

## INSIDE



### Blogging Black History

Blogs across subject areas are highlighting Library resources this month that help bring to light African American stories.

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### Researcher Story

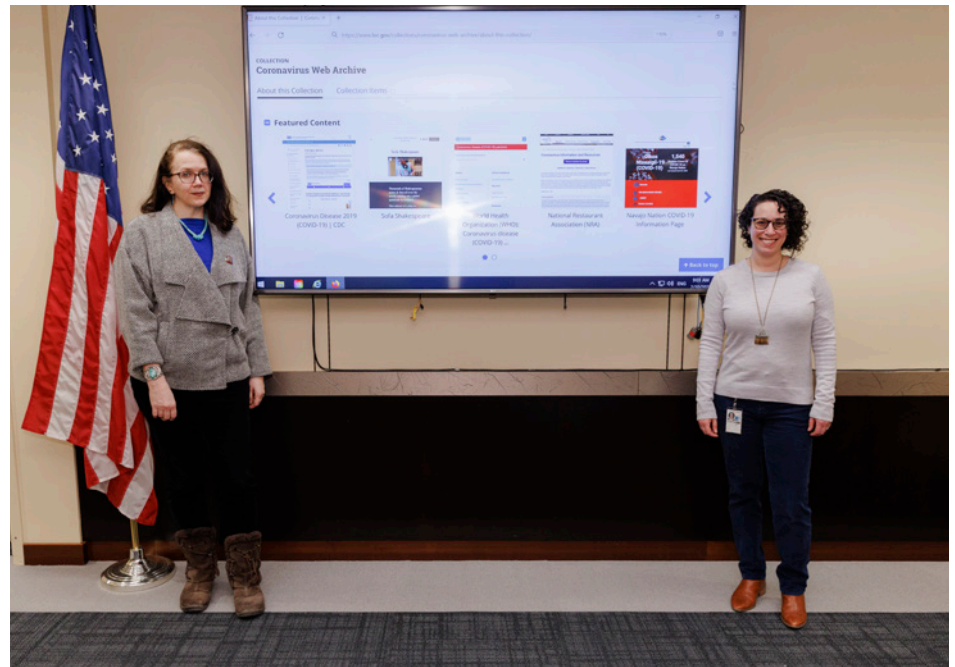
Lawyer turned biographer Walter Stahr turned to the online papers of Salmon P. Chase, the subject of his new book, once the pandemic hit.

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The Multimedia Group offers tips on putting your best foot forward during virtual meetings and events.

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Jennifer Davis of the Law Library (left) and Melissa Wertheimer of the Music Division are members of the team developing the Coronavirus Web Archive.

Shawn Miller

## Library Releases Coronavirus Web Archive Collection

An ongoing effort, the collection highlights many different aspects of the pandemic.

BY MARIA PEÑA

When future scientists, researchers and historians look back on the years the COVID-19 pandemic shut down schools and businesses, froze travel and placed workers in quarantine, they'll be able to dig through hundreds of websites that reveal just how people coped with this mortal threat.

That's because this month, the Library started to release its growing [Coronavirus Web Archive](#) collection, ensuring that scholars, scientists and average Americans can grasp the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on individuals, families and communities.

Subject specialists from across the Library began nominating content in March 2020 to include in existing thematic collections. Then, in June 2020, the Library established a formal collection plan for the archive and charged the Science, Technology and Business Division (ST&B) with leading the effort. The collection currently includes 450 web archives with content in English and 22 other languages.

"One of our goals for the collection was to balance the government, science, business and policy content with more human stories," Jennifer Harbster of ST&B said.

**CORONAVIRUS, CONTINUED ON 7**

# NOTICES

## KLUGE STAFF FELLOWSHIP APPLICATIONS INVITED

The John W. Kluge Center staff fellowship annually provides up to two qualified Library staff members with the chance to conduct independent research using the Library's resources. Fellows join influential senior scholars and promising national and international postdoctoral researchers in residency at the center. The application deadline is April 1.

