

Directions

By Car

From Route 128/I-95. Southbound: Take the Trapelo Road Exit (28) and turn left at the top of the ramp. Northbound: Take the Trapelo Road/Belmont Exit (28A) and bear right at the top of ramp. Continue on Trapelo Road for 2.8 miles to the Frederick C. Murphy Federal Center.

From Downtown Boston: Take the Massachusetts Turnpike west to Route 128/I-95 Exit 15 (11 miles). Take Route 128 north to Trapelo Road/Belmont Exit (28A). Continue on Trapelo Road for 2.8 miles to the Frederick C. Murphy Federal Center.

By Public Transportation

From Downtown Boston: From the Park Street station, take the MBTA subway (Red Line) to Harvard Square in Cambridge. Then take the MBTA bus (#73) to Waverly Square in Belmont (last stop). You may also reach Waverly Square via the MBTA commuter rail train (Fitchburg Line) from North Station, Boston. From Waverly Square you may walk (1.5 miles), or take a commercial taxi west on Trapelo Road.

Mail and Telephone Inquiries

We will provide answers to specific inquiries made over the telephone or through electronic and regular mail only if the information desired is brief and easily obtainable. Otherwise, the records are made available for examination in our research rooms by individuals who must conduct their own research. Extensive research by our staff is not possible.

Hours

Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 7 A.M.–4:30 P.M.

Thursdays, 7 A.M.–9 P.M.

First Saturday of each month (call or check our web site for specific dates), 8 A.M.–4:30 P.M. *Note: When the first Saturday falls on a holiday weekend, we will open the following Saturday.*

Original records research Monday through Friday, 8 A.M.–4:30 P.M. only. Records must be requested by 3:45 P.M.

Closed Sundays and Federal holidays.

National Archives Northeast Region (Boston)



Family History Sources

Frederick C. Murphy Federal Center

380 Trapelo Road

Waltham, MA 02452-6399

866-406-2379

E-mail: waltham.archives@nara.gov

Web site: www.archives.gov/northeast



Introduction

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) safeguards records of all three branches of the Federal Government. Our mission is to ensure that all Americans have ready access to essential evidence that documents the rights of American citizens, the actions of Government officials, and our national history.

In support of that mission, NARA–Northeast Region (Boston) has custody of the permanently valuable records of field offices and divisions of Federal agencies in the New England states. It is one of 13 such NARA facilities across the country. These records have continuing value for assisting in

the necessary processes of government, for protecting public and private rights, and for providing scholars, students, and the general public with basic historical sources. They reflect the history and development of the agency or office that created them and provide information on American legal, economic, political, and social history.

NARA has reproduced on microfilm many of its most significant records, especially those with high research value. Microfilm publications serve the public's need for greater access to original source material, by making holdings more accessible, as well as to provide security copies of the original records.

A significant portion of these records and microfilm contains material of genealogical value. The most widely used records for family research are described here.



Resources We Have . . .

Census Records

Our facility has microfilm copies of the existing Federal population census schedules, taken every 10 years, for all states 1790–1930 (nearly all of the 1890 schedules were destroyed by fire in 1921). There are Soundex indexes to the 1880, 1900, and 1920 censuses and partial Soundex indexes to the 1910 and 1930 censuses. In addition, commercially published indexes are available in our research room for most states and census years, including print sources, online databases, and CD-ROM.

The archives also has microfilm copies of non-population census schedules for Massachusetts 1850–80, and Vermont 1850–70, as well as some schedules of a special census of Union veterans and widows of veterans taken in 1890.

Naturalization Records

Our holdings include records of immigrants living in New England who applied for American citizenship. Below is a list of these naturalization records, consisting of the original petition and some declarations of intention. Complete or partial indexes are available for some of the courts. In addition, there is a Soundex index to naturalization petitions and records for all Federal and non-Federal courts in the New England states covering the years 1790–1906 (Connecticut 1790–1939).

1. Federal Court Records (U.S. District Courts and Circuit Courts)

Massachusetts, 1790–1991	Rhode Island, 1842–1991
Maine, 1790–1991	Vermont, 1801–1982
Connecticut, 1842–1991	New Hampshire, 1873–1991

2. Other Court Records

We have 5" x 8" photostat negative copies ("dexigraphs") of naturalization records from Federal, state, county, and municipal courts in Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont, 1790–1906.

3. Connecticut Naturalization Records

We have some records from non-Federal courts, 1790–1974. Included are records of Connecticut Superior Courts, Courts of Common Pleas, District Courts, and some municipal courts.

