



Public Service: Military & Civilian

# NATIONAL ARCHIVES

## 2023 GENEALOGY SERIES

May 3–June 14 on Wednesdays at 1 p.m. ET

[www.archives.gov/calendar/genealogy-series/2023](http://www.archives.gov/calendar/genealogy-series/2023)



# 2023 Genealogy Series

## Public Service: Military and Civilian

### Welcome!

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is pleased to present this educational series of lectures on how to conduct family research.

As one of the nation's premier genealogy institutions, it is our mission to inform the public about National Archives holdings that relate to family history and to make those records available to you.





# About the Sessions



Our presentations will demonstrate how to use federal resources at the National Archives and Records Administration for genealogical research. This year we focus on individuals who have served our nation in military or civilian service. We also have a session on how to preserve your own family collections.

National Archives presenters are broadcasting from Washington, DC; College Park, MD; Denver, CO; and St. Louis, MO. Sessions are intended for beginners to experienced family historians—all are welcome!



# Join the conversation!



Participate with the presenters and other family historians during a session's premiere.

Live Chat on **You**  **Tube**

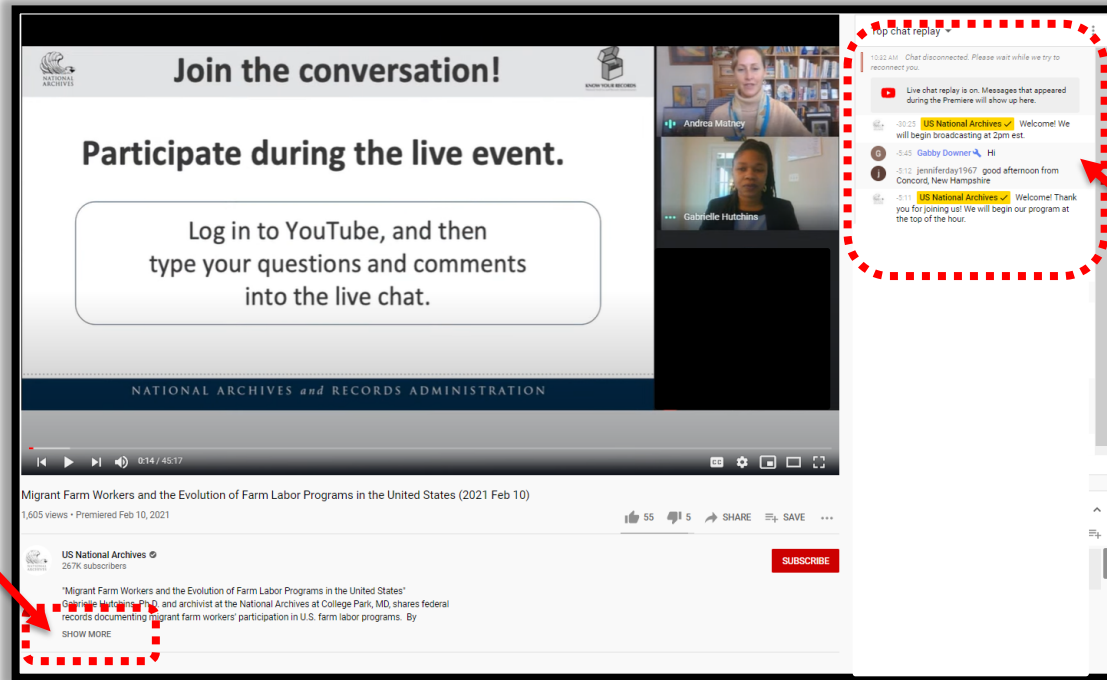
Log in and type your questions and comments.

Follow us at **@USNatArchives** on  **twitter**  
and join the Genealogy Series conversation  
using **#GenieSeries2023**.

# Instructions

## Show More

- captioning
- handout
- evaluation



The screenshot shows a YouTube live event interface. The main content area displays a video player with a title "Migrant Farm Workers and the Evolution of Farm Labor Programs in the United States (2021 Feb 10)" and a description. A red dashed box highlights the "SHOW MORE" link in the description. To the right, a chat window is open, showing a "Live chat replay" section and a list of messages. A red arrow points from the "SHOW MORE" link to the "Show More" section of the video player. Another red arrow points from the chat window to the "Chat" section on the right.

**Join the conversation!**

**Participate during the live event.**

Log in to YouTube, and then type your questions and comments into the live chat.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES *and* RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

Migrant Farm Workers and the Evolution of Farm Labor Programs in the United States (2021 Feb 10)

1,605 views • Premiered Feb 10, 2021

US National Archives  
267K subscribers

"Migrant Farm Workers and the Evolution of Farm Labor Programs in the United States"  
Gabrielle Hutchins, Ph.D., and archivist at the National Archives at College Park, MD, shares federal records documenting migrant farm workers' participation in U.S. farm labor programs. By

SHOW MORE

**Chat**

15:32 AM Chat disconnected. Please wait while we try to reconnect you.

Live chat replay is on. Messages that appeared during the Premiere will show up here.

4:21 US National Archives Welcome! We will begin broadcasting at 2pm est.

5:45 Gabby Downer Hi

2:12 jenniferday1967 good afternoon from Concord, New Hampshire

2:11 US National Archives Welcome! Thank you for joining us! We will begin our program at the top of the hour.

