

Customs Records,

Presented by Patrick Connelly, Archivist, National Archives at New York City

The Customs Service, created by an act of July 31, 1789, became part of the Department of the Treasury when that Department was established by an act approved September 2, 1789 (1 Stat. 65). The immediate office of the Secretary of the Treasury and, later, the Division of Customs--created in the 1860's--administered the Customs Service until the Bureau of Customs was created by an act of March 3, 1927 (44 Stat. 1381). The Bureau also assumed the functions of the Special Agency Service, successor to the Division of Special Agents created in the Secretary's Office in 1878 to supervise the activities of the special agents of the Treasury Department (first authorized by an act of August 6, 1846). An Executive order of February 28, 1942, transferred to the Bureau certain marine functions incident to the registry, enrollment, licensing, and admeasurement of merchant marine vessels--functions that previously had been administered by the Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation of the Department of Commerce.

Other powers and duties vested in the Secretary of the Treasury and administered by the Bureau of Customs pertain to the importation and entry of merchandise into and the exportation of merchandise from the United States; the collection of tonnage taxes, the entrance and clearance of vessels and aircraft, the regulation of vessels in the coasting and fishing trades, and the protection of steerage passengers. It also assists other agencies in the export control program, in the physical control of persons entering or leaving the United States, and (after 1789) in the enforcement of restrictions on the importation of certain foods.

The records described in this inventory are those of the Bureau of Customs that were in the National Archives on December 20, 1968. They amount to 7,704 cubic feet and are for the period 1745-1954. They are designated as Record Group 36, Records of the Bureau of Customs. Included in this record group are records of the Customs Service, consisting of correspondence and other records relating to the collectors' administration of the duties of the Service as well as to their superintendence of lights in the early days (to 1852), their administration of local revenue-cutter activities (to 1871), their collection and accounting for moneys for marine hospitals and Public Health Service hospitals, and their administration of civil affairs in Alaska in the period immediately after it was purchased. Also included are fragmentary records of a few collectors in the Colonial, Revolutionary War, and Confederation periods and a few records created by the Customs Service of the Confederate States of America.

Records retained by the Bureau include continuations of the case files in the central office of the Commissioner of Customs. Continuing files of the transferred field records have either been retained in collectors' offices or transferred to the regional Federal records centers.

Records of customhouses

In New England States

- Passamaquoddy, Maine
- Machias, Maine
- Frenchman's Bay, Maine
- Penobscot (later Castine), Maine
- Bangor, Maine
- Belfast, Maine
- Waldoboro, Maine
- Wiscasset, Maine
- Portland and Falmouth, Maine
- Saco, Maine
- Kennebunk, Maine
- York, Maine
- Bath, Maine
- Portsmouth, N.H.
- Newburyport, Mass.
- Gloucester, Mass.
- Salém and Beverly, Mass.
- Marblehead, Mass.
- Boston and Charlestown, Mass.
- Plymouth, Mass.
- Barnstable, Mass.

- Nantucket, Mass.
- Edgartown, Mass.
- New Bedford, Mass.
- Dighton (Fall River), Mass.
- Providence, R.I.
- Bristol-Warren, R.I.
- Newport, R.I.
- Stonington, Conn.
- New London, Conn.
- Middletown-Hartford, Conn.
- New Haven, Conn.
- Fairfield-Bridgeport, Conn.

In Middle Atlantic States

- New York City
- Hudson, N.Y.

Eastern District of Maryland

- Oxford, Md.
- Chester, Md.
- Havre de Grace, Md.
- Baltimore, Md.
- Annapolis, Md.
- Nottingham, Md.
- St. Mary's, Md.
- Nanjemoy, Md.
- Cedar Point, Md.
- Georgetown, D.C. (Washington, D.C.)

- Sag Harbor, N.Y.
- Newark, N.J.
- Perth Amboy, N.J.
- Little Egg Harbor, N.J.
- Great Egg Harbor (Somer's Point), N.J.
- Bridgeton, N.J.
- Burlington, N.J.
- Philadelphia, Pa.
- Wilmington, Del.
- Snow Hill, Md.
- Vienna, Md.

In South Atlantic States

- Alexandria, Va.
- Yeocomico, Va.
- Dumfries, Va.
- Tappahannock, Va.
- East River, Va.
- Newport News (Yorktown), Va.
- Richmond, Va.
- Petersburg, Va.
- Bermuda Hundred or City Point, Va.
- Norfolk and Portsmouth, Va.
- Hampton, Va.
- South Quay, Va.
- Folly Landing, Va.
- Cherrystone, Va.
- Camden, N.C.
- Edenton, N.C.
- Plymouth, N.C.
- Albemarle, N.C.
- Ocracoke, N.C.
- Washington, N.C.
- New Bern, N.C.
- Pamlico, N.C.
- Beaufort, N.C.

- Wilmington, N.C.
- Georgetown, S.C.
- Charleston, S.C.
- Beaufort, S.C.
- Savannah, Ga.
- Hardwick, Ga.
- Sunbury, Ga.
- Brunswick, Ga.
- St. Mary's, Ga.
- Fernandina, Fla.
- Jacksonville (St. John's), Fla.
- St. Augustine, Fla.
- Key West, Fla.
- Tampa, Fla.
- St. Marks, Fla.
- Apalachicola, Fla.
- Pensacola, Fla.

