

HISTORIAN AS EDITOR: THE CORRESPONDENCE OF JAMES K. POLK

By Michael David Cohen

James K. Polk was a “pre-eminently guilty” man. At least, he was according to a letter he received in June 1847. The officers of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society censured Polk in that letter for owning slaves and for upholding the institution of slavery — “the acme of human criminality.” A letter of that July, however, offered a more favorable assessment of the president. Three years earlier, Polk had promised a one-term presidency, but Benjamin Boston of Indiana now urged him to run for a second term. “[T]he Country,” Boston asserted, “Canot Do Without your Services four years Longer.” These letters typified Americans’ polarized views of the nation’s eleventh chief executive. The authors did not know Polk well. The abolitionists were too distant from him politically to be his intimates. Boston claimed to have met him, but many years earlier.

I like to think that I know Polk better. Granted, I have never met the man. He died in 1849. But I do closely read his letters. That is a large part of my job as a historian: I am the assistant editor of the Correspondence of James K. Polk, a project supported by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission and based at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Few can know an individual better than a documentary editor surveying the course of his/her life. Most acquaintances only have extensive familiarity with one or two facets of a person. Polk’s business managers and plantation

overseers, for example, knew his financial life well but had little intimacy with his dealings in matters of state. His cabinet officers and political allies, by contrast, stayed in touch with him on state matters but knew little of his personal finances or family life. His closest friends knew something about most facets of Polk, but only his wife, Sarah Childress Polk, knew all of him well.

The staff of the Polk Correspondence, however, studies it all. Editor/Director Tom Chaffin and I read every known extant letter written by or to Polk. To make sense of these letters, we also pore over his diary, newspaper accounts, and other contemporary documents. We thus examine each day of the president’s life and each part of that day: personal, political, and professional.

Documentary editors occupy a space between archivists and most other historians. Archivists gather primary documents sharing a certain subject matter or author. Historians, in turn, analyze those documents to learn about the past. Editors do some of both in order to make documents accessible to those who rely on them for research or study. We at the Polk Correspondence first locate, to the extent possible, all letters written by or to Polk. From that cache, we then publish annotated transcriptions of selected letters and summaries of all the others. Prior editors published eleven volumes of correspondence; Dr. Chaffin and I are at

See POLK continued on page 3

INSIDE

Historian as Editor, <i>Michael David Cohen</i>	1
President’s Message, <i>Matt Wasniewski</i>	2
The Future of Digital Preservation, <i>Trevor Owens</i>	4
NCA History Program: 10th Anniversary, <i>Sara Amy Leach</i>	6
Oral History in the U.S. House, <i>Albin J. Kowalewski</i>	8

First Legislative Archives Fellowship	10
From the Archives, <i>Charles Downs</i>	11
Federal History Office Profile, <i>SSA, Larry DeWitt</i>	12
Making History	14
Federalist Calendar	16



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Matt Wasniewski

SHFG is a unique organization with unique ambitions. It doesn't have an executive director or even a part time staff, but it does have — and I've always been impressed by this — an extraordinary spirit and history of volunteerism. As a result, the Society provides many of the benefits the big history organizations boast — print and online publications, an annual conference, an annual dinner and guest lecture, and other special events — without an expensive administrative structure. The executive council, for example, recently approved a measure to print the annual *Federal History* journal — an additional benefit to the membership and an added recruiting tool for the Society. Plans are afoot to renew the *Pearls of Wisdom* series, and the council is also considering instituting a skills workshop for junior-level public history staff and graduate students interested in public history. We do all of this through the voluntary efforts of a group of dedicated individuals and the support of our membership.

As designed in 2002, the Society's by-laws have helped foster this spirit of volunteerism. Over the last decade, however, rapid advancements in technology have changed the way we live and work — and SHFG is no exception. The Society has been forced to alter how it administers daily business, communicates with members, and reaches different audiences. It's become increasingly clear that revisiting the by-laws is a necessary step if we want the Society to grow and keep pace with the federal history community.

This past summer, a special committee created by the Executive Council and composed of three individuals (former president Mike Reis, publications director Ben

Guterman, and myself), met and corresponded to study possible revisions to the by-laws. Recently, our committee presented the council with a draft of proposed updates, and the council is currently evaluating these recommendations. It's my hope that we will be able to circulate the draft changes to the general membership later this year for consideration. We plan to seek approval at the next general business meeting (during the spring 2012 annual conference), and shortly thereafter hold a formal ballot with the full membership.

The proposed changes fall into three broad categories — all of which, we feel, will promote the Society's growth and enhance its activities:

Foster greater participation and volunteerism: The revised by-laws reorganize the responsibilities of several existing committees and create several new committees to handle the administrative workload. One particularly notable suggestion is the creation of two additional, non *ex-officio* elected council spots. All of these proposed changes are intended to create new opportunities for member participation, and should develop a reservoir of talent that can provide the necessary continuity and experience to lead the organization. While the Society is on excellent financial footing, we're not an organization that can afford to pay staff nor do we anticipate being able to do so in the foreseeable future. This means we will continue to depend on the volunteerism of our membership.

Adjust to the growing importance of the Web: In 2000, the Society launched its first Web site. The latest version of the site — which went live about a year ago — is testament to our increasingly electronic world. Most of the Society's communication is now done via the E-Bulletin, the *Federal History* journal, Federal History News, an online calendar, and electronic registration for conferences and events. A number of the revisions seek to streamline how we manage content, develop new features, and administer the Society's expanded online presence.

Reach a wider, more diverse audience: It's often been said in my time on the Executive Council that the Society

THE FEDERALIST (ISSN 0736-8151)

Newsletter of the Society for History in the Federal Government

Published Quarterly

The Society is a national professional organization open to all who are interested in federal history programs. Annual membership fee is \$40, \$20 students, and includes a subscription to *The Federalist* and other periodic publications. Contributors are encouraged to submit articles, news listings, and photographs to the editors.

Issues one-year-old and older (Second Series) are available, along with an index to articles, on the Society's web site at www.shfg.org.

Opinions expressed in articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions of *The Federalist*, the SHFG, or the agencies or organizations where the authors are employed.

Society for History in the Federal Government
P.O. Box 14139, Benjamin Franklin Station
Washington, DC 20044

SHFG Officers

President Matthew Wasniewski
matthew.wasniewski@mail.house.gov
Vice President Mark Rothenberg
mrothenb@nsf.gov
Secretary/Membership Sejal Patel
sejal.patel@nih.gov
Treasurer David Turk
fdc5@aol.com
Executive Carl Ashley
Council Jason Gart
Lu Ann Jones
Richa Wilson

THE FEDERALIST

Editors Albin J. Kowalewski
albin.kowalewski@mail.house.gov
John Lonquest
lonquestj@usace.army.mil
John W. Roberts
john_w_roberts@nps.gov
Benjamin Guterman
benjamin.guterman@nara.gov
Associate Editors Franklin Noll
franklin.noll@bep.treas.gov
Joan Zenzen
joanz10@verizon.net
Archivist/Photographer ... Charles Downs
chasdowns@verizon.net

Web Site: www.shfg.org

Printed by Welsh Printing Corp.
Falls Church, VA

needs to be more innovative in attracting new members: reaching graduate students and early-career federal historians; engaging the large but dispersed federal history community residing outside the Beltway; and attracting our academic cousins with like-minded research interests. I believe the proposed by-law changes will help provide the structure and forward-looking financial planning necessary to achieve such goals.

