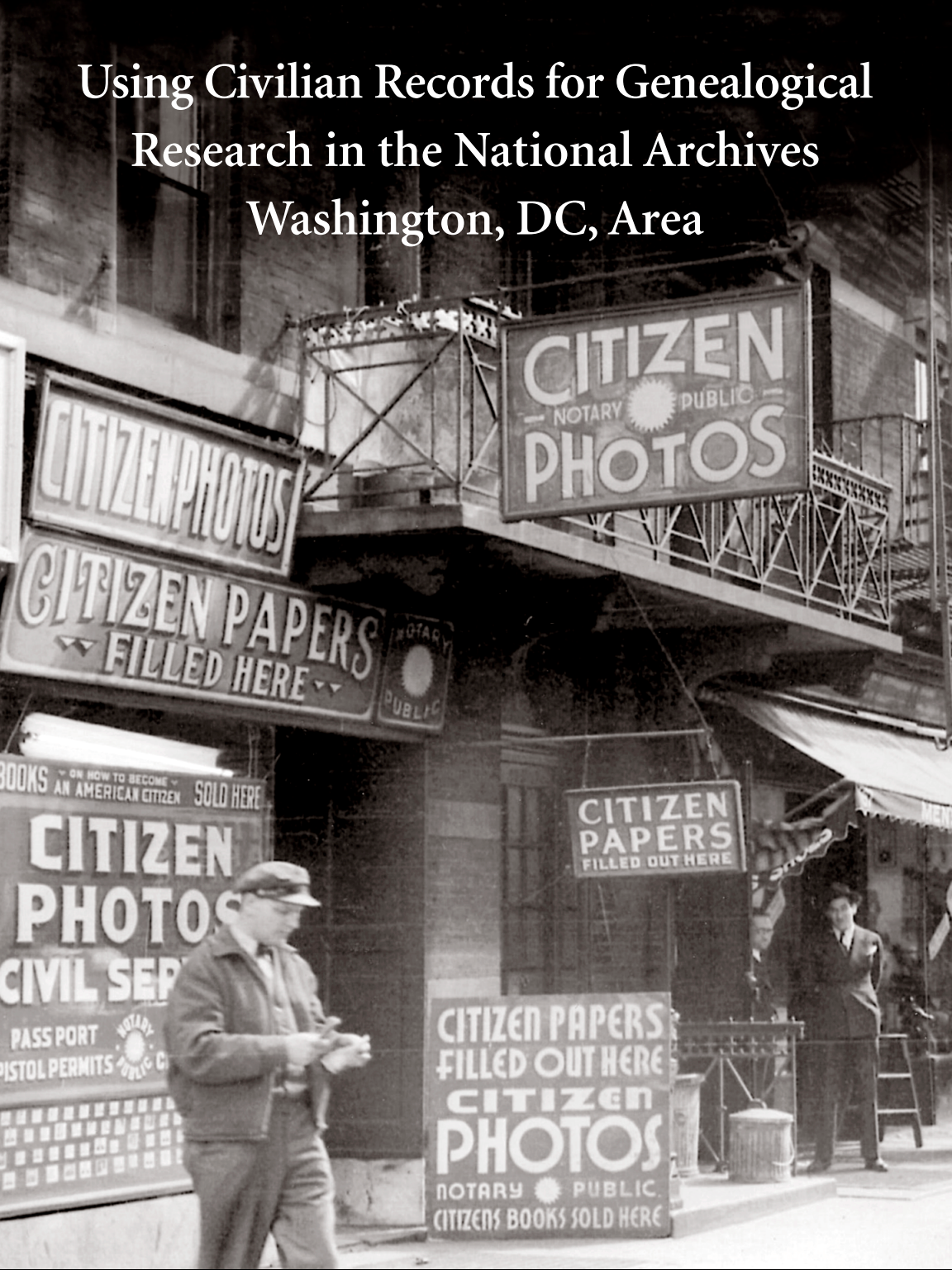
Using Civilian Records for Genealogical Research in the National Archives Washington, DC, Area



REFERENCE INFORMATION PAPER 110

Using Civilian Records for Genealogical Research in the National Archives Washington, DC, Area

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National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC

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Cover: Street corner next to Federal building in New York where U.S. Department of Labor handles naturalization for immigrants (119-G-81-M-3). For information on naturalization records, see page 20.

Back cover: Postman delivering mail, rural mail route, York County, Maine (33-SC-14560c). For information on postal records, see page 32.

Contents

Preface vii

Genealogical Research 1
- Before Visiting the National Archives 1
- Using the National Archives 2
- Finding Aids 2

Federal Census 4
- Population Census Schedules 4
- Soundex Indexes 5
- Soundex Coding Guide 7
- Enumeration District Maps 8
- Nonpopulation Census Schedules, 1850–80 9

Immigration 12
- U.S. Customs Service 12
- Immigration and Naturalization 12
- East Coast Ports 13
- Gulf Coast Ports 14
- Mexican Border Crossings 14
- Pacific Coast Ports 15
- Canadian Border Crossings 15
- Alien Files 15
- Arrival Records and Crew Lists, 1957–82 15
- Chinese Exclusion, 1882–1943 17

Naturalization 20

Passport Applications 23

Visa Applications, 1914–40 26

Seamen's Protection Certificates 27

Public Land 28

Civilian Employees 30
Official Register of the United States 30
Application, Recommendation, and Appointment Records 31
Official Personnel Files 32

Residents of the District of Columbia 33

American Indians 36

African Americans 40
Slavery 40
Federal Censuses 41
Southern Claims Commission 42
Freedman's Savings and Trust 44

War Relocation Authority 46
Japanese Internments 46

American Overseas Territories 49

Where to Find Vital Statistics 50

National Archives Online 51

National Archives Regional Facilities 52

Contacting the National Archives 53

Preface

This reference information paper (RIP) describes civilian records of interest to genealogical researchers held at the National Archives in Washington, DC, and College Park, MD. In conducting its business, the Federal Government creates records that can often be used by family researchers. Among the more commonly used records are Federal census records and public land records as well as passenger arrivals and naturalizations. This publication describes these and other records useful to genealogists.

Six decades ago, the National Archives began publishing reference information papers as part of a comprehensive descriptive program designed to help people find their way through the voluminous records in our holdings. Other publications that address related topics are the *Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives of the United States* (rev. 2000) as well as *Research in the Land Entry Files of the General Land Office* (General Information Leaflet No. 67, 2001) and *Black Family Research: Records of Post–Civil War Federal Agencies at the National Archives* (RIP 108, rev. 2006). The National Archives and Records Administration's web site, *www.archives.gov,* offers access to more sources for genealogical research as well as to the Archival Research Catalog (ARC), the online catalog of NARA's nationwide holdings.

As the nation's record keeper, NARA safeguards records of all three branches of the Federal Government. NARA meets an almost unlimited range of information needs, ensuring access to records on which both the credibility of government and the accuracy of history depend. We welcome any comments you may have on the information products and services NARA provides. You may e-mail your message to *inquire@nara.gov.*

Allen Weinstein
Archivist of the United States

Genealogical Research

This publication describes some of the most useful civilian records of interest to genealogists that are available at the National Archives Building in Washington, DC, and College Park, MD. The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) does not collect or compile family histories.

Before Visiting the National Archives

Before visiting the National Archives, compile as much information as possible about your family. The more information you have before you visit the National Archives, the quicker and easier your research will be.

Start with yourself. When and where were you born? What are your parents' names? When and where were they born? Your grandparents?

Look for old letters, family bibles, scrapbooks, diaries, pictures as well as marriage, birth, and death certificates. Look for names, dates, places, and relationships. Ask your relatives what they know about your family's history.

Read books about genealogical research. These are a few of the many "how to" books:

- Burroughs, Tony. *Black Roots: A Beginner's Guide to Tracing the African-American Family Tree.* New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2001.
- Crandall, Ralph J. *Shaking Your Family Tree: A Basic Guide to Tracing Your Family's Genealogy.* Boston: New England Historic and Genealogical Society, 2001.
- Croom, Emily A. *Unpuzzling Your Past: A Basic Guide to Genealogy.* Cincinnati, OH: Betterway Books, 2001.
- Greenwood, Val. D. *The Researcher's Guide to American Genealogy.* Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., rev. 2002.
- Rose, Christine and Kay Germain Ingalls. *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Genealogy.* New York: Alpha Books/Simon & Schuster, 2006.

- Szucs, Loretto D. and Sandra H. Luebking. *The Source: A Guidebook of American Genealogy.* Salt Lake City, UT: Ancestry, rev. 1997.

The following web sites are useful places to begin your research.

- *www.cyndislist.com*
- *www.Ancestry.com.* Some parts of this web site are by subscription.
- *www.Heritagequest.com.* Some parts of this web site are by subscription.
- *www.ellisisland.org*

Using the National Archives

The National Archives, established in 1935, is the repository for the permanently valuable records of the Federal Government. To use the National Archives you need to know how the person or family you are researching interacted with the Federal Government. In conducting its business, the U.S. Government created records of genealogical interest. Among its duties the Government:

- Takes a Federal census every 10 years;
- Documents the arrival of immigrants and grants citizenship;
- Issues passports; and
- Oversees public lands.

The records are arranged by the creating agency in groupings called record groups. For example, Record Group 29 is the Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 75 comprises the Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Record Group 36 is the Records of the U.S. Customs Service.

Under the record group is the series, a body of records that are related chronologically (1900 census) or by subject (index to New York arrivals, 1820–46).

Finding Aids

There is no master index to the holdings of the National Archives. To help you locate the appropriate records, NARA has created both published and online descriptive materials called finding aids.

The National Archives publishes a variety of finding aids such as guides, preliminary inventories (PI), descriptive pamphlets (DP), and reference information papers (RIP) that describe the holdings of the National Archives. For information on these publications see *Aids for Genealogical Research* or *www.archives.gov/publications*.

