Featuring Artists Responses to WWI from the Library of Congress Graphic Art Collection

By Katherine Blood and Sara W. Duke

As the country’s oldest federal cultural institution and the world’s largest library, the Library of Congress provides access to more than 162 million items in a variety of formats. The picture collections, alone, include nearly 16 million photographs, popular and fine art prints, posters, cartoons, documentary drawings, and architectural and engineering designs stretching from the 15th century to the present. The Library’s exhibition program offers a dynamic means of acquainting the public with these holdings, both online and on site, and it’s always a welcome challenge to select the most illuminating items to help viewers witness history.

World War I: American Artists View the Great War (www.loc.gov/exhibits/american-artists-view-the-great-war/; May 7, 2016–August 19, 2017) explores artists’ responses to the war to end all wars. Chosen from the Print and Photograph Division’s collection of over 76,000 pictures related to World War I—every artwork in the exhibition also represents a gateway to larger, signature collections. In co-curating the exhibition, we worked with Exhibition Director Betsy Nahum-Miller and invited colleagues to join in culling through these vast holdings to find the strongest works. Rather than visually illustrating a chronological narrative of the war, our goal was to privilege artist’s voices in telling personal stories that emphasized American experiences, with ripples out into wider historical and cultural contexts. We looked for examples by both celebrated and lesser-known creators that would encompass a range of themes while admitting some nuance and meaningful cross-connections. At the same time, we showcased major collection strengths with the hope of attracting future researchers to delve even further.

See “LOC WWI” cont’d on page 4

SHFG ANNUAL MEETING: APRIL 13, 2017 OCTOBER 20

A Return to the Archives

The Society for History in the Federal Government (SHFG) will hold its annual meeting on April 13, 2017, at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Building in Washington, DC.

Throughout its 37-year history, SHFG has enjoyed a unique and fruitful relationship with the National Archives. As one of the nation’s primary stewards of its records, NARA’s holdings are indispensable to federal historians and public history professionals across the nation. In turn, SHFG members have used NARA’s resources for official work duties and personal projects. Thus, the Society’s annual meeting will highlight the interplay among archivists, historical researchers, and public history professionals that enables a greater understanding of our collective past. Registration at: http://shfg.wildapricot.org/events.
President’s Message

By Kristina Giannotta

Welcome to the winter issue of The Federalist! The Society has had a busy fall, hosting two major events, and, as this goes to press, our annual Holiday Party.

On 20 October the Society hosted the 37th annual Richard G. Hewlett Lecture. The Lecture was held at the Woodrow Wilson Center and, like last year, the facilities, food, drink, and company was exceptional. In a surprise twist of fate, the topic, the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service, was presented by Bob Sutton (one of our own) and Donald Leadbetter. Bob delighted the attendees with his perspective of the long Park Service history as only a Chief Historian of the Park Service can do. Donald provided a fascinating discussion on how the Park Service planned and executed the massive centennial celebration. His discussion focused on how the Park Service chose programs and advertisements to introduce the Park Service to a very different America than that faced by the Park Service in its early and heyday years. On behalf of the Society and all our lecture attendees, I want to again thank Bob Sutton and Donald Leadbetter for presenting such fun and fascinating talks at the 37th Richard G. Hewlett Lecture.

In early November, the Society also hosted our informal oral history workshop. The workshop was the brainchild of NARA historian Jessie Kratz, who arranged the space for the workshop at NARA and planned the event. About 15 historians attended the workshop, with representatives from Navy, Army, State Department, Library of Congress, House of Representatives and even non-profit organizations. The discussion ranged from interviewee selection, media for recording interviews, archiving, advertising and using oral histories in federal or other public organizations. In addition to providing a chance to share ideas, the workshop provided a space for historians to gather together and network with other federal historians working in similar fields. We hope to establish further workshops in the future. Please feel free to share any ideas for topics with me at: shfg.president@gmail.com.

Early in January 2017, six Society members will be attending the AHA conference in Denver to hold a panel on History in the Federal Government: Careers Serving the Policymakers and the Public. The AHA is seeking to grow their relationship with federal historians and this panel provides the Society an opportunity to share the great work federal historians are doing with our counterparts in the academic community. The session is number 137 held on Friday the 6th of January. Please stop by if you are attending the conference!

This winter the Society is planning on holding its third jobs workshop. The workshop is tentatively scheduled for 11 February at NARA I. Please keep an eye out for our eBulletin updates or check the website for information. The workshops usually can only hold a limited number of attendees, and the seats sell out quickly!

Our annual conference this year will be held at the National Archives in downtown DC. Over the last few years our conferences have been out of town, this year we wanted to keep the conference local to serve those historians who can’t easily get out of town. We have received many panel and paper proposals and expect to prepare a great conference for you. Unlike prior years, this year the conference will only be held for one day, the 13th of April. Please continue to check our website for information on the conference.

Finally, in November the Society sent out the membership renewal requests for next year. Along with the renewal notification we also sent out a survey asking for your input on the Society. The Society has served federal and public historians since 1979, and as we move into the 21st century, we want to be sure the Society is meeting the needs of the federal history and greater history community. We will use your input to continue to develop workshops and other activities that support the needs and wants of our members. Please take the time to renew your membership—your membership supports our print and electronic publications as well as workshops and other planned events!

The Society is constantly working to meet your needs—so please let me know if you have questions, comments or ideas. I am available at: shfg.president@gmail.com. Thank you for your continued support of the Society! I hope you had a wonderful holiday season and have a safe and happy new year.
Editor’s Note

I am privileged to introduce this latest issue of The Federalist as its newly designated editor. As a longtime reader of The Federalist, I have great admiration for the work that editor Ben Guterman and other SHFG contributors have done to make it such a successful and worthwhile publication. I am continually awed and inspired by the diverse and prolific ways that historical programs of the federal government contribute to the understanding of the past and improve society in our present. As the American public seeks to reconcile oppositional political forces in the aftermath of the recent national election, producing and disseminating quality federal historical work has perhaps never been so critical to society and our institutions. I pledge that The Federalist will continue to be a forceful vehicle for conveying federal history work and SHFG’s message to those inside and outside of government.

In this issue of The Federalist, Katherine Blood and Sara W. Duke describe the process of curating World War I: American Artists View the Great War, a Library of Congress exhibit currently open until August 19, 2017. This fascinating exhibition presents items from LOC’s Print & Photograph Division to explore artists’ responses to the war to end all wars. National Park Service historian John H. Sprinkle presents his views on why, and to whom, NPS administrative histories matter, and speculates on how they might achieve broader appeal. K. M. Frederick-Frost profiles the National Institute of Science and Technology Museum, whose collection focuses on the history of metrology and its wide-reaching impact on society. The National Archives and Records Administration mobile device app, Remembering WWI is reviewed by Albinko Hasic.

This issue also features an overview of the SHFG Hewlett Lecture that took place on October 20, 2016, submitted by SHFG members Terrance Rucker and Anne Musella; a synopsis of the most recent WWI Centennial Commission meeting of ex-officio members; and an update on an SHFG partnership on behalf of the History Office at NASA’s Johnson Space Center by Lee White, executive director of the National Coalition for History. SHFG Archivist Chas Downs presents a special and timely feature on the history of The Federalist in his latest “From the Archives,” and A. J. Daverede looks at an absorbing group of naval aviation records in his column on “Newly Declassified Records.” I am very excited to introduce the inaugural column of a new feature on Presidential Library Records by the National Security Archives’ Nate Jones. Welcome and thanks Nate! You will also find announcements about new federal history books in “Recent Publications,” and other newsworthy items in “Making History,” in this issue #52 of The Federalist.

Comments and suggestions are welcome at shfgfederalist@gmail.com or on Twitter @faithtomfaith.

New SHFG Professional Development Workshops

The Society for History in the Federal Government has launched a new series of professional development meetings for historians to discuss common issues and challenges we face. This series is designed to be an informal, open discussion of various topics.

The first was held on November 16, 2016, at the National Archives Building in Washington, DC, on the theme of oral history projects. The meetings are free but registration is required. For announcements of future professional development workshops, please subscribe to the SHFG e-bulletin using the link at this webpage: http://shfg.wildapricot.org/Announcements.

