

**Finding Aid to the
SAVE Our National Archives A-File Advocacy Records,
1998-2012**

Collection number: AAS ARC 2018/1

Ethnic Studies Library



University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, California

Finding Aid Written By: Nathaniel Moore

Date Completed: July 2018

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COLLECTION SUMMARY

Collection Title: SAVE Our National Archives A-File Advocacy Records

Date (inclusive): 1998 - 2012

Date (bulk): bulk 1998 - 2012

Collection Number: AAS ARC 2018/1

Creators/Collectors: Save Our National Archives (SONA) – Jeanie Low, Sue Lee, Lorraine Dong, Rosalyn Tonai, Grant Din, Jennie Lew, William Wong, and Christopher Chow.

Extent: 1.25 linear feet (3 boxes)

Repository: Ethnic Studies Library
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Abstract: SONA (Save OUR National Archives) is a broad consortium of non-profit organizations and individuals dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of public access and services provided by the REGIONAL offices and collections of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). After twelve years, SONA was successful in advocating that the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) agreed to schedule older Alien Case Files for transfer to NARA's historical collection for public research, June 2009. SONA's core team based in San Francisco consisted of representatives of the Chinese Historical Society of America (CHSA), Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation (AIISF), National Japanese American Historical Society (NJAHS), and the Asian American Studies Department at San Francisco State University.

Languages Represented: Collection materials are in English.

Physical Location: Asian American Studies Archives

INFORMATION FOR RESEARCHERS

Access: Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights: Materials in this collection may be protected by the U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.). In addition, the reproduction of some materials may be restricted by terms of University of California gift or purchase agreements, donor restrictions, privacy and publicity rights, licensing and trademarks. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by copyright beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owner. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user. All requests to reproduce, publish, quote from, or otherwise use collection materials must be submitted in writing to the curator, Ethnic Studies Library, University of California, Berkeley 94720-2360.

Preferred Citation: SAVE Our National Archives A-File Advocacy Records, AAS ARC 2018/1, Ethnic Studies Library University of California, Berkeley.

Alternate Forms Available: There are no alternate forms of this collection.

Additional Notes on Collection: Contains inventory of news clippings.

Related Collection(s): N/A

Indexing Terms:

Emigration and immigration -- History -- Archives

Immigrants -- United States -- History

Aliens -- United States -- History

Chinese -- United States -- Emigration and immigration -- History

Chinese Americans -- United States -- History

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Acquisition Information: The SAVE Our National Archives (SONA) A-File Advocacy Records was given to the Ethnic Library by Jeanie Low in 2013.

Accruals: No additions are expected.

System of Arrangement: Arranged to the folder level.

Processing Information: Processed by Nathaniel Moore

SAVE Our National Archives Organization History

SONA (Save OUR National Archives) was a broad consortium of non-profit organizations and individuals dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of public access and services provided by the REGIONAL offices and collections of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). Based in San Francisco with national alliances, SONA formed to protest the closure of the thirteen regional national archives; and that the Alien Case Files (A-Files) were designated as a preserved historical collection at NARA.

The A-Files, the federal government's immigration case files compiled since 1944, contain information for millions of immigrants from over 100 countries. The files include information such as photographs, correspondence, birth certificates, health records, interview transcripts, visas, application material and other information on all non-naturalized residents, both legal and illegal. They are of particular interest to the Chinese American community as a large number of A-Files supplement information collected during earlier Chinese Exclusion Act-era files (1882-1943).

After initially joining the national protest, SONA and others were able to pressure NARA to cancel its plans to close the regional archives. However it took twelve years before SONA was successful in advocating that the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) agree to schedule older Alien Case Files for transfer to NARA's historical collection for public research. The agreement to permanently preserve the files was signed in June 2009. In addition to securing preservation and public access, SONA advocated to name the Research Room at the National Archives in San Francisco be named in honor of Congressman Tom Lantos, a longtime supporter of SONA's efforts. SONA's core team based in San Francisco consisted of representatives of the Chinese Historical Society of America (CHSA), Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation (AIISF), National Japanese American Historical Society (NJAHS), and the Asian American Studies Department at San Francisco State University .

