

**The legacy of print: The
importance of stewarding legacy
collections in the digital age**



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The FDLP: a legacy of access

"The depository library system is a long-established cooperative program between the Federal Government and designated major libraries throughout the United States under which certain classes of Government publications are supplied free of cost (except postage) to those libraries for the purpose of making such publications more readily accessible to the American public" (Depository Libraries, 1962)



Depository libraries shall make Government publications available for the free use of the general public...44 U.S. Code § 1911

URGENT

The FDLP: a legacy of Democracy

"Democracy is never a thing done. Democracy is always something that a nation must be doing." Archibald Macleish



The Librarian and the Democratic Process

By ARCHIBALD MACLEISH

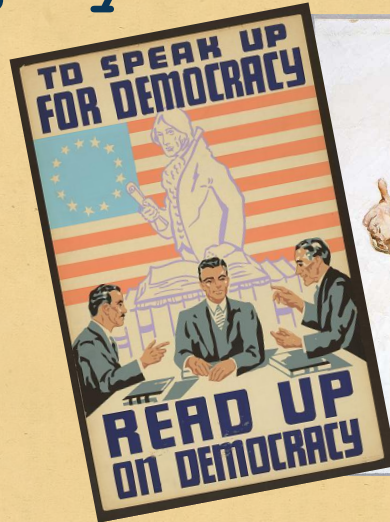
The librarian of Congress, at the last general session in Cincinnati, May 31, pointed out what librarians in a democracy must do if they are to preserve and make effective the social institutions in which they believe.

IT WOULD BE a brave man and an optimistic man who would suggest at this hour that the events of the past few weeks and months have been anything but evil. Certainly it would be a very foolish librarian who would suggest that there was any countervailing circumstance to balance the armed successes of obscuritism and brutal force. But there is, I think, one consequence of all this evil which may perhaps be turned to good, and not least by those who keep the libraries of this country. No one can look at Spain, at Austria, at Czechoslovakia, at Poland, at Finland, at Denmark, at Norway, at Holland, at Belgium and at the situation in Europe of France and Great Britain without asking himself with a new intensity, a new determination to be answered, how our own democracy can be preserved.

And no one can ask with earnestness and intelligence how our own democracy can be preserved without asking at the very outset how his own work, his own activity, can be shaped to that end. Librarians will ask that question of themselves as others will. And asking it, they may perhaps arrive at certain conclusions as to themselves and their relations to the

life of the country which will be valuable not only to the country but to themselves as well. Specifically they may perhaps arrive at certain conclusions as to the great question which, in speech and in silence, explicitly and implicitly, has troubled them so long—the question of their profession.

The wholly admirable attempt to put librarianship upon a professional basis, has, as I understand it, met this principal difficulty: that it has proved impossible to arrive at a common agreement as to the social end which librarianship exists to serve. Men are bound together in professions not because they speak in professional vocabularies or share professional secrets or graduate from professional schools. Men are bound together in professions because they devote themselves in common to the performance of a function of such social importance—a function so difficult, so particular and so essential to the welfare of society—that it requires of necessity a discipline, a technique, and even an ethic of its own. The definition of that function in the case of librarianship has not proved easy. The social function of the medical profession is known to every



"Democracy is dependent upon the public's easy, free, and equitable access to information produced by and about their government."

(Abbott-Hoduski, 1996)

Democracy must be Tangible

- There is something important about walking into the stacks and feeling the weight of knowledge. There's knowledge passed in this.
- We take concepts and turn them into something. Symbols matter. Interaction matters
- Democracy is something greater than one collection or person. It's something we feel, breath, embody, and interact with.



The FDLP provides
tangible access

The FDLP and the documents it
provides access to is living
democracy. The program, the
librarians, the patrons are
all democracy in action.

