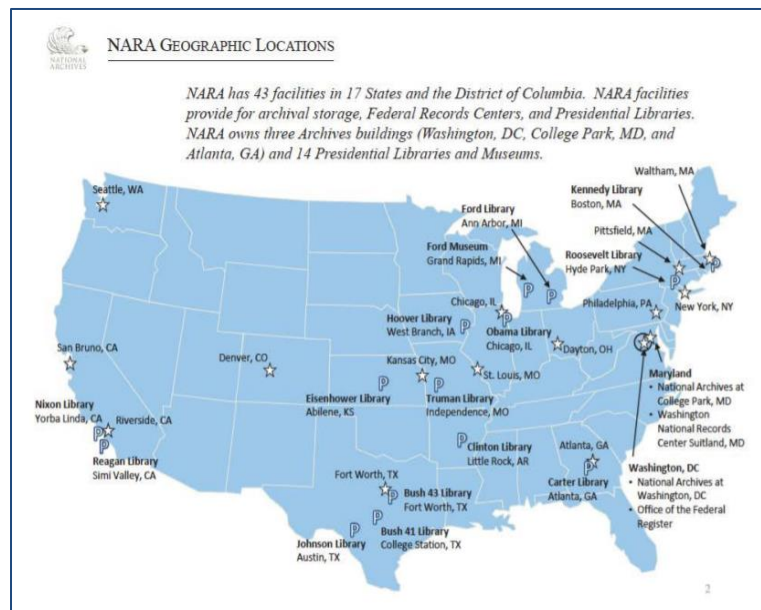


Researching Indigenous-Related Records at the National Archives and Records Administration

What is the National Archives?

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is an independent agency established in 1934 to identify, protect, preserve, and make publicly available the historically valuable records of the U.S. federal government. NARA's holdings date from the Revolutionary War era to the present and document the activities of federal agencies, the federal court system, and the U.S. Congress.

NARA only holds federal records determined to have ongoing value. This amounts to about 2–5 percent of records created in any given year. As of March 2021, NARA housed 13.28 billion pages of textual records; 10 million maps, charts, and architectural and engineering drawings; 44.4 million still photographs, digital images, filmstrips, and graphics; 40 million aerial photographs; 563,000 reels of motion picture film; 992,000 video and sound recordings; and 1,323 terabytes of electronic data in multiple research facilities and Presidential Libraries around the country.



For more information on NARA's history, mission, and strategic goals, please visit NARA's website at <https://www.archives.gov/about>.

How do I start my research at NARA?

First, determine the connection between your research topic and federal government policies and programs. NARA only houses permanent historical records of federal agencies, so not all historical records can be found at NARA. For example, NARA generally does not house vital records (birth, marriage, divorce, and death records), which are typically created by state and local governments. For more information, see "What Is Your Topic's Connection to the Federal Government": <https://www.archives.gov/research/start/gather-information#connection>

Second, become familiar with how records are arranged at NARA. Records are grouped in numbered *record groups* that are associated with a records creator: an agency, bureau,

commission, or other entity of the federal government. Within record groups, records are maintained in *series*, which reflect how the federal entity maintained and used the records. Records are generally not arranged by name or subject, although name and subject indexes might be available. For more information about records arrangement, see the following NARA web pages:

- “How Records Are Grouped”: <https://www.archives.gov/research/start/how-records-grouped.html>
- “Record Group Concept”: <https://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/index-numeric/concept.html>

Third, consult NARA’s website for tips and strategies for conducting your research. NARA’s website can help you find information about records, identify records that have been digitized and made available online, and determine if you need to visit a NARA research facility in person. See the following NARA web pages for more information:

- “Research Our Records”: <https://www.archives.gov/research>
- “Getting Started Overview”: <https://www.archives.gov/research/start>
- “Plan Your Research Visit”: <https://www.archives.gov/research/start/plan-your-visit>
- “Frequently Asked Questions”: <https://www.archives.gov/research/start/faqs.html>

What records does NARA have related to Native Americans?

