



# National Archives at Kansas City Newsletter

## Upcoming Virtual Programs at the National Archives

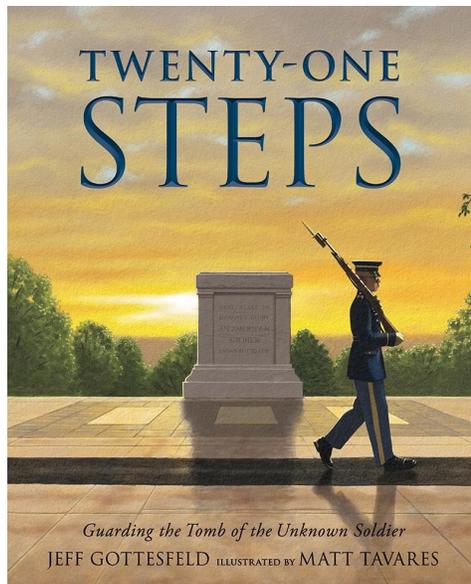
The National Archives is continuing to offer a full slate of public programs in November. An extensive list can be found [here](#). Below are several highlights on a variety of topics. All programs are scheduled according to Eastern Time.

### **Hollywood Victory: The Movies, Stars, and Stories of World War II**

On **Tuesday, November 2 at 7:00 p.m. EDT**, the National Archives will host **Christian Blauvelt** whose book *Hollywood Victory* tells how the film industry enlisted in the Allied effort during the Second World War - a story that started with staunch isolationism as studios sought to maintain the European market and eventually erupted into impassioned support in countless ways. Industry output included war films reminding moviegoers what they were fighting for and "home-front" stories designed to boost the morale of troops overseas. Joining Blauvelt in conversation will be TCM host **Ben Mankiewicz**. Excerpts from the National Archives' motion picture holdings will be presented. *Presented in partnership with Turner Classic Movies (TCM)*. This **free program** is available via live stream on the National Archives [YouTube Channel](#).

### **Twenty-One Steps: Guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier**

On **Wednesday, November 10 at 10:00 a.m. EST**, the National Archives will host **Jeff Gottesfeld** for a reading of his children's book, *Twenty-One Steps: Guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier*. November 11, 2021 is the 100th anniversary of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery. Gottesfeld will be joined by a Tomb guard who will explain the rigorous process of being selected as a guard and the 27-hour shifts of Tomb guard duty: an honor sought by many but for which few are selected. This **free program** is available via live stream on the National Archives [YouTube Channel](#).



### **Reclamation: Sally Hemings, Thomas Jefferson, and a Descendant's Search for Her Family's Lasting Legacy**

On **Tuesday, November 16 at 1:00 p.m. EST**, author **Gayle Jessup White** will discuss her book *Reclamation*. Jessup White, a Black descendant of Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings's family, explores America's racial reckoning through the prism of her ancestors - both the enslaver and the enslaved. She had long heard the stories passed down from her father's family, that they were direct descendants of Thomas Jefferson - lore she firmly believed, though others did not. For four decades, she researched her connection to Thomas Jefferson to confirm its truth once and for all, and discovered her family lore was correct. In *Reclamation*, she chronicles her remarkable journey to definitively understand her heritage and reclaim it, and offers a compelling portrait of what it means to be a Black woman in America, to pursue the American dream, to reconcile the legacy of racism, and to ensure the nation lives up to the ideals advocated by her legendary ancestor. Author and historian **Annette Gordon-Reed** will join the author in conversation. This **free program** is available via live stream on the National Archives [YouTube Channel](#).

## November 2021

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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

## The Surf and Its Legacy in American History

In 2011, the Surf Ballroom (colloquially known as The Surf), located near Clear Lake, Iowa, was added to the National Register of Historic Places. Earlier this year, it was granted National Historic Landmark status, the National Park Service records in the National Archives includes the nomination of The Surf for historic site status.

The original Surf Ballroom opened in 1933, murals on the walls depicted beach scenes so patrons would feel as though they were at a beach club. The Surf caught fire in 1947 and the next year was re-built across the street from the original location with seating capacity of 2,100 and a 6,300 square foot dance floor. The Surf is well known for several reasons.

Located in the holdings of the National Archives at Kansas City, *Amos v. Prom, Inc.*, is a US District Court Case that was filed on September 30, 1953. The plaintiff, LaFaun Amos, of Mason City, Iowa, alleged that the owners of the Surf Ballroom denied her entry on December 8, 1951, on the basis of her race. Amos was African American. In her complaint, she cited that the refusal of entry violated the Iowa Civil Rights Act and asked for \$10,000 in compensation.