For information about eligibility, the terms of the appointment, topics that can be researched and application requirements, [visit the fellowship webpage](#).

Questions? Contact Michael Stratmoen at [mist@loc.gov](mailto:mist@loc.gov)

## SCOTT TO ADDRESS WOMEN'S FORUM

Feb. 24, 2 p.m.

[Online](#)

The [Women's Forum for Growth and Networking](#) invites staff to attend part one of a two-part workshop on leadership. Norma Scott, chief of the Talent, Learning and Development Division, will present "Exploring Your Leadership Best." Handouts and breakout sessions will help participants assess their already-existing leadership acumen and draw up an action plan to continue developing their capabilities. All are welcome. Join Zoom meeting [here](#).

Questions? Send an email to [womensforumboard@loc.gov](mailto:womensforumboard@loc.gov).

## USER DATA COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Feb. 23, 2 p.m.

[Online](#)

Participants in the next User Data Community of Practice meeting will hear from the Geography and Map Division about trends in web traffic to the Sanborn map collection and from the Center for Learning, Literacy and Engagement about data collection across public programming. There will also be an update on the effort to develop key performance indicators to track the success of the Library's strategic plan. All interested staff are welcome to attend.

Questions? Contact Emily Roberts at [eeroberts@loc.gov](mailto:eeroberts@loc.gov).



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# GAZETTE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

[loc.gov/staff/gazette](http://loc.gov/staff/gazette)

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### MISSION OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The Library's central mission is to engage, inspire and inform Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity.

### ABOUT THE GAZETTE

An official publication of the Library of Congress, The Gazette encourages Library managers and staff to submit articles and photographs of general interest. Submissions will be edited to convey the most necessary information.

Back issues of The Gazette in print are available in the Communications Office, LM 143. Electronic archived issues and a color PDF file of the current issue are available online at [loc.gov/staff/gazette](http://loc.gov/staff/gazette).

### GAZETTE WELCOMES LETTERS FROM STAFF

Staff members are invited to use the Gazette for lively and thoughtful debate relevant to Library issues. Letters must be signed by the author, whose place of work and telephone extension should be included so we can verify authorship. If a letter calls for management response, an explanation of a policy or actions or clarification of fact, we will ask for management response.—Ed.

### Library of Congress Gazette

Washington, DC 20540-1620

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### GAZETTE DEADLINES

The deadline for editorial copy for the March 11 Gazette is Wednesday, March 2.

Email editorial copy and letters to the editor to [mhartsell@loc.gov](mailto:mhartsell@loc.gov) and [wmal@loc.gov](mailto:wmal@loc.gov).

To promote events through the Library's online calendar ([www.loc.gov/loc/events](http://www.loc.gov/loc/events)) and the Gazette Calendar, email event and contact information to [calendar@loc.gov](mailto:calendar@loc.gov) by 9 a.m. Monday of the week of publication.

Boxed announcements should be submitted electronically (text files) by 9 a.m. Monday the week of publication to [mhartsell@loc.gov](mailto:mhartsell@loc.gov) and [wmal@loc.gov](mailto:wmal@loc.gov).

# Blogs Celebrate Black History Month

This month, the Library's blogs have been paying tribute to the achievements of generations of African Americans across U.S. life, often in the face of great adversity. In the process, posts are bringing to light little-known aspects of the American story. Here's a selection.

## Blood Bank Pioneer

Dr. Charles R. Drew pioneered the preservation of blood and plasma at the start of World War II. He is responsible for America's first major blood banks and introduced the use of mobile blood donation stations, later known as "blood-mobiles," writes Heather Thomas on [Headlines and Heroes](#).

## Funeral Homes

Black-owned funeral homes are as much cultural institutions as they are commercial operations, and they have been around for a long time: They were among the first family businesses established by African Americans after the abolition of slavery in a trade that was and remains largely segregated along racial, ethnic and reli-



James Weldon Johnson

Prints and Photographs Division

gious lines, writes Lynn Weinstein on [Inside Adams](#).

