

NATIONAL ARCHIVES 2024 GENEALOGY SERIES



Tuesdays at 1 p.m. ET during May and June



Session Overview

Alien Files (A-Files): Researching Immigrant Ancestors at the National Archives

Learn about the Alien Files (A-Files), a rich source of biographical information for family research. The A-Files contain United States immigrant documents generated and collected since the mid-20th century with a wealth of data, including visas, photographs, applications, correspondence, and more. Participants in this session will understand who should have an A-File, discover online search methods to determine whether records are available at the National Archives, and gain the skills to successfully place a request.

Presenter Biography



Elizabeth Burnes

Elizabeth Burnes is an archivist at the National Archives at Kansas City who serves as the lead archivist for Alien Files (A-Files) reference as well as a Subject Matter Expert for Immigrant Related Records. She received a bachelor's degree in history at Truman State University, and a master's degree in history and museum studies at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.



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Alien Files (A-Files): Researching Immigrant Ancestors at the National Archives

Elizabeth Burnes

Archivist, National Archives at Kansas City

Subject Matter Expert (SME) for Immigrant Records



Overview

- Background Information
- File Content
- Record Requests

Background Information



Research Services



Image: A-File folders in a box

What is an A-File?

- The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) began issuing each alien an Alien Registration number in 1940 and on April 1, 1944, began using this number to create individual case files, called [Alien Files or A-Files](#).
- The files reflect the interaction of an immigrant with the federal government throughout their time in the United States up to the time of any final action, which could include death, departure, deportation, permanent resident status, or citizenship.



Actress Anna Lee completing the alien registration process. Image courtesy of the USCIS Historical Library.



What is the research value of A-Files?

- Since the early 20th century, the United States collected increasing amounts of information from immigrants. A-Files from mid-century hold a wealth of data, including visas, photographs, applications, affidavits, correspondence, and more.
- Although the files were created beginning in 1944, documents and information included may be much older than that and could date to the person's birth.

Who should have an A-File?

The immigrant....

Died before August 1, 1940	Will not have an A-File or an Alien Registration Number. Research other National Archives resources of genealogical interest, such as ship passenger manifest lists, for information about this individual.
Became a naturalized citizen between September 27, 1906, and August 1, 1940	Will not have an A-File. Inquire with the USCIS Genealogy Program regarding a possible Certificate File (C-File).
Became a naturalized citizen between August 1, 1940, and March 31, 1956	Will not have an A-File. Inquire with the USCIS Genealogy Program regarding a possible Certificate File (C-File) or 1940 Alien Registration Form.
Immigrated to the United States after April 1, 1944	Will have an A-File. Check National Archives holdings if born in 1920 or earlier. Otherwise, inquire with the USCIS Genealogy Program.
Naturalized on or after March 31, 1956	Will have an A-File. Check National Archives holdings if born in 1920 or earlier. Otherwise, inquire with the USCIS Genealogy Program.
Registered in the United States as an alien in 1940 but never came back to the Immigration and Naturalization Service for any reason	Was likely assigned an Alien Registration Number but will not have an A-File. You can obtain a copy of their 1940 Alien Registration Form from the USCIS Genealogy Program.
Registered in the United States as an alien in 1940 and came back to the Immigration and Naturalization Service for any reason (other than naturalization) after 1944	Will have an A-File. Check National Archives holdings if born in 1920 or earlier. Otherwise, inquire with the USCIS Genealogy Program.



What A-Files are currently available for research at NARA?

A-Files for the entire United States and its territories are being centralized at the [National Archives at Kansas City](#).

- Access Note: The files are stored off site and require advance notice for retrieval.

Because of strong interest and advocacy for the A-Files by local research communities and their congressional representatives, the [National Archives at San Francisco](#) maintains some of the available A-Files from the INS district offices located in San Francisco, Honolulu, Reno, and Guam.

- Researchers seeking individuals who may have lived in these areas should check **both** the National Archives at San Francisco and Kansas City records for A-Files.