Above: Exterior of the Surf Ballroom located in Clear Lake, Iowa. Record Group 79, Records of the National Park Service, 1785 - 2006; National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks Program Records, 2013 - 2017; Iowa SP Surf Ballroom. National Archives Identifier 75338469.

The following excerpt is from the National Park Service National Historic Landmark nomination: *Amos was among a group of eight blacks denied admission to the ballroom explicitly due to race, an action stated by manager, Carroll Anderson, that followed direct orders from property owner, Prom, Inc. Kenneth M. Moore, president of Prom, Inc. testified that the guiding policy of the Surf is that "any person admitted must be acceptable as a dancing partner to all other patrons." Further, Moore stated that on past occasions when the performers were black, such as the Lionel Hampton's orchestra, which was performing on the night of the incident involving Mrs. Amos, there tended to be a greater number of blacks in the crowd. On previous occasions where that was the case, the management received "numerous protests from regular patrons about the presence of Negroes." Such protests were credited with a change in policy regarding admission of blacks. Moore admitted that the Amos party was denied admission because they were black but noted he had been assured by legal counsel that the action would not violate the Iowa civil rights statute.*

*(Continued on next page.)*



Left: Bar area of the Surf Ballroom located in Clear Lake, Iowa. Record Group 79, Records of the National Park Service, 1785 - 2006; National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks Program Records, 2013 - 2017; Iowa SP Surf Ballroom. National Archives Identifier 75338469.

(Continued from page 2.)

Amos's primary reason in filing the complaint was that the dance hall fell under the amusement category as a venue and therefore a venue allowable for all to enter under the provisions of the Iowa Civil Rights Act; meaning Amos could enter The Surf as a person of color. The defense argued that the venue was a recreation location and therefore the owners did not have to abide by the Act and could deny entry to whomever they wished.

The case was decided by Judge Henry N. Graven on January 11, 1954. Judge Graven stated in his ruling that under the interpretation of the Iowa civil rights statute that a ballroom is a place of amusement therefore rejecting the defendant's argument. Further, the plaintiff was then granted compensation in the amount of \$400, by an all white jury of five women and seven men.



Above: The stage inside the Surf Ballroom located in Clear Lake, Iowa. Record Group 79, Records of the National Park Service, 1785 - 2006; National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks Program Records, 2013 - 2017; Iowa SP Surf Ballroom. National Archives Identifier 75338469.

The owners of The Surf appealed the case to the US Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals and the appeal was dismissed at the request of the parties involved. It should be noted that *Amos v. Prom* was not the first civil rights case filed against The Surf. Two previous cases had been filed regarding admission to the venue. The classification of "ballrooms" as places of amusement in the Iowa civil rights law was the key issue and the Amos case helped clarify what was deemed to be a subjective interpretation of the law.

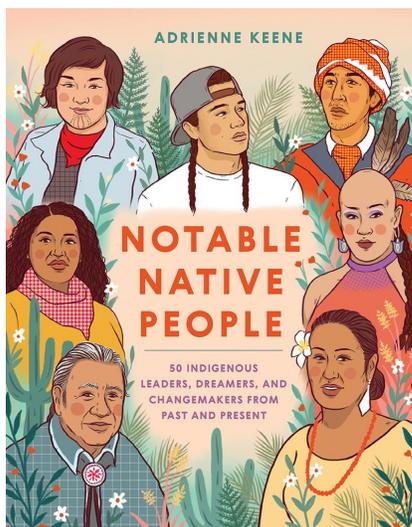
The Surf is also known as the venue in which "The Day the Music Died" immortalized in "American Pie," written and sung by musician Don McLean. On February 3, 1959, an airplane left from Clear Lake, Iowa, carrying musicians Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens, and J.P. Richardson (The Big Bopper). The plane was headed for Moorhead, Minnesota, but never made it as the aircraft crashed shortly after takeoff. The three musicians were part of a larger group that included Tommy Allsup, Carl Bunch, Waylon Jennings, and Dion and The Belmonts, who had been on a barnstorming Winter Dance Party tour of the Midwest.

The Winter Dance Party tour buses were not in great shape as they often broke, creating cold, flu and frostbite issues for the musicians, thus the idea of a chartered plane for part of the tour was pursued. According to [an interview](#) given in 2009 by Holly historian, Bill Griggs, to the *Star Tribune* (Minneapolis), the tour went through five buses in the first 11 days of the 24-city tour. The buses were not made to withstand the harsh winter climate. In addition, there was no road crew to help load and unload music equipment and the Interstate Highway System had not been fully constructed, so two-lane roads in rough winter conditions were the norm.