## Genealogy

Staff in the History and Genealogy Section routinely hear stories of surprising revelations that lie in the often-tangled roots of family histories, especially now with the growing popularity of DNA testing, writes Wanda Whitney on the [Library's main blog](#). Still, she was shocked at the news DNA testing revealed about her and her family.

Beware: Researching African American genealogy is hard, cautions Ahmed Johnson in [another post on the main blog](#). In 1860, nearly 4 million enslaved individuals lived in the U.S., but they didn't appear in federal census records. Therefore, researchers have to look to other resources, many of which Johnson details.

## 'Lift Every Voice and Sing'

Now often referred to as the "Black national anthem," the stirring turn-of-the-20th-century song by James Weldon Johnson and J. Rosamond Johnson has strengthened communities in prayer and protest, pain and uplift, writes Cait Miller on [In the Muse](#). Her post tells the story of how the brothers' most famous song came together.

## Black Midwives

Stacie Seifrit-Griffin writes on [Now See Hear!](#) about a 1953 film that relates to the theme of Black History Month this year: health and wellness. "All My Babies: A Midwife's Own Story" profiles the life and work of "Miss Mary" Coley, a Black midwife living in rural Geor-



Jack Delano/Prints and Photographs Division

A midwife wraps her kit to go on a call in Greene County, Georgia, in 1941.

gia. The movie was made to educate doctors, midwives, schools and health departments about midwifery in the Black community.

On [Inside Adams](#), Sophia Southard writes that the history of Black midwifery has roots in the 17th century, when Europeans brought enslaved African women skilled in the practice to the U.S. For centuries thereafter, midwives were essential health care providers in rural Southern towns, where they also played central roles in the lives of their communities.

For more great blog content on Black history, scroll through [all the posts from this month](#). ■

## HAVING TECHNICAL ISSUES?

The Office of the Chief Information Officer's service desk is staffed around the clock with technicians ready to help. Contact [ocio.servicedesk@loc.gov](mailto:ocio.servicedesk@loc.gov) or (202) 707-7727.

# 2021 All-Staff Survey Data Now Available

Librarywide data from the 2021 All-Staff Survey [is now available](#). The survey was open from Oct. 18 to 29, 2021. Its 49 questions were a mix of topics from the 2018 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, the Library's 2020 COVID-19 Employee Experience Survey and queries developed by the Human Capital Directorate (HCD) based on feedback from Library leaders and employees.

HCD also reviewed the question set with an external human resources advisory company and the Smithsonian Organization and Audience Research team, which manages the Smithsonian Institution's internal surveys and analytics.

Survey questions captured employee perceptions and experiences in 10 areas, including satisfaction, communication, leadership and work culture.

Staff are invited to review the 2021 survey responses, using both the slides and the spreadsheet provided. Responses from earlier surveys are also available on the [HCD website](#).

Survey data down to the division or office level (for units with 10 or more responses) has been made available to service unit leaders, and they may

share key findings and action plans. Data for units with fewer than 10 responses has been incorporated in the data of the next-highest organizational level.

Overall, the 2021 data compared favorably to the 2020 and the 2018 surveys, with small to moderate gains on most benchmarked questions. A large majority (68 percent) of respondents believe their talents are used well in the workplace, up 5 percent from 2018. Two-thirds report they are doing work that aligns with their career aspirations. Seventy-six percent (up 5 percent) believe the Library is successful at accomplishing its mission. Fifty-four percent (a 15 percent increase) believe the Library rewards creativity and innovation. And 78 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are satisfied with their jobs.

The survey responses also include information and data about pandemic-related challenges that some staff experienced. HCD is exploring Librarywide initiatives to address some of what was learned from the survey data.

Questions? Contact Ashlyn Garry in HCD's Employee Engagement Section at [asga@loc.gov](mailto:asga@loc.gov). ■

# Phase Three of Operations Restoration to Commence

The Library announced this week that phase three, part three, of its restoration of operations plan will commence on March 1. Given the dramatic decline in COVID-19 infections caused by the omicron variant, both locally and nationally, the Library is well positioned to begin the final phase of restoring operations, Library leaders determined.

