

## PRESERVATION PROGRAMS

The goal of Preservation Programs is to ensure that the records of our government are appropriately preserved so they will be available for use. We work with staff across the National Archives (NARA) to support and further preservation. You'll find Preservation Programs staff at work—preparing historic documents for display, rescuing burned military records, preserving electronic records, advising on design of storage and exhibition spaces, or protecting records in emergencies. We serve as a resource and offer guidance on the wide range of media in NARA's holdings—from paper and electronic records to artifacts and special media.

### Prevention Is Our Priority

Preservation Programs develops and applies preventive strategies to avoid damage to records. We know that the earlier preservation measures are implemented, the more cost-effective our efforts will be. We strive to

- Monitor and track risks threatening records in all formats
- Prioritize and implement preservation actions
- Specify and monitor environmental conditions in storage, processing, and exhibit spaces
- Specify and evaluate stable housings to hold and protect records
- Provide procedures and offer training on ways to handle records and prevent damage
  - Develop policies to minimize threats to records, from food and drink to pests and pollutants
  - Ensure NARA facilities are prepared for records emergencies
  - Apply cutting-edge technology and processes that deliver cost-effective preservation



## Did You Know?




- The National Archives has archives facilities, Federal records centers, and Presidential libraries in 44 facilities across the country from Washington, DC, to Anchorage, AK, and from Waltham, MA, to College Station, TX.
- The National Archives permanent holdings grow each year and include over
  - 4 million cubic feet of paper, photographs, maps, audio, video, art, and film records
  - 150 terabytes of electronic records
  - 550,000 artifacts
- We host an annual Preservation Conference that explores topics ranging from digitizing records to conservation treatment to collections preservation in this time of climate change and economic transition.
- We participate actively in developing national and international standards, working with the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), and others.
- Preservation Programs offers fellowships, internships, and volunteer opportunities in conservation, holdings care, and preservation science.
- NARA is a recipient of the prestigious Heritage Preservation/American Institute for Conservation Award for Outstanding Commitment to the Preservation and Care of Collections.

Cover image detail: Sail drawing of the USS Constitution (19-4-43)

### Preservation Programs

National Archives and Records Administration  
8601 Adelphi Road, Room 2800  
College Park, Maryland 20740-6001 • 301-837-0633  
[preservation@nara.gov](mailto:preservation@nara.gov)

To learn about preservation and our programs, please visit:  
[www.archives.gov/preservation/](http://www.archives.gov/preservation/)

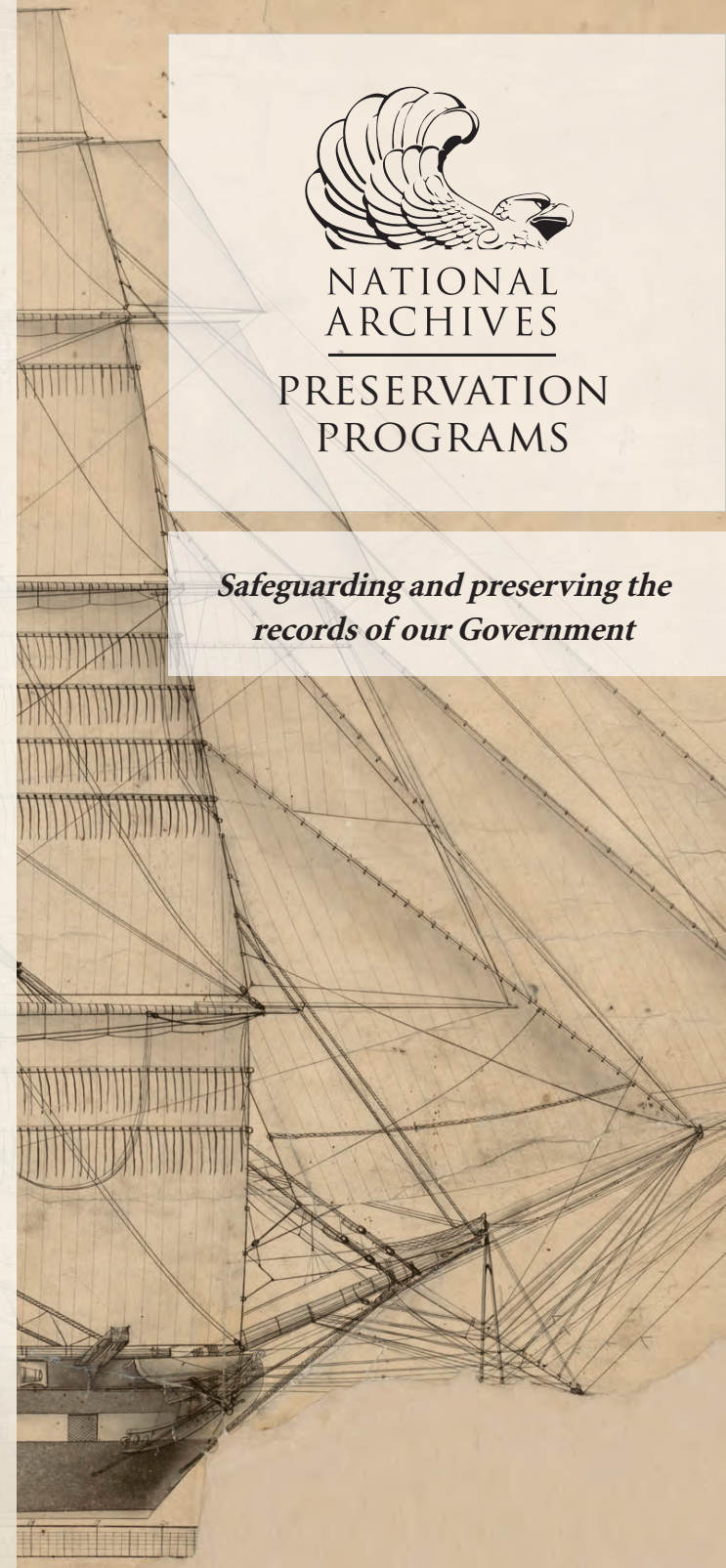
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NATIONAL  
ARCHIVES