What A-Files are currently available for research at NARA?

- As of November 2023, the National Archives at Kansas City has nearly *1,300,000 A-Files for individuals born 1920 and earlier.*
- As of November 2023, the National Archives at San Francisco has *300,000 A-Files for individuals who were born 1920 and earlier,* largely from the INS-Honolulu and INS-San Francisco District Offices.



When are Files Eligible for Accessioning?

- Files are eligible for transfer to NARA when the Year of Birth (YOB) for the subject is 100 or more years old.
- NARA does **not yet** maintain ALL of the files for individuals born 1920 and earlier.

Note: A-Files are still an active file series created by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).



Common Misconceptions

It is FALSE that A-Files are the same as Enemy Alien Registration Affidavits

- Enemy Alien Registration Affidavits were created 1918-1919 ([WWI](#)) for German immigrants; only a small percentage of the affidavits still exist.

It is FALSE that all immigrants naturalized

- [Naturalization](#) is a voluntary act; it is not required.
- Of the foreign-born persons listed on the 1890 through 1930 censuses, 25 percent had not become naturalized or filed their "first papers."



Common Misconceptions

It is FALSE that A-Files only represent noncitizens

- From April 1, 1944, to March 31, 1956, A-Files rarely include citizenship records; however, beginning April 1, 1956, A-Files serve as a consolidated point of documentation for all of an immigrant's records.

Varying needs of those seeking Dual Citizenship

- In an effort to assist dual citizenship seekers in understanding what NARA can and cannot assist them with, we have compiled some of the most [frequently asked questions](#).



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File Content



Image: A-File folders in a box



Research Services

Alien Registration Form (AR-2)

Form AR-2 OFFICE USE 4212197

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE

ALIEN REGISTRATION FORM

1. (a) My name is Maria (FIRST NAME) None (MIDDLE NAME) Ferraro (LAST NAME) 660

(b) I entered the United States under the name of Maria Ferraro 615

(c) I have also been known by the following names (Include maiden name if a married woman, professional names, nicknames, and aliases): Maria Barbano 25

2. (a) I live at 315 Hill Avenue, Endicott, Broome, New York (STREET ADDRESS OR SERIAL NUMBER) (CITY) (COUNTY) (STATE) 304

(b) My post-office address is Same (POST OFFICE) (STATE) 37

3. (a) I was born on May 16, 1932 (MONTH) (DAY) (YEAR) 92

(b) I was born in (or near) Casale (CITY) Alessandria (PROVINCE) Italy (COUNTRY) 16

4. I am a citizen or subject of Italy (COUNTRY) 16

5. (a) I am a (check one): Male Female (b) My marital status is (check one): Single Married Widowed Divorced Other 2

(c) My race is (check one): White Negro Japanese Chinese Other 2

6. I am 4 feet, 4 inches in height, weigh 180 pounds, have Gray hair and Brown eyes. (HEIGHT) (WEIGHT) (HAIR) (EYES) 192

7. (a) I last arrived in the United States at New York City, New York on July 1, 1920 (CITY OR PLACE OF ENTRY) (MONTH, DAY AND YEAR) 070120

(b) I came in by S. S. Dante Alighieri (NAME OF VESSEL, FREIGHTER, COMPANY, OR OTHER MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION) Dante/41

(c) I came as a (check one): Passenger Crew member Stowaway Other 1

(d) I entered the United States as a (check one): Permanent resident Visitor Student Treaty merchant Seaman Official of a foreign government Employee of a foreign government official Other 1

(e) I first arrived in the United States on July 1, 1920 (MONTH) (DAY) (YEAR) 1

8. (a) I have lived in the United States a total of 20 years. (YEARS) 20

(b) I expect to remain in the United States Permanently (PERMANENTLY OR PERIOD OF EXPEDITED STAY) 5

9. (a) My usual occupation is Housewife (b) My present occupation is Same (OCCUPATION) X