## Chat

- log in
- participate
- ask questions

**Videos and presentation materials remain available after the premiere date.**



# Schedule: May 3–17



**May 3**  
1 p.m. ET

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## Welcome and Introductions

**May 3**  
1:05 p.m. ET

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## *Civilians at War: Records of Participation in U.S. Military Conflicts*

**Claire Kluskens** - Subject Matter Expert for Genealogy/Census Related Records and Digital Projects Archivist from the National Archives in Washington, DC

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**May 10**  
1 p.m. ET

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## *Basic Military Records at the National Archives: Revolutionary War to 1917*

**John Deeben** - Archivist from the National Archives in Washington, DC

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**May 17**  
1 p.m. ET

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## *National Archives at St. Louis: Understanding the 1973 Fire and Its Impact on Genealogical Research*

**Eric Kilgore** - Archives Specialist from the National Archives at St. Louis

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# Schedule: May 31 – June 14



**May 31**

1 p.m. ET

## ***Civilian Conservation Corps Indian Division on the Reservation***

**Cody White** - Subject Matter Expert for Native American Related Records and an Archivist from the National Archives at Denver

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**June 7**

1 p.m. ET

## ***Accessing and Understanding Korean War Army Unit Records***

**Rachael Salyer** - Subject Matter Expert in Modern Military Records and an Archivist from the National Archives at College Park, MD

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**June 14**

1 p.m. ET

## ***Creating Your Own Preservation Survey and Plan for Family Collections***

**Sara Holmes** - Conservator in Preservation Programs from the National Archives at St. Louis

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**June 14**

1:55 p.m. ET

## **Closing Remarks**



# Session



## **Planning, Techniques, and Strategies for Preserving Family Collections and Stories**

Learn how professionals preserve records with surveys to create a plan, use archival techniques, and select storage strategies. Surveys help you create a plan of action to determine record treatment, housing, and storage. Archival techniques can be used on your own personal collections of paper-based materials, photographs, and objects. Strategies include how to identify storage needs for papers and photographs. We will tie this all together and show you how significant documents and records help to tell family stories.





# Presenter Biography



**Sara Holmes**

Sara Holmes started working at the National Archives in Preservation Programs at St. Louis in 2007. She is currently a Conservator. Before coming to the National Archives, she was a conservator at Texas Tech University and the Missouri State Archives. Ms. Holmes has a Master's in Library and Information Science with a Certificate of Advanced Study in Conservation of Library and Archival Materials from the University of Texas and a Master's in History from the University of New Orleans. She is also a Certified Archivist and was selected as a member of the first cohort of the Archives Leadership Institute in 2008.



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NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

# *Planning, Techniques, and Strategies for Preserving Family Collections and Stories*

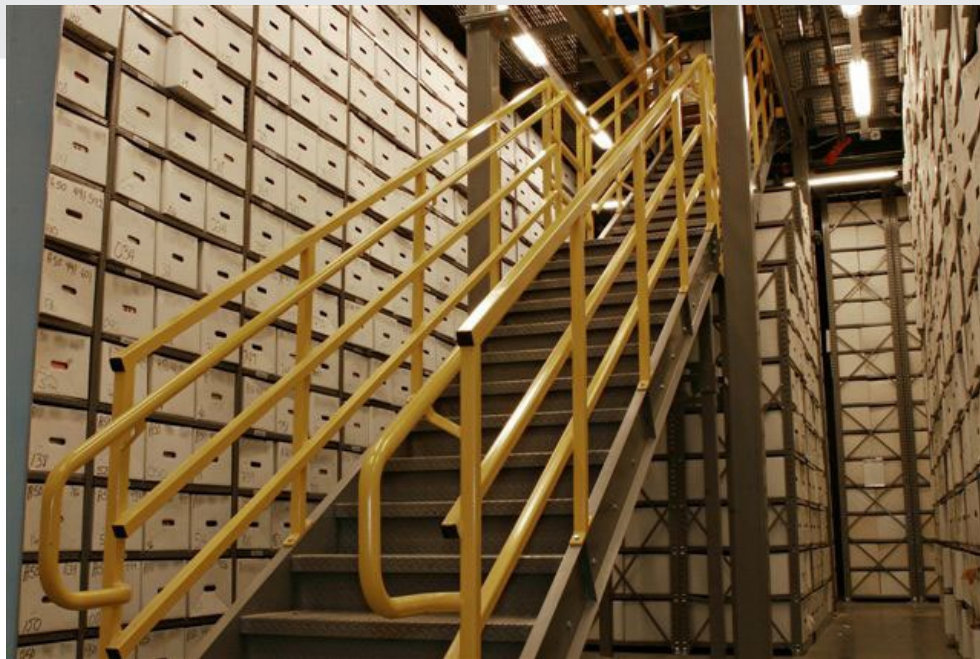
**Sara Holmes**  
**June 2023**



# Preservation Planning

Creating a preservation strategy for large institutional collections can include:

- Environmental standards for different kinds of records
- Identification of at-risk formats (audio, video, digital storage)
- Random sample surveys (statistically based)
- Collaboration with staff to help meet the needs of users
- Emergency planning



29-foot-high shelving on the first floor of the  
National Personnel Records Center



# Assessing Risk & Priorities through Surveys



# Surveying Archival Collections

The significance of a collection depends on its provenance and context.

## Provenance

- The origin or source of something
- Information regarding the origins, custody, and ownership of an item or collection

## Original Order

- The organization and sequence of records established by the creator of the records

From the Dictionary of Archives Terminology, Society of American Archivists



# Evaluating Risk

## Risk Management

- Describes the activities people and organizations undertake to identify, assess, and treat the risks that could potentially affect their businesses or organizations (or their family history!)

## Factors affecting risk

- Environment (temperature and relative humidity) in which collections are stored
- The media, materials, and condition of the items in your collections
- Accessibility of the item (book, floppy disc, 35mm slides, Betamax tape, audiotape, Wordstar file, etc.)
- Condition (inherent vice, natural chemical deterioration, and/or physical damage)



# Case Studies in Assessing Risk & Priorities in Family Collections



# Evaluating Significance & Risk

## Case Study: Aunt Mable's teapot



- Materials: Porcelain
- Condition: Excellent
- Stability: Low – easily broken
- Housing: Protect from breaking in secure display or box with padding

- Aunt Mable marked Dad's name on tape on the bottom (but the tape fell off years ago).
- What did the teapot mean to Mable?
- Why did she want dad to have it?
- We don't know!