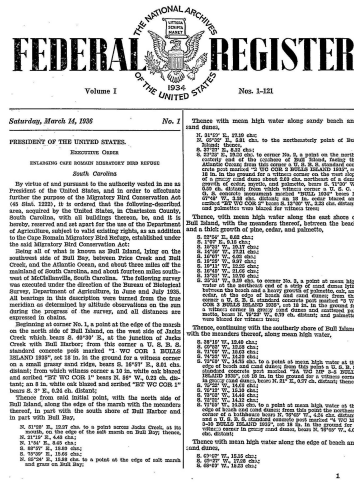
It matters!



The move to digitize

- Format changes are not new to the FDLP or Government Documents
- Digitization is an important to providing continued access

"As our patrons increasingly prioritize digital resources and remote access, libraries have adapted..(T)hese changes are often driven by the university's need to maximize the utility of available space..Consequently, academic libraries must balance the preservation of traditional resources with the integration of innovative services, all while responding to administrative directives and the diverse needs of their patrons." (Croft, 2026)

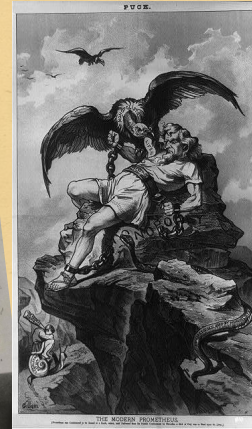


DRAFT

The Promethean promise

- Documents disappear
- Obsolescences
- Loss of connection
- How do we preserve
- Loss of access
- Manipulation

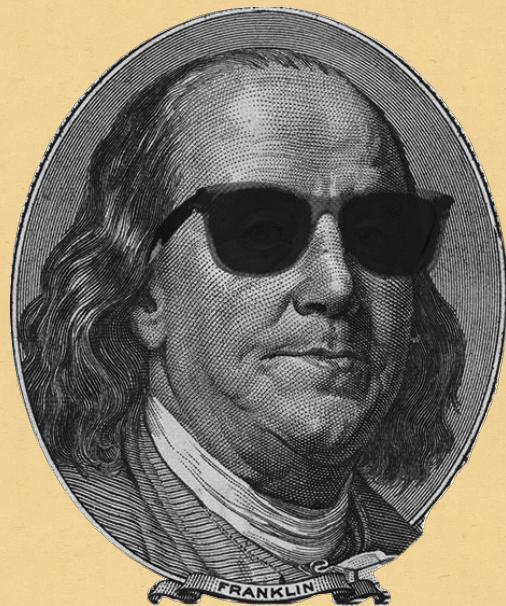
When falsehood can look so like the truth, who can assure themselves of certain happiness? Mary Shelley



"Democracy is best served by an FDL P that receives information in multiple formats so the needs of diverse and multiple users for equal opportunity information government to access government can be met."

Government Documents are both: The legacy and the Future

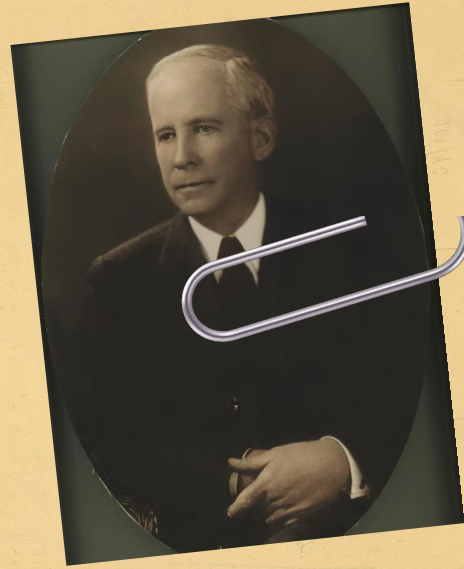
- The unintended consequences of digitization make the legacy of the FDLP even more important
- This legacy is more than the documents, it's an ethos of access
- We have an obligation to provide access and *preserve*



Government Documents are Democracy in Action

"A popular government, without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy; or, perhaps both." James Madison

- Preservation is access
- As we move into the future we cannot forget the lessons of the past
- Democracy is the the thing!



