



National Archives at Kansas City Newsletter

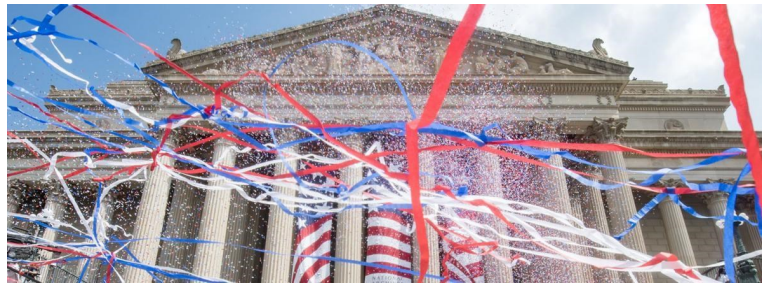
Upcoming Virtual Programs at the National Archives

The National Archives is continuing to offer a full slate of public programs in July. An extensive list can be found [here](#). Below are several highlights on a variety of topics. All programs are scheduled according to Eastern Daylight Time.

July 4th at the National Archives!

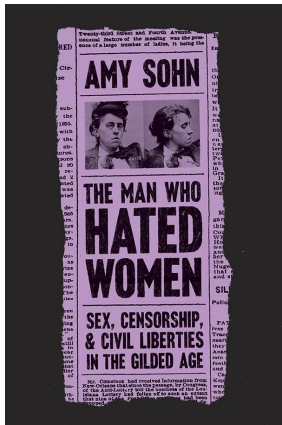
The National Archives marks the 245th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence with its traditional Fourth of July program both online and in person!

Highlights include welcoming remarks by Archivist of the United States **David S. Ferriero**, a variety of educational and family-friendly interactive programs with historical figures and Archives educators, and a lively, patriotic reading ceremony emceed by journalist **Soledad O'Brien**. All July 4th activities are free and open to the public. The full schedule can be found at www.archivesjuly4.org.



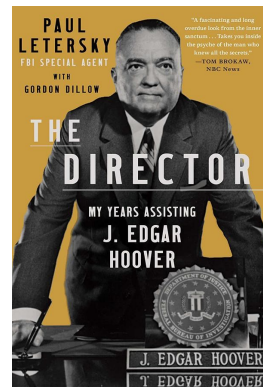
The Man Who Hated Women: Sex, Censorship, and Civil Liberties in the Gilded Age

On **Thursday, July 8 at Noon EDT**, the National Archives will host **Amy Sohn** for a discussion of her book, *The Man Who Hated Women*. Anthony Comstock, special agent to the U.S. Post Office, was one of the most important men in the lives of 19th-century women. His eponymous law, passed in 1873, imposed long prison sentences and steep fines for the mailing of contraception and obscenity. In her new book, Sohn presents a narrative history of Comstock and the remarkable women who opposed his war on women's rights at the turn of the 20th century. Joining Sohn in conversation will be journalist and author **Elizabeth Mitchell**. This **free program** is available via live stream on the National Archives [YouTube Channel](#).



The Director: My Years Assisting J. Edgar Hoover

On **Thursday, July 15 at Noon EDT**, the National Archives will host **Paul Letersky**, who will discuss his book *The Director: My Years Assisting J. Edgar Hoover*. In 1965, 22-year old Paul Letersky was assigned to assist the legendary FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, who had led the Bureau for an incredible 41 years. Hoover's personal privacy was more tightly guarded than the secret "files" he carefully collected—and that were feared by politicians and celebrities. In the first book ever written about Hoover by a member of his trusted, personal staff, *The Director* offers a unique inside look at one of the most powerful law enforcement figures in American history. Joining Letersky in conversation will be former FBI agent **Joe Pistone**. This **free program** is available via live stream on the National Archives [YouTube Channel](#).



July 2021

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Upcoming Events

Unless noted, all events are held at the National Archives 400 W. Pershing Road Kansas City, MO 64108

NOTE: All in-person public events at National Archives facilities nationwide are cancelled until further notice. This includes in-person public programs, tours, school group visits, public meetings, external conferences, and facility rentals.

Hidden Treasures from the Stacks

Max Friedman, a.k.a. Morris "Red" Rudensky: Violations and Reformation

Many people have walked through the gates of Leavenworth Penitentiary. Their violations have ranged from oleomargarine subterfuge to violating the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906. Many walked in, stayed a short stint, and never returned. Others entered and left in a body bag. A few made a career out of crime and served two or more terms but rarely have repeat offenders received a second chance on the outside.

