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Moon Dust in Berkeley? Lawrence Lab archivist finds old NASA treasure



Karen Nelson

When Apollo 11 returned from its historic flight in 1969, the moon rocks and lunar soil collected by Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin eventually found their way to some 150 laboratories worldwide. One of those was UC's Space Sciences Laboratory on the Cal campus. After scientists had completed their experiments on them, the samples should have returned to NASA. Instead they remained on a warehouse shelf, where they sat collecting earth dust until they were found more than four decades later.

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The screenshot shows the 'Founders Online' website interface. At the top, there is a blue header with the National Archives logo on the left, the text 'Founders Online' in the center, a red 'beta RELEASE' seal on the right, and the 'ROTUNDA' logo in the top right corner. Below the header, the main content area features the title 'CORRESPONDENCE AND OTHER WRITINGS OF SIX MAJOR SHAPERS OF THE UNITED STATES:' followed by a list of names: George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams (and family), Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, and James Madison. It states there are over 119,000 searchable documents. To the right is a 'QUICK LINKS' box with links for 'About Founders Online', 'Major Funders', 'Search Help', 'How to Use This Site', and 'Frequently Asked Questions'. Below this is a search bar with the text 'Enter search terms' and a 'GO' button. At the bottom of the search area, there is a large handwritten signature of George Washington and a portrait of him.

National Archives launches “Founders Online” Website

On June 23 NARA launched Founders Online, bringing together the papers of George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison in a single website that gives a first-hand account of the birth of the Republic. To view the Website go to <http://founders.archives.gov>

Founders Online was created through a cooperative agreement between the National Historical Publications

and Records Commission (NHPRC), the grant-making arm of the National Archives, and The University of Virginia (UVA) Press.

“Through Founders Online, you can now trace the shaping of the nation, the extraordinary clash of ideas, the debates and discussions carried out through drafts and final versions of public documents as well as the evolving thoughts and principles shared in personal correspondence, diaries, and journals,” said Archivist of the United States David S. Ferriero at a ceremony marking the launch. “This project is a key part of the National Archives’ mission and the President’s goal for Open Government and citizen access to make history accessible, discoverable, and usable by the American people.”

For the past 50 years, the National Archives, through the NHPRC, has invested in documentary editions of the original historical records of the Founding Era. Projects led by

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Moon Dust!

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Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory archivist Karen Nelson discovered the moon dust—about 20 vials with handwritten labels and dated “24 July 1970”—in April this year while reviewing and clearing out artifacts from the warehouse. “They were vacuum sealed in a glass jar,” said Nelson, who has worked in the lab’s Archives and Records Office for 17 years. “We don’t know how or when they ended up in storage.”

Along with the jar was a copy of a study of carbon compounds in Apollo lunar samples by several co-authors including Nobel Prize winner Melvin Calvin. The paper examined the nature and chemical characteristics of the carbon in the samples. Calvin helped shape NASA’s efforts to search for extraterrestrial life, including searching for organic and biologic compounds in the lunar samples.

Nelson contacted the Space Sciences Laboratory. “They were surprised we had the samples,” she said. She then contacted NASA, who asked that the samples be sent back but allowed her to first open the jar to remove the vials.

Besides having been the unwitting temporary repository of moon dust and other long-lost artifacts, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory creates a lot of historically valuable permanent records. Because the Lab is affiliated contractually with the U.S. Department of Energy, its federal records eventually make their way to the National Archives in San Bruno, where they are preserved and made available for public research.

Adapted from an article in the *Berkeley Lab Newsletter*, May 2013.

Founders Online

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dedicated historians and experts in editing historical documents have collected—from archives across the country and around the world—copies of original 18th- and 19th-century documents, transcribed them, provided annotations, and produced hundreds of individual volumes. Now for the first time, the combined efforts of that scholarship are available in a single online source, fully searchable, and freely accessible.

The Founders Online project emerged from hearings of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary held in February 2008. Inspired by the testimony of historians such as David McCullough, Congress provided funding and directed NARA to expedite public access to these founding documents through online publication.

Founders Online includes thousands of documents, replicating the contents of 242 volumes drawn from the published print editions. As each new print volume is completed, it will be added to this database of documents.

In addition, all of the unpublished and in-process materials (about 55,000 documents) will be posted online over the next three years. Researchers will be able to view transcribed, unpublished letters as they are being researched and annotated by the editors and staff.

