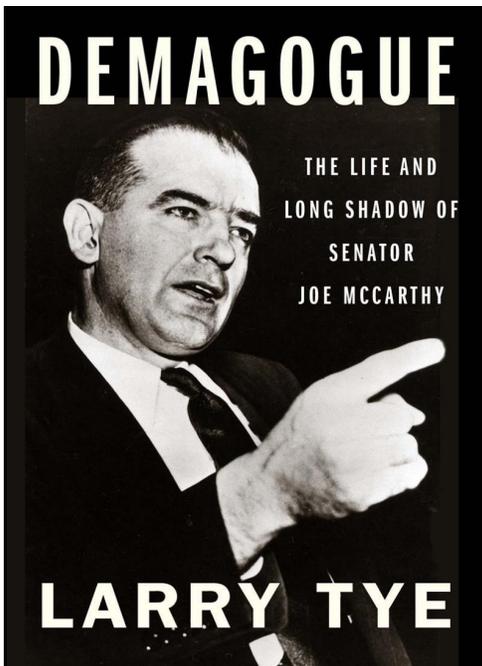




National Archives at Kansas City Newsletter

Upcoming Virtual Programs at the National Archives

The National Archives is continuing to offer a full slate of public programs in December. An extensive list can be found [here](#). Below are two author discussions. All programs are scheduled according to Eastern Standard Time.

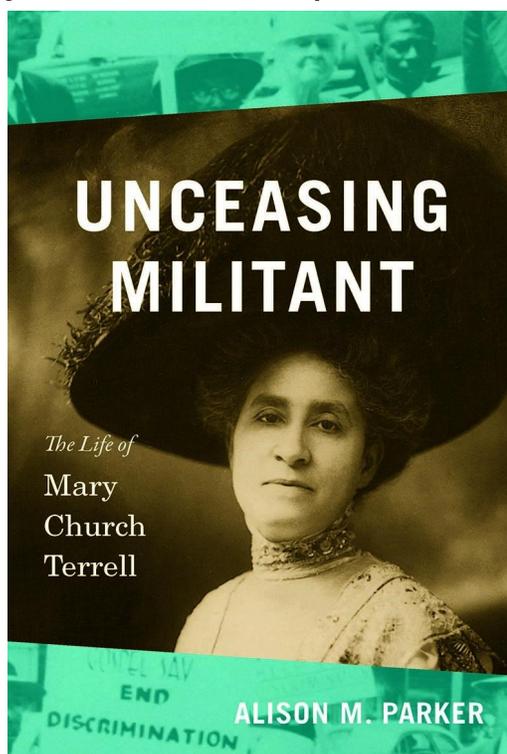


On **Monday, December 7 at Noon ET**, the National Archives will offer a program discussion with **Larry Tye** author of *Demagogue: The Life and Long Shadow of Senator Joe McCarthy*. This **free program** can be viewed via live stream on the National Archives [YouTube Channel](#).

Fueled by a trove of newly uncovered documents, author Larry Tye charts the legacy of Joe McCarthy in *Demagogue*. From 1950 to 1954, McCarthy destroyed many careers, whipping the nation into a frenzy of paranoia, accusation, loyalty oaths, and terror. When the public finally turned on him, he came crashing down. By recklessly charging treason against everyone from George Marshall to much of the State Department, he became the most influential and controversial man in America. Joining Tye in discussion will be **Don Ritchie**, former Senate Historian.

On **Thursday, December 17 at 1:00 p.m. ET**, the National Archives will offer a program discussion with **Alison M. Parker** author of *Unceasing Militant: The Life of Mary Church Terrell*. This **free program** can be viewed via live stream on the National Archives [YouTube Channel](#).

Born into slavery during the Civil War, Mary Church Terrell (1863–1954) would become one of the most prominent activists of her time, with a career bridging the late nineteenth century to the civil rights movement of the 1950s. One of the first African American women to earn a college degree and the first to be appointed to a school board of a major city, she went on to serve as the first president of the National Association of Colored Women and a founding member of the NAACP. Throughout her lifetime, Terrell collaborated closely with the likes of Frederick Douglass, Ida B. Wells, and W. E. B. Du Bois to change the culture and institutions that perpetuated inequality throughout the United States. Joining Alison Parker in conversation will be University of Kentucky history professor **Nikki Brown**.



