

**NMLA Archives and Archivists SIG meeting**  
**Wednesday, April 15, 2026, 3:00-4:00 pm**  
**on Teams**  
**Facilitator: Co-chair Michael Mongeau**  
**Attendees: 19**

**1. Welcome and Introductions: Michael Mongeau**

Michael indicated that co-chair Abby Smith would not be able to attend the meeting. He asked new attendees to introduce themselves. Shelly Black introduced herself as the digital archivist at the University of New Mexico and said she relocated to Albuquerque from North Carolina.

**2. Repository Highlight: Caroline M. Browning Hess, Bureau of Reclamation Office in Albuquerque**

Caroline was working at the Bureau of Reclamation in a term position. The BOR manages electricity and water and is a source of information about grazing rights, water rights, hydropower, and a broad range of matters applicable to agricultural practices. The office holds copies of many original documents, as the originals are in the National Archives. They hold records according to a retention schedule, and different document types have different retention requirements. For example, project files and engineering reports are kept for 25 years after project completion. Anything beyond that is at NARA. In the work Caroline was a part of, the team identified 97.6K records that were eligible for retention and upload, of which 91.2K were bulk loaded. Some 90 linear feet of records were deaccessioned (destroyed). The BOR also maintains endangered species reports, but she says that a variety of existing reports that used to be available online have since been taken down, as is true of various climate change reports—these are now only available through records requests. BOR records also document work with corporations, other agencies, and local communities, especially Indigenous groups. They also include anthropological reports and maps (many going back to circa 1900).

Michael asked about repatriation processes. Caroline said that the BOR office has lost a lot of employees since the last election. Repatriation has been uneven and, from what Caroline saw in the records, not always respectful. She is not sure what the process is like now.

Jonathan Pringle said the records office may get requests from people that are relevant to the BOR. How do researchers get set up to use the collection? Caroline said that information seekers would have to go to the Bureau of the Interior website and submit a

FOIA request because the material is not available in paper form. On the website, they have to go to the right subsection; in this case, the BOR Upper Colorado Basin. News media usually have to pay a fee. Caroline said that there are no finding aids for the collection and that many reports that used to be available are now disappearing—she recommended that people who are interested in environmental records in particular should file requests as soon as possible.

### **3. National Archives News: Michael Mongeau**

Michael said that the last couple of months have been big for archives news. For one, President Trump has argued that the Presidential Records Act is unconstitutional and that all material created by the presidents are private records, not public records. This will be going to court. The Society of American Archivists has issued a statement arguing that the PRA is constitutional.

There was also an attempt to shut down the Seattle NARA office on budgetary grounds. Seattle NARA is important because it holds a great many physical, non-digitized records relevant to Indigenous issues.

The Internet Archive has experienced pushback from the Washington Post, the New York Times, and the USA Today, who are blocking Internet Archive from crawling their sites because AI trains its LLMs through the Internet Archive. So this is raising larger questions about the use of the Internet Archive for LLM training in general.

Upcoming America 250 events include the Freedom Plane, which will send a variety of documents from NARA to exhibits around the country. The closest one to us may be Denver, which will host the exhibit for a range of dates in May and June. Many local repositories are coming up with their own America 250 exhibits.

SAA events: the SAA journal is looking for editors, and their archives and storytelling event, [“A Finding Aid to My Soul”](#) is coming up on April 30.

Caroline said that some other countries are now trying to archive US government documents—e.g., a climate change report that was issued under the Biden Administration and taken down by the Trump Administration is still available online through the United Kingdom.

### **4. Announcements: Everyone**

Abbie Olivas noted that the [Society of Southwest Archivists annual conference](#) is coming up—the physical meeting is in Waco, but there will be a virtual option as well, and Abbie and others will be doing a session about our SIG.

Caroline said, pertinent to the kinds of water management discussed earlier, that the Senate is voting today on House Joint Resolution 140, which would overturn mining protections for the Boundary Waters in Minnesota.

Portia Vesco said that she and Avi will be at the SSWA talking about the Archdiocese of Santa Fe Abuse Archive.

## **5. Other business**

The SIG's next meeting will have a professional development focus and is tentatively scheduled for May. Topic is TBD, but Michael is considering something on the American 250 activities at Princeton.