AHA Panel

The Society for History in the Federal Government will present History in the Federal Government: Careers Serving the Policymakers and the Public, a panel at the American Historical Association annual meeting in Denver, Colorado, on Friday, January 6, 2017. Participating in the panel will be Eric William Boyle, United States Department of Energy; Kristina Giannotta, Naval History & Heritage Command; Jessie Kratz, National Archives and Records Administration; Chris Tudda, Office of the Historian, United States Department of State; Zack Wilske, United States Immigration and Naturalization Service; and Carl Ashley, Office of the Historian, United States Department of State. The federal government is one of the largest employers of historians in the world, with professionals working in almost every government agency, from the National Park Service, the Department of Defense, the Forest Service, Department of Agriculture, the Library of Congress, the Central Intelligence Agency, the National Archives, NASA, and the list goes on and on. Many federal historians are by definition public historians, serving to educate people about the history of the United States and to make the workings and actions of the government more transparent to the public. At the same time, federal historians serve policymakers in their respective institutions, providing background information and historical context for informed governmental decisions. This session will explore some ways in which you can apply your training as a historian to areas outside the academy and to call your attention to the fact that there are many rewarding, interesting, and downright fun ways, you can be a historian in government.

SHFG’s e-bulletin

Announcements of events, conferences, workshops, and other programs.

Send announcements to shfg.ebulletin@gmail.com
Our final selection included over 50 original posters, fine prints, cartoon and illustration drawings, and photos by more than 30 artists including George Bellows, Wladyslaw I. Benda, Charles Buckles Falls, James Montgomery Flagg, Charles Dana Gibson, Childe Hassam, Lewis W. Hine, Edward Penfield, Joseph Pennell, and William Allen Rogers. In addition, over 60 scanned photographs, many from fragile glass negatives, were presented as a slide show both in the gallery and online.

The sometimes overlapping themes that emerged as we assembled the selections included government-sponsored propaganda images aimed at building support and disseminating official content; graphic art by commercial and independent artists including cartoonists, illustrators, and fine art printmakers; and eye-witness works by a soldier (Kerr Eby), war correspondent (Samuel J. Woolf), government-supported artist (Joseph Pennell), and conscientious objector (Maurice Becker) based on direct experiences. Photographs that combine documentary power with aesthetic quality show soldiers, nurses, and other war workers in action; activities from training camps to post-war recovery efforts; and places from camp libraries to battlefields. A number of photographs also recorded scenes in which posters and billboards were displayed in public spaces. The following selection of items highlight elements that inspired exhibit selections, including personal stories, wider historical themes, and hallmark collections at the Library.

James Montgomery Flagg’s Twist on his Famous Recruitment Poster

Flagg was among the veritable who’s who of leading artist/illustrators who created artworks for the Division of Pictorial Publicity (DPP)—an arm of Woodrow Wilson’s Committee on Public Information. Committee leader George Creel enlisted “Gibson Girl” creator Charles Dana Gibson to head the Division. He and Flagg were fellow members of New York’s Society of Illustrators for which Gibson also served as president. According to Flagg, he put his own visage to work as the model for his now-iconic 1917 Uncle Sam poster I Want You for U.S. Army which is preserved in the Library’s extensive collection of First World War posters. For the exhibition, we chose to display this alternative special format car card version, also from 1917, which was aimed at naval recruitment and intended for display on streetcars, buses, and subway cars. Flagg’s Uncle Sam was repurposed during World War II and continued to be re-appropriated as a major cultural reference.

Eugenie De Land’s Liberty Bond Poster and Related Design Drawing

The Library’s collection of World War I posters, more than 1,900 of which are searchable online at www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/wwi-pos/, is strongest in examples printed in the United States with further examples from Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, and Russia. Eugenie De Land’s poster for the U.S. Government Second Liberty Loan drive is among the gems found in this collection. Women First World War poster designers were relatively scarce and it’s doubly rare to preserve the artist’s original design drawing which shows key design differences in comparison with the final, printed poster. De Land was an independent, Washington, DC, artist and high school art teacher who had studied with Howard Pyle and whose classmates had included such leading artist/illustrators as Elizabeth Shippen Green and Maxfield Parrish. The December 1917 issue of The Poster touted her design in its article Woman’s Poster to Cheer Soldiers: “Miss De Land holds the unique position of being the only woman volunteer artist whose design for a Second Liberty loan poster was accepted.”

McKee Barclay’s Poisonous Gas Editorial Cartoon

In addition to illustrators and poster artists, newspaper editorial cartoonists were able to deploy war commentary in uniquely affecting ways. In this drawing, Baltimore Sun cartoonist Barclay McKee combines beautiful draftsmanship with a nightmarish subject. Reacting to the use of poisonous gas as a weapon, he depicted Roman war god Mars as a skeleton wearing a pith helmet and breathing deadly, specter-filled vapor from a trench. Poisonous gas was first used on a major scale in 1915 by German forces at Ypres in Belgium. Although relatively few died from gas on the Western Front, it quickly became a widely-dreaded psychological weapon because the physical effects could be excruciating. This drawing comes from the Library’s Art Wood Collection of Cartoon and Caricature Drawings which numbers over 36,000 drawings. Most of the 80 Barclay cartoons searchable online come from the Cartoon Drawings collection which includes over 180 World War I drawings by various artists: www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/acd/.
Donate to SHFG

Support New SHFG Events

Please donate to SHFG’s current efforts to organize and promote new events and workshops. These events will provide opportunities for professional development: to meet colleagues, exchange ideas, and learn more about the federal community. We urge you to contribute to our General Fund. You can donate the amount of your choice, either by check or online payment (at http://shfg.wildapricot.org/Donate)

Your donations also support all activities of the Society, including publication of The Federalist newsletter, Federal History journal, and stories and news for our website; our annual conference, the Richard G. Hewlett Lecture; and programming such as occasional tours, workshops, and social events that help students and historians develop in their careers.

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War Correspondents
Helen Johns Kirtland and Samuel Woolf

Most couples would not head into a war zone for their honeymoon, but that is exactly where Helen Johns Kirtland and Lucian Swift Kirtland went in 1917. Already an established photographer, Mrs. Kirtland worked for Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Weekly and the YMCA during World War I as one of the very few American women war correspondents. The Library’s Kirtland Collection contains about 200 images showing World War I and its aftermath including the exhibited portrait of Kirtland posing in a trench with a gas mask. Kirtland’s life and work are featured in the Library’s online Collection Overview of Women Photojournalists by photo curator Beverly Brannan: https://www.loc.gov/rr/print/coll/596_womphotoj.html.

The show includes two drawings by Samuel J. Woolf who worked as a visual war correspondent at the front in Beaumont-Hamel, France. In addition to being an artist, he worked as a cook, drove an ambulance, and endured some of the same privations as soldiers—also personally suffering the horror of a gas attack. Woolf studied with Kenyon Cox and George de Forest Brush at the Art Students League and National Academy of Design and had a long career with Time magazine. Woolf had studied at the Art Students League and National Academy of Design, before heading to the front. The Library holds over 100 drawings by Woolf related to both world wars.

Kerr Eby’s Warfront Etchings

World War I: American Artists View the Great War focuses on contributions by artists living in, or active in, the United States during the war. Though he was born to Canadian missionary parents in Tokyo, Japan, artist Kerr Eby studied at Pratt Institute and the Art Students League in New York City before volunteering for the U.S. Army in 1917. He served with the 40th Engineers, Artillery Brigade, Camouflage Division in France, where he saw battle action at Belleau Wood, Meuse-Argonne, Château-Thierry, and Saint-Mihiel. His warfront drawings became the basis for his etchings that convey a sense of immediacy based on his direct experience. A number appeared in his 1936 book War with the opening words: “I write in all humility of spirit, in the desperate hope that somehow it may be of use in the forlorn and seemingly hopeless fight against war ... I am not a pacifist if it means not to see the necessity of an army and navy in this world as it is and not to thank God for them. . . . There was great beauty in the last war as there is always beauty in human giving, but the beauty was in the giver not in the thing itself.”

Conclusion

In marking the war’s centennial, the Library of Congress is also featuring its primary resources through programming that includes education plans, public events, symposia, and book talks. Along with the Library’s presentation of artist’s responses in World War I: American Artists View the Great War (open through August 19, 2017)—its companion exhibition, Echoes of the Great War: American Experiences of World War I (on display from April 4, 2017 to January 2019) offers a wider array of original, multi-format special collections from the Library’s extensive holdings.