(c) My employer (or registering parent or guardian) is Myself (NAME) OX

whose address is _____ (STREET ADDRESS OR SERIAL NUMBER) (CITY) (STATE)

and whose business is _____

All items must be answered by persons 14 years of age or older. For children under 14 years of age, only the items marked with a star (*) must be answered by the parent or guardian. All answers must be accurate and complete. 16-38413 U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

10. I am, or have been within the past 5 years, or intend to be engaged in the following activities: In addition to other information, list memberships or activities in clubs, organizations, or societies OFFICE USE

None

11. My military or naval service has been None (COUNTRY) 9

(BRANCH OF SERVICE) From (DATE) To (DATE)

12. (a) I have not applied for first citizenship papers in the United States. Date of application _____ (DATE, STATE AND YEAR) 0

(b) First citizenship papers received _____ (DATE) (COUNTRY) (CITY) (STATE) 0

Filed petition for naturalization _____ (DATE) (CITY) (STATE)

13. (a) I have the following relatives living in the United States: 2

Parent(s) None (NAME, OR ONE, OR BOTH) Husband or wife Yes (YES OR NO) Children Seven (NUMBER)

14. I have not been arrested or indicted for, or convicted of any offense (or offenses). These offenses are: 0

(DATE, STATE AND YEAR) (NATURE OF OFFENSE) (DATE OF ARREST) (PLACE OF ARREST) (DISPOSITION OF CASE)

15. Within the past 5 years I have not been affiliated with or active in (a member of, official of, a worker for) organizations, devoted in whole or in part to influencing or furthering the political activities, public relations, or public policy of a foreign government. 0

AFFIDAVIT FOR PERSONS 14 YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER

I have read or have had read to me the above statements, and do hereby swear (or affirm) that these statements are true and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Subscribed and sworn to (or affirmed) before me at the place and on the date here designated by the official post-office stamp below.

Maria Ferraro (SIGNATURE OF REGISTRANT)

Fennell Whittemore (SIGNATURE OF OFFICIAL)

AFFIDAVIT FOR PARENT OR GUARDIAN ONLY

I am the _____ (FATHER OF, OR GUARDIAN OF, OR PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR) _____ (NAME OF ALIEN)

and have made the above allegations for him (or her). I have read or have had the same read to me, and do hereby swear (or affirm) that they are true and complete to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief.

Subscribed and sworn to (or affirmed) before me at the place and on the date here designated by the official post-office stamp at the right.

PRINT NAME, ADDRESS, AND BUSINESS OF PERSON SIGNING THIS AFFIDAVIT IN 9(a), ABOVE.

Subscribed and sworn to (or affirmed) before me at the place and on the date here designated by the official post-office stamp at the right.



16-38413 GPO

Alien Registration Form (AR-2) for Maria Ferraro, A4212197 (National Archives Identifier: [5654540](#))



Research Services

Address Report Card

4212197
INSTRUCTIONS (READ CAREFULLY)

ADDRESS REPORT CARD

DO NOT TEAR, FOLD, MUTILATE OR SPINDLE THIS CARD.

All aliens residing in the United States on January 1 shall, within ten days following such date, report their address to the Commissioner, Immigration and Naturalization Service. Aliens temporarily admitted to the United States, whose period of admission has not yet expired and who have not violated the conditions of their admission, are not considered, for the purposes of this report, to be residing in the United States and need not make this report. If you have any doubt as to whether you should make a report, be on the safe side and submit one.

Use this form for reporting your address. All entries on this form except your signature must be PRINTED clearly in ink or with a dark or indelible pencil. WHEN YOU HAVE COMPLETED THIS FORM TAKE IT TO ANY POST OFFICE AND HAND IT TO THE POSTAL CLERK. DO NOT MAIL IT.

