



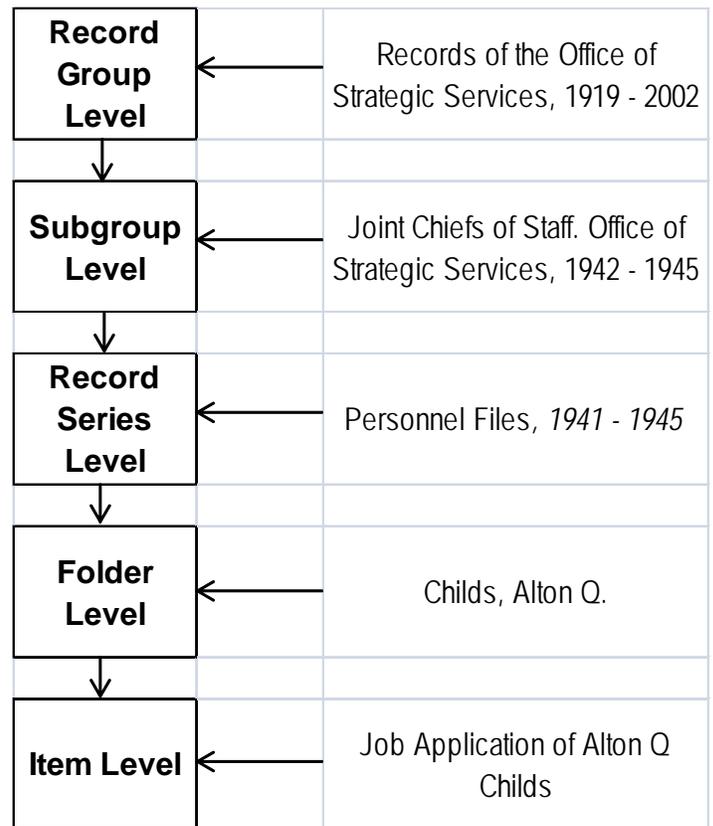
# The National Archives Online Public Access (OPA)

The Online Public Access (OPA) catalog is the primary search tool to locate records held by the National Archives. It is a catalog describing the records of the National Archives in exactly the same manner as a card catalog in a library describes books. OPA contains record group descriptions, subgroup descriptions, records series descriptions, file unit descriptions, and item level descriptions. The Online Public Access catalog provides more detailed descriptions than the Guide to Federal Records. OPA is growing rapidly but, as yet, it does not describe all of the records in the National Archives. Nonetheless, it is still a valuable resource for genealogists, historians, and others.

## Why Can't I Just Search For a Name?

Currently, all of the records of the National Archives have been described to the record group and subgroup levels. About 75% of the records have been described to the record series level. However, less than 10% have been described to the file level and less than 1% to the item level. As you can see from this illustration, the record group, subgroup, and series levels do not describe names of individuals or person-specific information. This means that when a genealogist currently uses OPA and searches by name, he or she will not generally retrieve all records containing the name they seek. This is because the OPA catalog does not contain an index of all names mentioned in each of the 10 billion records held by the National Archives.

The digitization partners of the National Archives, Ancestry.com and Fold3.com, are actively digitizing and indexing federal records. As they do this, file and item level descriptions are being generated for National Archives records. These images and indexes will eventually be input into OPA. In time, name searching in OPA will be common place. At present, it is effective only to a limited extent.



## Instructions For Use of OPA

OPA is located on the National Archives website ([www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov)). From the National Archives main page click **Research Our Records**. On the resulting page select **Online Catalog**. This will bring you to the **Basic OPA Search Page** where you can initiate basic searches of the catalog using key words or phrases.

To perform an advanced search, click on **Advanced Search** from the **Basic OPA Search Page**. This brings you to the **Advanced Search Page**. On this page you have a large number of options for your search. You can search by key words, exact phrases, National Archives Identifier number if you know it, types of records (such as photographs), or level of description. You can also limit the search to only specific years or only to specific archives repositories in the National Archives system (such as the National Archives at Riverside). Once you have entered your search criteria simply click **Search**. This will produce a **Search Results Summary Page** listing the names of record descriptions. Unless you have specified the level of description you want, you could see the names of record group descriptions, subgroup descriptions, record series descriptions, file unit descriptions, and even descriptions of individual items. You can use the “refine by” options on the left side of the screen to narrow the results of your search.

When you click on one of these description names on the **Search Results Summary Page** you will see the detailed descriptive information related to these particular records. It is important to note the **National Archives Identifier number** on each catalog record is unique to the records in question and is used to identify these particular records among all the records in the National Archives. There are four main tabs for each record description. The **Details** section shows the dates and arrangement of the records as well as any restrictions to their access or use. In cases where all, or some, of the records pertaining to the selected description have been digitized, and the image has been linked to the description, there will be a hyperlink next to **Includes** in this section. The **Scope and Content** section provides a narrative description about the set of records. The **Archived Copies** section tells you the volume of the records, the recording media and whom to contact to obtain copies or more information about the records.

**Records Hierarchy**

**Record Group 21:**  
Records of District Courts of the United States, 1685 - 2009

**Series:**  
Alien Registration Affidavits, 02/06/1918 - 06/28/1918

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**Tags Contributed by the Public**

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**Alien Registration Affidavits, 02/06/1918 - 06/28/1918**

**This Series describes records, some of which may not be available online.**

To obtain a copy or view the records, please contact or visit the National Archives and Records Administration location(s) listed in the Contact information below.

**National Archives Identifier:** 294758

**Creator(s):** U.S. District Court for the Phoenix Division of the District of Arizona (1912 - ) (Most Recent)

**From:** [Record Group 21: Records of District Courts of the United States, 1685 - 2009](#)

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**Details**

**Level of Description:** Series

**Type(s) of Archival Materials:** Textual Records

**The creator compiled or maintained the series between:** 02/06/1918 - 06/28/1918

**Includes** [179 item\(s\) described in the catalog](#) [Search within this Series](#)

**Arrangement:** Arranged alphabetically by name of registrant.

**Use Restriction(s):** Undetermined

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**Scope & Content**

Affidavits of people living in Arizona, but who were citizens from countries at war with the United States during the First World War. Men completed the form, "Registration Affidavit of Alien Enemy" while women used the form "Registration Affidavit of Alien Female." Information recorded on these forms includes a physical description of the registrants, a four-year history of employment and residence, birth data concerning the registrants and their immediate family, immigration and naturalization information, data on language fluency, registrants' fingerprints, and a photograph.

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**Variant Control Numbers**