

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES IN THE REGIONS...

June 2012

A MONTHLY CALENDAR OF EVENTS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

The Happy Family, ca. 1953

By Annie Davis and Amy Karwoski

In the years immediately following World War II, a fictional notion of the ideal, happy American family prevailed in popular culture. This ideal was reflected in TV shows like *Leave it to Beaver* and *I Love Lucy*. Memories of the horrors of war faded into the distance as dreams of a new era of peace and prosperity took their place: the mommy at home ironing, the daddy away at the office, Peggy and Tony riding bikes in the yard. This vision was captured in a Little Golden Book of 1947, *The Happy Family*, now out of print, a relic of the values of a previous time.

Our records reveal a great deal about the sentiments of a time. Consider “Operation Doorstep.” On March 17, 1953, more than 600 Civil Defense observers and media representatives witnessed an atomic explosion at the Atomic Energy Commission’s Nevada Proving Ground. News and radiomen referred to the event as “Operation Doorstep,” as its purpose was to illustrate what Americans could expect if an atomic burst were to occur over the doorsteps of our major cities.

“Operation Doorstep” was a combined Atomic Energy Commission, Department of Defense, and Federal Civil Defense Administration program. It allowed the Federal Civil Defense Administration to study the exposure of two “typical American homes” to an atomic blast. Photographs of the “typical” middle-class home constructed



“Family scene, mannequin style, before the blast. This group is in the living room of the house 7,500 feet from ground zero. March 17, 1953.” ARC # 6234467, Records of the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization, 1947–1962, Record Group (RG) 304, National Archives at Boston. These documents are also available in DocsTeach.

for this experiment also feature a “typical” middle-class family: two parents and two children, white and well dressed. They are shown enjoying a night of lighthearted leisure in their appropriately decorated living room, the family car visible through the front window.

Stores and businesses supported this program, donating building materials, furniture, and other materials necessary to create the model. J.C. Penny even outfitted the test mannequins in their stylish ensembles! The home décor was not entirely decorative, however. An entire paragraph of the final report discusses the value of venetian blinds, of which these writers are fans, stating “A great deal of misunderstanding has arisen concerning the use of venetian blinds.” Apparently, they might keep out thermal energy and protect the furniture from combustion. One can see that they performed as hoped.

The photographic records of the houses, furnishings, and mannequins before and after the blast not only provide strong evidence in support of using bomb shelters. To us, in a new century, these photographs depict a stereotypical notion of the American family of the period, one that by 1953 would be challenged on the stage of the Civil Rights Movement.

Annie Davis is an education specialist, and Amy Karwoski is an education



“The family group in the living room of the 7,500-foot house after the blast. While some mannequins look comparatively undisturbed, all showed marks from flying glass. The upright male mannequin had plaster chipped from both eyes. The little girl was severely marked around the forehead.” ARC # 6234468, Records of the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization, 1947–1962, RG 304, National Archives at Boston.

Background information: Pamphlet, Val Peterson, Administrator Federal Civil Defense Administration. These documents are also available in DocsTeach (<http://docsteach.org>).

NARA WestCoast June 2012

**[Multi-Generation Family] Family of Lim Lip Hong alias
Lim Tye, May 1914**
Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service,
1787-2004, Record Group 85
National Archives at San Bruno



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
					Colorado Springs, CO Colorado Genealogy Expo Information Booth and Exhibit Noon General Public 303-407-5749	Colorado Springs, CO Colorado Genealogy Expo Information Booth and Exhibit Noon General Public 303-407-5749
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
						Burbank, CA Jamboree – Southern California Genealogical Society All Day Workshop Genealogists 951-956-2000
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
					Anaheim, CA American Library Association – Genealogy Pre Conference TBD Workshop Genealogists 951-956-2000	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Anaheim, CA American Library Association Annual Meeting 1:30 P.M. Lecture General Public 951-956-2000						

The National
Archives at

Riverside
951-956-2000
riverside.archives@nara.gov

San Francisco
650-238-3501
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Seattle
206-336-5115
seattle.archives@nara.gov

Anchorage
907-261-7800
alaska.archives@nara.gov

NARA EastCoast June 2012

Affidavit of Loui Young stating that he is the father of Louie Jock Sung, and deposition of non Chinese witnesses. Documents were executed in New York City. February 15, 1909

Records of the Immigration of Naturalization Service, 1787-2004
Record Group 85
National Archives at New York



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY		
					<p>Waltham, MA Shot Heard Round the World 9:30 A.M. Workshop Students K-12 866-406-2379</p> <p>Philadelphia, PA First Friday Open House Noon Genealogists 215-606-0100</p>	<p>Philadelphia, PA African American Genealogy Group 9 A.M. Conference Genealogists 267-535-9084</p>		
3	<p>Waltham, MA This Land Is Your Land 9:30 A.M. Workshop Students K-12 866-406-2379</p> <p>Morrow, GA Naturalization Ceremony 10 A.M. Open House General Public 770-968-2100</p>	<p>Waltham, MA This Land Is Your Land 9:30 A.M. Workshop Students K-12 866-406-2379</p> <p>Waltham, MA Searching for Seaman 2 P.M. Lecture General Public 866-406-2379</p>	6	<p>Waltham, MA This Land Is Your Land 9:30 A.M. Workshop Students K-12 866-406-2379</p> <p>Waltham, MA Applications of Research Methods 6 P.M. Workshop K-12 Teachers 866-406-2379</p>	7	8	<p>Cherry Hill, NJ Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia (JGSGP) 1 P.M. Conference Genealogists 856-482-1853</p>	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	<p>Cherry Hill, NJ Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia (JGSGP) 1 P.M. Conference Genealogists 856-482-1853</p> <p>New York, NY Finding Family: NY Sources: Repositories and Imagination- So Where do you go for your records? 12:30 A.M. Workshop Genealogists 866-840-1752</p> <p>New York, NY Federal Hall New York's National Treasures Noon General Public 866-840-1752</p> <p>Morrow, GA Afro American Historical and Genealogical Society 10 A.M. Workshop Genealogists 770-968-2555</p>		
17	18	19	20	21	22	23		
	<p>Morrow, GA Naturalization Ceremony 10 A.M. Open House General Public 770-968-2100</p>	<p>Dobb Ferry, NY Researching the 1940 Census Westchester County Genealogy Society 10 A.M. Lecture Genealogists 866-840-1752</p>	<p>Bristol, PA Grundy Memorial Library Passenger Arrival Records 6:30 P.M. Open House General Public 215-606-0100</p>	<p>New York, NY New York Harbor Ellis Island Family History Game Show 1 P.M. General Public 866-840-1752</p>				
24	25	26	27	28	29	30		
		<p>Providence, RI Last Measure of Devotion 10 A.M. Workshop K-12 Teachers 866-406-2379</p>				<p>Morrow, GA Afro American Historical and Genealogical Society 10 A.M. Workshop Genealogists 770-968-2555</p>		

The National Archives at

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