In each issue of *Prologue: Quarterly of the National Archives and Records Administration* genealogists can read "Genealogy Notes." These articles describe a series of records of particular interest to genealogists. Many of the articles can be found on the NARA web site.

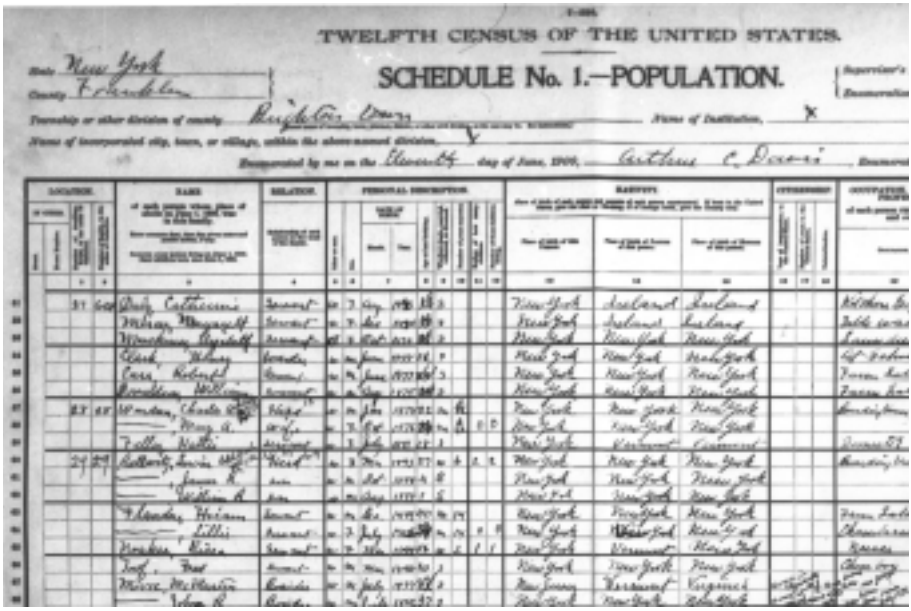
Each section in this reference information paper ends with a list of published and online finding aids that can help you find more information about the records.

For information on military service records see "An Overview of Records at the National Archives Relating to Military Service" by Trevor K. Plante, *Prologue,* Fall 2002, Vol. 34, No. 3 at *www.archives.gov/publications*.

Population Census Schedules

As required by Article I, Section 2, of the Constitution, a Federal census has been taken in the United States every 10 years since 1790 to enumerate (count) the population for apportioning representatives to the House of Representatives. Through 1950, census takers collected information about households and individuals by a house-to-house canvas. These filled-in forms constitute the population schedules for each decennial census.

To protect the privacy of people enumerated in the census, the Bureau of the Census restricts access to the census schedules for 72 years after the census is taken. For information on censuses taken after 1930, contact the Bureau of the Census, P.O. Box 1545, Jeffersonville, IN 47131, and request a copy of Application for Search of Census Records (BC Form 600). Online versions are at *www.census.gov* and click on genealogy.



TWELFTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES.

SCHEDULE No. 1.—POPULATION.

Upper part of a page from the 1900 census population schedules. Records of the Bureau of the Census, RG 29, National Archives Microfilm Publication T623.

The census records are available on microfilm. The schedules are arranged by census year; then alphabetically by state; then by county, and finally by city, township, or minor civil division. Researchers should know at least the state where a person lived during a census year, but the more information a researcher has about where a person lived, the better.

The questions and format change from census to census. From 1790 through 1840 the census lists only the head of the household. Beginning in 1850 the census listed everyone in the household, but the relationships were not listed until 1880. The census records for many states are incomplete, particularly those before 1850.

For 1850 and 1860 separate slave schedules are available that list slaveholders and the age, sex, and color, but not the name, of each slave. (See page 41 for additional information.)

In addition, most of the 1890 census was destroyed as the result of a fire at the Department of Commerce in 1921. The remaining entries are for small segments of Perry County, AL; the District of Columbia; Columbus, GA; Mound Township, IL; Rockford, MN; Jersey City, NJ; Eastchester and Brookhaven Townships, NY; Cleveland and Gaston Counties, NC; Cincinnati and Wayne Townships, OH; Jefferson Township, SD; and Ellis, Hood, Kaufman, Rusk, and Trinity Counties, TX.

The National Archives also has the 1890 special schedules of Union veterans arranged alphabetically by state for Kentucky (partial) through Wyoming, including Washington, DC. The schedules give the name of the veteran, the unit in which he says he fought, his dates of service, and the post office address of each living veteran. In the case of widows, the census gives the name of both the widow and her deceased husband.

The original census schedules for 1900 through 1930 no longer exist.

Soundex Indexes

In the 1930s the Work Projects Administration (WPA) began indexing the census using the Soundex indexing system. The Bureau of the Census continued the indexing in the 1960s. Not all the states for all years were indexed, but the following list shows what was completed:

- 1880 is available for all states but includes only families with children aged 10 or younger.
- 1900 is Soundexed for all states.
- 1910 is Soundexed for 21 states: Alabama, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.
- 1920 is Soundexed for all states.
- 1930 is Soundexed for 12 states: Complete indexes exist for Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. Partial indexes exist for Kentucky (Bell, Floyd, Harlan, Kenton, Muhlenberg, Perry, and Pike counties) and West Virginia (Fayette, Harrison, Kanawha, Logan, McDowell, Mercer, and Raleigh counties).

Soundex cards for "R600" for the 1900 census population schedules for Illinois. Records of the Bureau of the Census, RG 29, Microfilm Publication T1043.

The Soundex is a coded surname index based on the way a surname sounds rather than how it is spelled. Surnames that sound the same, but are spelled differently, like BROWN and BROWNE, are filed under the same code.

To search for a particular last name, you must first work out its code. Every Soundex code consists of a letter and three numbers. The Soundex code always begins with the first letter of the last name. Numbers are assigned to the remaining letters according to the Soundex coding guide. For example, Adams is Soundexed A352.

Soundex Coding Guide

Number	Represents letter
1	B, F, P, V
2	C, G, J, K, Q, S, X, Z
3	D, T
4	L
5	M, N
6	R

Rules for Soundex

To create a Soundex code, use the following steps:

Step 1: Write down the first letter of the last name

Step 2: After the initial letter, disregard any of the remaining letters A, E, I, O, U, W, Y, and H.*

Step 3: Write down the numbers found on the Soundex Coding Guide for the first three remaining unslashed letters. Add zeros for any empty spaces. Disregard any additional letters.

Additional Rules

Names with double letters: If the surname has any double letters, they should be treated as one letter. For example, the two "t"s in Ritter are coded with one "3" (R360).

Names with letters side-by-side that have the same number: A surname may have different letters side-by-side that sound alike and have the same code number. For example, CKS in Jackson should be treated as one number. The code for Jackson would be J250.

Names with prefixes: Mc and Mac are not considered prefixes.

If a surname has a prefix, such as Van, Con, De, Di, La, or Le, code the name both with and without the prefix.

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*If "H" or "W" separate two consonants that have the same Soundex code, the consonant immediately after the "H" or "W" should not be coded. For example Ashcraft is coded A261 (A, 2 for S, C ignored, 6 for the R, 1 for the F). Burroughs is coded B620 (B, 6 is for the R, 2 for the G, S is ignored, zero because there are no more letters to code).

It is important to remember that not all WPA or Census employees Soundexed a name strictly according to the rules. For example, Ashcraft may sometimes be found under A226.

Enumeration District Maps

The Bureau of the Census prepared enumeration district (ED) maps from 1880 to 1970. An enumeration district is an area that could be covered by a single census taker. EDs varied in size from several city blocks in densely populated urban areas to an entire county in sparsely populated rural areas. For larger cities, an enumerator had two weeks to take the census; a month in rural areas.

To use these maps, researchers must first know where their ancestors were living at the time of the census. The maps are arranged alphabetically by state and then county or locality. The content of the maps varies greatly among states and over time. The maps all show the boundaries of the ED as well as the ED numbers.

Maps do not exist for all counties or jurisdictions for all census years. The ED maps for 1930 have been microfilmed as *Enumeration District Description Maps for the Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1930, 36 rolls, DP).

Availability of the Records

Maps used in other censuses are located in the cartographic branch at the National Archives at College Park, MD.

Microfilmed copies of the census records are available at the National Archives Building, 700 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC, and at all of NARA's regional facilities.

To request copies of census records, use National Archives Order for Copies of Census Records (NATF form 82). To complete the order form, you need the following information: census year, state or territory, county, town or other subdivision, name of the head of the household, page number, and for 1880 to 1930, the enumeration district.

Federal population census schedules from 1790 to 1930 and Soundex indexes from 1880 to 1930 are available through the National Archives Microfilm Rental Program. For additional information on the rental program call 301-604-3699 or write to the National Archives Microfilm Rental Program, P.O. Box 30, Annapolis Junction, MD 20701-0030. Many census records are also available online at non-NARA sites. These sites usually charge a fee for access to the records.

Additional Sources of Information

Web site: *www.archives.gov/genealogy*

Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives, third ed., pages 15–41.

The 1790–1890 Federal Population Censuses, rev. 2001.

1900 Federal Population Census, rev. 2000.

The 1910 Federal Population Census, rev. 2000.

The 1920 Federal Population Census, rev. 1998.

1930 Federal Population Census, 2002.

Descriptions of Census Enumeration Districts, 1830–1950 (National Archives Microfilm Publication T1224, 156 rolls, DP).

Nonpopulation Census Schedules, 1850–80

Nonpopulation decennial census schedules consist of agricultural, industrial and manufacturers, mortality, and defective, dependent, and delinquent classes (1880 only) as well as social statistics. The Bureau of the Census did not take all of these censuses in all years.

Unloading dry farm wheat (33-SC-5094c).

Agricultural Schedules, 1850–80

The Department of the Interior directed that census enumerators gather agricultural information in the course of conducting the census. The enumerators gathered data about farms that met certain dollar value production thresholds.

