

# USER GROUP MEETING

National Archives in Washington, DC

June 25, 2010 at 1:00 p.m.

## OPENING

NARA Customer Services Division Director Diane L. Dimkoff welcomed everyone to the User Group meeting. Seventeen researchers attended.

## AGENDA

### 1. Update on Remodel

**NARA Office of Administration Acting Director and Space & Security Management  
Division Director Rick Judson**

John Bartell has accepted a job with another agency.

The design is close to being complete, but funding not approved. We anticipate that FY 2011 will start under a continuing resolution, so we do not know when funds will be available. We can't award until funding is available, but hope for early next year.

Office space is in place where part of the microfilm reading room was located.

### **Scott C. Teixeira, AIA, LEED AP from Hartman-Cox Architects**

Scott explained the sequence of possible alterations to the Ground Floor spaces of the A1 Research Center starting with Construction Sequence 1 – Parts A through C.

- Part A includes:
  - alterations to the east and south end of the Finding Aids/Consultation area;
  - construction of new Library offices;
  - construction of new glass entrances to the Library (NW corner of lobby) and Registration (NE corner of lobby); and
  - relocation of emergency egress door in locker room.
- Part B includes:
  - establishing temporary entrance to Finding Aids/Consultation through Room G.26;
  - construction of a new glass entrance to Finding Aids/Consultation (SW corner of lobby);
  - construction of new Classroom; and
  - reconfiguration of the locker room.
- Part C includes:
  - construction of new glass entrance to Microfilm Research Room (SE corner of lobby) and “build-out” of the new Microfilm Research Room.

Concurrent to all parts of Construction Sequence 1 – Parts A through C is the construction of the new west-side restrooms on the exhibit side of the Ground Floor. At the conclusion, we will vacate the existing Microfilm Research Room and support spaces in preparation of the

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project's next construction sequence, Construction Sequence 2, for construction of the "shell" space for the new Shop and "My Archives" space.

#### 2. Wi-Fi Update – Diane Dimkoff

A1 and A2 are getting wireless internet access (Wi-Fi). This is the Archivist's gift. Starting in July, construction work on Wi-Fi will begin in both buildings and will end in November. We are trying to do the work with minimal disruptions. Wi-Fi will be available to registered researchers (researchers with a NARA researcher card). The initial focus is on those users so that NARA can 1) monitor wireless usage; 2) adequately meet user's needs; and 3) protect from unauthorized use. This is Federal law.

Construction work will take place in 10' blocks during work hours. There is not enough money to do it after hours, but we will try to do most of the work between 6:00-9:00 a.m. to minimize disruptions.

#### 3. Web Redesign- Sarah Araghi

Sarah provided clarification of the handout of her web redesign presentation. [Please see [handout on the Redesign Strategy Overview at http://www.archives.gov/open/redesign/data/redesign-strategy-overview.pdf](http://www.archives.gov/open/redesign/data/redesign-strategy-overview.pdf)]

Sarah asked us to participate in feedback for the new website. Vote on the new designs during the week of July 4 or in person at the National Archives Public Vaults entrance in Washington, DC. Actual users will do the testing – we would love your participation. Vote online and contact us via <http://www.archives.gov/open/redesign/>.

Sarah noted a participant's suggestion that the data results about the new redesign could link back to NARAtions.

Analysis of the surveys showed no real discrepancy between public and staff responses. Both had the same ideas on information organization. We were expecting to see a difference, but they were primarily the same; organized the same way with the same words. As phases of the redesigned website are completed, those changes will become available starting in November.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.archives.gov/open/redesign/#data>

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### 4. Saturday Pull Pilot – Ann Cummings

In July, there will be Saturday pulls at A1; three additional staff members will pull records. Please note that this service is reserved for those records that have designated pull information, since the full range of consultation expertise will not be available. The additional Saturday staffing should be sufficient to enable timely fulfillment of most requests for military service records, military pension files, and bounty land application files.

The procedures for pulling records on Saturdays will remain very similar to normal work week operations.

- Records pulled between 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- Each researcher may request up to 16 designated military pension and service records.
- Staff will break for lunch between 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m.
- The pull station for Saturday will be located in the microfilm research center.
- If for some reason staff cannot locate the requested materials, they will designate this on a return slip form, explaining why they couldn't retrieve the materials.
- Staff pulling records are in the microfilm research center and will be available to answer questions relating to pull information.
- Records will be available for researchers to view in the central research room on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of Archives 1.
- Researchers are welcome to submit their pull requests for Saturday earlier in the week. However, we will not pull the materials until the researcher is on-site at Archives 1 on Saturday. This change in our normal procedure will allow us to better serve the on-site researchers, since staff available to pull records on Saturdays is limited.
- We will not have consultants or the MLR access available.
- If you have textual records from another group, you will need to provide us with the stack area, specific item, and if you have it -- the year and range. For instance, land records would need specific finding information.

