



# National Archives and Records Administration

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700 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20408-0001

## Research Guide to Selected Bureau of Naturalization Case and Correspondence Files, 1906–1946

Marian L. Smith, USCIS, and Claire Prechtel-Klusgens, NARA  
(January 2013 edition)<sup>1</sup>

*Please direct inquiries to the appropriate reference unit*

### Part 1 – Overview

The first federal naturalization law enacted in 1790 (1 Stat. 103) permitted foreign-born persons (aliens) to become U.S. citizens through a two-step process administered by any court of record. Additional legislation was enacted over the years.

Significant Federal oversight began in 1906 when Congress addressed problems of widespread fraud and irregularities in the naturalization process by an act of June 29, 1906 (34 Stat. 596), that also established a new Federal Naturalization Service within an expanded Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization in the Department of Commerce and Labor. In 1913, the Bureau was split, with the Bureau of Immigration and the Bureau of Naturalization operating independently of each other. Those bureaus were reunited in 1933 when they were consolidated as the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) within the Department of Labor. Under President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Reorganization Plan V of 1940, the INS was moved to the Department of Justice. The INS was abolished in 2003, and its immigration and naturalization recordkeeping functions were transferred to the new Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) within the new Department of Homeland Security, established January 24, 2003, by the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (116 Stat. 2135, 2205).

From its creation in 1906, the Naturalization Service worked to achieve uniformity in naturalization policy and practice in three major ways:

- (1) It set and collected standard naturalization fees.
- (2) It standardized all U.S. naturalization forms and collected duplicate copies of all naturalization papers filed in the courts.
- (3) Its officials worked to reconcile court decisions and advance uniform application and interpretation of naturalization statutes.

These activities created two major sets of records: *case files* and *correspondence files*. Correspondence (letters, telegrams, etc.) received or sent by the Naturalization Service could be filed in either location. Generally, if the correspondent already had a record on file with the Service (such as a declaration of intention, petition for naturalization, or certificate of naturalization file), the correspondence would be filed with those records ("*case file*"). If the correspondent had no records on file, the correspondence would be filed under the appropriate subject series among the *correspondence files*.

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<sup>1</sup> This Research Guide is based upon the descriptive pamphlet for National Archives Microfilm Publication A3388, *Name Index to Bureau of Naturalization Correspondence Files, 1906–1946* (Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Administration, 2012).

## Part 2 – Index to the Correspondence Files

National Archives Microfilm Publication A3388, *Name Index to Bureau of Naturalization Correspondence Files, 1906–1946* (19 rolls) (ARC Identifier 1593296)<sup>2</sup> publication reproduces a *name index to correspondence* filed in several related series of Naturalization Service case and correspondence files, 1906–46. It contains approximately 140,000 index cards arranged in rough alphabetical order by the first few letters of the surname, then in reverse chronological order by date. Some persons have their own index card, while others share cards with other individuals, thus making the alphabetization scheme somewhat overlapping. Cards that contain information about multiple individuals often combine names that begin with a range of letters. For example, references to persons with surnames beginning with *Zak* thru *Zam* are grouped together. Cards in groups such as this are generally numbered, with newer, high-numbered cards preceding older, lower-numbered cards. As a result of all of these factors, the A3388 roll list below sometimes lists a string of names or name fragments that begin or end particular rolls in order to clarify nuances in the arrangement. Typical index card entries are similar to these:

72/327	CONANT, JULIE LAUBMEYER; re natz. abroad (Natzd. thru husband, Amer. born) 1/15/35
2304-C-254865	CONDELLO, DOMINICK; re use of photostat copy of Joseph CONDELLO's cert. 9/23/35
23-17600	CONACHAN, JAMES; re natz. O.A.F. 11/27/35
8/15105	CONCEICAS, JOSE (Joseph J. Bernardos) re c/a 5/6/35
2274-D-126998	CONCHIE, JAMES; re c/a 11/8/35

Sometimes the indexers typed a dash instead of a slash, such as 8-13228 instead of 8/13228, but that variation is not important. Please note that A3388 is *not* a comprehensive name index to naturalizations since 1906.