December 2020

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Upcoming Events

Unless noted, all events are held at the National Archives 400 W. Pershing Road Kansas City, MO 64108

NOTE: All in-person public events at National Archives facilities nationwide are cancelled until further notice. This includes in-person public programs, tours, school group visits, public meetings, external conferences, and facility rentals.

Hidden Treasures from the Stacks

From Pine Ridge to Dresden: American Indian Performers in the Sarrasani Circus

During the early part of the twentieth century, the circus was one of the most popular forms of entertainment. While some circus acts revolved around a certain skill or feat of daring, for others, the draw was simply the performers themselves. That was the case for many American Indians who took part in circuses around the world, and within the Main Decimal Files of the Pine Ridge Indian Agency of South Dakota, a story emerges of Indians employed by circuses to perform in Wild West shows. Audiences at the time craved the exotic and flocked to the circus to see “authentic” displays of life in far-off lands, and spectators in Europe, South America, and Australia attending the circus could witness a snapshot of a fading way of life that was distinctly American.

Throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Bureau of Indian Affairs dictated much of everyday life for Indians living on reservations, inducing them to earn a living through agriculture and labor and to shun traditions that separated their ways of life from the broader American culture. Concurrently, circuses and Wild West shows employed indigenous performers to play a part in stereotypical “cowboys and Indians” stories; the shows also offered Indians a chance to strike out on their own and make extra money. One circus in particular that employed dozens of American Indians was the Sarrasani Circus, owned by Hans Stosch-Sarrasani. Having traveled widely for years, Sarrasani set up his show in Dresden, Germany, and during the 1920s and 1930s, circus officials contacted the Pine Ridge Agency looking for performers. (Continued on page 5.)



läuft ein, malerisch erscheinen in unabschbarer Kette merkwürdig geformte Fahrzeuge, deren grelles Gelb im ersten stumpfen Dämmern des Tageslichtes aufzuleuchten beginnt. Lautlos gehen die Arbeiterkolonnen ans Werk. Sarrasanis Lokomotiven, gleislos gesteuert, verlassen die Lorys. Messingteile funkeln, Kolben puffen auf und nieder, an den Rädern klebt noch der Schlamm vom letzten Abbrüche, drüben, in der vergangenen Stadt. Die Lokomotiven spannen sich vor die Menageriewagen, die Bitrowagen, die Transportwagen auf den Lorys, kurze Kommandorute hallen über die öde Fläche des Güterbahnhofes, Wagen gleiten von der Lory zur Rampe hinab, Züge fahren durch die Strassen.

Der Platz ist schon vermessend, eingeteilt: dort die Fassade, dort die Riesenkuppel des Chapiteaus, dort die Stallungen, dort die Werkstätten, dort die Maschinerien.

Nun kommt der zweite Zug. Ein malerischer Schwarm entsteigt ihm. Es ist heller Morgen geworden. Tausende, von Ankündigungen herbeigelockt, bilden Spalier. Völker aus vier Erdteilen ziehen vorüber, europäische Artisten, schmuck uniformierte Arbeitermassen. Der Tross der Tiere zieht daher. Ein Schwarm von zweihundert edlen, nervösen Rossen, eine Elefantenherde von sechzehn Kolossen, Kamele, Dromedare, Büffel, Zebras, Lamas, Zebus.

Neue Strassenlokomotiven setzen sich unter Dampf, ziehen neue, abermals neue Fahrzeuge von der Rampe zum Platze der Schau. Zu dreien, zu viere, ja zu sechsen werden sie aneinandergeschnitten, die elegante Maschine zieht den sonderbaren schienenlosen Zug in graziösem Bogen durch die Winkel des Städtchens.

Sarrasani zieht ein! Ein Bild von neuartiger, unendlich malerischer Schönheit wird wach. Die Poesie des Maschinenzeitalters wird lebendig, die Romantik des rauchenden Schlotens, des stampfenden Kolbens.

Zwei starre Masten ragen auf, darum breitet sich die weite hellgelbe Plane des Chapiteaus. Die Tentmannschaften arbeiten, sturmerprobte Gesellen, eine Musterriege. Griff für Griff siltz. Die leichte Kuppel beginnt sich zu wölben, Flaschenzüge knirschen, Stricke rasseln. Vorne ist plötzlich ein leichtes verstelltes Gerüst emporgewachsen. Es bedeckt sich mit funkendem Glas und mit glitzernden Spiegeln, mit abenteuerlichen Bildern und geschmückten, silber-goldenen Figuren: eine orientaisch, linientrohe Palastfront!