Significance: Low  
(But it is cute)





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# Evaluating Significance & Risk

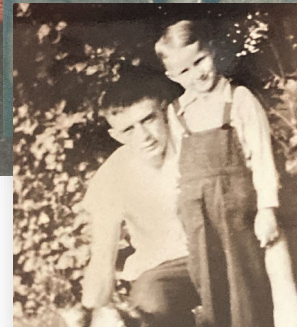
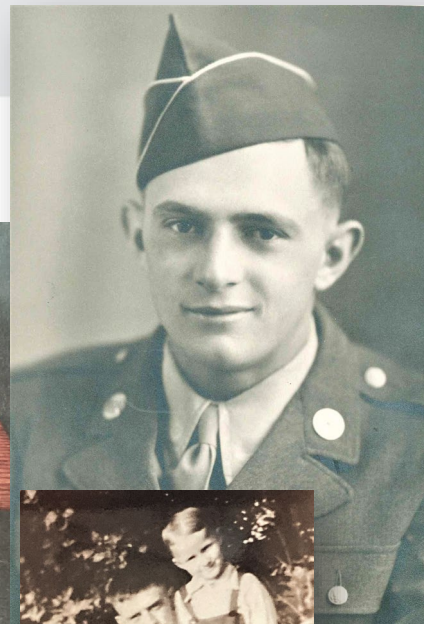
## Case Study: Toy Army Trucks, “U.S. Army Transport”

- On his last Christmas at home, Wendell gave these toys to Dad.
- Wendell was in the U.S. Army’s 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division (Ski Patrol).
- He was killed in battle in Italy in 1945.



Significance: High

- Materials: Wood, metal, paint
- Condition: Very good, some paint loss; stable and durable
- Housing: Display, or store in a fitted or padded box to keep from rolling





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# Evaluating Significance & Risk

## Case Study: Leather Mail Pouch



- Grandpa Sam was a rural mail carrier for 28 years.
- His “Safe Driver” awards were significant career achievements.

Significance: High



- Materials (pouch): Leather, metal; (contents): paper, plastic
- Condition: Worn, fair to good
- Highly stable
- Housing: Ideally leather (acidic) is not stored with paper; concern that plastic may degrade and damage paper cards inside — remove plastic; document that items were grouped and then store separately



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# Evaluating Significance

## Case Study: Leather Mail Pouch

But then we learned more –

Family documents and photos now  
combined with archival sources  
gave far more detail.

The Post Office Official  
Personnel Files has a 39-  
page record!

Maynard, Iowa  
Nov. 3, 1943

Mrs. Bessie Lykes  
Maynard, Iowa

route during the next few months. Since my  
route is completed by noon, I have the entire after-  
noon and evening in which I might be doing some  
work in the general war effort. Recently I have  
been working for the Wilson Produce Co. in Delwino,  
Iowa from two P.M. until ten P.M. Because of the  
labor shortage they are willing to make my hours  
flexible to allow for muddy roads and bad weather  
conditions which would keep me longer on the route.  
As you know, the Wilson Company prepares and  
preserves poultry and poultry products part of which  
are consumed by the armed forces. If this does not in  
our opinion  
my mail  
have my  
entire after-  
doing some  
they I have  
in Delwino  
cause of the  
my hours  
bad weather  
on the route  
cases and  
part of which  
does not in  
mail carrier  
office department

Sincerely,  
Samuel S. Holmes

Post Office Department, Official Personnel  
Files, National Archives



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# Evaluating Significance

## Case Study: Toy Army Trucks, "U.S. Army Transport"

And even more –  
Wendell's Official Military Personnel  
File was lost in the 1973 fire.  
However, there are other sources.

Finally our division was given its first major attack assignment. We were to take two mountains and various ridges that the Germans had occupied since last November. Needless to say it was a rough job and an extremely important one. We pushed off at night. Our morale was high. By dawn of the next day we were well on our way and had taken the mountains plus numerous prisoners. We then moved on to secure the ridges. We took one ridge that Jerry had zeroed in with mortars and before we had a chance to dig in we were under their fire. I was about twenty yards from your son when he was killed. He died instantly from concussion. There were no wounds on his body. I was hit with shrapnel shortly after and spent a month in the hospital.

Wendell often spoke of his father, mother and younger sister so I feel as though I know you. He was very fond of the pictures he had of you and carried them with him at all times. The day before the attack he received a package from his aunt. We were all crazy about that fudge. If there is anything else I can tell you I will only be to glad to do so. When I get back to the States I hope I shall have the opportunity of visiting you.

Sincerely yours,  
Merrill Archard (signed)

Sergeant Merrill Archard to Reick family, 1945 (family collection)

*Wendell's official military personnel file was lost in the 1973 fire.*

ORIGINAL

CHECK TYPE REQUIRED (See instructions attached) <input type="checkbox"/> UPRIGHT MARBLE HEADSTONE <input type="checkbox"/> FLAT MARBLE MARKER <input type="checkbox"/> FLAT GRANITE MARKER <input type="checkbox"/> BRONZE MARKER (SEE INSTRUCTIONS)		APPLICATION FOR HEADSTONE OR MARKER (Please make out and return in duplicate)	
SERVICE NO. DEPARTMENT DATE	37698522 PERSON NO.	<input type="checkbox"/> GRANITE (Check one) <input type="checkbox"/> MARBLE <input type="checkbox"/> NONE COMPANY	
NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial) Reick, Wendell F.	STATE Iowa	RANK Pfc	U. S. REGIMENT, STATE ORGANIZATION AND DIVISION 4TH
DATE OF BIRTH (Month, Day, Year) Feb 20, 1945	DATE OF DEATH (Month, Day, Year) May 13, 1945	LOCATION (City and State) Maynard, Iowa	
NAME OF CEMETERY Green Mountain Cemetery	NEAREST POST OFFICE (City and State) Maynard, Iowa	POST OFFICE ADDRESS OF CORONER Maynard, Iowa	
DO NOT WRITE HERE FOR VERIFICATION MAY 16 1945 GREEN MOUNTAIN, VT. 26 MAY 1945 3857578			
I certify this application is completed for a stone for the unmarked grave of a veteran. I hereby agree to assume all responsibility for the removal of the stone promptly upon arrival at destination, and properly place it at the decedent's grave at my expense.		APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE Edmer F. Reick DATE OF APPLICATION May 6, 1945	

FORM 623  
19 48 47  
IMPORTANT—Complete Reverse Side  
16-11483-0 GPO

Headstone  
Applications,  
1925–1963,  
National Archives



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# Evaluating Significance & Risk

Case Study: Toy Army Trucks & Leather Mail Pouch

But then we learned  
more –

An unexpected  
family conversation  
led to a better  
understanding of  
the bigger story.

**Significance:  
Great American  
Story!**





# Documenting Significance To Support Preservation

Document your findings related to objects, photos, and papers to demonstrate significance.

