



## **Record Group 85 Immigration and Naturalization Service**

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# Introduction

The Office of Superintendent of Immigration was established in the Department of the Treasury by an act of March 3, 1891. The Act of March 2, 1895 designated the Office as the Bureau of Immigration with responsibility for administering the alien contract-labor laws. The Superintendent of Immigration was re-designated as the Commissioner-General of Immigration at that time. The Bureau of Immigration became part of the Department of Commerce and Labor in 1903 and in 1906 was designated the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization with the addition of functions relating to naturalization. In 1913, it was transferred to the Department of Labor as two separate Bureaus of Immigration and of Naturalization, which were reunited by Executive order on June 10, 1933, to form the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). The INS became part of the Department of Justice in 1940. The INS was abolished in 2003 and its functions were transferred to the newly-created Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Immigration and naturalization functions are now handled by DHS's United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Deportation and related immigration law enforcement actions are handled by DHS's Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

One of the most noted functions of the INS during the first half of the Twentieth Century was enforcement of the Chinese Exclusion Acts. The first Chinese Exclusion Act passed in 1882 and the U. S. Treasury Department's Customs Service, though Collectors of Customs at each port, enforced the law during the remainder of the century. The U. S. Treasury Department's Bureau of Immigration, headed by the Commissioner-General of Immigration, became responsible for administration of the Chinese Exclusion Acts under the Act of June 6, 1900 (31 Stat. 588, 611). The Bureau of Immigration's U. S. Immigration Service, Chinese Bureau was established at this time to enforce the Chinese Exclusion Act. Collectors of Customs maintained final approval over local Chinese Bureau investigative recommendations at U.S. ports. The Commissioner-General of Immigration held no jurisdiction over Chinese immigration prior to June 6, 1900. The Collectors of Customs were finally eliminated from any Chinese Exclusion Act jurisdiction when the Bureau of Immigration, and its field operations at U. S. ports, became part of the newly-created Department of Commerce and Labor on July 1, 1903 – the effective date of the Act of February 14, 1903 (32 Stat. 825). Enforcement of the Chinese Exclusion Act remained somewhat separate from the enforcement of other immigration laws at the field office level until 1909 when 23 immigration districts were established and "Chinese Inspector" and "Immigrant Inspector" positions were gradually merged over the next few years. From 1903 to 1909, the "Chinese Inspector-in-Charge" at local ports generally made final decisions in Chinese Exclusion Act cases. Later the local Commissioners of Immigration (later known as District Directors) generally made final decisions in Chinese Exclusion Act cases. This Chinese Exclusion bureaucracy continued until the Chinese Exclusion Acts were repealed in 1943.

During the Chinese Exclusion Era, Customs and INS officials zealously enforced provisions of the Chinese Exclusion Acts and an enormous volume of individual case files resulted. The surviving case files from San Francisco and Hawaii amount to over 2000 cubic feet

– over 100,000 individual case files and over 100,000 ancillary identity and citizenship certificates. For related records concerning enforcement of the Chinese Exclusion Acts, see Record Group 21, the U.S. District Courts for the Northern District of California and District of Hawaii (habeas corpus case files for individuals), and RG 36, San Francisco District (correspondence and general administrative records).

**This guide is more than a description of the National Archives at San Francisco holdings in that it also documents many sought-after records that no longer exist.** Records now considered priceless by historians, social scientists, and genealogists were thought by some to have little or no future value fifty years ago. Many very early records from INS District Offices throughout the United States were destroyed in the 1940s and 1950s by the INS with the approval of the National Archives and the U.S. Congress. These records included documents of a routine administrative nature as well as very large volume of correspondence concerning the enforcement of immigration and naturalization laws at the District Office level. The INS believed at the time, incorrectly, that most District Office administrative records were “summarized or duplicated in substance” in files of the Central Office. The INS also destroyed many pre-1944 District Office case files concerning individual immigrants, deportees, and naturalization petitioners (i.e. pre-A File case files) on the assumption that the local files were of temporary value and essentially duplicated by Central Office records. This was partly true but only in the relatively small number of cases where adverse District Office immigration decisions were administratively appealed and in deportation cases after 1912.

## Commissioner of Immigration, Washington, D.C

### DUPLICATE CERTIFICATES OF IDENTITY, 1908-1943

**Extent:** 29.61 cu. ft.

**HMS:** 85-0005

**NAID:** 1560125

**Accession:** 085-95-002

**Transfer:** 085-60A-0389

**Boxes:** 1-88 (87 IND-4; 1 LTA-D)  
(old WNRC box #37-89)

**Location:** B-025-1-004-01 to -005-03

Arranged in two groups: 1. "Hawaiian Certificates" (green cards) and 2. "Chinese Certificates" (red cards). Thereunder the certificates are arranged numerically by the number embossed on the reverse of each. Most of the Chinese Certificates (red cards) below card number 14,401 are missing and presumed destroyed. Some cards numbered above 14,401 show signs of smoke and heat damage. The Chinese Certificates (red cards) were issued by INS Districts throughout the United States Offices to Chinese nationals and Chinese Americans. The San Francisco District issued a majority of the red cards, but many were issued by District Offices in New York, Boston, and other cities.

Certificates of Identity (red cards) were issued from 1909 until the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Laws (December 17, 1943) to both U.S. citizens and resident aliens upon their admission to the United States, whether or not admitted for permanent residence. They were issued only upon application at the original port of entry. The certificates were made up in book form and in triplicate. The original copy was given to the applicant, the duplicate forwarded to the INS Central Office in Washington, D.C., and the triplicate held at the port of entry.

In 1908 and 1909, Hawaiian certificates of identity, referred to as "green certificates of identity," were issued by the Immigration Service in Honolulu to Chinese Americans born in the Hawaiian Islands, or naturalized as citizens thereof prior to annexation, who applied for them within one year beginning March 1, 1908. None were issued after 1909 except replacement certificates issued by the INS Central Office in lieu of those lost. The certificates were made up in book form and in duplicate. The original copy was given to the applicant, the duplicate forwarded to the INS Central Office in Washington, D.C. Applications for the green certificates were also forwarded to the INS Central Office as evidenced by a letter dated June 7, 1937 from the INS District Director in Honolulu to the District Director in New York (see file 4280/294):

This office has no file pertaining to Chin Hen Quan (Herbert H. Chun), holder of green certificate of identity no. 4385. The evidence upon which the certificate was issued is at the Central Office.

W. G. Strensh  
District Director  
Honolulu District

The green and red cards now in the custody of the National Archives at San Francisco

are the duplicates that were originally collected by the Bureau of Immigration/INS Commissioner in Washington, DC during the Chinese Exclusion Act Era. Original certificates of identity were sometimes surrendered to the INS by relatives after the death of the holder. Altered certificates were seized by INS officials whenever possible. Torn or mutilated certificates were sometimes turned in by the holder for replacement. In some cases, such certificates were placed in immigration case files held by the district office. In other cases the certificates were forwarded to the INS Commissioner in Washington, D.C. for cancellation. The INS Commissioner's collection of cancelled certificates of identity appears to have been destroyed in 1945 by Congressional authorization (House Report 244, 79<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess.; National Archives disposition job 345-216, items 1 and 2, March 15, 1945.) because they were considered at the time to be of "no future administrative, historic, legal, or work value."

INS-San Francisco District general correspondence files relative to the issuance of certificates of identity existed at one time. The files appear to have been destroyed in 1948 by Congressional authorization (House Report 1278, 80<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess.; National Archives disposal job 347-258, item 5, Feb. 24, 1948).

The NARA-created Certificate of Identity index, described below with the **REGISTERS OF CERTIFICATES OF IDENTITY ISSUED, 1909-1938**, partially indexes the Chinese Certificates (red cards) issued by the San Francisco District. Dedicated volunteers entered over 38,000 names into a Certificate of Identity database. The printout of this database, arranged alphabetically, is available in the research room. Cards issued by other INS Districts are not indexed alphabetically by name at this time (as of September 2004).

The Hawaiian certificates (green cards) are completely indexed by the **INDEX TO CERTIFICATES OF IDENTITY, 1908-ca.1912**, which is described below in the Honolulu District Section. This index is in hard copy only. There is no electronic version at this time (as of October 2007).

**HMS:** HS1-305173129

**NAID:** 1560815

**Location:** C-021-1-002-04

### **CERTIFICATES OF RESIDENCE, 1892-1943**

In 1892, Thomas J. Geary, a Democratic Congressman from California, introduced a bill that extended for another decade all of the laws related to Chinese immigration. The resulting Act of May 5, 1892, the Geary Act, established what was essentially an internal passport system for all Chinese-born resident laborers in the United States by requiring them to apply for and carry a certificate of residence. If found without their certificate, they would be subject to deportation or imprisonment for a year of hard labor:

And it shall be the duty of all Chinese laborers within the limits of the United States, at the time of the passage of this act, and who are entitled to remain in the United States, to apply to the collector of internal revenue of their respective districts,

within no year after the passage of this act, for a certificate of residence, and any Chinese laborer, within the limits of the United States, who shall neglect, fail, or refuse to comply with the provisions of this act, or who, after one year from the passage hereof, shall be found within the jurisdiction of the United States without such certificate of residence, shall be deemed and adjudged to be unlawfully within the United States, and may be arrested... (from the Geary Act of 1892 (Chap 60, 5 May 1892), 27 United States Statutes at Large, pp.25-26.)

Chinese Americans and the Chinese government vigorously denounced the law. In a letter to U.S. Secretary of State Foster, Tsui Kwo Lin of the Chinese Legation stated:

The provisions of the act of May 5, 1892, I am informed, contravene the Constitution of the United States; it is admitted they violate the treaties between China and the United States. ...I desire to direct attention more especially to the fact that the Congress has prescribed as a punishment for the noncompliance with the law what is equivalent to banishment from the United States; and I wish to emphasize the fact that this punishment is applicable only to my countrymen. It was surprising to the Imperial Government to find engrafted in the law of the United States any such penalty, especially so when it has been proclaimed throughout the world for over one hundred years that the United States was an asylum for the people of all nations of the earth. In my surprise I naturally exclaim, is this a step backward progress, civilization, freedom, and liberty? (from page 154 of the *Papers relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Transmitted to Congress, With the Annual Message of the President, December 5, 1892*, Washington: GPO, 1893)

The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the Geary Act in 1893.

The Geary Act was amended by the Act of November 3, 1893 and registration was extended for another six months. The Act of April 30, 1900 ("An Act to Provide a Government for the Territory of Hawaii") required Chinese laborers to obtain certificates of residence in the newly acquired Territory of Hawaii. The Act also stipulated that "...no Chinese laborer...shall be allowed to enter any State, Territory, or District of the United States from the Hawaiian Islands." The certificate of residence requirement was extended to other insular territories, including the Philippines, by the Act of April 29, 1902 ("An Act to Prohibit the Coming into and to Regulate the Residence within the United States, Its Territories and All Territory Under Its Jurisdiction, and the District of Columbia, Of Chinese and Persons of Chinese Descent").

