

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES IN THE REGIONS...

January

2008

A MONTHLY CALENDAR OF EVENTS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

From the SS to Citizenship to the Moon: von Braun's Odyssey

On April 14, 1955, Wernher von Braun swore that "I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen. . ." With those words the former Nazi and SS officer became an American citizen.

The naturalization records for the U. S. District Court for the Northern District of Alabama in Birmingham are filled with similar documents for Arthur Rudolph, Karl Sandler, Herbert Reinhold Bergeler, Magnus von Braun, Alfred Johannes Finzel, and countless other Germans—all former Nazis and all members of the government's *Project Paperclip*. The documents list their occupations as scientist, development engineer, research engineer, etc., and all were residents of Huntsville, Alabama.

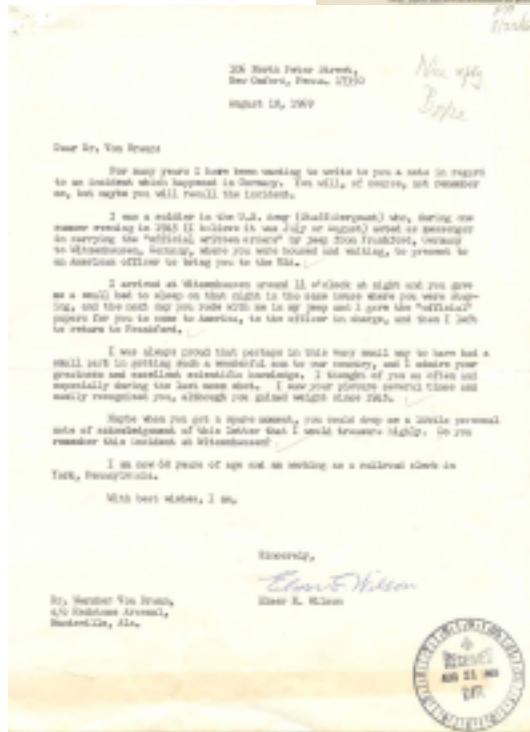
When the documents were created in the 1950s, no one could have guessed that the German scientists applying for citizenship would contribute to the technology that enabled the first man to walk on the moon.

At the end of World War II, the government sought the research expertise of selected German scientists and engineers. Von Braun himself led the Third Reich's V-2 missile project. These top German rocket specialists came to the United States in an initiative known as *Project Paperclip*. The project name came from paperclips used to mark the files of those selected. Ultimately, Dr. Wernher von Braun became director of NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama, designing the Saturn V launch vehicle that played a crucial role in the moon mission.

Years later, in 1969, he received a letter from a railroad clerk in York, Pennsylvania, who wrote that "I was a soldier in the U. S. Army (Staff-Sergeant) who, during one summer evening in 1945 . . . acted as messenger in carrying the "official written orders" by jeep . . . to Witzhausen, Germany, where you were housed and waiting. I arrived at Witzhausen around 11 o'clock at night and you gave me a small bed to sleep on that night in the same house where you were staying, and the next day you rode with me in my jeep and I gave the "official" papers for you to come to America..."

In von Braun's reply he said that "Of course I do recall very vividly the incident that you mentioned. As you suggested, it was a vital step on my road to this country back in 1945. As you know, I have spent a major portion of my adult life in this country; and I have been a proud citizen of the United States for many years."

New opportunities abound to study the life and work of Wernher von Braun, the preeminent rocket engineer of the 20th century.



Petition for Naturalization for Wernher von Braun, 1955.

Records of the U. S. District Court for the Northern District of Alabama (Birmingham), RG 21; NARA Southeast Region

Elmer E. Wilson to Wernher von Braun, 1969.

Records of the Marshall Space Flight Center at NASA, RG 255; NARA Southeast Region

NARA West Coast January 2008

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			2	3	4	5
		 <p>Astrogeologist Dr. Eugene Shoemaker of the US Geological Survey (USGS) with a scale model of the Apollo lunar lander resting on a recreation of the Moon's surface created from images taken by the Ranger satellite. Shoemaker was principal scientist for the Ranger mission and the USGS Branch of Astrogeology produced maps of the moon for the Apollo program. RG 57; NARA Pacific Region, Laguna Niguel</p>	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	Seattle, WA A Conversation with Marian Smith, USCIS Historian Lecture/General Public 206-336-5115				San Bruno, CA Chinese/Asian Immigrant Research & Records Lecture/General Public 650-238-3482 San Bruno, CA Immigration and Nationality Research and Records Lecture/General Public 650-238-3485	Seattle, WA Overview of National Archives Records and Research Workshop General Public 206-336-5115
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
			Denver, CO Martin Luther King Day 8 A.M. – 5 P.M. Exhibit/General Public 303-407-5749 Seattle, WA Finding Your Irish Ancestors Workshop Genealogists 206-336-5115		Anchorage, AK U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services Ceremony, 10:30 A.M. Alaska Public Lands Information Center Exhibit/General Public 907-261-7820	
27	28	29		31		

NARA's Pacific Region

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NARA's Pacific Alaska Region

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NARA East Coast January 2008

New York, NY
Mickey Mouse Goes To Court
10/9/07-3/30/08

New York, NY
New York: An American Capital
12/14/06-6/1/08

From NARA's Holdings: New York Photographs
10/1/05-6/1/08

New York, NY
Camp Kilmer: Entertaining the Troops!
11/14/07 - 6/1/08

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
	Philadelphia, PA <i>Melting Pot Woes: Ethnic Suspicions on the Homefront 1917-1918</i> 9/24/07-8/31/08	New York, NY <i>"I Had a Dream" Speech by Martin Luther King</i> Copies available in Exhibit Room 1/1/08-1/31/08			Philadelphia, PA First Friday Genealogy Open House General Public 215-606-0112	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		Waltham, MA Introduction to Preservation Lecture/Genealogists 781-663-0121		Easttown, PA Using Maps For Genealogy 1 P.M. Workshop/Genealogists 610-687-0346 Waltham, MA Application of Research Methods Workshop/Educators 781-663-0121		
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Jonesboro, GA Historical Jonesboro/Clayton County Lecture/General Public 770-473-0197				Hull, MA Historical Lecture @ Hull Lifesaving Museum 7 P.M. Lecture/General Public 781-663-0121	Morrow, GA Historical Photography Workshop Workshop/General Public 770-968-2555	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	Waltham, MA 54th Regiment Exhibition Opening Exhibit/General Public 781-663-0121					Morrow, GA Friends of the National Archives Symposium General Public 770-968-2555
27	28	29				
						Construction Project Photographs, Emergency Operations, 1927-1981 Route 128, Needham, MA RG 77; Records of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers NARA Northeast Region, Boston

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NARA's Mid Atlantic Region
Philadelphia 215-606-0100
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NARA's Southeast Region
Morrow 770-968-2100
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NARA Midwest January 2008

Exhibit:
Independence, MO
Fashion Court
1/17/08–2/7/08

Weston, MO
*Civil Rights,
Civil Liberties*
1/22/08–2/10/08

Parkville, MO
Far Greater Evil
1/22/08–2/10/08

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY



Snow Banks in the Pike National Forest, 1912
RG 95; NARA Rocky Mountain Region

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Central Plains Region**
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**NARA's National Personnel
Records Center (NPRC)**
Archival Programs Division
St. Louis 314-801-0850

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