Cite your sources! Tie together family items, stories

- Establishing significance can ensure that the next generations appreciate the stories connected to family collections—and will seek to preserve papers, photos, and objects passed down.
- You may wish to contact an archive and discuss donations so that your family collection is available to researchers and for potential exhibits, books, or articles.



# Creating Your Own Risk Assessment Survey



# Assessing Risk Based on Stability

For our purposes today, let's define stability to determine risk:

**Stability:** The quality of resisting change or deterioration (inherent vice, accessibility without obsolete technology, durability)

- Low risk—no obvious signs of instability, incompatibility, or fragility
- Moderate risk—minor instability seen, such as wear or discoloration
- High risk—breakable, fragile, has lost or will lose information, or is already inaccessible





# Assessing Risk Based on Condition

For our purposes today, let's define condition to determine risk:

**Condition:** The current physical state of your item

- **Minor damage**—shows damage, but can be handled without an aid or support, such as a box, folder, or sleeve
- **Moderate damage**—can be carefully handled, may need minor treatment, would likely benefit from an enclosure, such as a box, folder, or sleeve
- **Severe damage**—cannot be handled without easily causing more damage, would likely benefit from professional treatment



# Assessing Risk

Using a matrix will help you determine your priorities based on risk and identify your order of priorities.

Severe Damage	<b>Medium Priorities</b>	<b>HIGH PRIORITIES</b>
No/Minor Damage	<b>Low Priorities</b>	<b>Medium Priorities</b>
	High Stability (Durable)	No/Low Stability (Fragile)



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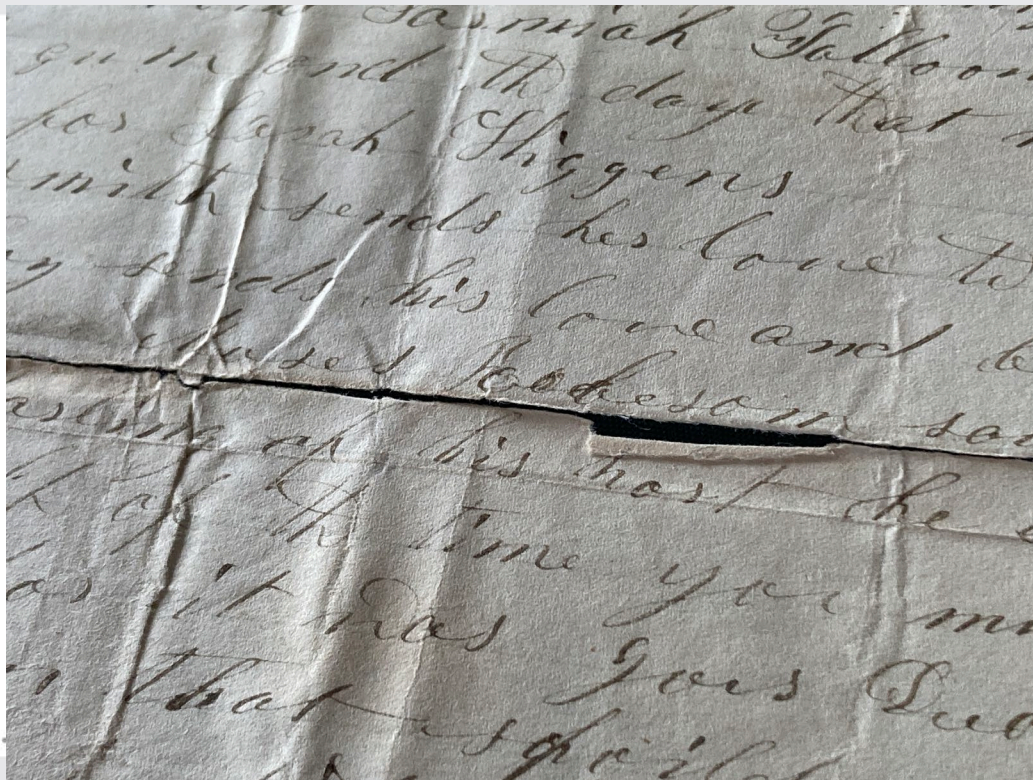
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# Focusing on Assessing Risk For Paper Collections



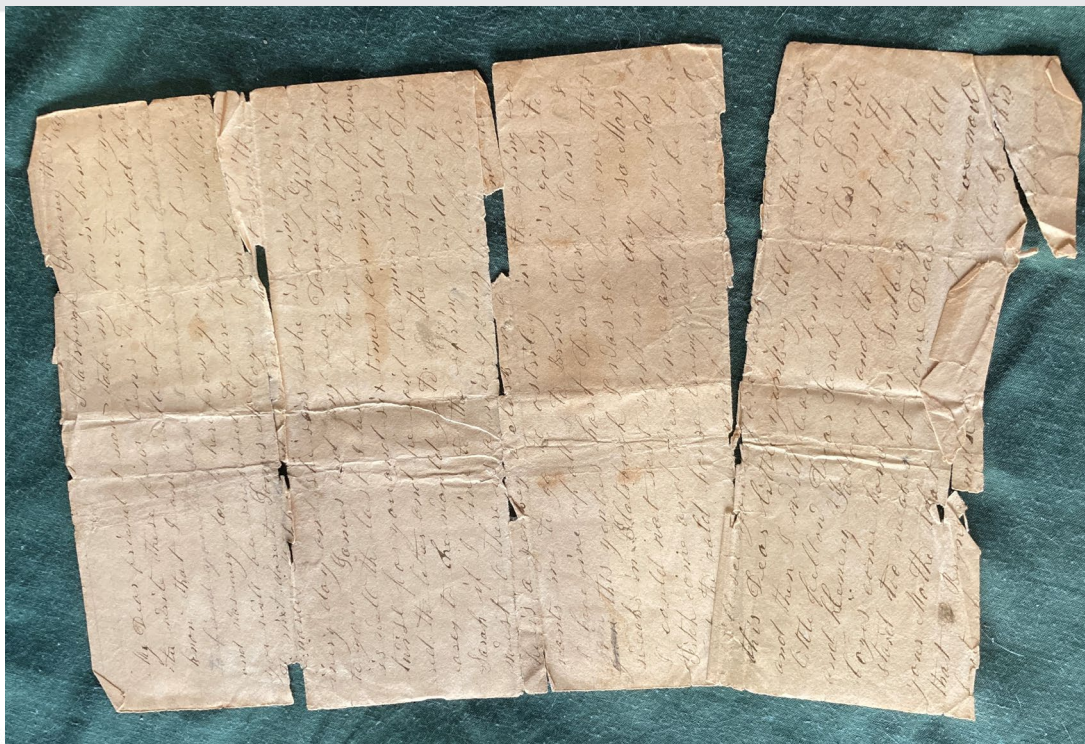
# Creased and Torn Paper

- Condition: Minor damage
- Stability: High to moderate
- Low risk
- Housing —  
Sleeved in polyester, or  
simply unfolded and kept  
inside a folder