In phase three, part three, the Library will eliminate remaining limitations on operating hours and events while maintaining health precautions to prevent transmission of COVID-19. These include mandatory mask wearing, distancing of 6 feet or more (12 feet when eating or drinking) and completion of the [daily health screening tool](#) for everyone working on-site.

Supervisors and managers who are not currently working in Library buildings will return to on-site work at least one day a week (or two days per pay period) when phase three, part three, begins. This will ensure an understanding of on-site operations and completion of preparations for a return to regular office operations when phase three, part three, is complete.

This week, the Library resumed regular reading room hours from Monday through Saturday between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. Researchers must make appointments to use the reading rooms; each day, two slots are available: one from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and the other from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. These expanded appointment hours allow researchers to remain on-site longer so they can avoid returning multiple times. ■

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## NEW VIRTUAL SERIES LAUNCHES

The Rare Book and Special Collections Division is delighted to announce the launch of a new virtual series, "From the Vaults." The series features division staff and invited guests discussing everything from crystal-gazing experiments in the Harry Houdini Collection to modern art treasures and fine bindings in the newly donated Aramont Library – and everything in between.

Access the series on the [Library's website](#) and [YouTube](#).

Questions? Contact Stephanie Stillo at [sssti@loc.gov](mailto:sssti@loc.gov).

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[www.nfc.usda.gov/epps/](http://www.nfc.usda.gov/epps/)**



Lissa Schaitler

## Walter Stahr

Walter Stahr turned to writing books after a career of more than two decades as a lawyer. First, he published “John Jay: Founding Father” in 2005. Since then, he has earned praise and awards for biographies of William Henry Seward and Edwin Stanton. His latest, about antislavery activist, Treasury Secretary and Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase, will be published this month. Here, he discusses his research at the Library.

### How did you get started writing biographies?

I was always a reader. One day in Hong Kong, while reading an American history book, I said to myself that even I could do better. And then it seemed as if another voice said to me, “Stahr, if you think that, do it; write a book.” I started thinking about topics and settled on John Jay, sort of a forgotten Founding Father.

### How do you select subjects?

I look for important Americans who have been, if not overlooked, at least not fully considered in recent books. In the case of Seward, for example, nobody had appreciated that his wife was a close friend of those who organized the Seneca Falls Convention – the start of the women’s movement in America. In the case of Chase, nobody had

noticed an early essay in which he declared that antislavery political pressure would end slavery in America.

### Why did you decide to delve into Chase’s story?

When my editor, the late Alice Mayhew, suggested that I should write about Chase, I was not initially enthused. Like many Abraham Lincoln buffs, I viewed Chase as ambitious and arrogant. But after a little reading, I decided that Chase deserved a new biography. I did so because we would not have had Lincoln without the work that Chase did in the two decades before the Civil War, creating and building antislavery political parties. While Lincoln was still a loyal Whig, almost silent on the subject of slavery, Chase was speaking out against slavery and in favor of Black rights and building up anti-slavery political parties, culminating in the Republican Party.

Chase helped Lincoln in the Lincoln-Douglas campaign of 1858 and in the presidential campaign of 1860. And Lincoln relied heavily on Chase as his treasury secretary during the Civil War, not just in financial but also in political and even military matters. Chase resigned in summer 1864, but soon thereafter he was out on the campaign trail, urging men to vote for Lincoln. At the end of the year, Lincoln named Chase as our next chief justice, the role he filled until his death in 1873.

### Which books have you researched at the Library?

I have researched all of my books at the Library. Indeed, as a young Washington lawyer, I spent hours in the Library. In those days, we relied on books, and many books were available only in the Law Library Reading Room. I have used so many different reading rooms over the years: the Main Reading Room (the most inspiring room in America); the Law Library Reading Room; the Newspaper and Current Periodical Reading Room; and, above all, the Manuscript Reading Room.