### A3388 Roll List

NEW ROLL NO.	OLD ROLL NO.	FROM	To
1	1	Aad	Alcouloumre
	19	Zak–Zam (cards 1–78)	Zz
2	1A	Alc–Aldh	Berger, S.
3	2*	Berger, T.	Burno–Burrn; Burns
4	3	Burro–Burs	Core–Corm (cards 25–48)
5	4	Core–Corm (cards 1–25)	Dow–Dowm
6	5*	Down–Downe	Frank (cards 24–67)
7	6	Frank (cards 2–23)	Graw–Grd (cards 6–32) <sup>3</sup>
8	7	Graw–Grd (cards 1–5)	Hold–Holk (cards 11–46)
9	8*	Hold–Holk (cards 1–10)	Ke–Keaz; Kean; Keane; Kearney
10	9*	Kearns; Keating; Keb–Ked	Lavi–Lavz (cards 21–38)
11	10*	Lavi–Lavz (cards 1–19, 75) <sup>4</sup>	Magg–Magm (cards 33–63) <sup>5</sup>
12	11	Magg–Magm (cards 1–62)	Michal–Michd (cards 21–48)

<sup>2</sup> NARA's Archival Research Catalog (ARC) is online at [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov).

\* Roll begins with a retakes section (images refilmed to ensure legibility). Retakes sections are lengthy on rolls 15 (old INS roll 14), 16 (old INS roll 15), 17 (old INS roll 16), 18 (old INS roll 17), and 19 (old INS roll 18).

<sup>3</sup> Two Graw-Grd cards after card 30 are assumed to be 31 and 32, but due to filming error, only part of each is legible.

<sup>4</sup> It is unknown why the "75" card was marked 75 instead of 20.

<sup>5</sup> Due to camera operator error, the images Magg–Magm (cards 1–32) were lost due to the film being overexposed. As a result, all Magg–Magm cards were refilmed on the next roll.

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NEW ROLL NO.	OLD ROLL NO.	FROM	To
13	12	Michal–Michd	Novi–Novz (cards 22–34)
14	13*	Novi–Novz (cards 1–21)	Pip–Pirz (cards 22–32)
15	14*	Pip–Pirz (cards 1–21)	Rosena-Rosenb; Rosen; Rosenbaum; Rosenberg, A–I (cards 20–31)
16	15*	Rosenberg, A–I (cards 1–19); Rosenberg, J–M; Rosenberg, N–Z; Rosenblatt; Rosenblum; Rosenc–Rosenj	Selm–Selz (cards 19–36)
17	16*	Selm–Selz (cards 1–18)	Stre–Stree
18	17*	Stref–Strh	Vig–Vim (cards 88–116)
19	18*	Vig–Vim (cards 1–87)	Zak–Zam (cards 79–95)

These records were filmed by the INS in May 1958 and transferred to the National Archives on microfilm in 2003. Although some of this film may be difficult to read, it is impossible to correct the situation since the INS destroyed the original records. The INS apparently used a camera system with an automatic card feeder. This machinery misfed some of the cards, resulting in either the top or bottom portion not being filmed. Some rolls begin with retakes sections (images refilmed to ensure legibility) that may correct some of these filming errors, but not all such errors were corrected.