Various documents among our INS and U.S. District Court holdings indicate that all records related to the issuance of certificates of residence were held by the INS in Washington, D.C. at one time, for example: "...all registration records of Chinese during the years 1892, 1893, and 1894 are on file in Washington, D.C., and held in the custody of the Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization." (file 12017/49263, A.D.D. Armstrong to Noel, March 1, 1935). There are constant references to 'certificate of residence registration books' in habeas corpus case testimony. Collectors of Internal Revenue throughout the continental United States accepted applications and recorded that information in ledgers and on duplicate certificates during the 1892 to 1894 period. Successful applicants were issued original certificates. The application forms, registration ledgers, and a set of duplicate certificates were kept by the Treasury Department (and later the INS) for reference and comparison. The registration in Hawaii was conducted in 1900 and 1901 in the same manner. The Philippine Commission conducted similar registrations there in 1902 and 1903. Section 7 of the Geary Act gives a description of the registration process:

SEC. 7. That immediately after the passage of this act, the Secretary of the Treasury shall make such rules and regulations as may be necessary for the efficient execution of this act, and shall prescribe the necessary forms and furnish the necessary blanks to enable collectors of internal revenue to issue the certificates required hereby, and make such provisions that certificates may be procured in localities convenient to the applicants, and shall contain the name, age, local residence and occupation of the applicants, such other description of the applicant as shall be prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury, and **a duplicate thereof shall be filed in the office of the collector of internal revenue** for the district within which such Chinaman makes application.

Chinese merchants residing in the United States and U.S citizens of Chinese ancestry could also obtain certificates of residence if they wished. Many wisely chose to do so for extra protection. Section 6 of the Geary Act states that "...any Chinese person, other than a Chinese laborer, having a right to be and remain in the United States, desiring such certificate as evidence of such right may apply for and receive the same without charge." An example of the utility of this provision is the case of Mock Leen, who, as evidence of nativity required for his return to San Francisco (arrival file #25483/3-3) "...submitted a certificate of residence 81559, issued in favor of Chinese person, other than laborer, in the name of Mack Leen [sic], **native born** male..."

**Unfortunately, the National Archives at San Francisco does not hold any records related to the original issuance of certificates of residence in the continental U.S., Hawaii, or the Philippines. Our holdings are limited to a few applications for replacement of lost Hawaii-**

**issued certificates** (see CASE FILES OF APPLICANTS FOR DUPLICATE CERTIFICATES OF RESIDENCE (4390), 1921-1938 – described later in this guide). Nearly all individual records of resident Chinese laborers, merchants, and U.S. citizens of Chinese ancestry registered under the authority of the Geary Act of 1892 and subsequent legislation appear to have been destroyed by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) during the 1940s and 1950s. Congress and the National Archives authorized the destruction of various portions of the records in 1945, 1950, and 1958. The certificates of residence issued under the Geary Act and the 1893 McCreary Amendment throughout the continental United States from 1892 to 1894 were destroyed in 1958. National Archives Disposal Job II-NNA-2668 contains the INS request to destroy the records. The INS submitted the request in January 1958 and described the records as “applications by persons of Chinese descent for Certificates of Identity [sic] and Certificates of Residence together with duplicate copies of such certificates issued by the United States Internal Revenue during the period 1893 through 1907. These certificates were issued under various provisions of the Chinese Exclusion Act with some re-issues as late as 1943.” The National Archives approved the destruction in its accompanying very brief appraisal report because “these records have no appreciable value for research purposes, and they are no longer useful to the Government or for protection of private rights.”

National Archives disposal job II-NNA-2668 is deficient in many respects. First, the INS failed to accurately identify their own records – identifying them as both certificates of identity and certificates of residence – two very different types of documents. The INS also failed to describe the volume of records proposed for destruction, making it difficult to determine exactly what was destroyed. Second, the National Archives appraisal report is factually wrong. The statement that “these records have no appreciable value for research purposes” is completely unbelievable given the large amount of scholarly research and the number of popular monographs on the subject of Chinese Exclusion published by 1958. The statement that certificates of residence were “no longer useful to the Government or for protection of private rights” was also absolutely untrue at the time. The evidence of U.S. birth for many citizens of Chinese ancestry still alive in 1958 was contained in their applications for certificates of residence. In some cases these applications and duplicate certificates were the only such evidence extant as of 1958.

**Original certificates of residence returned to the INS Central Office in Washington, D.C. for cancellation were destroyed in 1945 under Congressional authorization (House Report 244, 79<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session).** The National Archives approved the destruction without comment in February 1945. Researchers frequently ask about these cancelled certificates because there are often references to them in immigration case files. In many cases, original certificates of residence were returned to the INS District Office after the deaths of the holders and subsequently forwarded to the INS Central Office for cancellation. Other certificates were confiscated and returned for cancellation because of suspected immigration fraud. The records are described in National Archives Disposal Job 345-216 as follows:

Item 3, Certificates of Residence (Cancelled)

These certificates were issued in continental United States under the Act of May 5, 1892 as amended by the Act of November 3, 1893, to Chinese laborers, and in some cases to persons enjoying exempt status under the Chinese Exclusion Laws, by Collectors of Internal Revenue or the Central Office and attested to the holder's residence in the continental United States prior to May 5, 1892. These certificates were made up in duplicate, the original given to the applicant and the duplicate held by the issuing office. All certificates returned to Central Office for cause have been cancelled and are of no further administrative, historic, legal or work value.

Sole record copies. 1892-1943

2 Cubic feet.

**Applications and duplicate certificates of residence issued in Hawaii, together with original certificates returned for cancellation, were also destroyed in 1945 under Congressional authorization (House Report 244, 79<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session).** The records are described in National Archives Disposal Job 345-216 as follows:

Item 4, Certificates of Residence

Certificates of residence were issued in 1900 and 1901 in the Hawaiian Islands under the Act of April 30, 1900, to Chinese residents thereof, and may be regarded as prima facie evidence of residence in the Hawaiian Islands prior to April 30, 1901. The certificates were made up in duplicate, the original given to the applicant and the duplicate forwarded to Central Office. Among this group of certificates may be found those returned to Central Office for cause and cancelled and others damaged by fire to the extent that they cannot be microfilmed. These certificates are of no future administrative, historic, legal or work value.

Sole record copies.

12 Cubic feet.

The fate of the certificate of residence applications and duplicates issued in the Philippines and other insular territories, by the Act of April 29, 1902 ("An Act to Prohibit the Coming into and to Regulate the Residence within the United States, Its Territories and All Territory Under Its Jurisdiction, and the District of Columbia, Of Chinese and Persons of Chinese Descent") is unknown as of October 17, 2007. A search of National Archives disposal jobs was conducted but no reference to any certificates of residence issued in the Philippines could be found.

**Some records of individual certificates of residence survived and are housed at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. The material appears to consist of some applications for the re-issuance of certificates of residence in lieu of those lost or destroyed in later years and a few ledger books recording certificates issued.** The records are listed below. These surviving records appear to represent only a very small portion of the material that existed at one time.

**Applications for Duplicate Certificates of Residence, 1893-1920,**  
(RG 85 - Entry 137 - 34 boxes)

Applications for duplicate certificates of residence to replace ones that were either lost, stolen, or destroyed together with affidavits on the circumstances of the loss of the original, sworn depositions of the applicant, related correspondence, reports of Chinese Inspectors, and often a photograph of the applicant. Arranged by duplicate cert. number from ca. 132503 to ca 149995, and [Commissioner-General of Immigration case file] number52080/165 to 54705/26.

**Chronological Records Relating to Chinese Certificates of Residence, ca. 1893-1903** (RG 85 - Entry 138)

Chinese Residence Ledgers and Journals (6 volumes), arranged from 1892 to 1902, consisting of four ledgers and two journals of the number of residence certificates issued to various officials.

Record of Chinese Certificates of Residence, 1 vol., arranged from March 8, 1894 to June 20, 1894. Record of certificates issued at the **Sacramento**, CA, office with the certificate number, name of the issuee, and to whom delivered.

Record of Chinese Certificates Compared, 1 vol., arranged from Sept. 16, 1902 to June 29, 1903. Apparently a list of the applications for duplicate certificates of residence that were compared to the originals for authenticity. Consists of the name of the applicant, certificate number, and date compared and mailed, to whom sent and their address. All arranged chronologically.

**Numerical Records Relating to Chinese Certificates of Residence, ca. 1895-1901,** (RG 85 - Entry 139)

Applications for Duplicate Certificates of Residence from **Honolulu**, HI, 1 volume, arranged by certificate number from 29101 to 29408? with numerous gaps. Contains the cert. number, name, number of the certificate being replaced, and the date issued. [This register book corresponds to INS-Honolulu District series CASE FILES OF APPLICANTS FOR DUPLICATE CERTIFICATES OF [HAWAIIAN] RESIDENCE (4390), 1921-38, described later in this guide.]

**Miscellaneous Records Relating to Chinese Certificates of Residence** (RG 85 – Entry 140)

No arrangement or dates. Three volumes of blank certificates and one volume with a listing of "Certificates of Residence in Steel Boxes and Cabinets According to Districts."

# San Francisco District Office

The San Francisco District organized all records by file number. Unfortunately, an explanation of the specific meaning of many of the pre-1944 file numbers has not been found among the District administrative records. We have had to determine the meaning of many of the file numbers by examination of the records. An outline of the San Francisco District file numbering system appears in Appendix A.

## Administrative Records

Almost all pre-1945 administrative records from the INS San Francisco District were destroyed in the 1940s. The series described below amount to only a tiny fragment of the records that once existed. Some administrative records were destroyed when the Angel Island Immigration Station burned in 1940. Most other administrative records were destroyed in 1948 under Congressional authorization (House Report 1278, 80<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, January 29, 1948). A detailed list of records destroyed in 1948 appears in National Archives Disposal Job 347-258. Item 61 on the list is of particular note:

### Item 61, Administrative Correspondence File

Correspondence between offices of this District and the Central Office and with others, including incidental material other than individual case files, relating to matters in connection with the administration and enforcement of the immigration and naturalization laws and regulations.

Sole record copies, 1908-1944  
109 cubic feet

### ADMINISTRATIVE FILES, 1894-1941

**Extent:** 3.87 cu. ft.

**HMS:** 85-0038

**NAID:** 44129572

**Boxes:** 1-9 (LGA-R)

**Location:** C-021-1-007-05 to -06

### CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE (12006), 1912-1913 (file unit)

This includes 12006/630, 12006/675, 12006/700, and 12006/701 files of specifications, blueprints, memorandums, and correspondence concerning construction maintenance projects on Angel Island. Especially interesting are files related to the proposed crematorium.

NARS A-1 Entry 236  
Box 1

### TELEPHONE CABLE (12008), 1910-1940 (file unit)

The files contain information about the telephone cable running under the Bay from

Angel Island to San Francisco.  
NARS A-1 Entry 235  
Boxes 2-4

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE (12030), 1915-1941 (file unit)  
NARS A-1 Entry 229  
Box 5

HISTORICAL FILES RELATING TO ANGEL ISLAND (12030), 1894-1941 (file unit)  
NARS A-1 Entry 230  
Box 6

ANGEL ISLAND FERRY (12030), 1911-1941 (file unit)  
The files contain information about vessels used to ferry staff members and immigrants from Angel Island to San Francisco.  
NARS A-1 Entry 234  
Boxes 7-9

**SPEECHES AND ADDRESSES BY DISTRICT COMMISSIONER EDWARD W. CAHILL, AUGUST 1935-  
JULY 1938**

**Extent:** 0.361 cu. ft.

**HMS:** HS1-169139523

**NAID:** 7794541

**Accession:** NC369-78-1

**Transfer:** 069-94A-0566

**Box:** 1 (LTA-3)

**Location:** C-021-1-006-06

## **Case Files for Individuals, Businesses, and Related Records**

Case files generally contain a variety of documents used by the INS to establish an individual's identity and right to enter or reside in the U.S. Case file may contain one or more of the following documents: photographs, transcripts of interrogations, INS forms, statements of witnesses, birth certificates, death certificates, marriage records, visas, passports, correspondence, certificates of identity, return certificates, steamship tickets, court case papers, and many others. Most files do not contain all of these documents. File contents vary according to the circumstances of each case. Access to portions of some case files may be restricted due to personal privacy concerns for living individuals, law enforcement needs, and/or national security classification.

