

Newsletter
of the
Illinois
State
Archives
&
The Illinois
State Historical
Records
Advisory Board

Jesse White
Secretary of State
&
State Archivist

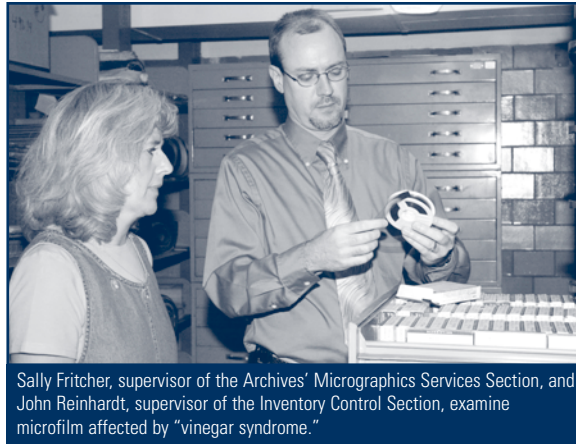
Volume 18
Number 2

Archives staff rescues corrupted microfilm

The Illinois State Archives staff recently noticed a sour smell coming from a microfilmed record series in the stacks. The series was 504.003 — Service Recognition Board (World War II); Bonus Applications From Veterans; 1947-1953 — 1,589 microfilm rolls in all. Upon investigation, it was found that the smell was a chemical reaction known as "vinegar syndrome."

Most film produced from the late 1930s through 1990 was manufactured on a cellulose acetate base. When acetate film is exposed to extremes in heat and humidity, a chemical reaction can take place, which threatens the stability of the film and the information on it. When acetate-based microfilm is stored in environmentally controlled conditions, its minimum life expectancy exceeds 100 years. Since 1990, nearly all microfilms made have a polyester rather than an acetate base with a minimum life expectancy of 500 years under proper storage conditions.

The State Archives staff is in the process of preserving the valuable information on the corrupted microfilms by converting the films to polyester-based films through its Micrographics Section. Each of the 1,589 rolls is being duplicated twice, once for reference use and once for security storage. Individual acid-free boxes are helping to further protect the duplicate rolls.



Sally Fritcher, supervisor of the Archives' Micrographics Services Section, and John Reinhardt, supervisor of the Inventory Control Section, examine microfilm affected by "vinegar syndrome."

Over the years, the applications and index have been used extensively, particularly by genealogists with World War II veterans for relatives. The original Bonus Applications were disposed of after being microfilmed. The General Assembly at the time had provided for bonus payments to Illinois veterans of World War II in 1946. Veterans were to receive a one-time payment of \$10 for each month of active

domestic service and \$15 for each month of active foreign service for the period of Sept. 16, 1940, to Sept. 3, 1945. In the event that the Illinois veteran died during this time of a service-connected cause, his or her heirs were entitled to a lump-sum payment of \$900 regardless of length of service.

The applications established Illinois residence at the time of entry into service and outlined service record. The files were sequentially arranged by claim numbers and indexed by a card file, record series 504.006 — Abstract of World War II Bonus Applications, 1947-1953, 98 cu. ft.

In all, the State Archives houses 25,232 rolls of public-use microfilm and 564,494 rolls of security microfilm. This significant instance of vinegar syndrome has caused the Archives staff to evaluate other microfilm in its possession. Fortunately, no further instances of acidic invasion have been detected, but periodic spot-checking will be an ongoing procedure.

"Historians and genealogists rely on the valuable information contained on these microfilms for their research," said Secretary of State and State Archivist Jesse White. "I commend the Archives staff for their quick detective work in rooting out the corrupted microfilms and setting a plan of action for converting these films to a safer and longer-lasting format."

Primary source documents provide insight into the past

Illinois at War, 1917-1919 teaching packet

An Application For Employment with the Farm Labor Administration of the Illinois State Council of Defense dated June 28, 1918, completed by a Joseph Nyburg, is among many primary source documents currently being considered by Archives staff for its next teaching packet. Tentatively titled *Illinois at War, 1917-1919*, this package is scheduled for release in 2006.

The Joseph Nyburg application comes from the voluminous files of the State Council of Defense (World War I), record group 517.000. Of the thousands of similar applications, this particular one was pulled because of the compelling story it presents. In June 1918, Nyburg was living at the Hotel Weinstein at the corner of S. Jefferson St. in Chicago. He was an American, age 40 and unmarried. He was 5'1/2" and weighed 130 pounds. He was applying to work as a farm hand, wanted a permanent position and was willing to negotiate for his salary. He preferred to work "as far west out of Chicago as possible." He had \$25, which he was willing to contribute to his resettlement if that amount were matched. His previous agricultural experience included five months on a chicken-breeding farm in Leicestershire, England in 1896, and over the hops harvest season in Kent, England in 1897. Nyburg returned to America to enlist in the Spanish-American War (1898) and received an honorable discharge. In 1916, he was back in England where he joined the British Army to fight in World War I. After an honorable discharge he returned to the U.S. Before arriving in Chicago he worked for the Goodyear Rubber Company in Akron, Ohio as a laborer for three weeks. He left that job because he "could not stand rubber smoke."

