



**I FOUND IT IN  
THE ARCHIVES**



SOCIETY OF  
American  
Archivists

[www.archivists.org](http://www.archivists.org)

## I FOUND IT IN THE ARCHIVES

Dear Colleague:

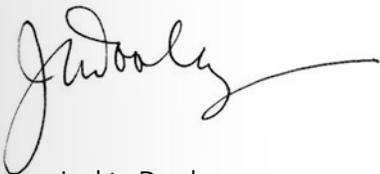
When we receive a letter of thanks from an archives user who is grateful for our help, we're reminded of the "humanness" of our profession. Since 2006, American Archives Month has given SAA members an opportunity to tell (or remind) people that items that are important to them are being preserved, cataloged, cared for, and made accessible by archivists – like you!

In conjunction with American Archives Month 2012, SAA is encouraging a special effort to involve people who have sought out archival collections by engaging them in a fun contest that makes use of online social platforms. *I Found It In The Archives!* is a collective effort to reach out to individuals who have found their records, families, heritage, and treasures through our collections.

Ask your users, your friends, and people you've never met to share their stories of discovery. Set up a contest, select the best entries, and allow others in the online world to vote for their favorites. Your local winner will join others in what will be a national competition, culminating in August 2013 when the national winner will be honored at the SAA/CoSA Joint Annual Meeting in New Orleans.

Measure your success in terms of entries, but also by the number of times you promote this contest with email messages, Facebook or blog posts, tweets, or YouTube videos. As others pass along your posts, you expand the opportunity for awareness. As local media carry stories of your contest – and post information online – you add to the awareness effect. How many people visit your website as a result of your promotion? Each person who clicks on your repository's website is being exposed to who we are and what we do.

Please begin making plans now to launch your *I Found It In The Archives!* local contest during American Archives Month in October. Working together, we'll build awareness of the people we serve, the history we preserve, and the significant contributions of archivists!

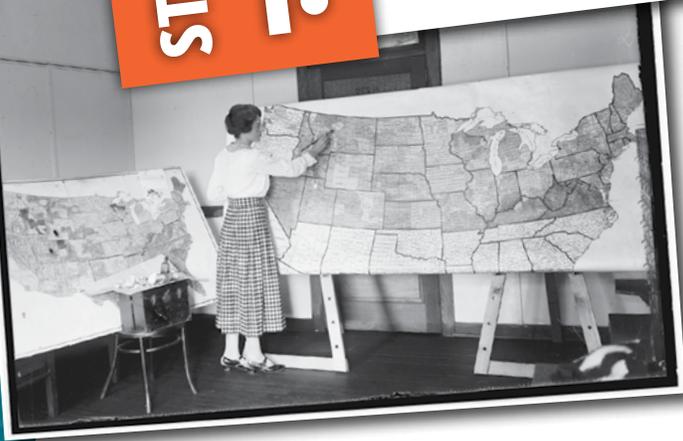


Jackie Dooley

SAA President, 2012-2013

# STEP 1:

## Map Out Your Plan



### Let's keep this simple.

First, map out a plan that works for you and your institution.

We see *I Found It In The Archives!* as an opportunity for people to submit a short story of their quest for information and their success in finding it in your archives. The story – submitted either as a 400-word written essay or as a video recording of no more than two minutes – would tell their tale of discovery and show the result of their search.

Your contest will take place primarily online, so participants *should* submit their entries to a designated email address. (You *could* allow entries submitted by mail or “walk-ins,” but then you’ll need to scan them and post them online.) Written entries could be attached as a Word document or pasted into the body of the email; video entries could be submitted as MPEG-4 files via email attachment or shared via a popular video site such as YouTube. (See the sidebar on page 4.) You can decide, based on your resources, whether your contest is limited to either essay or video submissions or includes both.

Your contest will culminate after several weeks (you determine your own schedule) with the selection of a winner and awarding of a prize. The prize should

be kept simple but special – a back-of-the-house tour led by an archivist, for example.