No set of by-laws can anticipate every challenge or

situation. But the right set will provide a necessary toolkit so that the Society's leadership can best navigate a future that holds great promise.

It's in this spirit that I invite you to take part in the process as it unfolds over the next several months. Please take the opportunity to review the revisions that will be forwarded by the Executive Council. As with all the Society's undertakings, this process will be successful only with the widest possible input and support of our membership.

POLK continued from page 1

work on volume 12, which will cover January to July 1847. Because of our work, scholars and students can read Polk's correspondence without traveling to archives and private collections. They also are spared the time-consuming and arduous tasks of deciphering the handwriting in frail original documents and microfilm, and of researching the individuals and events mentioned in the letters. We do that work for them.

Polk makes an excellent subject for a documentary-editing project. First, he was an important president. During his single term in the White House, Polk settled the boundary between the Oregon Territory and Canada, led a war against Mexico, and expanded the country's area by approximately one-third. Second, before and during his presidency, Polk corresponded with thousands of individuals. He wrote to family members, politicians, military officers, and business associates — a white, mostly male, and rather elite group. But he received letters from a much larger swath of humanity. Writers included nonelite white men such as Benjamin Boston as well as white women and a few African Americans. In June 1847, for example, Polk received letters from Lowell, Mass., factory worker Janett Richards and Nashville-born free black man A. Lefognain. Richards invited Polk to visit Lowell; Lefognain asked Polk to hire him as a servant because he feared being sold into slavery.

Finally, Polk makes a good subject because he *kept* most of his letters. He even copied outgoing letters by hand or with a letter press. Because he died three months after leaving the presidency, any plans he may have had to cull the letters went unfulfilled. As a result, we who gather, transcribe, and annotate his correspondence can present a thorough documentary account of a major historical figure that also offers insights into the issues and events in which he or his correspondents were involved.

Our work begins with finding the letters. Most are held by the Library of Congress, which bought a large collection from Polk's niece in 1903 and has added to it since. But the remaining letters are scattered among many libraries, archives, and private collections. Prior editors conducted thorough searches for these in past decades. Yet Dr.

Chaffin and I continue to turn up new letters. For example, we recently discovered a previously unknown letter of April 1847 by Polk about appointing an expert in the treatment of yellow fever to accompany the army in Mexico.

Next, we select letters to publish. Of nearly one thousand from January to July 1847, we can publish only about 350. We choose the most important, illuminating, or interesting ones. Nearly all the letters by Polk make it in. Of those he received, many get selected because they dealt with major political topics; the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society's letter falls in this category. Other published letters discussed his business or family affairs, came from particularly important people — such as inventor Charles Goodyear, who sent Polk shoes made of vulcanized rubber, and Jefferson Davis, future president of the Confederacy — or conveyed the concerns and political opinions of regular Americans.

After selection comes transcription — and a host of new challenges. The task is far more than simple data entry. Some of Polk's correspondents, even those with extensive educations and high government positions, had horrendous handwriting. Polk's own cursive was elegant, but his technology was not. The letter-press copies of his outgoing letters often are faint, blurred, or both; they also bled onto other sheets, forcing us to distinguish among multiple superimposed texts. Nonstandard punctuation, capitalization, and spelling force us to walk a narrow line between reproducing the texts exactly and forestalling confusion by our readers. Generally we retain the original content as closely as possible, but in a few cases — such as adding periods and capital letters to distinguish sentences — we lightly edit for clarity.

Finally, we annotate. People, institutions, and events that may have been familiar in 1847 are decidedly less so today. We search primary and secondary sources to identify Polk's correspondents and all individuals, organizations, publications, events, and issues mentioned in the published letters. Our notes give readers the essential knowledge that the letters' authors assumed. They also, where necessary, reveal the outcomes of events the authors discussed. Historians and students thus can quickly and easily draw on the letters' rich content.

The results of our labors are tangible. Many authors have drawn on the first eleven volumes of the *Correspondence of James K. Polk* for their books and articles. We look forward to seeing what scholarship emerges from the volumes to come. Because we select letters covering a variety of topics — from war to elections to slavery to science — and annotate them to maximize accessibility, our volumes are of value to scholars with diverse interests in nineteenth-century American history. I will never meet James K. Polk, but his letters enable me — and the readers

of the *Correspondence* — to get to know him and his era.

Michael David Cohen is assistant research professor of history and assistant editor of the Correspondence of James K. Polk at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. He thanks Tom Chaffin for helpful comments on this article. All letters mentioned herein will appear in volume 12 of the Correspondence of James K. Polk, forthcoming from the University of Tennessee Press.

THE FUTURE OF PRESERVING THE PAST: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE NATIONAL DIGITAL INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND PRESERVATION PROGRAM

By Trevor Owens

Digital technologies are touching almost every part of our lives. As a result, the historical record is rapidly changing from a set of analog materials (books, letters, manuscripts) to their born-digital counterparts (e-mail, PDFs, text documents, and other kinds of digital objects). This transition is happening so quickly that it puts the continuity of the historical record at risk. Over the last 11 years, the Library of Congress' National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program (NDIIPP) has worked with a network of partners around the country to ensure that tools, services, partnerships, and practices are developed and implemented to enable the preservation of important digital information.

In this article I provide a bit of background on the NDIIPP program and introduce three current initiatives and resources that might be of interest to the federal history community. These include: first, the National Digital Stewardship Alliance; second, a free software platform for displaying digital cultural heritage collections available at Viewshare.org; and third, a range of communications initiatives including our digital preservation blog.

THE NATIONAL DIGITAL INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND PRESERVATION PROGRAM

In December 2000, Congress appropriated \$100 million for the National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program, to be led by the Library of Congress. The legislation called for the Library to work with federal agencies and with a variety of additional stakeholders to develop a national approach to digital preservation: to collect, preserve, and make available significant digital content — especially information that is created only in digital form — for current and future generations.

NDIIPP is based on an understanding that digital

stewardship on a national scale depends on public and private initiatives working together. Currently, more than 200 partner organizations across 45 states make up our national network. Under the Library's direction, NDIIPP has worked with its partners to connect different platforms for storage and verification, for data and metadata management, and for access to and discovery of preserved digital materials.

This national network is currently preserving a substantial amount of our digital cultural heritage, including geo-spatial information, Web sites, audio visual productions, images and text, and materials related to critical public policy issues.

