

Rich Venezia: "Twentieth Century Immigration and Naturalization"

November 11, 2016

The Aliens Are Coming: USCIS Record Sets

A-Files? AR-2 Forms? C-Files? Oh my! Wade through the alphabet soup of the five record sets the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services holds to find where your recent immigrant ancestor may be hiding. (Note this lecture mainly applies to 20th-century immigrants.)

The Aliens Are Coming: USCIS Record Sets

In addition to handling current immigration into the USA, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) holds indispensable genealogical records for anyone with immigrant ancestors who arrived from the late eighteenth-century forward. This lecture explores a bit about how USCIS came to be, but more importantly, the valuable records it holds. Participants will learn who is likely to show up in which USCIS file set, how the index searching and ordering process works, and see examples of each record set held by USCIS. The files that will be discussed are:

- A-Files (Alien Files) (including which files are held at NARA and which are held by USCIS)
- AR-2s (Alien Registration Forms)
- C-Files (Naturalization Certificate Files)
- Registry Files
- Visa Files

Here are some of the links Rich provided in his talk:

See <https://www.archives.gov/research/naturalization/420-major-immigration-laws.pdf>

Ordering a United States Citizenship and Immigration Services Record

□ Records can be ordered at <https://genealogy.uscis.dhs.gov/>

C-Files (Certificate Files): 27 September 1906 – 31 March 1956

o Overview: <http://media.americanjewisharchives.org/docs/wilskeZack.pdf>

Further Reading and Select Bibliography

<http://www.uscis.gov/genealogy>

<http://www.archives.gov/research/naturalization/naturalization.html>

<https://www.uscis.gov/history-and-genealogy/genealogy/genealogy-notebook>

<https://www.uscis.gov/history-and-genealogy/our-history/organizational-timeline>

Szucs, Loretto Dennis. *They Became Americans: Finding Naturalization Records and Ethnic Origins*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Ancestry Incorporated, 1998. (Find on Google Books) National Archives (NARA): A-Files of immigrants with a birthdate over 100 years ago may be with NARA. (Currently, NARA has A-Files for some aliens born before 1909.)

Biography:

Rich Venezia is a New Jersey native who now calls Pittsburgh home, with roots in Italy, Ireland, England, Wales, and Prussia. He founded Rich Roots Genealogy in 2013. He was a member of the research team of Genealogy Roadshow on PBS for two seasons and also consulted on Follow Your Past (on The Travel Channel). Rich specializes in 20th-century immigrant ancestry and immigration records. His main areas of focus include Italian, Irish, Pittsburgh, and New Jersey/New York City research. He also assists clients with dual citizenship applications for Ireland and Italy.

Venezia holds a B. A. in Theatre from Point Park University. He received his Certificate in Genealogical Research from Boston University in 2015, and is the President of North Hills Genealogists in Pittsburgh. He lectures nationally, and has recently lectured at the FGS, NGS, OGS, and RootsTech 2017 conferences. He has been featured as IESAbroad's Alum of the Month, in Ciao Pittsburgh, and on The Genealogy Guys podcast. His writings have been featured in Irish Lives Remembered, FindMyPast's blog, and MyCanvas' blog. He spoke about "How to Grow Empathy From Uncovering Your Roots" at TEDx Pittsburgh 2017.

Rich Venezia
[412.339.0602](tel:412.339.0602)
rich@richroots.net

Rich Roots Genealogy
<http://www.richroots.net/>
<https://www.facebook.com/richrootsgenealogy>
<https://twitter.com/RichRootsGen>

Check out my TEDxPittsburgh talk: [How to Grow Empathy From Uncovering Your Roots](#)