NARA houses numerous records related to the federal government’s interactions with Native Americans since the Revolutionary War. These records include treaties, census rolls, allotment records, military service records, Federal Indian Boarding School records, maps, photographs, and much more.

Record groups with the greatest concentrations of records related to Native Americans include:

- Record Group 29: Bureau of the Census
- Record Group 48: Office of the Secretary of the Interior
- Record Group 49: Bureau of Land Management
- Record Group 75: Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Record Group 79: National Park Service
- Record Group 95: United States Forest Service
- Record Group 107: Office of the Secretary of War
- Record Group 115: Bureau of Reclamation
- Record Group 123: United States Court of Claims
- Record Group 267: United States Supreme Court
- Record Group 279: Indian Claims Commission
- Record Group 435: Indian Arts and Crafts Board
- Record Group 513: Records of the Indian Health Service

Records related to Native Americans can also be found among records of the U.S. Armed Forces (comprising multiple record groups) and the U.S. Congress (Senate records in Record Group 46 and House of Representatives records in Record Group 233).

See NARA's website for more information about records related to Native Americans:

- "American Indian Records in the National Archives":
<https://www.archives.gov/research/native-americans>
- "Native American History" (screenshot below):
<https://www.archives.gov/news/topics/native-american-heritage-month>



Can I find all of NARA's records related to Native Americans online?

No. While NARA has digitized millions of pages of federal records, this is only a small percentage of the billions of records that the agency houses. Most records at NARA (related to Native Americans or to other topics) are not yet available online.

The following web pages offer visualizations of different record groups' digitization status:

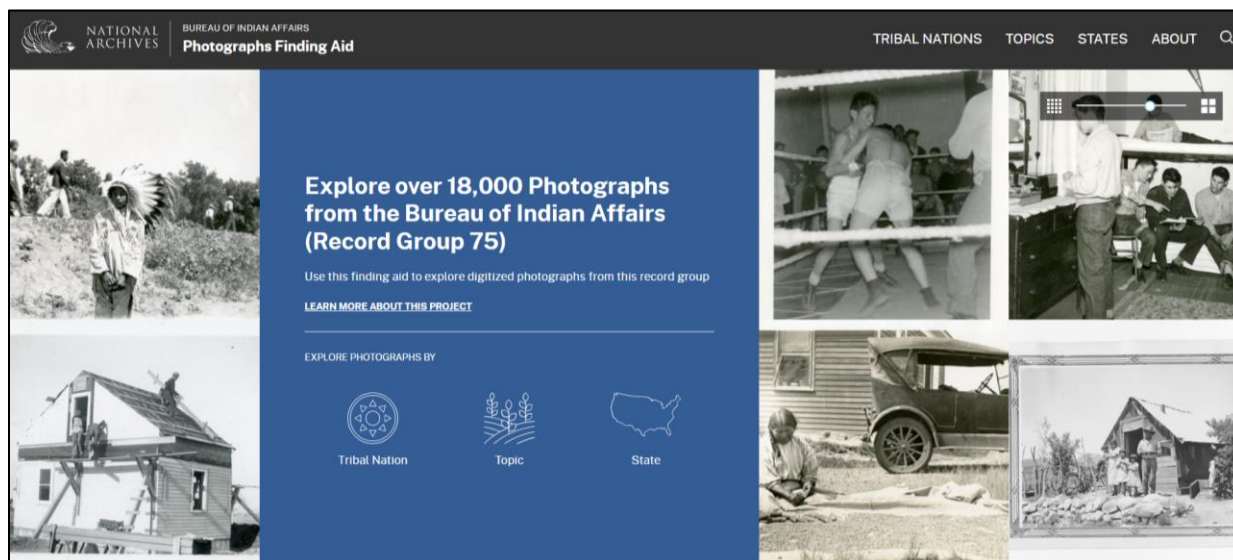
- Record Group Explorer: <https://www.archives.gov/findingaid/record-group-explorer>
- Presidential Library Explorer: <https://www.archives.gov/findingaid/presidential-library-explorer>
- Donated Collection Explorer: <https://www.archives.gov/findingaid/donated-collection-explorer>

What are some records related to Native Americans that are available online?