THE NATIONAL DIGITAL STEWARDSHIP ALLIANCE

Last year, in an effort to continue to broaden our network of partners, NDIIPP launched the National Digital Stewardship Alliance (NDSA), a membership organization for institutions committed to preserving the nation's digital information. The NDSA membership represents the diversity of the stakeholders in digital preservation. This includes universities, professional societies, commercial businesses, professional associations, government agencies, libraries, archives, museums, and other organizations with an interest in keeping digital information accessible.

Members of the NDSA collaborate to preserve access to our national digital heritage by:

- broadening access to our nation's expanding digital resources
- developing and coordinating sustainable infrastructures for the preservation of digital content
- creating and advocating professional standards for the management and stewardship of the country's digital records and objects
- facilitating cooperation between government agencies,

educational institutions, non-profit organizations, and commercial entities

- raising public awareness of the enduring value of digital resources and the need for active stewardship of these national resources.

The NDSA welcomes participation from organizations that have a demonstrated commitment to digital preservation and share the NDSA's stated values. Funds are not required and there are no fees or dues for membership. Members contribute through in-kind service to the NDSA by participating in one or more working group (Content, Standards and Best Practices, Infrastructure, Innovation, and Outreach and Education). You can learn more about the NDSA and how your organization or department can join the alliance on the NDSA's Web site, *digitalpreservation.gov/ndsa*.

VIEWSHARE.ORG, CREATING INTERFACES TO DIGITAL CULTURAL HERITAGE COLLECTIONS

A key part of demonstrating the importance of preservation work involves highlighting the value of the digital material being preserved. To that end, we have launched Viewshare.org, a free Web site that lets archivists, librarians, scholars, and curators create easy-to-use Web interfaces (maps, timelines, facets, and tag clouds) for their digital collections.

With Viewshare, users can turn raw data into creative applications. The program has two primary functions. First, it allows users to quickly generate interfaces to better understand their material. Seeing the content of a collection displayed on a map, a timeline, or a chart provides a visual key to possibly hidden patterns and trends. Second, the interfaces created with Viewshare — which can be embedded in any Web site — become powerful ways to demonstrate the value of particular collections.

The program works as follows: after ingesting information from spreadsheets, metadata object description schema (MODS) records, and a range of other formats, Viewshare then allows the user to augment that data. It can generate points of latitude and longitude using place names, derive standardized dates, and break apart those figures into lists

based on simple patterns. From there it allows users to plot their data on maps, timelines, and interactive navigation features. Finally, the platform allows users to publish and embed their product online. Each stage in this process is uniquely tailored to the challenges and needs of digital preservation.

If you think Viewshare.org might be useful to your organization, we encourage you to take a minute to visit the site, where you can request a free account. Viewshare is powered by the free and open source Recollection platform.

DIGITALPRESERVATION.GOV AND “THE SIGNAL” DIGITAL PRESERVATION BLOG

One of the most important roles NDIIPP serves is as a clearinghouse for information about digital preservation. The program's website (*digitalpreservation.gov*) includes extensive information about digital preservation projects and resources. This includes everything from technical information for experts and professionals to basic guidance about what the general public can do to help ensure that their digital information lasts.

Recently, the program launched “The Signal,” a digital preservation blog (*blogs.loc.gov/digitalpreservation*). “The Signal” is meant to convey two meanings. The name sounds a bit like a town newspaper, one that has timely information that people can put to practical use. That is our basic intent — to discuss digital stewardship in a way that is informative and appealing. “Signal” is also a technological term, meaning the transmission and use of data. Technology is moving fast, and we cover exciting new developments that have an impact on digital preservation and access.

Our work at NDIIPP is focused on ensuring long-term access to important digital information and we are thrilled to collaborate with others interested in the issue. I would encourage everyone in the federal history community to visit our website for further information.

Trevor Owens is a Digital Archivist for the Library of Congress in Washington, DC.

JOIN H-FED HIST

Online at

<http://www.h-net.org/-fedhist/>

Academic announcements
Book reviews • Job guide
Discussion logs

SHFG DIRECTORY

SHFG is compiling the Directory of Federal Historical Programs online.

Visit *<http://shfg.org/shfg/publications/directory-of-history-offices/>* to complete and submit a directory form. Send form to *Kate_Scott@sec.senate.gov*

NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION HISTORY PROGRAM: 10TH ANNIVERSARY

By Sara Amy Leach

In February 2011, the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) History Program, an agency within the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), celebrated its ten-year anniversary. Staffed by three interdisciplinary historians, the NCA History Program has achieved some significant benchmarks over the last few years. We've identified hundreds of historic memorials, documented national cemeteries, and organized archival materials. The NCA itself has grown from 121 to 131 national cemeteries, encompassing 20,000 acres containing 3.1 million occupied gravesites. New cemeteries are being planned as well. Last year alone, the NCA interred nearly 112,000 veterans and family members, and provided an additional 351,000 headstones or markers for sites around the world; 803,675 Presidential Memorial Certificates were also issued.

The NCA is the youngest of the three administrations in DVA — the second-largest federal department with 314,000 employees — and it represents less than one percent of the department's financial and human resources. Created to maintain the agency's administrative record (which began in 1973), the NCA History Program has grown to encompass "history and historic preservation," advocating for the protection and reuse of historic cemetery resources.

This year also marks the beginning of the sesquicentennial of the Civil War, and the NCA History Program has focused on the cultural landscapes, buildings, and structures under our purview which date to the conflict — including 75 national cemeteries and 33 related cemetery lots. In partnership with the National Park Service (NPS), we've undertaken several related documentation and outreach projects. For example, this October a new Discover Our Shared Heritage Travel Itinerary developed by the NPS Heritage Education Services and NCA/DVA titled "Civil War-Era National Cemeteries: Honoring Those Who Served" debuted on the Internet (http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/national_cemeteries/introduction.html). The itinerary features maps, site plans, current

and historic photos, and a history of the national cemetery system as it relates to the Civil War. Another sesquicentennial project is in the planning stages as well: the production and installation of 200 interpretive wayside panels in NCA-owned national and Confederate cemeteries. Many of these properties have been unstaffed for years, and this is the first effort to offer educational information at the sites.

Although NCA has many unique and beautiful monuments associated with the Civil War and subsequent conflicts, one stands out as a remarkable example of historic preservation in practice. The 32nd Indiana Infantry Monument (also called the Bloedner Monument, after its creator) is the oldest known extant Civil War memorial. It was

carved in 1862 and honors 13 German-born Union soldiers who died in the Battle of Rowlett's Station in December 1861. The failing limestone monument was removed from Cave Hill National Cemetery (Louisville, Ky.) in 2008 for stabilization; it was subsequently loaned to the nearby Frazier History Museum in Louisville. In December 2011, NCA will dedicate a replacement monument at the national cemetery. The new monument was hand carved by the John Stevens Shop of Rhode Island and includes both the original German inscription and an English translation. The conservation and replacement of the Bloedner Monument was coordinated for NCA by Heritage Preservation Inc.