COMPLETED

Get on the same page

Preserve print

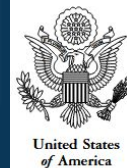
Claim stewardship of
these historic collections

*Why is government information librarianship
important?*

Preserving Government Information

The information the government collects, compiles, aggregates, and creates in the course of its normal statutory and regulatory functions must be preserved because it comprises irreplaceable knowledge about and for the republic. (Jacobs & Jacobs, 2025)

CURRENT RATES	CITY	STATE	COUNTY*	RTD	TOTAL
Sales	3.86%	2.90%	1.335%	1.10%	9.195%
Use	3.86%	2.90%	0%	1.10%	7.86%
Construction Use Tax	3.86%	2.90%	1.335%	1.10%	9.195%
Food Service	4.01%	2.90%	1.335%	1.10%	9.345%
Accommodations	7.50%	2.90%	1.335%	1.10%	12.835%
Admissions	5.00%	0%	0%	0%	5.00%



Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 119th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

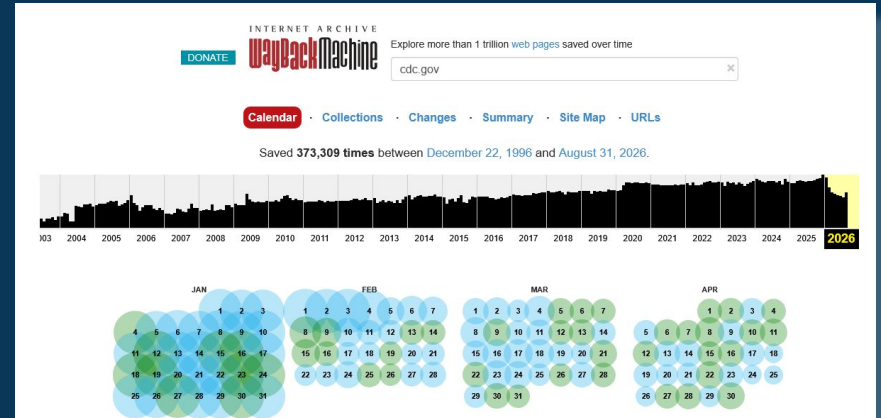
Vol. 172

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2026

No. 3

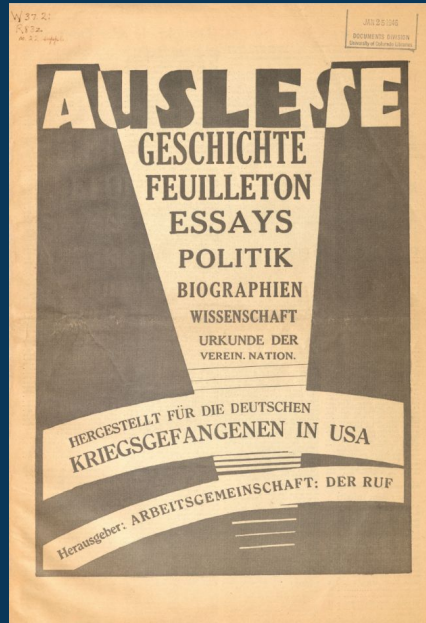
Information: Vanished? Missing?

- When we know what we lose
- When we don't know what we lost
- When we don't know what we have



A story from the SuDoc stacks

While shifting...



Librarians' powers combined!

* Cite this Text this Email this Print Export Record Save to List Permanent link

Der Ruf : Zeitung der deutschen Kriegsgefangenen in USA, edited and prepared for German prisoners of war by German prisoners of war.

Other Title: [Ruf \(New York, N.Y.\)](#)

Format: Journal

Language: German

Publication: New York, N.Y. : [Die deutschen Kriegsgefangenen in USA](#), 1945-1946.