### We suggest that you roll out your contest as follows:

- Set the ground rules: Who can enter? Where will the entries go? How will they be judged? What is the timing? What is the prize?
- Be specific about what is expected of the entrant.
- Set a deadline for entries.
- Announce the contest online and wherever you are able to post information.
- Invite your users and, through them, their friends and family – anyone who wants to participate – to submit an entry. Exclude your co-workers and others who are closely affiliated with your organization (more on this later).
- Have an internal panel judge the entries and select finalists.
- Invite “the public” to vote for their favorite among the finalists.
- Announce the winner(s).
- Award a prize.
- Enter your winner(s) in the national competition. **(The deadline for submission in the national competition is March 1, 2013.)**

The national competition will involve all winning entrants from local competitions being posted on SAA’s website for public voting in April and May. The winner of the national competition will be announced in June. We’ll celebrate the culmination of the contest at the SAA/CoSA Joint Annual Meeting in New Orleans in August, hosting the winner at SAA’s Awards Ceremony.

**Your first step is to review the suggestions we’ve laid out in this guide, tailor a contest to fit your institution’s needs and resources, and let us know how you’re proceeding.**

Ready? Let’s go!

# STEP

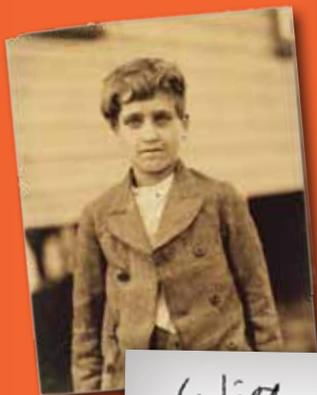
# 2:

## Set The Ground Rules



### Submitting Your Video Entry

For helpful tips on video sharing or to submit your local entry to the national competition, visit [www2.archivists.org/i-found-it](http://www2.archivists.org/i-found-it)



*With their help, I was able to fill a void in my life.*

Few of us are alike in our work or our institutions, so your contest should fit your organization - yet remain within certain parameters if your winner is going to compete nationally. The national competition will be based on entries that demonstrate the personal value that individuals have found in our archives. We will be looking for diversity, which should be a given considering the diversity of our collections!

You'll want to solicit entries from people who have "used" your facility or your staff's expertise, including those who may have explored your collections via your website. **Be sure to exclude your staff and their families from entering, as well as people who are so closely associated with your institution that it would be awkward if they were to win.** This would include board members, docents, vendors (such as an advertising or PR agency), and maybe even volunteers (you decide). Be specific regarding who cannot participate so there are no conflicts later when judging takes place. The Entry Form on page 6 outlines these exclusions. A customizable form is available at [www2.archivists.org/i-found-it](http://www2.archivists.org/i-found-it).

Compose ground rules that can be posted and that explain clearly what is expected of entrants.

Announce the dates on which the contest will start and end. (We recommend that you limit the entry period to three or four weeks so that you build a sense of urgency among entrants - and so that you have plenty of time for your preliminary judging and online public voting. Although the end-of-year holidays generally should be avoided for public relations activities, this may actually be a good time of year for your entries as folks gather with their families and have video cameras at the ready.)

The national competition will run from March through May. Your local entry(ies) must be received by March 1 in order to compete nationally. **Therefore, you**

**should set your deadlines to ensure that you've selected your winner(s) in time for the March 1 deadline.**

All entries should be submitted to a specific email address that you have set up for this purpose. This will enable you to communicate easily with the entrants and, with their permission, you can add them to a database of people who are "friends" of your organization and communicate with them on an ongoing basis. If you choose to accept entries in other ways, do ask entrants for an email address.

**For a sample Entry Form, Entry Application, and Release and Waiver, see pages 6-8.**

# STEP 3:

## Invite Entries Online, On Site, And Through Media

The more people who know about your contest, the better – so use as many contact tools as you have at your disposal. First, create a page or section of your website where complete information on the contest appears. Promote it on your home page so that it is highly visible. Your goal in this step is to drive as many people as possible to your website and the contest rules page, so every promotional tool you use must include the URL (address) that takes prospective entrants directly to the information page.