Incorrigible from a young age, Macy Motle Friedman, known as Max Friedman, began a career of crime by stealing bagels at age 13 in Manhattan's Lower East Side. This behavior landed him in New York State Reformatory School. Friedman would escape this facility, and several others over his lifetime., breaking into locked spaces became his specialty and a career was made out of the talent. This skill attracted the likes of Al Capone's Chicago Outfit, who hired Friedman for several safe-cracking endeavors. However, the occupation landed him into trouble.

On April 11, 1918, Max Friedman, standing five foot seven and weighing 144 pounds with short light auburn hair, walked through the gates of Leavenworth Penitentiary. Charged with robbery, concealment of weapons, and causing mayhem, Friedman was no stranger to incarceration, but this marked his first instance in federal custody. Much like his time on the outside, Friedman had a habit of breaking the rules. Violations listed in his prison file include loafing and loitering at work, talking in the dining room, fighting with another inmate, joining a strike, and refusing to work.

After Friedman's release from Leavenworth, he continued a life of crime and was arrested several times. On one occasion, he was captured in Kansas for burglary, but in order to receive a shorter sentence Friedman took on the identity of another wanted safecracker named Morris "Red" Rudensky. From this point forward, Friedman typically went by Rudensky but sometimes used other aliases to throw the authorities off his tracks. However, the law usually caught up to him.

On December 9, 1923, Friedman entered Leavenworth Penitentiary for the second time under the name Morris Rudensky. Rudensky, as noted from this point forward, continued a pattern of violating prison rules exceeding those during his first stay. Sometimes the violations were small, such as trading tobacco to purchase a necklace or loafing on the job. Other infractions were more severe, like threatening a guard, hiding files or shivs and other contraband in his cell, and fighting with other inmates.

Occasionally Rudensky's actions were daring, desperate, and a little creative. On November 5, 1924, he violated prison rules by escaping. Rudensky and another inmate left the penitentiary concealed in a crate headed for McNeil Island Penitentiary. Escaping the box, which was nailed shut by some accomplices with graphite coated fasteners for an easy getaway, was a fiasco. First, the container was placed lid side down which made it impossible to remove the nails. Second, a guard checking for escapees plunged a long knife in the box, which nicked Rudensky's partner. Eventually blood seeped out of the container revealing their presence. Rudensky made a second even less successful escape, which was much more creative. On this occasion he was kept informed when an inmate died, Rudensky then made his way to the morgue and slid himself into the body bag of an unembalmed man. After several hours the horrid smell forced Rudensky to end the escape attempt.

Much changed for Redensky on August 19, 1929, when he stopped a prison riot, which saved the life of fellow inmate and future president of the Brown & Bigelow publishing company, Charles Ward. After befriending Ward, Rudensky vowed to end his life of crime. On January 19, 1932, Rudensky transferred to the United States Penitentiary in Atlanta, Georgia, which serendipitously landed him into an Atlanta prison cell with his former on and off again employer, Capone. During his stay Rudensky s gained skills as a writer and editor of the inmate-run magazine called "The Atlantian."

Rudensky's writing skills, safecracking talent, and friendship with Charles Ward would pay off. Upon his release from prison Ward hired Rudensky as a copywriter at Brown & Bigelow. In the 1960s, he worked as a consultant for 3M Company's home security business. In 1970, Rudensky also used his writing skills to write an autobiography called "The Gonif," which means thief in Yiddish. Rudensky dedicated the autobiography to his friend and savior Charles Ward who helped him steer away from a life of crime.

(Continued on next page.)

Right: Photograph of Max M. Friedman, inmate #12560. Record Group 129, Records of the Bureau of Prisons, 1870-2009, Inmate case files 1895-1957, Inmate file of Max M. Friedman. National Archives Identifier 117701451.



Left: Photograph of Morris Rudensky, inmate #20321. Record Group 129, Records of the Bureau of Prisons, 1870-2009, Inmate case files 1895-1957, Inmate file of Morris Rudensky. National Archives Identifier 139685383.