For the Chase book, the online

version of the Chase papers was essential. I now live in Southern California, so it would have been hard to review all that material in person. Indeed, it would have been impossible, for I was midway through the Chase book when the Library closed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Every day, as I was writing and revising in 2020 and early 2021, I was using the online version of the Chase papers.

### Do you have any advice for other researchers on navigating the Library’s collections?

I urge researchers to enlist the Library’s staff members. I always mention my subject, and staff members often respond with something like, “Have you looked at this?” Jeff Flannery, the former head of the Manuscript Reading Room, pointed me to the records of books checked out of the Library during the Civil War. These enabled me to determine that Seward consulted some international law books, but not as many as his friend Charles Sumner, who seemed to be the most bookish member of Congress.

### What’s next for you?

I am working on a proposal about a man whose manuscript collection is (I fear) the largest presidential collection at the Library. ■

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## OIG WOULD LIKE TO KNOW

Report suspected illegal activities, waste, fraud, abuse and mismanagement in Library of Congress administration and operations to the Office of the Inspector General (OIG). A link to all Library regulations is available on the [staff intranet](#).

To make a report, contact OIG via the [online form](#) or report anonymously by mail to 101 Independence Ave., S.E., LM 630, Washington, D.C., 20540-1060.

## Applications Invited for Career Development Program

The Human Capital Directorate is accepting registrations for the virtual spring session of the Library's Career Development Program (CDP). Fourteen sessions will be offered weekly on Thursdays from March 17 to June 23. The deadline to apply is Feb. 25 at 4:30 p.m.

The award-winning program offers an opportunity for eligible Library staff members in permanent,

indefinite or temporary positions in pay plans GS/WG/WL/WS and grades 2 through 9 to enhance their professional development and leadership skills and their knowledge of the Library's service units, major programs and initiatives. (Indefinite or temporary employees' not-to-exceed date must be on or after June 24, 2023.) Participants will attend workshops, receive virtual guided tours of

Library service units and work with colleagues from across the Library.

Applicants must obtain the approval of their supervisors to participate and submit a digital copy of the completed registration form to Susan Mordan-White at [smordan@loc.gov](mailto:smordan@loc.gov) by the deadline.

For more information and to apply, visit the [CDP intranet site](#). ■

## Tech Tip: On-Camera Tricks and Techniques

Whether you're on-site or connecting remotely, virtual meetings and events have become a regular part of Library work. Make sure you're putting your best foot forward by following these helpful tips from the Multimedia Group.

### Setup

- Your device should be at eye level and arm's length away from you.
- If needed, raise your device using books or boxes to the proper height.
- Make sure that you are positioned in the screen without the top of your head or chin touching the edge of the screen.
- If possible, use a hard-wired internet connection.

### Lighting

- Use natural light or soft light to illuminate your face.
- Position yourself in front of a window or a lamp to illuminate your face.
- If possible, avoid having lights or windows behind you.

### Sound

- Find a quiet space without background noises and little echo.
- Silence all devices, including your cellphone and computer alerts.
- If possible, use earbuds or headphones with a built-in microphone.
- If you must use your computer speakers and microphone, make

sure your speaker volume isn't too high.

- Be mindful of tapping and hitting the surface and area around you when talking as this affects the sound and the stability of the camera.

### Background

- Pick a background that has depth behind you as this will limit shadows and be visually more appealing.

- Be aware of items behind you; you may want to remove items you prefer not to be visible on camera.
- Make sure your background isn't an area that people or pets will be walking through.
- Wear solids and primary colors; they work best for on-camera appearance.

Questions about Zoom? Contact the Office of the Chief Information Officer service desk at (202) 707-7727 or [ocioservicedesk@loc.gov](mailto:ocioservicedesk@loc.gov). ■

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## HCD SERVICES PORTAL

During this period of remote work, the [Human Capital Directorate \(HCD\) services portal](#) is there to help. Ask questions of HCD professionals; submit documents related to benefits, retirement and payroll matters; and track requests.