1850 and 1860. For the years ending June 1, 1850, and June 1, 1860, the schedules show the name of the owner, agent, or tenant for every farm with annual produce worth $100 or more. The enumerators recorded the kind and value of acreage and machinery and the amounts of livestock and produce.

1870. For the year ending June 1, 1870, the schedules show the name of the owner, agent, or tenant of farms of three acres or more or with annual produce worth $500. The enumerators recorded the kind and value of acreage and machinery and the amounts of livestock and produce.

1880. For the year ending June 1, 1880, the schedules show the name of the owner, agent, or tenant of farms of three acres or more or with annual produce worth $500. The enumerators recorded the quantity and value of acreage and machinery and the amounts of livestock and produce.

Manufacturers Schedules, 1820; Industrial Schedules, 1850–80

1820. The 1820 enumeration comprises items relating to the articles manufactured including the market value of the article annually manufactured; the kind, quantity, and the cost of raw materials annually consumed; the number (but not the names) of men, women, boys, and girls employed; the quantity and kinds of machinery; and the amount of capital invested.

1850–80. The enumerators recorded information about manufacturing, mining, fisheries, and every mercantile, commercial, and trading business with an annual gross product of $500 or more. In 1880, the schedules show the name of the company or owner; the kind of business; the amount of capital invested; and the quantity and value of materials, labor, machinery, and products. The schedules do not give the names of the employees.

Mortality Schedules, 1850–80

As part of the census reports for the 1850–80 censuses, enumerators gathered information on the deaths of people who died during the 12 months prior to the census date. There is no information on deaths occurring in the nine years outside of the census year. The entries in most of these schedules give the cause of death.

Social Statistics, 1850–70

Social statistics generally provide data on crime, real estate, wages, churches, schools, newspapers, libraries, and public debt. These schedules provide statistical information only and do not give names.

Defective, Dependent, and Delinquent Classes–1880 only

In 1880, the Superintendent of the Census collected information on "defective, dependent, and delinquent classes" using the following schedules: No. 1, insane inhabitants; No. 2, idiots; No. 3, deaf-mutes; No. 4, blind inhabitants; No. 5, homeless children (in institutions); No. 6, inhabitants in prison; and No. 7, pauper and indigent inhabitants.

Availability of the Records

The Bureau of the Census distributed the original nonpopulation schedules to non-Federal repositories in 1918 and 1919, long before the establishment of the National Archives. The Archives has acquired microfilm or published copies of many of these schedules including copies of some of the 1820 industrial schedules, and many of the 1850–80 schedules.

NARA holds complete sets of nonpopulation schedules for some states; incomplete sets for some states; and no records for other states. For a complete list of NARA's holding see pages 41–47 of the *Guide to Genealogical Research*. To verify the availability of these schedules in Washington, DC, and the regional facilities, check NARA's online microfilm locator or the genealogy page at *www.archives.gov.*

Additional Sources of Information

Web site: *www.archives.gov/genealogy*.

Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives, third ed., pages 41–47.

Immigration

The National Archives' immigration records document arrivals to the United States from foreign ports between 1820 and 1982. Passenger lists before 1820 are not at NARA except for a small, incomplete series for the port of Philadelphia beginning in 1800. During the 19th and 20th centuries, most immigrants arrived in New York; however, New York is not indexed from 1847 to June 15, 1897.

Pre-1820 records may be on file at the port of entry or in the state archives where the port is located. An excellent published source for early arrivals is *Passenger and Immigration List Index* by P. William Filby, a multivolume index to published lists of early immigrants to North America. This publication is available in many large libraries that have genealogy collections.

U.S. Customs Service (Record Group 36)

From 1820 to 1890, the U.S. Customs Service maintained passenger lists. A Customs passenger list normally gives each passenger's name, age, sex, and occupation; the country of embarkation; and the country of destination. The manifest also notes if a person died at sea.

Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) (Record Group 85)

Beginning in 1891, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) controlled entry into the United States. By 1893, immigration passenger lists included the name of the master of the vessel, name of the vessel, ports of arrival and embarkation, and the date of arrival. The manifests include the following information for each passenger: full name; age; sex; marital status; occupation; nationality; last residence; final destination; whether an individual had been in the United States before, and if so, when and where; and whether a person was going to join a relative and, if so, the relative's name, address, and relationship to the passenger.

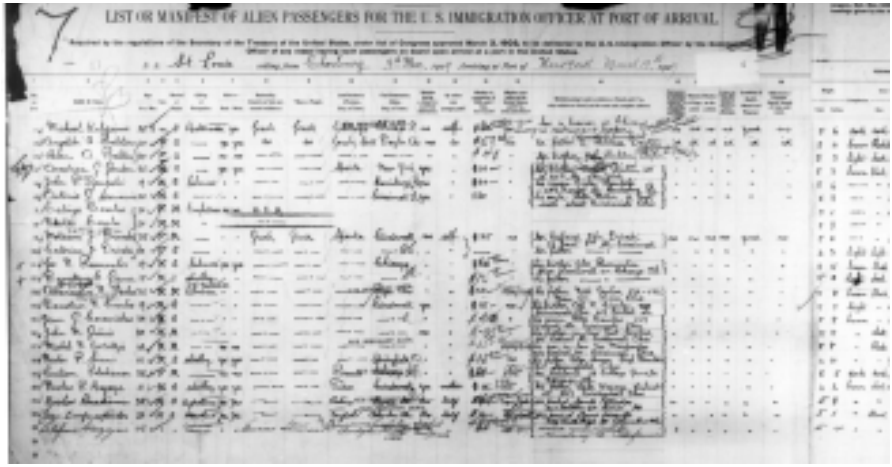
In 1903, INS revised the format to include race. In 1906, they added a personal description and birthplace, and in 1907, INS added the name and address of the nearest relative in the immigrant's home country.

As the passenger boarded the ship, the crew wrote down the passenger's name. The passengers gave their names orally; therefore the name written on the manifest may be spelled differently from the way the passenger regularly spelled his or her name. INS did not officially change the name of the passengers when they entered the country. If you don't know the original name, it may be difficult to find the name on the manifest.

The following is a list of major ports and indexes held by the National Archives. Not all of the arrival records have been indexed, therefore, the dates for which there are copies of the manifests and the dates for which there are indexes do not always correspond.

East Coast Ports

	Arrivals lists	Indexes
Baltimore	1820–1948	1820–1952
Boston	1820–74, 1883–1943	1848–91, 1902–20
New York	1820–1954	1820–46, 1897–1948
Philadelphia	1800–1945	1800–1948



A March 1907 immigration passenger list, *Passenger and Crew Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York, 1897–1919*. Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, RG 85, National Archives Microfilm Publication T715.

For minor East Coast ports, see *Copies of Lists of Passengers at Miscellaneous Ports on the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts and at Ports on the Great Lakes, 1820–73* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M575, 16 rolls, DP). These records are indexed on S*upplemental Index to Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at Atlantic and Gulf Coast Ports (excluding New York), 1820–74* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M334, 188 rolls, DP).

Famine Irish Data Files created by the Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, Center for Immigration Records, are found on the Access to Archival Databases (AAD). The files list people who arrived in New York between 1846–51. The file may include name, age, town of last residence, destination, passenger arrival date, a code for passenger's sex, occupation, literacy, native country, transit status, travel compartment, port of embarkation, and identification number for ship manifest.

Gulf Coast Ports

	Arrivals lists	Indexes
Galveston	1846–71	
	1896–1948	1896–1951
New Orleans	1813–75	1853–1952
	1903–45	

For minor Gulf Coast ports, see *Copies of Lists of Passengers at Miscellaneous Ports on the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts and at Ports on the Great Lakes, 1820–73* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M575, 16 rolls, DP). These records are indexed on *Supplemental Index to Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at Atlantic and Gulf Coast Ports (excluding New York)*, 1820–74 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M334, 188 rolls, DP).

Mexican Border Crossings

These lists, which are available from 1903–54, are arranged by the port of entry into the United States. Among the larger ports are El Paso, Rio Grande, Brownsville, and Laredo, TX; Nogales, AZ; and San Ysidro, CA. In many cases, the information is compiled on a manifest card rather than the traditional manifest sheet.

Many of the records are arranged alphabetically. Others are arranged chronologically, then by manifest number. The records arranged chronologically usually have a related alphabetical index.

Pacific Coast Ports

	Arrivals lists	Indexes
San Francisco	1893–1953	1893–1934
Seattle	1890–1957	

Canadian Border Crossings

Canadian border crossings are also known as St. Albans lists because the INS had its headquarters for Canadian border crossings in St. Albans, VT.

	Arrivals lists	Indexes
St. Albans	1895–1954	1895–1952

See Marian L. Smith "By Way of Canada: U.S. Records of Immigration Across the Canadian Border, 1895–1954 (St. Albans Lists)," *Prologue*, Fall 2000, Vol. 32, No. 3.

Alien Files

By 1947 INS phased out passenger arrival manifests as an official arrival record and replaced them with A-Files (Alien Files). To request an A-File, contact the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) (formerly the Immigration and Naturalization Service [INS]), not the National Archives. The USCIS form G-639, Freedom of Information/ Privacy Act Request, is available online at *www.uscis.gov* and click on forms. Mail the form to the USCIS office nearest you, not to the National Archives.

Arrival Records and Crew Lists, 1957–82

NARA has accessioned passenger arrival records that date from the 1950s to 1982. The records are on microfilm; the paper originals no longer exist. Preservation

copies have not been made for most of the ports so some of the microfilm is very fragile. These manifests are not complete for all ports, they lack indexes, and provide minimal information. To search these records, a researcher must have:

- the name of the passenger;
- the port of arrival into the United States;
- the exact date of arrival; and
- the name of the ship or airline on which the passenger arrived.

The nature and arrangement of the records, and the lack of name indexes, precludes easy access to the records. While our staff can assist researchers with their work, we cannot undertake the extensive research that may be required to locate information about individuals.

Write to the Old Military and Civil Reference Branch (NWCTB). Do not use the NATF Form 81 for these records.

