Locating the Relocated: Deciphering Electronic Records on Japanese Americans Interned During World War II

During this presentation, we will provide guidance on how to search National Archives Access to Archival Databases (AAD) as well as how to find information on digitized textual records in the National Archives Catalog. We will also demonstrate how to use the information in both systems to get a more complete picture of our holdings of Japanese American internee records.

John LeGloahec will explore how to use the Records About Japanese Americans Relocated During World War II, available through AAD. This set of records has become a popular genealogical tool that identifies Japanese Americans interned in several War Relocation Authority camps.

Jana Leighton will discuss genealogical information and the availability of records for download from the National Archives Catalog located within two series of Record Group 210: Records of the War Relocation Authority.

www.archives.gov/calendar/genealogy-fair
John LeGloahec
Archives Specialist
National Archives
at College Park, MD

John LeGloahec joined the National Archives in June 2006 as an archives specialist in the Electronic Records Division and since 2013 a full-time member of the Electronic Records Reference Branch.

He holds a Masters in Library Science (M.L.S.) from the University at Albany and a Masters in Social Studies Education (M.S.) from Long Island University. Prior to joining us, John worked at the International Monetary Fund Archives and the Rockefeller Archive Center, where he was Supervisor of the Nelson A. Rockefeller Papers Project. John has also served in various professional roles for the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference the National Archives Assembly.

Jana Leighton
Archivist
National Archives
at College Park, MD

Jana Leighton is an archivist in the Electronic Records Division Processing Branch at the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, MD. She has worked for the National Archives since January 2016.

Jana has a B.A. in History with minors in Art, Asian Pacific Studies, and Political Science from California State University Channel Islands and a M.A. in History from Colorado State University. She received her M.L.I.S with a concentration in Digital Preservation from Kent State University in 2015. She is originally from Watsonville, CA, but now resides in Washington, DC.
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Part 1 of 2

Locating the Relocated: Japanese American Internees Records Found in AAD
by John LeGloahec
The Electronic Records Division

- Collecting “born-digital” records of the federal government for nearly 50 years.

- Most of the records are raw statistical data

- Advantage: in many cases, records are made available more quickly than paper records

- Disadvantage: raw data can be “scary” to work with by the average researcher
Sixty-five different series, in excess of 900 different files, and more than 173 million individual records

More than 2.6 million “hits” on AAD – a daily average of about 7,200 in FY 2016.

Over 2 million hits so far in FY 2017.
Japanese American Records

- NARA webpage on Japanese American Records
  https://www.archives.gov/research/japanese-americans
- NARA webpage on Internment Records
  https://www.archives.gov/research/japanese-americans/internment-intro
Japanese American Records

- Japanese American Internee Data File (AAD)
- Searching War Relocation Authority (WRA) records webpage
  https://www.archives.gov/research/japanese-americans/wra
Executive Order 9066

- Issued by President Roosevelt
- Rescinded by President Ford
Searching in AAD

- [https://aad.archives.gov/aad/](https://aad.archives.gov/aad/)

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Document: Searching in AAD

- [https://aad.archives.gov/aad/](https://aad.archives.gov/aad/)
Robert Matsui (1941–2005)

- Interned in Tule Lake
- Served as a US Congressman (D-CA), 1978–2005
Robert Matsui (1941–2005)
Iwao Takamoto (1925–2007)

- Interned in Manzanar
- Trained in basic illustration in the camp
- Worked at Walt Disney Studios and Hanna-Barbera Productions
Iwao Takamoto (1925–2007)
George Takei (b. 1937)

- Interned in Rowher and Tule Lake
- Actor and Activist
- Produced play based on experiences in camp
George Takei (b. 1937)
Thank you!
Locating the Relocated: Deciphering Electronic Records on Japanese Americans Interned During World War II
Part 2 of 2

Utilizing Two Series Available in the National Archives Catalog
by Jana Leighton
On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 that allowed the Secretary of War to designate military areas and order evacuation of all persons deemed a threat to national security. In March 1942, the San Francisco Federal Reserve Bank’s Evacuee Property Department was established in response to this executive order and creation of the Evacuee Property Program. The program originally fell under the control of the Wartime Civil Control Administration. However, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9102 establishing the War Relocation Authority (WRA), and the Evacuee Property Program ultimately came under that agency’s organizational authority. The Federal Reserve Bank acted as the fiscal agents of the WRA. They created and maintained these records to provide assistance in relocation, maintenance, and supervision of evacuee property during World War II.

