



# The Rotarian Genealogist

FEBRUARY 2026 | THIRD QUARTER 2025-2026

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## FROM OUR PRESIDENT LUANNE NEWMAN

Dear Members,

This fellowship amazes me! As I met some of you at the Calgary Convention last June, I heard stories about your families and could strongly feel the zest you have for family research. You shared with each other; you listened to the stories of each other. Some of you even participated in the "Speed Tree Climbing" breakout session!

Each quarter, you step forward and offer newsletter articles! Do you know how much that is appreciated? (a LOT!) When fellow members read of your experiences, they see the successes that could be theirs, too. "You called **who**?" "You travelled **where**?" "You met **which** long-lost relative?"

How many of you were inspired and motivated by a speaker at one of our quarterly meetings – our "Family Reunions"? Our speakers are quality communicators, many of whom have spoken at conferences or larger national gatherings.

Do you have a brick wall? Not the kind that holds up your roof, but the obstacle that STOPS your research dead in your tracks and you just aren't able to get past it? We have folks who can offer help.

Educational opportunities, socializing, sharing, getting motivated. Your membership in FORG is here to help you. It's a gentle 'nudge' to remind you how much you love discovering. Share with a friend. Let them bask in the joy of discovery, too.

*Luanne*

## FORG CALENDAR

01 February

Newsletter Published

07 February

FORG Family Reunion Meeting via ZOOM  
Cheryl Rosen, "OMG! I'm Related to

Myself! - The problem with endogamy in Jewish Genealogy and tricks to finding your family" "

01 May

Newsletter Published

09 May

FORG Family Reunion/Zoom

Italian Genealogy, Bryan Schneider

# FORG FAMILY REUNION MEETING

"OMG! I'M RELATED TO MYSELF!" - CHERYL ROSEN

THE PROBLEM WITH ENDOGAMY IN JEWISH GENEALOGY AND TRICKS TO FINDING YOUR FAMILY.

Jewish Genealogy is unlike most other ancestral research one would do. One primary reason is due to endogamy, the practice of marrying and having children within your immediate family and community.



My mom's family was infamous for this as her paternal grandfather married his brother's daughter (his niece), and mom's maternal great-grandparents were sister and brother (but not married to each other). What once was considered difficult to research is no longer the case. I have family going back to the mid to early 1700's in Europe - a full 10 generations!

During this presentation, I'll explain how to get around the endogamy roadblocks, along with sharing loads of resources that are specific to Jewish Genealogy including the Holocaust, old and new country names, spelling variants, conferences & societies, and online & social media sites.

And by the time we conclude, maybe you can help me figure out how exactly I'm related to myself!

## JOIN ZOOM MEETING

**FORG Family Reunion**

**February 7, 2026 19:30 London**

**1:30 PM Central Daylight Time/US**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4337626224?pwd=elJoLzlpWkRpTTgzY2F3YlFoaztrQTog&omn=88012943437>

**Meeting ID: 433 762 6224**

**Passcode: 20191110**

**CHERYL ROSEN: "OMG! I'm Related to Myself! - The problem with endogamy in Jewish Genealogy and tricks to finding your family"**

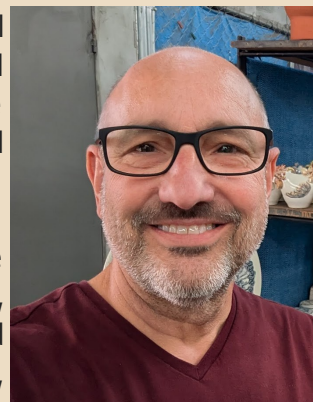
# WIKITREE: A GLOBAL FAMILY TREE COLLABORATION

*By Phillip Jares*

*Midday Rotary Club/San Miguel de Allende, Mexico*

Genealogy connects us not only to ancestors but also to a global community of researchers. After years of using platforms like Ancestry and MyHeritage, I've found WikiTree to be a unique and powerful tool. Unlike other genealogy websites, WikiTree is a free, collaborative platform aimed at creating one accurate, global family tree.

