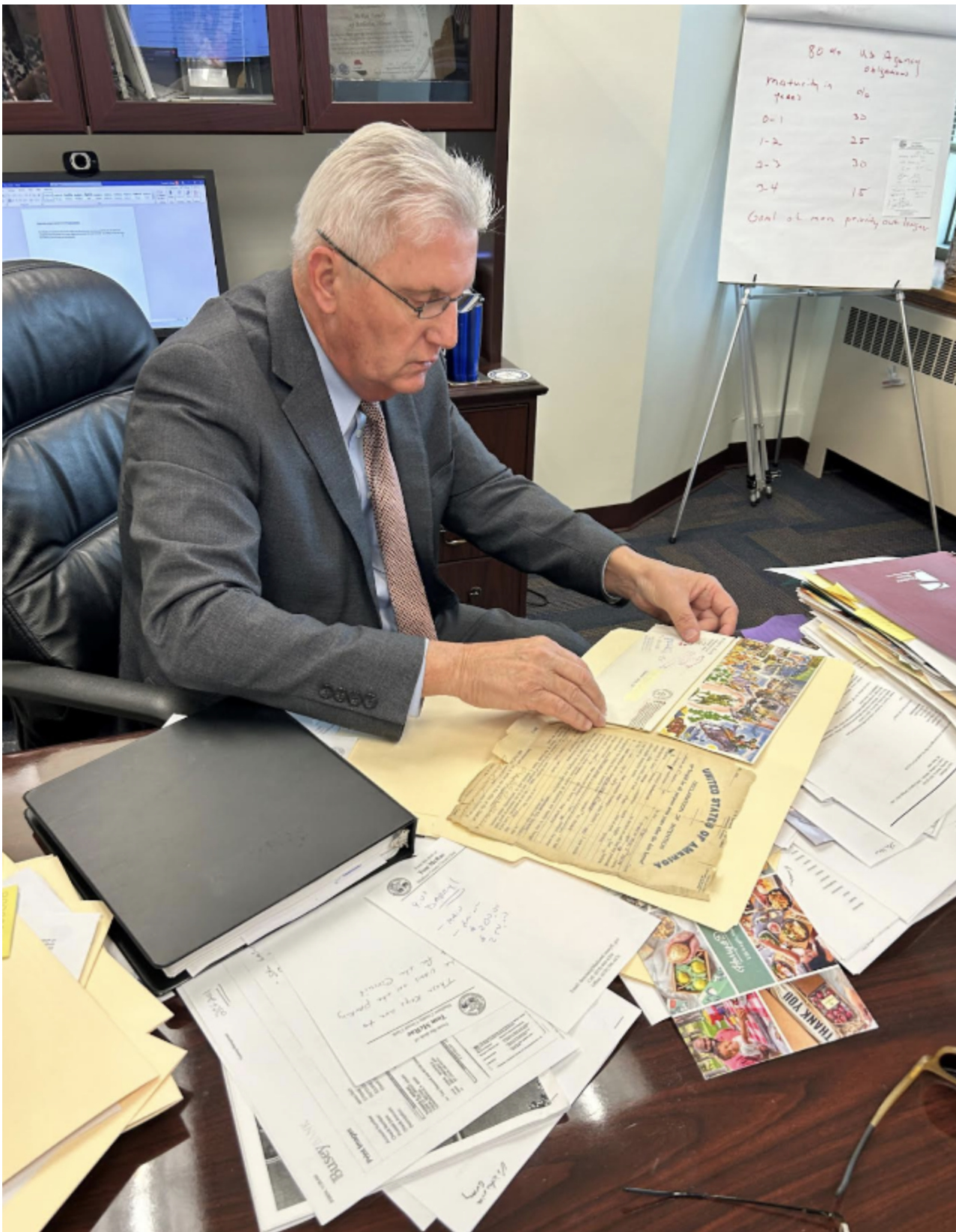




# **Madison County Circuit Clerk's Offices' Digitization Project Uncovers Fascinating Documents**

by Submitted by Madison County Circuit Clerk's Office  
March 18 2024 12:30 PM



EDWARDSVILLE — The Madison County Circuit Clerk’s office discovered several “fascinating” and historic records during the completion of its first phase of a digitization project.

