

## **Keynote Address: Enhancing Access to National Archives Collections and Services During the Time of COVID - Transcript**

[Please stand by for realtime captions.]

Hello everyone. We will get started in about five minutes.

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Good afternoon everyone. My name is Stephen Parks and of a current member of the depository library councilmember speaking to you from the state law library of Mississippi and the Council city of Jackson. I have the honor of introducing to you today our keynote speaker, Mr. David Ferriero. Mr. Ferriero is the 10th archivist of United States on November 6th 20 2009 and upon this confirmation he became the first librarian to hold the post and he has spent his career involved with government documents from the first job at MIT library and his job was to resell government documents to his time at Duke and New York public library as well. His tenure as the archivist of the United States has been one committed to the ideals of transparency, participation, and collaboration. In this effort the national archives at the administration has embraced social media to reach wider audiences. And has implemented measures that assure future generations will enjoy access to federal records and has an approved facilities that accomplish these goals. Please welcome Mr. Ferriero our keynote speaker for the fall of 2020 for the Federal Depository Library conference.

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Thank you, Stephen and greetings from the national archives on Pennsylvania Avenue. I am honored to be with you and I've had an opportunity to share some thoughts on a variety of topics and I think that will be of interest to you and some context. We do our role as a administration transitions how we are dealing with COVID-19, and our new social media strategy and interesting work on thoughts on that and let me start by sharing my history with government documents. To establish my archive experience that MIT, Duke and the New York public library and MIT I was at Northeastern University college student where I had the task of reshelving government document and student number challenged me and in each of the library positions the issue around government documents are very much in my wheelhouse and classification by Sue Doc and integrated into the regular collection and centralized or decentralized collections and encouraging the use of government documents and training librarians to remember government documents and the shift and online publications so I have been around. Now in my role and joined at the hip with GPO and enough about my government obligations credentials me tell you about the national archive who we are and what we do and dark I was created by legislation signed by Franklin Roosevelt in 1934 with the mission to collect protect and preserve the records of the United States government. Most important legal to make the records available so that the amended people can hold the government accountable and learn from our past. In terms of the mission of my agency Roosevelt said it best when he was dedicating his presidential library in Hyde Park in 1941. He said, it seems to me that the dedication of a library is in itself an act of faith to bring the records of the past and to house them into buildings where they would be preserved for the use of men and women in the future the nation must believe three things, they must believe in the past, they must believe in the future, and it must above all believe in the capacity of its own people to learn from the past

so they can gain and judgment in creating their own future. That learning from the past has been our mission from the very beginning. Starting with the Congress and Revolutionary war the government was creating records and as the bureaucracy grew so that the number records. Documents are piling up all over Washington in basements and garages and finding the 1920 from for the pilot records which became the national archives holding in the mid-1930s. The national archive is the final destination of the most important records of the United States government and today that collection translates into over 15 billion sheets of paper and 1 million photographs miles and miles of film and video and more than 6 billion electronic records. These records include deal Pledge of Allegiance signed by George Washington the Louisiana purchase signed by Bonaparte and the check for \$7.2 million for the purchase of Alaska, the civil rights act, all of the tweets being created as I am speaking in the White House. We serve customers and more than 40 locations all over the country are just here in Washington. This includes our massive national personnel records Center in San Luis, 40 presidential libraries and regional archives and those archives as you know also publishes the Federal Register the daily newspaper of the federal government and the office of the Federal Register is located in the GPO building. GPO prints copies of the Federal Register each day and this publication keep the public informed of new laws and regulations and actions by the federal departments and agencies. In addition to the Federal Register also administers the oral college by receiving certificates of ascertainment of electors and certificates of both from the state and the District of Columbia. And the office Federal Register reviews the certificates and the legal sufficiency and makes them available to the Congress for the official accounting of the electors and votes. The Federal Register provides the public with access to the electoral documents and information about the electoral college. And on the website the Federal Register makes the certificates available for public inspection for one year following the election. After that year the certificates become part of the national archives collection. This here to presidential election selection of collectors will appear on November 3rd, 2020 and the state meetings of the electors will be held on December 14th, 2020. Before the general election the office of United States contacts the governments of each state and the mayor and the District of Columbia and sharing resources to help them carry out their responsibilities. I recently sent that to each of the state governments to offer assistance from the national archive as they prepare to perform their responsibilities in the upcoming electoral college process. The national archive is committed to ensuring the smooth operation as the electoral process this year the website has now been updated at this year's deadline along with the provisions of the U.S. Constitution and U.S. code related to the election of the president and vice president. One more administered to function at the office of the Federal Register provides is we follow a similar process to amendments to the Constitution and wants to hill agrees to an amendment we manage the process of sending it to the state for ratification and telling those ratifications and reporting to the Hill. And a sign the amendment and you may have been hearing a lot about the equal rights amendment recently and with the number of ratifications warranted the pastor so keep your eye on that. And we said little about presidential transition. Every four years ago still a scenario and what if it's a one term presidency? Is the process managed by the Office of Management and Budget in the General services administration and driven by a presidential transition act of 1963. Intent is to ensure the seamless continuity of government both operations and services during a transition to a second term or to a new

