

Aliens in the Army

Tracking Down WWI Naturalization and Pre-Immigration Information

Session: RT9806

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The Nature of Naturalization

- National Defense Act of 1916 had authorized the military to expand its ranks
 - Included American citizens and non-citizens
 - Exceptions were initially made for married men, but then rescinded
- Aliens serving in the U.S. military did not gain citizenship through service alone
- Naturalization of soldiers was performed under certain provisions of nationality law facilitated by the U.S. armed forces
- These provisions waived the Declaration of Intention requirement and waived or reduced the residency requirement

Naturalization Oaths and Paperwork

Naturalization of soldiers could be performed at either:

- a Federal, State or local court having jurisdiction over the soldier's military base
- a judge from any of those courts might have held “naturalization court” at the military base

Not uncommon for soldiers to file petitions and become naturalized the same day

- One copy of the petition should be on file in the court where the naturalization took place
- Another copy was filed with the Federal Immigration and Naturalization Service

Where Do I Start?

A record of camp attendance for each soldier can be found using:

- Service Record
- Reconstructed Service Record
- Unit Muster Roll
- Ancestry.com - Naturalizations of World War I Soldiers

Need help finding the name and location of a camp? *Roster of Attendants at Federal Military Training Camps, 1913-1916* on Internet Archive

<https://archive.org/details/cu31924030724888>

Search physical records by military camp name at the National Archives

Locate Military Camp Files online with the National Archives website

<https://catalog.archives.gov/>

- Advanced Search
- Record Group – 393 & Keyword Alien Papers
- Use Catalog Shortcut - <https://goo.gl/CuKkHU>

Military Petitions

The reason you haven't found your ancestor's naturalization papers might be due to naturalization taking place near a military base or a local court where he/she was stationed

FamilySearch Military Petitions - <https://goo.gl/vogEdv>

- Military Petitions, Atlanta, Georgia, 1918-1924
- Military Petitions, Charleston, South Carolina, 1918-1924
- Military Petitions, Columbia, South Carolina, 1918
- Military Petitions, (Missouri) 1918
- Military Petitions, Louisville, Kentucky, 1903-1906, 1918-1921

Alien Papers

- Correspondence
- Lists of Non-Citizens to be interviewed
- Interviews
- Summaries of Interviews
- Conscientious Objectors
- Enemy Aliens
- Suspicious Characters
- Recommendations to excuse non-citizens from military service
- Internment Recommendations

American Protective League Records & FBI Files

Alien soldiers found to be persons of interest to the American Protective League or the Federal Bureau of Investigation may be listed in online and archived collections. The records include reports, memorandums, and other documents relating to investigations of predominately non-citizen aliens, who were politically suspect during the war.

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- World War I – FBI Case Files
 - Bureau Section Files, 1909-21
 - Mexican Files, 1909-21
 - Miscellaneous Files, 1909-21
 - Old German Files, 1909-21

American Protective League Records in Archives

- New York City - Patriotic Service League Records, 1917
<https://goo.gl/Ut1LLW>
- Louisiana - American Protective League Records 1918
<https://goo.gl/jQ2v5Q>
- Cleveland, OH - The Royce Family Papers, 1852-1924 <https://goo.gl/H4pq2x>
- Seattle, WA - American Protective League, Minute Men Division, Precinct 265 records, 1918-1919. <https://goo.gl/NxBNVu>

- Wisconsin - Wisconsin Defense League General Correspondence, 1917-1918. <https://goo.gl/4DxN9p>

Newspapers

- Google News Archive <https://news.google.com/newspapers>
- Chronicling America <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>

Was your ancestor in the American Protective League?

Ancestry.com

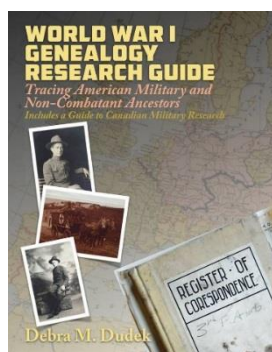
- U.S., American Protective League Members Record Cards and Registers of Members, 1917-1919
- American Protective League Correspondence, 1917-1919
- American Protective League Newsletters, 1918

The Web by Emerson Hough on Internet Archive - <https://goo.gl/ccLXgp>

Counter-Espionage Laws of the United States on Internet Archives - <https://goo.gl/LU8ZTM>

The League: the True Story of Average Americans on the Hunt for WWI Spies by Bill Mills on Amazon.com - <https://goo.gl/XA7w4L>

Need help researching your Great War ancestors?



World War I Genealogy Research Guide Tracing American Military and Non-Combatant Ancestors

Available in paperback and eBook on Amazon.com

<https://goo.gl/fH6XSV>

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