



NATIONAL ARCHIVES *and* RECORDS ADMINISTRATION
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VISA RECORDS

Except for a brief time during the Civil War (1861-1865), before World War I, alien visitors did not require visaed passports in order to enter the United States. The practice of requiring all aliens to obtain visas from U.S. officials abroad before departure for the United States was begun in 1917 as a war measure during World War I, and has continued since then. Visa activities in the Department have been handled by an organization responsible for that function since 1918. That organization has gone through many changes over the years.

Certain file categories in the Department of State central files were assigned for use by the visa organization and its records were kept separate from the main series of the Department's central files. Recordkeeping for files relating to visa matters falls into three main periods of time: From 1910 through 1949, Central Decimal File category 150 (with sub-divisions) dealt with "Immigration to the United States" and file category 151 (with sub-divisions) covered "Immigration of Chinese to the United States." During that same period, records relating to "Regulations governing residence, trade, and travel" to the United States were filed in file category 811.111 and records relating to individuals were filed under 811.111 [name]. From 1950 to 1962, Central Decimal File categories 150 through 165 dealt with broad subject of "Entry of aliens into, residence of aliens in, the United States." In 1963, the Department began using an alpha-numeric filing scheme. Under the new filing system, records relating to "Visas" were filed in the file category "V." There were sub-divisions, such as V-1 for "General policy. Plans. Coordination" and V-12 for "Entry." Refer to the filing manuals for each time period for more detail on the file breakdown of the records.

While all records on visa and immigration matters were supposed to be filed in the files maintained by the office responsible for visa matters, a small amount of documentation can be found among the main series of the Department of State central files for the 1910-1963 period.

More information on most of these and other records can be found in Inventory 15: Inventory of the General Records of the Department of State, RG 59.

I. Finding Aids

Lists of Papers ("Purport Lists") Regarding Immigration, 1910-1939. Lists of documents for the following file categories: 150-151.991. Boxes 1-15. Entry A1/701. Begin Loc: 230/52/4/4.

Lists of Papers ("Purport Lists") in the General Visa Correspondence, 1914-1940. Lists of documents for the following file categories: 811.111 Agent - 811.11162 Virgin Islands. Boxes 1-22. Entry A1/703. Begin Loc: 230/52/13/5.

Lists of Papers ("Purport Lists") of Procedural Correspondence Concerning Visas, 1914-1931. Lists of documents for the following file categories: 811/111. Boxes 1-5. Box 1: Dec 1914-Sept 1918; Box 2: Sept 1918-July 1919; Box 3: July 1919-October 1920; Box 4: October 1920-May 1924; Box 5: May 1924-October 1930. Entry A1/706. Begin Loc: 230/53/16/4.

II. Records Relating to Individuals

Visa Case Files, 1914-1940. File category 811.111[Name] arranged in the following three chronological segments: 1914-1923 Boxes 1-445; 1924-1932 Boxes 446-906; and 1933-1940 Boxes 907-1736. Entry A1/705. Begin Loc: 230/52/27/2

III. Policy and Procedural Records

The policy and procedural records are arranged according to the file numbers assigned during the period of time each filing system described above was used.

File No.	Dates	Boxes	Entry No.	Begin Location
1914-1949				
150 - 151.997	1910-1939	1-291	A1/702A	230/52/4/6
150.1- 150.9469 [Confidential File]	1910-1939	292-294	A1/702A	230/52/10/6
150.01 [Name] - 150.946 [Name]	1914-1924	1-3	A1/710	230/53/18/7
150 Barred Zones-151.997	1940-1945	1-103	A1/702B	230/52/10/6
150-151.10 Students	1945-1949	1-46	A1/702C	230/51/43/2
811.111	1914-1931	1-106	A1/707	230/53/16/5
811.111 Visas Granted	1914-1924	1-6	A1/709	230/53/18/6
811.111 Visas Refused	1914-1924	1-3	A1/710	230/53/18/7
800.111 - 811B.55	1914-1940	1-246	A1/704A	230/52/14/1
811.111 - 811.11181 [Confidential File]	1914-1940	247	A1/704A	230/52/19/2
811.111 - 811G.111	1940-45	1-236	A1/704A	230/52/19/2
811.111 - 811G.5544K	1945-1949	1-154	A1/704A	230/52/24/1
1950-1962				
150s and 160s	1950-54			Erroneously destroyed.
150 - 165.98	1955-59	502-572	A1/702D*	631/18/20/7
150 - 165.98	1960-62	1-51	A1/702E*	631/18/6/6
1963-1970				
V - V 31	1963-1964	1-47	A1/704B*	631/18/17/6
V - V 31	1965-1970	48-152	A1/704B*	631/18/18/6

*These records are not available for researcher use.

IV. Other Records

Lists of Visas Refused and Granted at Foreign Service Posts in Europe, 1917-1919. Lists from the consulate general in Paris, the legation in the Netherlands, the embassy in Spain, and the legation in Switzerland. 1 box. Entry A1/708 Begin Loc: 250/51/25/1

Petitions of the Jewish Peoples' Committee, 1938. A sampling of petitions urging passage of House Joint Resolution 637 providing for the admission of refugees into the United States. 1 box Entry A1/712 Begin Loc: 230/53/18/6

Visa Agent Designation Forms, 1941-1945. 3 boxes. Entry A1/3005 Begin Loc: 250/67/5/7

Textual Records Division
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