

[Follow-Up to ANN: Records Destruction Request from U.S. Department of the Interior \(2 Nov 2018\)](#)

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Type:

Call for Volunteers

Subject Fields:

Archival Science, American History / Studies, Research and Methodology, Public Policy, Political History / Studies

Dear colleagues,

Let me first send my appreciation to those of you who have followed up, with NARA and/or myself, regarding my post of November 2, 2018, in which I alerted H-Net readers to news of a records disposition request from the U.S. Department of the Interior that I found startling. This is, to my mind, a much-needed conversation.

I write now to, first, let you know that the deadline for public comments has been extended to **November 26** (*see original announcement for further details*).

Additionally, however, the best information I now have available to me suggests that the request falls within the bounds of ordinary archival procedures. Some may see this as necessarily concluding any further discussion on the matter; however, there are others who see this as an opportunity for academics to develop a deeper understanding of the archival practices that structure the histories we are able to tell. Those who tend toward the latter position may find the following piece worthwhile:

Holes in History: The Dept of Interior request to destroy records

<https://freegovinfo.info/node/13099>

Those who have the time and inclination should look to the DOI's Crosswalk for greater details about the records involved. If there are some that would be better designated as permanent, rather than temporary, that would be useful information to include in your comments. Anyone concerned about archival procedures more broadly might also urge NARA to reconsider their now-narrow definitions of "historical significance" and "research value," and to think more carefully about who is able to contribute to the process of determining which records fit into this criteria.

We may also want to become more involved by familiarizing ourselves with the process of filing a request through the FOIA, and by tracking the life of records that are important for our ability to practice historical research and writing. The latter may be best accomplished as an assemblage, which would streamline the process and minimize labor input.

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<https://networks.h-net.org/node/73374/announcements/3095956/follow-ann-records-destruction-request-us-department-interior-2>
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