library President and CEO Dennis M. Walcott. “I am grateful to Queens County Clerk Audrey Pheffer and the Office of Court Administration for this terrific collaboration and for their support as we continue to work to provide free access to knowledge, information, and opportunity to all."

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