Launched in 2008, WikiTree's goal is to build a single shared tree where each person has one profile. This avoids duplication, fosters cooperation, and results in more accurate family histories. Members can add biographical information, family relationships, photographs, and sources, and they work together to improve profiles. Changes are transparent, and sourcing is encouraged.



*Photo courtesy of Phillip Jares*

WikiTree's collaborative spirit is driven by an Honor Code emphasizing accuracy, respect, and cooperation. Contributors work together to refine profiles rather than competing for ownership. This ensures family histories remain intact, even if researchers become inactive or subscriptions lapse.

The site supports teamwork through various projects, teams, and categories that focus on geographic regions, ethnic groups, historical periods, surnames, and more. These projects offer guidance and experienced volunteers to help navigate research challenges. Today, WikiTree boasts over 1.3 million members and 43 million profiles, all maintained for free.

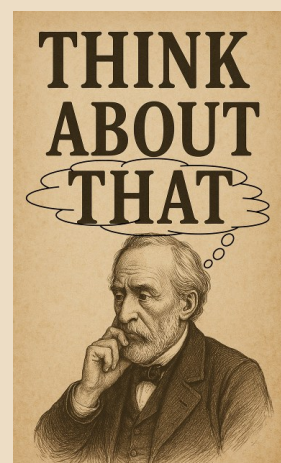
Volunteer roles such as Mentors, Rangers, and Data Doctors help maintain data quality and ensure accurate connections between profiles. Privacy is also a priority—profiles of living individuals are private, accessible only to trusted family members. Ethical research practices are encouraged, including reliable sourcing and cultural sensitivity.

WikiTree embraces genetic genealogy, allowing members to link DNA test results from services like AncestryDNA to profiles. This helps confirm relationships, identify unknown ancestors, and break through genealogical brick walls. WikiTree's DNA projects also offer education and support in this rapidly growing area.

A key strength of WikiTree is its international community. Through forums and projects, members share sources and expertise. For example, when researching my spouse's Norwegian ancestry, experienced WikiTree members guided me to vital records. Similarly, collaboration with a Czech member helped me trace my paternal line back to the 1500s and refine the family's history.

WikiTree complements other genealogy platforms. Records from Ancestry or FamilySearch can be used to strengthen profiles, preserving family histories in a free, shared, and enduring format.

# TRACING OUR ROOTS THROUGH LANGUAGE: WHY WORDS MATTER IN GENEALOGY



Genealogists When we research our ancestors, we often focus on names, dates, and places—but language is one of the most powerful keys to unlocking their world. Every immigrant family carried more than trunks and documents across oceans; they carried their home language, the sounds and expressions that shaped their identity. Understanding the languages our ancestors spoke can help us interpret records more accurately, appreciate cultural nuances, and even uncover stories that might otherwise remain hidden.

For many genealogical society members, the question naturally arises: *Should we learn our ancestors' languages to improve our research?* The answer is: not necessarily fluency, but familiarity can be incredibly helpful. Even a basic grasp of vocabulary—words for occupations, family relationships, dates, and places—can make foreign-language records far less intimidating. Learning how letters were formed in old handwriting styles (like German *Kurrent* or Italian cursive) can also make deciphering documents much easier. While full language study is optional, targeted learning can dramatically expand what you're able to understand and interpret.

Fortunately, learning a language—or even just the genealogical vocabulary you need—has never been easier. Online tools like *Duolingo*, *Babbel*, and *Memrise* offer structured lessons for beginners. YouTube hosts countless free tutorials on pronunciation, grammar, and handwriting styles. Websites such as FamilySearch provide word lists specifically designed for genealogists, helping you translate common terms found in historical documents. For those who prefer live interaction, platforms like *iTalki* and *Preply* connect learners with native speakers for one-on-one sessions tailored to your research needs.

Ultimately, exploring your ancestors' languages is more than a research strategy—it's a way to step into their world. Even a small effort can deepen your connection to the past and open doors to records, relatives, and stories you might never have discovered otherwise. As you continue your genealogical journey, consider letting language be one more tool in your research toolkit; it may lead you to insights that numbers and dates alone could never reveal.