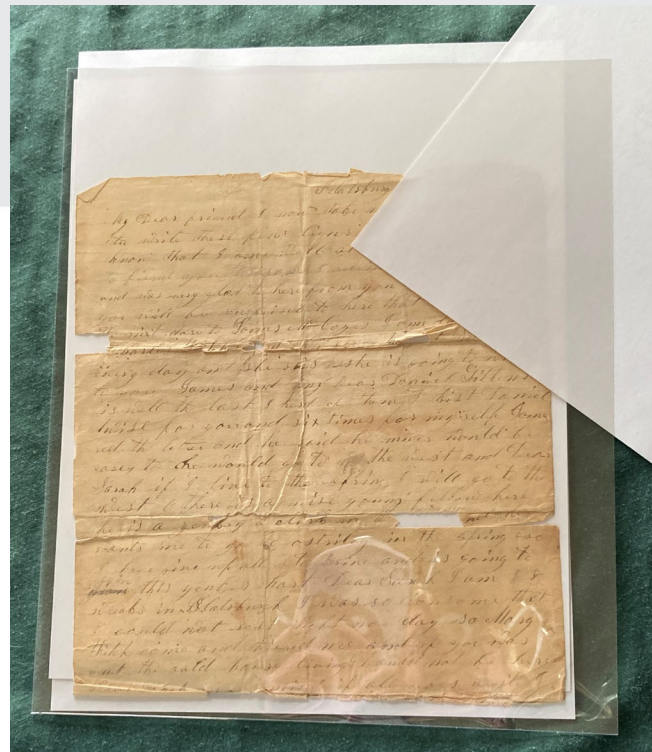
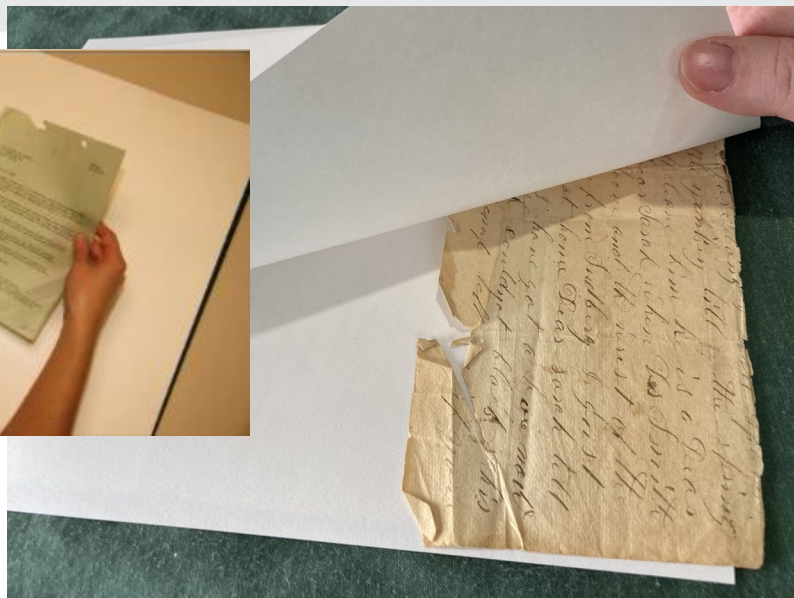


# Creased and Torn Paper (continued)

- Condition: Severe damage
- Stability: Low  
Very hard to handle without creating more damage
- Housing: Sleeve in polyester
- Treatment: Consult a conservator



# Creased and Torn Paper (continued)



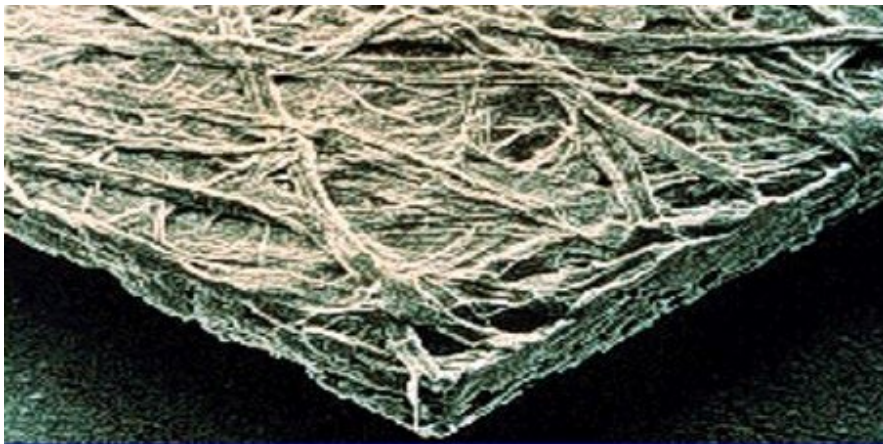
## TIP:

Polyester sleeves can have a static charge. If the fragile paper is forced into the sleeve against a resisting static charge, it may be torn. Use a piece of clean paper to support the fragile page and slide them in together, carefully removing the supporting paper once your fragile sheet is in the sleeve.

