

SALT LAKE COUNTY (UTAH). COUNTY
PROBATE COURT [959]

DECLARATIONS OF INTENTION AND
CERTIFICATES OF CITIZENSHIP RECORD BOOK,
1858-1872

1 reel microfilm (1 vol.)

DESCRIPTION: To become a citizen of the United States, an individual normally filed a "declaration of intention to become a citizen" at least two years prior to applying for citizenship. The next step was the naturalization hearing at which the candidate and witnesses either made oral statements or filed written petitions and affidavits attesting to the applicant's character, worthiness to become a citizen, and the validity of statements made to the court. If the judge found the applicant eligible to become a citizen, an oath was administered and the individual renounced his former citizenship. At this point a certificate of citizenship was issued documenting the fact. All the steps in this process are documented in this volume kept by the court clerk.

The first section of the book contains statements of individuals' intentions to become citizens of the United States. These "declarations of intention" have blanks for the insertion of the individual's name, his former sovereign, date, and signatures of the individual and the court clerk witnessing the statement. Declarations of intention document the applicant's intention to later become a U.S. citizen and to renounce his current citizenship.

The certificates of citizenship which constitute the second half of the volume document aliens' applications for citizenship. They summarize the hearing and oaths. Each form gives the date, applicant's name, nationality, date of declaration of intention, names of those testifying, ruler's name, and a standardized summary of the procedures. The applicant swore that he had filed his intention to become a citizen. Two U.S. citizens testified that the applicant had resided in the territory for a year and in the United States for five years. They further swore that he was

of good moral character and attached to the principles of the U.S. Constitution. The applicant then took an oath to support the U.S. Constitution and renounced allegiance to any foreign sovereign, and particularly to the ruler whose subject he had been. The court clerk served as witness.

There are two sections of similarly worded certificates, one for those who had entered the United States after age 18, and one for those who had entered the United States while under age 18. If they met the residency and other requirements, the latter could apply for citizenship at age 21 without actually having filed a declaration of intention.

ARRANGEMENT: Entries are grouped by category, with declarations of intention at the beginning, followed by certificates of citizenship for adult entrants, and certificates of citizenship for minor entrants at the back. Within each section, entries are chronological.

RELATED RECORDS: Since the probate court held concurrent jurisdiction with the district court during this period, other declarations of intention filed by Salt Lake County residents from 1869-1895 most likely will be found in the Third District Court DECLARATIONS OF INTENTION RECORD BOOKS, series 85111. CERTIFICATES OF CITIZENSHIP for the same district are in series 85110. The Supreme Court DECLARATIONS OF INTENTION AND CERTIFICATES OF CITIZENSHIP RECORD BOOKS, series 3942, contain third district records from 1859-1860 and first district records from 1852-1856. Salt Lake County was part of the first district from 1850-1856 and part of the third since 1856, as well as the seat of the Supreme Court. The MINUTES of the probate court, series 3939, may record more detail of the naturalization hearing.

DECLARATIONS OF INTENTION RECORD BOOKS from the other district courts from this period might also contain declarations of Salt Lake County residents as individuals could file in any court of record: First District Court, series 85113; Second District Court, series 85174; and the Fourth District Court series 85169. CERTIFICATES OF CITIZENSHIP from the different district courts include those from the First District, series 83895; the Second District, series 85175; and the Fourth District (from 1894-1895), series 85170. For other possible sources consult the Research Guide to Naturalization records.

PROCESSING NOTE: Archival processing was completed by A.C. Cone in 1989. The volume was microfilmed in 1998. The hard copy of the volume, and a copy of the microfilm, was transferred to the Salt Lake County Archives in August 2001.