The brief information provided on a single-page employment application (see page 3) outlines an extraordinary life at the time. When few Americans traveled significant distances away from their homes, Nyburg had journeyed to and from England twice. He had fought in the Spanish-American War in Cuba and with the British Army against Germans in France. Most Americans were less than eager to engage in this struggle as early as 1916. His ready cash worth was \$25 — a sum roughly the equivalent of \$422 today. His height and weight were average for the time. With the draft in full force in 1918, employment opportunities were most favorable for able-bodied men who had not been classified as 1-A. Nyburg's age would have excluded him from this priority rating. Across America both the industrial and agricultural sectors were experiencing labor shortages as some 4 million men had been called up for active service by the time of the Nov. 11, 1918, armistice.

Although this Application For Employment provides a wealth of information on the life of Joseph Nyburg, it also elicits many unanswered questions. Where was he born and where did he grow up? Did he have any siblings? What kind of education did he have? (Obviously, he was literate because he had completed the application himself. Most farm labor applications were filled out by an intake clerk

(cont.)

Midwest States Micrographics Conference

The 17th annual Midwest States Micrographics Conference will be Sept. 21-23 in Springfield at the Illinois State Capitol Building. Core state participants will report on their respective programs, and roundtable discussions will provide members an opportunity to share experiences and solve problems. Tours will be provided of the State Capitol, Frank Lloyd Wright's Dana Thomas House and the Illinois State Archives and its Micrographics Services Section.

For questions about the conference, please contact:
Sally Fritcher, Illinois State Archives
Micrographics Services
093 Howlett Building
Springfield, IL 62756
217-782-5188
217-782-3423 (fax)

Reference requests total nearly 13 million

Archives reference requests for calendar year 2003 totaled 12,915,012 — 15 percent more than the 2002 total of 11,255,091. Most reference inquiries — over 98 percent — are made online at the Archives page of the Secretary of State Web site and do not require intervention by Archives staff. With the volume of requests drastically increasing over the past several years, the Internet has provided a fast and efficient way for the Archives to handle this many requests.

New Fee Schedule

The Archives has revised its schedule of fees for document requests to reflect current language in the Illinois Compiled Statutes (15 ILCS 305/5.5).

Out-of-State Research Fee	\$10
<small>(Entitles users to up to two unofficial, non certified copies of a requested record(s), if available.)</small>	
Duplicated Microfilm Rolls	\$20 per roll
Compact Discs	\$20 per CD
Document Certification	\$.2 per document (certified)
Federal Land Records	\$.2 per page
Copies of Legislative Bills or other papers made from microfilm reader/printers and photocopiers, not exceeding legal size	\$.50 per page
Copies Exceeding Legal Size	\$.1 per page

Co-operating
U. S. Employment Service
U. S. Public Service Reserve
Illinois Department of Labor

FARM LABOR ADMINISTRATION
ILLINOIS STATE COUNCIL OF DEFENSE
FOOD PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT
JUN 28 1918

Name Nyburg Joseph Telephone _____

Street Address Hotel Weinstein Corner S. Jefferson street

Town Chicago State Illinois County Cook

Age 40 Nationality American Single or married Single

Weight 130 Height 5 - 5 1/2

Indicate experience (for instance if you have had experience as a feeder write "feeding" in the blank below the printed word "feeding," etc.)

Breeding	Feeding	Dairying	Grain Farming	Truck Gardening	General
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Which of the above types of farming do you prefer? Dairying or General

Wages wanted per month according my proficiency (Consider things furnished)

How long do you want to work? (Indicate date you would begin and when you desire to terminate work)
want to work permanent

In what part of county or state do you prefer to work? if I would have my own decision
I would prefer as far west out of Chicago as possible

If married and wife accompanies you, what work would she do, if any? _____

Is she experienced? _____ Give number and ages of children _____

NOTE: For married men and family a house is generally provided. Also garden; often two or more pigs; one or more cows; and you are allowed to raise a limited number of chickens; and some fruit is furnished etc.

How much railroad fare can you pay? (It will help to get desirable work if you can pay part or all of your fare)
am worth 25 Doll. Wich I will spare towards trip if assisted

For whom, and where did you work last: Goodyear Rubber Comp. Akron Ohio
General laborer

How long did you work there? 3 weeks. Could not stand Rubber smoke

Give two references U. S. War Dept. Adjutant Generals office Wash. D. C.
Secretary War office. London England S. W.