### There are many ways to promote your contest:

- Email your users, introducing the contest and providing a link to your website page.
- Post on your institution's Facebook page; tweet if you have an institutional Twitter account.
- Post and tweet using your personal pages and accounts. Ask employees of your institution to do the same and ask them to ask their friends to pass it along.
- Display posters or flyers throughout your institution. A flyer template that you can customize for your institution is available at [www2.archivists.org/i-found-it](http://www2.archivists.org/i-found-it).
- Post flyers in nearby shops or restaurants that people might pass en route to your facility.
- Post a video on your home page, your Facebook page, and/or YouTube to explain the contest and invite entries. (See tips [here](#).)
- Issue a news release to local media, briefly explaining the contest and directing people to your website for full information. (For tips on media relations, see [www2.archivists.org/aam](http://www2.archivists.org/aam).)
- Be creative! Who uses your services? Students? Researchers? The local community? They're your targets. Alert them by email or phone or place flyers where they're likely to see them.

Don't stop with one post, tweet, or email! The path to going viral is to be present repeatedly with information. Posting daily isn't too much, but do try to be original with each message. You could promote the fact that you've received your first entry (or the 10th or 25th), that a video made you laugh out loud or that an essay was particularly poignant. Comment on creativity or a clever approach. Do a daily countdown to the close of entries.

### Make Your Posts Enticing

Twitter limits you to 140 characters – and that's good news if you're trying to drive people to your website for complete information. So make that tweet or Facebook post vague and interesting. And make sure you mention that magic word "win"! It's one of the most intriguing words in the English language....



# I FOUND IT IN THE ARCHIVES

## Entry Form

It's essential that all entrants acknowledge that they understand what is involved and what their participation means. Use this form to secure that acknowledgment. (The form is also available via SAA's website at [www2.archivists.org/i-found-it](http://www2.archivists.org/i-found-it).) You could post this on your website in a downloadable format so it can be filled out, signed, scanned by the entrant, and returned to you as an email attachment. You could also offer the option of mailing the form, but be sure to set a deadline for the postmark so that you're sure you have forms that match every entry *before* you begin the judging.

The [NAME OF INSTITUTION] is sponsoring the *I Found It In The Archives!* essay and video contest to show how the items and information found in the nation's archives touch people's lives. We're seeking entrants who have found something special in our collections - records, documents, photos, recordings, a meaningful item or treasure. If it has meaning to you, it has meaning to us and is a wonderful basis for your entry.

Between now and the close of entries on [DATE], we ask that you submit either:

- A 400-word essay describing your quest for information and explaining why finding it has made a difference for you, along with a color photograph of you, or
- A video of no more than 2 minutes in which you describe your quest for information and explain why finding it has made a difference for you.

This entry form (which is downloadable) must accompany your entry and can be submitted along with the essay or video as an attachment to your email. (You may also drop off your entry and this form at our offices at [ADDRESS].)

Finalists in this competition will have their essays and videos posted online for a public vote. The entry with the most votes will be declared the winner and will receive [DESCRIBE PRIZE].

### RULES

You may submit only one entry. Submitting more than one entry will disqualify you.

You may submit your entry by email or by dropping it off at our offices at [ADDRESS].

You must not currently be employed or previously have been employed by [the INSTITUTION] - whether as employee or contractor - or related to a member of the same household as an [INSTITUTION] employee or contractor.

You must be 18 years of age or older at the date of entry.

You must be a legal resident of the United States.

Your entry becomes the property of [INSTITUTION]. We reserve the right to post your essay and photograph or video online. Materials will not be returned.

### TIMELINE

Entries must be received by [TIME AND DATE].

Finalists will be notified by [DATE] and their essays or videos posted online for a public vote.

The close of public voting will be [TIME AND DATE].

The winner of the competition will be notified on [DATE].

The winner may be asked to compete in a national competition. The winner of the national competition will be hosted at the Society of American Archivists Annual Awards Ceremony in New Orleans in August 2013.

Download your customizable form at:

[www2.archivists.org/i-found-it](http://www2.archivists.org/i-found-it)

# I FOUND IT IN THE ARCHIVES

## Entry Application

Please complete this form and answer all questions. Your entry will not be considered if it has any incomplete fields or if any questions are not answered. You may download this form, complete it, and scan it into a document that becomes an attachment to your emailed entry OR you may mail or drop off your essay and photo or video, along with your entry form, so that it arrives at our office at [ADDRESS] on or before [DATE and TIME].