In addition to the Bloedner monument, 80 other monuments and memorials underwent conservation over the last two years. These resources were identified during an inventory project that began in 2002 and used volunteers to complete survey forms and photograph the monuments. The inventory, now approaching 1,000 objects, was assessed in FY08 to prioritize approximately 150 of the oldest and most significant monuments long overdue for professional care. With funding provided by the DVA Office of Historic Preservation, a contractor produced condition assessments. Though funds for immediate



Cleaning the POW Confederate Dead Monument, built by the U.S. government in 1910, at Finn's Point National Cemetery in New Jersey. Contractor was Worcester Eisenbrandt Inc. Courtesy of the author.

conservation were unforeseen, the reports documenting physical deficiencies and cost estimates for rehabilitation were underway just as the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009 funding presented itself in March 2010. NCA received a total of \$50 million: over \$4 million was made available to conserve 49 historic monuments mainly dating from the 1820s to 1920; repairs to another 31 historic monuments were funded the same year. To protect this investment by NCA, cemetery staff will be provided with hands-on training and maintenance guides in the coming months. This was both a popular initiative and a milestone for NCA's stewardship of its historic assets — and as funding is available in the future, it will continue.

In addition to the History Program's work to protect the built environment, preservation of the original burial ledgers — the single-most important archival record associated with the national cemeteries — has been another ongoing project that will shed light on Civil War resources. Many of the oversized leather-bound books contain hand-written entries, and were transferred to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) decades ago. In recent years, however, more than 50 ledgers from NCA cemeteries surfaced in cemetery offices around the country. In an effort to secure these artifacts while still making them available within NCA, the History Program contracted for high-resolution digitization of the ledgers by a vendor qualified to handle such fragile records. The ledgers were then transferred to NARA and can be found as part of Record Group 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General. The digital files (in both TIFF and PDF formats) are maintained by the History Program. NCA is in the process of partnering with Ancestry.com to index the names in the digitized ledgers and make this information available via the Internet to key VA and NPS offices. This agreement is modeled after a partnership between Ancestry.com and NARA to reproduce records in the latter's collections. Ancestry.com is also planning to digitize and index burial ledgers previously held by NARA.

Another preservation priority for the History Program is the historic headstones in NCA national cemeteries and soldiers lots. Numerous inquiries are regularly directed to the NCA History Program by regional and cemetery offices, VA offices, federal agencies, Congress, and the public. Most of the requests are associated with interments for Civil War service, and some of these requests serve to illustrate practices that NCA chose to revise. For example, until



Cleaning the Tennessee Union Soldiers Monument in Knoxville, Tenn., which had been rebuilt in 1906. Contractor was Conservation Solutions Inc. Courtesy of the author.

2006 NCA permitted the “correction” or addition of inscription information on historic headstones (those 50 years or older). This practice, however, resulted in the loss of historic stones and valuable information. In an effort to better preserve the integrity of historic cemetery landscapes, new policies initiated by the History Program have limited changes to headstones and markers. We no longer allow corrections, but we will retain whatever new information we receive. All information will then be corrected if the

headstone must be replaced when it becomes illegible, or is otherwise no longer serviceable. As historic headstones age and fail naturally, NCA has also introduced a more historically accurate recessed-shield design for replacing Civil War and Spanish-American War veteran headstones. Another replica product is planned for the graves of Confederate soldiers who are buried in federally-owned cemeteries.

The inclusion of NCA historians in the process of reviewing requests for new or replacement pre-World War I headstones has improved determinations of eligibility for atypical service such as state militia, the accuracy of content and historic abbreviations, and reduced incidences of inadvertently providing a second headstone to graves already marked.

This year historic headstones benefited further with the conclusion of a multi-year scientific evaluation of marble cleaners by the NPS's National Center for Preservation Technology and Training. NCA immediately accepted the “Best Practices” recommendation for a new product, D/2 Biological Solution; other agencies managing national cemeteries will likely also use the findings. (The results are available at <http://ncptt.nps.gov/2011/best-practice-recommendations-for-cleaning-government-issued-marble-headstones/>.)

The History Program has many goals yet to accomplish including new listings on the National Register of Historic Places, expanding the oral history collection, and realizing thematic history studies. But for the next three years commemorating NCA's Civil War heritage will be in the forefront.

For more information about NCA History Program projects, please visit: http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/hist_hist-home.asp

Sara Amy Leach is the Senior Historian at the National Cemetery Administration's History Program, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: ORAL HISTORY AND ELECTRONIC TECHNOLOGY

By Albin J. Kowalewski

In November 2009, the Office of History and Preservation (now the Office of the Historian), U.S. House of Representatives, launched a Web site presenting the oral histories of longtime officers, path-breaking staffers, and others intimate with America's foremost legislative body (*oralhistory.clerk.house.gov*). Though their stories are rarely heard, it is from the staff's perspective that the House emerges not as a collection of 441 elected officials, but as an institution grounded in the combined — though certainly not unified — agency of a very diverse workforce. The memories of that workforce are opening new doors to how scholars and the public understand the House and America's evolving political culture.

For readers unfamiliar with the House's inner workings, the oral histories make for provocative reading. For political scientists and historians, the new source material should and does ask as many questions as it answers. Like any good record collection, the interviews challenge both the conventional history they inform and the historians who write it. Readers are left questioning the relationship between the House, its history, and the American people. And like any good medium, the oral history Web site has become another means by which our audience accesses and understands the individuals, events, and institutions which lived, happened, and existed in the past. This brief essay, then, explores electronic technology's ability to influence the making, presentation, and consumption of House history, and how that process has mimicked the larger push for openness and accountability in government over the last 40 years.

What emerges is a similar process in both the history of the House and the writing of that history: greater complexity in light of greater accessibility. Advocates in the 1970s intended what was then new technology — namely electric voting and television — to expose and simplify House procedure. But such advancements, it can be argued, complicated matters, creating a thornier and more partisan, but ultimately a more transparent institution. The Historian's oral history program is doing something similar: it is making the House more accessible for people living beyond the Beltway. And by focusing on staff and employees from all walks of life, the oral history program is also helping to democratize the history of the House of Representatives, upsetting the misconception that the narrative arc of the House is one of dead white men. As a result, the history and historiography of the House are becoming more diverse and more dimensional than once imagined.

When placed within the broader context of the House of Representatives, the 1970s may seem recent, but few periods in modern memory have redefined its culture more than that decade. Alongside the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 and the fallout from Watergate, the first electronic vote in 1973 and the first broadcasted floor proceedings in 1979 stand out as particularly influential developments. In light of the widespread betrayal of public trust during and after the Watergate scandal, proponents intended such technology to keep legislative processes simple and honest. These developments revolutionized how Members — especially the rank and file — conducted daily business and communicated with their constituents, and how their constituents communicated with them.

As the Historian's recent oral histories demonstrate, electronic voting and television were contentious issues during their time. In many respects, they created unintended consequences which continue to alter the nation's political landscape. While all of our interviewees worked in different capacities, nearly all suggest that staffers were the driving force behind this push to modernize the House. Although they did not write the rules, staffers nevertheless assumed responsibility for mastering new procedures and adapting older methods to new practice, and vice versa.

