This lecture provides a guide to obtaining records through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), using Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) case files, and how they can aid in uncovering family histories. By offering information on how to access FBI case files and examples from individuals’ research, this lecture provides genealogists with resources that may aid in their search for personal stories within Government records.
Netisha Currie is an archives specialist in textual processing at the National Archives at College Park. She specializes in the specially protected records and artifacts of high intrinsic value and leads the Vault Digitization Project. Netisha received a B.A. in Archeology and Anthropology from Oberlin College (2004) and a M.A. in Museum Studies from George Washington University (2011). Born and raised in the Washington, DC area with extended family in Mississippi, Netisha is interested in local and southern history.

Britney Crawford started working at the National Archives in 2004 while studying at Howard University towards a B.A. in Political Science and later her M.A. in Information Science from the University of Maryland, College Park. In 2011, Britney became an Archivist in the Special Access and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Branch where she is the lead archivist of the JFK Assassination Records Collection and specializes FOIA. She has experience teaching DC History and Research Skills while continuing research in information studies (particularly diverse populations) and program development.
FBI AND THE FOIA: 20\textsuperscript{TH} CENTURY FAMILY RESEARCH
Goals of the Presentation

- Provide an overview of the 20th century FBI case files accessioned at the National Archives (NARA)
- Inform genealogists of the family histories that exist in FBI records
- Provide step-by-step instructions on how to access FBI case files released under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)
- Share examples of family histories found in the FBI records
Significance of the Presentation

- This session hopes to:
  - Reveal new avenues of information that can be obtained from the FBI records
  - Share an untapped source of information at NARA
  - Expand the time frame of traditional genealogical research, bringing research up to the 20\textsuperscript{th} century
RECORDS OF THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
What is the scope of FBI records?

- Documents at the National Archives reflect the broad investigative mission of the agency
  - The FBI investigates crimes including:
    - Domestic/international terrorism
    - Public corruption
    - Civil rights violations
    - Organized crime
    - Kidnapping
    - Cyber crime
    - Etc.
FBI Records – Case Files

- Bulk of genealogical research
- Organized in the Central Records System
FBI Records – Administrative Files

- Office of the FBI Director
- Personnel files
- Records on the origins and development of the agency
FBI Records – Regional Files

- Records from U.S. attorneys and the federal courts
- Learn about the legal outcome of an investigation
- Records for the conclusion of the story in the case files
Classes of the Bureau

- 3 – Overthrow/Destruction of the Government
- 7 – Kidnapping
- 18 – May Act
- 23 – Prohibition
- 25 – Selective Service Act
- 31 – White Slave Traffic Act (Mann Act)
- 36 – Mail Fraud
- 40 – Passport Matters
- 44 – Civil Rights
- 50 – Involuntary Servitude
- 61 – Treason
- 65 – Espionage
- 77 – Background Investigations
- 91 – Bank Robbery
- 87 – Interstate Transportation of Stolen Property
- 100 – Domestic Security
- 105 – Foreign Counterintelligence
- 157 – Civil Unrest
Arrangement of Records

- Numbering Scheme
  - Class Number – Case File Number, Serial Numbers
    - 157-2438, Serial 1-102
    - Civil Unrest Case 2,438, documents 1-102

Within the Classes:

- Headquarters Files
- Field Office Files
- Bulky Enclosures
- Bulky Enclosures
The Mann Act, 1910
- Prohibited transportation of women in interstate/foreign commerce for purposes of prostitution, debauchery, immoral acts

Records Dates: 1921-1966
- Microfilm records
- 237 cubic feet, 505 boxes
- Most records have been declassified and are available
Class 44 – Civil Rights

- Records Dates: 1920-1999
- 7,403 boxes, 4,070.5 cubic feet
- Established in 1924 primarily for investigations of KKK activity
  - Scope expanded to include violence against labor unions, racial disturbances, police and prison brutality
- Records document the great social and domestic change in American life in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century – institutional segregation, lynching, voting rights, civil unrest, protests
Records Dates: 1920-1978

- 1539 boxes, 895 cubic feet

Records contain information for research about organizations as well as individuals investigated for espionage – having unlawfully obtained data affecting national defense, or disclosed material to foreign governments.
Class 100 – Domestic Security

- Record Dates: 1939-1984
- 34,911 boxes; 37,519.6 cubic feet
- Classification created when FBI was deemed the “clearing house” for national defense and domestic intelligence matters
  - FBI was mandated to investigate organizations suspected of subversive activities (Communists, Fascists, Nazis)
  - Files concerning individuals concern the Japanese relocation centers during WWII; suspected Communist members/sympathizers
- Post WWII: investigations were expanded into anti-Vietnam activity, leftist groups, COINTELPRO investigations
  - Investigations opened under this classification were ordered to be submitted to the Department of Justice (DOJ) because of the suspected civil violations of the Bureau
Class 105 – Foreign Counterintelligence