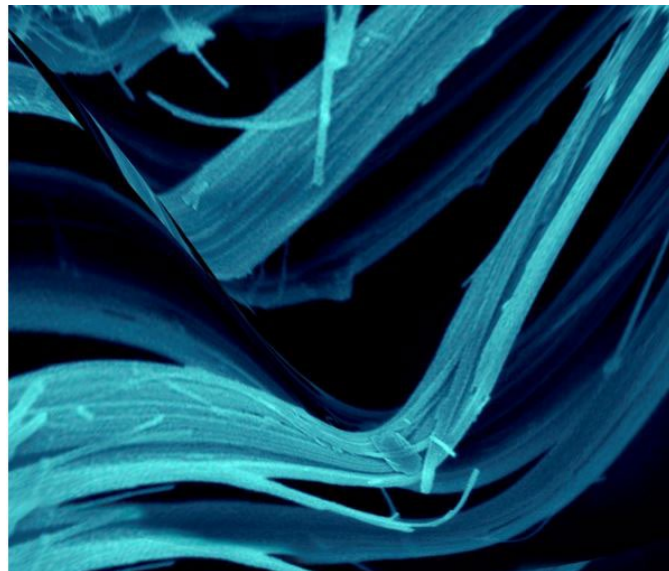
# Video of Placing a Document in a Polyester L-sleeve



# Creased and Torn Paper (continued)



Paper is a 3-dimensional object, made of fibers that bond and interconnect

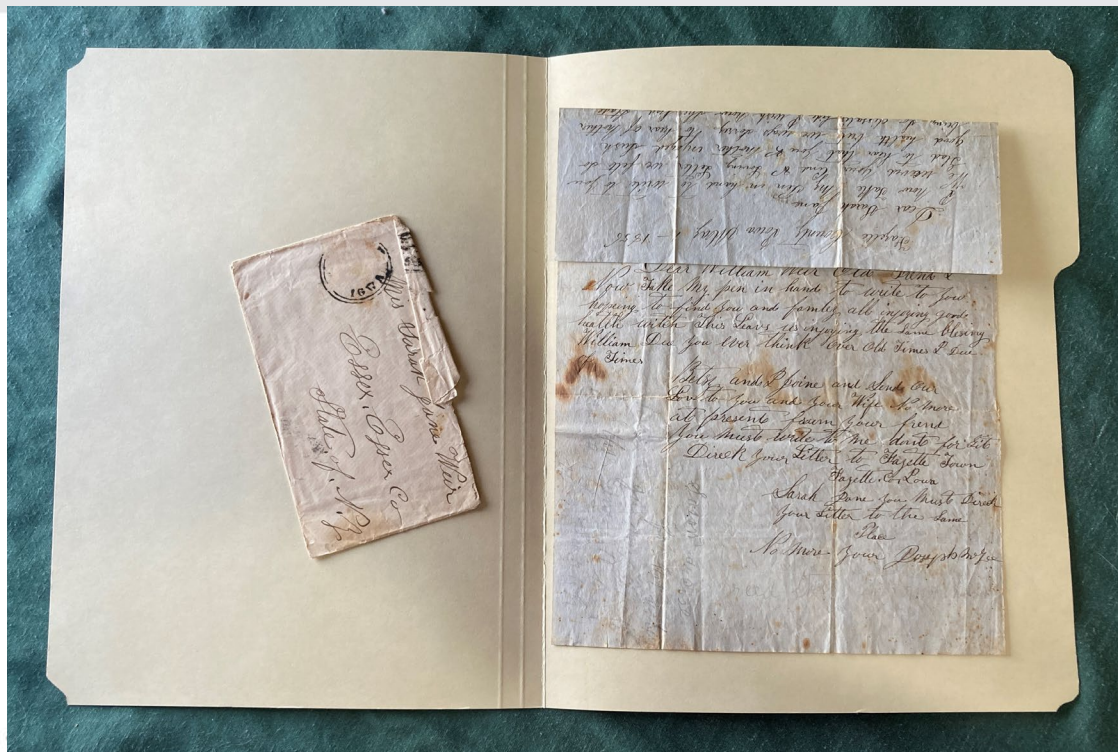


When creased, fibers are damaged



# Creased and Torn Paper (continued)

- Creases will also be relaxed over time if pages are simply unfolded and placed in folders
- Use existing folds if placing papers in folders that are too large to completely unfold
- Use interleaving if you are concerned about migration or transfer



# Creased and Torn Paper (continued)



## TIP:

Bone folders can be used to lightly relax creases in paper and prevent additional damage



Teflon folders can also be used



# Creased and Torn Paper (continued)

Humidification is common in labs, but not recommended at home!

- Be aware that some inks and media will bleed or sink – or disappear!
- Some papers can block and fuse together (example: coated papers)
- Photographs can be damaged

Mending tears is also not recommended

- Never use any kind of tape with adhesive
- Stabilize fragile paper in polyester sleeves instead of attempting to treat



A preservation technician places documents from an Official Military Personnel File (OMPF) damaged in the 1973 fire in a humidification dome.



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# Focusing on Assessing Risk for Books