The following instructions must be followed for Items 2, 3, and 6. ITEM 2: Be sure to indicate your registration number. This is very important. Your registration number appears on the official alien registration receipt card issued to you. ITEM 3: Print the name you used when registering under the Alien Registration Act in 1940; or, if you entered the United States after December 26, 1940, print the name used at time of entry. ITEM 6: Print the name of the country of which you are a citizen or to which you owe permanent allegiance.

FORM APPROVED
UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT No. A-306

(1) MY NAME IS
Ferraro (LAST) Maria (MIDDLE)

(2) MY REGISTRATION NUMBER IS 4212197
~~I REGISTERED UNDER THE NAME OF~~
MARIA Ferraro (FULL NAME)

(4) MY PRESENT ADDRESS IS
315 Hill Avenue (STREET ADDRESS OR RURAL ROUTE) Endicott, NY (POST OFFICE) Broome (COUNTY)

(5) I WAS BORN ON MAY 22 1892 (MONTH) (DAY) (YEAR)
(6) I AM A NATIONAL OF ITALY (COUNTRY)

DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES STATE CODE 311 DISTRICT CODE 07 COUN. OF CITY CODE 21

(7) DATE THIS CARD IS SIGNED Jan 8 1951 (MONTH) (DAY) (YEAR)
(8) I CERTIFY THAT ALL STATEMENTS ABOVE ARE TRUE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF.
Maria Ferraro (SIGNATURE OF ALIEN)

Printed in U.S.A. REMINGTON RAND P-18185 I. & N. SERVICE FORM 153 (1-1-51)

Address Report Card
for Maria Ferraro,
A4212197
(National Archives
Identifier: [5654540](#))

Vital Records

Sample of Birth, Death, and Marriage Certificates from A-Files

(Printed by authority)

CERTIFIED COPY of an ENTRY OF BIRTH.
Pursuant to the Births and Deaths Registration Act, 1953.

Registration District HOLBORN
in the Sub-district of ST. GEORGE THE MARTYR in the COUNTY OF LONDON

2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Name, if any.	Sex.	Name, and surname of father.	Name, surname, and maiden surname of mother.	Occupation of father.	Signature, description, and residence of informant.	When registered.
JULIA ADA	Girl	CLEMENT ROSSI	JULIA ROSSI formerly	Pianoforte Maker (Journeyman)	Julia Rossi, Mother, 26 Lambs Conduit Street	Sixt July 189

(Printed by authority)

CERTIFIED COPY of an ENTRY OF DEATH.
Pursuant to the Births and Deaths Registration Act, 1953.

Registration District HASTINGS
in the Sub-district of HASTINGS in the COUNTY BOROUGH OF HASTINGS

2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Surname.	Sex.	Age.	Occupation.	Cause of death.	Signature, description, and residence of informant.	When registered.
	Male	68 years	Cinema Manager, retired.	la Myocardial infarction b Atheroma of corenary arteries Certified by	Julia Aida Maude Widow of deceased In attendance 98, Parker Road, Hastings.	Twentyfi April

M 38484

PROVINCE OF ONTARIO
FORM 57
THE VITAL STATISTICS ACT

Marriage Certificate

NAME OF BRIDEGROOM GREGOIRE, LEO JOSEPH
PLACE OF BIRTH THETFORD MINES, QUEBEC
NAME OF BRIDE HUTTON, MADELINE MARY
PLACE OF BIRTH LINDSAY, ONTARIO
DATE OF MARRIAGE DECEMBER 2ND, 1944
PLACE OF MARRIAGE TORONTO, YORK COUNTY
DATE OF REGISTRATION DECEMBER 11TH, 1944
REGISTRATION NUMBER 1944-05-058632
ISSUED AT TORONTO, ONTARIO, THE 14TH DAY OF MAY 19 64

R. B. Wallace
DEPUTY REGISTRAR - GENERAL

212964 AB

Selected Miscellaneous

NOTICE! NOTICE!