Circuit Clerk Tom McRae said he initiated the project more than a year ago to help streamline the process of court record searches and storage within the office. While completing the project, that included scanning more than 9 million documents , numerous historic records were discovered.

“We’ve been working on digitizing records for the past six months,” Circuit Clerk Tom McRae said.

McRae, who is a self-proclaimed history buff said not only are the documents historical, but captivating as well.

One such record is that of Arshag Garbadian who applied for United States citizenship 1919. The document sheds a great deal of light on Garbadian's journey to become a naturalized citizen who eventually lived in Granite City.

He was born in Van Armenia, Turkey in 1890 and arrived in New York by ship through France in 1913. The 105-year-old yellowed and frayed document shows Garbadian's intention to "renounce all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state or sovereignty, and particularly to Mehemmed VI Emperor of the Ottomans of whom I am now a subject".

Other interesting items found include envelopes used in the office by former Circuit Clerk Willard V. “Butch” Portell in 1976. The front side of the envelopes are standard however the entire back is a scene highlighting the United States Bi-Centennial including Paul Revere and George Washington and the Boston Tea Party.

The digitization project is funded through the American Rescue Plan Act, which McRae requested \$600,000 from the County Board. The first phase cost nearly \$200,000.

"I appreciate the support of the county board as this money will allow record searches and storage to be much less cumbersome", McRae said.

Alisa Adair, who is the Circuit Clerk’s Office’s manager of records and archives, described the digitization effort as a major step forward.

“Much of our records were stored on microfilm or microfiche,” Adair said. “It had been degraded from so much use over the years and it was time consuming to locate needed records".

Court records will now be stored on the cloud and rather than cross-referencing paper documents and microfilm cases can be located on a computer.



McRae said that access to court documents is governed by the Administrative Office of Illinois Courts.

"I think people would be surprised that most records are open to the public," he said. "Our goal is to embrace technology that preserves the court records while making them as easily accessible as possible to all stakeholders."

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
NATURALIZATION SERVICE

No. 670

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DECLARATION OF INTENTION

Invalid for all purposes seven years after the date hereof

State of Illinois ss: In the City Court

County of Madison of Granite City, Illinois

Archag Garbadian, aged 38 years,  
occupation Laborer, do declare on oath that my personal  
description is: Color white, complexion dark, height 5 feet 7 inches,  
weight 155 pounds, color of hair black, color of eyes brown,  
other visible distinctive marks none

I was born in Van Armenia Turkey,  
on the 1st day of July, anno Domini 1890; I now reside  
at 940 Pacific Ave. Granite City, Illinois  
(Give address, street, city or town, and state)

I emigrated to the United States of America from Marseilles France  
on the vessel does not know; my last  
foreign residence was Van Armenia Turkey; I am xx married; the name  
of my wife is Cecil; she was born at Van Armenia  
and now resides at Avon Russia

It is my bona fide intention to renounce forever all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign  
prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, and particularly to Mehammed VI. Emperor  
of the Ottomans, of whom I am now a subject

arrived at the port of New York, in  
state of New York, on or about the 15th  
of July, anno Domini 1913; I am not an anarchist; I am  
polygamist nor a believer in the practice of polygamy; and it is my intention in good  
become a citizen of the United States of America and to permanently reside there  
I HELP ME GOD.

Archag Garbadian  
(Original signature of declarant)

Subscribed and sworn to before me in the office of the  
said Court this 1st day of May, anno Domini

Alvah Robinson  
Clerk of the City

[SEAL]

Term No. 1114  
Feb. 21st 1916  
Received from  
Simon Kellermann, Jr.  
Circuit Clerk  
the following named papers,  
in the case of  
People  
Simine et  
al VIZ:  
files  
Geo. D. Little  
Attorney  
1601 Pierce Bldg.  
Main 4280