#### **When you find someone in the index, what next?**

Once an item of interest is found in the index, it is then necessary to locate the related file in one of several Bureau of Naturalization record series that are located in several different repositories (as of 2013) as follows:

- (1) ***Bureau of Naturalization correspondence files, 1906–1946***, in the National Archives, Washington, DC. These files are in Record Group 85, Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and include Entries (record series) 26, 26-A, 26-C, 27, 30, 31, 33, and 34,<sup>6</sup> **described in detail on pages 4–5 (“Part 3”)**. Occasionally, index entries may refer to other record series besides these. Some files were destroyed before transfer to the National Archives and are no longer extant. Some files may have been consolidated under a different file number; in this situation, obtain the new number through a request to the USCIS Genealogy Program for an index search.
- (2) ***Alien Case Files (A-Files)***, at the National Archives at Kansas City, Kansas City, MO (ARC Identifier 4488912), or at the National Archives at San Francisco, CA (ARC Identifier 6105565). In 2010, the USCIS began transferring to these facilities A-files for individuals born more than 100 years ago. These files are part of Record Group 566, Records of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. To search for a specific person, go to the Archival Research Catalog (ARC) at [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov) and type the words “alien case file” and the person’s surname in the search box.
- (3) ***Naturalization files*** maintained by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Washington, DC, **described in detail on pages 6–8 (“Part 5”)**.
- (4) ***Naturalization records*** created in Federal courts and now in the custody of various National Archives and Records Administration facilities. Visit [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov) for more information.

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<sup>6</sup> The Entry (or Series) numbers are those assigned to the series in the legacy finding aid NARS A1.

- (5) *Naturalization records* created in county courts that remain in the custody of those courts or that are now in the custody of county or state archives.

### **Part 3 – Bureau of Naturalization Correspondence Files, 1906–1946, in the National Archives Building, Washington, DC**

A3388 serves as a finding aid to several Bureau of Naturalization correspondence files now in the custody of the National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC. For assistance with these records, which are part of Record Group 85, Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, contact: Archives I Reference Section, National Archives and Records Administration, 700 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC, 20408. Phone: 202-357-5385; Fax: 202-357-5936; Email: [ArchivesIreference@nara.gov](mailto:ArchivesIreference@nara.gov).

Each correspondence file generally has a two-part number. The prefix number is separated by a slash from the suffix number. The prefix number indicates the administrative or policy subject under which the case arose. The suffix number is the specific case number within that subject set. This list identifies the correspondence series and the file prefixes they contain:

**Administrative Files Relating to Naturalization, 1906–44** (1,767 boxes) (NARS A1 Entries 26 and 26-A, ARC Identifier 563066). Subject prefixes under which many records are filed are 8, 15, 23,<sup>7</sup> 72, 77, 834, 1506, 1525, 1726, 1737, 3900, 3910, 3912, 3926, 3933, 10088, 10331, 19783, 27603, 27632, 37576, 106787, 106799, 106821, 106971, 106972, 106974, 457123, and 457223.

The complete range of prefixes in this series is: 5–9, 11–27, 33–35, 37–48, 50, 63–75, 77–103, 105–107, 121–124, 127, 128, 130, 200, 380–387, 389–417, 432, 442, 443, 497, 570, 638, 665, 742, 834, 847–853, 929, 1134, 1135, 1186, 1506, 1525, 1696, 1702, 1726, 1737, 2535, 3900–3903, 3905–3907, 3910–3914, 3916, 3920–3934, 3936–3938, 4000, 10056, 10088, 10331, 10333, 10867, 10946, 11765, 13523, 16990, 18507, 19290, 19452, 19653–19659, 19661–19677, 19679, 19680, 19682–19690, 19692–19698, 19733–19740, 19742, 19751, 19783, 27603, 27632, 27670–27672, 27674, 27680, 27682, 27687, 27688, 27695, 37574, 37576, 37580, 37594, 37595, 37634, 37651, 37664, 37706–37708, 37751, 37762, 37764, 106781, 106787, 106799, 106820, 106821, 106835, 106853, 106908, 106920, 106938, 106942, 106951, 106952, 106956, 106958, 106965, 106966, 106968–106972, 106974, 106990, 106994, 106997, 106999, 457100–457102, 457104, 457111–457113, 457115, 457122–457124, 457126, 457133–457135, 457137, 457144, 457145, 145155–457157, 457159, 457166–457168, 457170, 145177–457179, 457181, 457188–457190, 457192, 457194, 457195, 457199, 457200–457203, 457210–457212, 457222, 457223, 457234, 457243, 457245, 457246, 457248, 509503, 509528, 509563, and 509598.