## CORONAVIRUS, CONTINUED FROM 1

“When future historians look back at this pandemic, we want them to understand the impact on everyday people’s lives.”

Coverage includes topics such as measures to slow down the spread of COVID-19, vaccine rollouts, responses to legal challenges, online guidance, unemployment and telework and responses from the arts and entertainment world.

“We may not know exactly what future historians will be looking for when they tell the story of these remarkable years,” Harbster said. “But by looking at our materials from the influenza of 1918 and broadening our scope to include areas beyond science like policy, the arts and social content, we hope to present a collection that will serve future researchers.”

By Feb. 8, the U.S. death toll for COVID-19 stood at 908,817, according to the Coronavirus Resource Center at Johns Hopkins University. Worldwide, the virus has affected everyone and just about every aspect of our lives. As the nation and the world begin to crawl out of the pandemic, the Library has taken proactive steps to help future researchers understand its full complexity. But it can’t collect everything, Harbster said.

“Curating such a collection requires a multidisciplinary, thoughtful approach. We are seeking out good examples that represent how we responded to this virus and how it has changed our lives,” she said.

The massive effort represents content creators from all levels of government as well as fields including science and technology, economics, arts and culture, public policy, education, psychology, sports and religion. International content is also included. International collections librarians and overseas offices made contributions to ensure that the archive is a truly [global collection](#).

Since the Library is a member of the International Internet Preservation Consortium, staffers also

nominated sites for that effort.

### What’s in this vault?

There are web captures featuring COVID-19 content from the White House, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, trade groups such as the National Restaurant Association, the Navajo Nation and the Social Distancing Festival, a site that celebrates art from all over the world.

As in past global crises and times of social uncertainty, art has helped people process the loss and full range of experiences and emotions unleashed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The archive includes “[Erase COVID](#),” a website created by dozens of artists to raise money and awareness through the sale of public safety-themed art, including posters, prints and greeting cards. For instance, “Cats for Crushin’ COVID,” by Baltimore artist Elena Fox, features 10 posters of cats modeling proper protocols to keep people safe.

The archive also includes information aimed at ethnic and Indigenous communities as well as content from Asia, Latin America, Africa, Europe, the Middle East and Oceania. One website capture from Iran shows messages about COVID-19 from the Rafsanjan University of Medical Sciences; others show government responses from countries like Mexico, Colombia and Venezuela.

The only restriction curators face as they release content on a rolling monthly basis is that the archives are embargoed for a year under Library policy. This is because the Library aims only to archive the websites, not to replace or compete with them. All pages in the archive carry a banner at the top that explains that the user is in an archive.

The collection is available for educational and research purposes, but many, if not all, of the websites and their contents – including photos, articles and graphics – are protected by copyright. People accessing these websites need to secure written permission from the copyright owners of materials

not in the public domain for their use, distribution or reproduction.

A 10-member team of experts behind the Coronavirus Web Archive developed criteria for selecting websites. They focused on content from historically excluded groups and on identified gaps in collecting areas, such as religion, psychology, education, sports and recreation, fashion, agriculture, transportation and the environment.

The process involved a thorough assessment for each website, according to Harbster. The group aimed to identify sites with high informational value and to avoid duplicating information.

### What about misinformation?

The Coronavirus Web Archive includes items related to misinformation because “that is part of the COVID-19 story,” Harbster said. To address misinformation, though, the team nominated a large news aggregator, NewsGuard, that tracks misinformation related to the pandemic.

Abigail Grotke, assistant head of the Digital Content Management Section, noted that the Library’s role is to archive and preserve web content without altering it, although the Library provides context through collection frameworks and descriptive information on item records on loc.gov.

“We preserve the content using standard Library practices for all digital content, so there are multiple copies and checks along the way to ensure the content is not altered,” Grotke said.

The Library began [building web archive collections](#) in 2000 to gather web-based information on specific themes or events as they unfolded. Since then, the Library’s [web archive collections](#) have grown to hold over 2.8 petabytes of data in over 21 billion files. ■