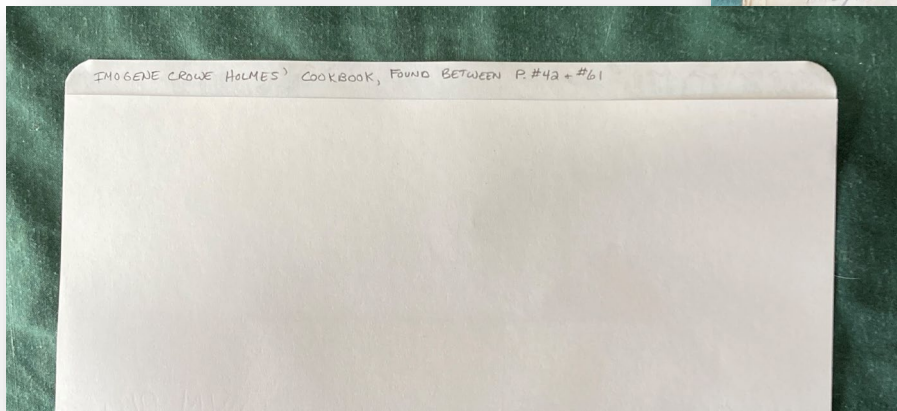
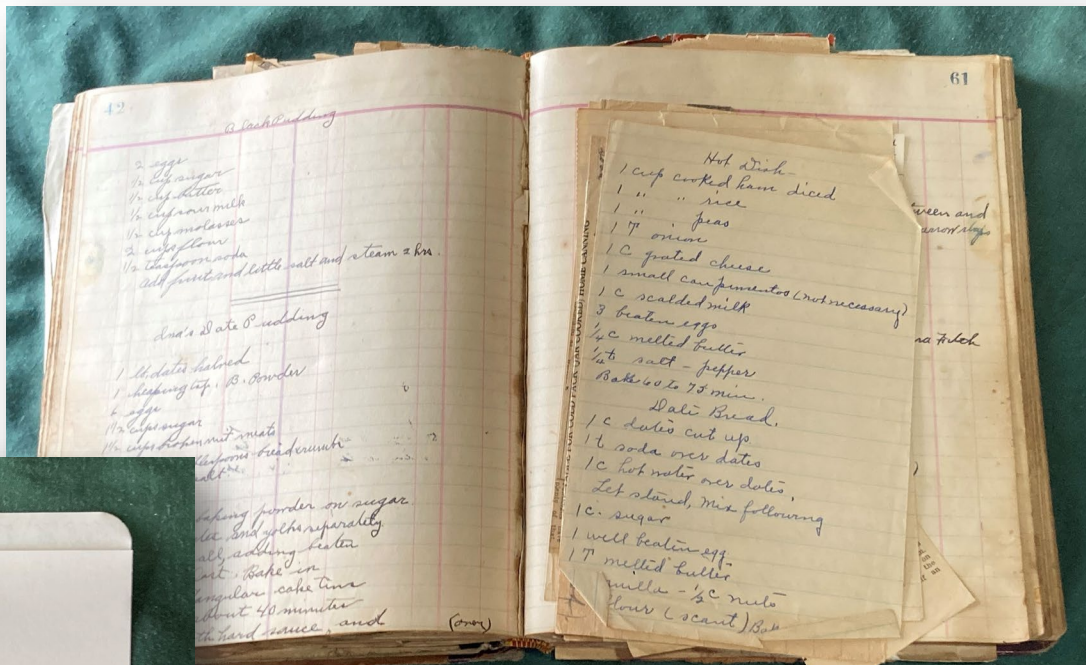


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# Books Overstuffed with Papers (continued)

**TIP:** Document original order first!

Use regular folders, and possibly also paper file folder inserts - like the one below - for loose papers removed from books. Label each folder with the page number where the papers are found.



# Common Problem

## Book with Loose Gatherings



- Condition: Moderate to severe damage
- Stability: Low to moderate  
Binding has separations and some sections are falling out; there are inserted papers with a mix of different acidities/discolorations, but nothing is fragile
- Housing: Use folders or interfile folders, or polyester sleeves for inserted materials, documenting original order. Purchase a custom-fit box to stabilize the book
- Possible treatment: Consult a conservator



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# Focusing on Assessing Risk For Photographs



# Cased Photographs

- Condition:  
Moderate damage
- Stability:  
Low, very fragile – never  
open cased photographs!
- Housing: Needs protection  
from dust or accidental  
damage, such as  
an “acid-free” box padded  
with tissue. This box is a  
make-do! We made do with  
an old hard-covered watch  
box and unprinted tissue  
that was on hand.



- Treatment: Consult a conservator  
specializing in cased photograph treatment





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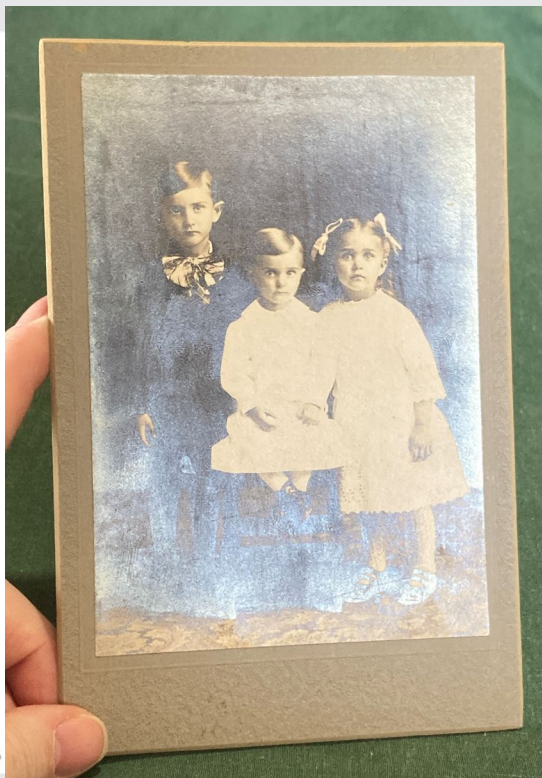
# Photo on Canvas

- **Condition:** Severe damage, extensive losses
- **Stability:** Low, easily crumbles off
- **Housing:** Wrap carefully in tissue (no fabric!) and box. Canvases are ideally stored vertically to prevent sagging
- **Treatment:** Consult a conservator

# Silvered Photographs

- Condition:  
Minor damage
- Stability: High
- Housing: Paper, plastic sleeve, or envelope that passes the P.A.T. (Photo Activity Test)

Silvering is seen at  
an angle only



# Dirt or Mold?



Minor or severe damage?



High stability or fragile?

# Dirt or Mold? (continued)



Mold can come in any color

- If actively growing, it is moist and wet
- If dormant, powdery and easily inhaled
- Can noticeably grow where it can feed (but be aware—high humidity can foster mold growth!)
- Dormant mold can actively grow again
- With exposure, mold can cause health issues

Recommendation

- Isolate in a bag or at least a box stored away from clean items
- Treatment by a conservator experienced in working with mold



# Dirt or Mold? (continued)

- Conservators cannot make a determination from images alone and would need to assess in-person to verify
- If in doubt, assume you have mold, not dirt, and isolate the item
- If certain you have dirt or dust only, use a soft brush to gently clean

(Top to bottom: goat hair dusting brush, two sizes of sable hair brushes, two sizes of sheep hair hake brushes)





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# Implementing Your Plan



# Bringing Your Plan Together

- Stable environment is the first consideration.

Do not store in attics, basements, garages, or any area where temperature and humidity are not controlled.

- Check storage areas periodically for any problems such as leaks or pests.
- Stabilize the most at-risk.