FIRST NAME \_\_\_\_\_

LAST NAME \_\_\_\_\_

STREET ADDRESS LINE 1 \_\_\_\_\_

STREET ADDRESS LINE 2 \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

CELL PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

WORK PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

ARE YOU 18 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER?      YES      NO

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN EMPLOYED BY [INSTITUTION]?      YES      NO

ARE YOU OR YOUR EMPLOYER A CONTRACTOR TO [INSTITUTION]?      YES      NO

ARE YOU RELATED TO, OR A MEMBER OF A HOUSEHOLD OF, A  
CURRENT OR FORMER [INSTITUTION] EMPLOYEE OR CONTRACTOR?      YES      NO

I have signed this application and the attached release and waiver on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, [YEAR]. I affirm that the statements made by me herein are accurate and truthful. I also affirm that I understand that my essay and photograph or my video may be displayed on [INSTITUTION'S] website, Facebook page, and other social media sites and that, if I am a finalist, my entry will be posted online for a public vote to determine the winners of this contest.

PRINT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

Download your customizable form at:

[www2.archivists.org/i-found-it](http://www2.archivists.org/i-found-it)

# I FOUND IT IN THE ARCHIVES

## Release and Waiver

In consideration for the opportunity to submit my Essay or Video and Entry Application to participate as an applicant in the *I Found It In The Archives!* contest being sponsored by [INSTITUTION], and for other good and valuable consideration, I irrevocably give [INSTITUTION] and its agents and contractors the right and permission to use, copy, alter, distribute, publish, broadcast, and display the Essay or Video that I have submitted; photographs and

images of me that I have provided or that they will create; my voice and likeness; my name; the city, state, or province in which I live; and other information and material included in my Entry Application, on [INSTITUTION'S] website, elsewhere on the Internet, in advertising and promotional materials, and in any other medium or format for any purpose related to the *I Found It In The Archives!* contest.

I acknowledge and agree that if am selected as a finalist for the *I Found It In The Archives!* contest, [INSTITUTION] may post the Essay and my photo or the Video on the Internet and allow the public to vote and comment on the material and on whether I should be chosen as the winner of the *I Found It In The Archives!* contest sponsored by [INSTITUTION].

I waive any right to royalties or other payment for the use of my Essay and photo or Video and I also waive the right to inspect or approve [INSTITUTION'S] use of the Essay and photo or Video and other materials that [INSTITUTION] may use with them.

I attest that there is no copyrighted material in my Essay or Video.

I release and waive and agree to hold [INSTITUTION], its agents, and its contractors harmless from any claims, damages, or liabilities resulting from their use of the Essay or Video and I agree not to bring any such claims against the released parties at any time in the future. This includes, but is not limited to, claims for violation of publicity rights and privacy rights, claims based on moral rights, claims for intrusion, claims for defamation, claims for fraud, claims for infliction of emotional distress, and claims for copyright or other intellectual property infringement, whether those claims may be based on statutes or the common law.

I represent and warrant to [INSTITUTION] that:

- The Essay or Video is my original work.
- I have not granted anyone else any rights to use, distribute, publish, broadcast, or display the Essay or Video.
- I have the full right and authority to execute this Release and Waiver.
- I have all rights necessary to grant the rights, waivers, and releases granted in this Release and Waiver.
- I have read this Release and Waiver and I fully understand it.
- All statements and information included in my Entry Application and any other statements and information that I provided to or will provide to [INSTITUTION] are true and complete.

PRINT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Download your customizable form at:

[www2.archivists.org/i-found-it](http://www2.archivists.org/i-found-it)

# STEP

# 4:

## Judge the Entries



Judging can be a tricky business. First select an odd number of people (three or five is good) to serve on the judging panel. It's good to have a mix - both men

and women, various ethnicities, different ages. The person in charge of the contest or the one who manages the entries should not be a judge; she or he will have a sense of who the entrants are, which could bias the judging.