Im riesigen Rundraume drinnen ringelt sich das Amphitheater empor. Ein purpurner Sammelkreis aus Logen und Sesseln schlingt sich um die Manege, die sich aus weicher Erde und hellem Sande polstert. Rotpurpurn strahlt die Piste, die die leuchtende Arena umkreist, die Schaustätte des Zauberreiches.

Ein Vormittagsgang

Am frühen Vormittage. Nebel liegen noch verdriesslich über der Strasse, Menschenströme pilgern an die Arbeit. Unter der leichten Riesenkuppel des Tentens duftet es nach frischem Holze und feingemahltem Sägemehl. Aus dem Halbdunkel lösen sich langsam menschliche Umrisse los. Dann und wann schlendert eine Gestalt, melancholisch vor sich hinpliefend, durch die Manege, die im stumpfen, blassen Lichte nüchtern und alltäglich aussieht. Es ist ein Europäer, oder ein Beduine, oder ein stolzer, hochaufigereckter Indianer.

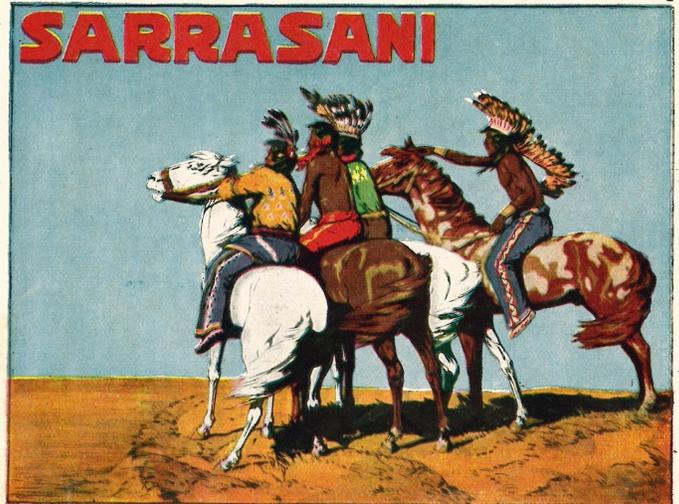
Die Schau, am Abend von blendendem Feuerzauber durchzuckt, von Sarrasanis leuchtenden Riesenslettern überstrahlt, hat ihr Werkelstaggewand angelegt. Ihr Werkelstaggewand ist Arbeit. Drunten tauchen ein paar Menschen auf, Männer in gelbgrünen Sammetjoppen, mit Reitpeitschen und Jockeykappen, sie führen mit sich den Elefanten. Er soll umlernen. In dem Schauspiel, das er mit fünfzehn seiner Kollegen allabendlich aufführt, ist ihm eine neue Rolle zuerteilt. Er steht auf enger Trommel, wuppnd nach vorn und nach hinten, mit dem Rüssel erwartungsvoll in der Luft herumschnuppernd, und man bringt ihm seine Handtierungen bei. Von fernher hallt Löwengebrüll, dumpf und finster.

Artisten stehen stumm nebeneinander, und sehen —, starren zu. Sie haben den tiefen, melancholischen Blick der wandernden Menschen. Nur Heimat ist Heterkeit. Auf den grossen Heerstrassen der Welt wird man bitter. Die fahrenden fiedelnden Gesellen von einstmalen wurden zu brütenden Philosophen, wenn sie am Abend die klirrende Schellenkappe vom Kopfe zogen, und Shakespeares spitzige Narren sangen wehevoll dahinschmelzende Lieder.

Die Artisten sehen zu und warten auf irgend etwas. Sie haben langsame, phlegmatische Bewegungen. Die Geduld, die die oberste Forderung an ihren Charakter ist, scheint sich vom Hirn auf die Gliedmassen zu übertragen. Draussen schwillt das Löwengebrüll an und wird gedämpft. Man denkt daran, wie hohl und unheimlich es über den abendlichen afrikanischen Busch klingen muss.

