



Pacific Currents

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Tom Lantos Research Center at San Bruno Archives



The late Tom Lantos

Immigration Records, Famed Congressman Honored in San Bruno Dedication Ceremony

On May 22 the National Archives at San Francisco officially opened to the public over 40,000 case files on immigrants to the United States and dedicated its research room – “*The Tom Lantos Research Center*” - to the late U.S. Representative Tom Lantos, - who was a leading force in preserving the files as permanent records.

A large crowd of supporters and dignitaries met in the archives courtyard to celebrate the opening. Speakers included Congresswoman Jackie Speier, who continued the

work of Tom Lantos in support of “Alien Files” (commonly referred to as “A-Files”). Also speaking were NARA Chief Operating Officer Tom Mills; Dominick Gentile, Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS); Jennie Lew and Jeanie Low, Save Our National Archives; Rosalyn Tonai, National Japanese American Historical Society; Jeremy Frankel, San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society; and Congressman Lantos’s grandson, Keaton Swett.

The A-Files were transferred from the USCIS. They are among the first of millions of case files that will eventually be opened to the public.

In 1940 the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), the predecessor of USCIS, started issuing Alien Registration Numbers to

Continued on page 2



Congresswoman Jackie Speier

This is our last paper issue!

***Pacific Currents* to continue as a digital-only online publication**

Cost and time have finally caught up with ***Pacific Currents***.

Starting with our next issue, we will cease to issue a printed version. Instead, our many subscribers will receive an email with a hyperlink to the PDF version on our Web site.

Two things:

1. If you are **not** currently on our email list, and wish to continue to receive the newsletter, please send an email with “Pacific Currents” in the subject line to laguna.workshops@nara.gov
2. If you have an exceptional need for a printed copy, we plan a very limited run each issue. If you have a special need, send us an email with “hard copy” in the subject line.



Immigration Records Dedicated

Continued from page 1

resident aliens in the United States. On April 1, 1944, INS began to assign these numbers to the new A-Files series. These records contain a wealth of genealogical information, including documents such as photographs, personal correspondence, vital statistics, interview transcripts, and visa applications.

A-Files are eligible for transfer to the National Archives 100 years after the birth of the subject of a file. These transfers to the National Archives ensure that these records will be saved in perpetuity and made available to the public for research.

The holdings of the National Archives at San Francisco will include many case files created at INS District Offices in San Francisco, California; Honolulu, Hawaii; Reno, Nevada; and Agana, Guam. The National Archives at Kansas City will maintain A-Files for all other INS District Offices nationwide.

A-Files may be viewed in person by appointment or copies may be ordered for a fee. Researchers may contact National Archives staff at AFiles.SanBruno@nara.gov to search A-Files holdings for a particular individual. An online database is available through the National Archives website. Visit <http://www.archives.gov/research/immigration/aliens/> for more information.

NARA Releases 2011 Records Management Self-Assessment Report

In May 2011, NARA issued the mandatory annual records management self-assessment (RMSA) to Federal agencies. The goal of the self-assessments is to determine whether Federal agencies are compliant with statutory and regulatory records management requirements.

The 2011 responses show that a large majority of Federal agencies remain at high to moderate risk of compromising the integrity of their records. They risk improper destruction of records or, in some cases, they are saving their records but not taking the necessary steps to ensure that they can be retrieved, read, or interpreted.

However, this report has positive news. For example, the number of agencies scoring “low risk” has increased slightly and several agencies have recognized the need for performance metrics for their records management programs. They have established sophisticated metrics that can serve as a model for others.

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then scroll down to

“Ways to Reach Us”

NARA uses the annual RMSA as a tool to monitor and oversee Federal records management programs. The work reflected in this report was accomplished prior to the issuance of the Presidential Memorandum on Managing Government Records (in November of last year), which requires each agency to designate a senior official to supervise an evaluation of the agency’s records management program. Data from the RMSAs, and agency submissions in response to the Presidential Memorandum, will give NARA a Government-wide base of information from which to develop the Records Management Directive. NARA has the legal authority to inspect and evaluate Federal agencies’ records management programs and practices. The full [report may be downloaded from NARA’s website](http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/resources/self-assessment-2011.pdf) <http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/resources/self-assessment-2011.pdf>

RECORDS TRANSFER, REFERENCE, and DIGITAL CAPTURE SERVICES WORKSHOPS

These **FREE** full-day **Federal Records Center Program** workshops teach you:

- ▶ About our Archives and Records Center Information System (ARCIS)
- ▶ How to transfer non-current records to your Federal Records Center
- ▶ How to make a request for reference services using our on-line Reference Services
- ▶ About our digital-imaging services

When

August 28, 2012
September 12, 2012
September 14, 2012

Where

San Diego
Phoenix
Flagstaff

Information and Registration

Diane Jones (951) 956-2064
diane.jones@nara.gov

Records Management Training, July-September, 2012

To register go to archives.gov/records-mgmt/training/ or email our training registrar at laguna.workshops@nara.gov
For more information on our workshops, go to <http://nara.learn.com/recordsmanagement-training>

Basic Records Operations

August 15, San Francisco September 11, Phoenix
August 27, San Diego September 13, Flagstaff

Creating and Maintaining Agency Business Information (Knowledge Area 2)

July 24-25, San Diego

Records Schedule Implementation (Knowledge Area 4)

August 20-21, San Diego

Records Management Program Development (Knowledge Area 6)

August 24, San Diego

Records Management Overview (Knowledge Area 1)

July 23, San Diego

Records Scheduling (Knowledge Area 3)

July 26-27, San Diego

Asset and Risk Management (Knowledge Area 5)

August 22-23, San Diego

Vital Records

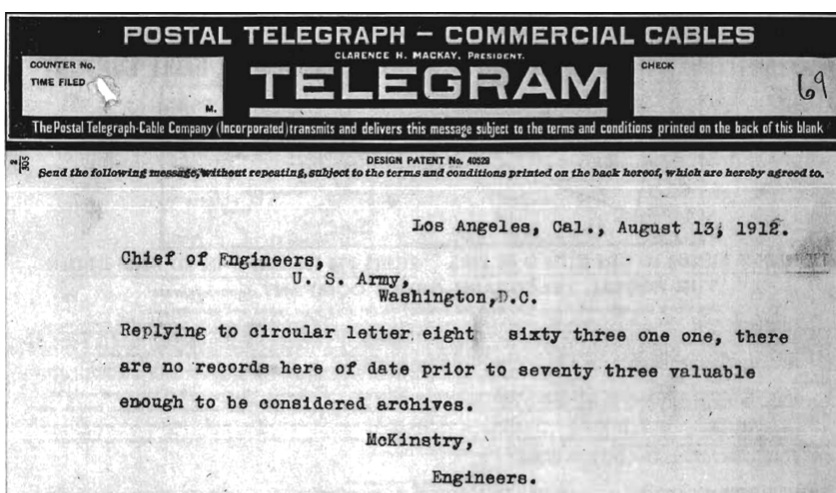
August 16, San Francisco

Presidential Memo Redux?

The 2012 Presidential Memo is not the first time agencies have been asked to provide information in response to a presidential directive on records management. In fact, President William H. Taft issued Executive Order 1567 on July 19, 1912, instructing heads of executive departments to obtain information on their records held “outside the city of Washington” that dated prior to 1873. Agencies responded to 21 questions about the records’ care, frequency of use, loss, and filing systems.

The National Archives did not exist when the order was issued. So agency officials reported to the Library of Congress (LC). LC’s report found that many records had been damaged or destroyed by fire, flood or pests, from being stored in the “least desirable parts of buildings,” and “for want of ventilation and from being in too dry or too moist an atmosphere.”

Regarding the care of the records, the report noted that the records



This telegram responded to a 1912 Executive Order by President Taft requiring that federal agencies report historically significant records held “outside the city of Washington” that dated prior to 1873.

were often in the immediate care of people who had other duties and responsibilities. It also found that offices had facilities to accommodate historical researchers, that archives in offices outside of Washington “antedate the inauguration of the Government under the Constitution” and that the records “reveal much material for history which has hitherto been hidden.”

Just 18 years later in 1930, agencies were again requested to send information back to their headquarters. This time the request

was made to gather information for the creation of the National Archives.

These documents, found in Record Group 77, Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers, show the responses from the Army Corps of Engineers from 1912 (pictured above) and 1930. Perhaps at the time the Corps’ records were not considered historically valuable. Today however, they provide a wealth of information helping to reveal our hidden past.

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National Archives and Records
Administration

24000 Avila Road, Suite 3513

Laguna Niguel, CA 92677-3497