- Record Dates: 1938-1988
- 1,401 boxes – 1,398.7 cubic feet
- Records contain information for research about organizations as well as individuals
  - Document foreign subversive activities as well as the activities of domestic political and social groups
  - Delve into the procedures and techniques of the FBI when conducting investigations (electronic surveillance, informants)
- Many case files focus on Soviet & bloc spy activities, anti-Semitic groups, Communist affiliates (Cuba and China), racial hate groups
- To narrow the scope of this classification, five more were created under the heading of Foreign Counterintelligence:
  - 199 – Terrorism; 200 – People’s Republic of China
  - 201 – Satellites; 202 – Cuba; 203 – All Other Countries
Class 157 – Civil Unrest

- Record Dates: 1957-1978
- 12,462 boxes; 626.4 cubic feet
- Established in 1959 to investigate civil disorders and demonstrations
  - Cases include records about incidents of civil unrest as well as investigations of groups that were thought to be disruptive
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA)
"To ensure an informed citizenry, vital to the functioning of a democratic society, needed to check against corruption and to hold the governors accountable to the governed"

- Enacted in 1966
- Records of the Federal Executive Branch
- Twelve subsections
- Amendments
FOIA Amendments

- 1974-Narrow the scope of law enforcement exemptions
- 1986-Broaden the scope of law enforcement records
- 2007-Open Government Act
Popular case files released from FBI Vault

Fannie Louie Hamer
44-HQ-22262, Section 2

Stokely Carmichael
100-HQ-446080
FOIA REQUEST
1. Written request
   A. Include:
      1. Contact information
      2. Scope of records as “reasonably described”
      Waiver Request (if applicable)

2. Submission
How to submit a FOIA request to NARA (archives.gov/foia/)

- Written request
- Contact information
- Records Reasonably described
- Case file number
- Certificate of Identity (if applicable)
FOIA: ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS
NARA Administrative Process

- 20 working days
- NARA search and triage process
- Response letters (responsive vs. non-responsive)
  - Case file
  - Case queue
  - Case review (1st-3rd party review)
    - agency review; NARA discretionary review/release
- Public access
What may you find?

- **Content - What is my history?**
  - Chronology, subject and document types, classifications

- **Exemptions**
  - Information withheld
    - Privacy/PII (Personal Identifiable Information)
    - law enforcement-b(6);(7)(a-e)

- **Cross References**
  - 1. other subjects (organizations/people)
  - 2. case file numbers (headquarters and field office)
Case File Type

Headquarters File

Field Office File

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Office Memorandum - UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (100-40496)
FROM: JAC, ANCHORAGE (65-336)
SUBJECT: ELDER LIGHTFOOT: SOLOMON McGAUX; ELDER JAMES MC COMB; DR. LOUIS PATMON; SECURITY MATTER - C

DATED: November 20, 1953

There are being enclosed copies of correspondence from GEORGE R. NGON to MR. HARVEY RIGG and to the Chief of Police, Anchorage, Alaska. This correspondence deals with the Russian language Bible which was dropped by Elder LIGHTFOOT SOLOMON McGAUX near St. Lawrence Island on 6/18/53. Said correspondence indicates that Elder McGa RX is not aware of the fact that the Bible was picked up by American authorities and did not reach Russian shores.

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ASH RESNICK is a key employee at the Caesars Palace Hotel-Casino in Las Vegas, and is well-known throughout the sports field. RESNICK has been observed in the company of WALT CHAMBERLAIN. While in Las Vegas on occasion at the Caesars Palace, and it was well publicized that CHAMBERLAIN was in Las Vegas for the opening of the International Hotel-Casino on 7/2/69.
Office Memorandum - United States Government

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI
FROM: GUY HOTTEL, SAC, WASHINGTON FIELD
SUBJECT: THOMAS DIXON
INFORMATION CONCERNING

DATE: September 22, 1947

Thomas Dixon
1129 Vermont Ave. N.W.
Washington, D.C.

September 8, 1947.

Mr. John E. Hoover
Director of the
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Hoover:
Document Types

TRANSLATION FROM RUSSIAN

(Inside cover page of the Bible in Russian)

"This holy book, the Bible, is sent to you in the name of Christ and God's love, by your loving Christian friend who is praying for you.

(Signed in ink) M. P. PERRY

If you would like to receive this Bible, and have profited by reading it, you may write to us about it. Write us care of the following address:

Russian Bible Society
A. 3. Box 3709
Washington, D.C. U.S.A."

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."

(Take, chapter 3, verse 1.)

(Reverse of the inside cover page; a message written in ink) "Given 5th 1953.