More Resources


Staff Writers Needed

The Federalist seeks writers to highlight agency news and write short feature articles. Specific areas of coverage include the National Park Service, U.S. Army, Smithsonian Institution, and Library of Congress, among others. Direct questions and responses to the editor at thomas.faith@shfg.org

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A Museum of Metrology: Origins and Opportunities

K. M. Frederick-Frost

Platinum meter bars, quartz clocks, and freeze-dried urine are just some of the artifacts that can be used to tell the tale of U.S. measurement science. Objects such as these represent the variety of the holdings of the National Institute of Science and Technology (NIST) Museum. The collection seems purpose-built to explore the history of metrology and its wide-reaching impact on society. This, however, was not the original purpose. Its origins are more akin to a cabinet of curiosities, accessible only to an elite few.

Since its beginning in 1901, NIST’s predecessor the National Bureau of Standards (NBS) was tasked with creating, maintaining, and disseminating U.S. measurement standards. Prototype artifacts, like those which defined units of length and mass, were held by NBS, to be seen and handled by only a handful of scientists and VIPs. The crown jewels of America’s measurement scientists were kept under lock and key in a vault on the NBS campus in Washington, DC.

In addition to storing contemporary standards, the vault became a place to house valuable historical artifacts, like the meter bar that was referenced in an incredibly fraught survey of the east coast in the early-to-mid 19th century, and the 1799 kilogram that was fabricated according to the specifications set at what some historians consider the earliest international scientific conference. The vault was also used on occasion to store highly sensitive items, like the original glass plate negatives taken of the ransom notes from the Lindbergh baby kidnaping in 1932, which were brought to NBS for handwriting analysis.

Over time the vault turned into something else entirely—an exhibit. In 1955, glass doors were added and it was opened for public viewing. Signage accompanied the artifacts, explaining their importance. These changes addressed an increasing problem: frustrated citizens roaming the NBS campus, hoping to get a glimpse of the measurement standards, who had no recourse in previous years but to leave disappointed.

When NBS moved its headquarters from Washington, DC, to Gaithersburg, MD, in the early 1960s, a larger vault was constructed at the heart of a newly dedicated Museum. Many of the same objects were put on exhibit, as well as never before displayed artifacts that were identified and donated by NBS staff. The arrangement, labeling, and presentation of the objects told the tale of science and technology, as scientists and engineers would have it told to the general public: a linear march towards progress and advancement led by luminaries in their fields.

Much changed over the next 50 years, including the name of the agency which is now known as the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). Despite the passage of time, the core of the Museum has not been much altered. Over half of the objects are still in the same place, with the same labels. Though the creators of the Museum saw the need to make a publically accessible display which communicated the NBS mission and its work to the general public, they did not create the infrastructure to regularly collect, interpret, and exhibit historical objects. The Museum’s continued existence was made possible by a series of librarians, archivists, and historians who either formally or informally acted as caretakers. It was not until 2014 that NIST hired its first Museum Curator.

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 changed the security posture of NIST and many other federal agencies. The NIST campus is no longer open to the general public. A fence and strict visitation rules now separate the Museum from the people for whom it was intended. So then, it is fair to ask, has the Museum reverted back to the days of an exclusive cabinet of curiosities locked away for the enjoyment of a select few?

Certainly digital technologies have opened up a number of possibilities for sharing NIST’s historical collections with the general public (see, for example, the NIST Digital Archives at http://nistdigitalarchives.contentdm.oclc.org/). But what of the physical Museum? Why keep, renew, and reinvest in it?

First and foremost, the NIST Museum itself is an historical object. There is a dearth of museums in the United States devoted to the history of science and technology (not to be confused with science centers), and fewer still that have passed the 50-year mark. It is also unusual that the NIST Museum is situated in the same environment where the artifacts are created and used, allowing for a collecting effort that preserves both location and agency context.

This kind of historical apologia only appeals to a small subset of people. As such, the NIST Museum is realigning its research and exhibits to reach and support a surprisingly overlooked demographic—those who walk the halls every day. Approximately 2,800 federal employees, 4,300 associates, and 12,000 conference attendees come to the NIST Gaithersburg cam-
The National Park Service at its 100th Anniversary
Terrance Rucker and Anne Musella

This year’s Hewlett Lecture and reception were held at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, DC on October 20, 2016. A panel of two National Park Service (NPS) employees, Donald Ledbetter, (National Tourism Program Manager), and former NPS Chief Historian Robert K. Sutton, discussed different aspects of NPS’s 100-year history and its efforts to engage citizens in celebrating this monumental anniversary.

Ledbetter discussed how the NPS celebrated its 100th anniversary nationwide. Instead of holding the celebrations at some of the well-known NPS landmarks like Yellowstone National Park, the Park Service wanted visitors the discover and celebrate the National Parks that meant the most to them. By using social media, NPS encouraged visitors to “find their NPS.” He also shared a multimedia presentation that featured various national parks and how

Instead of focusing on largely pedagogical, linear, and institutional narratives, the new emphasis is on embracing stories that resonate with NPS staff, associates, and guests. If anyone is likely to understand that measurement science and technology reflects both success and failure, rational deduction and seemingly irrational politics, Nobel laureates and unsung technicians—it is them. Critical history is the key to making the Museum relevant today.

The challenge of communicating these concepts with displays from the 1960s and a collection that did not grow significantly in the past few decades is real. Change takes time and resources. Instead of hoping and waiting for additional resources, the Museum is actively reaching out to NIST staff to become involved in collecting efforts and exhibit research. For a largely scientific and engineering workforce, this is a new experience.

An example of this kind of work is a recent collaboration with two of NIST’s forensic scientists. As NIST’s involvement with the development of forensic science standards expands, it is appropriate to explore the field’s past. The findings were unexpected. Extensive archival research revealed that not only did NBS have one of the earliest government labs performing handwriting, typewriting, and ballistics identifications, but that it played a significant role in the formation of other technical laboratories in the 1930s and 40s, including those of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the United States Postal Service. The resulting Museum exhibit reveals this largely unknown history, but also poses larger questions about why it is unknown. Why were valuable records destroyed? And, did shifting institutional priorities in the mid-1950s create apathy for this early work?

These questions generate interest about how we are preserving and interpreting objects and archival materials today, which raises awareness about ongoing collecting efforts. The Museum is taking this farther by encouraging all staff to help identify and suggest items for the historical collections. This is not only to benefit the Museum, but to encourage discovery of NBS/NIST history via material culture. The ultimate aim is to move this work beyond the fence that surrounds our campus. There’s lots of work to do here—a sentiment commonly voiced by many fellow historians and curators. After all, the collection is not just NIST’s cabinet of curiosities, it belongs to the Nation.

K. M. Frederick-Frost is the museum curator at the National Institute of Science and Technology (NIST) Museum in Gaithersburg, MD.
From Dust-Covered to Well-Thumbed: Administrative History and the National Park Service

John H. Sprinkle, Jr.

In the November 2016 issue of The Public Historian, Joan Zenzen takes one of the fundamental issues facing federal historians: “Why Administrative Histories Matter.” From her extensive National Park Service perspective, she lays out the institutional function of these chronicles of stewardship:

Administrative histories are an essential tool for park managers. They are written specifically for Superintendents, division chiefs, and other park staff. These histories lay out the significant events in the history of a park and, unlike a timeline, set these events within a larger historical context. They explain what was behind certain decisions. They chronicle a park’s conception, establishment, and management within the circumstances of the time period. They describe and evaluate past people, places, and actions. These histories illuminate a park’s unique management structure and also a park’s relationship with other NPS units and management entities. They set the national park unit into a larger story about the local community and the surrounding natural and cultural environment. As one historian told me, a good administrative history is a well-thumbed one, serving as a longtime reference for the entire park and remaining so even with changes in staff.

Zenzen’s elegant analysis is a capstone to recent interest in this genre of stewardship history. Three times since 2010 historians have gathered at the National Council on Public History (NCPH) annual meeting to discuss the nature of administrative history work. A collection of independent and institutional historians contributed to a wide-ranging discussion that focused on improving the product and its impact on the stewardship of National Park Service units and programs. Part focus group, part brainstorming session, and part group therapy, these discussions revealed a broad consensus regarding the purpose and need for administrative history within the National Park Service, as well as other federal agencies and institutions. As documented by several recent bureaucratic jeremiads, the overall reduction of historian staff positions, and the growing interpretive backlog (as opposed to its infrastructure maintenance backlog) within the National Park Service, one area of general agreement among the NCPH participants was the not-so-gradual declension of history as a discipline since the mid-1990s. Perhaps this subsidence reflects a more general pattern in the respect for historical sources, analysis, and interpretation, not to mention the replacement of well-crafted paragraphs by bulleted lists. The assembled practitioners, it seemed, were unable to chart a clear course forward, instead relying on the hope that:

- improved scopes of work, timelines, and peer review would make the communication between preparer and client more efficient and effective, thus avoiding controversies about controversial subjects
- the agency’s leadership would come about and recognize and reward the preparation of thorough and thoughtful annual narrative reports for all its myriad of bureaucratic layers, and,
- somehow, despite ever-tightening budgets, superintendents throughout the agency would have a collective Saul-like conversion and immediately authorize the implementation of administrative histories for each park unit and program.