A substantial majority of individual case files described below were created during the enforcement of the Chinese Exclusion Acts. Under the various Exclusion Acts, the burden of proof of citizenship, legal residence, and/or legal entry rested with the individual. INS officials conducted detailed investigations and evaluated the evidence presented. The case files in our

custody represent the accumulated material of each individual investigation.

Many other files were created for immigrants and travelers who were investigated under provisions of other immigration laws. Travelers from almost every nation passed through the Port of San Francisco during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. The details of many entries are recorded only on passenger manifests. While immigrants from China and U.S. citizens of Chinese ancestry are the subjects of nearly all early immigration case files, travelers of other ethnic groups begin to appear by 1908. At that time substantial number of case files for "Japanese Picture Brides" begin to appear. Some visitors and immigrants from Korea and British India are also subjected to detailed investigations beginning around that time. In the World War I period and later the INS also investigated people who were believed to be politically undesirable.

### **RECORDS RELATED TO HARRY BRIDGES**

**Extent:** 166 boxes

**HMS:** SB-178

**NAID:** 296490

The INS case file for labor leader Harry Bridges is extensive. The National Archives at San Francisco maintains a separate finding aid for these materials.

### **GENERAL INDEX TO IMMIGRATION CASE FILES, ca. 1884-ca. 1980**

**Location:** Microfilm cabinet 49C, drawers 1-3

Arranged alphabetically by surname, and thereunder alphabetically by first name, and thereunder alphabetically by middle name (if any). This series indexes the ARRIVAL INVESTIGATION CASE FILES, 1884-1944; the CASE FILES OF INVESTIGATIONS NOT RESULTING IN WARRANT PROCEEDINGS IN THE SAN FRANCISCO DISTRICT AND INVESTIGATIONS WITHIN THE SAN FRANCISCO DISTRICT AT THE REQUEST OF OTHER SERVICE OFFICES (12016), 1912-1950; the RETURN CERTIFICATE APPLICATION CASE FILES OF CHINESE DEPARTING (12017), 1912-44; the CASE FILES OF INVESTIGATIONS RESULTING IN WARRANT PROCEEDINGS (12020), 1912-50, the GENERAL IMMIGRATION CASE FILES (1300), 1944-55; and the GENERAL IMMIGRATION CASE FILES, 1944-55 from the Fresno, Sacramento, Oakland, Salinas, and Stockton Sub-Offices. See the entries for the Sub-Offices below.

The series includes microfilm rolls 1 to 376. Fifty of the rolls were lost by the Immigration and Naturalization Service San Francisco District Office before the National Archives and Records Administration was able to obtain them. The INS destroyed the original index cards after microfilming in the early 1980s and therefore some substantial gaps exist in the alphabetic sequence. Indexes created by staff members and volunteers listed below serve as a partial supplement.

## **REGISTERS OF CERTIFICATES OF IDENTITY, JUNE 14, 1909-JANUARY 19, 1939**

**Extent:** 0.627 cu. ft.

**HMS:** 85-0006

**NAID:** 5708749

**Accession:** 085-92-003 (Direct)

**Boxes:** 1-3 (IND-C)

**Location:** B-024-1-005-03

Arranged numerically by certificate number. Volume 2 is missing (covering certificates issued circa November 1910 to October 1911). The surviving books have been photocopied and the copies are in binders. The Certificate of Identity index was created from this series. Volunteers entered all 38,000 names into a database. The printout of this database, arranged alphabetically, is available in the research room. The printout of the database is a partial index to the series ARRIVAL INVESTIGATION CASE FILES, 1884-1944 and the series HAWAIIAN AND CHINESE CERTIFICATES OF IDENTITY, 1908-43.

Box 1: Volumes 1, 3-6 (Certificates # 1-2150, 6260-14914)

Box 2: Volumes 7-11 (Certificates # 14915-38611)

Box 3: Volumes 12-16 (Certificates # 38612-78765)

## **IMMIGRATION ARRIVAL INVESTIGATION CASE FILES, 1884-1944**

**Extent:** 1,701.392 cu. ft.

**HMS:** 85-0047

**NAID:** 296445

Arranged numerically by case file number. Bulk dates: May 12, 1884 to June 5, 1944. Most early files document the investigation of people arriving from China to determine their admissibility under the Chinese Exclusion Acts. By the early Twentieth Century the scope of individuals investigated expanded to include people arriving from Korea, Japan (especially Picture Brides), India, Russia, and other Asian countries. During and after the World War I era the files also include investigations of anyone arriving at San Francisco who seemed suspicious or was likely to become a public charge.

Alphabetical indexes created by staff members and volunteers cover our holdings of case files from 1884 to 1924. The database entries for these indexes were based on a detailed examination of each case file from that period. The most of the indexes are available in three binders in the research room next to the binders containing the index to the CERTIFICATE OF IDENTITY BOOKS, 1909-36. Researchers seeking case files of their ancestors may need to consult both indexes and also the GENERAL INDEX TO IMMIGRATION CASE FILES, ca1884-ca1980 listed above. The passenger arrival lists (M1476) are also a key to the case files. The case file numbers are composed of the arrival number given to a ship entering San Francisco followed by the ticket number or, after 1912, the manifest page number and line number. For example 10010/1459 or 22456/2-12. The passenger arrival lists are an important finding aid to the case files in addition to the indexes listed above.

Most case files for the September 1891 to April 1894 period are missing. They appear to have been lost by the INS during their massive file "indexing and consolidation" project in 1960 and 1961.

With the knowledge of archives director Waverly Lowell and under the direction of archives staff member Claude Hopkins, index cards were removed from this series by

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volunteers performing holdings maintenance in the 1990s. Volunteers then used the index cards for data entry, to create a partial database to the files based on the information on the cards. The cards were not replaced in their respective case files but were placed in these archives boxes.

**Location:** 3277A-3303F (cases 9228/1601 to 47222/1-11)

**Location:** SAFE (case 9995/Cabin **Sun Yat Sen**)

**Location:** Map Room Drawer 05.05 (oversize items from cases 10365/5632; 15251/20-2; 20536/102-6; 32196/8-10; 35428/14-14; 35841/6-12)

**Location:** Map Room Drawer 01.10 (oversize items from 15251/4-18)

**Location:** 3227J (index card boxes mentioned above)

### **LANDING DENIAL CASE FILES (9079), ca. 1903-ca. 1912**

We do not have a separate series of Landing Denial Case Files (9079) in our holdings. The INS-San Francisco District appears to have maintained a separate set of files for individuals who were denied entry during the 1903 to 1912 period. The files were annotated with the number 9079 followed by a serial number, 9079/1245 for example. The San Francisco District reworked their filing system extensively in 1912 and created many new types of case files while discontinuing others. The 9079 files appear to have been discontinued at that point. The existing 9079 case files appear to have been renumbered as arrival files and interfiled with the records described above. You will often see 9079 case files cited on cross-reference sheets of other case files from the 1903 to 1912 period. This leads to some confusion for researchers. If you see a name on a cross-reference sheet with a 9079 file number you should search for that individual's name in our various indexes to the arrival files.

### **IMMIGRATION 'CHINESE (BUSINESS) PARTNERSHIP' INVESTIGATION CASE FILES, ca. 1894-ca. 1944**

**Extent:** 48.385 cu. ft.

**HMS:** 85-0042

**NAID:** 296496

**Accession:** 085-88-001

**Transfer:** 085-60-0504

**Boxes:** 1 (FLT-S); 1-111 (LGA-R)

**Location:** C-021-1-007-07 to -008-05

The records are arranged in two segments: 1. "Lynch Maps" and related material; 2. partnership case files. The "Lynch Maps" are arranged first alphabetically by San Francisco street name and then alphabetically by California city name. The partnership case files are arranged numerically by case file numbers representing cities (mostly California) or, in the case of San Francisco, street names and addresses.

The "Lynch Maps," created by Immigration Officer John Lynch, are hand drawn maps of Chinese American business districts. Most "Lynch Maps" date from 1894 and were not updated in subsequent years.

The partnership case files include lists of business partners, photographs of the

partners, and a few maps of some Chinese American business districts in California. Some documents date to the 1870s.

The U.S. Customs Service originally collected lists of business partners in Chinese American stores on a semi-annual basis. Later the Immigration Service assumed the Customs Service functions and maintained the files. The lists were collected to facilitate the identification of merchants who were exempt from exclusion under the various “Chinese Exclusion Acts.”

Businesses that mainly provided a service, such as a restaurant, tailor shop, laundry, or photographic studio, were not considered merchant firms and did not have case files. This is an excerpt from the Immigration Act of 1893 concerning merchants:

Act of November 3, 1893 (28 Stat. 7) SEC. 2. The words “laborer” or “laborers,” wherever used in this act, or in the act to which this is an amendment, shall be construed to mean both skilled and unskilled manual laborers, including Chinese employed in mining, fishing, huckstering, peddling, laundrymen, or those engaged in taking, drying, or otherwise preserving shell or other fish for home consumption or exportation.

The term “merchant,” as employed herein and in the acts of which this is amendatory, shall have the following meaning and none other: A merchant is a person engaged in buying and selling merchandise, at a fixed place of business, which business is conducted in his name, and who during the time he claims to be engaged as a merchant, does not engage in the performance of any manual labor, except such as is necessary in the conduct of his business as such merchant.

The following is a form letter issued by the Commissioner of Immigration in San Francisco to Chinese American merchants:

Office of the Commissioner  
Angel Island Station  
Via Ferry Post Office  
San Francisco, Cal.

Sir:

In accordance with instructions received from the Department of Labor at Washington, D.C., all Chinese mercantile firms in this District are requested to file with this office a complete partnership list, in duplicate, every six months, preferably on the first of April and the first of October of each year, giving the names, in both English and Chinese characters, of all members of the firm, their respective duties, and their present locations or addresses (city or town is sufficient – street numbers not necessary).

The first list filed after the receipt of this letter should have an untouched photograph of each of the active members of the firm attached to the list opposite his name. Subsequent lists should contain photographs of any new active members, together with the date they became active, but it is unnecessary to supply additional photographs of old members who already have their photographs on file. All partnership lists should be certified under oath by the manager or other responsible officer of the firm. In event there has been no change in the partnership list since the last preceding list was filed, as required by this letter, a certificate to that effect, certified under oath in the same manner as a partnership list, will be accepted in lieu of a complete list.

The purpose of these lists is to furnish a means of identifying bona fide members of the different firms and if furnished strictly in accordance with above instructions it will enable such members to establish their status when applying for pre-investigation, etc., with a minimum loss of time.

Respectfully,  
\_\_\_\_\_ Commissioner.

See the entry REGISTER OF CHINESE PARTNERSHIPS, ca. 1882-ca. 1943 below.