The following list identifies the subject matter of *selected* prefix numbers:

PREFIX	SUBJECT
8	Certificates of arrival
15	Loss of citizenship through residence abroad within five years of naturalization
23	Miscellaneous inquiries relative to naturalization
24	Expatriation
35	Soldiers and sailors
72	Renunciation of American citizenship under Act of September 22, 1922

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<sup>7</sup> Files numbered 23/43822 or lower.

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PREFIX	SUBJECT
77	Requests for certificate of arrival on or after July 1, 1924
128	Laws of states regarding blood relatives serving as witnesses
380	Judges of naturalization courts
1506	Fraudulent naturalizations or fraudulent naturalization papers
1737	Naturalization certificates investigated; fraudulent papers cancelled
3932	Cooperation with War Department to apprehend and bring to trial draft deserters
4000	Lost certificate
10088	Request for information
37574	Fees for duplicate copies of naturalization papers, 1907
106787	Request for documents
106799	Request for information
457199	Correspondence with Chief Naturalization Examiner at San Francisco

**Special Files Withdrawn from the Bureau of Naturalization Correspondence Files, 1924–27** (1 box) (NARS A1 Entry 26-C, ARC Identifier 5726650). No file numbers.

**Oversized Enclosures to Administrative Files Relating to Naturalization, 1906–1944** (2 boxes) (NARS A1 Entry 27, ARC Identifier 4728390). File 1525/49 only.

**Education and Americanization Files, 1914–36 (422 boxes)** (NARS A1 Entry 30, ARC Identifier 4730950). Files in this series have either numeric prefix/suffix numbers or alphanumeric designations. *Numeric prefix/suffix files* begin with these prefixes: 27671, 27672, 27673, and 27674. *Alphanumeric files* begin with these prefixes: AL, ARE, E, L, N, PI, PM, TP, and UC. The format of the UC file numbers is actually E-number-UC, such as E4561UC.

**Oversized Enclosures to Education and Americanization Files, 1914–36** (12 boxes) (NARS A1 Entry 31, ARC Identifier 4731925). A small number of file prefixes are represented in this series: 742, 27671, 37762, 37762, 45712, 71542, 509525, 509528, 209528, E13232, E457122, and possibly others.

**Citizenship Education Program Files, 1935–54** (91 boxes) (NARS A1 Entry 33, ARC Identifier 4734721). Files have these prefixes: 25, 150–160, 162, and 166–168.

**Citizenship Training Textbooks, 1918–55** (5 boxes) (NARS A1 Entry 34, ARC Identifier 4734835). No file numbers. Various types of instructional materials.

#### **Part 4 – Additional Naturalization-Related Indexes in the National Archives Building, Washington, DC**

This section describes three additional indexes that may provide leads to other records. For assistance with these indexes, which are part of Record Group 85, Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, contact: Archives I Reference Section, National Archives and Records Administration, 700 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC, 20408. Phone: 202-357-5385; Fax: 202-357-5936; Email: [ArchivesIreference@nara.gov](mailto:ArchivesIreference@nara.gov).

**Index to Fraudulent Naturalizations, 1906–15** (12 boxes) (NARS A1 Entry 28, ARC Identifier 4730909). Arranged alphabetically by name. Provides the date of naturalization, court number, and naturalization certificate number. The "court number" can be translated into the name of the appropriate

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court using the *Court Directories*<sup>8</sup> to convert the prefix number to a court name (i.e., 234 = Circuit Court, Van Buren Co., Arkansas) in order to locate that record.