On the evening of February 2, the group played at The Surf. After the concert, Holly secured a plane and Richardson, who had been ill with a cold, swapped seats with Jennings. Allsup and Valens flipped a coin for the remaining seat on the four-seat, single-engine Beechcraft Bonanza. Shortly after take-off the pilot, Roger Peterson, lost control of the airplane and crashed in a cornfield killing all four occupants. The [official investigation](#) was completed by the Civil Aeronautics Board (precursor to the National Transportation and Safety Board), which indicated the probable cause of the accident was "the pilot's unwise decision to embark on a flight which would necessitate flying solely by instruments when he was not properly certificated or qualified."

Since its inception, The Surf has witnessed a tremendous amount of history. It continues to host various musicians, artists, and events as a public concert venue.

## November Virtual Programs for Educators and Students



### **Young Learners Program - Notable Native People: 50 Indigenous Leaders, Dreamers, and Changemakers from Past and Present on Wednesday, November 3 at 11:00 a.m. EDT**

For National Native American Heritage Month, we present author, educator, and podcaster **Adrienne Keene**, a citizen of the Cherokee Nation. She will share biographies from her young adult book, *Notable Native People: 50 Indigenous Leaders, Dreamers, and Changemakers from Past and Present*. The biographies of the historical indigenous people will be paired with historical records from the holdings of the National Archives and related DocsTeach activities. A question-and-answer session will follow this Young Learners presentation. This **free program** is available via live stream on the National Archives [YouTube Channel](#).

### **Young Learners Program - Meet Frederick Douglass on Monday, November 15 at 11:00 a.m. EST**

Meet Frederick Douglass, abolitionist, orator, writer, and statesman. Douglass escaped from

slavery in 1838 and became an influential force in the abolition movement with his powerful speeches, including "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July," and his antislavery newspaper, *The North Star*. Douglass continued to fight for rights of African Americans after slavery was abolished with the 13th Amendment. In 1889, Douglass was appointed U.S. Minister to Haiti. Douglass is portrayed by **Phil Darius Wallace**, actor, director, and writer. This **free program** is available via live stream on the National Archives [YouTube Channel](#).

### **The Constitution and Our Community for Grades 3-5 on Friday, November 19 at 11:15 a.m. EST**

In this 45-minute program, students will explore the idea of community, hone their primary source analysis skills by examining government records, and connect the Constitution to their own lives. [Registration](#) is requested for this **free program**.

### **The Constitution Rules! For Grades K-2 on Friday, November 19 at 1:15 p.m. EST**

In this 30-minute program, students will explore the idea of different responsibilities in their community and analyze images that highlight the jobs of the three branches of government as outlined in the Constitution. [Registration](#) is required for this **free program**.

## **We Rule: Civics for All of US - K-5 Civics Distance Learning Programs**

*We Rule: Civics for All of US* is a new education initiative from the National Archives that promotes civic literacy and engagement. We are providing teachers with programming, curricula, and exceptional field trip experiences both online and at our locations across the country. Our interactive distance learning programs draw upon the vast holdings of the National Archives to promote the knowledge and skills students need for civic engagement in the 21st century. To learn more or to schedule a program, visit the *We Rule* [website](#). Available *We Rule* programs include:

### **The Constitution Rules! for Grades K-2**

- In this 30-minute program, students will explore the idea of different responsibilities in their community and analyze images that highlight the jobs of the three branches of government as outlined in the Constitution.

### **The Constitution and Our Community for Grades 3-5**

- In this 45-minute program, students will explore the idea of community, hone their primary source analysis skills by examining government records, and connect the Constitution to their own lives.

## 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](mailto: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.

## National Archives Facility Information Regarding COVID-19

(updated as of October 28, 2021)

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. Finally, all in-person public programs and events are suspended until further notice. 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](#).



NATIONAL  
ARCHIVES

KANSAS CITY

**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](mailto:kansascity.educate@nara.gov) or visit [www.archives.gov/kansas-city](http://www.archives.gov/kansas-city). Tweet us @KCArchives. Follow us on Instagram at: [kansascity.archives](https://www.instagram.com/kansascity.archives). Find us on Facebook [www.facebook.com/nationalarchiveskansascity](https://www.facebook.com/nationalarchiveskansascity).