### **REGISTER OF CHINESE PARTNERSHIPS, ca. 1882-ca. 1943**

**Location:** Microfilm cabinet

The card file register gives the case file numbers of the IMMIGRATION 'CHINESE (BUSINESS) PARTNERSHIP' INVESTIGATION CASE FILES, ca. 1894-ca. 1944. The card file register is not really an index - researchers should know the city or address of a business to search it easily. It is arranged by city (mostly in California) and thereunder by business name. Entries for San Francisco are arranged by street name and thereunder numerically by business address. This register exists in microfilm format only. The original 3X5 cards composing the register were destroyed after microfilming in the 1950s.

### **CASE FILES OF INVESTIGATIONS NOT RESULTING IN WARRANT PROCEEDINGS IN THE SAN FRANCISCO DISTRICT AND INVESTIGATIONS WITHIN THE SAN FRANCISCO DISTRICT AT THE REQUEST OF OTHER SERVICE OFFICES (12016), 1912-1944**

**Extent:** 7.74 cu. ft.

**HMS:** 85-0041

**NAID:** 296429

**Accession:** 085-92-002

**Transfer:** 085-60D-0504

**Boxes:** 1-16

**Location:** C-021-1-010-07 to -08

Arranged numerically by case file number. The cases range from 12016/86 to 12016/14238. Substantial and numerous gaps exist in the numeric sequence.

Some case files in this series document individuals and groups investigated for possible

immigration fraud. Other files in this series document return certificate application cases for Chinese residents planning departures from other U.S. ports whose main immigration records were on file in San Francisco. Many thousands of the files appear to have been destroyed by the INS in the early 1960s. Some 12016 files were consolidated into other INS-San Francisco immigration case files (for example, file 12016/7131 for Wong Ling, departing from Seattle, was consolidated into his arrival file 16032/4-18). Case number 12016/5916 is the famous "Chinese Slave Girl" case.

**12016/1076 CASE FILE OF IMMIGRATION FRAUD INVESTIGATIONS, 1914-1924 (file unit)**

**Extent:** 2.402 cu. ft.                      **HMS:** 85-0040                      **NAID:** 4707423  
**Accession:** 085-92-002                      **Boxes:** 1-5 (LGA-R)                      **Location:** C-021-1-007-06

This is case number 12016/1076 (INS central office case 54184/138) - a very large case file containing materials of the Densmore Investigation. Included are village maps, extensive family genealogies, photographic logs of recent deportees, passenger lists, interrogations of immigrants and suspect INS employees, and coaching papers. This file was removed by the INS or NARA from 12016 files described above. [Staff note: NARS A-1 Entry 232, old NC-87 Entry 74; NC-87 title was "Papers Concerning Densmore Investigation, 1914-18", NARS a-1 title was "Chinese Coaching Material-Densmore Investigation, 1906-40"]

**12016/1106 ENEMY ALIENS, 1916-1929 (file unit)**

**Extent:** 1.290 cu. ft.                      **HMS:** 85-0039                      **NAID:** 296430  
**Accession:** 085-92-002                      **Boxes:** 1-3 (LGA-R)                      **Location:** C-021-1-007-06

This is case number 12016/1106 - a very large case file about World War I enemy aliens - mainly Germans. This file was removed by the INS or NARA from 12016 files described above. [Staff note: NARS A-1 Entry 231, old NC-87 Entry 73]

**12016/1272 PASSPORT AND TRAVEL CONTROL, 1918-1924 (file unit)**

**Extent:**    **HMS:**    **NAID:**  
**Accession:**    **Boxes:** 1-2 (LGA-R)                      **Location:** C-021-1-007-06

This is case number 12016/1272 - a very large case file about passport and travel control regulation during and after World War I. This file was removed by the INS or NARA from 12016 files described above. [Staff note: NARS a-1 Entry 233, old NC-87 Entry 75]

**CANCELLED RETURN CERTIFICATES OF DEPARTING CHINESE LABORERS, ca. 1887-ca. 1905**

Chinese laborers who lawfully resided in the United States during the Chinese Exclusion Act era were permitted to return to the United States after a visit to China provided that they obtained a return certificate prior to departure. The certificates were issued under Section 4 of

the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 (see Appendix A). The Collect of Customs in San Francisco maintained a large collection of laborer's return certificates that were surrendered and cancelled upon return or surrendered and canceled due to non-use. The certificates were later transferred to the custody of the Immigration and Naturalization Service and stored at the Angel Island Immigration Station Administration Building. Many thousands of certificates amounting to twenty-five linear feet were stored there in the attic. The records are described on page 68, item 415, of the *Inventory of Federal Archives, Series XI, Department of Labor, No5 California* published by the Works Projects Administration in June 1940. The Administration Building burned to the ground in August 1940 and all records not stored in the fireproof vaults were destroyed. The return certificates stored in the attic appear to have been destroyed at that time. Consequently, we do not have any collection of laborer's return certificates from that era.

Occasionally these older return certificates can be found in immigration case files, usually in instances where the individual left the U.S. in the 1880s or 1890s and did not return for many years. Some laborer return certificates also appear in writ of habeas corpus case files. One notable return certificate is that of Chae Chan Ping which appears in his U.S. Circuit Court habeas corpus case. Case 10100, *In re Chae Chan Ping*, in the U.S. Circuit Court, Northern District of California concerns the enforcement of the Scott Act of October 1, 1888. The Scott Act excluded all Chinese laborers from the U.S., even those who were lawfully domiciled but currently visiting China. Mr. Chae, previously a legal U.S. resident, had the great misfortune of returning to San Francisco after a trip to China on October 7, 1888. He was detained by Customs officials and held for deportation. He filed a petition for a writ of habeas corpus in the U.S. Circuit Court seeking his release on the grounds that the Scott Act violated his treaty rights and that the Act constituted an ex post facto law. He lost his case in San Francisco and also his appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The National Archives in Washington, DC holds some records related to return certificates. They are described in various NARA preliminary inventories under the incorrect heading "Chinese Certificate of Residence."

**Numerical Records Relating to Chinese Certificates of Residence [sic], ca.1895-1901, RG 85 - Entry 139:**

**Record of Return Certificates 1 to 13800, Jan 1895 to May 1901.**

Two-volume record of certificates issued to Chinese laborers with the number of certificate, where it was sent, to whom issued, the port of departure, and date of departure and return. ."

**Register of Chinese Laborers Departing from and Returning to US, certificate numbers 1 to 1363A, ca. 1895.** Consists of the number of the certificate, occupation, last place of residence, date of arrival and departure. ."

## **DEPARTURE BOOKS, ca. 1882-ca. 1903**

Chinese laborers who lawfully resided in the United States during the Chinese Exclusion Act era were permitted to return to the United States after a visit to China provided that their identity was documented prior to departure. Section 4 of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 (see Appendix A) required that "...the collector of customs of the district from which any such Chinese laborer shall depart from the United States shall, in person or by deputy, go on board each vessel having on board any such Chinese laborer and cleared or about to sail from his district for a foreign port, and on such vessel make a list of all such Chinese laborers, which shall be entered in registry-books to be kept for that purpose, in which shall be stated the name, age, occupation, last place of residence, physical marks or peculiarities, and all facts necessary for the identification of each of such Chinese laborers, which books shall be safely kept in the custom-house..."

The Collector of Customs in San Francisco maintained a set of departure books until 1900 when responsibility for Chinese Exclusion was transferred to the Bureau of Immigration. The departure books were later transferred to the Angel Island Immigration Station Administration Building. Many volumes of departure books were stored there in the attic. The records are described on page 68, item 411, of the *Inventory of Federal Archives, Series XI, Department of Labor, No5 California* published by the Works Projects Administration in June 1940. The Administration Building burned to the ground in August 1940 and all records not stored in the fireproof vaults were destroyed. The departure books stored in the attic appear to have been destroyed at that time.

## **WHARF REGISTERS OF DEPARTURES, 1895-1941**

**Location:** Microfilm cabinets

Pre ca. 1917 registers are mainly for Chinese nationals and U.S. citizens of Chinese ancestry. The registers for the ca. 1917 and later period include Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Indian nationals and American citizens of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Indian ancestry.

## **PASSENGER DEPARTURE MANIFESTS, ca. 1937-ca. 1954**

These extremely valuable records exist in microfilm format only and most are currently located at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. 64 rolls.

## **RETURN CERTIFICATE APPLICATION CASE FILES OF CHINESE DEPARTING (12017), 1912-1943**

**Extent:** 294.98 cu. ft.

**HMS:** 85-0059

**NAID:** 296477

**Boxes:** 1-686 (LGA-R)

**Location:** C-022-1-005-02 to -009-04

Arranged numerically by case file number 12017/14 to 12017/54437. Bulk dates: December 14, 1912 to December 3, 1943. The repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Acts in December

1943 formally ended this series and certificates were no longer issued. The files contain INS Form 430 "Application of Alleged Citizen of the Chinese Race for Pre-Investigation of Status" INS form 431 "Application of Lawfully Domiciled Chinese Merchant, Teacher, or Student, for Preinvestigation of Status," INS form 432 "Return Certificate - Lawfully Domiciled Chinese Laborer" and related application documentation. The files concern U.S. citizens and non-citizen merchants, teachers, students and laborers who wished to travel abroad, generally China. A copy of an approved Form 430, Form 431, or Form 432 was generally necessary to facilitate a relatively trouble-free return to the U.S. As usual, the files generally contain photographs, affidavits, and transcripts of testimony taken prior to departure. The register to this series is listed below. For the name index see GENERAL INDEX TO IMMIGRATION CASE FILES, ca1884-1979 listed above.

**REGISTER OF RETURN CERTIFICATE APPLICATION CASE FILES OF CHINESE DEPARTING (12017), 1912-1943**

**Location:** Microfilm cabinets

The card file register is arranged numerically by case number from 12017/1 through 12017/544[?]. Notations of new arrival case file numbers were made on the cards when individuals returned to San Francisco. Some images are difficult or impossible to read. The registers exist in microfilm format only. The original records were destroyed after microfilming.

**RETURN CERTIFICATE APPLICATION CASE FILES OF CHINESE AMERICANS (9170), 1903-1912**

**Extent:** 7.74 cu. ft.

**HMS:** 85-0055

**NAID:** 1573271

**Accession:** 085-88-001

**Transfer:** 085-60C-0504

**Boxes:** 1-18 (LGA-R)

**Location:** C-022-1-004-07 to -08

Alternative Series Title: RETURN CERTIFICATE APPLICATION CASE FILES OF NATIVES DEPARTING (9170) [APPLICATIONS OF ALLEGED AMERICAN-BORN CHINESE FOR PREINVESTIGATION OF STATUS], 1903-1912

Arranged numerically by case file number.

This series was created to document the applications of United States citizens of Chinese ancestry for return certificates prior to temporary visits to China. Under the provisions of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, as amended, all persons of Chinese ancestry, whether United States citizens or not, went through an examination process that determined their eligibility to re-enter the United States.

This series consists of case files containing forms including applications for return certificates, identification photographs of the applicants, affidavits, transcripts of interrogations of the applicants and of verifying witnesses, and occasionally personal letters and family photographs submitted by the applicants for use as evidence in determining their status under the Chinese Exclusion Acts. In addition, the files may contain official correspondence relating to the individual cases and correspondence documenting the temporary loan of files.