All entries should be blinded - no name, age, or address - when they are presented to the judging panel. Both essays and videos should be reviewed and winnowed down to a manageable number - 10 to 15 in each category if you are going to have 5 finalists in each. Judges should work independently, but each judge should read/view all entries, scoring them (1 to 5) in quality. The entries with the highest combined points make it to the semi-finals. Judges can now work as a group, with independent scoring following a discussion of the merits of the entry. Because the finalists will be posted online for a public vote, it is important that their presentations are articulate.

Be sure to take another step *before* deciding on finalists: Talk to them personally. A screening phone call is a very important step. You want to ensure that each person is okay with being a finalist; that each agrees to having his or her entry posted and voted on; and that each is willing to compete nationally and is able to travel to New Orleans alone or with a companion in August 2013.

You can also use the screening phone call to assess how individuals might promote their selection as a finalist. Can they harness their friends and families to participate? Are they okay with any other promotion you have planned?

You can decide the number of finalists you select according to the results of this final step in the judging process. Better to have three articulate and enthusiastic finalists than to have four or five including a couple who are lukewarm about the possibility of winning.



Date: Wed, Apr 22, 2009 at 12:49 PM  
Subject: A thank-you note!  
To: Irene Wairwright

Dear Ms. Wairwright

March 21, 2010

Attn: Cheryl

Louisiana Division/City/ Archives  
New Orleans Public Library  
219 Loyola Avenue  
New Orleans, LA 70112

RE: Obituary of [redacted]

Dear Cheryl,

Words cannot express my gratitude in the extra miles that you went in finding my grandfather's obituary. Now I can have the peace of mind knowing that the records will reflect his burial in the cemetery records with my grandmother. Because of your determination, I can know that all is well. I am ordering the monuments for the cemetery to acknowledge and celebrate the life of both my grandmother and grandfather.

I am deeply thankful for your kindness and hard work in finally finding the correct Micro Film transcript.

I enclose my check of \$2.00 for the research document, as well as a \$20.00 donation to the library fund for the Archives Department.

My best wishes to you and your career.

Sincerely,

decisions and people there.  
enough place to want to  
of references to the Kneel  
issue (I have attached a  
requested viewing of the  
Retreat for the Inmate. The  
document and so I didn't  
need judged issue...and

searches. Never before  
specimen, to finding of  
ing other  
rest and more than that,  
only were they full of  
others as well) to provide  
to a grandma who  
to a sweat" finding the  
experience? Hospitality

Thanks.

## STEP

# 5:

## Public Voting

A goal of this contest is to drive people to your website so that they can see firsthand what archivists are all about. Public voting can accomplish this many times over.

Post the finalists on your institution's website or Facebook page and invite the public to vote. Here are two posting methods:

### On Your Website:

Place the finalists' essays and links to their videos on your site. (To publish your video finalists on your website, upload the videos to a YouTube or Vimeo video-sharing account and use "embed" tools to copy and paste HTML code directly into your organization's website page[s]. No advance scripting is necessary. For tips and guidelines on how to do this, visit [www2.archivists.org/i-found-it](http://www2.archivists.org/i-found-it).) Unless you already have interactive capability, ask voters to email you their vote, using the same email address that you used for the contest entries. If you do have interactive capabilities built into your website, work with your IT department to activate a voting mechanism. And if the notion of an "IT department" doesn't apply to your institution, you might consider incorporating a service like Polldaddy (<http://polldaddy.com/features-polls/>) to tally your votes. Polldaddy has good reporting features and is not difficult to use.

### On Facebook:

To set up a simple poll or contest on your Facebook page:

1. Create a photo album with the title of your contest. You can add text describing the contest or the rules onto the album description.
2. Upload a photo for each contestant.
3. Add a description or caption below the photo. You could put the essay here or hyperlink to the essay on your website.
4. Promote the contest with a link to the photo album and instruct voters to "LIKE" their favorite entry.
5. People can vote for each contestant only once, but they can vote for more than one contestant.

To generate votes, start with your finalists – and everyone who entered your contest. For most, you won't have to ask twice for them to alert family and friends to go online and cast their vote. "Family and friends" can have a ripple effect on the order of a chain letter.

You can also announce the opening of the public vote through your normal communication tools:

- Send an email to everyone in your database.
- Mention it in your newsletter, e-newsletter, and other publications.
- Post it on your website home page, your Facebook page, and other social media platforms.
- Tweet if you have a Twitter account.
- Alert your family and friends and ask them to pass it along.
- Work with your local media to generate stories on the contest, the finalists, and the vote. (For tips on media relations, see [www2.archivists.org/aam](http://www2.archivists.org/aam).)