July is a good time to test. We have staff available to pull records during the month-long pilot and will then evaluate the pilot's success.

We have publicized the pilot as the lead article in the Summer 2010 issue of Researcher News, on [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov), in a press release, and on the NARAtions blog.

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### 5. Digitization Update

#### Ann Cummings

Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Widows and Other Dependents of Veterans  
([http://www.footnote.com/documents/115520748/civil\\_war\\_widows\\_pensions/](http://www.footnote.com/documents/115520748/civil_war_widows_pensions/))

- Prepped: 1,535 boxes to date
- Scanned: 1,588,784 images on the project to date from 1,484 boxes
- Currently available on Footnote.com: 674,962 images to date
- At minimum, NARA staff members review 5% of the case files with a page-by-page comparison to the originals: 10 boxes audited to date

Lincoln/Nebraska City Homestead Files

([http://www.footnote.com/documents/234241942/homestead\\_records/](http://www.footnote.com/documents/234241942/homestead_records/))

- Prepped: 122 boxes to date (unfolded, weighted, and placed in legal folders and boxes)
- Scanned: 202,394 images scanned through final certificate packet #10,397 to date
- Currently available on Footnote.com: 84,773 to date
- This project is 85% completed (there are a total of 12,295 packets in the pilot project).

Vietnam Service Awards

- Footnote.com has completed digitization of the Vietnam Service Awards, including Presidential Unit Citations, Valorous Unit Awards, Meritorious Unit Commendations, and Recommendations for Unit Awards. Descriptions of the records in this project are at [http://www.footnote.com/page/110457509\\_vietnam\\_service\\_awards/](http://www.footnote.com/page/110457509_vietnam_service_awards/).
- There was quality control checking of 100% of the boxes in this project to ensure that every document has an image.
- One percent (1,610 images) of the Vietnam Service Awards is now available on Footnote.com.
- These records are indexed by alphabetical or numerical unit designation.

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Southern Claims Commission Approved Claims

([http://www.footnote.com/documents/115166833/southern\\_claims\\_commission\\_approved\\_claims/](http://www.footnote.com/documents/115166833/southern_claims_commission_approved_claims/))

- Scanning is Completed: 153,308 images (all of the 223 boxes)
- Fifty-one percent of the images are indexed and available online (78,924 images)

### **Mary Rephlo**

If you wish to report that one of our digitization partner websites has either missing images or a browsing structure problem on a NARA title, please send a description of the error and the URL where the problem exists to [digitization@nara.gov](mailto:digitization@nara.gov). The partner will correct the error within 30 days of NARA's request to them, unless there are extenuating circumstances.

### **Rebecca Warlow**

Exhibit images are available digitally on ARC. When images are digitized in-house, we are looking at ways to make sure they are available online. We have a pilot project in the works to make sure the images are available online.

We are VERY interested in making any researcher's digitization available for all. Please contact Rebecca at [digitization@nara.gov](mailto:digitization@nara.gov).

### **6. Inaccurate Pulls at A1**

#### **Ann Cummings**

We have hired new students, so there is a learning curve. Please let us know if the pull is incorrect. We will correct it immediately, if possible. You should not have to wait. We will look into consistency and timely pulls. If staff cannot find the record or a researcher does not get the correct record, the researcher should receive a form back with a reason explaining why the record not found. We will continue to work on standardizing our procedures.

#### **Diane Dimkoff**

In response to the problem of the same request being rejected multiple times, Diane announced we are starting an analysis of our reference processes.

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**Mary Beth Linne**

The telephone number to contact the Central Research Room is 202.357.5363.

### **7. Rolling Pulls at A-1 – Ann Cummings**

We still pull records on the posted pull times. Based on researcher requests, we had started to pull records earlier than the posted time, but still limiting researchers to the same number of total pulls. Because this was misunderstood and caused some confusion, we have stopped the early pulls. The 10:00 a.m. pull done at 10:00 a.m. -- not earlier. Pulls will be done at designated times only. Requests put in after the pull times are held until the next scheduled pull.

Researchers can request up to one cart of records per pull and can have no more than two carts at a time. Researchers are also limited to 16 pension files per day.

Pull times are posted on the web at <http://www.archives.gov/dc-metro/washington/researcher-info.html#pull> and posted in the research room.

### **8. Our Archives Wiki Update – Rebecca Warlow**

Rebecca gave a sneak peak of the new wiki. Current pages are full of suggestions from staff and researchers, but we want more input. Ask for a user account if you want to participate.

NARA's wiki is like Wikipedia with a topic focus, discussion tabs, etc.

It is going live July 8th, but we would like more content from you, the users. Rebecca stayed after the meeting to provide more of a demo and to answer questions.

