



News Release

For Immediate Release

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You Are One Click Away from a Great Online Field Trip! “Digital Vaults” Delivers a New National Archives Experience

Washington, D.C... The National Archives’ new “Digital Vaults” website delivers an online experience that is unlike any other. With a database of some 1,200 documents, photographs, drawings, maps, and other materials and a keywording system that visually links records, the Digital Vaults website enables visitors to customize their exhibit experience and to create posters, movies, and games that can be shared by email. Each record in Digital Vaults is also linked to the National Archives research database, so visitors who want to know more can take the first steps toward a research journey into the National Archives.

Designed by Second Story Interactive Studios, Digital Vaults embraces “Web 2.0” technology in a way that has already garnered attention. It has been selected as Site of the Day by FWA (Favorite Website Award) and Adobe – Showcase; it has won an Information Design award from on Communications Art Design; it was selected Honorable Mention in Exhibition at the 2008 Museums in the Web Conference; and it was nominated for the 12th annual Webby Awards in the Cultural Institutions category.

Digital Vaults is part of a redesigned *National Archives Experience* website (<http://www.archives.gov/nae/>) that provides the inside story of the award-winning Public Vaults exhibition, the changing exhibitions in the Lawrence F. O’Brien gallery, the educational offerings of the Boeing Learning Center, National Archives public programs, information about the Foundation for the National Archives, and much more. The site has a special interactive resources section for educators and students. Teachers can get great ideas on lesson plans using reproducible primary sources, find information on teaching activities correlated to National Teaching Standards, and engage in a variety of professional development programs - on-site or online. Students can explore the depth and diversity of the holdings of the National Archives for their own school projects, gear up for National History Day, or even pick up a virtual pen and sign the Declaration of Independence!

Archivist of the United States Allen Weinstein said, “The National Archives Public Vaults exhibit in Washington allows visitors to interact with some of our vast holdings. The Digital Vaults takes this interactivity a step further on the Internet. It gives visitors the ability to choose what historical subjects they wish to explore so they can browse

records in an entirely new way. Through this website, online visitors of all ages can enjoy exploring the Digital Vaults and learning about the essential holdings of the National Archives.”

The online visitor to Digital Vaults decides what subjects to explore, from the atomic bomb to prohibition, from World War II to suffrage rights. The website displays records and their relationship to the chosen subject and to other records. The visitor is free to follow pathways between records and explore where the free association leads.

Tom Wheeler, President of the Foundation for the National Archives, said, “We are thrilled that the first stage of the Digital Vaults has been launched and is ready for online visitors. The website has long been considered a critical component of the *National Archives Experience*, one that would go far beyond the ‘granite walls’ of the National Archives building in Washington, to enhance the experience of visitors worldwide. The Digital Vaults will help to ‘unlock’ the stacks and reveal some of the treasures entrusted to the National Archives.”

About the Foundation for the National Archives

Created in 1992, the Foundation for the National Archives is an independent nonprofit organization committed to increasing public awareness and appreciation of the National Archives as an essential resource in the American democracy. The Foundation serves as the private-sector partner of the National Archives in the creation of the *National Archives Experience*, a national civic literacy initiative which includes permanent exhibits, educational programs, traveling exhibits, special events and screenings, educational literature, and historical/records-related products and media. The Foundation supports these activities by generating financial and creative support from individuals, foundations and corporations who share a belief in the importance of innovative civics education.

About the National Archives and Records Administration

The National Archives and Records Administration is the Federal agency that serves American democracy by safeguarding and preserving the records of our government, ensuring that the people can discover, use, and learn from this documentary heritage. It supports democracy, promotes civic education, and facilitates historical understanding of our national experience. Every subject relating to American history is covered in the nine billion records, the millions of photographs, maps and electronic records and the thousands of motion pictures and audio recordings that are available to the public at the National Archives nationwide. The National Archives maintains 20 regional records facilities and 12 Presidential libraries nationwide, as well as the Office of the Federal Register, the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), and the Information Security Oversight Office (ISOO).

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