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RECLAIM THE RECORDS

"Public data for public use"

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Our first newsletter — and our first win!

Welcome to the inaugural newsletter from [Reclaim The Records](#). We're a not-for-profit group of genealogists, historians, researchers, and open government advocates who are filing state Freedom of Information law requests to get public data released back into the public domain. We're so glad you signed up to follow all the latest news about our wacky little quest.

And we're going to start off this first newsletter with some exciting news:

Reclaim The Records has won its first legal case, winning access to over 600,000 never-before-public genealogical records!

We can now announce that our petition against the New York City Department of Records and Information Services (DORIS), parent organization of the New York City Municipal Archives, has been settled in our favor. We had originally filed a New York State Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) request with the Archives back in January, seeking copies of an important historical record set that was only available onsite in lower Manhattan. The Archives had at first accepted, then suddenly rejected our FOIL request, and then denied our appeal. Our last remaining option was to take them to court — and we did! [To read more background on this case, and the importance of these records, check out this article from Avotaynu Online.](#)

DORIS was due to respond to our case in court in Manhattan on Friday, September 25th, but they cried uncle and went to our attorneys to settle on Monday, September 21st. We don't have an exact date yet when our hard-won 48 microfilm copies will arrive in California, but it should be relatively soon. Scanning the films and uploading the digital images for free public access will happen shortly thereafter.

We're now pursuing the City for the recovery of our attorneys' fees, which is allowed under the New York State's FOIL in cases where a state government agency had no legal basis to deny a legitimate records request. We should hear the results of that pursuit sometime in the next two months or so.