These collaborative sessions at the NCPH have helped the NPS Park History Program understand the ongoing need to update its 2004 guidance for the preparation of administrative histories.

Transforming Joan Zenzen’s title into a question, federal historians might answer: “To whom do administrative histories matter?” Since 1916, the National Park Service has managed its now-more-than 400 units following the dilemma-filled principles of enjoyment today versus resource un-impairment for generations yet to come. In the 1930s, as the agency substantially expanded its historic preservation mission, it adopted the directive to gather or produce “true and accurate” facts about its stewardship properties. Thus, one might argue, that it would be impossible for the National Park Service to appropriately manage its holdings without maintaining an accurate administrative record of stewardship successes (and failures). Since 1998 NPS Director’s Order No. 28, the agency’s primary cultural resource management guidance, has classified an administrative history as one of a park unit’s nine baseline research reports. The stewardship history of a park is “of particular value to managers, planners, and interpreters [and] describes how a park was conceived and established and how it has been managed to the present day.” It emphasizes “the park’s legislative history and important issues in planning, land acquisition, development, public relations, and other topics of ongoing management concern.” If administrative history is so highly valued, then how long can a superintendent or a program manager continue to manage a protected area without a current version of this significant baseline documentation?

Although calls to document the agency’s history began in the 1950s, the formal administrative history program really began, as outlined in Zenzen’s Public Historian essay, with the appointment of Barry Mackintosh as the first Bureau Historian in 1982. Almost immediately the undertaking ran into trouble with the controversy surrounding Mackintosh’s analysis of operations at the Wolf Trap Center for the Performing Arts. Perhaps it is the bureaucratic tendency among public agency managers to avoid any consideration of controversy that explains why, if there is such widespread agreement as to the practical value of administrative histories, that they are so often left on the shelf to become dust-covered, outdated, and even forgotten.
Or is it simply a matter of accessibility? Is the solution as easy as requiring a well-crafted index, or is something more dynamic needed? If our administrative histories were packaged as internal websites with interactive timelines and exciting graphics (not to mention videos), would their content be more likely to be understood, or at least accessed, by an audience of agency administrators who are already overburdened with management responsibilities? In a world of “just in time” learning and the pervasiveness of authoritative sources like Wikipedia, perhaps it is prudent to reconsider the traditional format of a book-length monograph. The typical park superintendent does not have the time to go leafing through a 200-page administrative history to find out the story behind a particular resource management issue, nor at most parks is there a historian on staff who has the relevant subject-matter expertise and historical perspective. Where to begin? Perhaps, as Larry Dilsaver did for the National Park System, individual parks and programs could start by compiling an easily accessible collection of critical documents, including enabling legislation, planning documents, and annual reports. Alternatively, administrative history work could be segmented, or compartmentalized, in a manner similar to way parks have created “foundation documents” as the first chapter for all subsequent planning activities. However, simply transforming well-crafted, book-length narratives into whiz-bang websites, which have their own significant sustainability issues, is not the whole answer to improving access.

But, how do we get our administrative histories, in whatever format, to become well-thumbed? In the early 1960s, long-serving NPS historians could look back to the 1930s crisis generated by widespread recognition of the reconstructed inaccuracies found at Wakefield, the George Washington Birthplace in Westmoreland County, Virginia (also known as “Fakefield”), as the impetus for a long period of bureaucratic respect for the practice of history. It seemed that, in those days, from an admittedly nostalgic view shaped by the cultural context of the Cold War world, authenticity and accuracy mattered, as did academic integrity. Today, with the veracity of facts under siege on an hourly basis, and the virtual world rapidly replacing real physical experiences, one wonders if such a reconstructed comedy of historical errors would receive the same level of attention, or disapprobation. With the ongoing generational shift—as the millennials take over the world we have left them—federal historians need to become more seriously engaged with issues surrounding the transfer of knowledge, a trend that seems to offer a brighter future for the role of administrative histories, if only we could re-brand them as somehow cool, trendy, or as noted in the movie Mean Girls: “fetch.” As a group, federal historians are certainly more likely to lead the proverbial horse to water if our work is inherently more accessible and our products more adaptive to a changing world.

John Sprinkle serves as the National Park Service’s Bureau Historian. The views and conclusions expressed in this essay are those of the author and should not be interpreted as representing the opinions or policies of the National Park Service or the United States Government.

WWI Centennial Commission Holds Collaboration Meeting

Thomas I. Faith

The United States World War I Centennial Commission hosted a collaboration meeting for ex-officio members in federal history programs on September 22, 2016. The Commission’s plans for 2017 were discussed along with a variety of projects undertaken by several agencies. Executive Director Dan Dayton said that it is the goal of the World War I Commission to “insight a national conversation about World War I” that will invite the public to think about the causes, course, and consequences of the war. With that in mind, Dayton said the World War I Commission was forming a communication advisory board to assist them with getting the message out in 2017.

Commissioner Edwin L Fountain spoke about next steps toward the construction of a national First World War memorial at Pershing Park. Building a memorial on the site poses a unique set of challenges, Fountain said, since Pershing Park is an active urban space with existing features that need to be preserved. He said that the memorial will retain the central water feature and amphitheater design as currently situated, with the addition of a bias relief wall depicting 3 to 5 scenes from World War I—currently conceived to include a father saying goodbye to his family, a battle scene, a depiction of the nation at war, loss, and homecoming. In addition to the Pershing Park project, Fountain also highlighted the Commissions support of the 35 state commissions that have begun commemoration work so far.

Participants from several federal agencies spoke about their projects as well. John Hoffman from the Center of Military History talked about the World War I pamphlet series being prepared for publication, one of which on the Mexican Expedition of 1916 is already available. Eric Marr of the ABMC highlighted the commemorative events that are planned at ABMC cemeteries across Europe through 2018. From the Library of Congress, Ryan Reft spoke about the “Artists View the Great War” exhibit that is currently hosted there. Peter Jakab from the Air and Space Museum described an upcoming exhibit on artistic expression during World War I called “Artist Soldiers,” as well as a planned monthly First World War film series. Bob Vogel from the National Park Service highlighted the upcoming publication of “World War I Remembered,” an NPS guidebook to World War I, and a planned companion website. Representatives from the VA and DOD also spoke about public outreach efforts and support for First World War projects across the country. More details about these and other World War I related projects will become available through 2017 as the First World War centennial commemoration begins.
World War I is sometimes overshadowed by World War II in public memory. However, the National Archives is working to cast new light on the Great War for the ongoing centennial. NARA has announced a series of initiatives that will benefit researchers, teachers, and museum professionals nationwide. As the centerpiece of this undertaking, NARA recently launched the beta program of a new “Remembering WWI” mobile device application. This iPad app provides Great War imagery, video, and information at the touch of your fingertips.

The project is the culmination of a larger scale, long-term project to digitize still images related to World War I and II. Incorporating new technology, the creation of this iPad app will undoubtedly bring history to new audiences accustomed to the digital age. The Archives has invited the public to participate in improving the app before official nationwide launch in schools and museums in February 2017. The public can navigate the user interface, research, and share feedback in order to inform changes to the app on its History Hub page. Before the beta launch, the application was subjected to a series of tests and workshops, particularly involving teachers, in order to better understand how it could be used in a classroom setting. The public was also invited to contribute to content themes via the Historypin page dedicated to the project.

The application itself is very user friendly, and allows researchers to interact with a geographical interface focusing on relevant local community interests or broader themes. It highlights films, broken into short segments, but also gives users the ability to view full-length features. As part of the larger program to digitize World War I documents, NARA has also unveiled a new Meuse-Argonne Offensive website. As the “deadliest campaign in American history, resulting in over 26,000 battle deaths,” the Meuse-Argonne Offensive remains pivotal to the history of the war and, particularly, the fighting done by the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF). The Archives has gathered relevant records related to the offensive in a convenient central website, allowing researchers to access information on everything from military records to correspondence files. Another website feature related to geographic analysis is information on the “Town Files,” which provide documentation for specific battles American units were involved in. Of course, these files include photographs and maps as well.