Selected Published Indexes

Glazier, Ira. A., and P. William Filby. *Germans to America: Lists of Passengers Arriving at U.S. Ports, 1850–*. 67 volumes to date through June 1897. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1988.

Glazier, Ira A., *Migration from the Russian Empire: Lists of Passengers Arriving at the Port of New York, 1875–*. 6 volumes to date through June 1891. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1995.

Glazier, Ira A., and P. William Filby. *Italians to America: Lists of Passengers Arriving at U.S. Ports, 1880–99*. 16 volumes to date through April 1901. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1992.

Glazier, Ira A., and Michael Tepper. *The Famine Immigrants: Lists of Irish Immigrants Arriving at the Port of New York, 1846–1851*. 7 volumes. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1983.

The Morton Allen Directory of European Passenger Steamship Arrivals (New York, 1931) lists by year, steamship company, dates of arrival, and the names of vessels arriving at the ports of New York, 1890–1930, and Baltimore, Boston, and Philadelphia, 1904–26. This publication is available in some large public and research libraries.

Availability of the Records

NATF form 81, Order for Copies of Ship Passenger Arrival Records. To search an indexed passenger arrival record, you need to provide the name of the passenger, the port of arrival, and the approximate date of arrival. To order an unindexed arrival record, you also need to provide the name of the vessel and the month and year of its arrival or the name of the port of embarkation and the exact date of arrival. Do not use this form to request the 1957–82 arrival lists.

Microfilm copies of available passenger lists earlier than 1955 can be used in the National Archives in Washington, DC. The regional facilities also hold arrival records that cover the ports in their area.

Additional Sources of Information

Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives, third ed., pages 51–82.

Immigrant and Passenger Arrivals, rev. 1991.

Chinese Exclusion, 1882–1943

From 1882 to 1943, the U.S. Government severely curtailed immigration from China to the United States. This policy resulted, in part, from a concern over the large numbers of Chinese who had immigrated to the United States because of a need for inexpensive labor, especially for the construction of the transcontinental railroad.

Lee Wai She and children (Honolulu district Office: Old Chinese immigration files, "C" file #2989c, box 62.3225G).

The majority of these records are open to the public although access to some may be restricted under the Freedom of Information Act due to privacy considerations.

Records of the District Courts of the United States (Record Group 21). Included among the District Court records are thousands of case files relating to habeas corpus actions brought in both circuit and district courts during the late 1800s and early 1900s. These cases contested the Chinese exclusion actions of Federal immigration officials. Criminal case files document Federal action taken against Chinese who allegedly entered the United States illegally.

Immigration and Naturalization Service (Record Group 85). Many of NARA's regional facilities hold INS records created primarily during the enforcement of the Chinese exclusion laws, 1882–1943. Although the acts were repealed in 1943, some case files may contain correspondence and other records dated as late as the 1960s.

A typical Chinese immigration case file may contain information such as the subject's name, place and date of birth, physical appearance, occupation, names and relationships of other family members, and family history. Because of the nature of INS investigations, case files can provide links to file numbers for related cases, including those for other family members.

To locate a case file, a researcher must know the name the immigrant or traveler used on his or her papers as well as the first port at which the person entered or left the country. There is no master index to all of the files; however, individual INS districts may have created indexes to the files. Also some NARA regional facilities have indexed or are indexing some of the files in their custody.

U.S. Customs Service (Record Group 36). Prior to 1900, when INS assumed enforcement of the Chinese exclusion laws, the collector of customs helped administer the Chinese exclusion policy. The Bureau of Customs did not create individual case files although some of the documentation created by the Customs Service was included in the Bureau of Immigration case file.

Availability of the Records

Many of the records created to implement the Chinese exclusion laws are now in the custody of NARA's regional facilities. To locate the records you

need, contact the regional facility closest to where the person first entered or left the country.

Additional Sources of Information

Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives, third ed., page 62.

Chinese Immigration and the Chinese in the United States: Records in the Regional Archives of the National Archives and Records Administration, RIP 99, compiled by Waverly B. Lowell (Washington: National Archives and Records Administration, 1996). Also available at *www.archives.gov* and click on locations and hours.

Naturalization

Naturalization was a two-step process that generally required a five-year minimum residency in the United States. After the first two years of residency, an alien was eligible to file a declaration of intention ("first papers") to become a U.S. citizen. After three more years, the alien could file a petition for naturalization. If the citizenship was granted, the alien received the only copy of the certificate of naturalization. Immigrants were not required by law to become naturalized citizens.

1790–1906

From 1790 to September 26, 1906, any "court of record"—a municipal, county, state, or Federal court—could grant U.S. citizenship. Because the courts created their own forms, pre-1906 naturalization records vary in useful genealogical information. Most records indicate only the person's name, county of residence when naturalized, and former country of citizenship. Few records include the date and place of birth or the date and port of arrival. The declaration and the petition did not have to take place in the same court or state.

1906–92

After September 26, 1906, naturalizations took place in courts with jurisdiction, usually Federal and state courts, however, some naturalizations were done in county and other local courts. The forms also became standardized. The new forms required the applicant's name, place and date of birth, occupation, address, date of arrival in the United States, port of arrival, and the name of the vessel. For the first time, the forms also listed the names of the wives and minor children with their date and place of birth.

Also after 1906, the courts forwarded copies of the naturalizations to the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Exceptions to the Process

Derivative Citizenship: Until 1922, wives derived citizenship from their husbands but were not prevented from becoming citizens under their own names. Children derived citizenship from their fathers.

Minor Aliens: People who arrived in the United States as minors between 1824 and 1906 could be naturalized by filing only a petition for naturalization; they did not need to file a declaration of intention. These petitions often include information normally found in declarations of intention.

Veterans: In 1862, a law waived the requirement for filing the declaration of intention for honorably discharged veterans who had lived in the United States for one year. Laws enacted in 1894, 1918, 1919, 1926, 1940, and 1952 provided other provisions for veterans.

Availability of the Records

If you are searching for a pre-1906 naturalization, contact the state archives for the state where the naturalization occurred to request a search of state, county, and local courts. If the search is unsuccessful, contact the National Archives regional facility that serves the state where the activity took place to request a search of the Federal courts. For Washington, DC, courts, see page 33.

Generally speaking, the National Archives does not have the naturalization records for state, county, and local courts. There are some exceptions. The regional archives in Boston, New York City, and Chicago have photographic copies called "dexigraphs" for naturalizations performed in non-Federal courts before 1906. The Boston office has dexigraphs for Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont state, county, and local courts. The New York City office has dexigraphs for New York City courts. The Chicago office has dexigraphs for Cook County, Illinois, courts. The Work Projects Administration made the dexigraphs in the 1930s.

Other exceptions exist. Please contact the respective National Archives regional facility.

When contacting the National Archives, please provide the applicant's:

- name and aliases;
- residence when naturalized;
- approximate date of birth; and
- former country of citizenship.

For records after 1906, information about the spouse and children is helpful.

If the search for a post-1906 naturalization record is unsuccessful, contact the U.S. Citizenship and Immigrant Services (USCIS), formerly INS. USCIS has copies of naturalization records after September 26, 1906. Submit your request on a USCIS Freedom of Information/ Privacy Act Request (G-639). Contact USCIS for the G-639 at *www.uscis.gov* and click on forms.

Additional Sources of Information

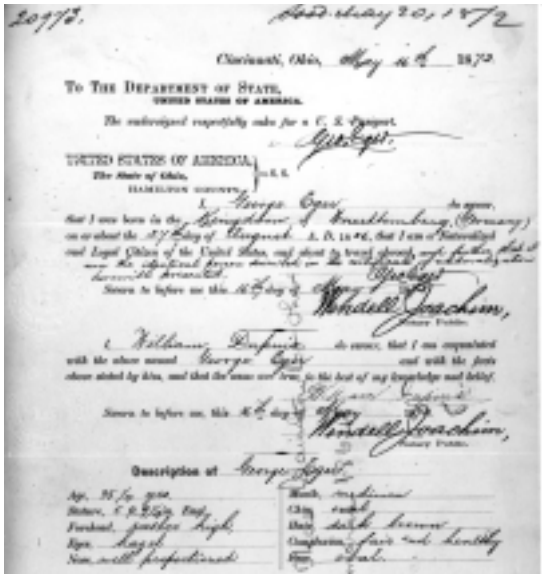
Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives, third ed., pages 87–105.

Passport Applications

NARA has passport applications submitted to the State Department from October 1795–March 1925. The U.S. Department of State has passport applications from April 1925 to the present. With two exceptions, U.S. citizens were not required to have a passport for travel abroad until 1941. The two periods when the Federal Government required passports were during the Civil War from August 19, 1861–March 17, 1862, and again during World War I from May 22, 1918–1921. Aliens were ineligible to apply for a passport except those who had filed their first papers (declared their intent to become a citizen). Those who had filed could apply for a passport from 1863–66 and 1907–20. Neither NARA nor the State Department has passports issued by other countries.

The four major types of passport applications are regular, emergency, special, and insular.

Regular. Most passport applications were for regular passports. Since the 1860s most contain the applicant's name, date and place of birth, physical description, date and port of immigration, date and court of naturalization if foreign-born, and since December 21, 1914, a photograph. Some applications may also give the occupation. The earliest passport applications occasionally contain affidavits and other supporting documents.



To The Department of State,
United States of America.

The undersigned respectfully asks for a U. S. Passport.

United States of America,
The State of Ohio,
Hamilton County, } ss.

Description of

Top section of an 1872 passport application. Records of the passport division. General Records of the Department of State, RG 59.

Emergency. Diplomatic and consular officials issued emergency passports valid for six months from 1874–1926. The applications include the applicant's date and place of birth, occupation, permanent U.S. residence, date of departure from the United States, place of residence abroad, purpose of the application, and the length of time the applicant intended to reside abroad.