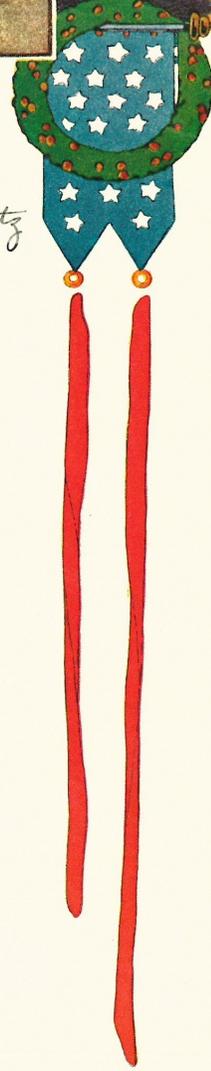
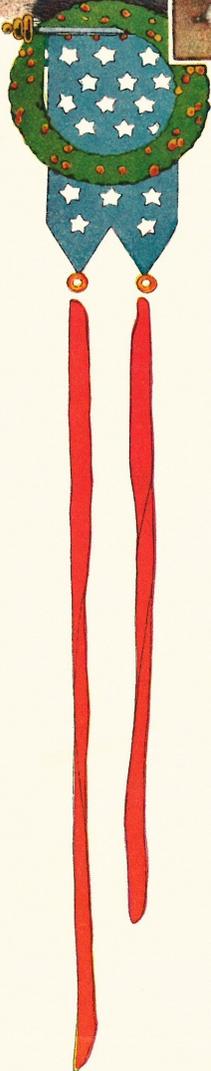
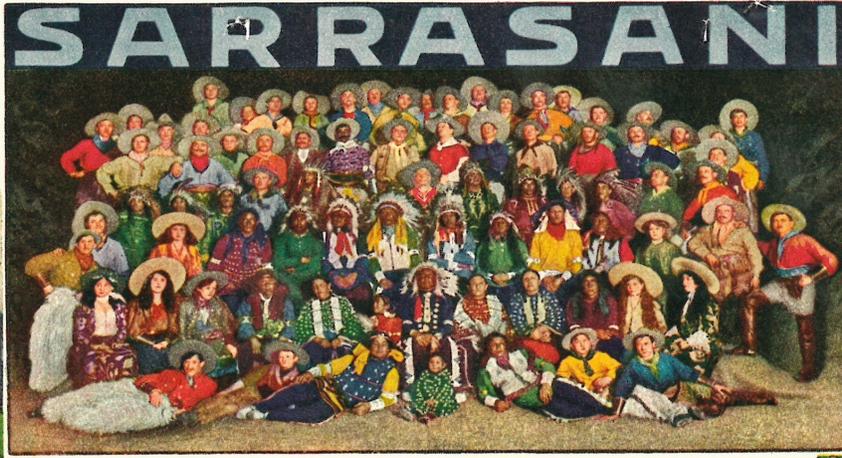
Im Gang von der Manege zum Stall steht ein junges zartes Ding im aschgrauen Pierrotkleidchen neben einem straff ausgebundnen Kalblütergaulen. Die kleine kraut ganz versunken den gespannten Hals des graugelbten Pferdes; es nickt und kaut schäumend die Trense. Im Verschlage nebenan schnattert; die dressierten Gänse ducken sich eng aneinander; auf einer Latte hockt griesgrämig der Truthahn.

Ringsum brüllen Löwen, fauchen Tiger, klaffen Doggen, heulen röhelnd die Seelöwen. Die grosse, polyphone Musikkapelle hält sich dauernd dadurch in Atem, dass die einzelnen Gruppen sich gegenseitig aufreizen. Ueber die Gasse des Zeltstalles recken 16 Elefante die grauen, geringelten Rüssel. Sie wippen von Bein zu Bein und befächeln sich einander. Es sind uralte, vielerfahrene Tiere dabei mit knochigen, faltreichen Charakterköpfen. Ihre Haut ist, wenn man mit dem Finger darüberstreicht, wie morscher, körniger Schwamm.





Above: Sarrasani Circus advertising brochure. Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Main Decimal Files, 1900-1965. Pine Ridge Agency. Sarrasani Circus Advertising Brochure. National Archives Identifier 137873948.



Articles of Agreement.

ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT, entered into this the 1st day of September, 1931, by and between Clarence O. Schultz ~~the CIRCUS SARRASANI~~, hereinafter referred to as the party of the first part and an Indian Tom Stabber and W ife of the Pine Ridge Reservation, Pine Ridge, South Dakota, hereinafter referred to as the party of the second part.

