



Welcome to the National Archives Know Your Records program!

The Know Your Records program consists of free events with up-to-date information about our holdings. Events offer opportunities for you to learn about the National Archives' records through ongoing lectures, monthly genealogy programs, and the annual genealogy fair. Additional resources include online reference reports for genealogical research, and the newsletter *Researcher News*.



About the National Archives

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is the nation's record keeper. Of all the documents and materials created in the course of business conducted by the United States Federal government, only 1%–3% are determined permanently valuable. Those valuable records are preserved and are available to you, whether you want to see if they contain clues about your family's history, need to prove a veteran's military service, or are researching an historical topic that interests you.



May 10, 2017

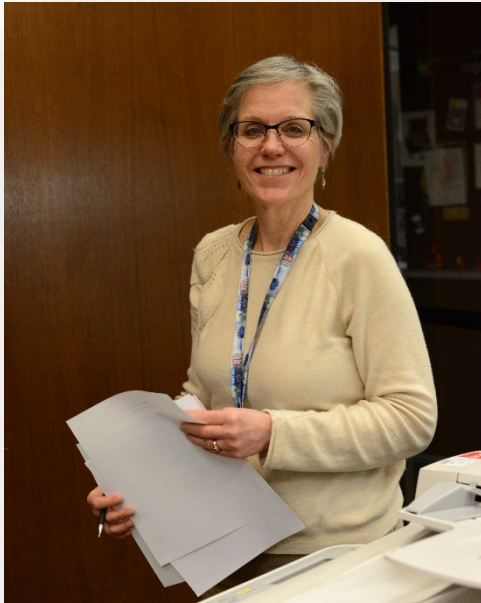


*Oh, The Stories They Tell:
Chinese Exclusion Acts Case Files
at the National Archives*

Susan Karren

Although the search for a Chinese Exclusion Act case file may be difficult and challenging, the rewards can be great for the family and social historian. Presented by the National Archives at Seattle Director Susan Karren in recognition of the Chinese Exclusion Act's 135th anniversary.

Presenter's Biography



Susan Karren

Director
National Archives
at Seattle, WA

Susan Karren is the Director of the National Archives at Seattle. She has been with the National Archives for 30 years, 27 of them in Seattle. She has also worked in Washington, DC and in Chicago. Sue received her M.A. in history from Brigham Young University.

OH, THE STORIES THEY TELL:



Chinese Exclusion Acts
Case Files
at the
National Archives &
Records Administration

Who? Where? When?

- Any person of Chinese ancestry, whether U.S. citizen or alien, entering or re-entering the U.S.
- Ports from San Francisco to New York
- 1884–1943

What? How many?



- **Photos, interrogations, forms**
- **Almost half million individual case files**

Where do I look for these?

- Exclusion files were kept by the district that created the *first* file even if later travel occurred through different districts
- Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) records are held by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) facility that serves the state in which the port, district or city is located

Everyone of Chinese descent. . .



**Dr. Sun Yet Sen
1910**



**Soong Ching Ling
1907**

Madame Sun Yet Sen



**Soong May Ling
1907**

**Madame Chiang
Kei-shek**

Even the most American of professions. . .

Actress Anna May Wong

RECEIVED FROM THE COMMISSIONER OF IMMIGRATION

Certificate of Identity number. . . 54099.

Name. ANNA MAY WONG

Age. 19; height . . 5 feet . . . 5 inches.

Occupation . Actress. ; destination . Los Angeles, Cal

Admitted as. Native (Doctor's certificate).

Physical marks: . scar on end of left thumb.

.

Ex s.s. Princess Victoria, July 1, 1924 19.

Address . 241 North Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, Cal.



Anna May Wong
Applicant
Attest: J. P. Hardin
Immigrant Inspector
Los Angeles, Cal.
Sept. 12, 1924.