### **RECORD OF NATIVES DEPARTING (9170), 1909-1913**

**Location:** Microfilm cabinets

This register exists in microfilm format only. The original register was destroyed after microfilming in the 1950s. There is an index at the beginning of the register that also serves as a partial index to the series RETURN CERTIFICATE APPLICATION CASE FILES OF NATIVES DEPARTING (9170), 1903-1912 listed above.

### **RETURN CERTIFICATE APPLICATION CASE FILES OF CHINESE LABORERS (9180), 1903-1912**

**Extent:** 2.580 cu. ft.

**HMS:** 85-0056

**NAID:** 1573279

**Accession:** 085-88-001

**Transfer:** 085-60C-0504

**Boxes:** 1-6 (LGA-R)

**Location:** C-022-1-004-08

Alternative Series Title: RETURN CERTIFICATE APPLICATION CASE FILES OF LAWFULLY DOMICILED LABORERS DEPARTING (9180), 1903-1912

### **DAILY RECORD OF APPLICATIONS FOR RETURN CERTIFICATES [LABORERS] AND DISPOSITION THEREOF (9180), 1903-1912**

**Location:** Microfilm cabinets

Arranged chronologically by date of entry. The registers exist in microfilm format only. The original registers were destroyed after microfilming in the 1950s. There is an index at the beginning of each registers that also serves as an index to the series RETURN CERTIFICATE APPLICATION CASE FILES OF LAWFULLY DOMICILED LABORERS DEPARTING (9180), 1903-1912 listed above.

### **RETURN CERTIFICATE APPLICATION CASE FILES OF CHINESE MERCHANTS, STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND CLERGY (9190), 1903-1913**

**Extent:** 3.870 cu. ft.

**HMS:** 85-0057

**NAID:** 1573287

**Accession:** 085-88-001

**Transfer:** 085-60C-0504

**Boxes:** 1-9 (LGA-R)

**Location:** C-022-1-004-08 to -09

Arranged numerically by case file number.

This series was created to document the applications of resident Chinese merchants, students, teachers, and clergy for return certificates prior to temporary visits to China. Under the provisions of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, as amended, all persons of Chinese ancestry, whether United States citizens or not, went through an examination process that determined their eligibility to re-enter the United States.

This series consists of case files containing forms including applications for return certificates, identification photographs of the applicants, affidavits, business records, and transcripts of interrogations of the applicants and of verifying witnesses. In addition, the files

may contain official correspondence relating to the individual cases and correspondence documenting the temporary loan of files. Most of the case files concern Chinese merchants.

**DAILY RECORD OF APPLICATION FOR RETURN CERTIFICATES (MERCHANTS) [STUDENTS AND TEACHERS] (9190), 1903-1912**

**Location:** Microfilm cabinets

Arranged chronologically by date of entry. The registers exist in microfilm format only. The original registers were destroyed after microfilming in the 1950s. There is an index at the beginning of each registers that also serves as an index to the series RETURN CERTIFICATE APPLICATION CASE FILES OF LAWFULLY DOMICILED MERCHANTS, TEACHERS, AND STUDENTS DEPARTING (9190), 1903-1912 listed above.

**RETURN CERTIFICATE APPLICATION CASE FILES OF CHINESE AMERICANS AND CHINESE NATIONALS (11505-12499), FEBRUARY 8, 1894-JANUARY 23, 1913**

**Extent:** HMS: 85-0058 NAID: 1566759

**Accession:** 085-88-001 **Transfer:** 085-60C-0504

**Boxes:** 1-46 (LGA-R) **Location:** C-022-1-004-09 to -01

**Location:** *needs location* MAP-5 (oversize item from case 12498/49, Chang See)

Arranged numerically by case file number. These appear to be files of Chinese who actually departed from San Francisco, whereas the 9170, 9180, and 9190 case files appear to be the original applications for return certificates - some of which may have been unused or denied. The file numbers 11505 to 12413 are departure manifest numbers. The departure manifests themselves are described below - REGISTERS OF CHINESE DEPARTING FROM THE UNITED STATES, 1882-1908. The 12017 case file series appears to pick up where 9170, 9180, 9190, and 11505-12413 case file series leave off. There was probably some change in case filing procedure around 1912. The result is that all types of departure applications - merchants, students, and laborers were combined for the 1912-1944 period.

**REGISTERS OF CHINESE DEPARTING FROM THE UNITED STATES, 1882-1908 [bulk dates 10/20/1882-10/06/1908]**

**Location:** Microfilm cabinets

Arranged chronologically by date of entry. These are the registers for the RETURN CERTIFICATE APPLICATION CASE FILES OF CHINESE DEPARTING (11505-12413), 1894-1912 entry above. The emphasis is on departing passengers although there are notations of some returns. The registers do not appear to have indexes. The registers exists in microfilm format only. The original registers were destroyed after microfilming in the 1950s.

## **DEPORTATION INVESTIGATION CASE FILES (12020), ca. 1930-ca. 1950**

**Extent:** 24.94 cu. ft.

**HMS:** 85-0053

**NAID:** 1566705

**Accession:** 085-92-002

**Transfer:** 085-60C-0504

**Boxes:** 1-58 (LGA-R)

**Location:** C-021-1-011-05 to -08

Former Series Title: CASE FILES OF INVESTIGATIONS RESULTING IN WARRANT PROCEEDINGS, ca. 1930-ca. 1950.

Arranged numerically by case file number. Old box numbers 336692-336707. The cases range from 12020/7285 to 12020/35451. Substantial and numerous gaps exist in the file number sequence. The last 12020 file was opened in June 1944 prior to the imposition of the new filing system (1300 series), but the series was in active use for the next several years due to ongoing investigations. Deportation investigations opened after July 1, 1944 can be found in various series including 1300 files, A-Files (1956 - ), B-Files (1944-56), and E-Files (1944-56) depending on the date of the investigation. Many A-Files, all B-Files, and all E-Files are still in USCIS custody.

This series was created to document deportation investigations of resident aliens accused of various crimes including illegal immigration, narcotics possession, and gambling. It consists of transcripts of interrogations, investigative reports, identification photographs, and police reports. The case files of aliens found eligible for deportation contain deportation warrants.

Many deportation files were destroyed by the August 12, 1940 fire at the Angel Island Immigration Station. The Immigration and Naturalization Service-San Francisco District appears to have destroyed most of the remaining deportation files in early 1960 during a period of case file "screening and re-indexing." Almost all files below number 12020/15000 are gone. Only 846 files survive. Over 35,000 existed at one time.

All 846 files are searchable by name - <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/1566705>.

## **APPLICATION CASE FILE OF NATIVES BRINGING FOREIGN-BORN DEPENDENTS TO THE US (12023), 1941**

**Extent:** 0.430 cu. ft.

**HMS:** 85-0062

**NAID:** 44165489

**Box:** 1 (LGA-R)

**Location:** C-022-1-009-05

We have only one case file for this series: 12023/8573 for Gin Gim Leong, son of Gin Bock Hay, from February 1941. Originally the date span of this series would have been 1912 to 1944.

It was necessary for Chinese Americans to make these applications for investigation of their citizenship status so as to facilitate the entry of their spouses and/or children.

12023 files were converted to arrival files when dependants landed in San Francisco. 12023 files were not converted to arrival files in cases where the applicants did not subsequently travel to the US or who eventually entered through another US port.

All other remaining 12023 files appear to have been destroyed by the INS in the early

1960s. The file in our custody survived because it was mistakenly interfiled with another series of case files in the early 1950s.

**PASSPORT APPLICATION CASE FILE (12034), 1916**

**Extent:** 0.430 cu. ft.

**HMS:** 85-0061

**NAID:** 44165485

**Box:** 1 (LGA-R)

**Location:** C-022-1-009-05

We have only one case file for this series. The 12034 files appear to have been destroyed. This one survived because it was mistakenly refiled with the 11505-12413 departures in the 1950s.

**VOLUNTARY DEPORTATION CASE FILES (12039), ca. 1927-1944**

**Extent:** 0.430 cu. ft.

**HMS:** 85-0060

**NAID:** 4658054

**Box:** 1 (LGA-R)

**Location:** C-022-1-009-05

We have only three case files for this series. The 12039 files appear to have been destroyed. These three survived because they were mistakenly refiled them with the 11505-12413 departure files.

**ENEMY ALIEN DEPORTATION CASE FILE (12044), ca. 1942**

**Extent:** 0.430 cu. ft.

**HMS:** 85-0064

**NAID:** 43434825

**Box:** 1 (LGA-R)

**Location:** C-022-1-009-05

We have only one case file for this series. The 12044 files appear to have been destroyed. This one survived because it was mistakenly refiled with the 11505-12413 departure files.

**IMMIGRATION AND DEPORTATION INVESTIGATION CASE FILES (1300), 1944-1955**

**Extent:** 270.04 cu. ft.

**HMS:** 85-0054

**NAID:** 1566751

**Accession:** 085-90-001

**Transfer:** 085-60A-0504; 085-60B-0504

**Boxes:** 1-628 (LGA-R)

**Location:** C-022-1-009-05

Arranged very roughly in numerical order by case file number. Very significant disarrangement exists - probably due to careless filing when the records were originally active and when they were stored in the San Francisco Federal Records Center.

The INS started a uniform case file numbering system for all Districts in 1944 to eliminate confusion when files were loaned between Districts. File numbers for the "post-Chinese exclusion" period are composed of the district and office number followed by the file number. For example, file 1300-124567 is a District 13 file from the district headquarters office "00". A list of all the 1944 to 1955-era District offices is in the RG85 entry of the National Archives Guide (in print and at [nara.gov](http://nara.gov)).

Most of the files relate to the arrival of Chinese Americans in San Francisco by plane and

by ship. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of files concern foreign-born wives and children of Chinese American World War II veterans. Even though the Chinese Exclusion era ended in 1943, the INS continued to investigate Chinese American travelers thoroughly. In many cases, Chinese-born children of Chinese American citizens were subjected to blood tests to confirm parentage.

Unfortunately, the San Francisco passenger arrival lists provide no clue to the San Francisco case file numbers after 1944. The 1300 file numbers from 1 to 150,000+ were used for all types of actions. A number could represent the arrival of a plane or ship, an immigration case file, or a letter sent.

The files are indexed by the GENERAL INDEX TO IMMIGRATION CASE FILES, ca. 1884-ca. 1980 (85% complete) that is described above. An electronic index, compiled by staff member and volunteers is partially complete. A printout of the index is available in the textual research room.

### **CHINESE PASSENGER LISTS, 1897-1905**

**Location:** Microfilm cabinets

The registers exist in microfilm format only. The original records no longer exist.

### **RECORDS OF ARRIVALS AND DISPOSITION OF JAPANESE, 1928-42**

**Location:** Microfilm cabinets

The registers exist in microfilm format only. The original records no longer exist.

### **SAN FRANCISCO CHINESE MORTUARY RECORDS, 1870-1933**

**Location:** Microfilm cabinets

As noted earlier, the INS zealously enforced the Chinese Exclusion Acts. The INS collected information on the deceased for future investigations. The registers exist in microfilm format only. The original records no longer exist.

A similar compilation of San Francisco mortuary records, prepared in 1912 and covering the years 1871 to 1908, was held by the INS Central Office in Washington, D.C. The Central Office compilation appears to have been destroyed in 1945 under the authority of National Archives disposal job 345-216.