In 1946, the WRA was abolished by Executive Order 9423 and was replaced by the War Agency Liquidation Unit within the Department of the Interior (DOI).

Physical custody of the records had been retained by the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco (FRBSF) until their transfer to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in March 2016.

The records were legally transferred from the Department of the Interior (DOI) (legal Federal custodian of the records) to NARA during the same period.
More About the Records

Belong to Record Group 210: The Records of the War Relocation Authority

Include two series, the San Francisco Branch Evacuee Property Files, 3/18/1942-6/30/1946 and the Portland Branch Evacuee Files, 3/18/1942-6/30/1946

Both series document the management and disposal of properties and goods as identified by the War Relocation Authority (WRA) as directed by Executive Orders 9066 and 9102. They consist of correspondence, reports, and case files pertaining to the property of individuals, families, and businesses impacted by involuntary evacuation and relocation because of their foreign national status or Japanese ancestry. Nationalities include, but are not limited to German, Italian, and Japanese. Many of the documents produced at the Los Angeles Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank were believed to have been incorporated into the San Francisco Branch Evacuee Property Files, 3/18/1942-6/30/1946 collection while under the physical control of the San Francisco Branch. Numerous forms were triplicate, filed separately, and there may be multiple copies of a record within these series. Subjects covered include internment, military restricted areas, Civilian Exclusion Orders, Wartime Civil Control Administration (WCCA), U.S. Employment Service, Farm Security Administration, and the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL). Some of the records are in Japanese.

San Francisco Branch Evacuee Property Files, 3/18/1942-6/30/1946
National Archives Identifier: 38221779
Includes: 12 file units described in the catalog
Extent (Size): 127,788 Tagged Image File
Format (TIFF) and 345 Portable Document Format (PDF) files
NARA created Finding Aid available

Portland Branch Evacuee Property Files, 3/18/1942-6/30/1946
National Archives Identifier: 40143322
Includes: 98 file units described in the catalog
Extent (Size): 6,184 Tagged Image File
Format (TIFF) and 98 Portable Document Format (PDF) files
Finding Aid available
Finding the Records

Step 1: Go to the National Archives and Records Administration’s website (https://www.archives.gov/).

Step 2: Click on the “Research Our Records” tab (https://www.archives.gov/research) and then click on “Search the Catalog” within the “Research in the National Archives Catalog tab.”
Step 3: After being redirected to the “National Archives Catalog” landing page (https://catalog.archives.gov/) put in the search term “Branch Property files.”

Step 4: Both the “San Francisco Branch Evacuee Property Files, 3/18/1942-6/30/1946” and “Portland Branch Evacuee Property Files, 3/18/1942-6/30/1946” series will be shown at the top of the query result page.
Useful Tips

- Look at the NARA-created finding aid available for the San Francisco Branch Evacuee Property Files (NAI: 45642181) and/or the “Portland Japanese Internment Records Finding Aid” (NAI: 4097892) available for the Portland Branch Evacuee Property Files first.

- “The Report of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco: Evacuation Operations Pacific Coast Military Areas 1942” (NAI: 40974894) is useful and can be used as a reference tool for both record series.

- All records for these series are available for download and accessible online.

- The records are scanned for Optical Character Recognition (OCR) so you can search within PDFs. Note: Many of the records are handwritten and therefore OCR is less accurate.

- Unlike in AAD, many of the records within these two series utilize the evacuee’s nickname or American name and not their legal or Japanese name.

- A significant quantity of the records are forms that were made out in duplicate and/or triplicate. However, many times there is useful or unique information on only one of the copies.

- The records were originally paper, migrated to microfilm, and then the microfilm was digitized into TIFFs. The PDFS (specifically for the series San Francisco Branch Evacuee Property Files) reflect this in that the order in which the records appear may seem backwards. It is important to pay attention to page numbers and dates within the records.
Helpful Information Within the Records

Record: Interview Form

Includes name, address before evacuation, if the interview was done by phone or in person, business and/or home telephone number, indicates if property is personal or business, and citizenship
Record: Personal Property Form

Includes name, family number, where property is located, date form was filled out, and at what storage location property it was stored.
Record: Motor Vehicle Registration Form

Includes name of registered owner, family number, address of registered owner (before evacuation), license number, engine number, date first sold, and type of vehicle
Thank You!

For general questions about NARA's electronic records, or for further information, please contact us at cer@nara.gov.
Thank you for attending!

If we did not get to your question, you may submit it to inquire@nara.gov

Today’s video recording and materials will remain available at www.archives.gov/calendar/genealogy-fair