PRESERVATION  
PROGRAMS

*Safeguarding and preserving the  
records of our Government*







## Meet Preservation Programs

Four units work together in Preservation Programs: Conservation, Electronic Records Preservation, National Preservation Programs, and St. Louis Preservation.

### Conservation

Caring for the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and other founding documents is just one aspect of Conservation's work. We preserve records that come to the National Archives in many formats: loose and bound textual documents, photographs, posters, artwork, architectural drawings, and printed and hand-drawn maps. We assess the condition of the records and identify their composition, and we stabilize and treat documents to prepare them for digitization, exhibition, and use by researchers. We make custom housings for large or fragile records, and we teach holdings maintenance and records handling procedures. Conservation staff monitors environmental conditions in our facilities, and conservation scientists conduct preservation research and evaluate products used for storage and exhibition. The conservator-on-call team provides speedy guidance on emergency response for all NARA facilities.

## Electronic Records Preservation

The Electronic Records Preservation staff conducts technical analysis of electronic data structures and formats and provides first-time preservation of electronic records onto archival media. We operate and maintain the archival preservation system that includes network-attached storage, hard drives, software applications, and databases. We conduct annual holdings maintenance work for several thousand magnetic tapes and optical media, and migrate electronic records onto new and stable archival media. We provide reference reproductions to researchers. We review associated metadata for accessioned electronic records and develop archival information packages for ingest into NARA's Electronic Records Archives.

### National Preservation Programs

Our responsibilities in Preservation Programs connect us with colleagues in our archives facilities, Federal records centers, and the Presidential libraries. Together we identify the needs of NARA records by conducting preservation reviews at these facilities. We establish preservation priorities, develop cost-effective strategies, implement programs and policies to protect records, and monitor our progress. Our work on NARA's

new Holdings Management System enables tracking of records locations and preservation needs and actions. We work with all NARA facilities to ensure readiness in the event of a records emergency. We are helping build strategic alliances for emergency preparedness with other Federal agencies. Our communications initiative is bringing preservation information to broader audiences through new media.

## St. Louis Preservation

Preservation staff at the National Archives at St. Louis cares for military and civilian records at the National Personnel Records Center. We assess condition for each request for burned records from the 6.5 million that survived the 1973 fire. We remove mold, humidify and flatten the records, and mend them as needed. Our reformatting staff digitizes or microfilms records to make them more accessible and protects the originals from excessive handling and damage. We plan to make even more personnel records available as we begin to scan and digitally enhance images of burned and other records.