Subjects: [World War, 1939-1945 > Periodicals](#), [World War, 1939-1945 > Prisoners and prisoners, American](#), [Prisoners of war, Writings of](#), [German Fort Keamy \(R.I.\) > Periodicals](#), [Guerre mondiale, 1939-1945 > Périodiques](#), [Zeitschrift](#), [Deutscher Kriegsgefangener, Quelle](#), [Presse](#), [Umschulungswerkstätten für Siedler und Auswanderer > Bitterfeld, USA, 1939-1945](#), [periodicals](#), [Periodicals](#), [Periodicals](#), [Périodiques](#).

Similar Items

- [Group captives : the re-education of German prisoners of war in Britain 1945-1948 / by Henry Faulk](#)
by: Faulk, Henry
Published: (1977)
- [General theory of international law / edited by Siefert Wiessner](#)
Published: (2017)
- [Jazz : a history / by Frank Tirro](#)
by: Tirro, Frank
Published: (1977)
- [Cahiers d'histoire de la guerre](#)
Published: (1949)
- [Global war studies](#)
Published: (2010)

- Archives
- Cataloging
- Preservation
- Digital Asset Management & Production Services (DAMPS)
- And back in the Archives!

UC Boulder Collections

Browse Der Ruf : Zeitung der deutschen Kriegsgefangenen in USA



BROWSE ALL BROWSE 4W FACETS

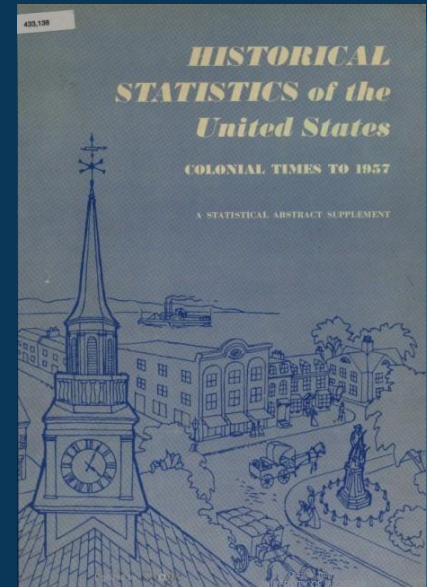
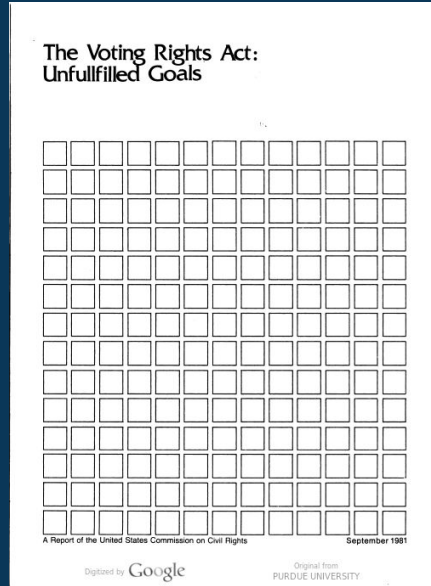
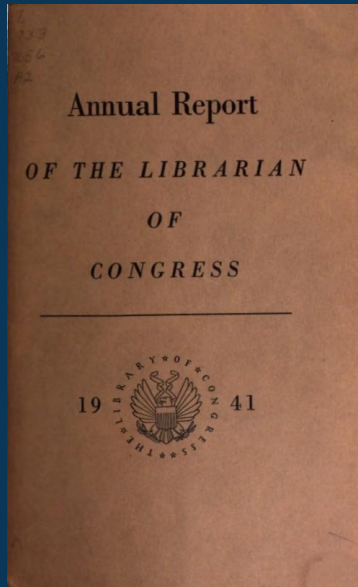
Der Ruf was a German language newspaper published during World War II for German prisoners of war (POWs) held in the United States. It was distributed to multiple POW camps across the country, and was produced with the specific aim of providing alternatives to the Nazi ideology.

