



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.