Emergency passports for naturalized citizens also include the date when the person embarked and arrived into the United States as well as the port of embarkation and the name of the ship. The application also gives the date and the court of naturalization, and the applicant's travel plans including the date of departure from the United States, the ship's name, the arrival date, and the foreign port of destination.

Special. The Department of State issued special passports to diplomats and other Government officials traveling abroad on official business.

Insular. Residents of U.S. insular possessions or territories applied to the Department of State for insular passports. NARA has applications from residents of Hawaii from 1916–24, the Philippines from 1901–24, and Puerto Rico from 1915–22.

Microfilmed Indexes

Registers and Indexes for Passport Applications, 1810–1906 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1371, 13 rolls, DP).

Index to Passport Applications, 1850–52, 1860–80, 1906–23 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1848, 61 rolls).

Microfilmed Applications

- *Passport Applications, 1795–1905* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1372, 694 rolls).
- *Passport Applications, 1906 to March 31, 1925* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1490, 2740 rolls).
- E*mergency Passport Application (Passports Issued Abroad) 1877–1907* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1834, 56 rolls). Applications from 1874–76 no longer exist.

Availability of the Records

Pre-1925 Applications. Civil Reference Branch (NWCTC).

Post-1925 Applications. Paper copies of passport applications from April 1925 to the present can be requested by mail from the Department of State, Research and Liaison Branch, 1111 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC, 20522-1705.

Additional Sources of Information

Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives, third ed., pages 330–331.

Visa Applications, 1914–40

Passports are issued by the Federal Government to U.S. citizens traveling abroad; visas are permits allowing the bearer entry into or transit through the country that granted the permit. Before World War I aliens did not need visas to enter the United States except for a brief time during the Civil War. In 1917 all aliens were required to obtain visas from a U.S. consulate before entering this country. After passage of the Immigration Act of 1924, consular officials were responsible for denying visas to applicants inadmissible under the quota system.

The visa case files do not generally include applications for entry into the United States. Visa case files are arranged in three chronological groupings: 1914–23, 1924–32, and 1933–40. Thereafter they are arranged alphabetically by the name of the alien. Most of the case files for 1914–23 and some for 1924–32 have been disposed of except for precedent cases and for case files that contain policy material or relate to significant individuals. The Department of State destroyed visas from March 1940 and later.

Diplomatic visas can contain personal information about the diplomat and the members of his party. Standard visas, however, generally give the name of the application and when and where the consulate issued the visa.

Availability of the Records

Civil Reference Branch (NWCTC)

Seamen's Protection Certificates

American seamen carried seamen's protection certificates as proof of citizenship. During the 18th and early 19th centuries, the United States issued seamen's protection certificates in an attempt to protect American seamen from impressment by Great Britain and other powers. In 1796 Congress required that each district collector of customs keep a register of those seamen who applied for seamen's protection certificates. The seamen presented evidence of citizenship such as a birth certificate, passport, old seamen's protection certificate issued in another port, or an oath taken before a notary public, alderman, or other officials. Collectors of customs received applications, issued certificates to the seamen, kept proofs of citizenship on file, and regularly sent lists of registered seamen to the Secretary of State.

Because the certificates were used for identification, the registers give the seaman's name, certificate number and date of issue, age, place of birth, and how citizenship was obtained (birth or naturalization). The register also gives a physical description including height, complexion, color of hair and eyes, and in some cases, identifying marks such as scars, limps, tattoos, or deformed limbs.

The application gives the name, age, physical description, place of birth, and signature or mark of witnesses. NARA holds few applications or certificates.

Availability of the Records

Old Military and Civil Reference Branch (NWCTB)

Additional Sources of Information

Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives, third ed., pages 259–262 for a list of ports and dates for those ports.

Public Land

The U.S. General Land Office (GLO), a predecessor agency of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), documented the transfer of public lands from the U.S. Government to private ownership. Land patent certificates document only the *first* transfer of title of land from the United States to another party. Records of later transfers may be found in county or state records.

The BLM web site (*www.glorecords.blm.gov*) provides access to Federal land conveyance records for public land states. For eastern public land states, with the exception of Iowa, data is available for patents issued between 1820 and 1920. For Iowa, researchers need to consult the tract books. For western public land states, data is available for patents issued from 1820–1965. Images of patents are available for patents issued from 1820–1920. The site does not contain every Federal title record issued for public land states. This web site is an ongoing automation project of the BLM, and patent images and data are being added daily to this site. The web site visitors' center contains links to other helpful related sites.

The **Eastern States** are comprised of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Although NARA has the land entry case files for these states, the tract books are held by the Eastern States Office, Bureau of Land Management, Department of the Interior (BLM-ESO), 7450 Boston Boulevard, Springfield, VA 22153.

The **Western States** are comprised of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

The GLO tract books and patent books for the 17 western public land states are held at the National Archives Building in Washington, DC. Tract books record who received which piece of land. The patent books record the official transfer from the Federal Government to an individual.

To request a pre-July 1908 land entry case file you need to know the state, the historical land office at the time of the transaction, the type of land entry, and the final certificate number. There is also a seven-states name index to the pre-July 1908 general land entry case files for Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Florida, Louisiana, Nevada, and Utah. For the western states the legal description is sufficient. To get the legal description, write to the courthouse where the land was located.

To search post-July 1908 land records, you need to know the name of the person who acquired the land (entryman) and the state where they purchased the land. The legal description (section, township, and range) is often useful.

The following states are not public land states: Any state that was one of the original 13 colonies as well as Hawaii, Kentucky, Maine, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, and West Virginia. Contact the appropriate state archives for information on these states.

To request a bounty land warrant, you need to know the war in which the soldier fought, the year of the congressional act authorizing the warrant, the number of acres authorized to the soldier, and the warrant number.

Availability of the Records

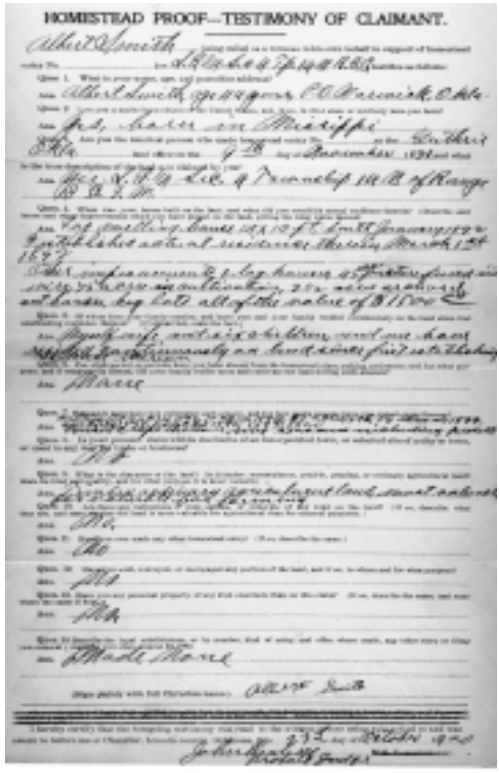
Old Military and Civil Reference Branch (NWCTB) unless otherwise noted.

To request a copy of a land patent, use NATF Form 84, Order for Copies of Land Entry Files.

Additional Sources of Information

Research in the Land Entry Files of the General Land Office, RIP 114, formerly GIL 67, 2006.

Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives, third ed., pages


HOMESTEAD PROOF—TESTIMONY OF CLAIMANT.

Homestead proof, testimony of claimant, for Albert Smith, Guthrie, OK. Records of the Bureau of Land Management, RG 49.

285–303

Civilian Employees

Service of civilian employees of the Federal Government is documented among some of the records in the National Archives. There is often information about civilian employees dispersed throughout correspondence files of the agencies for which they worked, but this information requires extensive research and consultation of indexes.

Official Register of the United States

The Federal Government published the *Official Register of the United States* biannually from 1816–1959. Until 1907, the *Register* contained a list of virtually all employees in the Federal Government.

1816–1906. For these years, the *Register* is arranged in a table that can include the employee's name, job title, the state or country of birth, the location of their post, and their annual salary. Earlier years have less information. The volumes are arranged by agency, office, or bureau. Beginning in 1877, each volume has an alphabetical name index.

1907–59. The volumes consist of one-line entries for Federal employees arranged alphabetically by surname. The entries contain the following information: the employee's name, the department in which employed; official title; bureau or office in which employed; annual salary; the state, territory or foreign country of birth; and the congressional district and county from which appointed. After 1920, these volumes usually only contain information on higher level employees.

Availability of the Records

The *Official Register of the United States* is available in many Federal depository libraries. Check the Government blue pages for the library closest to you.

Application, Recommendation, and Appointment Records

Letters of application, recommendation, and appointment contain records such as letters received and sent relating to nominations for employment, testimonials, notifications of appointments, oaths of office, requests for transfers, recommendations for promotion, resignations, complaints, petitions, and reports of inspectors. Occasionally the files include information about the employee's date and place of birth as well as the place and date of death.

Department of State, 1797–1901. The application and recommendation case files of the Department of State, 1797–1901, include letters from applicants for positions throughout the Government including the diplomatic and consular service. Files for the Adams through Grant administrations (1797–1877) are available on several microfilm publications.

Availability of the Records

Civil Reference Branch (NWCTC)

Department of the Interior, 1849–1907. The records of the appointments division of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior, 1849–1907, includes letters from applicants, letters supporting or protesting applicants, oaths of office, charges filed against employees. Positions include territorial governors, secretaries, commissioners, and surveyors general; Indian agents and superintendents; land office registers and receivers; and patent agents. Files for Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Wisconsin, and Wyoming are available on microfilm.

Availability of the Records

Civil Reference Branch (NWCTC)

Records of Appointments of Postmasters, 1789–1971.

- Record of Appointment of Postmasters, Oct. 1789–1832 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1131, 4 rolls)
- Record of Appointment of Postmaster, 1832–Sept. 30, 1971 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M841, 145 rolls, DP)

Availability of the Records

Old Military and Civil Reference Branch (NWCTB)

Official Personnel Files

The personnel records for Federal service that ended after 1910 are in the National Personnel Records Center, Civilian Personnel, 111 Winnebago Street, St. Louis, MO 63118. Access to files less than 72 years old may be restricted.