Photos included in files can also show:

- ✓ Changes in fashion over time
- ✓ Americanization of the person
- ✓ Family portrait styles
- ✓ Interiors and exteriors of Chinese businesses

Watch your ancestor grow up

1906 (14 years old with sister)



1914 (22 years old)

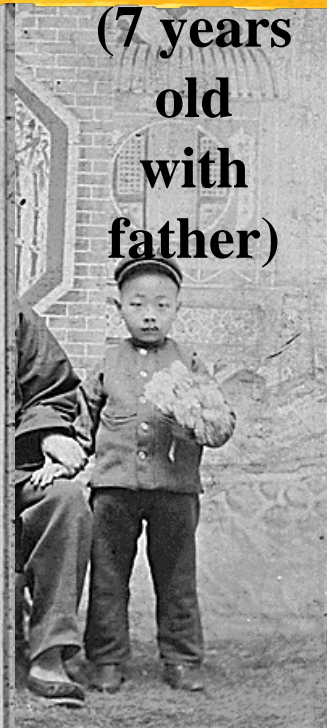
*Alvin
Lam*



相影齋顏寄 PHOTO. 914 Dupont St. S. F. Cal.

1899

(7 years old with father)



(1 year old)

Chinese-American Families



San Francisco, February 1914

Chinese-American Families



San Francisco, May 1914

Chinese-American Families



1922

Interrogations

Applicant sworn, testified:

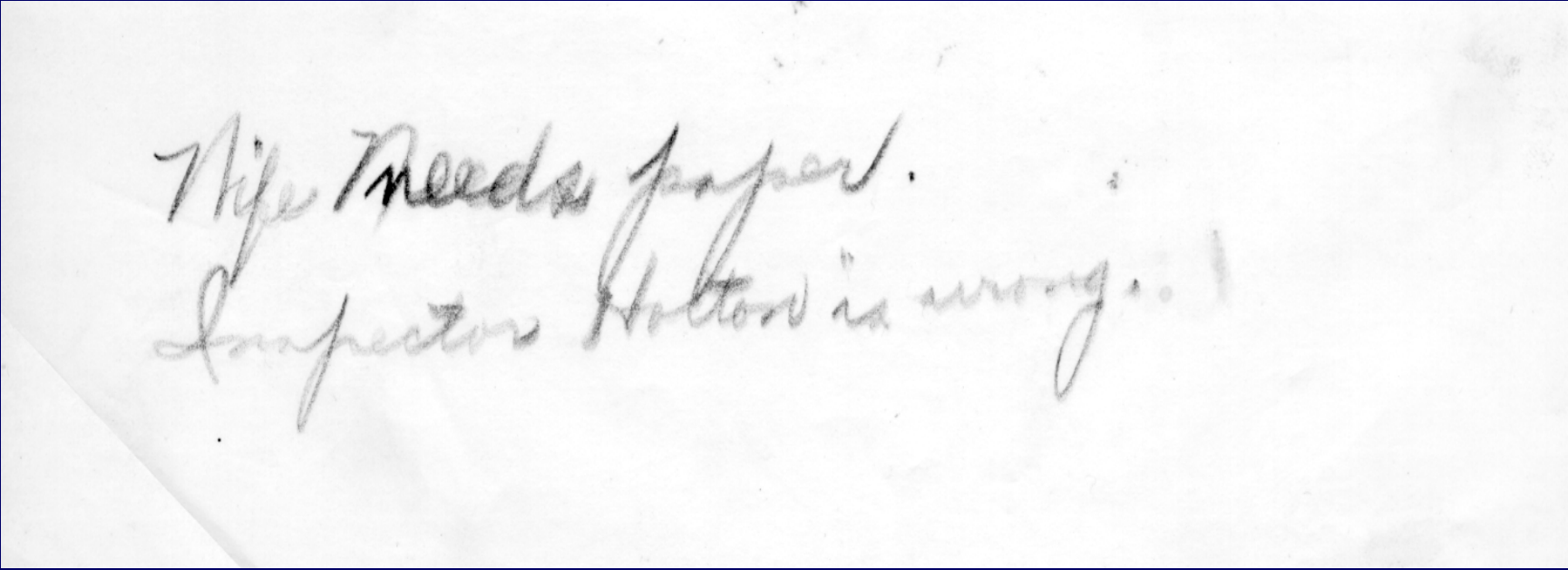
- Q What is your name?
A Mrs. Yee Shing; my maiden name was Mary Kasky. (Speaks English)
Q Of what race or blood are you?
A I am a Finlander.
Q Where were you born?
A I was born in the state of Michigan.
Q Who is this gentleman that accompanies you? (Indicating Yee Shing)
A That is my husband, Yee Shing.
Q You have made an application for a return certificate in order to accompany your husband to China. Have you any property in this country or any debts due you?
A Yes, my husband and I own jointly a five room house in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, which stands in our names jointly. We paid \$2500 when we bought it and we put \$2000 for improvements.
Q The title to that property stands in your names at this time?
A Yes.
Q On your return do you intend to occupy the house again?
A Yes, we have it rented now.
Q Did your husband exhibit the deed to this property to the officers in Minneapolis?
A Yes, Mr. Seaman saw it, also the tax papers.
(Rights and duties as to return explained to applicant.)