### **9. Digitized Serial Set – Diane Dimkoff**

We have followed through with the request to purchase the Digitized Serial Set. A Request for Quote (RFQ) has issued and closes June 30.

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### **10. Doc Preservation Form - Diane Dimkoff**

We consider you our partners in identifying preservation needs and we could use your help. If you find a document in delicate shape, please request and complete a preservation form, including the location of the document, so that we can easily locate the record. If you need assistance, we will be happy to fill out the form for you. We will provide Mylar and polyester sleeves to help protect delicate documents.

### **11. Green Bags**

**Diane Dimkoff**

The problem with the green bags is an internal, one so we ask for your patience while we work out the details. The practices in AI and AII are different because of the buildings themselves, the guards, the security, and the logistics. We will sort it out.

**Susan Cummings**

The green bag process will be final after an analysis.

### **12. Change Frequency of Meetings?**

**Diane Dimkoff**

Diane opened the floor and asked for suggestions. This is very much a partnership with your input.

### **Participant Suggestions**

- Meet only when there is information to relay.
- Meet every other month.
- Gear information only for each particular building -- more focused.
- Meet quarterly like the meetings used to be.
- Less meetings at A2 because there is not as much going on there.
- Have frequent meetings to continue to get user's input.
- Have a sign-in sheet.

**Susan Cummings**

We need to have meetings at both buildings and want participation from all users. Susan would like to keep alternating buildings until the end of the year, responding to your needs, and discussing topics such as the budget and building alterations.

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### Ann Cummings

There are the same pull issues in both buildings and a lot of similarities.

### 13. A1 Researcher Tables – Scott Teixeira

Scott noted that the project is an alteration to the A1 building (not a renovation).

He showed images of the current tables and pointed out various features. First, they are not historic tables, so appropriate changes are available. Lamps are not historic either.

His firm redesigned the tables based on the sole criteria of making them ADA compliant while maintaining a historically appropriate appearance.

The feedback he has received so far:

- More power needed
- Desk lamp takes up too much space
- Configure for team research.
- Security requirement for glass partitions between researchers.

Scott showed a new all-bronze lamp design. The lamp would swing around, up/down, in/out, left/right.

He showed a new desk design:

- Power outlets
- Partitions – maybe retractable so they easily push and pull to extend.
- Four of the tables without partitions in the research lobby are for Public Access Terminals.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor research rooms will eventually be equipped with new and/or reworked tables. This task is not a part of the National Archives Experience 2 project. The scheduling and funding of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor improvements is separate.

### Participant Suggestions

- Room 203 desks splinter and catch clothing. Scott will look into the oak and its finish. More durable edge treatments are considered.
- Room for large 4” transformers.
- Don’t add a data plug. Landline not provided.
- Paper dust/leather/pins/paperclips could fall in between retractable partitions.



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- Request larger tables for maps. Scott responded that enlarging the amount of area provided for each researcher will reduce the total number of researchers accommodated at any one time. He will work with NARA staff to determine the optimum diversity of size and quantity of researcher “stations.” We also need to meet ADA requirements and emergency access.
- Provide lighting for digital cameras
- Don’t reduce the number of tables

### **Diane Dimkoff**

We are looking at the options for oversized documents and options for lighting. We may have a mix. Diane is also looking to remedy the hodge-podge of furniture in room 202.

### **Scott Teixeira**

Scott analyzed the building on his own. In technical terms only, new restroom facilities could be built on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor by altering and converting the E-3 and W-3 stacks on Tier-7 and Tier-8, but such an alteration would involve years of feasibility analysis, the substantial relocation of records, and millions of dollars. A more cost effective solution for providing restroom facilities to researchers on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor would be to equip all the staff-only doors along the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor corridors with electronic security access control (card readers) so that researchers can access the existing restrooms at the ends of the corridors.

## **14. General topics**

### **Diane Dimkoff**

The ScanPro has a purchase request and we are looking into funding.

### **Rebecca Crawford**

The STView Scan is here but not available. It needs the correct service pack which hopefully will come soon. Please fill out questionnaires about it.

### **Diane Dimkoff**

The decommissioned microfilm readers will be reallocated to other NARA facilities. They will not be thrown away.

**Scott Teixeira and Rebecca Warlow** stayed after the meeting to answer questions.

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### **UPCOMING USER GROUP MEETINGS**

- July – No meeting
- August 27 with Archivist at Archives I, 1:00 p.m., room G-24

Please send agenda items to Diane Dimkoff at [diane.dimkoff@nara.gov](mailto:diane.dimkoff@nara.gov) or Nancy Fortna at [nancy.fortna@nara.gov](mailto:nancy.fortna@nara.gov), so that staff can attend to address the issues.

**ADJOURNMENT – 2:45 p.m.**