



# The Rocky Mountain Record



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## Exploring the Holocaust Archives

By Steve Adams, Senior Records Analyst, Rocky Mountain Region, Albuquerque, New Mexico

On February 19<sup>th</sup>, I had the opportunity to visit the International Tracing Service (ITS) sometimes referred to as the Holocaust Archives, in Bad Arolsen, Germany. It has operated under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross since 1945.

When I went to the ITS, I met with the Director, Reto Meister who explained to me how the archives works and the steps they take to answer all of the requests they receive. In an effort to make the information more available, and to answer their thousands of requests, they are scanning and digitizing all

30 million documents. The plan is to provide electronic copies to each of the 11 countries that oversee the ITS. In the case of the US, the copy would go to the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC. The Director then arranged for me to have a tour of the archives at 3:30 that afternoon with their Archivist, Udo Jost. The ITS consists of five buildings, and they currently have 327 employees. The first three rooms visited were those that house the card index. The card index has over 50 million names that have been extracted from the files consisting of nearly 30

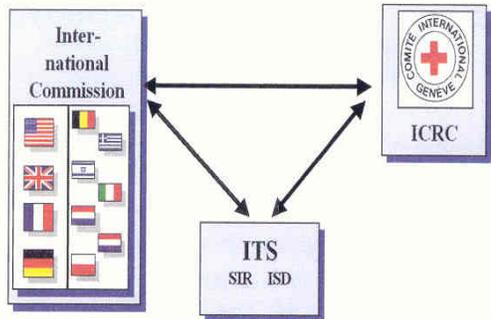
million documents. The main collection includes 3,672,000 Concentration Camp documents, 3,978,000 Wartime documents, 861,000 Child Tracing documents, and 20,919,000 Post War documents.

The Concentration Camp documents are records of the people imprisoned in the camps, and consist of two main categories; deportation records and prison records. The Wartime documents include; reports of marriages, saving account cards, lists of forced laborers, lists of deceased, records of personal invento-

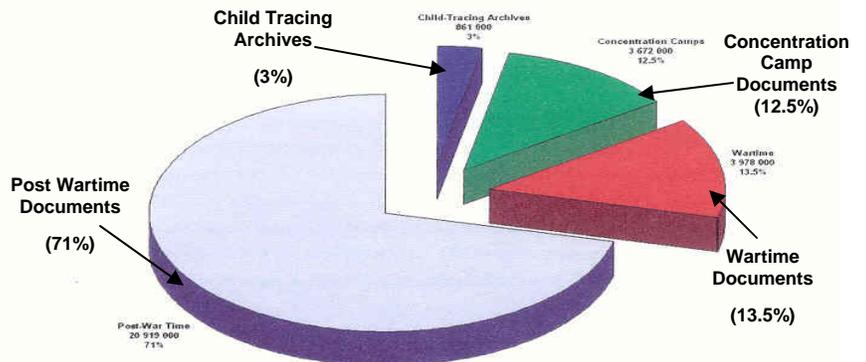
ries and bequeathed property, and others. The Child Tracing documents pertain to the Lebensborn children; the 20,000 children that were to become the "master race".

It is with these records that the staff at the ITS use to research requests from individuals concerning people who were displaced, imprisoned, or killed during WW II. Most of the requests are from people trying to find out what happened to family members or relatives.

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International Tracing Service (ITS)



ITS Holdings Restoration Challenges Distribution

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It can take up to six months to answer a request. There are many difficulties in researching the requests, including names spelled differently, false information given when imprisoned, and requestors often don't have accurate information.

The ITS is in the process of scanning all 30 million documents. I toured their scanning operation. They use a variety of scanning and digital photographic equipment. Many of the documents are so fragile that they can only be digitized using planetary digital cameras. They have scanned the 50 million names from the card index of names, and are currently working on the 30 million documents. One of the biggest problems that the ITS is facing is the rapid deterioration of the documents. Many of the documents created during WW II were done so on very poor quality paper, and as a result the

paper is in extremely poor condition. The preservation of these documents is essential to maintaining the records of one of the world's darkest periods.

I finished up the day engaged in conversation with Udo. I asked him if he ever felt overwhelmed by the tasks that he faced. He looked at me and responded, "No. I just get angry." Udo has been with the ITS for over 24-years. He invited me to return again for a more extensive tour. I probably will.