Forms also give personal glimpses into family life

Yee Shing, of Dakota, is making application for return certificate as a laborer under Rule 13 of the Chinese Regulations. His application is based upon duplicate certificate of residence No. 144813 and a five room house situated at 518 North Minnesota Ave., Sioux Falls, S. D. He has submitted a warranty deed and his last tax receipt covering this property, and I am of the opinion that he is entitled to the return certificate.

He has also made application for return certificates under Rule 16 of the Chinese Regulations for his five American born children, Lillian Yee, Vincent Yee, Eugene Yee, Edwin Yee, and June Yee. Birth certificates for each of these children have been furnished, and I have no doubt that they are citizens of the United States as alleged. Separate applications have been taken for each of the children for the reason that it may be that they will return to the United States at different times. The wife of Yee Shing, and mother of these children, is a white woman of the Finnish race, born in the state of Michigan. She is also going with Yee Shing and his children, and, of course, does not require any certificate under the Chinese Exclusion Law.

. . . and show that INS didn't even
always understand the laws

A photograph of a piece of white paper with handwritten text in cursive. The paper is slightly wrinkled and has a folded corner on the left side. The text is written in dark ink and reads: "This needs paper." followed by "Inspector Holtov is wrong." on the next line.

This needs paper.
Inspector Holtov is wrong.

How do you prove you are who you say you are?

- Interrogations often focused on identification of family members in photos and descriptions of places the person was supposed to know.
 - Hand drawn maps by parent and child used for comparison
 - Fill-in-the-blank maps for persons who were returning to a city in which they claimed to have formerly lived

Interrogations



- Information varied depending on a person's situation but usually included
 - name(s), age, place of birth, marital status, place of marriage, occupation
- May include
 - names of parents and siblings and where they live
 - number and names of children
 - travel history
 - descriptions of cities, towns and villages

Merchant? Laborer?



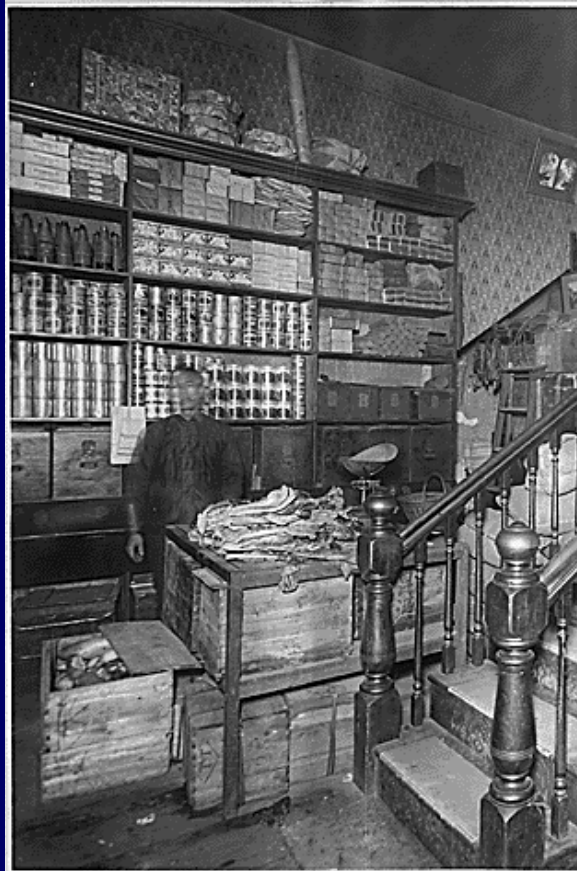
- Files contain documentation to help support and reject a person's status
 - Photos provide an interesting glimpse of 20th century business life in the U.S.
 - Can be used to show the development of business districts