Most interviewees note how quickly electronic technology redefined House procedure. In the case of electronic voting, what many hoped would simplify House operations, resulted (somewhat ironically) in the adoption of more rules. Roll call votes which once took 30 minutes with perhaps six votes a day, now lasted half that time. Energy could now be spent on the exchange of ideas — or used to hold more votes. The Speaker assumed greater power to regulate the voting schedule, while requiring a larger quorum in the Committee of the Whole. In an oral history with the Historian's Office, Cokie Roberts (daughter of two Members and a former congressional reporter) notes how quickly the Membership adapted: "I remember writing a story...about one day the electronic voting system broke down, and they did have to call the roll, and nobody knew how to call it, nobody knew how to answer it." "It was," she said, "very funny."

The culture of the House — and of American politics generally — continued to evolve with the first televised proceedings. As Speaker during the late 1970s, Tip O'Neill of Massachusetts oversaw the installation of television cameras in the House Chamber. He did so reluctantly, however, predicting that television would encourage posturing,

partisanship, and embarrassing exposure. Others, however, countered with the argument that such broadcasts promised transparency. Eventually, O'Neill relented to the development of a Speaker-controlled television system that debuted in March 1979.

Not long after the House's first broadcast, a congressional delegation including O'Neill and Donald K. Anderson (then Majority floor manager and future House Clerk, and one of our interviewees) traveled to the South Pacific to discuss a longstanding defense treaty with foreign officials. At one point during a series of meetings, the Australian Prime Minister, according to Anderson's oral history, switched topics and asked O'Neill for tips on televising his own country's parliament. As Anderson remembered it, O'Neill pointed at his host and said, "Mr. Prime Minister, take my good advice. Don't do it. It will be the biggest goddamned mistake you'll ever make." With hindsight, though, O'Neill came to appreciate his decision to televise the House's proceedings. In his memoir written in 1987, he went so far as to say that allowing television cameras in the House Chamber was "one of the best decisions I ever made."

Ultimately, the forerunners of modern technology in the House — from electronic voting to television — erected a framework on which to drape the Internet and all its modern manifestations. Like its predecessors, the Internet is making the House of Representatives more accessible for the electorate. It is also, however, complicating the House's culture, forcing Members and staff to master new procedures and new etiquette without abandoning House traditions rooted in basic civic negotiations.

So, too, is the Historian's oral history Web site. If the Web site and these interviews tell us anything, it is that staffers and employees were crucial in helping the House reflect the wider society. The House has always been the people's branch, and by harnessing the power of electronic media first made popular in the form of television, we at the Office of the Historian intend to make its history the people's history.

Albin J. Kowalewski is a Historical Publications Specialist at the Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives

SOCIETY FOR HISTORY IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

CALL FOR PAPERS

FEDERAL HISTORY JOURNAL

Federal History, the online journal of the Society for History in the Federal Government, seeks articles for its 2013 issue. *Federal History* features scholarship on the history of the federal government, including military history, 1776–present. We welcome manuscripts from federal historians and others working in the federal government, as well as independent scholars and historians working in public history and academia. See <http://shfg.org/shfg/publications/federal-history-journal/> for current issue, past issues, and details on submissions, which should be sent to editor-shfg-journal@shfg.org.

SHFG Online

New at www.shfg.org

- Latest federal history news
- Video of Trask Lecture, 2011
- Latest publications from federal history offices
- *The Federalist*, past issues
- Registration for SHFG Directory
- Library of Congress interactive on Lincoln
- Calendar of conferences
- *FEDERAL HISTORY* journal

Send news and information to webmaster@shfg.org

SHFG'S E-BULLETIN

Send announcements to
shfg.ebulletin@gmail.com

The bulletin is a service to SHFG members.

FELLOWSHIPS IN FEDERAL HISTORY

NATIONAL ARCHIVES ANNOUNCES PETER SHULMAN THE RECIPIENT OF THE FIRST LEGISLATIVE ARCHIVES FELLOWSHIP

On July 5, 2011, David Ferriero, Archivist of the United States, announced that Peter Shulman was the recipient of the first National Archives Legislative Archives Fellowship, a \$10,000 stipend funded by the Foundation for the National Archives. Dr. Shulman's appointment, noted Ferriero, "grows out of our commitment on many different levels to foster research and inquiry into the historical records of Congress housed in the National Archives Center for Legislative Archives. We look forward to having him share the results of his research with the community at large."

Dr. Shulman is an Assistant Professor of History at Case Western Reserve University where he teaches courses on the history of technology, energy and the environment, historical methods, and contemporary history. His research explores the complex interplay between technological change, the rise of fossil fuels, and the emergence of the United States as a global power. He is expanding his 2007 dissertation into a manuscript, *Engines and Empire: America, Energy, and the World, 1840–1940*, that promises a significant reinterpretation of 19th- and 20th-century American foreign relations and brings new perspectives to several subfields of U.S. history.

After concentrating mainly on the actions of cabinet officials and executive departments, Shulman "realized that it was impossible to understand the politics of technology in the 19th and 20th centuries—let alone foreign affairs—without a stronger focus on Congress." He also concluded that focusing on Congress "allows us to explain the development of American foreign relations in far more concrete, material, and sophisticated ways than ever before." In the summer of 2010, research in 19th-century petitions and memorials sent to Congress added a critical dimension to his narrative by offering "an unparalleled view of what Americans thought of their country and its government." In the next few months, Shulman plans to expand his research into congressional committee records for the full period covered by the book. As part of the fellowship, he will also make presentations

on his research plan and findings.

To qualify for the fellowship, announced by Ferriero last March, applicants had to be Ph.D. candidates with an approved dissertation proposal at the time of application or have received their Ph.D. within the last five years. Research proposals were considered on any topic that used the historical records of Congress housed at the Center for Legislative Archives. Applicants had to submit a research plan that identified the records at the Center that supported their topics and that included complementary collections such as members' personal papers. The fellowship required a minimum tenure in residency at the National Archives of a month.

The fellowship invited scholars to consider the great diversity of topics that research in the archived records of Congress support and to take advantage of the enormous volume of records open to them. Congress has legislated, held hearings, investigated, or debated nearly every conceivable subject, and the records of the Senate and House of Representatives reflect the full spectrum of the nation's concerns and preoccupations since the First Congress convened in 1789. Consequently, the 26 fellowship applicants' proposals explored broad and diverse topics, including consumer rights, the Poor Peoples Campaign, the political history of the computer, Indian removal, American public broadcasting, military chaplains, the impact of women staff members on Capitol Hill's legislative agenda,

and compensation for victims of Wounded Knee. The proposals were evaluated by an outside review panel of prominent scholars from across the nation who assessed and ranked them on their scholarly merit and on the strength of two required letters of recommendation. A selection committee, chaired by the Archivist, used those rankings to determine this year's fellowship winner.

If you have questions about the fellowship or have a research interest in the records of Congress, contact the Center for Legislative Archives at www.archives.gov/legislative or 202-357-5350.