-Courtesy of Microsoft Copilot

# IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION PROCESSES



By Thomas F. LaClair  
Rotary Club of Clayton, New York USA  
tomlaclair624@yahoo.com

As President of the Jefferson County New York Genealogical Society, I was recently asked how immigration and naturalization affected the growth of the local region. Not having a written document, the county clerk recommended that an Artificial Intelligence (AI) query might be beneficial. The AI responses to my various questions were intertwined to bring you this article. I concluded the article by providing actual documents to support the naturalization processes. Although this article will be read by people outside of Jefferson County, New York, and even outside New York State altogether, I anticipate a similar process may be found in your local community. This information is meant to provide thought-provoking questions that may lead to similar ancestral files in your community.

## **KEY FIGURES AND FACTS**

- Over 12 million immigrants came through Ellis Island between 1892 and 1954, with the busiest year, 1907, seeing over a million arrivals alone.
- Most immigrants were processed and released within a few hours, though some faced detention or deportation.
- Over 100 million Americans today can trace their ancestry to immigrants who entered through Ellis Island.

For some of our ancestors, becoming a U.S. citizen was a long-sought goal, and there is no better way to preserve this achievement forever than finding the documents that formalized it. Naturalization records can, depending on the circumstances, also provide an incredible amount of crucial information for the family history researcher, including details about their origins.

## **DERIVATIVE CITIZENSHIP**

The vast majority of people who underwent the naturalization process were adult men. Though women and children often became citizens through what is called derivative citizenship, this process rarely generated any records. For the most part, immigrant children under the age of 18 inherited the citizenship of their father, and until 1929, the only documentation they could use to prove their citizenship was the Certificate of Citizenship of their father. After 1929, anyone who derived citizenship from a parent could apply for their own certificate.

Naturalization for women can be significantly more complicated. Researchers should keep in mind that, in general, there was little motivation for a woman to become a full-fledged citizen due to the severe societal limitations on her freedom. Although not all, many derived citizenship from their husbands.

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**ORIGINAL**

**PETITION FOR CITIZENSHIP**

No. 2208

To the Honorable the Supreme Court of Jefferson County at Watertown, N. Y.

The petition of George Gabriel Tyo, hereby filed, respectfully sheweth:

(1) My place of residence is Route 2, Adams, N. Y. (2) My occupation is Farmer

(3) I was born in Martintown, Canada on 4/23/03. My race is French

(4) I declared my intention to become a citizen of the United States on 10/16/28 in the Supreme Court of Jefferson Co. at Watertown, N. Y.

(5) I am \_\_\_\_\_ married. The name of my wife or husband is Eleanor Tyo

I was married on 9/18/24 at Adams, N. Y. She \_\_\_\_\_

born at Rodman, N. Y. on 4/14/03 \_\_\_\_\_, entered the United States \_\_\_\_\_

resides at ✓ Rodman, N. Y. I have 1 children, and the same, date  
and place of birth, and place of residence of each said child are as follows: Bernard George Tyo born 7/28/29 at Rodman, N. Y. Resides at Adams, Route 2, N.Y.

(6) My last foreign residence was Martintown Canada. I emigrated to the United States of America from Cornwall Canada My lawful entry for permanent residence in the United States was on Nyando, N Y under the name of George Gabriel Tyo as shown by the certificate of my arrival attached hereto, 6/10/04 \_\_\_\_\_, on the ship N Y C

(7) I am not a disbeliever in or opposed to organized government or a member of or affiliated with any organization or body of persons teaching disbelief in or opposed to organized government, nor do I profess to be a polygamist nor a believer in the practice of polygamy. I am attached to the principles of the Constitution of the United States and well disposed to the good order and happiness of the United States. It is my intention to become a citizen of the United States and to renounce absolutely and forever all allegiance and claims, past, present, state or other, and conformity to laws, customs, usages, and institutions of every country except the United States.

**GEORGE V. BY THE SPACE OF GOD, OF GREAT BRITAIN, IRELAND, AND THE BRITISH DOMINIONS BEYOND THE SEAS KING, DEFENDER OF THE FAITH EMPEROR OF INDIA**

of whom (which) at this time I am a subject (or citizen), and it is my intention to reside permanently in the United States. (8) I am able to speak the English language.