Select treaties, census rolls, enrollment records, correspondence, and photographs related to Native Americans, among other records, are digitized in the National Archives Catalog

(<https://catalog.archives.gov>). See the following NARA web pages for more information and links:

- “American Indian Treaties: Catalog Links”: <https://www.archives.gov/research/native-americans/treaties/catalog-links>
- “Bureau of Indian Affairs Photographs Finding Aid” (screenshot below): <https://www.archives.gov/research/native-americans/bia/photos/>
- “Bureau of Indian Affairs Rolls”: <https://www.archives.gov/research/native-americans/rolls>
- “Native American Census Records”: <https://www.archives.gov/research/native-americans/census>



NARA’s ongoing Alaska Digitization Project is also digitizing many records related to Alaska Natives for inclusion in the National Archives Catalog (<https://catalog.archives.gov>). For more information about this project, see: <https://www.archives.gov/seattle/anchorage-project>

For updates on recently digitized records, see “What’s New in the National Archives Catalog”: <https://www.archives.gov/research/catalog/whats-new>

Why are some NARA records related to Native Americans only available on paid websites (e.g., Ancestry.com)?

NARA partners with some private institutions to expand online access to federal records. In many of these partnerships, NARA makes its records available to the partners to digitize, and in exchange, the partners can publish the digital images on their own websites (which may or may not cost money to access from home). After an agreed-upon period of time, known as an embargo period, NARA gains rights to the digital images and can upload them to the free National Archives Catalog (<https://catalog.archives.gov>). On-site researchers at all NARA research facilities can access digitized records on partners’ websites for free.

For more information about NARA's digitization initiatives and current partnerships, see: <https://www.archives.gov/digitization>

Are records related to Native Americans available as microfilm?

Yes, in some instances. NARA microfilmed many frequently requested records related to Native Americans, and the agency is currently digitizing these microfilm publications.

You can search NARA's Microfilm Catalog (<https://eservices.archives.gov/orderonline>) to find records available as microfilm. The Microfilm Catalog is searchable by keyword, record group number, microfilm publication number, and more. The Microfilm Catalog includes microfilm roll/reel lists and indicates which NARA research facilities have physical copies of those rolls. If a microfilm publication is digitized, the Microfilm Catalog will include a link to more information.

Microfilm Catalog Page (<https://eservices.archives.gov/orderonline>)

The screenshot shows the NARA Microfilm Catalog page. The header includes the NARA logo and navigation links. The main content area is titled "Microfilm" and contains a search section with a text input field and a "Search" button. Below the search section is an "Order Microfilm" section with a text input field and a "Submit" button. To the right of the search section is a "Most Requested" section featuring a thumbnail image and the text "Enumeration District Maps for the Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930". Further right is a "Check My Order Status" section with a text input field and a "Track It!" button. At the bottom right, there is a "FAQs" section with a list of questions and answers.

Example: Microfilm Catalog Page for NARA Microfilm Publication M234, *Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824–1880*

