

Naturalization Records at the Archives of Michigan

Archives of Michigan Holdings

The Archives of Michigan holds naturalization records from the counties listed below. Counties with online indexes are indicated in the table. Indexes for other counties may be available in the Archives of Michigan reading room.

County	Inclusive Dates	Record Group	Online Index
Alcona	1869–1958	2011-26	
Alger	1885–1965	2008-30	
Allegan	1850–1956	94-342	X
Alpena	1871–1982	2003-61	X
Antrim	1863–1955	2002-60	X
Arenac	1883–1956	99-10	
Barry	1840–1958	2004-68	X
Bay	1858–1966	94-417	X
Calhoun	1892–1980	91-270	
Charlevoix	1855–1956	90-173	
Chippewa	1847–1985	96-217	X
Clare	1872–1965	99-77	X
Clinton	1850–1964	2005-20	X
Crawford	1879–1964	2002-40	X
Delta	1866–1955	98-50	X
Dickinson	1891–1970	96-218	X
Eaton	1915–1929	80-120	X
Eaton	1836–1959	2002-17	
Genesee	1838–1931	81-44	X
Genesee	1931–1965	90-296	X
Gladwin	1874–1964	81-56	
Gogebic	1887–1980	90-182	
Grand Traverse	1853–1980	99-49	X
Gratiot	1857–1956	94-341	
Hillsdale	1846–1930	85-09	
Huron	1864–1961	96-227	X
Ingham	1845–1931	83-52	
Ingham	1896–1985	90-168	
Ionia	1835–1959	85-32	
Iosco	1859–1974	94-378	X
Iron	1881–1956	96-216	X
Isabella	1861–1965	2004-71	X
Kalamazoo	1840–1967	94-343	X
Kent	1860–1929	89-28	X

County	Inclusive Dates	Record Group	Online Index
Keweenaw	1862–1954	96-219	
Lake	1872–1955	2000-71	X
Lapeer	1840–1956	98-63	X
Lenawee	1853–1963	2002-26	X
Livingston	1871–1962	2015-122	
Luce	1887–1929	82-116	
Luce	1929–1956	94-379	
Mackinac	1821–1964	98-48	X
Macomb	1820–1983	97-78	X
Manitou	1870–1894	75-70	
Marquette	1852–1971	89-467	X
Mason	1870–1969	99-25	X
Mecosta	1859–1956	90-274	
Menominee	1863–1955	2008-22	
Monroe	1849–1929	84-87	
Monroe	1929–1982	2015-167	
Montcalm	1852–1955	82-134	
Montmorency	1931–1954	2003-12	
Muskegon	1850–1941	84-119	
Muskegon	1929–1980	94-302	
Newaygo	1855–1966	99-82	X
Oakland	1843–1987	2004-14	
Ontonagon	1851–1953	2002-61	X
Otsego	1879–1956	2000-04	X
Ottawa	1852–1962	2000-72	X
Presque Isle	1856–1956	2013-8	
Saginaw	1852–1966	89-77	
Saint Clair	1843–1982	94-301	X
Saint Joseph	1854–1967	2005-36	
Sanilac	1850–1964	94-267	X
Tuscola	1857–1965	90-70	
Van Buren	1887–1967	2005-24	
Washtenaw	1830–1985	90-278	
Washtenaw	1830–1985	96-226	
Wayne	1837–1935, 1942	85-36	
Wexford	1875–circa 1975	2009-2	

Please note that naturalization papers could also have been filed in federal district courts in Michigan. The National Archives Great Lakes Regional Branch holds the following records from Michigan district courts. Citations from the ancestry.com naturalization indexes refer to these federal records and, therefore, are not available at the Archives of Michigan.

Detroit (Eastern District)

Indexes: 1837–1991

Declarations of Intention: 1865–1989

Petitions: 1837–1991

Marquette (Western District)

Indexes: 1887–1915

Declarations of Intention: 1887–1909

Petitions: 1888–1915

Flint (Eastern District)

Indexes: 1965–1984

Petitions: 1965–1984

Grand Rapids (Western District)

Indexes: 1868–1962

Declarations of Intention: 1868–1978

Petitions: 1868–1972

The National Archives Great Lakes Regional Branch can be reached by phone at (773) 948-9001 or by e-mail at chicago.archives@nara.gov.

Naturalization Law History

The Naturalization Act of 1802 established a three-part naturalization process. Immigrants had to declare their intention to become a citizen, observe a required residence period, and then petition an authorized court for admission to citizenship. In character, this process was both judicial (occurring in and by order of a court) and administrative (supervised by federal government agencies).

Initially, the immigrant filed a Declaration of Intention with an authorized court, indicating his or her intention to become a citizen, to renounce all allegiance to any foreign state, and to renounce any foreign title or order of nobility. Then, at least two years after making this declaration (but, after 1906, no more than seven years later), an immigrant who had been a resident of the United States for at least five years was allowed to petition the court for admission to citizenship. This petition included both the applicant's oath and the affidavits of two witnesses who attested to the residency and good character of the petitioner. Finally, if the petition was accepted, the court issued an order admitting the individual to citizenship.

The Basic Naturalization Act of 1906 (passed June 29 and effective October 1) established the Immigration and Naturalization Service, more precisely defined administrative procedures, and provided for federal supervision over the naturalization process. It also set forth requirements for the information to be collected on naturalization forms. Prior to that time, naturalization could occur in any federal court or any state court of record with only general guidance from federal law.

Researchers using naturalization records will find few early entries for women. From 1866 until the passage of the Married Woman's Act in 1922, citizenship was automatically given to the wife of any male citizen. Since then, women have been required to complete the naturalization process themselves.

Information Contained in Naturalization Records

As their name implies, declarations of intention are written statements of someone's desire to become a U.S. citizen. Oaths are statements in which individuals intending to become U.S. citizens renounce any allegiance to other countries, leaders, or monarchs. Other oaths are from individuals who swear that they have known the petitioner for a given period of time and can vouch for his or her good character. Finally, the petitions from aspiring citizens are formal requests to be granted citizenship after all requirements have been met. These materials are arranged chronologically.

Declarations of Intention

Prior to 1907, information listed on declarations of intention was limited to date, name of individual, and country of origin. After 1906, the forms give much more information, including age, occupation, race, complexion, height, weight, color of hair and eyes, distinctive marks, date of birth, residence, date and place of departure, means of transportation to the U.S., port of arrival, and oath. Alphabetical name indexes are at the front of each volume.

Petitions and Records

Before 1907, the petition and record offers only date, name of individual, country of origin, names of witnesses, and oath. After 1906, the forms also provide residence, occupation, date and place of birth, date and place of emigration, means of travel to the U.S., date and place of immigration, date and place declaration filed, names of spouse and children, their places of birth and residence, length of time in Michigan, names of witnesses, plus their occupations and residence. Alphabetical name indexes are at the front of each volume.

Court Orders

The court orders are documents prepared twice a year that identify those persons who have qualified for U.S. citizenship. These papers are the judge's order granting petitions for naturalization, and simply list date and name of individual.

Certificates of Naturalization

Certificates of naturalization give number, name, age, date of transaction, place and date where the declaration of intention was filed, date and place where the petition was filed, date and place where the order was filed, and residence of each. The Archives of Michigan holds few certificates of naturalization.