

Using the NEW National Archives Catalog



www.archives.gov/research/catalog

What is the National Archives Catalog?

The National Archives Catalog lets the staff and public search multiple National Archives resources at once. The catalog searches across archival descriptions, digitized and electronic records, authority records, and web pages from Archives.gov and the Presidential Libraries. The catalog also allows the public to participate in cataloging records by allowing tagging and transcription.

What does the catalog contain?

The catalog currently contains archival descriptions for 85% of the holdings of the National Archives, authority files, and over 2 million digitized copies of records.

Entering a Search

1. Enter one or more keywords in the **SEARCH BOX** and click .

If you enter more than one keyword, the catalog combines them with an 'AND' so that the search obtains results containing all the keywords. [Therefore, it is best not to search using more than a very few relevant keywords.](#)

Sorting Search Results

By default the search results are ordered by the most relevant first. Change the sort order by choosing an alternative from the drop down button at the top of the search results screen. Sort options include:

Relevance – [Just like most search engines ... the computer decides.](#)

Title – [Titles are created by individuals, so a title might not be exactly as you remember. Best to write it down or better yet ... write down the Title AND the National Archives Identifier.](#)

National Archives Identifier – [A VERY important number. It will always get you back to your record. Type it in to either the old or new Online Catalog and it will take you to your document and its description, citation information. EVERYTHING. When saving any NARA digital object it is BEST to include this number in the file name.](#)

Local Identifier – [A number important only for searching in person at a particular archives or ordering a copy.](#)

HMS Entry Number – [A number only relevant for NARA archivists.](#)

Refining a Search

The search refinements allow you to narrow your search results. Search refinements are provided on the left side of the search results page.

1. Enter a search.
2. On the results page, click on one of the search refinement options on the left side of the screen. *The search will be automatically re-run based on the new criteria added to the search.*
3. The selected refinement will be displayed at the top of the search results followed by an "X" (e.g., Refinements: Type of Archival Materials: Moving Imagesx). You may select additional refinements to further narrow your search results. Click on the red "X" following a refinement to remove the refinement and return to the original set of search results. [Do this rather than hitting the browsers BACK button. That will throw you clear out of the catalog.](#)

The refinement options are:

Data Source

Archival Descriptions. [May or may not contain digital copies.](#)

Archival Descriptions with Digital Objects. [Digital copies you can use in the classroom.](#)

Authority Records. [All the Federal agencies from which the items in your list originated.](#)

Archives.gov. [National Archives websites that elaborate upon, describe, display or use items matching your search terms.](#)

Level of Description

Record Group
Collection
Series
File Unit
Item

Type of Materials

Textual Records ([Usually paper documents](#))
Photographs and Other Graphic Materials
Sound Recordings
Moving Images
Maps and Charts
Artifacts
Architectural and Engineering Drawings

File Format

Image (JPG)
Portable Document File (PDF)
Image (GIF)
ASCII Text
Audio Visual File (WMV)
Application/zip
Microsoft Word Document
Audio Visual File (MP4)
MS Excel Spreadsheet
Image/jp2 image/jpeg
World Wide Web page

Location

[National Archives facility holding the original document.](#)

Date (year ranges)

Viewing Search Results

1. The catalog groups all search results together under the "All" tab and ranks them based on their relevancy to your search terms or parameters. Users may narrow what types of records they are looking for by clicking on one of the following tabs:

When you click on any one of the tabs below, the only way to get back to [ALL](#) is to use the search engine's [Back](#) button at the upper left top of your screen next to the URL of the website.

[Online](#) – All digitized copies of records, including all types below.

[Web](#) – Archives.gov web pages

[Docs](#) – Digitized textual records. Textual usually means “paper” or “written.” Sometimes these include photos, maps, and charts included in a textual file folder.

[Images](#) – Digitized photographic records

[Videos](#) – Digitized motion picture records

2. By default, 20 results are shown on the first page. To view more results click between pages. To change the number of results displayed per page, select the [Results per page](#) drop down arrow.

Printing Search Results

This is for printing the [list](#) of items you have found, which can be narrowed to the page you are viewing or up to 500 items.

1. Enter a search. Click a Title or URL to view a full result.
2. At the top right side of the full result display, click on the  icon to print.
3. Select either "Results on Page" or "Top 500 Results."
4. Click the Print button.
5. In the pop-up window, select either "Brief" or "Full" descriptions. Also select "Yes" or "No" for thumbnails.
6. Click the Print button.

Exporting Search Results

Once again for exporting the [list](#) of items you have found.

1. Enter a search.
2. At the top right side of the full result display, click "Export."
3. Select either "Results on Page" or "Top 500 Results."
4. Click the Export button.
5. In the pop-up window, select either "Brief" or "Full" descriptions. Also select "Yes" or "No" for thumbnails and which user contributions to include (i.e. Transcriptions, Tags).
6. Select the export format (CSV, JSON, PDF, TXT, or XML).
7. Click the Export button.

Bookmarking Search Results

The National Archives Catalog allows you to bookmark search results in the browser window. From any search result list or full result display:

1. In Mozilla Firefox, select Bookmark – Bookmark This Page.
2. In Internet Explorer, select Favorites – Add to Favorites.
3. In Chrome, select the star icon at the right side of the address bar to bookmark the page.