The screenshot shows the NARA Microfilm Catalog page for publication M234. The header includes the NARA logo and navigation links. The main content area is titled "Publication Summary" and contains the following information: Publication Number: M234A, Publication Title: Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-1881. (Rolls 1-200), Record Group Number: 75, Record Group Title: Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Number of Rolls/Fiche/Disks: 200, Form: Microfilm, 35mm, Color: Black & White, For Sale: No, For Rent: No. Below this information is a "Digital Availability" section with a link to "Available in the National Archives Catalog". To the right of the "Publication Summary" section is a "Publication Details" section with a link to "View Important Publication Details". Below the "Publication Details" section is a "Viewing Locations" section with a link to "Location Facility". The "Viewing Locations" section lists various NARA research facilities, including National Archives at Riverside, National Archives at San Francisco, NARA's Rocky Mountain Region (Denver, CO), National Archives Building - Archives I (Washington, DC), NARA's Southeast Region (Atlanta, GA), NARA's Great Lakes Region (Chicago, IL), NARA's Northeast Region (Boston, MA), National Archives at Kansas City, NARA's Northeast Region (New York City, NY), NARA's Southwest Region (Fort Worth, TX), and NARA's Pacific Alaska Region (Seattle, WA).

For a list of microfilm publications digitized by NARA's partners, see: <https://www.archives.gov/digitization/digitized-by-partners> (screenshot below). You can search this list by keyword (e.g., "Cherokee") or microfilm publication number (e.g., "M234"). The page is periodically updated to reflect newly digitized microfilm.

Digitization at the National Archives
Home > Digitization at the National Archives > Microfilm Publications and Original Records Digitized by Our Digitization Partners

Microfilm Publications and Original Records Digitized by Our Digitization Partners

Several of our digitization partners, including Ancestry.com, Fold3.com, and Familysearch.org, have digitized microfilm publications and original records from NARA's holdings and made them available on their websites. The list below includes microfilm publications and original records that have been either partially or wholly digitized by the partners. The list will be updated as additional materials are digitized.

Please note: Familysearch.org is a free site; however it does require registration to access all of the material on the site. Ancestry.com and Fold3.com are both subscription services that allow free searches of some or all index terms for each title. Free access to Ancestry.com and Fold3.com is available in all Research Rooms at National Archives locations, including those in our regional archives and Presidential libraries. All of the digitized records produced under partnership agreements will be made available through the National Archives Catalog. Original records that have been digitized for which there is no microfilm will have "Original records" listed in the microfilm publication number column. If you experience any issues with the information on this page, please report it to digitization@nara.gov.

Click the column headings to sort or download the [spreadsheet](#) to view on your computer.

Show 10 entries

Search

Series NAID(s)	Microfilm Publication Number	Microform Publication Title (and Link to Images in Catalog if Available)	Fold3.com Link	Ancestry.com Link	FamilySearch.org Link	Other Partner Link	Record Group	NARA Completion Status
201532	Original Records	Defendant Jacket Files for U.S. District Court, Western, Division of Arkansas, Fort Smith Division, 1866-1900		Ancestry.com			51	Not Started

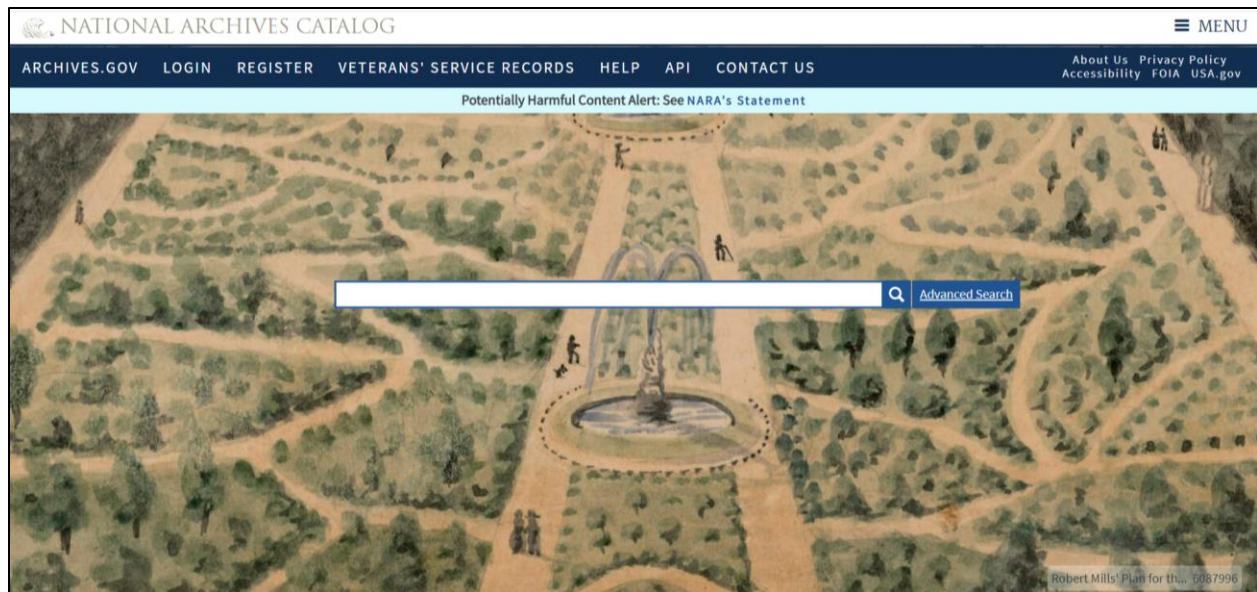
You can also use the Microfilm Catalog to order digital copies of microfilm publications. For more information, see "How to Order Digitized Microfilm": <https://www.archives.gov/research/order/microfilm-pubs>

