

Quick Guide to finding Exclusion and Deportation Records for Specific Immigrants

The vast collection of historical Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) subject, policy and correspondence files (**Entry 9 of Record Group 85 at the U.S. National Archives in Washington, D.C.**) includes thousands of files related to all aspects of immigration policy during the years 1906-1956.

Up to half of these files relate to specific individuals, making them a potential goldmine of information for family historians interested in documenting their ancestors or the history of any person who may have come into contact with the INS during the first half of the 20th century. Immigrants who appealed a Board of Special Inquiry (BSI) Hearing decision or who were subject to a Warrant of Deportation may have an INS correspondence file at the National Archives.

Because there is no publically available name index for Entry 9, searching for files related to a specific individual can be difficult. But it is not impossible. The following tips will help you get started:

1. Search ancestry.com's digitized version of the Subject Index

(<http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=19460>)

If you have access to the commercial site ancestry.com, start by searching that site's digitized version of the Subject Index to INS Correspondence and Case Files. Though the original index is arranged by subject, ancestry.com has digitized it and made it name searchable. Note that the Subject Index is not a comprehensive name index for Entry 9 files. A name that does not appear in the Subject Index may appear in the INS Master Index.

2. Search the Microfilmed Subject Index

If you are near a National Archives facility or LDS Family History Center you may be able to request a copy of the microfilmed version of the Subject Index to INS Correspondence and Case Files.[i] Because the index is arranged by subject, however, it is nearly impossible to locate a file using just a name. You will only be able to use this option if you know the approximate date and cause of the action that generated the file.

Common strategies for finding files in the microfilm index include:

- Reels 28-30 of the index contain a list of "vessels by name." This list includes the names of many immigrants who appealed Board of Special Inquiry (BSI) hearing decisions. If you believe your immigrant appealed a BSI hearing looking up his/her ship by name and date of arrival may provide a file reference. Note that only files for appealed cases still exist and that the vast majority of cases were not appealed.

- Less often, an immigrant's name may be found under the cause of the action that created the file. For example, under the subject heading for "Illiterates" there are dozens of entries for immigrants held for special inquiry due to questions about their ability to read. But in other cases the subject headings include very few names. For example, the heading "Likely to Become a Public Charge" has only a small number of name entries though it was the most common cause for exclusion.

- Names that do not appear in the Subject Index may be found by a USCIS Genealogy Program Index Search Request

3. Make an Index Search Request with the USCIS Genealogy Program.

(www.uscis.gov/genealogy)

If you've tried the above suggestions without success and have reason to believe that INS created a case or correspondence file related to the individual you are researching you may consider filing an Index Search Request with the USICS Genealogy Program. USCIS maintains the INS Master Index, a name index that includes cards referencing the files that today make up Entry 9 of RG 85 at the National Archives.

A USCIS Index Search should return file citations for any immigrant who had a BSI decision appealed to Washington, D.C. between 1893 and 1944 or anyone who was the subject of a warrant for deportation between 1903 and 1950. The Index Search may return file citations even for individuals who do not appear in the Subject Index to INS Correspondence and Case Files.

Common Questions about the Master Index

•Why are some people who appear in the Master Index not listed in the Subject Index?

The Master Index is a true name index. INS officials searched it by name (or a Soundex code based upon a name) to find files related to individual immigrants. To be effective every name needed to be included.

The Subject Index was meant to allow INS officials to locate files related to a particular topic. While some entries in the Subject Index could include names, the names themselves were not necessary to locate, files related to a particular subject (e.g., "Orphans)."

In practice, this meant that the Subject Index could include a single heading referring to 15 "Orphans," while the Master Index would include an individual name listing for each of the 15 orphans. Today we would be able to find each of them by name in Master Index, but the Subject Index would include none of the names.

•Why isn't the Master Index available online?

Federal law requires that USCIS restrict access to its records and indices for both law enforcement and privacy purposes. In addition to cards related to Entry 9 files now available to the public in the National Archives, the Master Index includes references to many other file types, many of which are still in USCIS custody. While the index is described as "historical," it includes information as recent as 1975. Open access to personal information about living persons would constitute a clear violation of the Privacy Act

Subject Index to INS Correspondence files, 1906-1957 (NARA Publication T-458)

NARA's 31 reel microfilm publication T-458 is a general index to Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) correspondence and related to policy and administrative subjects, including files related to individual immigrant's exclusions and deportations. The index provides reference to several INS record Systems which operated between 1906 and 1957, but primarily indexes the INS Immigration Subject Policy and Correspondence file series, also known as the "56,000 series" (NARA Entry 9 of RG 85/NARA ARC Identifier 559947 / MLR Number A1, 323, A1, 9-A).