Dr. Peter Shulman

FROM THE ARCHIVES

DENNIS ROTH'S 10-YEAR HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY FOR HISTORY IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

By Charles Downs

From time to time, I have cited the first and only history of the Society, Dennis Roth's *The First Decade of the Society for History in the Federal Government*. Its origins date to 1988, when the National Council on Public History proposed dedicating an issue of its quarterly journal, *The Public Historian*, to history in the Federal Government. The Society's second president, David Trask was asked to serve as guest editor, and with the assistance of the SHFG Publications Committee chaired by Roger Trask, commissioned a number of articles for the volume. Authors included William S. Dudley, Ronald Spector, Benjamin Cooling, Roger Trask, and Frank Burke. The articles would first be reviewed by David Trask, and then by the editors of *The Public Historian*, with a tentative publication date set for mid-1990.

The centerpiece of the special issue was to be a 10-year history of the Society written by Dennis Roth, Forest Service Historian. In a letter to Roth dated June 16, 1988, David Trask stated that he expected a "fully documented, interpretative history" of 50 to 70 pages, and expressed confidence in Roth's ability to produce a work that would make a notable contribution to the profession. Roth's initial deadline was May 1, 1989. In researching his history, Roth made good use of the Society's archives — then consisting of 10 archival boxes — and conducted 25 interviews with individuals involved with the creation and early years of the Society. By late August, his and all but one of the other articles had been sent to the editorial staff of *The Public Historian*. The special issue appeared to be on track.

But things began to unravel soon after Roth submitted his draft for review. Lindsey Reed, associate editor of *The Public Historian*, wrote to Roth on October 3, 1989, and expressed grave concerns with his article, believing that it failed to grapple with the "substantive issues" that led to the founding of the organization. These included the need for professional standards, the lack of respect and awareness for history on the part of the public and agency decision-makers, and the issue of "official history." Reviewers criticized the article as too detailed, personality oriented, and gossipy in tone, and found that it needed to be condensed and drastically revised. Reed understood that it was done as a narrative, but felt that it needed to be tighter, and needed to convey reflections on

substantive issues. She also called Roth's citations confusing and sloppy, and gave him until November 15 to re-submit the revised article. Two reviewer comments were included with Reed's letter. "Reviewer A" found that the article provided valuable insights into the development of the public history movement, but needed a summary analysis of the issues raised in the text. This reviewer liked the use of interviews, but found that more corroboration was needed for some statements. He went on to say that although the piece lacked polish and needed improvements in its clarity and style, it could be corrected for publication. "Reviewer B" disagreed, arguing that it was a poorly written collection of dubious gossip, with an emphasis on who did what, rather than a thoughtful analysis of substantive issues. He concluded that publishing it would be a disservice to the Society as well as all historians.

As one might expect, Roth responded with a strong defense of his work, but in a letter dated January 30, 1990, Otis Graham, editor of *The Public Historian*, stood by the anonymous reviewers. Graham believed that while Roth told the Society's early history well, he failed to grapple with painful realities and fundamental professional questions. He went on to say that the special issue needed an SHFG history, but not one rejected by the reviewers and questioned by the editors of *The Public Historian*. He suggested that David Trask try making revisions to it.

Graham also circulated a letter of the same date to all the other authors, complaining that their pieces were marked by their "official" origins, and verged on "cheer-leading." Their articles presented pleasant trivialities, but failed to wrestle with the difficult issues of practicing history in the federal government. Roth found Graham's letters insulting, and washed his hands of the project by withdrawing his submission. Other authors, including Bill Dudley and David Trask, rejected much of the reviewers' criticism of their own articles, and found Graham's critical methods to be unprofessional.

On February 26, David Trask broke the news of "an untoward development" to Roger Trask. "Events of recent days have led the Society to end further efforts to prepare a special issue of *The Public Historian* devoted to federal History," he said. The individual authors, however, were still free to have their articles published in regular issues

of the journal. Eventually, several of the articles commissioned for the special issue did appear in later volumes of *The Public Historian*. Not surprisingly, Roth's was not one of them.

Clearly, Roth and his critics had different views on what the 10-year history of SHFG should focus on. At the time, "public history" was a relatively new field, and "official history" was still a suspect discipline to more traditional academic historians. Roth's work could have dealt with the major issues that SHFG faced in its early years more analytically, and been less dependent on letting the key personalities speak for themselves. Indeed, some of the other authors addressed these concerns more directly than did Roth.

Whatever its shortcomings for publication in 1990, the Roth history provides material on the founding and growth of SHFG that is invaluable today. His interviews were timely and occurred roughly ten years after the events he described took place. Many of those he interviewed are now deceased or have moved on to other activities. Time has taken its toll on the memories of others. The events he portrayed may well be viewed differently by some participants, but this is to be expected. Roth's work has given us a basis for further discussion of the founding and development of the Society, as well as for exploring enduring professional concerns it raises.

Roth's history consists of 45 typescript pages (page 26 is missing), not including its 153 footnotes, and is now posted on the SHFG Web site at www.shfg.org/shfg/about/

history/. The manuscript and the correspondence concerning it can be found in SHFG Archives Series 3, Box 2. If you have comments on the Roth history, or for more information on the SHFG Archives, contact chasdowns@verizon.net.



The SHFG supported the AHA's National Coordinating Committee in 1985, led by Page Miller (left), in its lobbying for an independent National Archives and the appointment of a professional archivist, Don Wilson (right), to lead it. Courtesy of the author.

FEDERAL HISTORY OFFICE PROFILE

The Federalist profiles a different history office in each issue.

Please direct texts, comments, and inquiries to editor Joan Zenzen at joanz10@verizon.net.

FEDERAL HISTORY AT THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

By Larry DeWitt

Like other small history programs, the three-person staff of the Social Security Administration (SSA) Historian's Office have to be historians, archivists, and curators all rolled into one. We do historical research, both as assistance to other researchers and to inform our own work; we maintain the second largest archive of Social Security-related materials in the country, and the only one focused exclusively on Social Security; and we operate a newly renovated History Museum at SSA headquarters in suburban Baltimore, Md. Our staff are members of SHFG and such related organizations as the National Academy of Social Insurance (NASI).

The history program at SSA has been in continuous operation since 1964 when our first Historian, Abe Bortz,

joined the agency and began assembling archival materials. In 1968, Dr. Bortz opened a small History Room museum at our headquarters in Baltimore, Md., to display the agency's growing collection of artifacts.

By far the biggest news in our world is the reopening — in August 2010 in conjunction with the 75th anniversary of the Social Security Act — of our new, expanded, and upgraded History Museum. The culmination of a three-year renovation, the SSA History Museum is modest in size (about 1,000 square feet), but houses nearly 300 artifacts and features modern interactive electronic exhibits as well as more traditional displays. The Museum is already host to 3,000-plus visitors a year — including tour groups ranging from students from area schools to foreign dignitaries

visiting SSA. A core function of our office is to introduce all new SSA headquarters employees to Social Security's history in their orientation program through a guided tour of the Museum. It is — if we say so ourselves — the most popular part of the new employee orientation.