Olympia, WA - 5th and Columbia

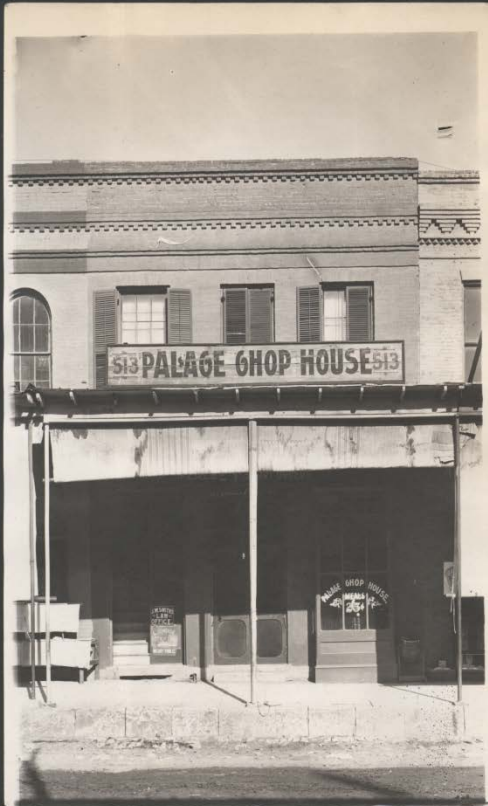


ca.1903

Tuck Tung Co., Seattle, WA ca.1905 gambling establishment?



Austin, Texas restaurant



I certify that the photographs
on other side is a true
likeness of the interior of
513 Congress Ave., Austin
Texas.