WITNESSETH: That in consideration of the terms and covenants hereinafter set forth it is mutually agreed as follows:

1. The party of the first part engages the party of the second part to take part in all regular performances of the CIRCUS SARRASANI.
2. The party of the first part agrees to pay the party of the second part the sum of \$ 55.00; monthly, for a period of one season.
3. The party of the first part agrees to provide clean, nourishing food in ample and sufficient quantities, and skilled medical aid and attention in case of sickness, all without cost or obligation to the party of the second part.
4. In the event of the death of the party of the second part, the party of the first part agrees to properly embalm the body and send it to Rushville, Nebraska, at the close of the contract, said party of the first part to bear all expenses incidental thereto.
5. The party of the first part agrees to provide an escort and transportation for the party of the second part from the Pine Ridge Agency to the CIRCUS SARRASANI in GERMANY, and at the close of the show season, to provide an escort and transportation back to the Pine Ridge Agency, Pine Ridge, South Dakota, unless this contract should be terminated at an earlier date then specified, in which event transportation and all expenses are to be immediately available. The party of the first part further agrees to provide reasonable travelling accomodation.
6. The party of the first part agrees to make all reasonable effort to protect the party of the second part from intoxicating liquors and all other immoral influences.
7. The party of the second part agrees to faithfully perform the duties assigned to him by the party of the first part, said duties to consist in portraying Indian life and entertainments at such times and places as shall be agreeable to the party of the first part.

(Continued from page 2.)

For American Indians participating in these shows, even being thousands of miles away from home and earning their own money did not equal independence. Though they had the choice of whether to join, officials from the Bureau of Indian Affairs essentially controlled negotiations and determined the language in their contracts. Phrasing in agency correspondence stipulated that contract extensions “must be with the consent of the Indians”; however, it was clear that the government could object to an extension.¹ Grounds for objection were typically that an individual’s time was better spent on farming duties, or agency officials objected to the temptations that existed outside of the reservation.

Indians in Wild West shows earned a wage but still had to furnish clothes out of their own pockets, and costumes were a non-negotiable part of their act. The costumes helped to create the quintessential American Indian experience that audiences came to see, yet they were no small expense. According to one estimate, “costumes cost per head roughly between \$75 to \$100 which amount is deducted from their salaries weekly. The men expect plus food and lodging monthly \$30, women \$20, children \$10.” As for the acts performed, those could include things such as “mail hold ups,” “war dances,” and “fancy ropers.” One letter states that, “The Indians ... in their good costumes are always [sic] a good draw to any show.”² To European audiences in particular, American Indians represented an entirely different way of life.

Venturing so far from home and placing themselves and their families in the hands of circus officials inevitably came with risks. While some performers from Pine Ridge found the experience to be worthwhile, others did not and complained of poor treatment by circus managers and unpaid wages for work performed. A 1926 letter from Henry Standing Bear describes how circus staff took advantage of those in their employ by disregarding their contracts and refusing to let them leave the show after their time had ended.³ Additionally, complaints of mismanagement and breakdowns in communication between Sarrasani and his associates, Bureau of Indian Affairs officials, and the performers themselves caused turmoil and often led to Indians either choosing not to participate or wanting to join but being left high and dry after bungled negotiations.⁴

While some government officials saw the circus as an acceptable way for Indians to earn money, Secretary of the Interior Ray Lyman Wilbur disapproved of making a spectacle of native traditions. In a 1929 press release, he argued that it was one thing for Indians to carry on their own traditions and “natural celebrations,” but doing so “to the benefit of individuals or communities who use them to attract visitors” was quite another. To Wilbur, the goal of the Department of the Interior was to help the American Indian “[establish] himself on an even keel of self respecting independence,” and he argued that performing in the circus had the opposite effect.⁵

Even for some who were once eager to perform, the enthusiasm appeared to fade. In 1931, Thomas Stabber wrote to Pine Ridge Superintendent Ernest W. Jermark, stating that he no longer wished to participate in the circus. Having acted in previous seasons as a sort of leader among the performers, Stabber seemed to become disillusioned with the show. He wrote that performing with Sarrasani was not worth it for the meager wages he received, and it would be better for him to stay home and farm. He said, frankly, “I don’t want any body to bother me this year.”⁶

More information about the Main Decimal Files of the Pine Ridge Agency can be found in the Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the [National Archives Catalog](#).

Are you connected to the National Archives at Kansas City?



We encourage our patrons to use electronic mail and social media to connect with us. Our Facebook address is [facebook.com/nationalarchiveskansascity](https://www.facebook.com/nationalarchiveskansascity). In addition, you can find us on Instagram @kansascity.archives or tweet us via Twitter @KCArchives or #KCArchives.



