Welcome/Administrative Business

Jennifer (Jen) Nelson, Acting Executive for Research Services and Special Assistant to Chief Operating Officer Tom Mills, welcomed everyone to the Researcher Forum and addressed several issues with the group.

- *NARA and Continued Use of Record Groups*: There is no truth to the rumor that the National Archives is planning to abandon the key principle governing the arrangement and description of archival records: the record group. Archivist of the United States David Ferriero stated that the rumor resulted from statements he made in response to a question during his lecture, "Learning from the Past: The Role of the National Archives," as part of Catholic University's School of Library and Information Science Colloquium Series on November 3, 2011. While he acknowledged that the "archival processing routines" that NARA uses "made sense at the time" and for the agencies whose records they were, he doesn't believe that researchers should have to know record groups to find records on a given topic in an era of electronic research. He expressed in his talk that it's time to "rethink basic archival process routines" to make it easier for researchers to find the records themselves—"it's a huge challenge." The Archivist then encouraged attendees to listen to his lecture at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MD52rimJHTc (minute 43:00) and decide for themselves what he said.

- *Robert M. Warner Research Center Transformation*:   According to the most current schedule, the work to construct the wall on the south side of the existing Microfilm Research Room is scheduled to take place the first week of March. This information supersedes the earlier projected schedule which showed that work would start around February 20. This will have no impact on the schedule to complete the Research Center reconfiguration because that wall will be completed sooner than originally planned. The Finding Aids Room is currently scheduled to open around February 29. The current schedule calls for work on the vestibule floor at the Research Center entrance to begin on February 6 and end about three weeks later. That work will take place at night. If you have questions about the reconfiguration, please send an email to *jennifer.nelson@nara.gov.*

Diane Dimkoff, Director of Customer Services, covered other topics of interest to researchers.

- *Weather Conditions:* To learn the status of NARA operations, you may call the NARA status line at 301-837-0700, check NARA's Facebook page, access *OPM.gov*, and/or tune in to WTOP 103.5.

- *Know Your Records Survey via IdeaScale:*   NARA has listed the top 63 *Know Your Records* talks on IdeaScale and is seeking to learn which topics are of greatest interest to researchers for putting up online (e.g., genealogy, ethnic heritage, Open Government, Civil War, social media). NARA plans to take the top 5 and transcribe them for uploading to YouTube. Voting ended on January 29.

- *Researcher News:* The spring edition of *Researcher News* is now available for viewing at *http://www.archives.gov/dc-metro/newsletter/2012-spring.pdf.*

Citizen Archivist Dashboard

Archivist David Ferriero introduced the main feature of the meeting: a demonstration of the Citizen Archivist Dashboard, which was recently launched by NARA.   To illustrate the importance of openness in government, he held up his personal copy of the newly released first volume of President Obama's papers and read statements made by the President during his first senior staff meeting on the importance of government transparency; these statements served as the preamble to the President's Open Government Initiative.   The Archivist stressed that openness in government is more than just informing the public, it's recognizing that government doesn't have all the answers and needs to tap the public's knowledge. He further stated that NARA has created its own Open Government plan and tied its organizational transformation to it. NARA's Citizen Archivist initiative has been designed to tap the expertise of records users who know a lot about the records, capture that information, and share it with future users. The program is dedicated to involving the American public in what we do.

The Archivist presented Pam Wright, Chief Digital Access Strategist, who was pleased to see both familiar and new faces in the audience. She found the Archivist's remarks to be an exciting introduction to the day's topic. Pam and her dynamic staff are very comfortable with transparency and using online tools. When the Archivist came on board and was seeking change in NARA's approach to providing access to users, NARA turned to social media as a way to further public participation. The Citizen Archivist Dashboard has built upon many of the projects piloted in recent years and brings public participation to a whole new level.

Meredith Stewart, Management and Program Analyst in NARA's Open Government Division, then demonstrated the Citizen Archivist Dashboard for attendees. She accessed it at *www.archives.gov/citizen-archivist* and accompanied her briefing with a PowerPoint presentation, which may be viewed in the *Handouts* section of the January 27 Researcher Forum meeting at *http://www.archives.gov/dc-metro/researcher-forum/*.

Slide 2 – The Citizen Archivist Dashboard
- The Dashboard was launched at the end of December and serves as a portal for crowdsourcing features, such as tagging, transcription, editing articles, uploading & sharing, and contests.

- You can get to the Dashboard from the *archives.gov* web site.   Go to the "Information for" column and click on "Citizen Archivists."

- As you look at the Dashboard, there are tabs relating to the features. The first is "Tag." You have been introduced to tagging initiatives on Flickr and perhaps in NARA's Online Public Access (OPA) catalog. The Dashboard is organized so you can see the different missions that have been set up. It will open up in our online catalog, and we're asking the public to come in and tag. We already have many people who have contributed a significant number of tags to the National Archives images of records on Flickr.

- The second activity (tab) is "Transcribe." We launched the transcription pilot on Wednesday, January 25. People have already come in and transcribed.