THIS FILE IS NOT CONSOLIDATED

- I. When this file becomes active and subsidiary files are needed from the Central Office to complete the file consolidation, Form G-180 shall be executed, giving data necessary to make complete search of indexes and to prepare decentralization records.
- II. The following information *must* be shown when appropriate:
 - A. *Entry subsequent to July 1, 1924*, where the documents are in the Central Office and a search of indexes is required:
 1. **VISAS.**—The name used at time of arrival, if different from present name.
 2. **REENTRY PERMIT.**—The name used at the time the last permit was issued and year of issuance.
 3. **SUSPENSION OF DEPORTATION.**—The name under which the record of entry was created and when possible, the *Central Office immigration file number*.
 - B. *Entry prior to July 1, 1924*, where the record of entry is at the port of arrival.
 1. The entry shall be verified and the G-180 stamped to show "Entry as immigrant verified," unless record was created through registry.
 2. **REGISTRY.**—The name under which the record of entry was created and when available, number shall be given.
- III. **CREATION OF RECORDS.**—Where record of entry is created under sections 244, 245, 249, or private law: the G-180 shall show "Record created under . . ."
- IV. Any Central Office file number, other than above, which may be known, shall be quoted.
- V. All requests for records and files for consolidation from Central Office shall be made on Form G-180.

Below: Application and Permit to Reenter the United States for Eric Watson, A11221466 (National Archives Identifier: [5408713](#))

ALIEN REGISTRATION
No. A11 221 466

APPLICATION FOR PERMIT TO REENTER THE UNITED STATES
An alien previously lawfully admitted to the United States, to reenter the United States, if otherwise admissible, as a passport applicant as a treaty merchant.

PERMIT TO REENTER THE UNITED STATES
ERIC DEAN WATSON
an alien previously lawfully admitted to the United States, to reenter the United States, if otherwise admissible, as a passport applicant as a treaty merchant.

PERSONAL DESCRIPTION OF BEARER

AGE	HEIGHT	WEIGHT	COMPLEXION	HAIR	EYES
33	5 10	130	FAIR	BROWN	BLUE

VEHICLE DISTINCTIVE MARKS

NOTE ON LEFT CHEEK

RELIGION: M F Other

MARRIAGE: Married Divorced Never Married

COUNTRY OF BIRTH: AUSTRALIA

COUNTRY OF DESTINATION: AUSTRALIA

EXPIRES: MARCH 26 1955

REPORT OF DEPARTURE OF ALIEN
Form I-424 (Rev. 12-24-52)
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE

Form approved
Budget Bureau No. 43-R259.4
51653
J. P. Grundy, Inc., 165 William St., New York 38, N. Y.

FAMILY NAME: REGELOUS
GIVEN NAME: WILLIAM

OCCUPATION: FLORIST

MANIFEST SHEET NO.: SOUTHAMPTON
LINE NO.: 4

STREET ADDRESS OR HOTEL: 7921 White Bluff Rd Savannah Ga
CITY: Savannah
STATE: Ga

DATE OF BIRTH: 6 23 96
PLACE OF BIRTH: Saffrom England
CITY: Saffrom
COUNTRY: England

NATIONALITY: British
REENTRY PERMIT: HAS HAS NOT
SEX: M F
STATUS: S W D

DESTINATION ABROAD: 34 Lindholme Yorkshire England
CITY OR TOWN: Lindholme
COUNTRY: England

REASON FOR GOING ABROAD: visit

HOW LONG WILL YOU REMAIN ABROAD?: 3 mos

LAST ENTRY IN UNITED STATES: 4/28/50
CITY: New York
NAME OF VESSEL OR AIRCRAFT: SS America
CITY OR TOWN: New York
COUNTRY: S.S. UNITED STATES

DATE AND PORT OF DEPARTURE FROM UNITED STATES AND NAME OF DEPARTING VESSEL OR AIRCRAFT: MAR 6 1955
CITY OR TOWN: NEW YORK
COUNTRY: S.S. UNITED STATES

WAS SUCH ENTRY FOR PERMANENT RESIDENCE OR TEMPORARY STAY?: Perm.

