



National Archives and Records Administration

NORTHEAST REGION

201 Varick Street, 12th Floor
New York, NY 10014-4811

www.archives.gov

www.archives.gov/facilities

The National Archives at New York City is moving in the next two years to the Alexander Hamilton U.S. Custom House.

Due to the reduction in on-site storage at this new location, and in anticipation of the move, staff have identified records that should remain on-site. The list includes some of our most popular and historically significant series, as well as records used most heavily by our constituents – Federal agencies, Congressional offices, Federal and local courts, legal professionals, and members of the public -- for business purposes.

Please note: this list is not final. We are soliciting feedback from volunteers and our patrons to help us determine which records should move to the Custom House. We understand that patron demand may shift so we expect this on-site list may change over the years to meet that need.

RG 21 Naturalization records

Petitions for naturalizations from the U.S. District Courts serving New York, New Jersey, and Puerto Rico are our most popular record series. The records are used regularly by genealogists and historians; however, the heaviest use is by individuals who need to prove citizenship to obtain entitlements.

RG 21 Docket books

The New York office holds dockets from over a dozen separate courts. Each court hears multiple types of cases from bankruptcy to admiralty. Dockets provide a record of papers filed and proceedings held in court cases. Depending on the type of case (criminal, civil, bankruptcy, law, equity, admiralty, etc.), the dockets contain information such as title, case numbers, defendants, plaintiffs, attorneys, as well as a chronological listing of filings and proceedings of the case. In many cases the dockets serve as the only comprehensive index to a particular court's records.

Significant Case Files

RG 21 Records of the U.S. District Courts

We have identified historically significant case files in our court records. The records are popular with researchers and are often featured in outreach activities. Significant cases include one of the oldest records in the regional archives, a Vice Admiralty hearing involving the *Pink Charles* (1685), which was a vessel seized for apparent violations of navigation laws and a Royal African Company monopoly of the slave trade. Other cases relating to civil rights and African-American history involve notable figures including Bayard Rustin, Ella Fitzgerald, and Marcus Garvey, as well as several school

desegregation cases. Of major importance is a copyright infringement case in which **Martin Luther King, Jr.** went to court to protect his rights to the "I Have a Dream" speech given at the march on Washington in 1963.

A highlight of our collections is the indictment and trial record of **Susan B. Anthony** in 1873, a landmark case in the history of women's rights. Pages from the court case are on display in the National Archives Rotunda in Washington. Other constitutional issues documented in our court records include precedent setting cases relating to free speech and obscenity: *The United States of America vs. Jacob Abrams* (1918), the litigation involving the importation of James Joyce's "*Ulysses*" into America (1933), and *The United States v. Lenny Bruce* (1964). The Abrams case is a landmark First Amendment, "free speech" case in which Justice Holmes dissented from the majority stating that the publication of certain anti-war pamphlets did not constitute a "clear and present danger."

Other significant court cases include the War of 1812 and Civil War Prize cases, and admiralty cases relating to the sinking of the *General Slocum*, *Titanic*, *Lusitania*, *Morro Castle*, and *Andrea Doria*.

Significant Case Files

RG 118 Records of the United States Attorneys

Significant cases include the investigative files that resulted in the prosecution of **Ethel and Julius Rosenberg** for espionage and **Alger Hiss** for perjury. These records were the focus of precedent setting legal actions that resulted in the release of previously sealed grand jury testimony.

RG 36 US Customs Service

The records document the commercial and maritime history of the coastal and inland ports of New York and New Jersey. The files contain a large number of early imprints of broadsides, handbills, proclamations, and laws. These deal with topics ranging from the establishment of the customs duties and the documentation of vessels, to the Quasi War with France (1798-1801) and the War of 1812 (1812-1815). Of special note is a printed version of a June 26, 1799 proclamation of John Adams regarding trade with France and an 1813 broadside containing the text of an agreement between the United States and Britain concerning the exchange of prisoners taken during the War of 1812.

Civil War related records

With the sesquicentennial of the American Civil War (2011-2015) fast approaching, we intend to take Civil War related records with us to the Custom House. The anniversary will bring the events of the Civil War back into the spotlight. As media outlets including the History Channel and PBS feature Civil War related programming, we anticipate renewed interest in our Civil War holdings. We also plan to feature Civil War materials in our outreach activities during the sesquicentennial.

Our holdings document the importance of New York as a center for the manufacture of armaments and supplies (**RG 92, Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General**; **RG 156, Records of the Office of the Chief of Ordnance**; and **RG 181, Records of the**

Naval Districts and Shore Establishments) for the Union army and navy. New York City is unique among cities during the Civil War in that riots necessitated the use of the Union army to quell the widespread disturbances and protect government property. These efforts are well documented among holdings from **RG 77, Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers**. Also, the enrollment of men for the 1863 draft is crucial to the understanding of the riots. When regionalized, **RG 110, Records of the Provost Marshal General's Bureau (Civil War)** will provide detailed evidence of this incendiary event.

Records Supporting DERP-FUDS Research

A variety of researchers from private and government agencies conduct Defense Environmental Restoration Program-Formerly Used Defense Site Program (DERP-FUDS) research in **RG 77, Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers; RG 121, Records of the Public Building Service; RG 269 Records of the General Services Administration; and RG 270 Records of the War Assets Administration**. This program is responsible for performing environmental cleanup of properties that were once owned by the Department of Defense.

Important Historical Site

NRAA-N is home to records of the Brooklyn Navy Yard (**RG 181, Records of the Naval Districts and Shore Establishments**). NRAA-N holds photographs taken at the yard's machine shops, dry docks, housing facilities, and maintenance buildings. Interest in the site has been on the rise in recent years following high-profile redevelopment projects at the site (Admiral's Row, for example).

Documenting Minority Struggles

NRAA-N has and will continue to provide educational support to students of the New York City School District. These programs will require that New York's onsite holdings include records that document historical issues faced by minorities. Records from **RG 211, War Manpower Commission; RG 228, Committee on Fair Employment Practice; and RG 323, the Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration** document minority job training, discriminatory hiring practices, economic rehabilitation, and other issues.

High Value Vault

We will bring our high value vault to the Custom House. Items secured in the vault include Mediterranean Passports with signatures of John Adams, James Madison, Thomas Jefferson, John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson, and James Monroe; presidential pardons signed by Woodrow Wilson; early comic books including Batman #1; early Wright brothers photographs; a selection of Thomas Edison's patent drawings; and Andy Warhol postcards.

We will also dedicate stack space to store records requested from off-site holdings for researchers and special projects. This will allow patrons to have access to all records regardless of their storage location and will help us maintain our high level of customer service.