Additional Sources of Information

Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives, third ed., pages 271–80.

Residents of the District of Columbia

Records in the National Archives document the lives of District of Columbia residents. Many of these records are dispersed among correspondence files, administrative files, tax assessment records, tax payment records, and building permits. The files are often unindexed and require extensive research to locate information pertaining to individuals. Records may also be in different record groups for different periods.

Beginning in 1802 a series of mayors administered the District of Columbia until February 1871. From then until June 1874, Officials of the Territorial Government ran the city followed by the Commissioners of the District of Columbia. The commissioners oversaw the city from July 1874 through July 1878. On June 11, 1878, the Board of Commissioners became the administrative head of Washington, DC.

Records of the District Courts of the United States (Record Group 21)

The National Archives Building holds records for the District Courts in the District of Columbia only. The other court records are found in the regional facility that serves the state in which they are found. Among the court records held by the National Archives in the Washington, DC, area are:

- Bankruptcy: 1814–1878, with gaps.
- Divorces: 1860–1954; there are name indexes that list both parties in the divorce.
- Marriages: licenses from the Fourth Presbyterian Church, 1837–62. NARA does not hold any other marriage records.
- Naturalizations: 1802–1926; there are name indexes.
- Probate records: 1801–1878.

Records of the Bureau of the Census (Record Group 29)

- Census, 1800–1930. See pages 3–6 for more information about the census.

Records of the Supreme Court of the United States (Record Group 267)

Appeals from the Circuit Court of the District of Columbia to the Supreme Court, 1792–1893.

Records of the Government of the District of Columbia (Record Group 351)

- Building permits for the District of Columbia, 1877–1949
- Deed books, 1792–1869. The deed books record the transfer of property including slaves.
- Metropolitan police
  - register of appointments to the Metropolitan Police Force, 1861–1930
  - personnel files, 1861–1950
  - service records, 1861–1930

Records of St. Elizabeth's Hospital (Record Group 418)

The records of the medical records branch, 1866–1955, consist of the records of St. Elizabeth's Hospital. There is a 75-year restriction on access to the records. Also, the records are incomplete.

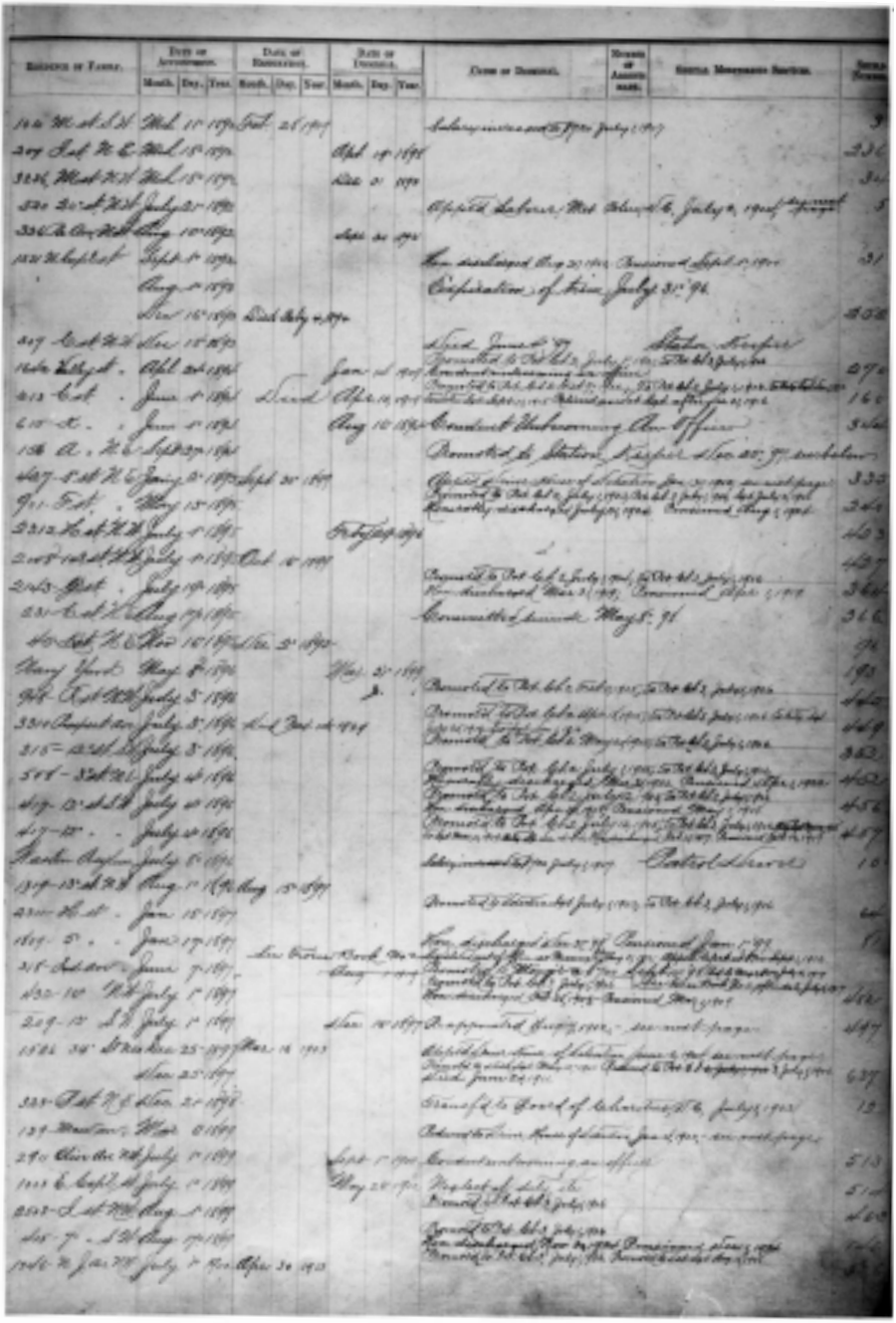
NARA does not hold the following District of Columbia records: births, deaths, and marriages except for the series cited above.

Availability of the Records

Old Military and Civil Reference Branch (NWCTB)

Additional Sources of Information

Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives, third ed. References to DC residents are cited throughout the *Guide*, but see specifically pages 319–324.



Page from the register of appointments to the force. Records of the Metropolitan Police Records of the District of Columbia, RG 351.

American Indians

The National Archives holds information about American Indians who maintained their ties to Federally recognized tribes. Most of the records are arranged by tribe from about 1830–1970. There are many lists containing names of individual Indians, such as Indian census rolls, a few emigration lists, enrollments, and annuity rolls. Personal names often appear in correspondence files and other administrative records, but locating names in these records often requires extensive research.

The records are usually arranged by tribe. It is very difficult to determine a person's tribal affiliation if you do not already know the tribe. Native Americans may sometimes appear on the Federal decennial censuses designated as Indian, but the census rarely gives the tribe. If the census includes a group of Indians living together, the tribe may be named. Indian reservations may be found sometimes at the end of some of the counties. The 1930 census lists Indians both on and off the reservation, but does not indicate the person's tribe unless he or she is living on a reservation.

Annual Census Rolls of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1885–1940. These records normally show for each person in a family the Indian name, English name, or both names; age; sex; and relationship to the head of the family, or sometimes, to other enrolled Indians. The records occasionally include supplementary information, such as names of people who died or were born during the year. The censuses only enumerate people who were living with Federally recognized tribes on reservations; they do not usually include names of people living away from the tribe. The later rolls are typed, and sometimes arranged in alphabetical sections. The earliest ones are handwritten and sometimes difficult to read. These records are available on *Indian Census Rolls, 1884–1940* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M595, 695 rolls, DP).

Lists of Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Creek Who Moved West, 1830–46. Each entry on these lists usually contains the name of the head of the family; the number of persons in the family by age and sex; a description of the property owned before removal, including the location of real property; and dates of departure from the East and arrival in the West.

Enrollment and Applications for Enrollment of the Five Civilized Tribes and Related Records, 1896–1907. The National Archives has custody of enrollment and applications for enrollment of the Five Civilized Tribes—the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole—living in Oklahoma. While the original records for most of these series are in the custody of the National Archives–Southwest Region in Fort Worth, TX, the National Archives Building in Washington, DC, has microfilm copies.

The indexes of names and some personal data from some of the applications are also accessible in the Archival Research Catalog (ARC); see page 51 for more information:

- Citizenship Applications, 1896. A total of 9,618 applications received by the Dawes Commission have been digitized.
- Dawes Commission Applications, 1898–1914. This includes descriptions of 64,177 Cherokee, Chickasaw, Creek, and Seminole applications for enrollment to the Five Civilized Tribes. There is no description in ARC relating to the Choctaw. A total of 10,874 of the 64,177 application descriptions have digital copies attached to them. Many of the descriptions share the same digitized image(s).
- Final Rolls of the Citizens and Freedmen of the Five Civilized Tribes in the Indian Territory, 1907. The document lists the names of the individuals who were allowed on the tribal rolls by the Dawes Commission. The index to the final rolls is also available digitally on ARC. All 634 pages of the final rolls have been digitized.
- Wallace Roll of Cherokee Freedmen in Indian Territory, 1890. The Wallace roll is a schedule of names of Cherokee freedmen created by Special Agent John W. Wallace. Individuals on the schedule were entitled to share with the Shawnee and Delaware in the per capita

distribution of $75,000, appropriated by Congress in October 1888. All 196 pages of the Wallace roll have been digitized.

- Kern-Clifton Roll of Cherokee Freedmen, January 16, 1867. The digitized document is a census of freedmen of the Cherokee Nation and their descendants. All 202 pages of the Kern-Clifton roll have been digitized.

Eastern Cherokee Claims Files, 1902–10. The index to applications submitted for the Eastern Cherokee Roll of 1909 is digitized and available on NARA's web site. The index includes the names of all persons applying for compensation arising from the judgment of the U.S. Court of Claims on May 28, 1906, for the Eastern Cherokee tribe. The applications list family members including grandparents or ancestors on earlier rolls.

