



OFFICE *of* GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES

August 25, 2015 – Sent via U.S. mail



NATIONAL
ARCHIVES
and RECORDS
ADMINISTRATION

8601 ADELPHI ROAD
OGIS
COLLEGE PARK, MD
20740-6001

web: www.ogis.archives.gov
e-mail: ogis@nara.gov
phone: 202-741-5770
toll-free: 1-877-684-6448
fax: 202-741-5769

Dear [REDACTED]

This letter responds to your August 18, 2015 submission to the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS), which we received on August 24, 2015 via U.S. mail.

Congress created OGIS to serve as the Federal Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Ombudsman and our jurisdiction is limited to assisting with the FOIA process.

OGIS:

- Advocates for neither the requester nor the agency, but for the FOIA process to work as intended
- Provides mediation services to help resolve disputes between FOIA requesters and Federal agencies
- Strives to work in conjunction with the existing request and appeal process
- May become involved at any point in the FOIA administrative process

OGIS does not:

- Compel agencies to release documents
- Enforce FOIA
- Process requests or review appeals
- Provide assistance outside the realm of FOIA
- Make determinations or dictate resolutions to disputes
- Provide legal assistance

I carefully reviewed your letter. It appears that you seek assistance in researching your family history. Please know that OGIS's mission is to review Federal agency compliance with the FOIA and provide mediation services to resolve FOIA disputes. We are committed to our mission and we have established specific policies on procedures on how to achieve that



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mission. Unfortunately, we are not able to assist you with researching your family history.

OGIS is an office within the National Archives and Records Administration. Each year, millions of people use the Federal records in the National Archives to search for their family roots. Census schedules, ship passenger arrival lists, citizenship papers, military pension files, land patents, and court records offer detailed evidence to flesh out family histories. Because of their age or subject matter, most records in the National Archives' holdings are unrestricted and are available for research without filing a FOIA request, including genealogical and family history materials.

NARA staff may be able to provide reference assistance to you, however; if you require extensive research assistance at NARA facilities, NARA offers a list of researchers who are available for hire. I've enclosed the list of researchers for hire for your reference. Please note that researchers for hire are not NARA employees.

If you have a question about research and records at NARA, you may contact NARA staff by writing to the following address:

The National Archives and Records Administration
8601 Adelphi Road
College Park, MD 20740-6001

In your correspondence, you should be as specific as possible and include details—such as names, dates, places, events, or organizations related to your topic—to help the Reference Staff understand and respond to your question(s).

For your reference, I enclosed the following documents from NARA's website: Genealogy Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and the "Services for Offsite Researchers—Frequently Asked Questions" section of General Information Leaflet 71 The National Archives in the Nation's Capital – Information for Researchers.

I hope you find this information useful.

Sincerely,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the sender.

 Facilitator
Office of Government Information Services

Enclosures (3)