State briefly your entire experience in farm work, and give such other data as may be of assistance to us in selecting for you the most suitable position. Indicate State and County where most of your experience was gotten. (This is very important) Have been working in Leistershire England on a chicken breeding farm in 1896 for about 5 months.
Have been engaged Hop picking (Harvesting) in Kent England 1897
and in 1898 joined spanish american war Hon. Discharged and in 1916
joined British army European war. Hon. Discharged.

Nyburg Transcription



FARM LABOR ADMINISTRATION
ILLINOIS STATE COUNCIL OF DEFENSE
FOOD PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

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Nyburg Original Document

(cont from page 2)

rather than by the applicants themselves.) Why did he journey to England prior to or in 1896? Why did he return to the U.S. to fight in the Spanish-American War? Why did he return to England after his discharge? What compelled him to join the British Army to fight in the European War? After returning to the U.S, why did he journey to Akron, Ohio? Why did he choose Chicago after Akron? The ultimate question is, "What finally happened to Joseph Nyburg?"

Primary source documents such as this provide readers the opportunity to experience history on an emotional level. The unanswered questions are a result of true human empathy with a very real, if obscure, historical figure. Many of the primary documents the Archives has selected for its other teaching packages were chosen for the emotions they elicited. The selection of individual documents for the *Illinois at War, 1917-1919* teaching packet does not guarantee that the Joseph Nyburg application will be included. The relatively short time period that this particular teaching package will cover will cause the 50 documents chosen to be related closely. How they ultimately interrelate has not yet been determined.

NEH Preservation Grants deadline May 17

The National Endowment for the Humanities currently offers Preservation Assistance Grants to small- and medium-sized libraries, museums, historical societies, archives, town and county records offices, underserved departments and units within colleges and universities, as well as other larger institutions to help them improve their ability to preserve and care for their humanities collections. Typical collections include special collections of books and journals, archives and manuscripts, prints and photographs, moving images, sound recordings, architectural and cartographic records, decorative and fine arts, textiles, archaeological and ethnographic artifacts, furniture and historical objects. Grants will be awarded for a period of 18 months for a sum of \$2,000, \$3,500 or \$5,000.

Preservation Assistance Grants can be used for any one or any combination of the following categories:

- General Preservation Assessments
- Consultations with Professionals to Address a Specific Preservation Issue

- Purchase of Storage Furniture and Preservation Supplies
- Purchase of Environmental Monitoring Equipment for Humanities Collections
- Education and Training

Preservation Assistance Grants may support consultant fees, workshop registration fees, travel and per diem, and the costs of purchasing and shipping preservation supplies and equipment. Any U.S. nonprofit organization may apply for the grants. Applicants must care for and have custody of the humanities collection that is the focus of the application, have at least one full-time equivalent staff member (paid or unpaid), and be open and provide services or programs for at least 120 days per year.

The application deadline is May 17 for projects scheduled to begin Jan. 1, 2005. For an application or more information, please contact: www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/pag.html, 202-606-8570, preservation@neh.gov.

Federal Township Plats, 1804–1891 (2002), 102 Illinois counties with each county on a single CD-ROM. — \$20 per county

A Summary Guide to Local Governmental Records in the Illinois Regional Archives, second edition (1999), 265 pp. — \$6

Descriptive Inventory of the Archives of the State of Illinois, second edition (1997), 940 pp.; or CD ROM — \$20

Chicago City Council Proceedings Files, 1833-1871: An Inventory (1987), 989 pp., and Chicago City Council Proceedings Files, 1833-1871: An Index (1987), 93 microfiche (18,714 pp.) — \$35

Illinois Public Domain Land Sales (2001), explanatory booklet (7 pp.), and CD-ROM (538,750 entries) — \$25

The Margaret Cross Norton Working Papers, 1924-1958 (1993), 8 - 35 mm microfilm rolls with An Inventory and Index (1993), 7 microfiche (1,055 pages) — \$60

Hard Times in Illinois, 1930-1940 (2002), teacher's manual (119 pp.) and 50 document facsimiles — \$10*

The Illinois and Michigan Canal, 1827-1911 (1998), teacher's manual (115 pp.) and 50 document facsimiles with transcriptions — \$12*

Illinois at War, 1941-1945 (1994), teacher's manual (119 pp.) and 50 document facsimiles — \$12*

From the Ashes, 1872-1900: A Selection of Documents from the Proceedings Files of the Chicago City Council (1990), teacher's manual (123 pp.) and 50 document facsimiles with transcriptions. — \$10*

Early Chicago, 1833-1871: A Selection of City Council Proceedings Files from the Illinois State Archives (1986, 1999), teacher's manual (115 pp.) and 50 document facsimiles with transcriptions — \$14*

*** Teaching packets are available FREE to Illinois educational institutions by submitting a request on letterhead stationery. All other requests are filled for the fee listed. To order publications, please contact: Illinois State Archives, Norton Building, Publications Unit, Springfield, IL 62756, 217-782-2226. Please make checks payable to Secretary of State.**