#### Roll 1:

Volume 1 – pages 1-197 – July 3, 1870 to June 23, 1885

Volume 2 & 3 – pages 198-463 – June 24, 1885 to December 13, 1907

Volume 4 – June 8, 1905 to February 26, 1918

Volume 5 – February 5, 1918 to October 31, 1918

Volumes 1, 2, and 3 cover San Francisco deaths only. Volumes 4 and 5 cover

deaths throughout the state of California (including San Francisco).

Roll 2: 1918 to 1933 – cover deaths of native-born Chinese Americans in San Francisco only.

**REGISTER OF CHINESE PARTNERSHIPS IN CALIFORNIA, 1894-ca. 1940**

**Location:** Microfilm cabinets

The registers exist in microfilm format only. The original records no longer exist.

**REGISTER OF FEDERAL COURT CASES RELATED TO CHINESE AMERICANS AND CHINESE IMMIGRANTS ARRIVING AT AND DEPARTING FROM SAN FRANCISCO, ca. 1883-ca. 1916 (bulk dates 1883-1904)**

**Location:** Roll 1 (of 1), microfilm cabinet 40, drawer 9

This is a card file register arranged numerically by the court case number listed on the upper left-hand corner of each card. Some cards at the beginning of the register are unnumbered (and partly illegible). A few of the cards at the beginning of the register are possibly spurious inclusions from other series.

The register is composed of three-by-five inch cards that have been reproduced on 16mm microfilm. A double column of card images appears on the film. The card image on the right is the front, which contains the all the relevant information described below. The card image on the left is the back. The INS apparently re-used old card so unrelated information occasionally appears on the card backs. The target at the beginning of the microfilm lists the title as: *"Index of Chinese Court Record Certificates. Filed by Serial Numbers. Dated Prior to Dec. 1, 1954 and Arranged in Chronological Order."* This is not an accurate description. The register is NOT a name index and NOT a subject index. The cards are NOT arranged in alphabetical order. The records are NOT arranged chronologically. The cards are arranged by court case number in ascending order. Because the case numbers are from various courts and various dockets there is no corresponding rough chronological progression to them. A further complication is the fact that the leader of the microfilm was erroneously marked by NARA staff as "M1389 roll 31." This register is NOT part of M1389.

Most cards list the court case number and the name of the court at the top of the card. Most cards also list the name of the petitioner/claimant/defendant. Most importantly, many cards include INS-San Francisco District immigration case file numbers and arrival dates. Some cards have extensive lists of names and INS case file numbers for relatives and witnesses. The cards document court cases throughout the United States, although most cards concern cases in the U.S. Circuit Court and U.S. District Court in San Francisco. Most of the cases appear to be habeas corpus petitions although some are for admiralty libels and revenue prosecutions. For the U.S. District Court in San Francisco, the habeas corpus cases are found in Admiralty (see NARA microfilm publication M1249, *Admiralty Case Files [Private] of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California, 1850-1900*). Habeas corpus cases heard by the Circuit Court

in San Francisco are on the civil docket (and are not available on microfilm). A United States Commissioner heard a few San Francisco cases. The notation "USDC NDC" after the case number means U.S. District Court, Northern District of California. "USCC NDC" means U.S. Circuit Court, Northern District of California.

The cards are extremely valuable in that they provide a clear link between Federal court cases and INS-San Francisco District case files. This connection has often been difficult to make because of spelling variations of Chinese names. This may have been one of the reasons why the register was created. Immigration officials in San Francisco collected information from other courts in addition to the Federal courts in San Francisco. This probably occurred when a traveler from another U.S. city applied for a return certificate in San Francisco and submitted as evidence court case papers documenting his/her nativity or lawful residence. San Francisco was perhaps the most active U.S. Pacific port in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Chinese Americans from all over the United States traveled through San Francisco for visits to China.

This register is most useful to researchers who have located a court case and wish to know if an individual had a corresponding immigration case file in San Francisco. For example, if a researcher located a habeas corpus petition file on NARA microfilm publication M1249, then this register could be consulted to locate the immigration case file.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service filmed the records in 1957. The microfilm was poorly produced and some of the cards are illegible. The register exists in microfilm format only. The INS destroyed the original records after filming. [Master negative: NARA accession job #NN3-85-84-1; WNRC SF135 #85-61A0218, box 444]

### **REGISTERS OF CERTIFICATES OF IDENTITY FOR CHINESE RESIDENTS, July 1, 1909-ca. 1943**

**Location:** Microfilm cabinet 40, drawer 9

### **REGISTER OF WAR BRIDES WITH CHILDREN, 1946-1948**

**Location:** Roll 1 (of 1), microfilm cabinet

This is a manifest register, reproduced on 35mm microfilm, that is arranged chronologically by ship arrival date (also numerically by INS-assigned ship arrival number) and thereunder alphabetically by name of immigrant. The register originally consisted of eight-and-a-half-inch by eleven-inch sheets of paper.

The microfilm reproduces INS form I 417, *Manifest of Alien Passengers Applying for Admission to the United States under the Act of December 28, 1945 and of Accompanying U.S. Citizen Children* (War Brides Act, 59 Statutes-at-Large 659). Most of the manifests are for ships sailing from Australia. There are also manifest for ships sailing from Auckland, Fiji, Manila, New Caledonia, and Shanghai. The information included on the manifests is minimal: name of applicant and various INS notations of application numbers, visa status, type of passport (if any), etc. Our holdings do not include any application material or evidence that the war brides were required to submit. If any material still exists it may still be in the custody of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. It is possible that some war brides or their children

were investigated by INS officials in San Francisco - check the indexes for the "1300" files described above. Researchers should also check NARA publication *M1410 Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at San Francisco, 1893-1953* (available in our microfilm reading room) for more complete passenger manifest information.

We do not have any name indexes to the manifests. Researchers should know the name of the ship and/or the approximate arrival date to locate information on a specific individual. A search of our naturalization records for the U.S. District Court in San Francisco (indexed by name) or the GENERAL INDEX TO IMMIGRATION CASE FILES, ca. 1884-ca. 1980 (described above) could help provide that information in some cases.

Some background information on war brides can be found in *War Brides and Their Shipment to the United States, Occupation Forces in Europe Series, 1945-46* by the Office of the Chief Historian, Headquarters European Command. United States Army, 1947.

The register exists in microfilm format only. The INS destroyed the original records after filming. [Master negative: NARA accession job #NN3-85-84-1; WNRC SF135 #85-61A0218, box 434]

#### **REGISTERS OF ALIEN STUDENTS ADMITTED UNDER THE IMMIGRATION ACT OF 1924, 1924-1946**

**Location:** Microfilm cabinet

The registers exist in microfilm format only. The original records no longer exist.

#### **RECORDS OF MISCELLANEOUS [CHINESE] IMMIGRATION CASES FROM OTHER PORTS, 1911-1912**

**Location:** Microfilm cabinet

The registers exist in microfilm format only. The original records no longer exist.

## San Francisco District Records Available as National Archives Microfilm Publications:

The microfilm publications listed below have been reproduced by the National Archives from the highest quality master negatives available from the Immigration and Naturalization Service. The original films include defects that affect the legibility of some frames. The original manifests no longer exist.

**M1389** INDEXES TO NON-CHINESE PASSENGER LISTS OF VESSELS ARRIVING IN SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, 1893-1934

**M1410** PASSENGER LISTS OF VESSELS ARRIVING IN SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, 1893-1953

**M1411** PASSENGER AND CREW LISTS OF VESSELS ARRIVING IN SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, 1954-1957

**M1412** CUSTOMS PASSENGER LISTS OF VESSELS ARRIVING IN SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, 1903-1918

**M1416** CREW LISTS OF VESSELS ARRIVING AT SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, 1905-1954

**M1436** ADMITTED ALIEN CREW LISTS OF VESSELS ARRIVING IN SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, 1896-1921

**M1438** PASSENGER LISTS OF VESSELS ARRIVING AT SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, FROM INSULAR POSSESSIONS, 1907-1911

**M1439** LISTS OF US CITIZENS ARRIVING AT SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, 1930-1949

**M1413** REGISTERS OF CHINESE LABORERS RETURNING TO THE UNITED STATES THROUGH THE PORT OF SAN FRANCISCO, 1882-1888

**M1414** LISTS OF CHINESE PASSENGERS ARRIVING IN SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, 1882-1914

**M1476** LISTS OF CHINESE APPLYING FOR ADMISSION TO THE UNITED STATES THROUGH THE PORT OF SAN FRANCISCO, 1903-1947

**M1494** PASSENGER LISTS OF VESSELS ARRIVING AT SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, FROM HONOLULU, HAWAII, 1902-1907

# Records of Sub-Offices of the San Francisco District

## Fresno, CA, Sub-Office

### IMMIGRATION AND DEPORTATION INVESTIGATION CASE FILES (1301), 1944-1955

**Extent:** 3.01 cu. ft.

**HMS:** 85-0048

**NAID:** 4658049

**Accession:** 085-92-002

**Transfer:** 085-60D-0504

**Boxes:** 1-7 (LGA-R)

**Location:** C-021-1-008-06

Arranged numerically by file number. An alphabetical name index is available in electronic format. Old boxes 335995-335996 and 336002.

Note: Screened. Fully Open.

## Honolulu, HI, Sub-Office

The Honolulu Office was part of the San Francisco District (District 13) from 1944 to 1949, then became the headquarters of District 17 in April 1949. The National Archives at San Francisco maintains a separate detailed finding aid for the Honolulu District that includes records dating from 1944-1949. See the entry **IMMIGRATION AND DEPORTATION INVESTIGATION CASE FILES**.

## Oakland, CA, Sub-Office

### IMMIGRATION AND DEPORTATION INVESTIGATION CASE FILES (1303), 1944-1955

**Extent:** 2.15 cu. ft.

**HMS:** 85-0049

**NAID:** 4658050

**Accession:** 085-92-002

**Transfer:** 085-60D-0504

**Boxes:** 1-5 (LGA-R)

**Location:** C-021-1-008-06

Arranged numerically by file number. An alphabetical name index is available in electronic format. Old box 335997.

**Note:** Some case files contain Federal income tax returns closed under 26 U.S.C. 6103 (Internal Revenue Code) and exempt from disclosure under 5 U.S.C.552(b)(3).

## Reno, NV, Sub-Office

The whereabouts of Reno **IMMIGRATION AND DEPORTATION INVESTIGATION CASE FILES** (1304), 1944-1955 are unknown. The files (in four boxes containing files 1304/1702 through 1304/2167 - FRC accession 85-56-221) were transferred from the San Francisco Federal Records Center to the INS office in Reno on December 12, 1959.

## **Sacramento, CA, Sub-Office**

### **IMMIGRATION AND DEPORTATION INVESTIGATION CASE FILES (1305), 1944-1955**

**Extent:** 2.15 cu. ft.

**HMS:** 85-0050

**NAID:** 4658051

**Accession:** 085-92-002

**Transfer:** 085-60D-0504

**Boxes:** 1-6 (LGA-R)

**Location:** C-021-1-008-06 to -07

Arranged numerically by file number. An alphabetical name index is available in electronic format. Old boxes 335998-335999.

**Note:** Some case files contain Federal income tax returns closed under 26 U.S.C. 6103 (Internal Revenue Code) and exempt from disclosure under 5 U.S.C.552(b)(3).