(9) I have resided continuously in the United States of America for the term of one year at least immediately preceding the date of this petition, to wit, since 9/10/04 \_\_\_\_\_, and in the County of most immediately preceding the date of this petition, to wit, since 8/12/21 \_\_\_\_\_, being a residence within said county of at least six months next preceding the date of this petition.

(10) I have \_\_\_\_\_, heretofore made petition for citizenship Number \_\_\_\_\_, on \_\_\_\_\_, and such petition was denied by that Court for the following reasons and causes, to wit: \_\_\_\_\_

and the cause of such denial has since been cured or removed.  
Attached herewith and made a part of this, my petition for citizenship, are my declaration of intention to become a citizen of the United States, certificate from the Department of Labor of my said arrival, and the affidavits of the two verifying witnesses required by law.

Wherefore, if, your petitioner, pray, he may be admitted a citizen of the United States of America, and that my name be changed to \_\_\_\_\_

I, your afforesaid petitioner, being duly sworn, depose and say that I have \_\_\_\_\_ read \_\_\_\_\_ this petition and know the contents thereof; that the same is true of my own knowledge except as to matters herein stated to be alleged upon information and belief, and that as to those matters I believe it to be true; and that this petition is signed by me with my full, true name.

George Gabriel Tyo  
(Complete and true signature of petitioner)

**AFFIDAVITS OF WITNESSES**

G. Wilbur White \_\_\_\_\_, occupation Farmer  
residing at Adams Route 2, N.Y. \_\_\_\_\_, and  
Hadley S. Babbitt \_\_\_\_\_, occupation Farmer  
residing at Adams, N. Y. \_\_\_\_\_  
each being severally, duly, and respectively sworn, depose and says that he is a citizen of the United States of America, and that he has personally known and has been acquainted in the United States with \_\_\_\_\_

George Gabriel Tyo \_\_\_\_\_ the petitioner above mentioned, since Oct. 15 1926 \_\_\_\_\_ and that his personal knowledge the petitioner has resided in the United States continuously preceding the date of filing this petition, of which this affidavit is a part, to wit, since the date last mentioned, and at Adams Oct. 15 1926 \_\_\_\_\_, and that he has personal knowledge that the said State, in which the above-entitled petition was made, continuously since \_\_\_\_\_, and that he knows the contents of the Constitution of the United States, and well-disposed to the good order and happiness of the United States, and that in his opinion the petitioner is in every way qualified to be admitted a citizen of the United States.

C. William White \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of witness)  
Hadley S. Babbitt \_\_\_\_\_  
Subscribed and sworn to before me by the above-named petitioners and witnesses in the office of the Clerk of said Court at Watertown, N. Y. this 23rd day of Oct. Anno Domini 1931. I hereby certify that certificate of arrival No. S-14024  
from the Department of Labor, showing the lawful entry for permanent residence of the petitioner above named, together with declaration of intention No. \_\_\_\_\_ of such petitioner, has been by me filed with, attached to, and made a part of this petition on this date.

Jas. Deacon  
Clerk. (SEAL)

## T. LACLAIR CONT FROM PG 6

# IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION PROCESSES

### ***FINDING NATURALIZED ANCESTORS***

A necessary first step is to determine which ancestors were naturalized in the first place, and when they went through the process. Fortunately, this type of research question can be fairly straightforward to answer. Census records are some of the most accessible documents that can be used. Most censuses will contain each person's birthplace—those born in foreign countries are obvious candidates for naturalization.

Federal censuses from 1850 onward will contain the birthplace of all household members. Federal censuses from 1890 (most of the 1890 census is no longer available) onward will contain the year of immigration and citizenship status. The 1920 census identifies the exact year of naturalization.

New York state censuses are helpful as well. The 1855 New York state census contains birthplace and length of residence in the current municipality. The 1905, 1915, and 1925 state censuses contain birthplace, citizenship status, and number of years in the United States. Other records will contain this information as well. However you accomplish it, the first goal is to form a hypothesis about when your ancestor may have gone through the naturalization process, and where they lived at the time.

### ***PRE-UNITED STATES NATURALIZATION IN NEW YORK***

1609–1664: Dutch Colonial New York. Since the colony was operated by the Dutch, immigrants arriving in New Netherland had to take an oath of allegiance to the Dutch parliament, the States General, and to the Dutch West India Company.