How do I search for NARA records that are not available online?

The National Archives Catalog (<https://catalog.archives.gov>) includes archival descriptions of record groups and series in NARA's nationwide holdings, as well as millions of digitized records. The Catalog is free to access and can help you determine which records are in NARA's holdings, where records are physically housed, and whether you can access records online.

You can perform a basic keyword search of the Catalog, or you can use the Advanced Search option to narrow your results by level of description, type of materials, and more.

Basic Search Page (<https://catalog.archives.gov>)



Advanced Search Page (<https://catalog.archives.gov/advancedsearch>)

Most records at NARA are described at the series level. Series-level descriptions in the Catalog typically provide the following information (at a minimum):

- series title
- creating organization(s)
- record group in which the series is found
- dates the series was created or compiled
- arrangement
- restrictions on access or use (if applicable)
- identifier numbers (e.g., National Archives Identifier)
- records' extent (e.g., number of boxes)
- contact information for the NARA custodial unit

Example: “Cherokee Emigration Rolls, 1817–1838” (National Archives Identifier 595427)

Record Hierarchy

Record Group 75:

Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1793 - 1999

Series:

Cherokee Emigration Rolls , 1817 - 1838

Tag

1760942

aaron price

Annie B Youngblood

Atkinson

Barker

bird

Charlotte Copeland

cherokee

Cheyne

choctaw

clayton

countryman

davis

dixie bennett driggers

More ...

Enter new tags...

Add

Comment

Add a comment...

Login

Policy

Need Help?

Cherokee Emigration Rolls , 1817 - 1838

⚠ This Series contains 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.

Additional Information About this Series

National Archives Identifier:

595427

Creator(s):

War Department. Office of Indian Affairs. 1824-1849 (Most Recent)
War Department. Office of the Secretary. 1789-9/18/1947 (Predecessor)
War Department. Office of Indian Trade. (1806 - 1822) (Predecessor)

From:

Record Group 75: Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1793 - 1999

Details

Level of Description:

Series

Type(s) of Archival Materials:

Textual Records

The creator compiled or maintained the series between:

1817 - 1838

Includes:

79 file unit(s) described in the catalog
1 item(s) described in the catalog

Search within this series

General Note(s):

The names of officials who conducted the removals include Lt. Joseph W. Harris, Lt. Edward Deas, Captain Drane, Capt. John Page, Lt. Van Horne, B. F. Curry, J. A. Harris, John Huss, John S. Young along with Attending Physician Dr. Clark Lillybridge, and B. B. Cannon.

Arrangement:

Unarranged.