RECEIVED APR 19 1955

Above: Report of Departure of Alien for William Regelous, A7464511 (National Archives Identifier: [5362891](#))

Above: Sample "Not Consolidated" Notice from A-Files

Naturalization Records

Additionally, within an A-File you may find:

- Declaration of Intention & Petition for Naturalization
- Certificate of Naturalization/Certificate of Citizenship

NOTE: Naturalization records will primarily appear in an A-File if the naturalization took place April 1, 1956, or after.



Certificate of Naturalization for Leonardo Bulawin, A22142420 (National Archives Identifier: [5500056](#))



Additional Immigrant-Related Records

A-Files can also include:

- Passenger manifest/border crossing records and information
- Visa Files, Registry Files, Petition Files, Chinese Exclusion Files, and other INS record types that were consolidated into the A-File
- Passport records (both foreign and U.S.)
- Deportation records
- WWII enemy alien records (immigrants of German, Italian, and Japanese descent)
- Records of repatriation and derivative citizenship



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Record Requests



Image: A-File folders in a box

A-Files Online Catalog Search Result

National Archives Identifier

Individual's Name

Alien Registration Number & Accession/Box Info

Catalog Entry Interpretation Guidance

 **File Unit**
Alien Case File (A-File) for Abdul Moomin

The following is some of the information contained in the alien case file: Birth Date: 11/16/1912 Date of Entry: 10/30/1997 Port Of Entry: Los Angeles, CA (IA) Country of Birth: Sri Lanka Father's Name: Abdul Mother's Name: Samara Naturalization Date: 4/20/1999 Naturalization Location: Los Angeles, CA

 NAID: **74764167** |  Container ID: **1003** |  Local ID: **A41214911/566-17-0189/Box1003**

 Creator: **Department of Justice. Immigration and Naturalization Service. 6/14/1940-3/1/2003**

 Series: **Alien Case Files**

Note: Always read the "Scope & Content" note to learn more about the subject of the file.

Be sure to scroll to the bottom of the catalog entry to review the Location of Record

National Archives at Kansas City[A]

 Kansas City, MO, 64108  (816) 268-8000  (816) 268-8038  Afileskansascity@nara.gov

Copy	Copy Status 	Specific Media Type 
1	Reference, Reproduction, and Preservation	Loose Sheets (Container 1003)