**From then on, it's a matter of tallying the votes and choosing your winner(s).**

STEP

6:

## Announce The Winner(s), Award The Prize(s)



Your awards ceremony can be as elaborate or as simple as you'd like to make it - fireworks and a band or a phone call and a welcoming event at your institution. Same with the prize. The scope is up to you, but do make it meaningful. And be sure to include your winners' (and finalists') essays and videos on your website

and Facebook page. Your contestants will be delighted with the public recognition and your institution benefits from the "real-life" testimonials.

The best prize is one that you simply can't get anywhere else. It need not cost a cent. Remember that the people who enter a contest tied to your

institution already have found value in your archives. Give the winner(s) - or the winner(s) and runner-up - a chance to go behind the scenes and experience something that isn't open to the public at large.

For example, give a private tour led by an individual on your staff who has special expertise or holds a high office; allow something rare to be viewed; plan something outside of your institution that ties back to your collection - a neighborhood walk, for example.

The "extra" that goes along with your prize is the opportunity to compete nationally and win a trip to the SAA/CoSA Joint Annual Meeting in New Orleans in August 2013. SAA will host the national winner(s) at the annual Awards Ceremony.

STEP

7:

## Going On To "Nationals"

All local winners will be eligible for a national competition sponsored by SAA.

We'll generate voting with a promotional campaign and work with you to gin up support with your constituents as well.

We'll also be asking you for background information on your local winner(s) - what you learned in your screening interviews and in meeting them when you awarded your prize. We want to be certain that we have a good sense of who our finalists are as we promote them and their experience with media and others.

Submit your entries by March 1, 2013, to [saahq@archivists.org](mailto:saahq@archivists.org).



I appreciate your detective work

# STEP 8:

## Tallying Our Success



As always, we'd like to try to measure our success with this *I Found It In The Archives!* campaign. To that end, we ask that you track, to the best of your ability, the numbers that indicate what you achieved:

- How many people did you “touch” directly with your information through your database of users and others?
- Number of entrants.
- Number of hits on your website page dedicated to the contest.
- Number of votes cast.
- Number of media impressions. (This is measured by the circulation of the print media or the audience of the broadcast outlet. You can Google a question such as “circulation of XYZ newspaper” or “audience of XYZ program on channel X” and will almost always wind up with current information for a specific news outlet.)
- Any other statistics that you can collect.

Please collect these numbers as you go along so that when you receive a survey from SAA headquarters, you can easily fill in the blanks and we can see what kind of impact this campaign has had.

We're hoping for a large and enthusiastic turn-out for this campaign to raise awareness of the value of archives and archivists. Thank you in advance for participating!

**Acknowledgements:** SAA gratefully acknowledges the following sources of images used in this kit:

Cover: Archivist Martha Briggs (left) helps Liesl Olson find “it” – diaries, letters, and photos of Fanny Butcher (1888-1987), the longtime literary editor of the *Chicago Tribune* – in the archives at the Newberry Library in Chicago.

Page 3: “Woman creating map of United States showing states and counties” (August 1922), LC-DIG-npcc-23258, courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

Page 4: “Jo Veal, 219 Park Street, Lindale, Georgia” (Lewis Wickes Hine [1874-1940], photographer, April 1913), LC-DIG-nclc-02796, courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

Page 5: “Full-length portrait of an African American woman seated holding an African American infant” (A.D. Jaynes, photographer, created between 1860 and 1870), LC-DIG-ppmsca-11042, courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

Page 9: “Inter city beauties, Atlantic City Pageant, 1925” (Atlantic Foto Service, 1925), LC-USZ62-125527, courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division; letter to Louisiana Division/City Archives, New Orleans Public Library.

Page 11: Journalist and author Cokie Roberts, who serves as vice president of the Foundation for the National Archives, moderates a panel of distinguished speakers who discuss their favorite discoveries within the National Archives’ holdings, October 2, 2009. Accessed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6tBFzEbNO2o>