In the Gulf States

- Blakely, Ala.
- Mobile, Ala.
- Puerto Rico
- Virgin Islands
- Pearl River, Miss.
- Natchez, Miss.
- Vicksburg, Miss.
- New Orleans, La. (Mississippi)
- Teche, La.
- Sabine, Tex.
- Galveston, Tex.
- Saluria, Tex.
- Corpus Christi, Tex.
- Brazos de Santiago, Tex.
- Paso del Norte, Tex.

In the Mississippi, Ohio, and Missouri River ports
Palmyra, Tenn.
Minnesota
Duluth, Minn.
Chicago, Ill.
Louisville, Ky.
Massac, Ohio
Ohio district
Marietta, Ohio
Pittsburgh, Pa.

In the Lake ports.
Presque Isle (Erie), Pa.
Michilimackinac (Superior), Mich.

Milwaukee, Wis.
Detroit, Mich.
Port Huron (Huron), Mich.
Michigan
Grand Rapids, Mich.
Cuyahoga, Ohio
Sandusky, Ohio
Miami, Ohio
Champlain, N.Y.
Oswegatchie, N.Y.
Cape Vincent, N.Y.
Sacket's Harbor, N.Y.
Oswego, N.Y.
Genesee (Rochester), N.Y.
Niagara, N.Y.
Buffalo Creek (Buffalo), N.Y.
Dunkirk, N.Y.
White Mountains, N.H.
Memphremagogg, Vt.
Vermont

North and South Dakota
Montana and Idaho
Colorado
Arizona
San Diego, Calif.
San Pedro, Calif.
Wilmington, Calif.
Los Angeles, Calif.
Upper California
San Francisco, Calif.
Monterey, Calif.
Sonoma, Calif.
San Joaquin, Calif.
Sacramento, Calif.
Humboldt, Calif.
Oregon
Umpqua, Oreg.
Southern Oregon
Port Orford, Oreg.
Cape Perpetua, Oreg.
Yaquina, Oreg.
Willamette, Oreg.
Puget Sound, Wash.
Alaska
Hawaii

Records of the Customs Bureau are found in most NARA facilities nationwide. The following is a list of facilities and the states they serve.

NARA ARCHIVAL CONTACTS

The National Archives at Anchorage

Holding Records from Alaska.

654 West Third Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2145

907-261-7820 Email: alaska.archives@nara.gov

The National Archives at Atlanta

Holding Records from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee

5780 Jonesboro Road
Morrow, Georgia 30260

770-968-2100 Email: atlanta.archives@nara.gov

The National Archives at Boston

Holding Records from Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

Frederick C. Murphy Federal Center
380 Trapelo Road
Waltham, Massachusetts
02452-6399

(781) 663-0130 E-mail: waltham.archives@nara.gov

The National Archives at Chicago

Holding Records from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin

7358 South Pulaski Road
Chicago, IL 60629-5898

773-948-9001 E-mail: chicago.archives@nara.gov

The National Archives at Denver

Holding Records from Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming

Physical Location: Denver Federal Center
Building 48

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 25307
Denver, Colorado 80225

(303) 470-5740 Email: denver.archives@nara.gov

The National Archives at Fort Worth

Holding Records from Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Arkansas

Locations: 2600 West 7th Street, Suite 162, Fort Worth, TX 76107

1400 John Burgess, Fort Worth, TX, 76140

817-831-5620 & 817-551-2051 Email: ftworth.archives@nara.gov

The National Archives at Kansas City

Holding Records from Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska.

400 West Pershing Road
Kansas City, MO 64108

Phone: 816-268-8000 E-mail: kansascity.archives@nara.gov

The National Archives at New York City

Holding Records from New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands

201 Varick Street, 12th Floor
New York, NY 10014
(Entrance on Houston Street, between Varick and Hudson.)

1-866-840-1752 or 212-401-1620 E-mail: newyork.archives@nara.gov

The National Archives at Philadelphia

Holding Records from Pennsylvania, Delaware, West Virginia, Maryland and Virginia

900 Market Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
19107-4292

215-606-0100 Email: philadelphia.archives@nara.gov

The National Archives at Riverside

Holding Records from Arizona, Southern California, and Clark County, Nevada.

23123 Cajalco Road
Perris, CA 92570

951-956-2000 Email: riverside.archives@nara.gov

The National Archives at San Francisco

Holding Records from Northern California, Hawaii, Nevada, Guam, Pacific Trust Territories, and American Samoa

1000 Commodore Drive
San Bruno, CA 94066-2350

(650) 238-3501 Email: sanbruno.archives@nara.gov

The National Archives at Seattle

Holding Records from Idaho, Oregon, and Washington

6125 Sand Point Way NE
Seattle, Washington 98115-7999

206-336-5115 Email: seattle.archives@nara.gov

The National Archives at Washington, DC

700 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20408-0001

202-357-5000 or 1-866-325-7208 Email: archives1reference@nara.gov

The National Archives at College Park

8601 Adelphi Road
College Park, MD 20740-6001

301-837-2000 or 1-866-272-6272 Email: archives2reference@nara.gov