It has been over 102 years since the start of the Great War in Europe, but too many barriers to information access remain and WWI is too often ignored by a wider audience. Many teachers may not spend much time teaching this part of history because of its inaccessibility. NARA has gone to great lengths to digitize information relating to the First World War and allow its public accessibility. This effort will undoubtedly bring new life to WWI holdings, inspire new work on the topic, and new interest among the public.

Remembering WWI History Hub Page: https://historyhub.archives.gov/groups/remembering-ww1

Remembering WWI Historypin Page: http://www.historypin.org/en/rememberingww1/?geo=71.991879,10.06763,2/bounds/-13.669536,-70.791745,87.738955,90.927005/paging/1

The Meuse-Argonne Offensive: https://www.archives.gov/research/military/ww1/meuse-argonne.html
NCH Intervenes to Preserve History Office at NASA’s Johnson Space Center

Lee White, executive director of the National Coalition for History

In July, NCH was made aware by the leadership of the Organization of American Historians (OAH) that the history office at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration’s (NASA) Johnson Space Center (JSC) was likely to be defunded and closed at the end of the 2016 fiscal year on September 30. One historian in the three-person office had already been terminated. This situation was especially disconcerting because of the vital work of the JSC office in preserving the oral histories of astronauts and engineers, scientists, technicians and agency managers who blazed our nation’s trail into space.

The JSC history office was the 2016 recipient of OAH’s Friend of History award. The prize “recognizes an institution or organization, or an individual working primarily outside college or university settings, for outstanding support of historical research, the public presentation of American history.”

Under the current structure, each of NASA’s eleven centers across the country has its own history office. Each is autonomous and operates under the purview of that center’s assistant administrator. The JSC historians are not federal employees but work for a contractor; thus they could be let go without the usual restrictive federal personnel rules applying.

On August 15, NCH sent a letter to NASA Administrator Charles F. Bolden, Jr. urging him to provide the funding necessary to keep the JSC office open with the resources it needs to be fully staffed and maintain the same excellent level of service to the historical community and the public it has provided in the past. The OAH and the AHA each communicated to NASA the same concerns regarding the imperative of continued funding for this work.

On September 23, NCH received a highly favorable reply from NASA’s Chief Historian William P. Barry. Stating that NCH’s “letter was both timely and impactful,” he reported that the history office was being restructured within the JSC under the management of a civil service employee and that the contractor staff was being retained with plans to add an additional person in the future. Assuring the AHA that “the attention of the very top management has been turned to the history program,” Barry told OAH president Nancy Cott that Administrator Bolden places “a high priority on having a strong history program at NASA” and that steps are being taken to strengthen the program, “including placing the office under the purview of the Chief Knowledge Officer.”

The outcome was the direct result of NCH working collaboratively with OAH, AHA and the Society for History in the Federal Government to achieve this common goal.

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Newly Declassified Records

This issue’s featured declassified series is a large series this time, and it will appeal to the aerospace/defense technology specialist. The records belong to RG 402, the Bureau of Naval Weapons, a short-lived naval organization that replaced the Bureau of Ordnance and the Bureau of Aeronautics in 1959, only to be reorganized into the Naval Ordnance Systems Command and Naval Air Systems Command in 1966. The files (676 Hollinger boxes designated by the finding aid entry number P 7) are a wonderful collection of original company proposals made to the Navy starting in the immediate post-World War II timeframe and lasting until the early 1960’s. The documents from each proposal vary considerable, from very thin folders with very general information to quite detailed documents with multiple folders and detailed drawings and performance data. Nearly all (if not all) of the early Cold War naval aviation inventory is represented in this series, including many little-known or totally unknown projects that were submitted in response to Navy requirements or as unsolicited proposals upon which an aerospace company made a gamble. The individual proposals are outlined on a lengthy list found in the last box of the series (Box 676), but the list has not yet been updated as the records have been rehoused, so the researcher will have to guess as to which current box contains the records desired. While the vast majority of the documents in this series has been declassified, there may be a few documents that have been withdrawn for national security reasons. The document withdrawals are represented by the standard NDC red-striped withdrawn item notice. To discover more record series declassified by the NDC, please visit the NDC Blog at http://blogs.archives.gov/ndc/ for a complete list of declassified record series and an opportunity to set processing priorities on a number of record series awaiting indexing.

– A. J. Dawarede, NARA, NDC
Presidential Library Records

How Classified Presidential Library Records are Released to the Public

Nate Jones

The Presidential Records Act of 1978 (PRA) established that the papers of U.S. Presidents legally belong to the American people. According to the law, the Archivist of the United States assumes responsibility for the custody, control, preservation, and accessibility of Presidential records after the President leaves office. Moreover, the Archivist of the United States has the “affirmative duty to make such records available to the public as rapidly and completely as possible.”

This is the first contribution of a regular Federalist column discussing the activities and new document releases of the Presidential Libraries.

Presidential records are made available to the public through each administration’s Presidential Library, which are located across the United States. The libraries themselves are often federal and private amalgamations. For example, while all of the records at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library are maintained by the National Archives and Records Administration, the Library’s recreation of the Oval Office—and its other museum exhibits—were financed by private funding through the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation.

The PRA states that the public can request Presidential records “in accordance” with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) beginning five years after the President leaves office. In addition to the exemptions under FOIA in which documents can be withheld (except, wisely, for FOIA’s Exemption Five), the PRA defines six additional exemptions through which Presidential documents can be withheld for 12 years after the President leaves office. After this 12-year limit, both the former President and current President also retain the ability to invoke executive privilege and stop the release of information, though this privilege has rarely been used.

Unfortunately, the release of Presidential records is very rarely “rapid,” especially if the documents were previously classified, as a substantial portion of those sought by researchers are. In most cases, a researcher must file a FOIA request with the Library for the record they are requesting. Then, if the Library determines the record is classified (a process that often takes longer than a year), the requester must file a second Mandatory Review request with the federal agency that claims “equity” of the record.

Recently, the National Security Archive received a response to a Presidential record request which took over 12 years to process. A more efficient system would empower the Libraries themselves, or perhaps the National Declassification Center, to more quickly declassify these historic documents.

Additionally, Presidential Libraries are embracing digital platforms to make their records available to the widest possible audience. While all Libraries are moving in this direction, some are better-utilizing digital resources than others. The best I have seen to date is the George H.W. Bush Library which has excellent, expansive, and well organized online collections of the President’s memcons and telcons with foreign officials, National Security Council Meetings, NSC Deputies meetings, and much more. Other libraries would do well to follow the Bush Library’s digital lead.

Future columns will alert readers to Presidential Library document releases and appraise them. If you have any observations, questions, or hot releases, please send them my way via twitter: @nsanate.
From the Archives

The Federalist Hiatus

Chas Downs

When Volume 1, number 1 of The Federalist came out in the summer of 1980, the Society for History in the Federal Government met one of its fundamental goals, the creation of a quarterly newsletter to serve the Federal history community. As noted in “From the Archives: The Federalist,” Winter 2013–2014 (#40 p.13), this publication was intended to “to serve as a means of communication between Society members distributed over a wide geographic area and an even wider variety of historical interests.”

Sharon Gibbs Thibodeau served as The Federalist’s editor for the first five editions. Then, starting in Winter 1981, Judson MacLaury took over from her. He was followed by a number of editors with varying lengths of tenure, until Fred Beck assumed editorship in Fall 1996, when he was replaced by Steve Garber, who had been Associate Editor, as editor for the Spring 2001 edition. But Garber was unable to continue as editor, and with Beck retired, The Federalist was in dire need of someone to take over editorship. Despite SHFG President James B. Gardner’s pleas, the position remained unfilled, forcing publication of The Federalist to cease.

By 2002, it became obvious that the hiatus would not be brief, so Gardner’s successor Richard McCulley announced the creation of a new Publications Committee, chaired by former The Federalist editor Beck, and consisting of Betty Koed, editor of the stop-gap SHFG Monthly Bulletin; Ed Schamel, SHFG webmaster; and Kevin Ruffner, a former The Federalist editor. The committee was mandated to examine and make policy recommendations on how the Society communicated with its members, and report to the executive council in October. After holding its first meeting on August 21, 2002, and receiving advice and opinions from several SHFG members, the committee produced “Society Publishing and Communication Issues, An Interim Report,” on November 13, 2002. Issues that the report examined included: utilization of the Internet; the value of producing The Federalist and Occasional Papers in hard copy; and the need to address the “graying” of the Society’s membership and the desirability of appealing to younger professionals. Providing tangible items such as The Federalist in the mail could be an inducement for current members to renew, while having a viable and current SHFG website would appeal to younger, Internet savvy historians. However, a practical problem remained: the Society’s continuing inability to fill the editorship of The Federalist. Roger Launius, who succeeded McCulley as SHFG President in 2003, continued to work with the Publications Committee, until, in November of that year, it was announced that The Federalist would be revived. Recognizing the substantial responsibilities and work load entailed in serving as editor of The Federalist, four co-editors were recruited, with the intent that each would be responsible for one of the four annual editions. A “story list” was circulated containing proposals for the contents of the first edition of The Federalist, which finally did resume publication as promised in the Spring of 2004.