From a preacher of the Evangelical Church
L. S. ORCHUK
No. 1712 S Street, N. W.
Washington, D.C.,
United States of America,
Washington, D.C."

Whoever finds this Bible, write a letter if possible.

With a prayer for you.

Elder LEONID CHONCHIN

TRANSLATION

ENRICO T. LEONID
October 9, 1953

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 11/12/53

Session 12
April 19, 1920.

Hon. John Robert O'Connor,
United States Attorney,
Federal Building,
Los Angeles, California.

Re: - JOHN ARTHUR JOHNSON
Violation of Section 2
White Slave Traffic Act

Dear Sir:

I am transmitting herewith a certified copy of the indictment §21.66, in the case entitled U. S. vs JOHN ARTHUR JOHNSON, otherwise known as JACK JOHNSON, charged with having violated Section 2 of the White Slave Traffic Act.

This certified copy of the indictment was forwarded to me by Division Superintendent E. J. Breman of the Chicago office of the Bureau of Investigation, same having been secured by him on request from me.

JOHNSON is now located at El Juario, Mex., and from information I have received from our agents located at San Diego, I believe that JOHNSON will surrender himself in the near future.

Yours very truly,

S. A. Connell
SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE

United States Department of Justice
Fедерal Bureau of Investigation

Copy to: 1  U. S. Attorney, Jackson, Mississippi

Date: June 14, 1963

Field Office File No.: 41-1452

Subject: UNKNOWN SUBJECTS;
FANNY LOU HAMER; ETAL - VICTIMS

Character: CIVIL RIGHTS

Synopsis:
Victim HAMER arrested by Unsub believed to be a Sheriff or Deputy on June 9, 1963, Winona, Mississippi, bus station. Victim did not use facilities at terminal but was arrested when she inquired about other victims being arrested. She was not furnished the nature of the charges until her appearance in court June 15, 1963, when she was charged with immoral conduct and resisting arrest. She was released on two hundred dollars bond, June 15, 1963. Victim claims she did not resist arrest at any time and she was kicked by Unsub Sheriff or Deputy when entering his car to go to jail. After being placed in jail victim was beaten by two Negro male prisoners with blackjack on instructions from Unsub, Mississippi Highway Patrolman in the presence of 2 other white males, one of whom was seen later in the uniform of Winona, Mississippi, Police Officer. The third white male in the cell struck victim with his hand in attempt to quiet her screaming when being beaten by the prisoners. No medical treatment afforded her.

DETAILS:
Classifications (cont’d)

Classification 25

Classification 100
Classifications (cont’d)

Classification 105

Classification 157

Enclosed herewith for the Bureau are six copies of a letterhead memo captioned “ELDER SOLOMON LIGHTFOOT MICHAUX”, dated as above.

The confidential source mentioned therein is Source learned that S.B. CHEVERIKOV suggested MICHAUX write Ambassador MENSNIKOV setting forth his proposal. MICHAUX indicated he would contact CHEVERIKOV on 8/13/59, to determine if CHEVERIKOV obtained an appointment for him with the Ambassador. As of A.M., 8/14/59, MICHAUX was unable to furnish the information re this matter.

WFO indices reveal a file on “ELDER LIGHTFOOT SOLOMON MICHAUX, et al.; SM-C”, WFO file 100-28088, Bureau 100-404896.

WFO file on MICHAUX reveals that MICHAUX, accompanied by two other individuals, traveled to Nome, Alaska, 6/13/53, for the purpose of chartering a plane to take them to the International Date Line. They intended to drop from the plane...
Exemptions

B(6)/7) (C) - Personal Privacy

B(7)(D)-Source Code
Cross References

Subject:
Elder Lightfoot Solomon Michaeaux

HQ Case File:
100-HQ-404896
Cross References (cont’d)

NAME THIS FORM

Session 12

Slide 37 of 47
Can you find my great-grandfather?

Missouri who is 90 years old, and told me that my great grandfather (his uncle) Thomas DIXON was a secret agent of the Government throughout his life and especially two world wars. I would like to have confirmation and if possible information It is Thomas DIXON (son of Thomas Dixon and Nancy Walden, born in Nowe in 1883) but his real name would be Arthur LEBRUN (son of Louis LEBRUN Adelina Selma TRICHEL, from Louisiana, Natchitoches or Missouri, Saint-Lc to France in 1917 under order of the American army. He would be back in the USA around 1930 to spy Fritz Kuhn under the name of Thomas Dixon or "Chief New Moon". Is this true?

In the Vault folder of the FBI on Fritz Kuhn all secret agents are hidden, is among them or not at all? I just want to know if Thomas Dixon (or Arthur Lebrun) was working for the Government throughout his life. And if it advance for any help you offer me. IS VI

My family tree

THOMAS DIXON Alias ARTHUR L. LEBRUN Uncle of LOUIS MEZIERES.
His childrens in France.

