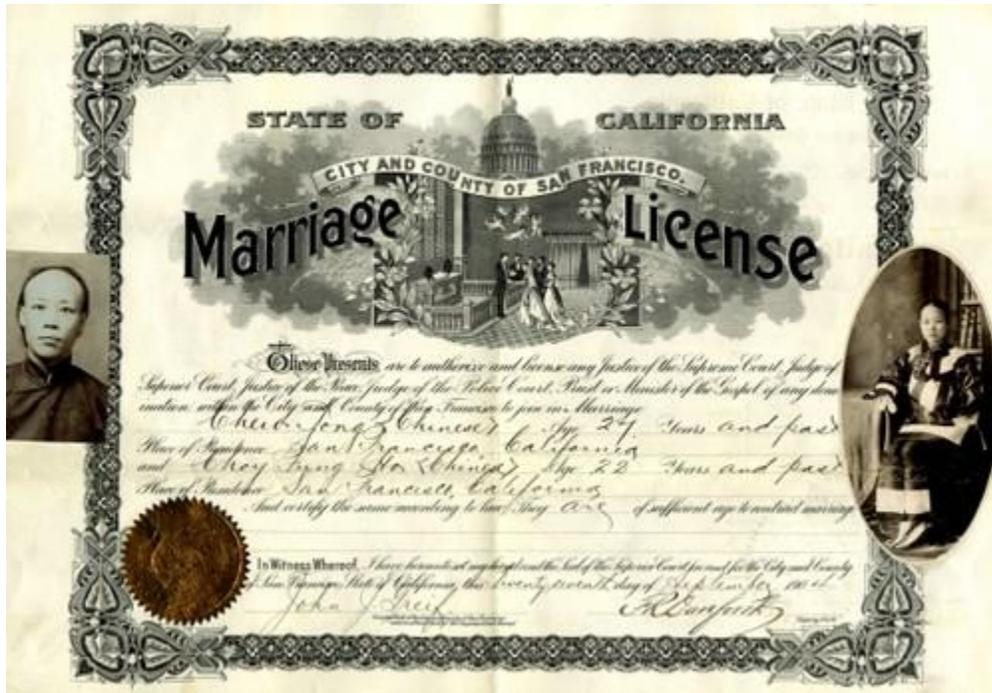


Seeking resolution for a sad chapter in Seattle's history — Chinese Exclusion Act case files

AUGUST 14, 2015 BY NORTHWEST ASIAN WEEKLY

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For Northwest Asian Weekly



Seattle National Archives volunteers started a blog on the Chinese Exclusion Act case files housed at the facility in Seattle, WA. The blog is located at <http://chineseexclusionfiles.com/>.

The purpose is to showcase the variety of information found in the Chinese Exclusion Act case files and to give guidance on how to locate information in the files. The focus is the files at the National Archives-Seattle from Record Group 85 pertaining to Seattle, Port Townsend, WA and Portland, OR. Although these files are located in Seattle, the subject of the file may have lived anywhere in the United States—Seattle, San Francisco, Buffalo or Pine Bluff, AK.

Volunteers have been working on indexing these files for many years.

It is a long, slow process. Recently, to speed things up, instead of indexing a wide variety of data fields, we decided just to record the box and file number and name of the

subject of the file. We have finished about 850 boxes of Seattle files (about 30 files in each box) and we have about 475 boxes to go. You do the math. After we have entered the minimal information, we will go back and add the other data fields.

This basic information will make it easier for people to find the file they are searching for. We now have a team of five volunteers working on the indexing.

The website contains a short history of the Act, National Archives contact information to get assistance in finding a case file, and links to resources. Blog entries are made once or twice a week and contain examples of information that may be found in the case files.

Here's a list of items on the blog so far: a 1904 San Francisco marriage license, witness affidavits with photos, information a Seattle Chinese interpreter, application for laborer's return certificate, pre-investigation form with photo, list of the applicant's family members in the United States and their file numbers, a Chinese woman attending nursing school in Illinois, the file of the father of one of our volunteers, certificate of residence, passport, 1918 draft registration card, family group photos, Chinese business cards, a 1904 San Francisco birth certificate, list of Caucasian witnesses, and certificate of identity. Many of these files contain photos; some over a period of years.

The Chinese Exclusion Act was in effect from 1882 until 1943.

Thousands and thousands of records were created during this time. It is unfortunate how these files came about but the information found in the files is priceless.

If you think someone in your family or a friend may have a case file, start the search for their case file. *(end)*

*Trish Hackett Nicola is a National Archives-Seattle Volunteer and Blog Editor
<http://chineseexclusionfiles.com>.*