To avoid confusion, the revived newsletter was called the “Second Series,” with the first issue designated Number 1, and would continue consecutively with no volume breaks. John W. Roberts edited the first, with co-editors Benjamin Guterman, Betty Koed, and John Lonnquest alternating editorship of the next several issues. Eventually other co-editors were added, including Jeffery S. Resnick, Terrence Rucker, and Alben Kowalewski. As these co-editors came and went, only Guterman, the last of the original co-editors, was left. Starting with issue #36, he continued to serve as sole editor until his recent retirement with the Fall 2016 issue (number #51). Not only was Guterman’s tenure as editor by far the longest of any The Federalist editor, during this period he also edited other SHFG publications, was instrumental in the redesign of the SHFG website after taking over as webmaster, and co-founded and edited the Federal History Journal.

As the new The Federalist editor Tom Faith assumes his duties, I have no doubt that he will receive the same invaluable help and support that his predecessors enjoyed from the SHFG membership.

To learn more about the SHFG Archives, or if you have additional information or documentation on this or other SHFG matters, contact Chas Downs at chasdowns@verizon.net
Recent Publications

Many recent federal agency publications are featured at http://shfg.org/shfg/category/recentpublications/


The new edition adds a variety of new information: the close relationship GPO had with President Lincoln, the agency’s experience with the segregation imposed on the Federal workforce during the Woodrow Wilson Administration, a long-forgotten proposal to build a Government paper mill, GPO’s production of the transcripts of Presidential tape recordings during the Watergate crisis, and other events and milestones. It even has a new section on GPO’s appearance in movies and on TV over the years. New photographs have been added, and the book brings the agency’s history up to date to 2016.

“We are pleased to offer this new edition of *Keeping America Informed* to everyone who is interested in the history of the GPO and the essential role it plays in bringing transparency to the workings of our Federal Government,” said GPO Director Davita Vance-Cooks. “The agency is indebted to the work of our historian, Mr. George Barnum, who edited the new book, and to its designer, Mr. Dean Gardei,” she said, adding, “No history of the GPO would be complete without telling the story of the men and women who have worked here and who continue to serve the GPO’s critically important mission of Keeping America Informed. It’s to them that this book is truly dedicated.”

Copies of *Keeping America Informed* are being distributed to Federal depository libraries nationwide and may be ordered online from GPO’s bookstore for $38 at https://bookstore.gpo.gov/products/sku/021-000-00217-8.

*The Virginia Campaigns, March–August 1862*, by Christopher Kolakowski, covers key battles in the Commonwealth of Virginia including Malvern Hill, Glendale, Gaines’ Mill, Mechanicsville, and Second Bull Run. It also discusses the changes made in leadership of the Union command as President Abraham Lincoln and Secretary of War Edwin Stanton assumed direction of the war.

Christopher L. Kolakowski was born and raised in Fredericksburg, Virginia. He received his bachelor’s degree in history and mass communications from Emory & Henry College, and his master’s degree in public history from the State University of New York at Albany. He has spent his career interpreting and preserving American military history with the National Park Service, New York State government, the Rensselaer County (NY) Historical Society, the Civil War Preservation Trust, Kentucky State Parks, and the U.S. Army. He has published two books with the History Press: *The Civil War at Perryville: Battling for the Bluegrass* and *The Stones River and Tullahoma Campaign: This Army Does Not Retreat*. He is a contributor to the Emerging Civil War blog, and his study of the 1941–1942 Philippine Campaign titled *Last Stand on Bataan* was released by McFarland in 2016. He served as director of the George Patton Museum and Center of Leadership in Fort Knox, Kentucky, from 2009 to 2013, and became the MacArthur Memorial director in September 2013.

Many CMH titles are available to the general public from the Government Publishing Office (GPO). To check GPO prices and availability, go to GPO’s Online Bookstore at http://bookstore.gpo.gov, or call (202) 512-1800 or toll-free 1-866-512-1800.

*The Civil War in the West, 1863*, by Andrew N. Morris, is the latest addition to the Center of Military History’s U.S. Army Campaigns of the Civil War series. In 1863, Union and Confederate forces fought for control of Chattanooga, a key rail center. The Confederates were victorious at nearby Chickamauga in September. However, renewed fighting in Chattanooga that November provided Union troops a victory, control of the city, and drove the Confederates south into Georgia. The Union success left its armies poised to invade the Deep South the following year.

Andrew N. Morris is a retired U.S. Army infantry officer with a combat tour in Vietnam, multiple Cold War tours in Germany, and training deployments to Korea and Japan. After he left active duty, he earned his Ph.D. in history from the University of Kansas. In 2001, he began working in the U.S. Army Europe’s Military History Office, and was there until his May 2016 retirement, serving as the chief historian for the last few years.

Many CMH titles are available to the general public from
This volume addresses Somali President Siad Barre’s entreaties for U.S. military aid before and after the Somali invasion of Ethiopia’s Ogaden Desert, the U.S. response to Soviet and Cuban intervention on behalf of Ethiopia, attempts to negotiate an end to the Ogaden war, and efforts to retain U.S. influence in the region. Furthermore, the volume documents the arguments between Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Zbigniew Brzezinski over an appropriate response to the Soviet intervention, and whether to link Soviet behavior in the Horn of Africa to other bilateral issues, such as Strategic Arms Limitation Talks.


This volume is part of a Foreign Relations subseries that documents the most important foreign policy issues of the Jimmy Carter administration. The focus of this volume is on the administration’s efforts to negotiate, sign, ratify, and implement new Panama Canal treaties.

The volume documents the negotiations between the United States and Panama on the accessibility, security, and neutrality of the canal and its eventual transfer from the United States to Panama in 1999; the battle for public opinion, executive branch support, and congressional ratification of the canal; and the formulation of legislation necessary to implement and fund the canal. The volume further addresses other bilateral issues, such as U.S. attempts to influence Panamanian involvement in other Central American nations and Panama’s hosting of the Shah of Iran at the request of the United States.


CIA and the Wars in Southeast Asia, 1947–75: A Studies in Intelligence Anthology. Selections, introduction, and summaries by Clayton D. Laurie, CIA Historian, and Andres Vaart, Managing Editor. This digitally interactive and hyperlinked anthology was prepared as a contribution to Department of Defense-led interagency efforts to commemorate the passing of 50 years since the large-scale engagement of the military forces of the United States and other countries in defending the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) against communist guerrilla, mainforce, and North Vietnamese Army units. For CIA, and many members of the U.S. military, engagement in South Vietnam began well before what is marked as the beginning of the 50th anniversary commemoration, 1965. As the 41 articles selected by CIA historian Clayton Laurie for this anthology will show, Southeast Asia was the focus of CIA activity as long ago as the early 1950s, when it was directed to provide support to French efforts to maintain control of its colony of Indonesia.

This volume is dedicated to the men and women of the United States, Allied nations, and peoples of the region with whom U.S. intelligence worked to thwart the advance the advance of communism in Southeast Asia. Among the more than fifty-three thousand Americans who gave their lives were eighteen members of the Central Intelligence Agency, their sacrifices marked by stars carved into CIA’s Memorial Wall. Read it online here: https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/books-and-monographs/Anthology-CIA-and-the-Wars-in-Southeast-Asia/index.html.
Making History

Army Medical Department

The U.S. Army Medical Department Office of Medical History Winter 2016 AMEDD Historian newsletter is out. It features stories on Task Force Smith, Army medical training history, information about recent additions to their collections, and an examination of the history of staff rides and AMEDD personnel. Read past and current issues of the AMEDD Historian at http://history.amedd.army.mil/newsletters.html.

Atomic Heritage Foundation

The National Park Service announced that Kris Kirby will serve as the Manhattan Project National Historical Park’s new superintendent. Kirby brings to the position 20 years of experience with the National Park Service. Most recently, she served as Chief of Business & Revenue Management at Yosemite National Park. The Atomic Heritage Foundation recognizes Tracy Atkins and Charlie Strickfaden for doing a great job as interim superintendents and welcomes Kris to her new post. We look forward to working with the new team!