administration. Briefing materials are prepared which give an overview of the organization and the talk for five or 10 most pressing issues in the demonstration will have to handle it medially after inauguration and a budget overview of the current leadership team and congressional consideration. In addition since there is also for the records they might be leaving administration and we to ensure that both leaving the records behind that's about 4100 presidential appointees and we also need to prepare to train 4100 incoming presidential appointees. Residential records also need to be factored into the planning and records stay in the White House until the operation ceremony itself and my staff is in the White House removing records to a temporary site while planning for a new presidential library that takes place. Let me tell you a little bit about COVID-19 and what has been happening here at the national archives. Since March all of us have been living through this historic crisis as we have adapted to the impact of COVID-19. At the national archives we have been using this time to undertake project that would have long-term benefits for public access and national archive staff has been working remotely to create date finding a data to enhance research since March 16th we had over 922 archival descriptions and over 11 million digitized pages the national archive catalog and the branch has successfully added most of thousand photographs and associated caption information to the catalog since March and the French more than 57,000 items in filing the description and 82,000 digital object to the catalog during fiscal year 20. And the moving image has created more than 5600 new descriptions this year that's 5300 video files. Staff has also been tagging and describing transcribing records already in the catalog and transcribing records especially handwritten documents makes it records easier to find and since March the number of available tax transcriptions in the catalog is roughly doubled. Catalog not provide over 121 million digital copies and we continue to add more every day. The work we are currently doing everything else better positions are to make that but at the same time that the research and you can help to to make this program anyone can contribute to the national archive catalog by tagging and transcribing and adding comments and every contribution helps the history. Let me tell you a little bit about where we are in terms of reopening. We are now in phase 2 where many of our facilities we are following the April White House guideline of a three phase reopening and I'm pleased to say that 23 of our parties facilities are now in phase 2 and that means we have people in our 23 facilities working to prepare to bring the public back into our buildings. Last Saturday we tested a process of visits to the rotunda and were slowly making our way back to allowing the public back into the building. A few words on our social media strategy which I hope you read about. Over the summer the national archives conducted a social media Summit with staff and it was interesting to hear how they're using the tools and for the agency strategic goals on how we can improve our use of social media. The fact we are meeting virtually underscore the importance of digital engagement right now in our daily lives personally and professionally. As a result of this we recently released a new streamlined social media strategy with a focus on creating more engaging digital content and increasing participation by staff in the spectrum of online forms and beginning in fiscal year 2021 and spending the coming five years the national archives aims to expand digital storytelling and to make the agency's record increasing the availability with online audiences. The shift to working starting and experiencing cultural almost exclusively online for much of the United States during the COVID-19 pandemic reinforces the significance of this new strategy and the national archive social media team interacts with the public daily through several platforms ensuring

that the diverse audiences of the national archive resources are able to connect with what the agency can provide. Online platforms also make agency staff and researchers to the public and more than 130 national archives employees actively contribute to 139 social media account and 14 different platforms generating hundreds of millions of used annually and those are relationships that the social media team also cultivates further in the coming year and this work has provided critical has provided proved critical during the COVID-19 pandemic and the demand for virtual experiences has grown more urgent and part of the staff cross agency the have risen to the challenge for invaluable resources for community engagement distance learning public programs and access to our records all of the all of this has been shared to public media. Finally other work we have been doing is of importance and I want to celebrate the work that digital preservation folks have done and the ark of 2018 to 2022 strategic plan embrace electronic records and a vision is to ensure cutting-edge access to extraordinary volumes of information and unprecedented engagement and greater meaning to the American experience. To do so you must collaborate with other federal agencies and the private sector and public to ensure records and archives throughout in the digital world and it's become even more apparent because of the June 2019 directorate transition to electronic records and the federal agencies to transition business processes and record-keeping to a fully electronic environment and to and the national archive of acceptance of paper records by the end of 2022 in our digital preservation subject matter asked have been hard at work to repair the national archives for this change and they formalized a set of documents that describe how we identify risks to digital files and prioritize them for action and create specific plans for the preservation of these many file formats and several billion files representing more than 500 formatted version of these files can be categorized into several jet electronic records and the vast majority of people messages followed by JPEG and tiff images and plaintext and in June we released the preservation framework to document and share in the recommended actions. And this unique compressive resource that combines format risk analysis prioritization for action and recommended preservation and the framework can be applied across electronic lifecycle to file a format sustainability and risk metrics to provide critical contact for record creators and inform record selection and appraisal and record management decision and identify appropriate processing tools and guide the choice of formats available for public access the framework is freely available for use at the international community and I urge you to take a look at it. The national archive is now slowly entering phase 2 in the facilities as I said and we recently opened the rotunda and is open on Saturdays with times tickets and we have been busy these last eight months with a worldwide pandemic while we are still closed to the public and I hope you visit us at archives.gov and social media and CD additional records and enhancement we have made during this time. And I look forward to welcoming you back into the national archives facilities across the country. Thank you and have a good conference.

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On behalf of the depository community I thank you Mr. Ferriero for this informative address. Thank you again. To my fellow attendees please join us at 3:00 p.m. Eastern for the start of our regular conference programming. Please also remember that two virtual rooms will be going

simultaneously so be aware of the different links that you need to use to attend whichever session you choose. Thank you.

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[Event concluded]