Permanent URL: <https://doi.org/10.60807/pn2a-zm57>

Half the battle

The central problems which plague librarians today... are not mere technical problems or professional problems. They are problems upon the solution of which much more depends than the rules of catalogers, the solvency of library corporations, or the good repute of the librarian's profession. They are problems upon the solution of which depends the answer to the question whether the psychological climate of our world is to be favorable to fascism or freedom, to obscurantism or civilization. (MacLeish, 1942)

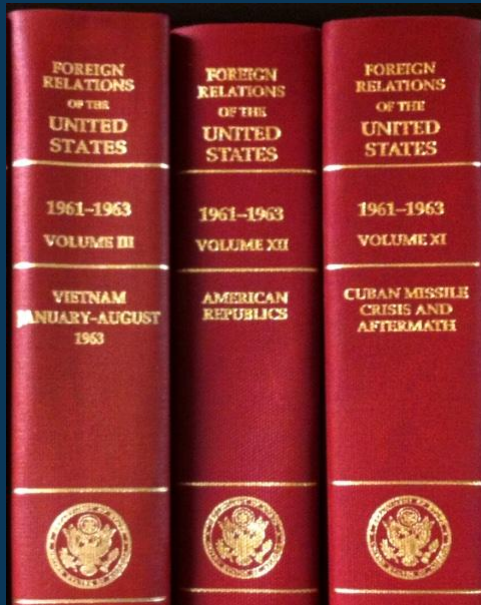
The other half



Freedom!

An ideal for which to strive

FRUS



“TITLE IV—FOREIGN RELATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES HISTORICAL SERIES

“SEC. 401. GENERAL AUTHORITY AND CONTENTS OF PUBLICATION.

22 USC 4351.

“(a) **CHARTER OF THE PUBLICATION.**—The Department of State shall continue to publish the ‘Foreign Relations of the United States historical series’ (hereafter in this title referred to as the ‘FRUS series’), which shall be a **thorough, accurate, and reliable** documentary record of major United States foreign policy decisions and significant United States diplomatic activity. Volumes of this publication shall include all records needed to provide a comprehensive documentation of the major foreign policy decisions and actions of the United States Government, including the facts which contributed to the formulation of policies and records providing supporting and alternative views to the policy position ultimately adopted.

...tensions between the need for secrecy and the desire for “Thorough, Accurate, and Reliable” documentation. (Hensler, 2026)

Honest, accessible, and preserved

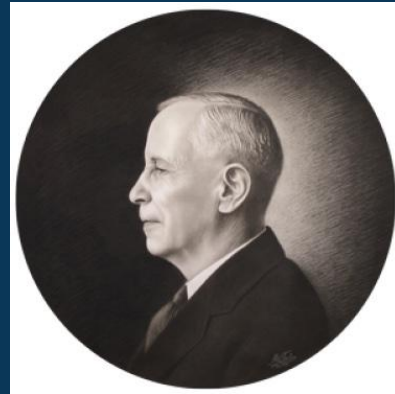
- Regardless of format or origin
 - Freedom to learn
 - Freedom to decide
- Based in fact, in reality

The inherent value of government information is realized through its accessibility and usability by the general public. (J&J, 2025)

“The earth,” wrote Thomas Jefferson, “belongs always to the living generation.” The same thing is true of the past. The past belongs always to the living generation and the true task of the librarian is to make the title good in truth as well as in theory - to make the ownership bear fruit. (MacLeish, 1942)

The power is ours!

True democracy has but one class, the working class, in the sense that all its people are in one manner or another productive - of food, of goods, of culture, of beauty; in a word, productive of better and happier conditions of life. (Norlin, 1937)



Put another way...



Books smell musty and rich. The knowledge gained from a computer - it has no texture, no context. It's there, and then it's gone. If it's to last, then the getting of knowledge should be tangible. It should be, um, smelly.

Thank you!

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This presentation was 100% human-created!

Thank you!

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Conclusion

- Print is important
- We're not saying digitization is bad
- Connection to the past is a foundation of research

Questions



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