



JOHN D. KINARD

DISTRICT CLERK GALVESTON COUNTY

PRESS RELEASE 02/24/2015:
GALVESTON COUNTY DISTRICT CLERK'S IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION
RECORDS PORTAL LAUNCH

Many people have come to Galveston Island in search of hidden treasure, but very few of them realize that they can find just that at the Galveston County District Clerk's Office. They don't need a treasure map, or any special tools. All they need is a desire to uncover Galveston Island's rich history and internet access! The Galveston County District Clerk's Office has a wonderful selection of Federal Immigration and Naturalization records. Galveston County District Clerk, John Kinard, in partnership with Galveston County Clerk Dwight Sullivan, has digitized all of these records and is pleased to announce the launch of a web-based portal which will enable residents to search these records with the click of a button utilizing Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology. Galveston was a major point of entry at the turn of the century. Current immigration and naturalization records are maintained by the Federal Government, but from the late 1850's until the 1950's, immigration issues were handled by the State District Courts. As a result, the custodian of such records was the Galveston County District Clerk.

The types of documents that one is likely to find when examining these records are Declarations of Intention, Petitions for Citizenship, Petitions for Naturalization, and Certificates of Arrival. Each of these documents include very interesting information about the individual seeking citizenship. For example, these records include the name, age, occupation, addresses, application witnesses, family members and, sometimes, photos. These records contain over 500,000 informational references for immigrants from 61 countries.

Now that these records are available online, people can view them without any concern about their delicate and fragile condition. However, the long term goal is to raise the funds to permanently restore all of these precious records. Tax deductible donations for this cause can be made to the District Clerk Restoration Fund, 600 59th Street, Suite 4001, Galveston, TX 77551.

There is no charge to access these records but there is a nominal charge to print the documents.

www.co.galveston.tx.us/district_clerk

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These records are truly hidden treasures. Each document represents a life on the brink of a great adventure. To find these treasures you don't need to be a pirate, or a treasure hunter; you just need to visit the Galveston County District Clerk's office new Immigration records portal at the Galveston County District Clerk Website or at <http://gcdcimmigrationrecords.galvestoncountytexas.gov>.