513 Congress Ave.
Austin, Texas

ca. 1904

Chinese businesses

Lee Bing business

Mt. Holyoke, MA ca.1904



Chinese businesses

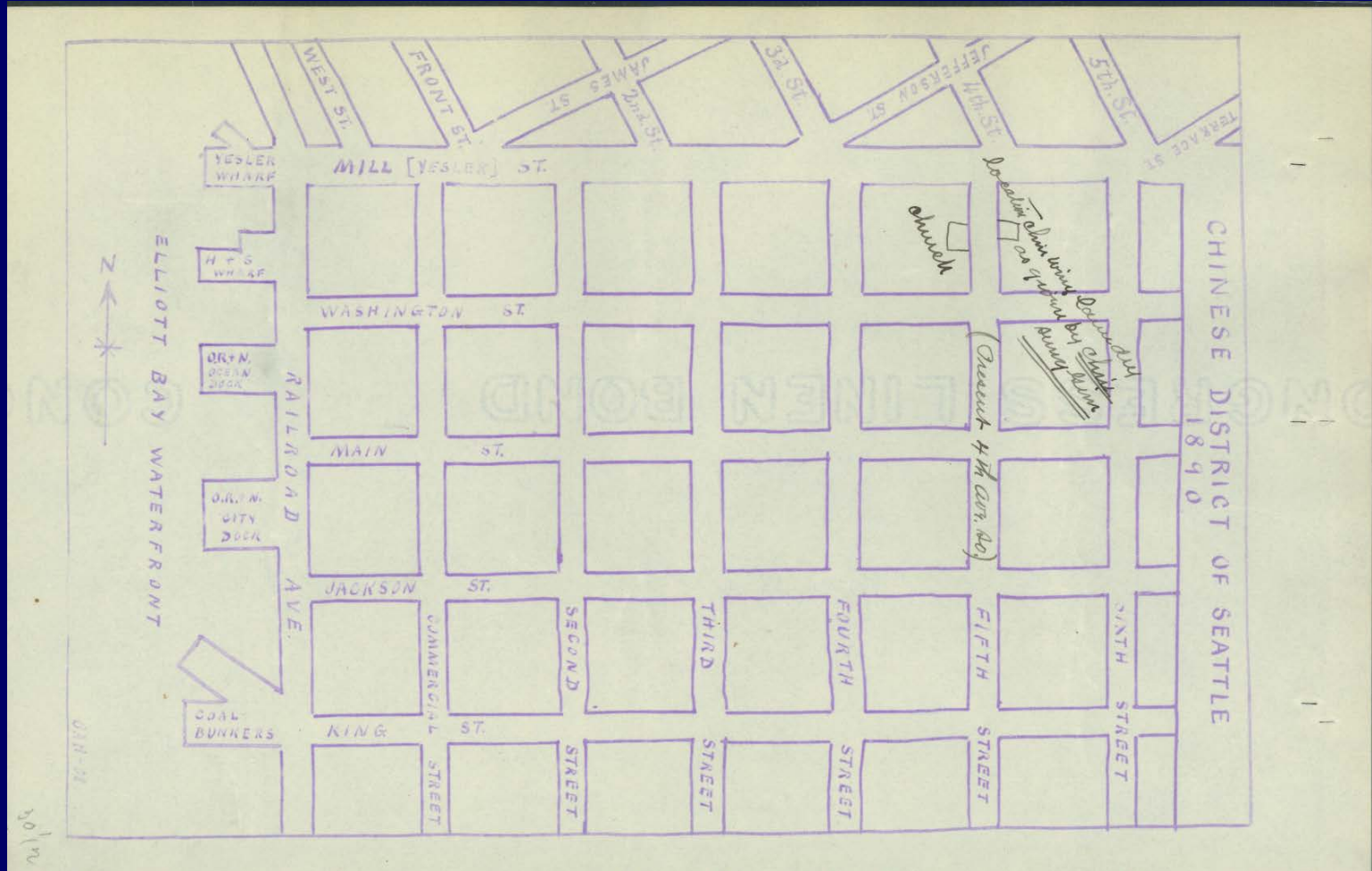


Lace House Dry Goods Company

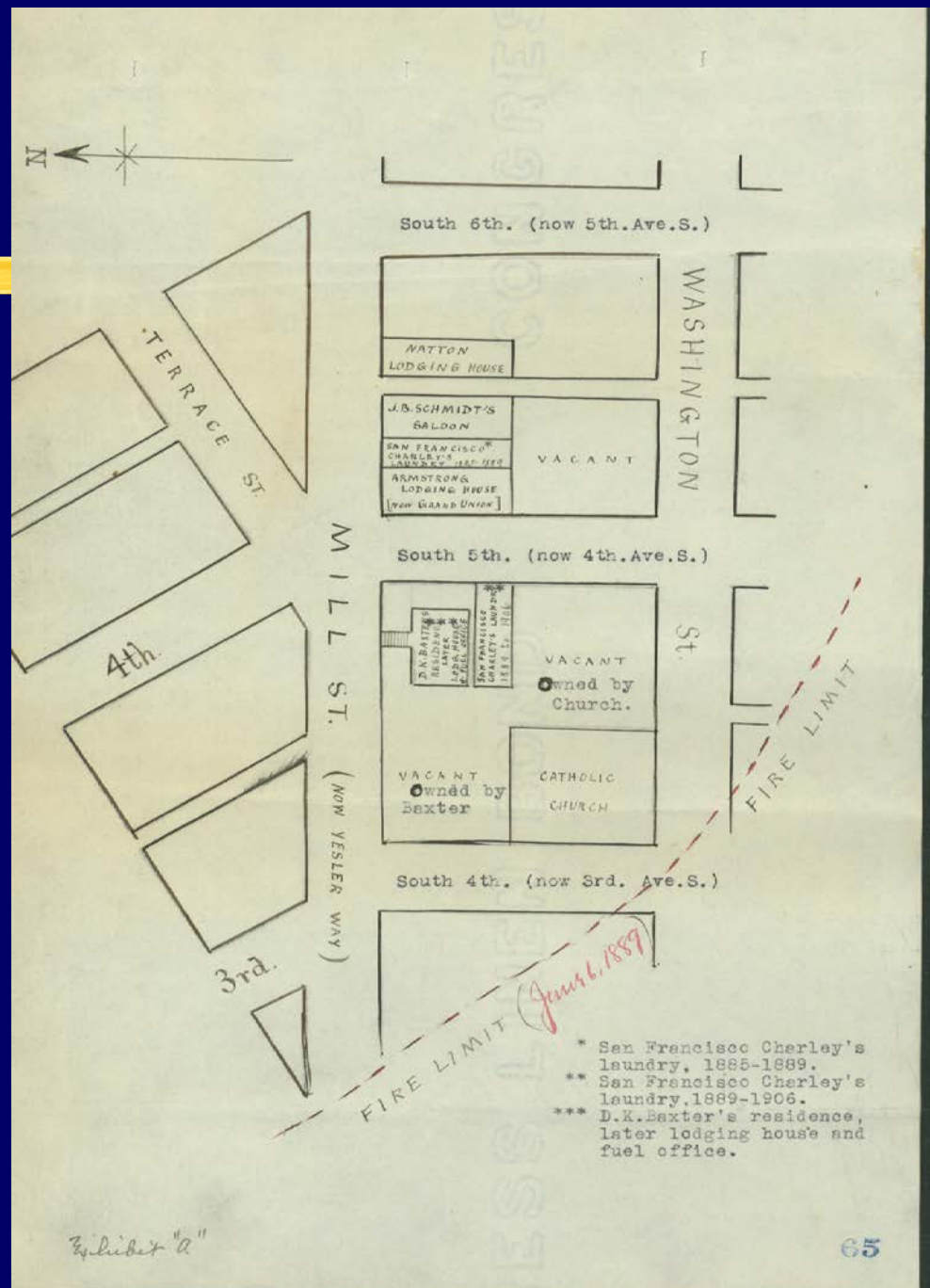
1517 Market St.