Central Intelligence Agency

In October 2016, Jack Pfeiffer’s five volume Official History of the Bay of Pigs Operation, originally prepared between 1979 and 1984, was released to the public. The cornerstone of this collection is a two-volume, 400-plus page document consisting of the CIA Inspector General’s (IG) Report on the CIA’s ill-fated April 1961 attempt to implement national policy by overthrowing the Fidel Castro regime in Cuba by means of a covert paramilitary operation, otherwise known as the Bay of Pigs, and a commentary on the IG report written by the Directorate of Plans (DP), now known as the Directorate of Operations (DO). These two volumes are a rare side-by-side compilation of high-level government self-evaluation of its own performance in an historic and controversial event. The remainder of the collection is comprised of various documents, to include finished intelligence, National Security Council (NSC) briefings and Spanish-language documents. The collection now stands at 769 documents, although more may be added in the future as additional documents are subjected to the ongoing review process. See it online at the FOIA Electronic Reading Room: https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/collection/bay-pigs-release.

Environmental Protection Agency

Emails have been sent to several professional societies serving historians (specifically AHA, HSS, and ASEH) asking them to send a letter to EPA’s Administrator Gina McCarthy suggesting that EPA reinstate its history program. At the end of August, Stan Meiburg, EPA’s Acting Deputy Administrator, met with Terrence Rucker, a past President of the Society for the History in the Federal Government to discuss historians’ contributions. The EPA’s history webpages at https://www.epa.gov/history have reportedly been updated for the first time in many years. It is hoped that Administrator McCarthy will institute a history position or program before leaving the agency with the outgoing presidential administration.

Forest Service

In conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act, the Forest Service commemorated the U.S. campaign against the British Fort at Prospect Bluff, Florida. The fort, destroyed in 1816 and rebuilt in 1818 as Fort Gadsden, is a National Historic Landmark located in Apalachicola National Forest. Regional Forester Tony Tooké presented the history of the site to over 200 participants during a formal ceremony. The event also featured 19th-century musical performances, historical reenactments and other activities.

George C. Marshall Foundation

The Marshall Museum recently hosted a new special exhibition, What We’re Made Of, featuring original oil paintings Coca-Cola used for advertising during World War II plus artifacts from Hershey and Hormel, the maker of SPAM products that became iconic rations during that war. Objects in the exhibition included World War II paintings, images and artifacts from The Coca-Cola Company; artifacts and images from The Hershey Story: The Museum on Chocolate Avenue; artifacts manufactured by “converted” companies during wartime from the George C. Marshall Museum Collection; framed original propaganda posters donated to the George C. Marshall Foundation by Lee, Karol, and Douglas Armbruster; images from the Hormel Corporation, and photographs from the George C. Marshall Library & Archives. What We’re Made Of is a part of the Marshall Legacy Series and is being presented with sponsorship from the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

Historical Society of Washington, DC

The Society announces a new exhibition, DISTRICT II, at the National Building Museum from November 19, 2016 until February 12, 2017. DISTRICT II is a poetic visual essay exploring the changing streetscape of downtown Washington in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s through the urban street photography of Chris Earnshaw, Joseph Mills, and the late Bill Barrett.

House of Representatives

The U.S. House of Representatives has launched a new oral history web exhibition to commemorate the centennial of Jeannette Rankin’s election (Nov. 7, 1916) and swearing in (April 2, 1917) to the House as the first woman elected to Congress: http://history.house.gov/oral-history/century-of-women/. Interviews include Pat Schroeder, Liz Holtzman, Yvonne Burke, Barbara Kennelly, Susan Molinari, Connie Morella, and Nancy Johnson, to name a few: full transcripts, bios, related objects and images, and nearly 150 video clips are available. More interviews will launch in early 2017 and more are in process. The total is expected to exceed 50 interviews by project’s end.

A Records Search feature on the History, Art & Archives web site
(history.house.gov) was also announced. (http://history.house.gov/HouseRecord/Search/) This new feature showcases a selection of the U.S. House of Representatives’ official records. The records reflect how citizens and their elected representatives address, advocate, and legislate for important issues. Metadata and historical and institutional context accompany each document. The unique perspective makes Records Search a valuable tool for researchers, educators, and the general public.

Please spread the word about this exciting addition to the History, Art & Archives web site!

Records Search features:
• Never-before-seen documents from the holdings of the House of Representatives
• PDFs of records can be downloaded and are searchable (when possible), facilitating classroom use
• Hi-res images of the documents with zoom capability allow close examination and analysis of each document
• Related subjects make it easy to find records about the same topic
• Related links provide additional context for the records and connections with content on the rest of the site
• Regular additions of new content keep the site fresh and encourage future exploration and discovery
• Each state and U.S. territory has at least one document related to its history

History, Art & Archives welcomes your feedback on Records Search. Please send any comments or suggestions to archives@mail.house.gov.

John W. Kluge Center
Historian, author, librarian and presidential speechwriter Edward L. (Ted) Widmer, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs in New York and a senior fellow and adjunct professor of history at Brown University, was appointed director of the John W. Kluge Center at the Library of Congress on October 3, 2016. He is the author or editor of many historical treatises, including The New York Times Disunion: A History of the Civil War; Listening In: The Secret White House Recordings of John F. Kennedy; a biography of Martin Van Buren; and Ark of the Liberties: America and the World. A forthcoming book, to be released in 2017, is Lincoln on the Verge: An Odyssey, By Rail. Widmer has also served as special assistant to the president for National Security Affairs and director for speechwriting at the National Security Council, from 1997-2000, as a special adviser to the president for special projects on issues related to history and scholarship (2000-2001), and as a special assistant from 2001-2004.

Library of Congress
The Library of Congress has undergone many exciting changes since Carla Hayden was appointed the Librarian of Congress in September 2016. The LOC website homepage has been redesigned to expose more content and function better on mobile devices. Other new digital initiatives include a collaboration with the Galileo Museum in Florence on a project related to the Waldseemuller map, and a collaboration with the Royal Collection Trust and King’s College London to digitize the papers of King George III. Additionally, the ceremonial office of the librarian of congress has been opened to the public. Check https://www.loc.gov regularly for updates on these and other new initiatives.

Margaret Sanger Papers
The Margaret Sanger Papers are pleased to announce the publication of ‘Round the World for Birth Control, 1920-1966, the fourth and final volume of The Selected Papers of Margaret Sanger, by the University of Illinois Press. The 720-page volume addresses Sanger’s least studied activities, from her groundbreaking advocacy of birth control around the world during the interwar years through her postwar role in creating the International Planned Parenthood Federation. The publication of this volume is the culmination of the Sanger project’s efforts to make Sanger’s papers available to the public in a variety of formats. Along with the volumes, the Project has produced a two-part series 101-reel microfilm edition, The Woman Rebel—an electronic edition part of the Model Editions Partnership, and a digital edition—The Speeches and Writings of Margaret Sanger (which is still being finalized). As a result, we have closed our project offices at New York University.

Marine Corps
A special issue of the Marine Corps University Journal on Climate Change & Policy is available at https://www.usmcu.edu/sites/default/files/MCUPress/MCUJ_si2016_CCP.pdf, focusing on the past, present, and future impact of climate change and policy. The issue is intended to inspire discussion on how U.S. agencies and Service branches address the subject based on operational demands, political pressure, and public opinion. This special issue of the journal also represents the strategic direction of the new editorial board and Marine Corps University Press staff who intend to address topics of value to the Marine Corps, Marine Corps University, and the larger Department of Defense community.

National Declassification Center
The National Declassification Center has released a listing of 228 entries that have completed declassification processing between January 2 and August 31, 2016 and are now available for researcher request. This release consists of records from both military and civilian agencies.

Highlights include:
• Department of State, Program and Subject Files for North Vietnam,
• Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, U.S. Consulate General, Hong Kong: Classified Central Subject Files,
• Joint Chiefs Of Staff, Office Of The Secretariat, Central Files,
• Army Staff, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2 (Intelligence); Project Decimal Files, 1964,
• Atomic Energy Commission, Classified Official Correspondence,
• Office of the Secretary of Defense, Advanced Research Projects Agency; Orders, and
• Bureau of Naval Weapons, Proposal Files For Aircraft, Helicopters, and Missiles (When making a request, please cite the HMS Entry and Series Title.)