Altogether, some 175,000 documents are projected to be on the Founders Online site. This website promises to be of immense value for the public’s ability to understand the world and intentions of the nation’s founders. It will also provide a bold economic, educational, and technical model that will provide important lessons as we plan future efforts for online publication of historical materials.

Check out this video on the project: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zv477V6tKew>

For more information on the project, visit <http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2010/winter/founders.html>



USING FEDERAL RECORDS CENTER SERVICES WORKSHOP AUGUST 20

This **FREE** one-day workshop shows you how to transfer records to the FRC, submit reference requests on-line, return re-files and send interfiles. It also gives information on online disposition activities, and promotes FRC scanning services for documents, rolled microfilm, aperture cards and oversized material.

When

August 20
8:30 am-
3:00 pm

Where

Federal Records Center
23123 Cajalco Road
Perris, CA 92570

Information and Registration

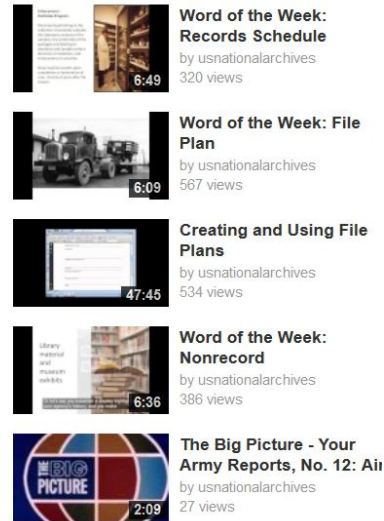
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“Word of the Week” Video Series

The National Archives YouTube Channel has posted a little video series called “Word of the Week”. In our last issue we highlighted a video on file plans. Other titles are about records inventories, “non-records” and records schedules. These videos are great for educating your unit’s staff on basic records management concepts and tools. In this issue we are highlighting the video on records inventories.



Word of the Week: Inventory



The video is at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9vJnSy3KakA>

Summary: A records inventory is a high-level survey of all the different types of information being created, received and stored by an organization. We use the information we gather in a records inventory to develop, implement and improve our records management programs. Inventories have number of purposes. They can be used to create a baseline of information to revitalize a records management program or update a records schedule. They are also used to plan a move of records to a new building or to inform the conversion from an analog to an electronic recordkeeping system. Whatever their specific purposes, records inventories are essential to keeping an organization informed so that its records can be managed appropriately.

Leader-led Records Management Training, July–August 2013

To register go to archives.gov/records-mgmt/training/ or email our training registrar at laguna.workshops@nara.gov

For more information on our workshops, go to <http://nara.learn.com/recordsmanagement-training>

By Course Name:

Records Schedule Implementation

(Knowledge Area 4)

July 8-9, San Francisco August 26-27, San Diego

Asset and Risk Management (Knowledge Area 5)

July 10-11, San Francisco August 28-29, San Diego

Records Management Program Development (Knowledge Area 6) July 12, San Francisco August 30, San Diego

By Location:

San Diego, California

Records Schedule Implementation (KA4), August 26-27; Asset and Risk Management (KA5), August 28-29; Records Management Program Development (KA6), August 30

San Francisco, California

Records Schedule Implementation (KA4), July 8-9; Asset and Risk Management (KA5), July 10-11; Records Management Program Development (KA6), July 12

Contact us!

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Graphic depicting the launch of an invasion landing craft. On Kansas City's Darby ship building company letterhead in World War II.

On-line Records Management Training Webinar Series, July-Sept. 2013

This low cost training can help you improve records management in your office! Connect to the Internet and a toll-free audio line to participate from your remote location. Register once to enroll in four 90 minute sessions. The cost includes all four sessions.

To register, go to: NARA Learn Website

If you have questions, please contact us at: nara.recordsmanagement@nara.gov.

Basic Records Operations

(\$125 per connection)

You will learn what to file, how to file it, and how to remove files no longer needed for current business.

Dates offered:

- ▶ July 10, 17, 24 and 31 (7:00 a.m., PT)
- ▶ August 8, 15, 22 and 29 (11:00 a.m., PT)
- ▶ September 5, 12, 19 and 26 (7:00 a.m., PT)

Vital Business Information

(\$125 per connection)

You will learn 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

Dates offered:

- ▶ September 3, 10, 17 and 24 (7:00 a.m., PT)