St. Louis, MO (ca. 1909)

U.S. Cities - Seattle



A view of post-fire Seattle, 1903



How do I locate a file?

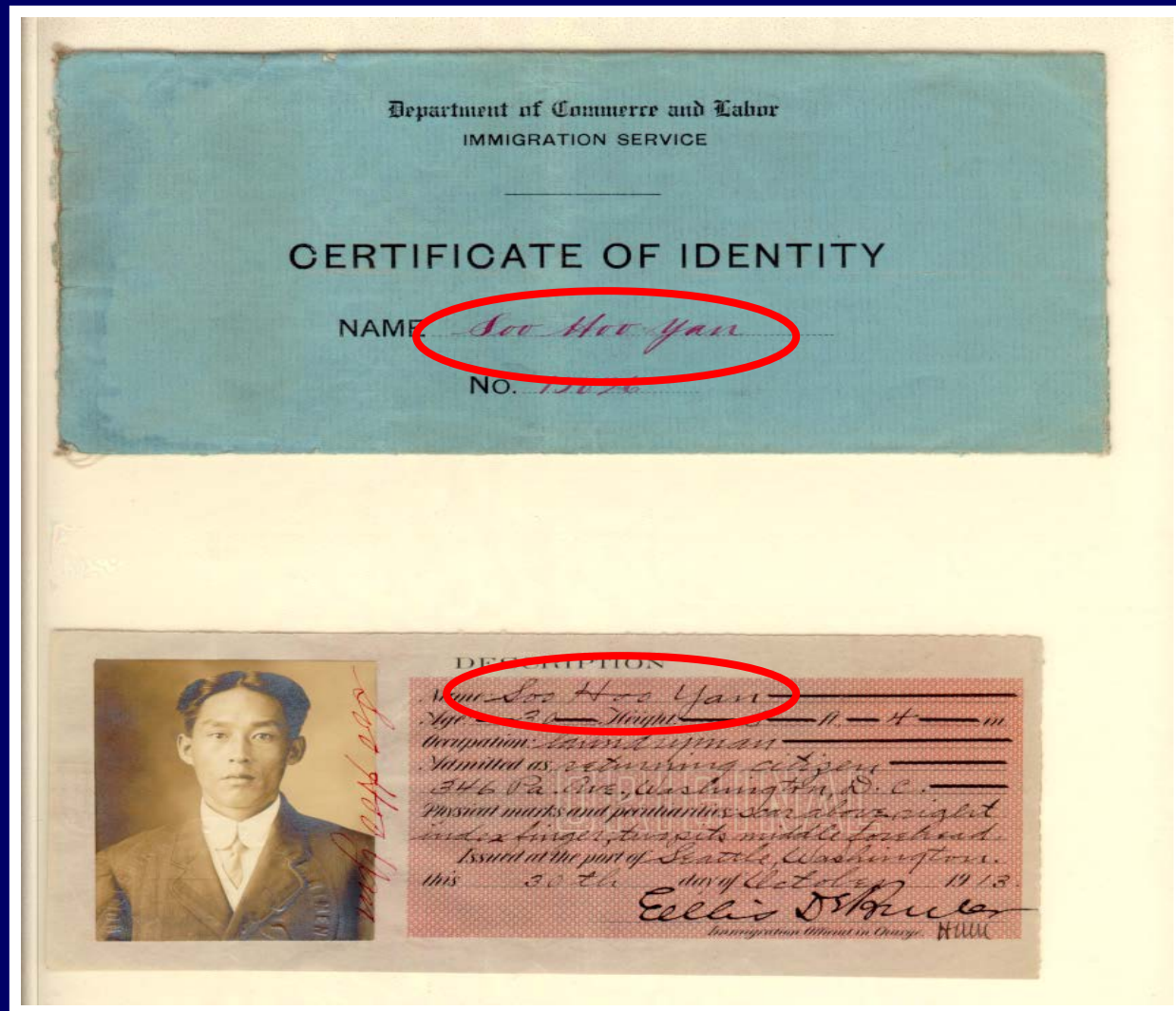


A case file number is gold!

