

What Are You Working On, Judy Luis-Watson

Judy Luis-Watson: This is the volunteer program at Archives II, and while we've had it here for a few years, we really got— it really took off a couple, two and a half, years ago when I first got started. The program here is really part of a larger program with Archives I as well. And I work very closely with my colleague, Becky Martin, down there to make sure that we have a cohesive program, though both buildings have different needs and projects and all of that.

Judy Luis-Watson: These large tables are specifically for holdings maintenance projects. And let's talk here with, [Laughter], tell me your name.

Sara: I'm Sara, and I'm working on a rehousing project for World War I American Expeditionary Force records. So, that's what we have here. [Laughs] And what I'm doing is saving space, so I'm going through and looking for triplicates and quadruplicates and tenth copies of things, and taking them out so we keep two excellent copies of every single record that we have. And we've also unfolded and smoothed out and put in protective covers things that need to be in protective covers. And put everything in these nice big legal-sized, acid-free, wonderful boxes.

Judy Luis-Watson: So you also have another project that you help with here.

Sara: I do, that's right. I also help answer reference letters for the Reference department, so when people write in looking for information on Navy deck logs, your letter might come to me. [Laughs] And I'll go look in the deck logs so veterans, for instance, would like to know where their ship was at certain times or what was happening on a certain day on that ship, and I'll go look for that for them.

Judy Luis-Watson: We have just tons of projects. We sort of have, I think, 26 different projects going on right now. Some are group projects. The holdings maintenance one is a big, large project; we might have 35 people working on it at different times. There's another online project with Vietnam records, and we're redoing the captions, actually annotating the captions; they're on Footnote already. So that's a Still Pictures project with Ed McCarter. And we have about 25 different volunteers coming to do that. And so I think we have about 10 computers in the room. Sometimes they're all taken. Today we have a couple more. People will be in and out. We have a very flexible schedule, so you just never know who's going to be here.

Judy Luis-Watson: The National Archives Volunteer Association has been around for quite a few years. And I wanted to— I sort of thought about it because Linda was the Secretary this past year. Do you want to say something about NAVA?

Linda: It's a stimulating organization for the volunteers to join. It not only informs us more about what the agency is doing, but it also has a very active enrichment program for the volunteers themselves. Every month we go to a different site, usually in— it's always been in Washington since I've been— the year, two years, I've been involved with it. I've seen more of Washington, in terms of places to visit the tourists might not even know about, as a volunteer. And I've been in the area almost 40 years. [Laughs]