

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES IN THE REGIONS...

May 2009

A MONTHLY CALENDAR OF EVENTS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Columbia River Flood of 1948

There was exceptionally heavy winter snowfall in the upper Columbia River Basin during the winter of 1947–48. Warm temperatures and heavy rains in May 1948 caused snowmelt to occur very quickly. The river's waters rose rapidly, tributaries overflowed their banks, and the biggest flood since 1894 filled the Columbia to overflowing. The flood of 1948 was basinwide, affecting communities as far upriver as British Columbia. At Vancouver, Washington, the Columbia crested on June 13–14 at 31 feet above sea level.

The worst-hit community was Vanport, Oregon. Vanport was the creation of Henry Kaiser who, by 1942, operated three very large shipyards in the Vancouver/Portland area. He purchased 650 acres of lowlands along the Columbia River near the shipyards to provide housing for his workers. While he provided an entire community with a variety of services, the homes and apartments were built quickly on wooden foundations. At its peak Vanport was home to 40,000 people and was the second largest city in Oregon. In 1948 the population was down to 18,000.

By the 25th of May, Vanport was 15 feet below the water level in the river and the dikes surrounding the city were being monitored around the clock. On the morning of May 30, the Housing Authority of Portland issued a statement saying the dikes were safe and there would be time for an

orderly evacuation if needed. But a little after 4 p.m. flood waters broke through a railroad dike on the west side of Vanport and within a short time inundated the community. Most of the buildings in Vanport were swept away by the force of the water flowing through the breach in the dike. Clusters of destroyed homes ended up resting against sections of the dikes surrounding the city. The pressure of water flowing from the west combined with the impact of flood debris caused breaks in dikes on the east side of Vanport as well.

Vanport was completely destroyed by the flood and was never rebuilt. The rapid influx of water resulted in almost total loss of personal possessions. Fifteen people died in Vanport, however the toll could have been much higher since many people were away from their homes on that Memorial Day weekend. Elsewhere in the Columbia Basin, the flood destroyed 5,000 homes, forced some 50,000 people to evacuate, and caused an estimated \$100 million in damage.



Above: View of East End of Vanport Showing Logjam of Houses Against Denver Avenue Dike Less than 24 Hours Later

Installation Historical Files of Civil Works Projects (Floods), 1925–1965; Portland District Office; Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers, RG 77
Courtesy of NARA Pacific Alaska Region–Seattle

Left: Vanport Looking Northwest Showing Original Break in the Railroad Dike on May 30th, 1948

Installation Historical Files of Civil Works Projects (Floods), 1925–1965; Portland District Office; Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers, RG 77
Courtesy of NARA Pacific Alaska Region–Seattle

NARA WestCoast May 2009

CCC-Constructed Drinking Fountain at Verlot Camp, Mount Baker National Forest, 1936 Photographs and Other Graphic Materials, Records of the Forest Service, RG 95
Courtesy of NARA Pacific Alaska Region—Seattle



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
	Exhibit: Seattle, WA Blue vs. Gray: The Civil War in the Pacific NW 9/1/08–Ongoing	Exhibit: Seattle, WA Picturing the Century in the Pacific Northwest 5/6/08–Ongoing				Denver, CO National History Day 8–12th Grade Students 303-407-5749
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
						San Mateo, CA San Mateo Asian Pacific American Heritage Fair Information Booth and Exhibit/General Public 650-238-3478
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
			Vallejo, CA Ports, Forts and Sports: Maritime Economy, Defense and Recreation through Time and Across Space, 1 P.M. North American Society for Oceanic History Annual Conference www.nasoh.org/Conference.htm 5/13–5/17	Seattle, WA Brick Wall Discussion Group Genealogists Workshop 206-336-5115	San Bruno, CA E-VET Veterans Records Research Genealogists Workshop 650-238-3485	
					Vallejo, CA NARA-NPS Panel, 1 P.M. North American Society for Oceanic History Annual Conference/ Panel www.nasoh.org/Conference.htm	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
			Denver, CO Volunteer Luncheon 11:30 A.M. Genealogists 303-407-5749		Sacramento, CA Early Asian American Immigration History/Records, 1 P.M. Lecture 650-238-3478	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31		Seattle, WA Seattle Area Archivists Meeting, 2-4 P.M. Archival & Allied Professionals 206-336-5115				

NARA's Pacific Region

Laguna Niguel 949-360-2641
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NARA's Pacific Alaska Region

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NARA EastCoast May 2009

Children Working at Bib Mills, 1909
Bibb Mill No.1, Macon, GA., RG 102
Photo by Lewis Hine
Courtesy of NARA Southwest Region-Atlanta



Exhibit:
Milburn, NJ
The American Revolution: Documenting Our Nation's Founding
4/15-5/15/09