- do you have any documents the person left behind – *you may already have what you need*
- Have you located a file for another family member – *check for a cross-reference sheet*

Certificates of Identity

May still be with owner and can lead to case file



Certificate of Residence

No. 127735

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Certificate of Residence.

Issued to Chinese LABORER, under the Provisions of the Act of May 5, 1892, as amended by the Act approved November 3, 1893.

This is to Certify THAT Chow Co Mau a Chinese LABORER, now residing at Baker City Or has made application No. 10835 to me for a Certificate of Residence, under the provisions of the Act of Congress approved May 5, 1892, as amended by the Act approved November 3, 1893, and I certify that it appears from the affidavit of witness submitted with said application that said Chow Co Mau was within the limits of the United States at the time of the passage of said Act, and was then residing at Baker City Or, and that he was at that time lawfully entitled to remain in the United States, and that the following is a descriptive list of said Chinese LABORER, viz:

NAME: Chow Co Mau AGE: 6 years
LOCAL RESIDENCE: Baker City Or
OCCUPATION: Schoolboy HEIGHT: 3 ft 5 in COLOR OF EYES: Dark
COMPLEXION: Light PHYSICAL MARKS OR PECULIARITIES FOR IDENTIFICATION: Scar on right cheek

And as a further means of identification, I have affixed hereto a photographic likeness of said Chow Co Mau

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL this 3rd day of May, 1891, at Portland, State of Oregon.

Chow Co Mau
Collector of Internal Revenue,
District of Oregon.

Chow Co Mau
127735

No. 3014353 ORIGINAL.
SEATTLE
2731/5

3-1408

Permits to Re-enter

Form 632

19484 / 53

Permit No. **910937**
Application No. C-3226

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
IMMIGRATION SERVICE

Permit to Reenter the United States

PURSUANT to provisions of section 10 of the Immigration Act of 1924, this permit is issued to bearer, **HUI BING GEE**, an alien previously lawfully admitted to the United States, to reenter the United States, if otherwise admissible, as a nonquota immigrant, and its validity shall expire this 29th day of June, A. D. 1934.

Hui Bing Gee

Form 632

18-4

Permit No. **997596**
Application No. C-3904

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE

Permit to Reenter the United States

PURSUANT to provisions of section 10 of the Immigration Act of 1924, this permit is issued to bearer, **WOO YEE SAM**, an alien previously lawfully admitted to the United States, to reenter the United States, if otherwise admissible, as a nonquota immigrant, and its validity shall expire the 28TH day of MARCH, A. D. 1936.

The personal description of the bearer is: Age, 13 years; height, 4 feet and 10 1/2 inches; weight, 90 pounds; complexion, CHINESE

hair, BLACK eyes, BROWN identification marks, MOLE LEFT SIDE NOSE, SCAR BASE RIGHT INDEX FINGER. - EXEMPT STATUS, MINOR DAUGHTER OF MERCHANT, ADMITTED TO U.S. PRIOR TO JULY 1, 1924.

Approved: *Woo Yee Sam* Issued at Washington, D. C., this 28TH day of MARCH, A. D. 1935.

Woo Yee Sam Commissioner.
Charles F. Harris Secretary of Labor.

This permit shall have no effect under the immigration laws except to show that said alien is returning from a temporary visit abroad, nor shall it be construed to be the exclusive means of establishing that the alien is so returning.

NOTE.—Any erasure or alteration shall render this permit null and void.

7033/2911
SEATTLE

Description of the bearer is: Age, 28 years; height, 5 feet weight, 176 pounds; complexion, Chinese; identification marks, Scar center right cheek; pit

U. S. PRIOR TO JULY 1, 1934. *****

Issued at Washington, D. C., this 29th day of June, A. D. 1933.