At a minimum, use clean boxes with no signs of damage, deterioration, or odor.





# Bringing Your Plan Together (continued)

Improve housing by progressively seeking to move from good, to better, to best.

- Keep in mind how much space you have for storage.
  - Check the exterior measurements of boxes so they fit on your shelves!
  - Small boxes may need to be consolidated in larger boxes (photos, custom book boxes).
  - Items needing padding (textiles, breakable objects) will take up space.
- Consider whether different branches of your family should be stored separately—keep different provenances separate.
  - Describing your collections may be easier if family groups are recognized.
  - Consider how collections will be passed on to the next generation. For example, you may be splitting maternal and paternal collections among relatives.



# Bringing Your Plan Together (continued)

Beware: There is no certification for products called “Acid Free” or “Archival”

What to look for:

- Products that are pH neutral
- Lignin-free paper-based products
- Boxes and folders with a buffer (usually calcium carbonate)
- Enclosures and supplies for use with photographs that have passed the P.A.T. Test (Photo Activity Test)

If interleaving:

- Use buffered tissue (with an alkaline reserve) for black-and-white photos, negatives, most papers, and cotton-based textiles
- Use unbuffered tissue (no alkaline reserve) for color photographs and negatives, blueprints, silk, wool, leather, and metals



# Bringing Your Plan Together (continued)

- Using Boxes
  - Consider custom-sized, machine-made boxes for books, albums, and scrapbooks that may need support
  - Boxes will provide an additional layer of safety in case of damage, as well as provide a microclimate

## TIP:

Buying in bulk is typically cheaper, but some purchases may have minimum order requirements. Consider working jointly with friends or through a local Genealogy Society to make a joint order to bring the costs down.

# For More on Risk & Prioritizing

PSAP

COLLECTION ID GUIDE ▾

USER GUIDE ▾



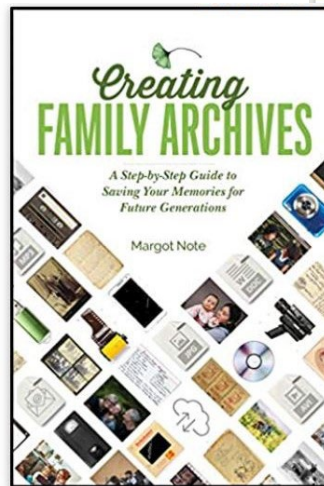
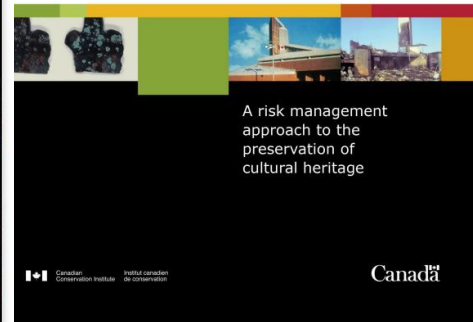
Preservation Self-Assessment Program

The Preservation Self-Assessment Program (PSAP) is a free online tool that helps collection managers prioritize efforts to improve conditions of collections. Through guided evaluation of materials, storage/exhibit environments, and institutional policies, the PSAP produces reports on the factors that impact the health of cultural heritage materials, and defines the points from which to begin care.

Refer to the [handout for this presentation](#)



## The ABC Method





# For More on Preservation

[www.archives.gov/preservation](http://www.archives.gov/preservation)

[www.culturalheritage.org/resources/collections-care](http://www.culturalheritage.org/resources/collections-care)

[www.nedcc.org](http://www.nedcc.org)

Email us at [preservation@nara.gov](mailto:preservation@nara.gov)



# Finding Personnel Files

The National Archives at St. Louis holds records for both  
Official Military Personnel Files and  
Official Personnel Folders of former federal civilian employees

[www.archives.gov/st-louis](http://www.archives.gov/st-louis)

*Special thanks for assistance to:*

*Cousins Becky and Dana*

*National Archives at St. Louis research room staff Eric Kilgore, George Fuller, and Kayla Dawkins*



# After the broadcast . . .



**Email questions to  
*[inquire@nara.gov](mailto:inquire@nara.gov)***

Video recordings of lectures and  
downloadable handouts  
will remain online at

**[www.archives.gov/calendar/genealogy-series/2023](http://www.archives.gov/calendar/genealogy-series/2023)**



# Feedback

## We value your opinion.

Please take a minute to complete a short evaluation. Your comments help us maintain the quality of our services and plan future programs.

Thank you!

### Event Evaluation:

[www.surveymonkey.com/r/KYREventEval](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KYREventEval)





# Thank You Genealogy Series Team!

## Presenters

Claire Kluskens  
Cody White  
Eric Kilgore  
John Deeben  
Rachael Salyer  
Sara Holmes

## Production

Alexis Van Dyke  
Amber Forrester  
Andréa Matney  
Erin Townsend  
Jamie Atkinson  
Jason Winston  
Julie Reid  
Miriam Kleiman  
Rudregus Davis  
Sasa Simic  
Vernon Smith

## Communication

Cara Lebonick  
Hilary Parkinson  
Laura Sheehan  
Mary Ryan  
Victoria Macchi



# KNOW YOUR RECORDS

National Archives and Records Administration



Educational resources on how to access and conduct research using U.S. federal government records held at the National Archives and Records Administration.

## Know Your Records

[www.archives.gov/calendar/know-your-records](http://www.archives.gov/calendar/know-your-records)

Videos and Handouts on **You Tube**

Playlists: [Civilian Service](#) and [U.S Veterans](#)



**KNOW YOUR RECORDS**  
National Archives and Records Administration



## Know Your Records in Autumn 2023

**Thursday**  
**August 10**  
1 p.m. ET

***Sound Recordings of the World War II Era***

**Ashley Behringer** – Archivist from the National Archives at College Park, MD

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**Wednesday**  
**September 13**  
1 p.m. ET

***The Records of the Provost Marshal General and Enemy Prisoners of War Held in the United States during World War II***

**Rachael Salyer** - Subject Matter Expert in Modern Military Records and an Archivist from the National Archives at College Park, MD



# Questions & Answers in Chat



**Please stay if you have questions.**

Although this concludes the video portion of the broadcast, we will continue to take your questions in **chat** for another 10 minutes.