You can request NATF Form 83 for a search of the Eastern Cherokee records.

Annuity Payrolls, 1841–1949. Records of the annuities distributed by the Government to tribes under treaty agreements give the individual Indian name of heads of households. They may tell the number of persons in a family, plus the sex and age, but usually do not give family member names.

Carlisle Indian Industrial School, 1879–1919. The Carlisle school was the first Government-sponsored non-reservation boarding school for Indians. The records include registers of students as well as information about their tribal affiliation, academic career, medical condition, financial affairs, and careers after leaving school.

Availability of the Records

The original administrative records of the headquarters of the Bureau of Indian Affairs are in the National Archives in Washington, DC. These records are available from Old Military and Civil Records Branch (NWCTB).

The National Archives regional facilities hold records created by the Bureau of Indian Affairs field offices and Indian schools at the regional level. The

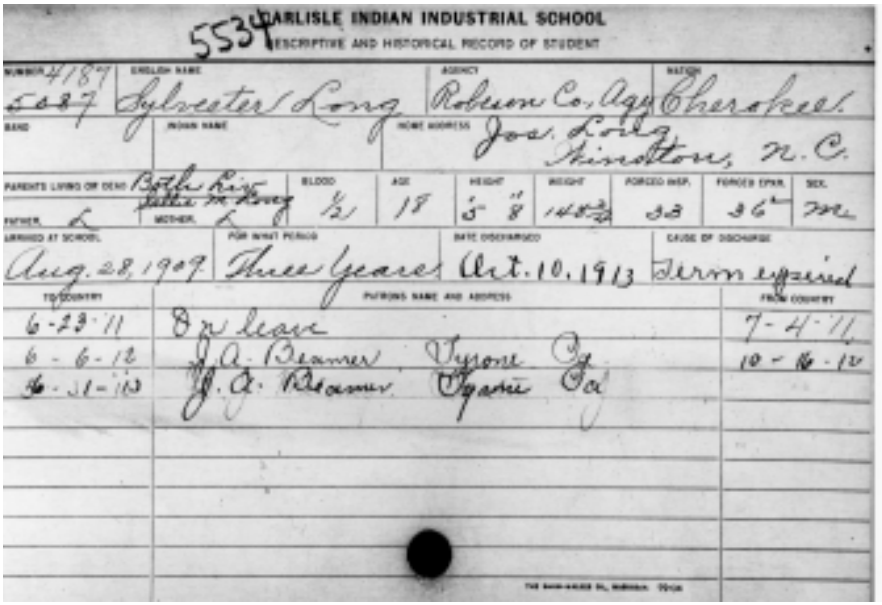
National Archives–Southwest Region, Fort Worth, TX, for example, holds many records relating to the Five Civilized Tribes. Check with the regional branch near you for information on their holdings.

Additional Sources of Information

Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives, third ed., pages 213–234.

Hill, Edward E. *Guide to Records in the National Archives of the United States Relating to American Indians*. National Archives and Records Administration. Washington, DC, 1981.

American Indians: A Select Catalog of National Archives Microfilm Publications, rev. 1995.


CARLISLE INDIAN INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL
DESCRIPTIVE AND HISTORICAL RECORD OF STUDENT

5534

4187 5087 Sylvester Long Robeson Co. Agy Cherokee

Jos. Long Kinston, N.C.

Both Dec. Father m Prev. ½ 18 5' 8" 148 33 36 M

Aug. 28, 1909 Three years Oct. 10, 1913 Term expired

TO COUNTRY	PUTRONS NAME AND ADDRESS	FROM COUNTRY
6-23-11	On leave	7-4-11
6-6-12	J. A. Beamer Tyrone Pa.	10-16-12
6-21-13	J. A. Beamer Tyrone Pa	

Individual history card for a student at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, PA. Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, RG 75.

African Americans

The African American experience is documented throughout the records of the Federal Government. Records relating to African Americans usually are not found as separate series, but interspersed among the records. Although many records indicate the race of an individual, most do not. From the close of the Civil War to the present, genealogy for black Americans generally follows the same search path as genealogy for others. Records about slaves are more difficult to locate and are found rarely in the National Archives.

Slavery

Slave Manifests (Record Group *36*)

Masters of ships bringing cargo into the United States from abroad had to submit a manifest or list of all of the goods they were importing. NARA has manifests for a few of the ships that brought in slaves between 1789 and 1808 before the foreign slave trade became illegal. Manifests give the number of slaves, African port or area from which the ships sailed, U.S. port it entered, shipper, and name and address of the recipients of the cargo. Because no names appear on the lists, these manifests are useful only for circumstantial evidence.

Masters of ships carrying slave cargo *between domestic ports* were required to submit a manifest of their human cargo. These manifests generally include the slave's name (usually the given name, not the last name), sex, age, and height. They also contain the name of the shipper and the person or firm to whom the slaves were shipped. The records of the customs houses include slave manifests for New Orleans, LA, 1819–52 and 1860–61; Mobile, AL, 1822–60; and Savannah, GA, 1801–60 and 1860–61. To use these records, you need to know where, when, and by whom the slave was sold.

Records of the District Courts of the United States (Record Group 21)

Except for the District of Columbia, the National Archives does not hold

slave records. For slavery records begin by contacting the state archives in the state in which the slave lived. The records for the District of Columbia are:

- *Records of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia Relating to Slaves, 1851–63* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M433, 3 rolls).
- *Habeas Corpus Case Records, 1820–63, of the U.S. Circuit Court of the District of Columbia* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M434, 2 rolls).

Manumission Records (Record Group 217)

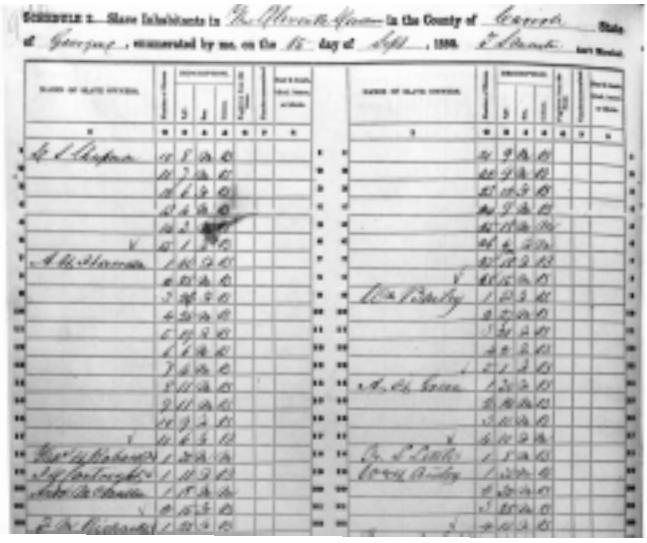
Manumission was the legal process that granted a slave his or her freedom. The National Archives holds manumission records for the District of Columbia only. For manumission records in other jurisdictions, contact the state in which the slave was manumitted. The records for the District of Columbia are:

- *Records of the Board of Commissioners for the Emancipation of Slaves in the District of Columbia, 1862–63* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M520, 6 rolls, DP).

Federal Censuses

From 1790–1840, the census schedules list only the names of the head of household including the heads of free households. Others in the household, including slaves, are tallied but not named.

In 1850 and 1860, the Government took a slave census as well as a general census. Neither schedule lists the names of the slaves. The schedules give the name of the owner and list the slaves by gender, age, and whether black or mulatto. The names of all free blacks were included in the 1850 and 1860 general population censuses.



Schedule of slave inhabitants. 1850 census population schedules for Carroll County, GA. Records of the Bureau of the Census, RG 29. National Archives Microfilm Publication M432.

The listing of all African Americans by name began with the 1870 census, the first Federal census taken after the Civil War and emancipation. (See pages 4–11 for additional information about census records.)

Southern Claims Commission

An act of Congress on March 3, 1871 (16 Stat. 524), established the Commissioner of Claims, commonly known as the Southern Claims Commission (SCC). The commissioner reviewed and made recommendations regarding the claims of Southerners loyal to the Union who had "furnished stores and supplies for the use of the U.S. Army" during the Civil War.

African Americans submitted claims before the commission and were also among the 220,000 witnesses who testified on behalf of both African American and white claimants. The commissioner's case files can contain such information as the names, ages, and places of residence of former slaves; the names of slave owners' slave manumissions; and other personal data about blacks before and after the Civil War.

The approved claims are among the records of the Third Auditor of the

The Sam McCall family of Wilcox County, Alabama (83-FA-5005).

Treasury in Records of the Accounting Officers of the Department of the Treasury (Record Group 217). Barred and disallowed claims can be found in the Records of the U.S. House of Representatives (Record Group 233). Barred and disallowed claims that were appealed are in the Records of the U.S. Court of Claims (Record Group 123).

To determine if your ancestor filed a claim before the commission and whether the claim was approved, barred, or disallowed, consult the consolidated index on fiche 1–4 of *Barred and Disallowed Case Files of the Southern Claims Commission, 1871–80* (National Archives Microfiche Publication M1407, 4829 fiche, DP). The consolidated index provides an alphabetical listing of persons who filed claims before the commission.

The records of the SCC are on the following NARA microfilm or microfiche publications, however, not all of the records of the Southern Claims Commission have been microfilmed or microfiched.

Treasury Records (Record Groups 217 and 56)

- *Records of the Commissioners of Claims (Southern Claims Commission), 1871–80* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M87, 14 rolls, DP) includes the journal of commissioners, letters received, and an unpublished geographical list of claims.
- *Southern Claims Commission Approved Claims, 1871–1880*: *Alabama* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M2062, 36 rolls, DP).
- *Southern Claims Commission Approved Claims, 1871–1880: Georgia* (National Archives Microfiche Publication M1658, 1100 fiche, DP).
- *Southern Claims Commission Approved Claims, 1871–1880*: *Virginia* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M2094, 45 rolls, DP).
- *Southern Claims Commission Approved Claims, 1871–1880*: *West Virginia* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1762, 3 rolls, DP).