UNITED STATES PENITENTIARY

LEAVENWORTH, KANSAS

20321

RECORD OF Morris Rudensky No. 20321
 Alias Joseph M. Freidman, Joe Burns, Jew Red. Color White
 Crime Ass. & Robbing Mail Custodians. Military or Civil Civil
 Sentence 25 years, months, days.
 Fine Cost
 Received at Penitentiary Dec. 9, 1923. From S.D. Ills. Springfield.
 Date of sentence Dec. 8, 1923. Sentence begins Dec. 9, 1923.
 Maximum term ends Dec. 8, 1948 Minimum term ends Sept. 21, 1940
 Good time allowed 3000 days. Occupation, Machinist-Plumber Age, 27 years
 Eligible to parole April 8, 1932 Wanted by Illinois State Penitentiary

As ^{Max M. Friedman, #12560, USP. Leav. Kans. April 11, 1918, Chg. Rob. Sent. 3 Yrs.}
 As ^{Morris Rudensky, #2613, State Refm. Green Bay, Wisc. Chg. Burg. Sent. 4 Yrs.}

2nd Grade-----6/7/24 Assame man, Milwaukee, 1916, disord. conduct., no disp.
 1st " " 7/2/24 As Max Freeman, #16775, U.S.D.B. Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas,
 3rd Grade-----11/5/24. As manslaughter, 3 years, Mar. 27, 1919.
 2nd Grade-----2/2/25 As Joe Burns #A-#2138, State Ref., Pontiac, Ill., 6/18/19,
 3rd Grade-----2/6/25. burg. & entering, 1 to 20 years Final disp. Below:
 2nd Grade 5/2/25 As same man, 2 1/2 yrs. State Ref., Elmira, N.Y.-incomplete.
 1st Grade 6/1/25 As same man, Blackwells Island, N.Y., 3 mos.-6 mos.-9mos.
 2nd Grade-----5/30/27 As same man, State Pen., Waupum, Wis., 5 mos. ESCAPED & WANTED
 1st Grade -- 7-26-27 As same man, 60 days in Milwaukee Work House, incomplete.
 2nd grade -- 8-15-27 As same name, 90 days San Francisco, information incomplete
 1st Grade -- 9-13-27 Joe Burns, #4591, Ill. State Pen., Menard, Ill., burglary &
 2nd grade-12/27/27 entering, sentence indefinite, Oct..1, 1919, ESCAPED.
 1st Grade 1-26-28 Final disp. #A-2138, Trans. to Southern Illinois Pen., Menard, Illinois,
 Oct. 1, 1919. Escaped 1/24/28

DATE	VIOLATIONS	
1924	2nd grade 6-14-28 1st Grade 7-13-28	3rd, Grade 9-21, 28 2nd, Grade 2-22, 29
June 7	Violation of prison rules. Trading with another prisoner in violation of Sec. 43 Prison Regulations. In that Morris Rudensky 20321 did purchase a necklace with tobacco from 19520. This necklace was reported lost by 18621 to the mail clerk and was recognized by him by the description furnished by 18561 when 20321 presented it for mailing. (KERNEY) Isolation on r-stricted diet and reduced to 2nd Grade/ Released from isolation 6/9/24	
Nov. 5	Violation of prison rules. Escaping. This man escaped from the penitentiary concealed in a box that was supposed to contain print material and which box was passed out by foreman Savage under the pretense of having super-intended the packing. (Mr. Zerbst D.W.). Isolation on restricted diet, reduced to 3rd Grade and to forfeit all good time.	3000.
1925		
Feb. 6	Violation of prison rules. In a shake down this A.M. I found three files and instruments in slot above his door of cell. Evidence inclosed herewith. (DeVeare) Reduced to third grade.	
Feb. 23	Violation of prison rules. Cursing and threatening a guard. As I was making the rounds of the gallery this A.M. without any provocation what so ever for I never spoke to the man at all, he started to cursing me for every thing he could think of and making threats as to what he would do. It seems as though he was peeved over me reporting finding some files over his door. I said nothing to him to cause him to abuse and threaten me. Immediately after they were passed down stairs for breakfast Guard Allen on 4 gallery found a spoon in the lock box on the same side the tray men pass down on, bent as you find it. (DeVeau) Isolation on restricted diet and to be hand-cuffed to cell door during working hours. <i>Released from isolation 2/25/25</i>	

Above: Above: Record of Morris Rudensky. Record Group 129, Records of the Bureau of Prisons, 1870-2009, Inmate case files 1895-1957, Inmate file of Morris Rudensky. National Archives Identifier 139685383.

