

A Guide to the Bedford County (Va.) Naturalization Records, 1909-1915

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1909-1915

A Collection in the Library of Virginia
Library of Virginia
2025

History

Processed by: Library of Virginia staff

Title Statement

A Guide to the Bedford County (Va.) Naturalization Records, 1909-1915

Subtitle: Bedford County (Va.) Naturalization Records

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Publication Statement

Date: © 2025 By The Library of Virginia. All Rights Reserved.

Publisher: Library of Virginia

Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from being created directly into EAD, created by McKenzie Long, 20 March 2025

Language Usage: Description is in English

Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Collector

Bedford County (Va.) Circuit Court

Extent

2 volumes

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

These volumes came to the Library of Virginia in an undated transfer of court papers from Bedford County.

Processing Information

The two standardized volumes of naturalization records issued by the federal government were microfilmed by the Library of Virginia's Imaging Services Division in 1977.

Encoded by M. Long: March 2025.

Preferred Citation

Bedford County (Va.) Naturalization Records, 1909-1915. Local government records collection, Bedford County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia, 23219.

Alternative Form Available

Department of Commerce and Labor, Division of Naturalization, Petition and Record, 1909-1915, and Department of Commerce and Labor, Division of Naturalization, Declaration of Intention, 1909-1913, are available on microfilm stored at the Virginia State Records Center on reel barcode 13415, SRC box 420. Security microforms (i.e. microfilm and microfiche) stored through this program are not used for reference purposes and access restrictions apply. Contact the [State Records Center](#) with questions regarding these materials.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Additional Bedford County Court Records can be found on microfilm at The Library of Virginia. Consult ["A Guide to Virginia County and City Records on Microfilm."](#)

Historical Information

Context for Record Type: Following the passage of the Naturalization Act of 1906, the federal government standardized the naturalization process by issuing bound volumes containing standard naturalization forms. These bound volumes were kept by the various courts of record in which a person could make a declaration of intent to become a U.S. citizen, and copies of the records were sent on to the federal government.

Locality History: Bedford County was named probably for John Russell, fourth duke of Bedford, who served as secretary of state for the southern department from 1748 to 1751 and had general supervision of colonial affairs. It was formed from Lunenburg County in 1753, and parts of Albemarle and Lunenburg Counties were added in 1755. The county court first met on 5 May 1754. The county seat is the town of Bedford.

Scope and Content

Bedford County (Va.) Naturalization Records, 1909-1915, consists of Department of Commerce and Labor, Division of Naturalization, Petition and Record, 1909-1915, and Department of Commerce and Labor, Division of Naturalization, Declaration of Intention, 1909-1913, standardized volumes of naturalization records issued by the federal government. There were two primary types of naturalization volumes issued by the federal government: Declaration of Intention volumes and Petition volumes. Oftentimes, applicants were documented in both of these volume types within a locality, but that is not always the case. An applicant may have entered their declaration of intention in one locality before moving and completing their naturalization petition elsewhere.

Declaration of Intention volumes record declarations of intent to become United States citizens. Information on the declaration of intent includes a person's name, age, occupation, color, complexion, height in feet and inches, weight, color of hair, color of eyes, other visible distinctive marks, place and date of birth, current residence, place from where emigrated to the United States, vessel arrived on, last foreign residence, a renunciation of allegiance and fidelity to the state of which the person is currently a citizen, and the date the intention was sworn.

Petition volumes, often called Petition and Record, record the petitions for naturalization, oaths of allegiance, and orders of court admitting petitioner to United States citizenship. Not all parts may be completed as all stages of the citizenship process could be completed in different courts and in different locations in the United States.

A petition for naturalization contains the petitioner's name, address, occupation, birthdate and place, place

where emigrated from and date and port of arrival in the U.S., name of ship on which emigrated, where declared intention to become a citizen, spouse's name, place of birth and address, and number of children with their names, birth dates and places of birth. Additional recorded information includes a renunciation of allegiance and fidelity to the state of which the person is currently a citizen or subject, a statement that the petitioner can speak English, and the date since the petitioner has resided constantly in the U.S. An affidavit of witness to these facts is signed by two persons.

For many petitions, a declaration of intent and occasionally other correspondence or related documentation is inserted into the volume facing the naturalization petition. Also sometimes included is an order of the court admitting the petitioner to United States citizenship that includes date of citizenship and certificate of naturalization number.

Inserted into the volumes at various points were correspondence and regulations from the United States Department of Labor's Bureau of Naturalization.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged into the following series:

- Series I: Naturalization Volumes, 1909-1915, separated into two volumes and arranged chronologically.

Contents List

Series I: Naturalization Volumes, 1909-1915

Extent

2 volumes

Arrangement

Separated into two volumes and arranged chronologically.

1099534: Department of Commerce and Labor, Division of Naturalization, Petition and Record, 1909-1915

1099535: Department of Commerce and Labor, Division of Naturalization, Declaration of Intention, 1909-1913