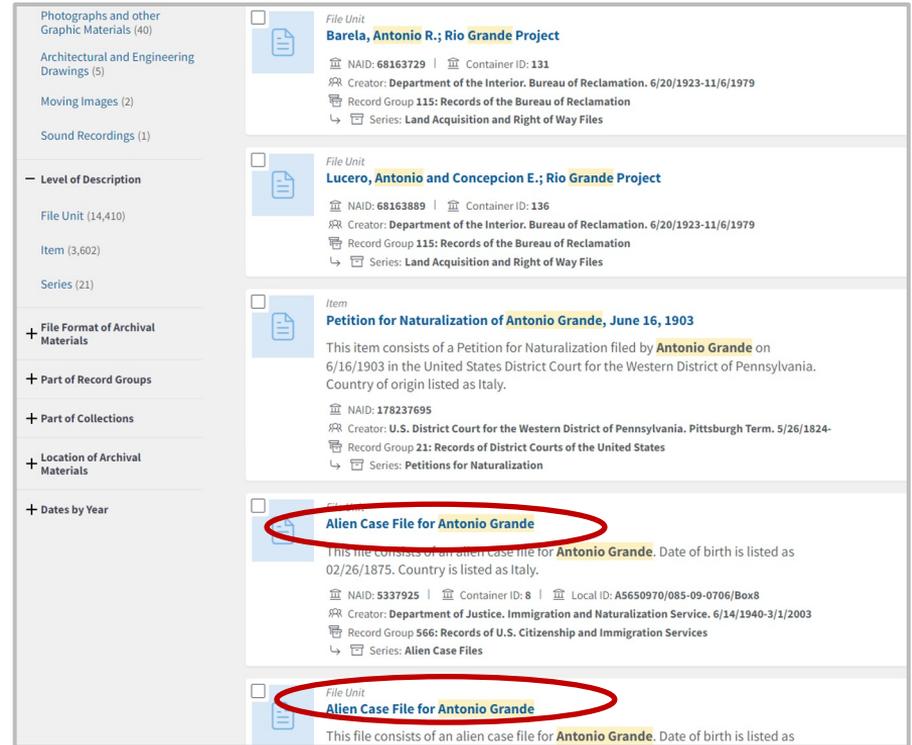


What can the National Archives Catalog tell me about the subject of the file?

- Alien Registration number
- Last Name
- First Name
- Alias
- Date of Birth
- Sex
- Date of Entry
- Country of Birth
- Father's Name
- Mother's Name
- Naturalization Date
- Naturalization Court
- Naturalization Location

Searching the Catalog

- You can search by First and/or Surname OR Alien Registration Number (ex. **A1234567**) from the main page.
- BE AWARE: You will be looking for results with “Alien Case File for [name]” or “A-File for [name]” as the title on the results page.
- Keep in mind that A-Files are **only** maintained in Kansas City and San Francisco.



The screenshot displays a search results page with a left-hand navigation pane and a main content area. The navigation pane includes filters for 'Level of Description', 'File Format of Archival Materials', 'Part of Record Groups', 'Part of Collections', 'Location of Archival Materials', and 'Dates by Year'. The main content area shows a list of search results, each with a document icon and a title. Three results are circled in red:

- File Unit: Barela, Antonio R.; Rio Grande Project**
 NAID: 68163729 | Container ID: 131
 Creator: Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, 6/20/1923-11/6/1979
 Record Group 115: Records of the Bureau of Reclamation
 Series: Land Acquisition and Right of Way Files
- File Unit: Lucero, Antonio and Concepcion E.; Rio Grande Project**
 NAID: 68163889 | Container ID: 136
 Creator: Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, 6/20/1923-11/6/1979
 Record Group 115: Records of the Bureau of Reclamation
 Series: Land Acquisition and Right of Way Files
- Item: Petition for Naturalization of Antonio Grande, June 16, 1903**
 This item consists of a Petition for Naturalization filed by Antonio Grande on 6/16/1903 in the United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania. Country of origin listed as Italy.
 NAID: 178237695
 Creator: U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh Term, 5/26/1824-
 Record Group 21: Records of District Courts of the United States
 Series: Petitions for Naturalization

Below the circled items, there are two more results, each with a document icon and a title circled in red:

- Alien Case File for Antonio Grande**
 This file consists of an alien case file for Antonio Grande. Date of birth is listed as 02/26/1875. Country is listed as Italy.
 NAID: 5337925 | Container ID: 8 | Local ID: A5650970/085-09-0706/Box8
 Creator: Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service, 6/14/1940-3/1/2003
 Record Group 566: Records of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
 Series: Alien Case Files
- Alien Case File for Antonio Grande**
 This file consists of an alien case file for Antonio Grande. Date of birth is listed as



Searching the Catalog

You can also search for the term “Alien Case Files” series from the main page. You will open the entries with that title (National Archives Identifiers: [4488912](#) and [6105565](#)) and can click on the “Search within this Series” button to limit your search to **ONLY** A-Files. Note: You may need to search both the Kansas City and San Francisco series.

Record Group 566: Records of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

Series ⚠ NOT YET AVAILABLE ONLINE

Alien Case Files, 1944–2003

Other title: A-Files

Creator: Department of Justice. Immigration and Naturalization Service. 6/14/1940-3/1/2003 (Most Recent)

NAID: 4488912 | Textual Records | Photographs and other Graphic Materials | Collected: 1944–2003

Search within this Series 📁 1,339,226 File Units



Searching the Catalog

When I complete a “Search within this Series” in the Catalog, I normally try the following search term combinations and browse the result lists:

- Surname
- First Name and Surname
- Surname and Year of Birth (ex. Grande and 1875)
- First Name and Year of Birth
- Exact Date of Birth (ex. 9/5/1903 or 09/05/1903)



Submitting a Request

How can I request copies of A-Files?