RECORD No. 20321

Rudensky

DATE	VIOLATIONS	Days in Solitary	Loss Days
✓ 1927			
May 30	Violation prison rules. This prisoner reported on sick call this morning wearing a sweater outside his blouse; thereby concealing his number; I asked him why the sweater outside his blouse, reply, what the hell you think dam cold. I ask for his number, reply, go fuck your-self you are supposed to be a gentleman; you are a prick; upon second request for number he gave it to me with the reply now stick it up your ass, you are fooling with a man now. Above conversation took place in presence of Guard Galvin and several hospital attendants. (Prince) Isolation on restricted diet and reduced to second grade. <i>Released from isolation 6-2-27</i>		
June 27	Violation prison rules. Disregarding rules. Talking the clerk 24298, into taking his second grade card out of door and scratching his number off of list; so he could get yard privileges. (Pennington) To remain in second grade an additional 30 days. This man went out on the yard when he was in 2nd grade.		
Aug 15	Violation prison rules. Fighting. This prisoner was fighting on yard, after I seperated him from 23532 he resisted and hit 23532 again. (Rossie) Isolation on restricted diet and reduced to 2nd grade.		
Nov. Dec. 1,	Violation of prison rules: Possession of contraband: In company with Mr. Schwantz Searched this mans locker and found the following articles, Dental tools, alcohol torch, silver, gold, files and articles too numerous to mention. (Krautz) No action. Investigation shows these articles werer furnished to this man by Dr. Mariness when the latter was acting prison physician for the purpose of making trinkets.		
Dec/27 30	Violation of prison rules. This man is guilty of threatening another prisoner in my presence. Said he would fix him. He says ahead and report him, when I told him he couldnt get by with such actions (Isolation) (Baker) Isolation on restricted diet and reduced to second grade. <i>Released fr. Isolation 12/30/27</i>		
1928 June 14	Violation of Prison Rules; Searching this cell #310, I found two cans used for stoves and one bottle of denatured alcohol This man is an occupant of this cell. (Krautz) Reduced to second grade & all purchasing priveleges suspended.		
Sept. 21,	Violation of prison rules; Having steak and eggs in his possession and calling me vulgar names. This man came into tailor shop with a lot of raw steak and also several eggs I ask where he got this he refused to tell me and said he would tell no one. He went up to the south end of the tailor shop with the stuff and came back in a few minutes and said to me that he took the stuff back. He then hit his fist down on the desk breaking a glass and began calling me vulgar manes. He told me he was doing life and didnt care what happened to him that if I reported this incident that he would get me for it He then called me every vulgar name that he could think of such as, I was a prick-eater. that I was a cock-sucker Grabbed hold of his privates and said I would even suck that if he give me a chance. (Keirns) Isolation on restricted diet and reduced to Third Grade. <i>Released from Isolation 9-25-28</i>		

June Virtual Programs for Educators and Students

Upcoming Summer Workshops: This summer, the National Archives and our Presidential Libraries will host several professional development opportunities for educators. Educators can participate in document-based workshops on finding and teaching with primary sources, and on specific historical topics. A list of various professional development workshops are available [online](#).

Young Learners Program - Meet Theodore Roosevelt on Thursday, July 22 at Noon EDT

Theodore Roosevelt is portrayed by **Joe Wiegand**, actor and historian. Theodore Roosevelt was a soldier and statesman, explorer and scientist, historian and author. Often known as “Teddy” or “TR,” he was the nation’s youngest President and personified a vigorous United States in the early 20th century. TR will explain how he doubled the number of national parks despite foes in Congress who declared, “Not one red cent for scenery!”

This **free program** is available via live stream on the National Archives [YouTube Channel](#).



The National Archives
Comes Alive!
Young Learners Program
Teddy Roosevelt
Thursday, July 22, noon ET
Featuring Joe Wiegand
Actor and Historian

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

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National Archives Facility Information Regarding COVID-19

(updated as of June 30, 2021)

The National Archives is committed to the health and safety of our visitors and staff. We are continuing to monitor the situation regarding COVID-19. National Archives staff will continue to serve the public remotely by responding to emailed requests for records and [History Hub](#) inquiries. Finally, all in-person public programs and events are suspended until further notice. We will continue to update the public as agency guidance becomes available. Follow the National Archives at Kansas City on [Facebook](#) or on Twitter [@KCArchives](#).



GENERAL INFORMATION: The National Archives is open Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Closed on weekends and Federal holidays. Hours are subject to change due to special programs and weather.

The National Archives is located at 400 West Pershing Road, Kansas City, Missouri, 64108, and is home to historical records dating from the 1820s to the 1990s created or received by Federal agencies in Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

For more information, call 816-268-8000, email kansascity.educate@nara.gov or visit www.archives.gov/kansas-city. Tweet us [@KCArchives](#). Follow us on Instagram at: [kansascity.archives](https://www.instagram.com/kansascity.archives). Find us on Facebook www.facebook.com/nationalarchiveskansascity.