## **Salt Lake City, UT, Sub-Office**

The whereabouts of Salt Lake City **IMMIGRATION AND DEPORTATION INVESTIGATION CASE FILES** (1306), 1944-55 are unknown. The files (in boxes containing files 1306/164 through 1306/4776 - FRC accession 85-56-225) were transferred from the San Francisco Federal Records Center to the INS office in Salt Lake City on March 18, 1959.

## **Stockton, CA, Sub-Office**

### **IMMIGRATION AND DEPORTATION INVESTIGATION CASE FILES (1307), 1944-1955**

**Extent:** 3.010 cu. ft.

**HMS:** 85-0051

**NAID:** 4658052

**Accession:** 085-92-002

**Transfer:** 085-60D-0504

**Boxes:** 1-7 (LGA-R)

**Location:** C-021-1-008-07

Arranged numerically by file number. An alphabetical name index is available in electronic format. Old boxes 336000-336001.

NOTE: Screened. Fully Open.

## Salinas, CA, Sub-Office

### IMMIGRATION AND DEPORTATION INVESTIGATION CASE FILES (1308), 1944-55

**Extent:** 2.15 cu. ft.

**HMS:** 85-0052

**NAID:** 4658053

**Accession:** 085-92-002

**Transfer:** 085-60D-0504

**Boxes:** 1-5 (LGA-R)

**Location:** C-021-1-008-07

Arranged numerically by file number. An alphabetical name index is available in electronic format. Old box 336003.

**Note:** Some case files contain Federal income tax returns closed under 26 U.S.C. 6103 (Internal Revenue Code) and exempt from disclosure under 5 U.S.C.552(b)(3).

## **San Francisco District Records of the Naturalization Examiner**

Bureau of Naturalization officials in each District worked in concert with state and Federal court officials during the naturalization process. Bureau officials in the districts maintained duplicate copies of all naturalization documents that were filed with the courts (Declarations of Intention, Petitions for Naturalization, and Certificates of Naturalization) and, additionally, collected witness affidavits and correspondence. Bureau officials appeared in court on behalf of the United States in naturalization proceedings.

The INS has a large volume of Bureau of Naturalization records for District Offices in San Francisco and Denver stored in the San Francisco Federal Records Center. These District Office records are still in the legal custody of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. The National Archives and Records Administration does not have access to the files. The San Francisco Federal Records Center is a low-cost storage facility and the Records Center staff has no information concerning INS records stored there. They are unable to provide any reference service on INS records for the public. Researchers must file a Freedom of Information Act request with the INS to obtain any documents stored in Federal Records Centers. For all practical purposes, however, it is doubtful that the INS could retrieve a sought-after document from their old Bureau of Naturalization District Office records. Those older records were filed under radically different filing schemes than are used now by the INS and appropriate indexes and finding aids probably no longer exist. The INS would likely be unable to conduct such extensive research.

At present the old Bureau of Naturalization District Office records are not scheduled for permanent retention by the National Archives and Records Administration. San Francisco and Denver District Office records will be destroyed in the next several decades. Unfortunately, the most comprehensive files (from a genealogical perspective) related to naturalizations prior to 1940 are probably those collected by the Bureau of Naturalization/INS District Offices throughout the U.S.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service, Washington, DC 20536, has duplicate records of all naturalization Certificates issued after September 26, 1906. To request information from the INS, you can use INS Form G-639, "Freedom of Information/Privacy Act Request." The form is in the Portable Document Format (PDF).

## **U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services District 21 – San Francisco – RG 566**

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) and United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) signed an agreement on June 3, 2009 to make the Alien Files (A-Files) a permanent series of records. A-Files will be transferred in five-year blocks to National Archives custody 100 years after the alien's year of birth.

Created by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) beginning in 1944, A-Files contain all records of any active case of an alien not yet naturalized as they passed through the United States immigration and inspection process. An A-File might also be created without any action taken by the alien; for example, if the INS initiated a law enforcement action against or involving the alien.

A rich source of biographical information, A-Files may include visas, photographs, affidavits, and correspondence leading up to an alien's naturalization, permanent residency, or deportation. Some A-Files contain records consolidated from the older immigration case file series currently open for public research at the National Archives in San Francisco.

Because of strong interest and advocacy for the A-files by local research communities and their congressional representatives, the National Archives at San Francisco will maintain many A-Files controlled by 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. A-Files from other district offices are centralized and available through the National Archives at Kansas City.

The National Archives' holdings of A-Files will grow as United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) continues to transfer records.

### **Alien Case Files, 1944-2009**

Arranged by terminal digit number. This series consists of individual immigration case files, commonly referred to as Alien Files or A-Files, for individuals born 1910 and prior.

A-Files contain all records of any active case of an alien not yet naturalized as they passed through the United States immigration and inspection process. An A-File might also be created without any action taken by the alien, for example if the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) initiated a law enforcement action against or involving the alien.

All case files contain the Alien Registration Form (Form AR-2) which provides the name, address, date/place of birth, physical description, occupation, employer, and a statement of military service of the alien. Some case files include photographs, personal correspondence, birth certificates, health records, interview transcripts, visas, applications, newspaper clippings,

and other information. The quantity and type of information vary significantly between individual files in this series.

Individual case files may also contain records from early immigration case files, such as visa files and Chinese Exclusion Act-era files, when cases were reopened due to later activity such as the replacement of a document, a petition for an immigrant relative, or participation in the Chinese Amnesty Program.

This series does not yet contain all of the alien case files for individuals born 1910 and prior. In addition, this series only contains files maintained by INS district offices located in San Francisco, Honolulu, Reno, and Guam. A-Files from other INS district offices are maintained by the National Archives at Kansas City.

A-Files may be searched using the National Archives catalog (<https://catalog.archives.gov/>). A name index is available. More information about the A-Files may be found online at <http://www.archives.gov/research/immigration/aliens/>.

NAID 6105565

See RG 566 finding aid for locations

## Appendix A: Summary of San Francisco Case File Numbers

The first half of each case file number is the key to the type of file. For example 12017/34566 is a RETURN CERTIFICATE APPLICATION CASE FILE OF CHINESE DEPARTING (12017) and 23456/2-3 is an ARRIVAL INVESTIGATION CASE FILE.

1 through 9199 - multiple series, some no longer extant as such - 9079 landing denials; 9170, 9180, 9190 departure applications; 9171 – unknown; etc.

9200 through 11499 – arrival case files - Each number represents the arrival of a ship. The case file number is composed of the arrival number followed by a ticket number. At first only ships carrying Chinese passengers were given arrival numbers after circa 1900 all ships, and later aircraft, were given arrival numbers.

11500 through 11999 – departure case files - Each number represents the departure of a ship. The case file number is composed of the ship departure number followed by the line number on the departure manifest.

12000 through 12050 - multiple series - Administrative files - 12001 & 12008; deportations - 12016 & 12020; 12017 departures; etc. Many interesting series have been destroyed by the INS and the FRC.) See below for more information.

12051 through 12499 – departure case files - Each number represents the departure of a ship. The case file number is composed of the departure number followed by the line number on the departure manifest.

12500 through 13499 – arrival case files - Each number represents the arrival of a ship. The case file number is composed of the arrival number followed by the page and line number on the passenger arrival manifest.

13500 through 13599 – Chinese partnership case files – numbers 13562 through 13599 were never used.

13600 through 47222 (end) – arrival case files - Each number represents the arrival of a ship. The case file number is composed of the arrival number followed by the page and line number on the passenger arrival manifest.

## The "12,000" Series

This is a list of the "12,000" series files of the INS – San Francisco District. These series date to the 1912 to 1944 period except where noted. Researchers often see these numbers referenced in immigration case files. At one time each file number in the "12,000 series" probably contained one or more individual files. Many "12,000" file number series contained thousands of files. A few series may have been destroyed all or in part by the devastating fire that destroyed the Angel Island Immigration Station in 1940. Other series were destroyed by the INS in the 1940s and early 1960s. Many records appear to have been destroyed by the INS under the authority of National Archives disposal job 347-258, Feb. 24, 1948 (House Report 1278, 80<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess.).

**12000** Administrative files (?) Perhaps this was an important administrative series. These files had the great misfortune of being boxed together with the 12013 so-called "accounting" files and were destroyed with them by the San Francisco Federal Records Center. They were part of San Francisco FRC accession 85-51-98 which was destroyed in 1960 (60D40).

**12001** Personnel Files (confirmed by a notation in file 19265/34-1). There is nothing here in San Bruno under this series number – check with the National Archives at St. Louis, Missouri. Information about making requests for personnel files is available on their website at <http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/archival-programs/civilian-personnel-archival/index.html>."

**12002** unknown

**12003** unknown

**12004** unknown

**12005** unknown

**12006** Construction and Maintenance Files.

**12007** unknown

**12008** Telephone Cable Files.

**12009** unknown

**12010** Case Files of Departing Asians (non-Chinese, i.e. Japanese, Indians, etc.), 1924-44. Probably created because of the Immigration Act of 1924. (See file 37622/7-2 for example. Probably destroyed?)

**12011** unknown

**12012** unknown

**12013** “Fiscal and Accounting Files” (per Standard Form 135 description). Part of San Francisco FRC accession 85-51-98 which was destroyed in 1960 (60D40). This file code may have included some very interesting administrative and financial documents.

**12014** unknown

**12015** unknown

**12016** Case Files of Investigations Not Resulting in Warrant Proceedings in the San Francisco District and Investigations Within The San Francisco District at The Request of Other Service Offices.

**12017** Return Certificate Application Case Files of Chinese Departing

**12018** unknown

**12019** unknown

**12020** Case Files of Investigations Resulting In Warrant Proceedings [Deportations] - “Deportation Investigation Case Files.” Fewer than 850 files survive out of the original 35,000+. The earliest files in this series, dating from 1913 to 1930 were all destroyed when the Angel Island Immigration Station administration building burned to the ground on August 12, 1940.

**12021** “Petitions” “applications” (for what? naturalization?). This was a two cubic foot part of San Francisco FRC accession 85-51-103 which was destroyed in 1960 (60D40).

**12022** “Petitions” “applications” (for what? naturalization?). This was a three cubic foot part of San Francisco FRC accession 85-51-103 which was destroyed in 1960 (60D40).

**12023** Application Case Files of Natives and Merchants Bringing Foreign-Born Dependents to the US. Part of San Francisco FRC accession 85-51-103 which was destroyed in 1960 (60D40). One file survived the destruction.

**12024** unknown

**12025** Investigation of Status Files. 12025 files were opened during the investigation of the immigration status of individuals who were suspected of being in the U.S. illegally. Unfavorable 12025 investigations frequently led to 12016 and 12020 investigations. All 12025 files appear to have been destroyed by the INS except for one file currently in INS custody and stored under

national security classification in the Washington National Records Center vault. Another file - 12025/1637 - also survives because it was consolidated into file 1300-46251 when the subject of the file applied for a return permit (for I-631) in 1947.