1664–1776: British Colonial New York. Immigrants arriving in New York after 1664 had to take an oath of allegiance to the King of England in order to enjoy the privileges afforded to his subjects, including the right to own land. Naturalization was expensive, but a more affordable process known as denization also allowed for land ownership. Both processes required action in England until 1740, when Parliament allowed the colonial government to naturalize aliens.

1776–1790 (New York): During the Revolution, both sides required and often demanded oaths of allegiance. By 1783, all current residents of New York State became U.S. citizens. For most of U.S. history, naturalization was a two-step process. The immigrant would file an initial form, the declaration of intention (often called "first papers"), and then wait for a period of time (usually five years). After the mandatory waiting period, they would file their actual petition for naturalization.

1790–1906 (New York): In 1790, the first federal naturalization act was passed—it allowed naturalization to occur at any court of record with a clerk and a seal. Though the exact period of time changed several times, after 1802, all aliens were not eligible for naturalization until living in the United States for five years.

After 1906, naturalization could still happen in nonfederal courts, but these courts were required to collect a certain level of information—usually far more than what is found in naturalization documents before 1906. Courts retained original copies but had to send duplicates to the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization in Washington, DC, where they were added to a record called a C-file.

In 1933, the Immigration and Naturalization Service was formed and processed most naturalizations occurring in New York. The Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization maintains "C-files" for naturalizations between 1906 and 1956 – generally, these files contain the most genealogically relevant information of all naturalization records. The records for most naturalizations that took place in New York federal courts are held by NARA-NYC in New York City, and many are available online at Ancestry.com.

CONTINUED PAGE 8



## IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION PROCESSES

### ***JEFFERSON COUNTY NATURALIZATION FILES***

The physical records for naturalization processes in Jefferson County, New York, are primarily held by the Jefferson County Clerk's Office, 175 Arsenal Street, Watertown, New York. The Jefferson County Records Management section has provided an index of the U.S. Naturalization Records for the Northern Zone, which covers Jefferson County. There are 17,131 names on the index; some of the names may be duplicates if spelled differently. Information for those visiting in person or requesting copies by mail is found by reviewing: <https://www.jeffersoncountyny.gov/searchcopyrequests>. To locate the complete index of naturalizations, scroll down to the page to Naturalization Records 1825 – 1973. The index hyperlink is found here.

### ***RETRIEVING PHYSICAL RECORDS FOR GENEALOGICAL PURPOSES***

Whether in person or through the mail, first research the Naturalization index to determine if one of your ancestors is listed, indicating one or more records are in the file.

If visiting the Jefferson County Clerk's Office in person, visit the Records Management Section on the first floor, just to the left of the Department of Motor Vehicles, and request the file folder as noted on the index. Provide the full name, date of naturalization, index number, and file number.

The Records Management Clerk will pull the folder and permit you to evaluate the contents. You can elect to make copies of none, some, or all of the contents. There is a cost to make copies. No photography is permitted.

If requesting files by physical mail or electronic email, provide the full name, date of naturalization, index number, and file number. Provide your contact information and open up a dialog toward retrieving documents.

The Records Management Department lists this on their website: "When submitting a copy or search request, please make sure to complete the request form in its entirety. If you have questions prior to submitting your request, our Records Management Department can be reached at [recordscenter@jeffersoncountyny.gov](mailto:recordscenter@jeffersoncountyny.gov) or by calling 315-785-3312, Option 3 during regular business hours."

### ***AN EXAMPLE OF NATURALIZATION RECORDS RETRIEVED***

George G. Tyo and George Gabriel Tyo are listed in the index. In this case, two different entries for the same person. In reviewing the files from these two folders, several documents of interest were scanned and provided as examples. Please note that the contents of each folder may vary slightly. Some files have more papers than others, and although most do not, some files have a photograph of your ancestor. Two scanned documents are referenced.

George G. Tyo Declaration of Intention dated 16 Oct 1928.

George Gabriel Tyo Petition for Citizenship dated 23 Oct 1931.

In closing, take the time to research if a naturalization file exists in your community, and if so, what fascinating documents might be found in your ancestors' folder. You might be pleasantly surprised at what you learn.