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## Upcoming Workshops in New Mexico

### include:

◆ June 13-14, 2007 KA2 Creating & Maintaining Agency Business Information

◆ June 19, 2007 BRO Basic Records Operations

◆ June 20, 2007 (1/2 day) Recordkeeping: A Program Manager's Survival Guide

◆ June 27, 2007 (1/2 day) Electronic Records Forum

◆ July 24-25, 2007 KA3 Records Scheduling

◆ July 26-27, 2007 KA4 Record Schedule Implementation

◆ August 21-22, 2007 KA5 Asset & Risk Management

◆ August 23, 2007 KA 6 Records Management Development

To register go to:

<http://www.nara.learn.com/recordsmanagement-training> or call (303) 407-5720

## Records Storage Overview

A protective storage environment can be considered a box within a box. The outer box is the facility itself. The storage room or stack provides the next tier of protection. In general, storage in a cool, dry environment that is free of dust and chemical pollution will limit deterioration of paper-based, non-textual, and object holdings. The requirements for NARA archival storage facilities can be found in NARA Policy Directive 1571 Archival Storage Standards. For more information on 1571 go to: [archives.gov/foia/directives/nara1571.pdf](http://archives.gov/foia/directives/nara1571.pdf).

The next level of protection is provided by the box, map case, cabinet, or other container. Archival containers that provide physical support to the holdings prolong the useful life of the records, protecting them from pests, water, dust, light, and other deteriorating agents. Within the container, items are housed in appropriate sized enclosures, such as a folder, box, portfolio, etc., that will provide physical protection as well as protection from light and dust. The enclosure itself should be made of stable permanent quality materials that will not

contribute to the document's deterioration.

Holdings Maintenance is closely related to storage. Much of this information will be useful in determining the storage methods most appropriate for NARA holdings.

For more detailed information about storage and holding maintenance, see Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler's "Preservation of Archival Records: Holdings Maintenance at the National Archives", for details regarding enclosure specifications, and for easy-to-

follow directions on preservation handling procedures for long term storage go to: [archives.gov/preservation/holdings-maintenance/table-of-contents.html](http://archives.gov/preservation/holdings-maintenance/table-of-contents.html).



## Transferring Permanent Electronic Records to NARA: Answers to the Top 5 Questions

**Question 1:** When do I transfer my permanent electronic records to the National Archives?

**Answer:** First, ensure that the records are scheduled as permanent on a Standard Form SF 115, Request for Records Disposition Authority. Second, transfer records when they are no longer needed for agency business or earlier if possible.

**Question 2:** What transfer formats can I use?

**Answer:** The format depends on the type of records being transferred. For transferring specific types of permanent electronic records, please refer to NARA guidance on our web site at: [www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/initiatives/erm-products.html](http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/initiatives/erm-products.html). Some general guidelines include:

- ◆ Textual records—plain ASCII or in Portable Document Format (PDF) format or scanned images.

- ◆ Scanned Images of textual records, the preferred formats are Tagged Image File Format (TIFF) and Portable Network Graphics (PNG). Graphics Interchange Format (GIF) and Basic Image Interchange Format (BIFF) are also acceptable.

- ◆ Data files and data bases convert tables to files with fixed-length fields or fields defined by delimiters.

- ◆ Digital geospatial data, Spatial Data Transfer Standard (SDTS) or Geography Markup Language (GML). Preferred formats for these records are evolving, so contact NARA for assistance.

- ◆ Digital photographic records, Tagged Image File Format (TIFF) and File Interchange Format (JFIF, JPEG) are also acceptable.

- ◆ Web records, Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) and

other formats such as TIFF or PDF that either are embedded in the HTML or referenced by it.

**Question 3:** What transfer media can I use?

**Answer:** It is probably easiest to transfer records on compact disk, read-only memory (CD-ROM), because agencies typically have the drives for this media and it's inexpensive. Other acceptable media include magnetic tape and tape cartridges, such as Digital Linear Tape (DLT). You may also use File Transfer Protocol (FTP).