A major project of this past year has been our partnership with the Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) Presidential Library in Hyde Park, which has had on display a special exhibit commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Social Security Act of 1935. We consulted with the archivists and curators at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library in the design of their exhibit, and the bulk of the artifacts in the exhibit are from our collections. We also participated in special programs at the FDR Library in commemoration of the 75th-anniversary celebrations. (You can view some of the FDR events online on C-Span at <http://www.c-span.org/Events/FDRs-New-Deal-Social-Security-Act-and-National-Labor-Relations-Act/19802-2/>.)

As the custodians of the agency's institutional history and of our programmatic history, we serve a variety of internal and external interests. Both scholars writing about Social Security and SSA staff looking into policy areas peruse the collections in the SSA History Archives. Congressional staffs rely on us for background information, and the news media will occasionally check with us before running stories on Social Security (although not nearly often enough in our opinion!). Items from our photo collections appear in both popular and scholarly publications, and we decorate congressional staff offices with reproductions of historical posters. Perhaps our biggest duty is to answer the hundreds of e-mails and other inquiries we receive each year from people wanting to know about some (often obscure) fact of Social Security history.

We also love to give talks on Social Security history (have PowerPoint, will travel). We speak with college classes, senior groups, congressional staff, professional organizations like NASI and SHFG, and just about anybody who will sit still for it.

We also have a prominent Internet presence, with one of the largest online collections of historical materials of any federal agency. The site has been providing multimedia historical materials since 1996, and we routinely get in excess of 50,000 unique users a month to our site at www.socialsecurity.gov/history.

One of the more interesting questions we field about our institutional history is why such a large federal agency has its headquarters in suburban Baltimore, Md., rather than in Washington, DC, with the rest of the government. As we historians like to say, there is a story behind that.

In late 1936, as SSA was beginning its operations, it searched Washington for suitable space to house the new Social Security program. In the pre-computer era, all of our records were on pieces of paper stored in filing cabinets (it

Social Security Administration Historian's Office

Social Security Administration
6401 Security Blvd., Room 1532, Ball Building
Baltimore, MD 21235

Senior Historian: Larry DeWitt

Staff: 1 senior historian, 1 historian, 1 archivist/curator

Contact: Larry DeWitt

Tel: 410-965-8107 Fax: 410-965-8105

E-mail: larry.dewitt@ssa.gov

Web Site: www.socialsecurity.gov/history

Office Activities and Responsibilities

The SSA Historian's Office maintains a large archival collection of Social Security-related documents, photographs, and audio and video materials. We also curate a small museum featuring artifacts from Social Security's history. Our main functions are to provide access to these assets, as well as providing research assistance to both internal government researchers and members of the general public. We have an active oral history program and we do talks and presentations to interested outside groups. A core function of our office is to make our materials as accessible as possible by converting them to electronic formats and publishing them on our internet site.

Recent Publications

Larry DeWitt and Edward D. Berkowitz. "Lyndon Johnson's Legacy in Health Care." In *A Companion to Lyndon B. Johnson*, ed. Mitchell B. Lerner. Wiley-Blackwell, forthcoming in 2012: 163–186.

Larry DeWitt. "Frances Perkins and the Administration of the Social Security Program." In *A Promise to all Generations: Stories & Essays about Social Security and Frances Perkins*, eds. Christopher Briesach and Kirsten Downey. Frances Perkins Center, 2011: 91–102.

Edward D. Berkowitz and Larry DeWitt. "Social Security from the New Deal to the Great Society: Expanding the Public Domain." In *Conservatism and American Political Development*, eds. Brian Glenn and Steve Teles. Oxford University Press, 2009: 53–85.

Larry DeWitt, Daniel Béland, and Edward D. Berkowitz, eds., *Social Security: A Documentary History*. Washington, DC, Congressional Quarterly Press, 2008.



Larry DeWitt at the entrance to the new SSA History Museum.
Courtesy of the author.



Core Team who designed the new SSA Museum: (l. to r.) Eric DeLisle, historian; Richard Gabryszewski, lead archivist and curator; Bev Fox, art director; Larry DeWitt, historian; Joe Zappacosta, facilities manager. Courtesy of the author.



The Candler Building in Baltimore's Inner Harbor during its time as the first operational headquarters of the Social Security system. Courtesy of the author.

MAKING HISTORY

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

NASA's History Program Office has published two new volumes. *Psychology of Space Exploration: Contemporary Research in Historical Perspective*, edited by Douglas A. Vakoch (NASA SP-2011-4411), is divided into three sections: Surviving and Thriving in Extreme Environments; Managing Interpersonal Conflict in Space; and Multicultural Dimensions of Space Exploration. The second is *When Biospheres Collide: A History of NASA's Planetary Protection Programs*, by Michael Meltzer (NASA SP-2011-4234). The author raises the fundamental issue of human exploration's impact through contamination on our planet and others: "If we irrevocably alter the nature of other celestial bodies, we compromise all future scientific experimentation on these bodies and may also damage any extant life there. By inadvertently carrying exotic organisms back to Earth on our spaceships, we risk the release of biohazardous materials into our own ecology."

was described at the time as "the largest bookkeeping operation in the history of the world"). To their surprise, administrators soon discovered there was no available building in the District with floors strong enough to support the volume of records the program would require. So, suitable temporary space was needed while a new building was constructed to SSA's specifications. (That building still exists today: it is the Wilbur J. Cohen Federal Building at 4th and Independence, and it houses the Voice of America.)

The closest available space with strong enough flooring was a former Coca-Cola bottling factory in Baltimore's Inner Harbor, in the Candler Building, named after the founder of Coca-Cola, Asa Candler. SSA planned to stay in Candler temporarily. It did so until 1960, when we moved to our suburban Baltimore campus.

The new Social Security Building in Washington, DC, was completed in early 1940, but before SSA could move in, World War II intervened. The conflict in Europe had already begun, and although the United States would not formally enter the war until 1941, President Roosevelt was already busy mobilizing the federal city: all vacant federal space in the District was given to the War Department, including the new Social Security Building. Thus, SSA never got its building in Washington, and that — along with regional politics — is why we are in Baltimore to this day.

We invite the SHFG community to visit us in Baltimore, to see our Museum, or do research in our Archives. Please contact us if we can help with your own work in any way. Not to worry, the floors in Baltimore are strong enough to hold us all.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

A new building in St. Louis now houses both the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) and the National Archives at St. Louis. It was built and is owned by the Molasky Group of Companies, which leases it to the General Services Administration and NARA. NPRC is the repository for the personnel records of former members of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard as well as civilian employees of the federal government — holding files (about 9 billion pages) for an estimated total of 100 million individuals who served their country in the military or as a civilian. The oldest records document service ending in the 1880s and the most recent ones are from 2004. Older military records are preserved at the National Archives Building in downtown Washington, DC. In the last two years, NARA has taken legal custody of more than 213,000 cubic feet of civilian personnel records (representing the service of millions of employees), created by more than 112 different federal agencies between 1850 and 1951. The center is the busiest facility in the agency, handling 5,000–6,000 requests a day for information from personnel files — about 1.5 million a year.