## FORG — DON'T KEEP IT A SECRET

Do you learn something from our Zoom meetings? Know anyone in the world who enjoys family research?

For \$20USD/year or \$100USD for life, our members have access to amazing speakers who even hold a Q & A session right after the presentation! Tell your genealogy friends that, if they are in Rotary or not they can be a part of FORG. It's easy! [Share this link in an email to them.](#)

**FEBRUARY 7, 2026**

**“OMG! I'M RELATED  
TO MYSELF!” -  
THE PROBLEM WITH  
ENDOGENY IN JEWISH  
GENEALOGY AND TRICKS  
TO FINDING YOUR  
FAMILY.”**

**CHERYL ROSEN**

**SAVE THE  
DATES  
UPCOMING ZOOM  
PROGRAMS**

**MAY 9, 2026**

**ITALIAN GENEALOGY**

**BRYAN SCHNEIDER**

## FORG "GATHERED & SHARED"

Something new in 2026 is our FORG "Gathered & Shared" newsletter column. This section will feel: curated, not promotional, scholarly but welcoming, shared knowledge among peers worldwide. Send us any suggestions. (graphic courtesy ChatGPT)

### ➡ CONFERENCEKEEPER

Have you visited the ConferenceKeeper website? Many of our members and friends use this to find out so much information on the topic we love most—Genealogy!

ConferenceKeeper is, as they put it, a "most complete genealogy calendar of events on the Internet", listing thousands of podcasts, webinars, conferences, libraries and more.

There are resources and events offered *around the world*, as seen here (click each location

[United States](#)

[Australia](#)

[Canada](#)

[Europe](#)

[Ireland](#)

[Mexico](#)

[United Kingdom](#)

[Virtual](#)

for results). If you want to [volunteer](#), they have links to needs for record transcription, indexing, translating, headstone-hunting, diary and letter transcribing from the 1800's, and much more.

We thank Tami and crew at [ConferenceKeeper](#) for allowing us to share this great research collection!

### ➡ ROOTSTECH .... [RootsTech](#) is the world's

largest "family discovery event"/genealogy conference live in Salt Lake City, March 5-7 (register early for the live event to get a discount), and most content available online for FREE. Our very own Bill Harvey will be there and would love to meet up with anyone else from FORG. [Email Bill](#). Click this link for a [video glimpse of this event](#).

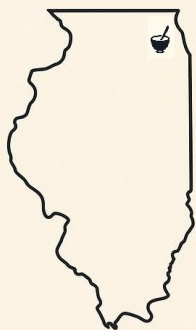


Courtesy of RootsTech YouTube channel





# FAMILY RECIPE SHARING



*Today's recipe is from:*

**JUDY SPANNENBERG STEINBECK**  
***Arlington Heights, Illinois US***

*While any recipe that is just Jell-o doesn't sound fancy or creative, I can tell you this one was always a hit.*

*My best and oldest friend is in Chicago and I consider her family. We grew up together, a few houses apart. Her parents were my godparents. She is my son's godmother and I, her daughter's. Whether it be a family event — baptism, birthday, graduation, holiday — or a monthly meeting of the Coupon Club I founded, you'd always hope this recipe was on the table. Judy and her sisters, Susan and Linda, were known for it and it brings back fond memories!*

*-Luanne Newman*

*Graphic from Microsoft Copilot*

## WHITE JELL-O

**1 package (8 oz) cream cheese**  
**1 cup milk**  
**1 Tablespoon lemon juice**  
**1/2 cup granulated sugar**  
**1 teaspoon vanilla extract**  
**1 package/envelope Knox unflavored gelatin**  
**8 ounces Cool Whip**  
**Optional, seasonal or holiday berries or fruits**

- Soften cream cheese.
- Add sugar, beating until fluffy
- Dissolve gelatin in glass measuring cup of 1/3 cup boiling water
- Add vanilla and lemon juice to cream cheese mixture
- Beat until smooth
- Add gelatin mixture to cream cheese mixture and beat
- Fold in Cool Whip
- Pour into greased mold or pan
- Use berries, fruits, or mint leaves, etc. to garnish