

# Mining the National Archives

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National Archives and Records Administration website: <http://www.archives.gov/>

Great Lakes Region: <http://www.archives.gov/great-lakes/>

## Archival Basics

- Records – all recorded information made or received by an organization. Includes paper, photographs, movies, electronic media, microfilm, etc.
- Original Order – order in which records were created.
- Provenance – records from one creator or record keeping group should not be mixed with records from another group.

## Arrangement of Records at the National Archives

- Records are arranged by federal agency.
- Records from each agency or major part of an agency are arranged in a “record group” or RG.
- Within RG’s records are arranged by “record series”

## Keys to finding your ancestors:

- Where and how might your ancestor have interacted with the Federal government?
- Determine which agency or sub-agency they may have had contact with.
- Remember government agencies interact. A relationship with one agency may have actually involved several agencies.
- Ask the archivists!

## National Archives Publications:

- <http://www.archives.gov/publications/>
- Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives, Third Edition.  
# 100001 Hardcover \$39 ISBN 0-911333-00-2  
#200001 Softcover \$25 ISBN 0-911333-01-0
- Prologue  
Online: <http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/>  
Print: \$24 for one year (4 issues). Single copies are \$6 each.

## NARA Tools

- Finding Aids (online and print).
- ARC - online catalog of NARA's nationwide holdings. Just over 62% of records are described in ARC.
- AAD - online access to records in a small selection of historic databases. Approx. 475 of the nearly 200,000 data files are available.
- eVetRecs – order copies of Veteran's service records.
- Order Online! – use to get microfilm descriptions and locations.