The John F. Kennedy Presidential Library has opened a new exhibit titled *In Her Voice: Jacqueline Kennedy, The White House Years*. The exhibit presents excerpts from Mrs. Kennedy's 1964 oral history in combination with iconic treasures from the Library's collection that chronicle the moments and events described by the former First Lady. The opening of the exhibit coincides with the publication of these never-before-heard interviews as a book and audio set titled *Jacqueline Kennedy: Historic Conversations on Life with John F. Kennedy*. Jacqueline Kennedy recorded a series of interviews in spring 1964 with Special Assistant to the President Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. The tapes, held on deposit at the Kennedy Library, remained sealed in accordance with Mrs. Kennedy's wishes. The oral history is being shared this year as part of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Kennedy Presidency. In the conversations highlighted in the exhibit, Mrs. Kennedy chronicles the details of domestic life with her husband and children inside the White House, and shares her insights into the milestone events of the Cold War that she witnessed at close range.

New microfilm publications include *District Files from the General Correspondence of the Alaska Division, Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1908–1934* [M2149, RG 75, 20 rolls]; *Selected Department of Justice and U.S. Supreme Court Records Concerning Mexican Revolutionary Activities in the United States, 1906–1922* [M2131, RGs 60 and 267, 15 rolls]; and *Franklin Peale's Report on His Visit to Europe in the Service of the U.S. Mint, 1833–35* [M2137, RG 104, 1 roll]



NATIONAL PRESERVATION INSTITUTE

The Institute's 2011–2012 schedule for Professional Seminars in Historic Preservation & Cultural Resources Management is now available. The seminars are offered nationwide. Offerings include "Identification and Evaluation of Mid-20th-Century Buildings," "Conflict Resolution and Consultation Tools for Cultural and Natural Resource Projects," "Native American Cultural Property Law," and "NAGPRA and ARPA: Applications and Requirements." Limited scholarship opportunities are available. See the schedule and information at www.npi.org.

U.S. ARMY CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY

The Center has published a new volume titled *Then Came the Fire: Personal Accounts from the Pentagon, 11 September 2001*. Editor Stephen J. Lofgren and a team of oral historians conducted hundreds of interviews with witnesses, first responders, and survivors of the Pentagon in the days immediately following the event. The anthology consists of excerpts from the

accounts of sixty-one people, both oral interview and written, who were involved in the attack, and it provides their stories and perspectives on that day. The range of personal experiences is broad. It includes individuals who watched the plane strike the building, Pentagon occupants — some of whom were badly injured — who sought to escape the burning area, and bystanders and other Pentagon personnel who sought to help and rescue colleagues, as well as people involved in the response and recovery efforts. This book, prepared for the tenth anniversary of the attacks, is an important compilation of personal memories of the Pentagon on 11 September that will serve to remind future generations of the tragedy and the acts of valor on that day. The volume (Pub 70-119-1) can be ordered from the Center at <http://www.history.army.mil/catalog/order/ordering.html> or from GPO (S/N: 008-029-00545-0), or can be viewed online at <http://www.history.army.mil/html/books/070/70-119-1/index.html>.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The Department of State has released *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XXXIV, National Security Policy, 1969–1972*.

This volume documents U.S. national security policy in the context of the Vietnam War and the changing Cold War strategic balance between the United States and the Soviet Union. When President Richard Nixon assumed office in January 1969, he was confronted with the fact that the United States no longer held commanding military superiority over its superpower rival. Since the end of his stint as Vice President in 1961, the Soviets had achieved a rough strategic parity that left the United States with "significant vulnerabilities" vis-à-vis the USSR. This volume documents the Nixon administration's efforts to grapple with this new strategic situation and provides coverage of the following: The administration's review of U.S. nuclear and general purpose forces and strategic doctrine; its attempts to ascertain the level of technological sophistication achieved by the Soviet missile program; and its decision to deploy Safeguard, a modified anti-ballistic missile system. The volume also examines chemical and biological weapons policy; U.S. nuclear policy in Asia; the evolution of the administration's strategic priorities in light of an ever-shrinking defense budget; and the transition from military conscription to an all-volunteer armed force. Additionally, the volume provides previously unreleased material regarding the October 1969 Joint Chiefs of Staff Readiness Test, in which Nixon secretly placed on alert portions of the United States military, including its nuclear forces. Throughout this volume, a consistent theme is the relationship between military strength and diplomatic strength; in particular, the importance of military might — real or perceived — to the United States' ability to maintain credibility in the eyes of allies and adversaries alike.

This volume was compiled and edited by M. Todd Bennett. The volume and this press release are available on the Office of the Historian website at <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v34>. Copies of the volume will be available for purchase from the U.S. Government Printing Office online at <http://bookstore.gpo.gov> (GPO S/N 144-000-02641-4; ISBN 978-0-16-084411-9), or by calling toll-free 1-866-512-1800 (D.C. area 202-512-1800). For further information, contact history@state.gov.



Society for History in the Federal Government

Box 14139 • Ben Franklin Station
Washington, DC 20044

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
MERRIFIELD VA
PERMIT NO. 1701

FEDERALIST CALENDAR

Jan. 5–8, 2012. American Historical Association (AHA), Annual Meeting, “Communities and Networks.” Chicago, IL. Visit <http://www.historians.org/annual/proposals.htm>

Jan. 20–24, 2012. American Library Association, Midwinter meeting. Dallas, TX. Visit www.ala.org/conferenceevents/upcoming/index.cfm

Mar. 27–31, 2012. Society for Applied Anthropology (SfAA). Annual Meeting. “Bays, Boundaries, and Borders,” Baltimore, MD. Visit www.sfaa.net

Mar. 2012. Society for History in the Federal Government (SHFG). National Archives at College Park, MD. www.shfg.org

Apr. 19–22, 2012. Joint meeting with the Organization of American Historians and the National Council on Public History, “Frontiers of Capitalism and Democracy.” Milwaukee, WI. Visit <http://www.oah.org/meetings/> or <http://ncph.org/cms/conferences/>

May 10–13, 2012. Society for Military History (SMH), Annual Meeting. “The Politics of War” Arlington, Virginia. Visit <http://www.smh-hq.org/conference.html>

June 28–30, 2012. Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations (SHAFR), “Revolutionary Aftermaths.” Hartford, Connecticut. Visit <http://www.shafri.org>

July 19–22, 2012. Society for Historians of the Early American Republic (SHEAR) Annual meeting. “Local and Global Connections in the Early Republic: New Approaches and New Contexts.” Visit <http://faculty.chass.ncsu.edu/ctfriend/SHEAR1.htm>

Aug. 6–12, 2012. Society of American Archivists. Annual Meeting. “Beyond Borders.” San Diego, Calif. Visit <http://www2.archivists.org/conference>

Nov. 15–18, 2012. American Studies Association Annual Meeting. “Dimensions of Empire and Resistance: Past, Present, and Future.” San Juan, Puerto Rico. Visit http://www.theasa.net/annual_meeting/