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# NEWS RELEASE

## **Historic Naturalization Index Headed to National Archives Facility in Denver**

*USCIS Saved Pre-1906 Naturalization Records from Destruction*

DENVER— Employees at the Denver District Office of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) recently saved the index to nearly 3,000 naturalization records, many dating from the mid-nineteenth century to 1906, from the shredder.

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) approved a USCIS request to transfer the index to the NARA's Rocky Mountain region headquarters in Denver. There the index will become a valuable resource for genealogists and other historical researchers seeking information from old court naturalization records.

“We are pleased that these valuable records will now be available to genealogists and the general public,” said USCIS District Director Mario Ortiz. “This is significant because we are talking about 140-year-old records – and a few that pre-date the Civil War – becoming available for review and study, instead of being destroyed because of their age.”

Encased in seven card-file drawers, the transferred records are referred to as an “Old Law” naturalization index because it references naturalizations performed under the “old law” in effect prior to Sept. 27, 1906. Under the “new” 1906 law that created the federal naturalization service, officials routinely needed to check pre-1906 records to verify eligibility for benefits.

By the early 1940s, that task was simplified when the Immigration and Naturalization Service's (INS) Denver District Office created the “Old Law” index with the help of workers employed under the Works Progress Administration (WPA) – a government agency created in 1935 that provided jobs and income to millions of U.S. citizens suffering through the Great Depression.

The specific records relate to naturalizations in courts within the historic INS Denver district. Information on the index cards includes individual names and addresses, country of birth, court and date of naturalization, and volume and petition numbers. Some cards may also include dates and ports of arrival in the United States and names and addresses of witnesses.

The records are available for public review at the National Archives Rocky Mountain Region in Denver. Call (303) 407-5740 for more information or visit <http://www.archives.gov/rocky-mountain/>.

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