All information about upcoming events and programs is emailed to patrons through our electronic mailing list. If we do not have your address on file, please send an email with your preferred address to kansascity.educate@nara.gov or call 816-268-8000.



By providing your address, you grant the National Archives at Kansas City permission to send you information about special events, and programs. Per the Privacy Act of 1974, we will not share your personal information with third parties.

December Virtual Programs for Students

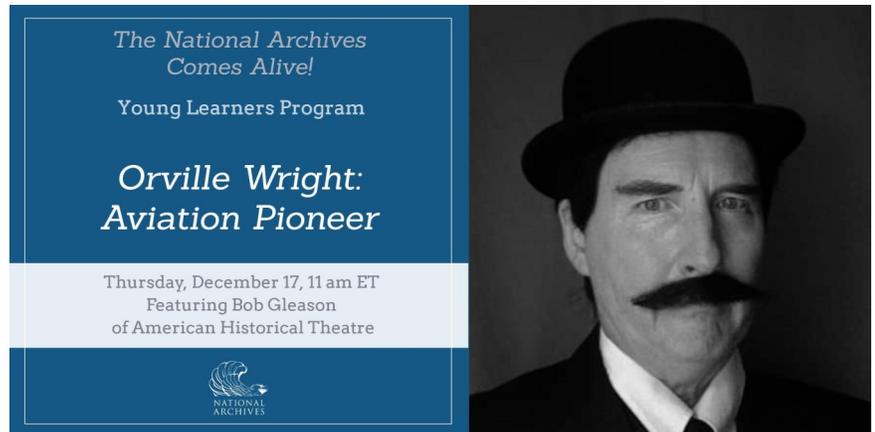
This month the National Archives has two upcoming virtual learning programs ideal for older students and young learners, as well as families. More information can be found [here](#).

- **The Bill of Rights at the Schoolhouse Gate on Tuesday, December 16 at 6:30 p.m. ET**

Do the rights guaranteed by the Bill of Rights apply to public schools? Throughout their schooling, students are taught about the rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution. Join the National Archives and iCivics for a timely discussion about the application of the Bill of Rights in schools. Moderated by **Stephen Wermiel**, Professor of Practice of Law, American University, Washington College of Law, and monthly columnist for SCOTUSblog, panelists include **Linda Monk**, author of *The Bill of Rights: A User's Guide*; **Mary Beth Tinker**, plaintiff in U.S. Supreme Court Case *Tinker v. Des Moines Iowa Independent School District*; and Justin Driver, Yale Law School professor. This **free program** can be viewed via live stream on the National Archives [YouTube Channel](#).

- **Young Learners Program Series - Orville Wright: Aviation Pioneer on Thursday, December 17 at 11:00 a.m. ET**

Meet Orville Wright (Bob Gleason, an actor with American Historical Theatre) and discover how the Wright Brothers made the first controlled flight of a powered aircraft in this live event from our Young Learners Program Series. Attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions of Mr. Wright during the program. This **free program** can be viewed via live stream on the National Archives [YouTube Channel](#).



National Archives Facility Information Regarding COVID-19

(updated as of November 30, 2020)

The National Archives is committed to the health and safety of our visitors and staff. We are continuing to monitor the situation regarding COVID-19. National Archives staff will continue to serve the public remotely by responding to emailed requests for records and [History Hub](#) inquiries. While we are closed, we invite the public to explore our online resources by visiting www.archives.gov and viewing our [online exhibits](#) and [educational resources](#) and participating in our [Citizen Archivist Missions](#).

Finally, all in-person public programs and events are suspended through December 31, 2020. We will continue to update the public as agency guidance becomes available. Follow the National Archives at Kansas City on [Facebook](#) or on Twitter [@KCArchives](#).



GENERAL INFORMATION: The National Archives is open Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Closed on weekends and Federal holidays. Hours are subject to change due to special programs and weather.

The National Archives is located at 400 West Pershing Road, Kansas City, Missouri, 64108, and is home to historical records dating from the 1820s to the 1990s created or received by Federal agencies in Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

For more information, call 816-268-8000, email kansascity.educate@nara.gov or visit www.archives.gov/kansas-city. Tweet us [@KCArchives](#). Follow us on Instagram at [kansascity.archives](#). Find us on Facebook www.facebook.com/nationalarchiveskansascity.