- The next tab is "Edit Articles." You can edit articles on "Our Archives" Wiki or Wikipedia. One project encourages Wikipedians to add National Archives images of Ansel Adams photographs to Wikipedia articles. Another project encourages Wikipedians to write new or expand existing articles related to National Archives records featured on "Today's Document."

- The next tab is "Upload & Share."   We know that researchers are taking a lot of photographs, and many want to donate these images. You can share these images on Flickr by creating a Flickr account and uploading the images along with some basic information about the record. You would then ask to join the National Archives Citizen Archivist Research Group on Flickr. We encourage you to get online and share.

- The last tab on the Dashboard is "Enter a Contest." You can learn about contests from the Dashboard. The most recent was a student multimedia contest called "Document Your Environment," inspired by the Documerica collection of photographs. Also featured in NARA's contests are the "I Found it in the National Archives" contest, which encouraged researchers to submit stories from their findings in the Archives and NARA's first contest "History Happens Here," which asked people to mash-up National Archives images with real life.

- Other Features: You can also "Find Activity by Site" (Flickr, Tumblr, Wikisource etc.) and "Make a Suggestion" (new activities, documents you would like to see transcribed, tagging mission, etc).

Slide 3 – Tagging 101
- What is a tag; why tag; and who tags?

Slide 4 – Tagging in the National Archives Catalog
- If you want to tag, go into the new Online Public Access (OPA) system and create a login to tag records. Within the catalog, it is clear that tags are contributed by the public.

- We have created "tagging" missions to tap into existing interest in our records. If you have an idea for a mission, please let us know.

- Add tags that are meaningful for you. Tags can describe the image in a variety of ways, including themes represented, aspects of the image, photographic styles, etc. A dialogue box will pop up to tell you your tag(s) have been submitted. It will also let you know if that tag already exists.

Question: Are there any reviews of tags?
- We approve tags based on our tagging policy.

Question: What if I notice a tag that is not appropriate; what would I do?
- Right now, there is no flagging feature. Please email *search@nara.gov*, mention the tag in question, and include a link to the description or digital copy.
- Please visit "Frequently Asked Questions: Tags in Online Public Access (OPA)" for more information at *http://www.archives.gov/social-media/faqs/tagging-faqs.html*.

Slide 5 – Transcription 101
- What is it; why do it; and how is it done?

Slides 6 & 7 – NARA Transcription Pilot Project; Documents Chosen for Transcription
- The transcription feature was launched on Wednesday, January 25, as a pilot program.

- Features/best practices of the transcription tool are:
  o You do not need to log in to transcribe documents.
  o There are three levels of transcription: Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced.
  o You have magnifier and zoom features.
  o You transcribe in a free text box and do not need to format the document.
  o Your work will save over previous versions, and there is no access to previous versions.
  o You can work on one page at a time within a document.
  o Multiple people can work on one document with multiple pages.
  o There is a lock-out feature if you have a page open so other users cannot work on the same page. You will see a red notification in the transcription box.
  o You can search for documents that are "Not Yet Started," "Partially Transcribed," or "Completed."
  o As we use transcriptions in our catalog going forward, we will make it clear that these transcriptions were contributed by the public.
  o The comments feature allows you to start a discussion about transcription difficulties on the document page.
  o You can "Save Page as Complete" or "Save Page as Incomplete."
  o Even if a transcription is in the complete category, you can still see it and correct anything you think needs changing.
  o Use brackets if you want to describe an aspect of the document you see but which would not be part of the transcription.
  o Do not correct spelling mistakes, but be true to the document and type what you see.
  o If you cannot make out a word, please use "[illegible]."

- o Please describe markings, stamps, and seals.
- o View the Transcription Tips for more information: *http://transcribe.archives.gov/tips*

Question: What about hackers or people trying to sabotage a document?
- There is no login required for transcribing; however, we can prevent spamming. In all of the projects we've done in social media, this has always come up as a concern, but we haven't encountered these types of problems.

Slides 8 & 9 – Crowdsourcing Projects; Crowdsourcing Brainstorm
- If you have any questions or ideas for other crowdsourcing projects, please send them to *opengov@nara.gov*.

Comment: You should link to the transcription tips from the Board of Certification of Genealogists.

<u>Next Meeting of the Researcher Forum</u>

Please join us for the next meeting of the Researcher Forum on the new date of *May 18, 2012, at 1:00 p.m. in the National Archives Building in Washington, DC (Archives I)*. Agenda items can be sent to Jen Nelson at jennifer.nelson@nara.gov, Susan Cummings at susan.cummings@nara.gov, or to other NARA customer service or reference managers.

In the meantime:
- ➢ Please visit the Researcher Forum page at www.archives.gov/dc-metro/researcher-users-group/ for meeting minutes and upcoming information on changes coming to the Robert M. Warner Research Center at Archives I.
- ➢ The NARAtions blog is available for discussion at http://blogs.archives.gov/online-public-access.
- ➢ If you have suggestions for questions we should ask our researchers and the public, please send them to us at socialmedia@nara.gov.

Thank you all for coming.