**Question 4:** What else should I know about transferring permanent electronic records?

**Answer:** Electronic textual records should be logical collections of related records. NARA also accepts e-mail messages with attachments. Data files and databases require more extensive documentation than other electronic

records, and a record layout and codes are required for each file. A completed Standard Form 258, Agreement to Transfer Records to the National Archives of the United States, accompanies the transfer. For electronic records, NARA signs the SF-258 after the processing is completed, not upon receipt of the records.

**Question 5:** Where can I find additional information about electronic records?

**Answer:** Complete information about NARA regulations for transfer can be found at [www.archives.gov/research/electronic-records/transfer-records-to-nara.html](http://www.archives.gov/research/electronic-records/transfer-records-to-nara.html).



## TIPS FOR ELECTRONIC DATABASE SCHEDULE CHECKLIST



Include the following on all electronic database schedules:

- √ common name of the system
- √ agency program or unit supported by the system and
- √ function/purpose of the system i.e., the reasons for and the requirements met by the system.

Provide disposition instruction for each of the following:

- √ data inputs (include all records in all media formats from which the systems receives data).
- √ informational content of the master file (the main subject matter, data coverage, time span, geographic coverage, and other major characteristics of the system).

- √ data outputs (printouts, tables, charts, reports, screens of information, electronic files used for other purposes).

- √ systems documentation (documentation needed to read and understand the data).

**For more information go to:** [archives.gov/records-mgmt/publications/tips-for-scheduling-databases.html](http://archives.gov/records-mgmt/publications/tips-for-scheduling-databases.html).

## NARA — Rocky Mountain Region

*Springtime in the Rockies (June 5-6 2007)*

### NARA Workshop in Kalispell, Montana

Training Opportunity near scenic  
*Glacier National Park*

#### Records Scheduling (Knowledge Area 3), June 5-6:

What do you do with information and records that you no longer need for business purposes? How you schedule your records determines the basis for meeting your agency's operating, fiscal, and legal needs. This course (KA 3) includes the legal requirements and practical advantages in scheduling records as well as the disposition practices necessary to meet an agency's business needs and NARA's recordkeeping requirements.

Anyone responsible for developing or updating agency records schedules or whose work is associated with developing records retention requirements for records and information systems. (Required for NARA's Certification of Federal Records Management Training.) Two day course.

**Cost:** \$300.00 per student. **Time:** 8:30 am to 4:00 pm.

## NARA Workshop in Denver, Colorado

**July 11-12, 2007**

### Disaster Preparedness & Response

This course provides the knowledge and skills required to identify, protect, and make readily available the vital records needed to support the resumption of critical business functions after a disaster, and to establish and administer a vital records program. Participants will learn how to develop and activate an emergency plan for records. At the end of this practical skills-level course, participants will be able to understand the importance of emergency planning; write, assign responsibility for, analyze, and test the plan. In addition, participants will learn how to assess damage to records, determine and initiate appropriate response actions, and determine recovery actions for damaged records. The target audience is Federal, state, and local government employees and contractors, specifically, individuals with records responsibilities, COOP managers, line managers and staff, and information technology personnel.

**Two day course,**

**8:30 am - 4:00 pm.**

**Cost \$300 per student.**



Register for workshops and briefings through: <http://nara.learn.com/recordsmanagement-training>

or request a registration form by e-mailing us at: [workshop.denver@nara.gov](mailto:workshop.denver@nara.gov)

Call: (303) 407-5720 or Fax: (303)-407-5731

Date	Course Title	Location
June 5 - 6, 2007	(KA3) Records Scheduling	Kalispell, MT
June 13-14, 2007	(KA2) Creating and Maintaining Agency Business Information	Pojoaque, NM
June 19, 2007	BRO: Basic Records Operations	Albuquerque, NM
June 20, 2007	Recordkeeping: A Program Manager's Survival Guide (1/2 day)	Albuquerque, NM
July 11 - 12, 2007	Disaster Preparedness and Response	Denver, CO
July 12, 2007	Electronic Records Forum (1/2 day)	Albuquerque, NM
July 18, 2007	Basic Records Operations (BRO)	Denver, CO
July 24-25, 2007	(KA3) Records Scheduling	Pojoaque, NM
August 21-22, 2007	(KA5) Asset and Risk Management	Pojoaque, NM
August 23, 2007	(KA6) Records Management Program Development	Pojoaque, NM