File number 100-HQ-258821

Date range of request: Inside 1914-1966
Thomas Dixon

Dixon was interviewed by me in the Spring of 1942, probably in May or June, at which time he furnished little information of value. He was interviewed on reference from Mr. Ladd's Office and was primarily interested in obtaining employment. The brief review of the Bureau files which it was possible to make before interviewing Dixon, revealed that he had previously applied for employment and had been refused. Consequently he was appropriately advised that in view of his age and lack of qualifications there were no openings. Dixon mentioned briefly having been told by a Japanese in New York City that the Japanese Government had a large undercover army in this country. He was intensively and carefully questioned concerning this but could give no substantiating information other than the name of the Japanese who told him about this army, which name I do not now recall.

Very truly yours,

Thomas Dixon
1129 Vermont Avenue N.W.
THE CURRIE HOUSE BURNING

A FAMILY STORY FOUND THROUGH THE FOIA PROCESS
What We Knew

- Currie Settlement
- Ellisville, MS
- Multiple conflicts with the KKK in the early 1960s
  - Picnic with COFO workers
  - House burning

Family portrait – Brewel and Florine Currie and children, 1952
Questions That Remained

- Who?
- Why?
- When?
- What happened?

Home of Brewel Currie, Sr. March, 1965
What We Found

- **Who** – KKK Ellisville Klavern
- **When** – Oct 11, 1965
- **Why** – Retaliation for COFO incident

Home of Brewel Currie, Sr. Oct 12, 1965

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He states that during a meeting of the Ellisville Klavern of the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan of Mississippi (WKKKOM) on 1/12/65 a Mr. D. M. Robinson suggested that he believed that some action should be taken against the CURRIES. This was due to some members of the CURRIE family shooting at several Klan members who went to the CURRIE farm and attacked a group of COFO workers and young negroes who were at the farm having a picnic.

Statement from FBI informant, 157-2438-10
What We Found

- **What happened:**

  **Statement of Billy Roy Pitts (Klan member) and Florine Currie about the night of October 11, 1965**

  "I heard that the klans had dumped a bunch of civil rights workers at a pond at a Negroes house near Ellisville, Mississippi, known as the Currie Settlement. Cecil Sessum got shot at the time this trouble took place and wanted to get even with the Negro. About a year later, in the fall of 1965, Sessum got a group together including Billy Roy Pitts, Pat Lowe, Lamar Lowe, Henry DeBoxtel and an individual who drove a 1955 or 1956 Chevrolet. I later learned this individual to be Harold Stringer. We met at Cecil Sessum's house. I rode with Henry DeBoxtel and Stringer. Sessum drove my car which was at that time a 1959 Mercury, which had a yellow bottom and a white top. I carried a double-barrel shotgun which was loaded with tear gas. My job was to go up to the Currie house and shoot the gas into this man's bedroom. Pat Lowe, Lamar Lowe and Cecil Sessum poured gas around the Negro's house. Henry DeBoxtel shot the window out of the house so I could shoot the gas into the house. As this was done, the Negro came out of the house with a pistol. I had an unloaded gun, so I ran for the car and the Negro shot me in the left foot. As I made a dive for the inside of the car, he shot me again and it creased me on the left ear. I had a 25 automatic in the pants pocket but I didn't get it out. I was in Stringer's car as we left which was hit pretty bad in the rear deck lid. I understand that the bullet which hit my ear went into the floorboard of the car. Aaron Rogers drove my car away from the house of Currie, and it was hit two places on the right hand side right under some chrome.

  FLORINE CURRIE advised that on the morning of October 11, 1965 she, her husband, and children were asleep in their house when she was awakened by a loud noise. She stated that she could not describe the noise and that she could not say whether it was a gun blast or explosion. She stated that her husband went outside the house to investigate the noise and called back for her to wake the children. She advised that she got the children up and went outside to join her husband. When outside she noticed a fire under and on the front porch. She related that she and the children got water from the pump and were able to put out the fire. She stated that her son saw flames on the roof and it appeared that the whole house was ablaze. She stated the house was totally destroyed by the fire, but that no one was injured.

  She advised that she did not see anyone in the area of the house prior to or after hearing the noise which caused the family to be amused. She stated that she was primarily interested in seeking that the children were safe and trying to put out the fire and not pay attention to anything else. She advised that she and her husband slept in the front of the house and the children sleep in the back part of the house.

  She stated that when it was determined the house was lost she and the children went and stayed with neighbors while her husband remained at the property. She stated that she has not had an opportunity to talk with her husband about the fire. She stated that she lived in the house for twenty-four years prior to the fire."

Session 12
Afterword
QUESTIONS
Presenters didn’t get to your question?

You may email us at inquire@nara.gov