

# NATIONAL ARCHIVES CATALOG

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## And the winner is...

Alex Smith!

Last week we celebrated Public Service Recognition Week with our annual [Archivist's Achievement Awards ceremony](#). This event provides the opportunity to recognize volunteers and staff of the National Archives for their passion and dedication to serving the mission of the National Archives and the American people. This year, we were proud to present a special award to one of our most dedicated and enthusiastic Citizen Archivists: Alex Smith.

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*Archivist of the United States, David Ferriero, presents Alex Smith with the Citizen Archivist Award at the 2017 Archivist's Achievement Awards Ceremony. Photo by Jeff Reed.*

We first met Alex in 2015, when the Susquehanna University registrar was preparing to retire and looking for a meaningful way to spend his newly found free time. He read about the National Archives' Citizen Archivist transcription project and discovered a way to volunteer and, according to Smith, do "something that matters for an organization as important as the National Archives."

In the first eighteen months of his virtual volunteer work, Mr. Smith made a remarkable 11,100+ transcription contributions to the National Archives Catalog. Several times a week he logs into the Catalog and searches for his next record to transcribe. He often employs a serendipitous method to find the next record. For example, while searching for and transcribing telegrams, he reads about prohibition agents that leads him to search for prohibition. He's inspired by the books he reads in his leisure – searching for public figures in the catalog such as Sherman Adams, John Bricker, Meade Alcorn, and Ann Whitman.

Alex Smith is not only a diligent citizen archivist and transcriber, he also is an evangelist and cheerleader for records in the National Archives, sharing the stories he's found with friends. He is full of excitement when he discovers the intriguing, heroic and even the mundane within our records – he finds "happy

surprises” within routine and seemingly dry records. Always a storyteller, he recounts what he has discovered while transcribing and has inspired others to become citizen archivists as well.

We were thrilled to welcome Alex to the National Archives and present him with this year’s Citizen Archivist award. We even got to spend some time showing him around the National Archives at College Park and talking about our favorite records.



*National Archives Catalog Community Managers Suzanne Isaacs (left) and Meredith Doviak (right) with Alex Smith. Mr. Smith is holding a 19th century example of a wooden box used for the storage of records.*

Alex shared, “If it weren’t for the Archives, I’d be having a much duller time, so I really am grateful for the imaginative ways you have allowed us civilians to take part in your extraordinary work.”

We consider ourselves the lucky ones to have such dedicated volunteers. Thank you for all you do to make the records of the National Archives more accessible to all! Here are our top 20 contributors for the month of April. [Can you join Alex in the top 20?](#)

**Top 20 contributors in April:**

- |                        |                     |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Smithal             | 11. garywyssocki    |
| 2. PhillipEverettBacon | 12. LibrarianTeresa |

3. Icahalan
4. maileann
5. Ceili
6. Dkarimkhani
7. Jammon49
8. kb1213
9. gypsi
10. Bibliophile
13. PoliticalHistory
14. Nightingale
15. isrash
16. Msrosebud
17. ScribeOfPoland
18. happyAmerican
19. Daniel
20. katies

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## Bicycle Petition



In our [last newsletter](#), we featured photographs documenting the history of our agency. In one of those photos, you may have noticed an archivist examining a rather large document wound on wooden spools. What exactly is that record? And why is it so big?

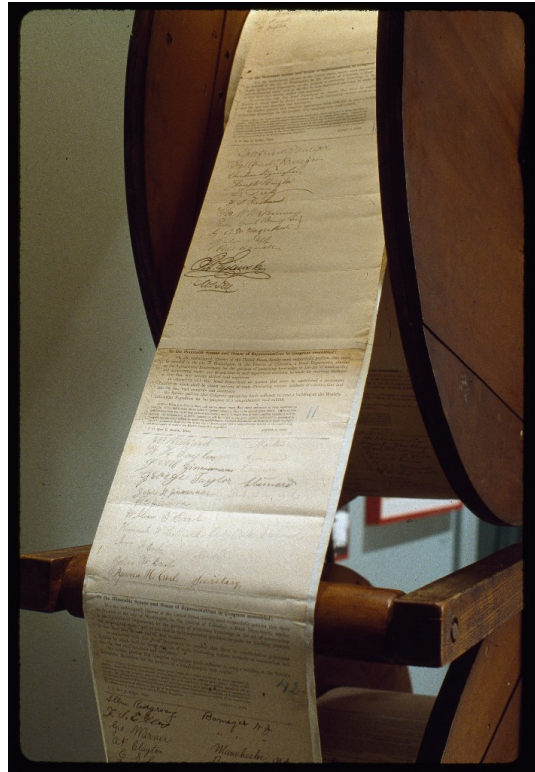
One of our eagle-eyed colleagues, Daniel Dancis, recognized this mammoth record as the [Petition for the Establishment of a Roads Department, Referred to the Committee on Interstate Commerce, 12/20/1893](#).

Over 6 feet high, this is one of the largest petitions in the holdings of the National Archives. Learn more about the story of this BIG record on the [Congress in the Archives Tumblr](#).

Thanks for helping us learn more about this record, Daniel!

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## Happy Birthday, Mr. President: JFK 100 Preview

This year marks the [100th anniversary of the birth of President John F. Kennedy](#). In commemoration of this centennial, the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum will be hosting a series of events and activities throughout the year.



*Birthday Salute to President Kennedy. National Archives Identifier 6816418*

Join us as we help celebrate [#JFK100 Social Media Day](#) on Tuesday, May 23! We will launch a special transcription mission featuring records relating to the 35th president. We'll launch this JFK Transcription Mission on our [Citizen Archivist Dashboard](#) on May 23. Stay tuned!



Throughout this day, the National Archives will join other archives, museums,

and cultural organizations to celebrate the 100th anniversary of John F. Kennedy's birth. Learn about the life, Presidency, and legacy of JFK through social media activities hosted by the GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums) community. Experts will be on hand to talk about the impact of President Kennedy, First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy, and the Kennedy White House. Whether your interests are in science and innovation, arts and culture, public service, civil rights, or peace and diplomacy, there will be so much for you to explore!

Questions or comments? Email us at [catalog@nara.gov](mailto:catalog@nara.gov).



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