Access Restriction(s):

Unrestricted

Use Restriction(s):

Unrestricted

Subjects Represented in the Archival Material(s):

Lists (Document genres)
Cherokee Indians
Trail of Tears, 1838

Scope & Content

This series includes lists of Cherokees Indians involved in the Cherokee Removals from areas in Georgia and the Southeastern United States, to lands West of the Mississippi River, between 1817 and 1838. The records document Indians who were emigrating, Indians who intended to emigrate, and Indians who were capable of removing themselves or who were owed funds in reimbursement for removal.

Some of the lists are emigration and muster rolls that contain the names of emigrant Indians. Others contain evaluations of abandoned property and improvements, records of debts and balances of payments due, records of funds expended, and a journal of occurrences. The lists document Cherokees enrolled in Cass County, Georgia, or in other places for certain years. Other lists document political alignment within the Cherokee Nation such as those favoring the Treaty of 1835, or the Ridge Party. There is a petition requesting United States citizenship, and petitions from Cherokees requesting permission to remove themselves. Included on one roll are the names of Creek Indians gathered with the Cherokees in Tusculmbia, Alabama; another roll includes a list of interpreters.

Variant Control Numbers

ARC Identifier:

595427

Inventory Entry Number:

220

Entry 220 is located in Preliminary Inventory 163, "Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs" (RG 75).

Archived Copies

Copy 1:

Preservation-Reproduction-Reference

Extent (Size):

4 linear feet, 2 linear inches

Contact(s):

National Archives at Washington, DC - Textual Reference (RDT1)
National Archives Building
7th and Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20408
Phone: 202-357-5385
Fax: 202-357-5936
Email: Archives1reference@nara.gov

Count:

1 Legal Archives Box, Narrow
2 Suit Box, 24 inch Thin
1 Suit Box, 24 inch Medium
3 Legal Archives Box, Standard

Copy 1 Media Information:

Specific Media Type:

Bound Volume

Specific Media Type:

Paper

Comments on this Series (0)

See the following NARA web pages for more information about the National Archives Catalog:

- “Using the National Archives Catalog”:
<https://www.archives.gov/research/catalog/help/using>
- “National Archives Catalog Search Tips”:
<https://www.archives.gov/research/catalog/help/search-tips>
- “National Archives Catalog Guide for Genealogists and Family Historians”:
<https://www.archives.gov/research/genealogy/catalog-guide>
- “What’s New in the National Archives Catalog”:
<https://www.archives.gov/research/catalog/whats-new>

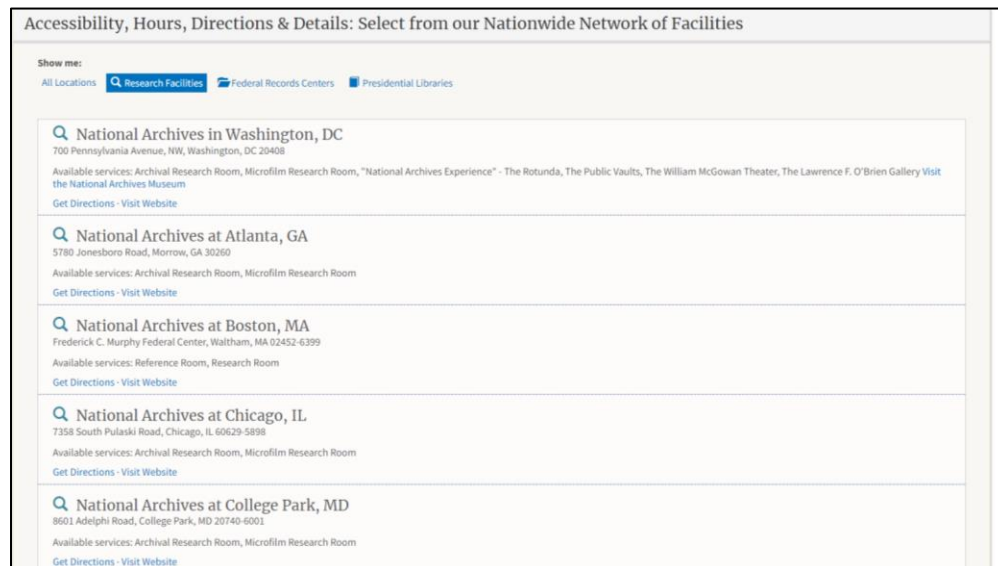
See “Online Research Tools and Aids” for other ways to search for NARA records online:

<https://www.archives.gov/research/start/online-tools.html>

Are all of NARA’s records related to Native Americans housed at one NARA research facility?

No. Records related to Native Americans are housed at multiple NARA research facilities around the country, depending on the federal agency or court that created the records. For a list of NARA research facilities and their contact information, see:

<https://www.archives.gov/locations#research-facilities> (partial screenshot below)



For example, textual records of the U.S. Supreme Court (Record Group 267) are only housed at the National Archives in Washington, DC. However, textual records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (Record Group 75) can be found at NARA’s DC building and at NARA’s field offices, depending on the BIA office that created the records. A guide to locating BIA records at NARA is available on NARA’s website: <https://www.archives.gov/research/native-americans/bia-guide>

NARA research facilities also house records in different formats. Although you can occasionally find photographs, maps, sound recordings, and other special media among the textual records

at NARA's DC building and field offices, most special media is housed with the appropriate branch at the National Archives in College Park, Maryland:

- Still Pictures Branch (<https://www.archives.gov/research/still-pictures>)
- Moving Image and Sound Branch (<https://www.archives.gov/research/motion-pictures>)
- Cartographic Branch (<https://www.archives.gov/research/cartographic>)
- Electronic Records Division (<https://www.archives.gov/research/electronic-records>)

The best way to locate the NARA research facility that houses particular records (i.e., the NARA custodial unit) is to find a description of those records in the National Archives Catalog. Each Catalog page includes contact information for the NARA custodial unit.

What do I need to know before I make an in-person visit to a NARA research facility?

Researchers must make an appointment to visit NARA research facilities. Researchers should email the relevant facility using the contact information on the facility's web page to request an appointment. Links to NARA research facility web pages are available here:

<https://www.archives.gov/locations#research-facilities>

On-site researchers must present a valid NARA researcher card each time they visit a NARA research facility. First-time researchers can obtain a free researcher card by going through a registration process. During registration, first-time researchers must present a government ID that includes a photograph (such as a driver's license or passport), complete a short form that provides their name and contact information, and review orientation materials that discuss the safe handling of archival records and explain facility policies and procedures.

While all NARA research facilities require researchers to obtain a researcher card, NARA facilities may have different hours and records retrieval policies. They may also have different parking and transportation options, on-site equipment for making copies, and proximity to restaurants and hotels. Double-check the relevant facility's web page for this information **before** you visit and contact the facility with any specific questions about visiting.

For more information about on-site research visits, see the following NARA web pages:

- "Regulations for NARA Researchers": <https://www.archives.gov/research/start/nara-regulations>
- "What's Allowed in Research Rooms": <https://www.archives.gov/research/start/whats-allowed.html>
- "Access to National Archives Facilities—Security Requirements": <https://www.archives.gov/locations/building-access-security-requirements>
- "Research at the National Archives by People Under Age 18": <https://www.archives.gov/research/start/access-by-minors.html>

I have additional questions. Who do I contact?

If you have a question related to a specific NARA research facility, or to records that you know are housed at a specific NARA research facility, you should contact that facility directly. Each NARA research facility has a facility web page that includes their contact information. For a list of NARA research facilities and links to their facility pages, see:

<https://www.archives.gov/locations#research-facilities>

If you have a general question about NARA records, please submit your inquiry via NARA's Contact Us page: <https://www.archives.gov/contact>

Revised September 2020