T-458 is not a name index. Individual names may appear under a subject heading, but only because that alien's case raised question about the subject. **The fee-based genealogy website www.ancestry.com has placed a digitized and name-searchable copy of the index online (<http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=1946>).**

It is important to note that the Subject Index does not include a complete listing of individuals who appear in the files. Researchers seeking exclusion and deportation records for individuals who do not appear in the Subject Index should consider making a USCIS Genealogy Index Search Request (see www.uscis.gov/genealogy).

The index contains references to several file types, not all of which are available from the National Archives. Below are the sample file numbers for the most common file types found in the index:

Sample File Number	Record Series
53305/499, 52344-468	Subject and Case Correspondence of the INS ("56000 Series") [Immigration 1906-1957, and Nationality ca. 1933-1957, RG 85, Entry 9]. Archives I, DC Includes files related to exclusion and deportation.
500/2, 23/54467, 106799/500	Administrative Files Relating to Naturalization (Bureau of Naturalization Correspondence Files), 1906-1946 [Nationality, RG 85, Entry 26 and additional entries]. Archives I, DC
2873-P-29476, 2551-D-66264	INS Petition Files (P) and INS Declaration Files (D). Not Available, though court numbers (to the left of the P or D) may help researchers locate the court copy of a declaration or petition (e.g. court 2873 = The Court of Common Pleas at Gaffney, NC). Court number translations are available on the NARA microfilm publication M203: Directories of Courts Having Naturalization Jurisdiction, 1908-1963.
C-349852	Naturalization Certification Files (C-Files). Files for 1906-1956 available through the USCIS Genealogy Program.
A-40552314	Alien Files/A-files. Files numbered below 8 million (A8000000) and documents therein dated prior to May 1, 1951 available through USCIS Genealogy Program.
R-32145	Registry Files. Available through USCIS Genealogy Program.

Questions about other citations may be directed to the USCIS History Office (uscishistory.library@dhs.gov). More information about all of the files listed above may be found at www.uscis.gov/historyandgenealogy.

Access:

The T-458 microfilm index (31 reels) is available at the National Archives in Washington, DC and from LDS family history centers. **The fee-based genealogy website www.ancestry.com has placed a digitized and name-searchable copy of the index online.**

Sample Index Card

Card Subject	Card Date	2.
KAISER WILHELM II	(189-1911)	
53,084-373 Trach NY 10/26/10; fine \$100 Marcos 1/10/11		
53,084-373 Trach transit NY 10/26/10 Marcos detd Mexico		
53,262-26 DSRTR ex NY 10/25/9; w/a Fried.Ziese 6/14/11		
53,370-15 STOWAWAY NY 9/1/11 apl Robt.Michel		
53,430-78 DSRTR ex NY 9/28/10 Ins PG Salem-Oreg - w/a Mizik Lewitan 4/24/12		
53,870-293 Imbecile NY 9/27/11 fine \$100 Rachel Lubelsky		
53,625-100 Insane NY 1/16/13 Johann Krug apl domicil		
53,574-72 DSRTR NY 4/20/12; post w/a Heinrich Frank 4/3		
53,700-604 Insane NY 11/13/13; apl Betty Cordes		
53,633-166 DSRTR NY 2/17/13; NY w/a Ulrich Langemeiner		
53,633-115 DSRTR NY 9/19/13; w/a Heinrich Langhans		
53,710-469 Trach NY 12/11/13; fine Ferencz Napliczky		

File Numbers

File Subjects

Date of Correspondence

Note: Archivists at NARA need the complete file number to locate a file within Entry 9 of RG 85. File Numbers have both a prefix (53084) and suffix (373). File numbers separated by a dash (53084-373) are equivalent to file numbers separated by a slash (53804/373). There is no “code” or key to the numbers, they refer to sequential file jacket numbers and have no relation to the file’s subject.