James J. Connelley
Commissioner General of Immigration

to show that said alien is returning from a temporary visit abroad, the alien is so returning.

shall render this permit null and void.

Hui Bing Gee

An unusual cross-reference sheet

SPL 6
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR,
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE

REFERENCE SHEET

CASES USED IN CONNECTION WITH ABOVE CASE

Moy Toy Nai alias Charley M Toy

NO.	NAME	STEAMER	DATE	RELATIONSHIP
Portal 474	Brought forward			
Portal 1770	" "			
35100/4916	" "			
40454/1-1	" "			
35100/6567	" "			
405/1-1	" "			
4445/1-1	" "			
31/769	" "			
1310/6-22	" "			
16724/1-1	" "			
DS 1521-1525	Reinvestigation of Moy Toy Nai to bring in his wife, Lee Sing Yung; his son Moy Quon; his daughter Lau Fung; his son Moy Hop, and Moy Hop's wife Sing Chuan			
16662 & 16663	Moy P Sing and Moy Yick (partner of Moy P Sing)			brother
DS 513 & 514	Moy P Sing and Yung Sing (departure record Dec 26 1903)			brother & bro's wife
Portal 2042	Sing Wong (alias Lee Sing Yung)			2nd wife
30715	Moy Bok Toon (alias Moy Ton)			son
7032/1811	Moy Bock Quong Donald (alias Moy Koun)			son
Portal 1771	Moy Hong (married to Tom J Chong)			adopted daughter
7030/254	Moy Jung May			daughter
7030/11522	Moy Min Good			daughter
7031/795	Chin Shee			4th wife
7031/796	Moy Bock Ling			son
Portal 1769	Moy P Sing			brother
Portal 2355	Yung Sing	(w/Moy P Sing)		sister-in-law
7031/584	Leung Yuen King	(w/Moy Bok Toon)		daughter-in-law
7032/2967	Moy Chuck Sun David	(s/Moy Bok Toon)		grandson
35100/6581	Moy Chuck Kow Arthur (deceased)	(s/ ")		"
7030/5693	Moy Chuck Wing Edward	(s/ ")		"
7030/5694	Moy Chuck Tong Ernest	(s/ ")		"
7030/5695	Moy Yook Ming Elizabeth	(d/ ")		grand-daughter
7030/7741	Moy Yook Ping Edith	(d/ ")		" "
7030/7742	Moy Yook Gay Marjorie	(d/ ")		" "
7030/7743	Moy Chuck Quon Paul	(s/ ")		grandson
7030/7744	Moy Chuck Way Stephen	(s/ ")		"
9663/3-3	Chin Nhan Sew	(w/Moy Bock Quong)		daughter-in-law
7030/7667	Moy Ying Florence	(d/ ")		grand-daughter
7030/7668	Moy Ngan Lillian	(d/ ")		" "
7030/7669	Moy Sene Alice	(d/ ")		" "
7030/7670	Moy Shee Esther	(d/ ")		" "
7030/7671	Moy Doris	(d/ ")		" "
7030/7672	Moy Leung Alfred	(s/ ")		" "
7028/134	Moy Chuck Fan (deceased)	(s/Moy Bok Hop)		grandson
7030/12041	Moy Hong Toy	(h/Mee Hong Toy)		daughter
7030/3804	Lee Sun Yuen	(h/Mee Hong Toy)		son-in-law
7030/12042	Lee Dong Foon	(s/ ")		grand-son
7030/12043	Lee Wan Foon	(d/ ")		grand-daughter

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1934

Page 1.

14-511

CROSS-REFERENCE SHEET

7032/115

CASES USED IN CONNECTION WITH ABOVE CASE

STEAMER	DATE	RELATIONSHIP
		4th wife
		son
(Moy Jung May)		son-in-law

Charley Toy
7030/115

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1934

page 2

14-511

Indexes



- Not all are easily accessed but we have our ways
- INS created indexes (a few)
- NARA created indexes (not all electronic)
- some on-line

How else?



- Gather information from other family members
 - when and where did the person first arrive or leave?
 - who were they traveling with?

Using other family members to find information

- INS used information from other files to verify information given during interrogations. Files may include:
 - Cross-reference sheets
 - Carbon copies of interrogations from other files

Good Luck!!

Remember -

- Gather documents
- Get creative and
- Ask an archivist!





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/know-your-records