- Send an email to the appropriate NARA office:
 - afiles.kansascity@nara.gov
 - sanbruno.archives@nara.gov
- We can also receive requests via postal mail or fax.

A successful request includes:

- Individual's complete name (including known variants)
- Local Identifier (Alien Registration Number, Accession Number, Box Number)
- National Archives Identifier (NAID)



Submitting a Request

Also helpful to include to aid confirming a match to the individual you are seeking:

- Individual's approximate date and place of birth (include known date variants)
- Individual's approximate date of entry into the United States
- City/state where the individual resided in the United States
- Names of parents, spouses, and/or children



Submitting a Request

A-Files for on-site use in NARA research room:

- A-Files can only be viewed in the research rooms at Kansas City and San Francisco.
 - A-Files are not shipped between NARA locations.
- Appointments are required.
 - A-Files in Kansas City are stored off site and require advance notice for retrieval.
 - A-Files in Kansas City and San Francisco require advance screening by staff prior to public use.
- Researchers must register and complete orientation prior to visiting the research room.



No matching results in the Catalog?

- If you cannot find your individual in the Catalog, it is because NARA does not currently maintain the record.
- NARA will accession new A-Files on an annual basis.



Research
Services

No matching results in the Catalog?

Researchers can continue their search by contacting the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) through their Genealogy Program:

www.uscis.gov/genealogy

OR

through a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request:

<https://www.uscis.gov/records/request-records-through-the-freedom-of-information-act-or-privacy-act> .

The USCIS continues to maintain all active and inactive A-Files that have not yet been transferred into the holdings of the National Archives.



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services



A-Files Fee Schedule

Research and Reproduction Fees

Mail Order Services

<i>Product/Service</i>	<i>Fee</i>
A-File with a <i>date of birth</i> prior to 1890	\$27.00
A-File with a <i>date of birth</i> 1890 or after	\$40.00

On-Site Service

<i>Self-service Product/Service</i>	<i>Fee</i>
Self-service paper to paper copy	\$0.25 per copy

Note: There is an additional \$15.00 fee for certification (per certification packet, up to 150 pages). Certified copies must be provided in paper format.

Standard mail order services fees include one copy format, scan OR paper.



Web Resources

The [A-Files page](#) provides additional information to guide A-File research.

The [Immigrant Records landing page](#) is a great resource for locating additional record series related to A-Files.

Research Our Records

Home > Research Our Records > Immigration Records > Immigrant Records at the National Archives

Immigrant Records at the National Archives

Among the billions of historical records housed at the National Archives throughout the country, researchers can find information relating to immigrants from the late 1700s through the early 2000s. The National Archives preserves and makes available documents created by Federal agencies in the course of their daily business.

Please note: Although some of these records have been digitized and made available online, there are many records that are only available in paper or microfilm format at NARA locations.

As you plan your research, consider this question: how does my research topic intersect with the US Federal Government?

What are you researching?

- Immigration Records
- Naturalization Records
- Visa Records
- Alien Files (A-Files)**
- Enemy Alien Records
- Passport Records
- Other Immigrant Topics
- Ethnic Heritage

[Other Research Questions](#)



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Contact Info

A-Files in Kansas City: files.kansascity@nara.gov

A-Files in San Francisco: sanbruno.archives@nara.gov



After the Broadcast

Email questions to inquire@nara.gov

Video recordings of lectures and downloadable handouts
will remain online at

www.archives.gov/calendar/genealogy-series/2024



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KNOW YOUR RECORDS

National Archives and Records Administration

Educational resources on how to access and conduct research using U.S. federal government records at the National Archives and Records Administration.

www.archives.gov/calendar/know-your-records