Availability of the Records

Civil Reference Branch, College Park, MD

U.S. House of Representatives (Record Group 233)

- *Barred and Disallowed Case Files of the Southern Claims Commission, 1871–80* (National Archives Microfiche Publication M1407, 4829 fiche, DP). This publication also includes the consolidated index discussed above.
- *Summary Reports of the Commissioners, 1879–80* (National Archives Microfilm Publication P2257, 1 roll). This publication also includes the consolidated index.

Availability of the Records

Center for Legislative Archives (NWL)

U.S. Court of Claims (Record Group 123)

- *U.S. Court of Claims Docket Cards for Congressional Case Files, ca. 1884–ca. 1943* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M2007, 5 rolls). This publication contains docket numbers for Southern Claims appended to the Court of Claims.

Availability of the Records

Old Military and Civil Reference Branch (NWCTB)

Freedman's Savings and Trust

In 1865 Congress incorporated the Freedman's Savings and Trust Company (known as Freedman's Bank) primarily for the benefit of former slaves. The main office was in Washington, DC, but the bank also established offices in Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, New York, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Texas.

- *Registers of Signatures of Depositors in Branches of the Freedman's Savings and Trust, 1865–74* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M816, 27 rolls, DP). Contains personal information about depositors in 29 branches.
- *Indexes to Deposit Ledgers in Branches of the Freedman's Savings and Trust Company, 1865–74* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M817, 5 rolls, DP). Provides the names and account numbers for depositors in 26 branches.
- *Journal of the Board of Trustees and Minutes of Committees and Inspectors of the Freedman's Savings and Trust Company, 1865–74.* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M847, 2 rolls, DP).

Availability of the Records

Civil Reference Branch (NWCTC)

Additional Sources of Information

- *Guide to Genealogical Records in the National Archives*, third ed., pages 239–254.
- *Black Family Research: Records of the Post-Civil War Federal Agencies at the National Archives* (RIP 108), compiled by Reginald Washington, National Archives and Records Administration, rev. 2006. This RIP also describes the records of the Freedmen's Bureau. (See box.)
- *List of Free Black Heads of Families in the First Census of the United States [1790]* (Special List 34), compiled by Debra L. Newman.
- *Black Studies: A Select Catalog of National Archives Microfilm Publications* (National Archives and Records Administration, 1984).
- *Black History: A Guide to Civilian Records in the National Archives*, compiled by Debra L. Newman (National Archives and Records Administration, 1984).

On March 3, 1865, the War Department established the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, also known as the Freedmen's Bureau. These records are an excellent source of information about freed slaves. Because the records are military records, however, they are not described in this brochure. For more information see *Black Family Research: Records of Post-Civil War Federal Agencies at the National Archives* (RIP 108, rev. 2006).

War Relocation Authority

Japanese Internments

During World War II, about 110,000 persons of Japanese ancestry were evacuated from parts of California, Oregon, Washington, Arizona, Alaska, and Hawaii that were designated as military areas. Later in 1942, a new order established assembly centers under the Wartime Civil Control Administration (WCCA). Established at the same time, the War Relocation Authority (WRA) was set up to carry out the removal, relocation, maintenance, and supervision of those excluded from the military areas. Files compiled by the WCCA and WRA contain much personal information about the evacuees.

The 10 centers were located in Central Utah, Topaz, UT; Colorado River, Poston, AZ; Gila River, Rivers, AZ; Granada, Amachie, CO; Heart Mountain, Heart Mountain, WY; Jerome, Denson, AR; Manzanar, Manzanar, CA; Minikoda, Hunt, ID; Rohwer, McGehhe, AR; and Tule Lake, Newell, CA.

A crowd of onlookers on the first day of evacuation from the Japanese quarter in San Francisco (210-GC-426).

Japanese American Internee Files, 1942–46

This automated data file is available at *www.archives.gov/aad*. This series of records contains personal descriptive data about Japanese Americans evacuated from Washington, Oregon, and California to the 10 camps listed above. Among the data elements are name, age, race of internee and spouse, year and place of birth, and occupation of father.

Evacuee and Excluded Files, 1942–46

This series is a consolidation of an individual's files from regional, area, district, and other field offices of the agency, the relocation centers, and the statistics section of the headquarters of the relocation planning division. These paper files include the information on the automated database described above as well as correspondence on various topics including the health records of individual evacuees. The case files include personal history records that give the name of the evacuee, individual and family numbers, birthplace, birth date, religion, marital status, educational accomplishments, linguistic ability, employment history, and military service records. The files may also include property records and health records.

The following researchers have access to the files:

- Individuals have access to their own files
- Family members born less than 75 years ago with written permission from the family member
- Family member born more than 75 years ago
- Researchers looking for anyone born less than 75 years ago will need to provide a death certificate, obituary, or copy from the Social Security death index

Final Accountability Rosters of Evacuees at Relocation Centers, 1944–46

These rosters are arranged by relocation center followed by an alphabetical list of the evacuees at that relocation center. Among the information provided is the name, the assigned family number, sex, date of birth, citizenship status, pre-evacuation address, date of entry into the center, date of departure from the center, and final destination after leaving the center. The rosters are on *Final*

Accountability Rosters of Evacuees at Relocation Centers, 1944–46 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1865, 10 rolls, DP).

Availability of the Records

Old Military and Civil Reference Branch (NWCTB)

Additional Sources of Information

Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives, third ed., pages 206–208.

American Overseas Territories

- **Virgin Islands.** There is a wealth of information among the records of the Government of the Virgin Islands prior to America's purchase of the islands in 1917. The records include reports of baptisms, as well as various lists of slaveholders, slaves, and free inhabitants. These records are in Danish. The Virgin Islands are also included in the 1920 and 1930 Federal decennial population censuses.
- **Puerto Rico.** Records relating to residents of Puerto Rico as well as Federal and territorial employees are included in various correspondence files of the Bureau of Insular Affairs. There are card indexes to the records. Puerto Rico is included in the 1910, 1920, and 1930 Federal decennial population censuses. In addition, the Bureau of the Census conducted a special census of the island's population in 1935. That census is available on *Schedules of the 1935 Special Censuses of Puerto Rico: The Social and Population Schedules, 1935–1936* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1881, 88 rolls).
- **Panama Canal Zone.** The records of the Panama Canal include information relating to Americans who worked in the Canal Zone during or after the construction phase or were married in the Canal Zone. The Canal Zone is also included in the 1920 and 1930 Federal decennial population censuses.
- **American Samoa and Guam** are included in the 1920 and 1930 Federal decennial population censuses.

Availability of the Records

For all but census records, Civil Reference Branch (NWCTC)

Where to Find Vital Statistics

NARA holds records created by the Federal Government only. Records such as birth, death, and marriage certificates are created by local authorities and are usually found at the county or state level. Although some states began keeping these earlier, throughout most of the United States, birth and death registration became a requirement from 1890–1915. Before state or local registration, only church records and family Bibles *generally recorded* births and deaths. Marriage records will be found in most counties, often dating from the establishment of the county.

Deeds and wills are also useful genealogical sources. These are usually found at the county courthouses, although some of the earliest records may be at the state archives.

Where to find vital statistics: You will need to know where the birth, death, or marriage took place in order to find the record. The following sources are good ways to get started, but you may also want to contact local historical and genealogical societies.

Where to Write for Vital Records: Births, Deaths, Marriages, and Divorces (May 2002); available for purchase from the Government Printing Office (GPO), *www.gpo.gov.*

www.vitalrec.com provides information on how to order vital records from both the state and the county level.

www.cdc.gov/other.htm#states provides links to the states' departments of health web sites.

National Archives Online

Genealogy web site

www.archives.gov/genealogy.

Access to Archival Databases (AAD)

AAD allows for online access to electronic records that are highly structured such as in databases. The series selected for AAD identify specific people, geographic areas, organizations, or dates. Some of these series serve as indexes to accessioned archival records in non-electronic form.

- Web site: *www.archives.gov/aad*

Archival Research Catalog (ARC)

ARC is the online catalog of NARA's nationwide holdings in the Washington, DC, area, regional archives, and Presidential libraries. ARC replaces its prototype, the National Archives Information Locator (NAIL).

- Web site: *www.archives.gov/research/arc*

National Archives Regional Facilities

Many of the records described in this brochure are also available at NARA's regional facilities. For a list of the regions and their contact information, see *www.archives.gov* and click on locations and hours. Among the records held in each region are the Federal population census records 1790 to 1930 and Revolutionary War pension and bounty-land warrant application files.

Contacting the National Archives

Customer Service Center
202-357-5400

Old Military and Civil Reference Branch (NWCTB)
National Archives Building
700 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20408-0001
202-357-5383

Civil Reference Branch (NWCTC)
National Archives at College Park
8601 Adelphi Road
College Park, MD 20740-6001
301-837-3480

Center for Legislative Archives (NWL)
National Archives Building
700 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20408-0001
202-357-5350

To contact NARA by e-mail
inquire@nara.gov

To purchase NARA Publications

Research Support Branch (NWCC2)
8601 Adelphi Road
College Park, MD 20740-6001
301-837-2000
1-866-272-6272
Fax: 301-837-0483

To obtain free NARA Publications

Research Support Branch (NWCC1)
700 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20408-0001
202-357-5400
Fax: 202-501-7170

To request NATF forms
Call 202-357-5400

To request a paper copy of NATF forms online or for questions call 1-866-325-7208, or e-mail your request to *inquire@nara.gov.*

To complete an NATF form online see *www.archives.gov* and click OrderOnline! To order online, you must use a credit card.

Microfilm Publications
Not all of the possible relevant microfilm publications are listed in this reference information paper. For additional information see *Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives,* the guides to selected microfilm publications cited throughout the RIP, and the microfilm locator on *www.archives.gov*

National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC
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