Passenger Arrival Lists and Border Crossings

Our holdings include microfilm copies of the lists for the ports of:

Boston (1820–1943)	Baltimore (1820–91)
Gloucester, MA (1906–42)	Philadelphia (1800–1926)
New Bedford, MA (1826–52; 1902–42)	New Orleans (1820–1902)
Portland, ME (1820–68; 1893–1943)	New York (1820–1926)
Providence, RI (1820–67; 1911–43)	Galveston (1896–1951)
Canadian Border Crossings (1895–ca.1954)	

At least partial indexes exist for most of the above lists.

Customs Records

American seamen from New England are documented in U.S. Customs Service records. These records may provide information that includes place of birth, town of residence, physical description, and sometimes names of relatives. Specific records include crew lists, shipping articles (which document payments), records of seamen's protection (issued for identification), case files of deceased and deserted seamen, and Marine Hospital returns of seamen (not medical records, documents money withheld for dues). These are available for various New England ports, 1789–ca. 1950. Researchers will need to know what ports individual seamen may have shipped out of in order to effectively use these records. To locate crew lists it is usually necessary to know the vessel name and port. Please inquire about using these records before visiting, since the records listed above do not exist for every New England port in all time periods.

Draft, Military Service, and Pension and Bounty Land Application Records

We have microfilm copies of the applications for pension and bounty land warrants issued to veterans of the Revolutionary War and military service records of those who served in the war. These records cover all states and include name indexes. We also have War of 1812 military bounty land war-



rants; an index to compiled service records of volunteer soldiers who served in the War of 1812; the pension index for veterans of the War of 1812, the "Old Wars", Mexican War, and Indian Wars, as well as a general index to pension applications, submitted between 1861 and 1934, for military service performed up to 1916. Abstracts of service records of naval officers for the period 1798–1893 and indexes to compiled service records of volunteer Union soldiers who served in organizations from each New England state are available. There are also World War I draft registration cards for each New England state and World War II draft registration cards (fourth registration only) for most New England states.

Chinese Exclusion Acts Case Files

Chinese Exclusion Acts case files for Boston (1911–55) and Montreal (1900–52) are a valuable resource for the study of Chinese immigration and Chinese American travel, trade, and social and family history from the late-19th to mid-20th century. A typical Chinese Exclusion Acts case file contains such information as the subject's name; place and date of birth; physical appearance; occupation; names and relationships of other family members; and family history. Materials in the files may include applications; certificates of identity and residency; correspondence; Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) findings, recommendations, and decisions; maps of immigrant family residences and villages in China; original marriage certificates; individual and family photographs; transcripts of INS interrogations and special boards of inquiry; and witness statements and affidavits. The records are indexed by the individual's name. Privacy Act restrictions may apply to some cases.

Records Relating to African Americans

Some of our holdings relate specifically to African American family research. We have microfilmed records of the Assistant Commissioners of the Freedmen's Bureau in the Southern states as well as the registers of depositors in the branches of the Freedmen's Savings and Trust Co., 1865–78 (with index), and the records of the Board of Commissioners for the Emancipation of Slaves in the District of Columbia, 1862–63. These records often provide considerable information regarding African American family relations, marriages, births, deaths, occupations, and places of residence. They can contain the names of slave owners and information concerning African American military service, plantation conditions, manumission, property ownership, and migration. Additional records include the compiled military service records of the 54th and 55th Massachusetts Infantry regiments.

Records Relating to Native Americans

Our holdings include the final cards of the Five Civilized Tribes as well as indexes to the Eastern Cherokee applications on microfilm. An act of Congress approved in 1893 established a commission to negotiate agreements with the Choctaw, Creek, Chickasaw, Seminole, and Cherokee Indian tribes. As part of a process to divide tribal land into plots to be divided among the members of the tribe, the Dawes Commission either accepted or rejected applicants for tribal membership based on whether the tribal government had previously recognized the applicant as a member of the tribe and other legal requirements. Applicants were categorized as Citizens by Blood, Citizens by Marriage, Minor Citizens by Blood, New Born Citizens by Blood, Freedmen (African Americans formerly enslaved by tribal members), New Born Freedmen, and Minor Freedmen. The final cards include both approved and rejected names. Most rolls give the name, age, sex, degree of Indian blood, and roll and census card number of each person.

What We Do Not Have . . .

Despite the above resources, however, we are not primarily a genealogical institution. We do not have "vital records" (birth, death, marriage, or divorce). These are either state or local records. Questions involving family histories, local records, records of the Colonial period (pre-1789), church records, etc., should be directed to the proper state or local government agency or genealogical/historical society in the area in which you are interested.

Reproductions

For a fee, our staff will make or arrange for copies of records and provide certified copies for legal use. You may use self-service copiers for a fee to make paper copies from microfilm.