**Index to Cities and Towns Participating in the Education and Americanization Program, 1914–36** (32 boxes) (NARS A1 Entry 32, ARC Identifier 4734622). Arranged alphabetically by state then by city. Serves as a finding aid to Education and Americanization Files, 1914–36 (NARS A1 Entry 30, ARC Identifier 4730950).

**National Archives Microfilm Publication M1952, *Index to Naturalizations of World War I Soldiers, 1918* (4 rolls)**, may assist in locating a soldier's date and court of naturalization. The index provides the soldier's name, date of naturalization, the "court number" of the court at which the naturalization occurred, certificate number, and name of the military base to which the soldier was assigned on that date. The "court number" can be translated into the name of the appropriate court using the *Court Directories*<sup>8</sup> to convert the prefix number to a court name (i.e., 234 = Circuit Court, Van Buren Co., Arkansas) in order to locate that record. M1952 is available for researcher use in the National Archives Building, Washington, DC, and at the NARA Regional Archives in Chicago, IL, as well as online at *Ancestry.com* as the "U.S. World War I Soldier Naturalizations, 1918" database.

### **Part 5 – Naturalization Files Maintained by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service, Washington, DC (as of 2013)**

A3388 also serves as a finding aid to files in the custody of the USCIS. Researchers seeking these records must request some files from the USCIS Genealogy Program, while other files must be requested under the Freedom of Information Act (for records relating to a third party) or Privacy Act (for records relating to oneself). The FOIA or PA request must include the immigrant's full name, date of birth, and place of birth, and should request "all records" related to that individual. Consult the USCIS web site for the most up-to-date information regarding procedures and cost.

USCIS Genealogy Program home page: <http://www.uscis.gov/genealogy>  
USCIS FOIA home page: <http://www.uscis.gov/foia>

The record series remaining (as of 2013) with USCIS include the following:

**Administrative Files Relating to Naturalization, 1906–44.** Correspondence files for selected prefix numbers from this series were not transferred to the National Archives but instead remain with USCIS. The following list identifies the subject matter of relevant prefix numbers:

PREFIX SUBJECT

- 23 Files numbered *above* 23/43822 (since Jan. 1, 1940) were retained by the INS for consolidation with C-Files and A-Files. Once consolidated, the material ceased to be filed under the 23 number. See the paragraphs concerning C-Files and A-Files for further information on accessing those records.
- 29 Racial ineligibility for citizenship. Submit a FOIA/PA Act request to USCIS.

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<sup>8</sup> Court directories on roll 1 of National Archives Microfilm Publication M2033, *Laws Relating to Immigration and Nationality, 1798–1962, and Directories of Courts Having Naturalization Jurisdiction, 1908–1963* (2 rolls). M2033 is available for researcher use in the National Archives Building, Washington, DC, and at NARA Regional Archives in Anchorage, AK; Riverside, CA; San Francisco, CA; Denver, CO; Atlanta, GA; Chicago, IL; Boston, MA; Kansas City, MO; Philadelphia, PA; Fort Worth, TX; and Seattle, WA.

PREFIX SUBJECT

- 129 Files documenting the repatriation of women who lost U.S. citizenship by marriage to an alien prior to 1922 and who resumed U.S. citizenship under the act of June 25, 1936. Submit a request for copies to the USCIS Genealogy Program.
- 3904 Applications to resume citizenship by persons who lost citizenship either (1) by taking the prescribed oath of renunciation and allegiance before a naturalization court in the U.S. or before a U.S. diplomatic or consular officer abroad, following the loss of U.S. citizenship by reason of service in the armed forces of an allied foreign country in World War I or World War II, or (2) by voting in a foreign political election during World War II, but who never applied for a certificate and for whom no prior certificate file exists. Submit a request for copies to the USCIS Genealogy Program.
- 3909 Draft evasion. These files were retained by the INS but are either not extant or may have been consolidated with C-Files and A-Files. If consolidated, the material ceased to be filed under the 3909 number. See the paragraphs concerning C-Files and A-Files for further information on accessing those records.
- 3913 Naturalization of enemy aliens.<sup>9</sup> These files were retained by the INS but are either not extant or may have been consolidated with C-Files and A-Files. If consolidated, the material ceased to be filed under the 3913 number. See the paragraphs concerning C-Files and A-Files for further information on accessing those records.