SCOPE AND CONTENT OF COLLECTION

SONA (Save OUR National Archives) was a broad consortium of non-profit organizations and individuals dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of public access and services provided by the REGIONAL offices and collections of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). Based in San Francisco with national alliances, SONA formed to protest the closure of the thirteen regional national archives; and that the Alien Case Files (A-Files) were designated as a preserved historical collection at NARA.

This collection contains comprehensive newspaper coverage of the twelve year campaign to preserve the Alien Case Files and make them accessible to the public. It also contains detailed email correspondence, petitions and letters to NARA, USCIS, various legislators and others regarding preservation and public access to the A-Files, resources and advocacy materials and VHS/DVD media items, as well as materials related to the naming of the Research Room at the National Archives in San Francisco.

SERIES DESCRIPTION

SERIES 1: [News clippings, Press Releases, 1998 – 2012]

Arrangement: Box 1 Folder 1

Scope and Content Note: News clippings and press releases focused on coverage of SONA and its efforts to preserve and increase public access to Alien Case Records.

SERIES 2: [Email Correspondence, 1998 - 2012]

Arrangement: Box 1 Folders 2 – 4 and Box 2 Folders 1- 12

Scope and Content Note: Email correspondence re: to organization, strategy, public education, alliance building, meeting notes, communication between SONA members and various legislative offices, media, NARA, USCIS, historians, genealogists, etc. concerning the Alien Case Files (1998-2012) and the proposed closing of NARA regional branches (1998-1999).

SERIES 3: [SONA Advocacy/Resource Materials, 1998 - 2010]

Arrangement: Box 2 Folders 12 – 20

Scope and Content Note: Contents include SONA's chronological advocacy summary & SONA organizations, 1998-2012; Resource materials (Code of Federal Regulations, A-File Survey) that helped to formulate the A-File Information Sheet; Copy of the ascension agreement between NARA and USCIS to schedule the older Alien Case Files to NARA for preservation; petitions and letters to NARA and USCIS from SONA, various individuals, legislators and organizations; materials re: program to celebrate the arrival of the A-Files.

SERIES 4: [Media, 1998 - 2012]

Arrangement: Box 3

Scope and Content Note: Contents include VHS and DVD items of public meetings held at NARA; a report on the National Archives and A-Files; images from the Alien Case Files Ceremony held at NARA SF in 2012.

CONTAINER LIST

SERIES 1: [News clippings, Press Releases, 1998 - 2012]

<u>Container</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Dates</u>
Box 1	1	News Clippings/Press Releases	

SERIES 2: [SONA Email Correspondence, 1998 - 2010]

Box 1	2	Email Correspondence	1998
Box 1	3	Email Correspondence	1999
Box 1	4	Email Correspondence	2000
Box 2	1	Email Correspondence	2001
Box 2	2	Email Correspondence	2002
Box 2	3	Email Correspondence	2003/04
Box 2	4	Email Correspondence	2005
Box 2	5	Email Correspondence	2006
Box 2	6	Email Correspondence	2007
Box 2	7	Email Correspondence	2008
Box 2	8	Email Correspondence	2009
Box 2	9	Email Correspondence	2010
Box 2	10	Email Correspondence	2011
Box 2	11	Email Correspondence	2012

SERIES 3: [SONA Advocacy/Resource Materials, 1998 - 2010]

<u>Container</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Dates</u>
Box 2	12	SONA Advocacy and History	
Box 2	13	Assorted Reference Materials	
Box 2	14	Correspondence/Petitions I	1998-2001
Box 2	15	Campaign Updates/Opposition to Transfer of A-Files	1999
Box 2	16	Correspondence/Petitions II/NARA Policy Change	2004-2005
Box 2	17	Materials related to the accessioning of the A-Files	2007-2008
Box 2	18	Conference Planning Notes/Materials/Programs	
Box 2	19	Tom Lantos Reading Room – National Archives (SF)	2010
Box 2	20	Arrival and Opening of the A-Files	2011-2012

SERIES 4: [SONA Media, 1998 - 2012]

Box 3	Public Meeting – NARA SF (DVD)	1998
Box 3	Public Meeting – NARA SF (VHS)	1998
Box 3	National Archives (Linda Yee, Reporter) (VHS)	1998
Box 3	Save Our National Archives CHSA (DVD+R)	2009
Box 3	Alien Case Files Ceremony – NARA SF (CD-R80)	2012