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>Exhibit: Philadelphia, PA Elusive Freedom 8/1/08-9/30/09</p>	<p>Exhibit: Waltham, MA RG 110 "Civil War at Home" 4/24-6/30/09</p>	<p>Exhibit: New York, NY Bayard Rustin Goes to Court 4/15-6/15/09</p>	<p>Exhibit: Philadelphia, PA Hidden City Philadelphia! 5/29-6/30/09</p>	<p>Philadelphia, PA Quest for Freedom Live and Learn Weekend Open House General Public 215-606-2112 5/1-5/2/09</p>	<p>Wayne, NJ National History Day Competition-NJ Workshop/K-12 Students/Teachers 866-840-1752</p> <p>NARA SE Region, GA Georgia Genealogical Society Lecture/Genealogists 770-968-2555</p> <p>Waltham, MA Using Essex County History K-12 Teachers 781-663-0121</p>	
<p>3 Milburn, NJ Revolutionary War Treasures of the National Archives, 6 PM. Lecture/General Public 866-840-1752</p>	<p>4 Philadelphia, PA American Association of Museums (AAM) Annual Conference 202-289-1818 4/30-5/4/09</p> <p>Troy, NY Finding Your Immigrant Ancestors at NARA Lecture/Genealogists 413-236-3604</p>	<p>5 Waltham, MA Records Related to Military Service 18th, 19th, and 20th Centuries, 2 PM. Genealogical Lecture and Tour General Public 781-663-0121</p> <p>Waltham, MA Researching Military Records with NARA Genealogists Lecture/General Public 781-663-0121</p>	<p>6 Philadelphia, PA Genealogical Series: Naturalization Records, 12 Noon Workshop Genealogists 215-606-0112</p> <p>Millersville University, PA National History Day PA Competition K-12 Students 215-606-2112 5/6-5/7/09</p>	<p>7 Hicksville, NY Unlocking the Digital Vaults Lecture/Genealogists 866-840-1752</p> <p>Waltham, MA Researching the Records of the Home Front K-12 Teachers 781-663-0121</p>	<p>8 Philadelphia, PA First Friday Genealogy Open House, 12 Noon Open House General Public 215-606-0112</p>	
<p>10 Milburn, NJ Revolutionary War Treasures of the National Archives, 6 PM. Lecture/General Public 866-840-1752</p>	<p>11 Troy, NY Navigating the Bureaucracy Lecture/Genealogists 413-236-3604</p> <p>Troy, NY Finding the Correct Ancestor: Civil War and Homestead Lecture/Genealogists 413-236-3604</p>	<p>12 Abington, PA History Thieves, 7 PM. Lecture/Genealogist 215-884-2479</p> <p>New York, NY Finding Family: Using Naturalization Records, 12:30 PM. Workshop and Tour General Public 866-840-1752</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>16 Paterson, NJ Genealogy Resources of the National Archives Lecture/General Public 866-840-1752</p>
<p>17 Milburn, NJ Revolutionary War Treasures of the National Archives, 6 PM. Lecture/General Public 866-840-1752</p>	<p>18 Natick, MA Researching Military Records with NARA, 2 PM. Lecture/General Public 508-647-6520</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21 Ellis Island, NY Family History Game Show, 1 PM. General Public 866-840-1752</p>	<p>22 Federal Hall National Memorial, NY New York's National Treasures, Noon-2 PM. General Public 866-840-1752</p>	<p>23 Harrisburg, PA Hartranft Commemoration General Public 215-606-0112</p>
<p>24</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>
<p>31 Southington, CT Beginning Your Genealogy at NARA Lecture/Genealogists 413-236-3604</p>						

NARA's Northeast Region
Pittsfield 413-236-3600
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Boston 866-406-2379
waltham.archives@nara.gov
New York 866-840-1752
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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
atlanta.archives@nara.gov

NARA Midwest May 2009

Photograph of an Old Doe with a Long Ewe Neck, 1939
Records of the Forest Service, 1870–2000, RG 95, Courtesy of NARA Great Lakes Region–Chicago



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
Exhibit: Chicago, IL Celebrity Draft Registration Cards 4/1/09–12/31/10		Exhibit: Excelsior Springs, MO Mugged! 5/11–5/29/09				
3	4	5	6	7	8	Chicago, IL Using Court Records for Local and Family History Workshop/Genealogists 773-948-9001 <hr/> Joplin, MO Online Educational Resources of NARA, 10:30 A.M. Teacher Workshop General Public 816-268-8017
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	Kansas City, MO Open House, 6 P.M. Open House and Tour General Public 816-268-8072 <hr/> Kansas City, MO History Fair, 10 A.M. Open House General Public 816-268-8071
24	25	26	27	28	Kansas City, MO Dedication Ceremony, 10 A.M. Opening/Dedication Federal Agencies 816-268-8072	23
31				Kansas City, MO Author Event, 6:30 P.M. Lecture/General Public 816-268-8072	29	30

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Chicago 773-948-9001
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NARA's Central Plains Region
Kansas City 816-268-8000
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NARA's National Personnel Records Center (NPRC)
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St. Louis 314-801-0850

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