**Declaration of Intention (D) File.** A typical file number looks like this: 2345-D-678910. These files were maintained temporarily by the Naturalization Service. If naturalization was granted, the declaration was moved to the person's C-File. The declaration should also remain on file in the appropriate court's naturalization records. Use the *Court Directories*<sup>8</sup> to convert the prefix number to a court name (for example, 2345 = U.S. District Court, Raleigh, NC) in order to locate that record.

**Petition for Naturalization (P) file.** A typical file number looks like this: 234-P-56789. These files were maintained temporarily by the Naturalization Service. If the naturalization was granted, the petition was moved to the person's C-File. The petition should also remain on file in the appropriate court's naturalization records. Use the *Court Directories*<sup>8</sup> to convert the prefix number to a court name (i.e., 234 = Circuit Court, Van Buren Co., Arkansas) in order to locate that record.

**Certificate of Naturalization File (C-File), 1906–56.** A typical file number looks like this: 1234-C-567890 or C-567890. These files are in USCIS custody. Submit a request for copies to the USCIS Genealogy Program. A copy of the naturalization papers should also remain on file in the appropriate court's naturalization records. If the court number is included in the reference, use the *Court Directories*<sup>8</sup> to convert the prefix number to a court name in order to locate that record.

**Overseas Military, World War II (C-File).** A typical file number looks like this: OM-12345. World War II overseas military naturalization records were sent for filing among court records only if the person already had a U.S. residence. If so, a copy of the naturalization papers were sent to the Federal court having jurisdiction over that residence. Otherwise, the naturalization record is in USCIS custody. Submit a request for copies to the USCIS Genealogy Program.

**Old Law Certificates (C-File).** A typical file number looks like this: OL-12345. These files are in USCIS custody. Submit a request for copies to the USCIS Genealogy Program. "Old law" certificates

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<sup>9</sup> Matters relating to the 11th subdivision of Section 4 of the Naturalization Act of June 28, 1906 (34 Stat. 596), as added by an act of May 9, 1918 (40 Stat. 542).

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were replacement naturalization certificates issued to persons who naturalized before September 27, 1906, who applied for a replacement certificate in 1929 or later.

**Certificate of Derivative Citizenship (C-File).** Typical file numbers look like this: A-23456, AA-43567, or DA-34523. These files are in USCIS custody. Submit a FOIA/PA request to USCIS for files with DA prefixes; submit a request for copies to the USCIS Genealogy Program for files with A and AA prefixes. Certificates of derivative citizenship were issued to persons who derived U.S. citizenship through the naturalization of a parent while a minor, or through birth abroad to U.S. citizen parent(s).

**Alien Registration Form or Alien File (A-File).** Typical file numbers look like this: A1234567, A01 234 567, AR1234567, or AR01 234 567. Most files remain in USCIS custody (as of 2013), although the files of some persons born more than 100 years ago have been transferred to the National Archives as mentioned on page 2. For A- and AR- numbers less than A8000000, submit a request for copies to the USCIS Genealogy Program. For A- and AR-numbers greater than A8000000, submit a FOIA/PA request to USCIS. The INS began issuing each immigrant an alien registration number in 1940, and on April 1, 1944, began using this number to create individual files, called Alien Files or A-Files. From 1944 to 1956 A-Files contained all records of any active case of an immigrant not yet naturalized; upon naturalization all records were moved to a consolidated C-File, and the A-File ceased to exist. In 1956, the filing system was changed. All persons naturalized on or after April 1, 1956, have an A-File only. An alien may have an A- number solely for an alien registration form without having an "A-File."