**12026** Immigration Fraud Investigation Case Files.

**12027** unknown

**12028** Departure case files of “In-Transit” passengers. Possibly consisted of files containing lists of alien passengers arriving at San Francisco en route to foreign ports like Cuba, Mexico, Canada, or Central America. Possibly consisted of lists of files or perhaps individual case files of in-transit passengers detained at Angel Island or 630 Sansome Street awaiting the next ship or train to another destination (likely destroyed – no evidence that any 12028 files still exist)

**12029** unknown

**12030** Administrative Files Related to Buildings and Grounds.

**12031** unknown

**12032** unknown

**12033** unknown

**12034** Applications for Passports.

**12035** ?? Case Files of Repatriated Filipinos, 1935-41. This series consisted of individual investigation files of Filipinos who requested repatriation to the Philippine Islands at U.S. government expense under authority of the Act of July 10, 1935, and the superceding Act of July 27, 1939. The program terminated as of December 31, 1940. Ten cubic feet of records appear to have been destroyed by the INS under the authority of National Archives disposal job 347-258, item 55, Feb. 24, 1948 (House Report 1278, 80<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess.). A parallel general correspondence file related to Filipino repatriation appears to have been destroyed at the same time (job 347-258, item 49). See also 12042. OR – COULD THIS BE – Deportation Case Files Initiated by Other District Offices. These 12035 numbers appear next to name of people who were deported (Chinese, East Indian, and Japanese) on the “Wharf Registers of Departures.” ??

**12036** unknown

**12037** unknown

**12038** unknown

**12039** Voluntary Deportation Case Files.

**12040** unknown

**12041** "Case Files Related to Applications to Take Oath of Allegiance to the United States Under the Act of June 25, 1936, as amended" (application of restoration of United States citizenship lost by marriage to an alien).

**12042** "Applications for Repatriation under the Act of July 10, 1935." See also 12035.

**12043** unknown

**12044** "Enemy Alien Case Files"

**12045** "Case files of Investigations under the Alien Registration Act of 1940, 1942-6/30/1944." Fifty-three cubic feet of records were all destroyed under the authority of National Archives disposal job 347-258, item 8, Feb. 24, 1948 (House Report 1278, 80<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess.).

**12046** unknown

**12047** Case file of women who lost citizenship because of marriage to an alien ineligible for citizenship?

**12048** unknown

**12049** unknown

**12050** unknown

## Appendix B: Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882

Forty-Seventh Congress. Session I. 1882

Chapter 126.-An act to execute certain treaty stipulations relating to Chinese.

Preamble. Whereas, in the opinion of the Government of the United States the coming of Chinese laborers to this country endangers the good order of certain localities within the territory thereof:

Therefore,

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That from and after the expiration of ninety days next after the passage of this act, and until the expiration of ten years next after the passage of this act, the coming of Chinese laborers to the United States be, and the same is hereby, suspended; and during such suspension it shall not be lawful for any Chinese laborer to come, or, having so come after the expiration of said ninety days, to remain within the United States.

SEC. 2. That the master of any vessel who shall knowingly bring within the United States on such vessel, and land or permit to be landed, and Chinese laborer, from any foreign port of place, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and on conviction thereof shall be punished by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars for each and every such Chinese laborer so brought, and may be also imprisoned for a term not exceeding one year.

SEC. 3. That the two foregoing sections shall not apply to Chinese laborers who were in the United States on the seventeenth day of November, eighteen hundred and eighty, or who shall have come into the same before the expiration of ninety days next after the passage of this act, and who shall produce to such master before going on board such vessel, and shall produce to the collector of the port in the United States at which such vessel shall arrive, the evidence hereinafter in this act required of his being one of the laborers in this section mentioned; nor shall the two foregoing sections apply to the case of any master whose vessel, being bound to a port not within the United States by reason of being in distress or in stress of weather, or touching at any port of the United States on its voyage to any foreign port of place: Provided, That all Chinese laborers brought on such vessel shall depart with the vessel on leaving port.

SEC. 4. That for the purpose of properly identifying Chinese laborers who were in the United States on the seventeenth day of November, eighteen hundred and eighty, or who shall have come into the same before the expiration of ninety days next after the passage of this act, and in order to furnish them with the proper evidence of their right to go from and come to the United States of their free will and accord, as provided by the treaty between the United States and China dated November seventeenth, eighteen hundred and eighty, the collector of customs of the district from which any such Chinese laborer shall depart from the United States shall, in person or by deputy, go on board each vessel having on board any such Chinese laborer and cleared or about to sail from his district for a foreign port, and on such vessel make a list of all such Chinese laborers, which shall be entered in registry-books to be kept for that purpose, in which shall be stated the name, age, occupation, last place of residence, physical marks or peculiarities, and all facts necessary for the identification of each of such Chinese laborers, which books shall be safely kept in the custom-house; and every such Chinese laborer so departing from the United States shall be entitled to, and shall receive, free of any charge or cost upon application therefor, from the collector or his deputy, at the time such list is taken, a certificate, signed by the collector or his deputy and attested by his seal of office, in such form as the Secretary of the Treasury shall prescribe, which certificate shall contain a statement of the name, age, occupation, last place of residence, personal description, and fact of identification of the Chinese laborer to whom the certificate is issued, corresponding with the said list and registry in all particulars. In case any Chinese laborer after having received such certificate shall leave such vessel before her departure he shall deliver his certificate to the master of the vessel, and if such Chinese laborer shall fail to return to such vessel before her departure from port the certificate shall be delivered by the master to the collector of customs for cancellation. The certificate herein provided for shall entitle the Chinese laborer to whom the same is issued to return to and re-enter the United States upon producing and delivering the same to the collector of customs of the district at which such Chinese laborer shall seek to re-enter; and upon delivery of such certificate by such Chinese laborer to the collector of customs at the time of re-entry in the United States, said collector shall cause the same to be filed in the custom house and duly canceled.

SEC. 5. That any Chinese laborer mentioned in section four of this act being in the United States, and desiring to depart from the United States by land, shall have the right to demand and receive, free of charge or cost, a certificate of identification similar to that provided for in section four of this act to be issued to such Chinese laborers as may desire to leave the United States by water; and it is hereby made the duty of the collector of customs of the district next adjoining the foreign country to which said Chinese laborer desires to go to issue such certificate, free of charge or cost, upon application by such Chinese laborer, and to enter the same upon registry-books to be kept by him for the purpose, as provided for in section four of this act.

SEC. 6. That in order to the faithful execution of articles one and two of the treaty in this act before mentioned, every Chinese person other than a laborer who may be entitled by said treaty and this act to come within the United States, and who shall be about to come to the United States, shall be identified as so entitled by the Chinese Government in each case, such identity to be evidenced by a certificate issued under the authority of said government, which certificate shall be in the English language or (if not in the English language) accompanied by a translation into English, stating such right to come, and which certificate shall state the name, title, or official rank, if any, the age, height, and all physical peculiarities, former and present occupation or profession, and place of residence in China of the person to whom the certificate is issued and that such person is entitled conformably to the treaty in this act mentioned to come within the United States. Such certificate shall be prima-facie evidence of the fact set forth therein, and shall be produced to the collector of customs, or his deputy, of the port in the district in the United States at which the person named therein shall arrive.

SEC. 7. That any person who shall knowingly and falsely alter or substitute any name for the name written in such certificate or forge any such certificate, or knowingly utter any forged or fraudulent certificate, or falsely personate any person named in any such certificate, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor; and upon conviction thereof shall be fined in a sum not exceeding one thousand dollars, or imprisoned in a penitentiary for a term of not more than five years.

SEC. 8. That the master of any vessel arriving in the United States from any foreign port or place shall, at the same time he delivers a manifest of the cargo, and if there be no cargo, then at the time of making a report of the entry of vessel pursuant to the law, in addition to the other matter required to be reported, and before landing, or permitting to land, any Chinese passengers, deliver and report to the collector of customs of the district in which such vessels shall have arrived a separate list of all Chinese passengers taken on board his vessel at any foreign port or place, and all such passengers on board the vessel at that time. Such list shall show the names of such passengers (and if accredited officers of the Chinese Government traveling on the business of that government, or their servants, with a note of such facts), and the name and other particulars, as shown by their respective certificates; and such list shall be sworn to by the master in the manner required by law in relation to the manifest of the cargo. Any willful refusal or neglect of any such master to comply with the provisions of this section shall incur the same penalties and forfeiture as are provided for a refusal or neglect to report and deliver a manifest of cargo.

SEC. 9. That before any Chinese passengers are landed from any such vessel, the collector, or his deputy, shall proceed to examine such passengers, comparing the certificates with the list and with the passengers; and no passenger shall be allowed to land in the United States from such vessel in violation of law.

SEC. 10. That every vessel whose master shall knowingly violate any of the provisions of this act shall be deemed forfeited to the United States, and shall be liable to seizure and condemnation on any district of the United States into which such vessel may enter or in which she may be found.

SEC. 11. That any person who shall knowingly bring into or cause to be brought into the United States by land, or who shall knowingly aid or abet the same, or aid or abet the landing in the United States from any vessel of any Chinese person not lawfully entitled to enter the United States, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall, on conviction thereof, be fined in a sum not exceeding one thousand dollars, and imprisoned for a term not exceeding one year.

SEC. 12. That no Chinese person shall be permitted to enter the United

States by land without producing to the proper officer of customs the certificate in this act required of Chinese persons seeking to land from a vessel. And any Chinese person found unlawfully within the United States shall be caused to be removed therefrom to the country from whence he came, by direction of the United States, after being brought before some justice, judge, or commissioner of a court of the United States and found to be one not lawfully entitled to be or remain in the United States.

SEC. 13. That this act shall not apply to diplomatic and other officers of the Chinese Government traveling upon the business of that government, whose credentials shall be taken as equivalent to the certificate in this act mentioned, and shall exempt them and their body and household servants from the provisions of this act as to other Chinese persons.

SEC. 14. That hereafter no State court or court of the United States shall admit Chinese to citizenship; and all laws in conflict with this act are hereby repealed.

SEC. 15. That the words "Chinese laborers", whenever used in this act, shall be construed to mean both skilled and unskilled laborers and Chinese employed in mining.

Approved, May 6, 1882.

## Appendix C: Spelling Chinese Names

From the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Immigration: TREATY, LAWS, RULES GOVERNING THE ADMISSION OF CHINESE, RULES OF MAY 1, 1917 (Third Edition – October, 1920), page 62, rule 26:

### Rule 26. SPELLING OF CHINESE NAMES.

1. It is practically impossible to use any general and uniform method of spelling Chinese names. Such names are supposed to be rendered into English according to the science of phonetics, but there is a great divergence of opinion as to the letters of the English alphabet that ought to be used to represent certain sounds. With a view to obviating this difficulty so far as may be possible, officers of the Immigration Service engaged in investigating the cases of Chinese should observe the following practice:

- (a) If the name of the Chinese person has been used already in some previous stage of the case under investigation, continue the same spelling throughout the proceedings unless it is quite apparent that a mistake has occurred and that the name (i.e., the *sound*) can not be rendered properly by means of the letters previously used, in which event a note explaining the change should be inserted in the paper in course of preparation.
- (b) When the name of the Chinese person arises primarily in connection with any case, represent it in English by means of the simplest and most accurate combination of letters which will produce the *sound* of such name – e.g., the name or sound *Lui* should be represented by three letter *l – u – i*, not *Louis*, *Louie*, *Loeey*, etc.
- (c) Whenever the name of a Chinese person is obtained, after rendering it into English in accordance with the foregoing, require such person to write his name in Chinese characters, inserting it in the paper being prepared immediately after the English equivalent. If the name is thus written in the shorthand notes of a stenographer employed in reporting the case, a tracing thereof should be inserted in the transcript of such notes. As the written language of China does not vary, no matter to what extent the spoken language may run into dialects and colloquialisms, this practice will insure the procurement of the Chinese person's exact appellation.