Requests to access the newly released records or to order copies should be directed to Archives 2 Reference at 301-837-3510 or archives2reference@nara.gov. Please note that some series may contain other restrictions such as privacy or law enforcement and may require screening or a FOIA request prior to access. See the full list here: https://archivesdeclassification.files.wordpress.com/2016/10/ndc-released-entries-january-2-august-31-2016.pdf.

National Institutes of Health

The NIH recently lost one of its most prolific photographers. Gerald (Jerry) V Hecht died on November 24, 2016, age 88. His unmistakable skill, coupled with his trusted access to NIH surgical units, labs, and the White House, made him one of the many non-scientific staff members who have helped make the NIH a great scientific institution. The visual history of NIH would be lost if not for his photographs of everyday life at the NIH. These photographs captured the remarkable achievements of the NIH during a period of spectacular growth and a rise in prominence. In 2010 Jerry Hecht donated his prints to the National Library of Medicine and the Office of NIH History. To view some of his images, please visit the Office of NIH History Flickr page at https://www.flickr.com/photos/historyatnih/albums/72157645031352542.

The History Office at NIH has been commemorating the anniversaries of several NIH institutes. November 1, 2016, marked the 50th anniversary of the National Institute of Environmental and Health Sciences (NIEHS). Using oral histories, newsletters, and photographs, the event has been widely publicized on the NIH campus, and the NIEHS has digitized its oral history audio tapes in order to improve accessibility. The History Office is available to any Institute to help commemorate its anniversary.

National Museum of American History

On October 23, 2016, the National Museum of American History reached its goal of raising $300,000 to support the conservation and display of Dorothy’s Ruby Slippers from The Wizard of Oz, with over 5,300 backers. Congratulations NMAH! You can follow the conservation effort on their blog at http://americanhistory.si.edu/blog.

National Museum of Forest Service History

The National Museum of Forest Service History welcomes its new director, Lisa Tate. Tate grew up in Missoula, and credits the National Forests and public lands with molding her character. She has worked in nonprofit management, board development, and fundraising for over 30 years. Her work has primarily focused on conservation, animal welfare, the arts, and nature play based nonprofit organizations.

The Fall issue of the Museum’s newsletter is now available, with articles on “Protecting the Health of America’s Forests” through interagency partnerships, and the recently donated Neal Rham archives.

National Park Service

On October 6, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell announced a new study showing that spring is beginning earlier than its historical average in 75 percent of the national parks examined—providing further evidence that climate change is already impacting public lands. The announcement came during a visit to Shenandoah National Park, one of the sites identified in the study as experiencing the impacts of an early onset of spring. “Using sound science as the basis of this report, we can see that climate change is already impacting our nation’s national parks,” said Secretary Jewell. “Our challenge in real time is planning for and adapting to these changes—like the need to address increasing threats of invasive species, stresses on native species and changing visitor patterns driven by warmer weather. It’s clear that one of the biggest challenges our national parks face in their second century will be adaptive management in the face of a changing climate.” The study can be read here: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ecs2.1465/full.

National Portrait Gallery

On May 12, 2016, leading scholars converged at the National Portrait Gallery to discuss the Center for Visual Biography. The Center for Visual Biography hopes to foster and engage with current research on portraiture, art, and history. Members of the advisory board include both Smithsonian staff and a diverse array of outside scholars. Spearheaded by David C. Ward, Senior Historian and newly appointed Director of Scholarly Programs at the National Portrait Gallery, the Center for Visual Biography will increase the scholarly and academic programming at the National Portrait Gallery. The Center for Visual Biography’s inaugural initiative is the November 4 and 5 Richardson Symposium, organized by Dr. Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw and titled “Racial Masquerade in American Art and Culture.” The symposium will bring together scholars and artists who engage with the history of racial masquerade in their work while examining contemporary instances of racial masquerade in American culture and the ways in which performances of false identity continue to shape how we see ourselves and others.

National Women’s History Museum

In August 2016, The National Women’s History Museum announced the addition of six new members to its board of directors: Molly Bordonaro, Jon Bouker, Mari Snyder Johnson, Cheri Kaufman, Julie Smolyansky and Joan Walker. The board provides leadership for delivering on NWHM’s mission to build a museum on the National Mall that educates, inspires, empowers and shapes the future by integrating women’s distinctive stories into the culture and history of the United States.
“NWHM is pleased to have these accomplished members join our board at this exciting time in our evolution,” said NWHM Board Chair Susan Whiting. “These new board members bring their valuable expertise from the worlds of government relations, communications and marketing, community engagement, nonprofit strategy and business, as well as a firm commitment to ensuring women’s contributions to American history are included in our national narrative.”

Office of National Marine Sanctuaries

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced that John Armor has been selected as Director of NOAA’s Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS), our nation’s system of underwa- ter parks. Mr. Armor has been acting director since May 2015. He has been with NOAA since 2000, serving as the program’s national permitting coordinator, chief of the program’s Conservation Policy and Planning Division and ONMS deputy director overseeing personnel, policy and administrative matters for the system.

A team of maritime archaeologists from Monitor National Marine Sanctuary is using manned subsuribles and underwater robots in partnership with NOAA’s Office of Exploration and Research, Project Baseline, the Bureau of Ocean Energy and Management, the University of North Carolina Coastal Studies Institute and SRI Internationals, to survey shipwrecks from a World War II battlefield off the coast of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. The German U-boat U-576 and the freighter SS Bluefields have been identified in that area, both sunk on July 15, 1942. NOAA is currently considering an expansion of Monitor National Marine Sanctuary’s boundaries to increase protection of Bluefields, U-576 and other historic shipwrecks in the Graveyard of the Atlantic.

Papers of the War Department

To assist researchers of Native American history, the Papers of the War Department has compiled a list of tribes, with all known variations of spelling, mentioned in their collection. The Papers of the War Department contains over 2,000 documents pertaining to federal relations with more than forty Native American tribes, representing federal correspondence and documents from the early republic. See it here: http://wardepartmentpapers.org/blog/?p=1906.

Society of American Archivists

SAA Vice President/President-Elect Tanya Zanish-Belcher is now soliciting volunteers to serve on SAA appointed groups beginning in July 2017. If you’re interested in contributing to SAA’s growth—and furthering your “professional service career”—review the list of open appointments and the volunteer form at http://www2.archivists.org/news/2016/take-the-next-step-in-your-professional-service-career-volunteer-for-ansa-appointed-grou. Deadline: January 20, 2017.

Veterans History Project

Karen D. Lloyd has been appointed director of the Veterans History Project (VHP), a program of the American Folklife Center. Lloyd has served as acting director since September 2016. As a veteran herself, as well as the wife, child and sibling of service members, Lloyd is deeply committed to the project’s mission. In her role, she will be responsible for directing the activities to ensure the Library of Congress collects and preserves oral histories and documentary materials from veterans of World War I through the current conflicts.

VHP has also launched “Art of War,” the latest installment in its online “Experiencing War” website series at www.loc.gov/vets/stories/ex-war-artofwar.html. The presentation examines 19 digitized collections found in the VHP archive, all of which include original creative works produced during wartime. The works run the gamut from cartoons and photographs to watercolor sketches and illustrated envelopes produced by veterans from a wide variety of branches, service locations and military roles.

White House Historical Association

The White House Historical Association has launched a new exhibition, Blair House: The President’s Guest House, through March 3, 2017. Since its purchase by the United States Government in 1942, Blair House has served as the official guest residence for the president of the United States. Situated at 1651 Pennsylvania Avenue, across from the White House, Blair House accommodates visiting foreign heads of state and delegations upon an invitation from the president. Beyond its significant role in providing the best of American hospitality to dignitaries from abroad, Blair House hosts presidents-elect in the weeks preceding their inauguration and move into the White House. Before it was an official guest house, Blair House was the home of a prominent political family, and for more than a century the Blairs welcomed presidents as neighbors and friends.

Marking the story of the presidency through history, this exhibition presents Blair House, The President’s Guest House, as a historic private home, the threshold for a modern president’s inauguration, and the centerpiece of today’s diplomatic hospitality. The history of the house and its historic role within the U.S. Department of State and the White House are explored through paintings, photographs, documents, and objects from the Blair House collection.

World War I Centennial Commission

On September 26 the U.S. World War I Centennial Commission signed a partnership of mutual support with the Federal Government of Belgium regarding the commemoration of the Centennial of World War I. This new agreement calls for the two organizations to share their experience, knowledge, and technical means, as they prepare for the commemoration of the American intervention in World War I.

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