



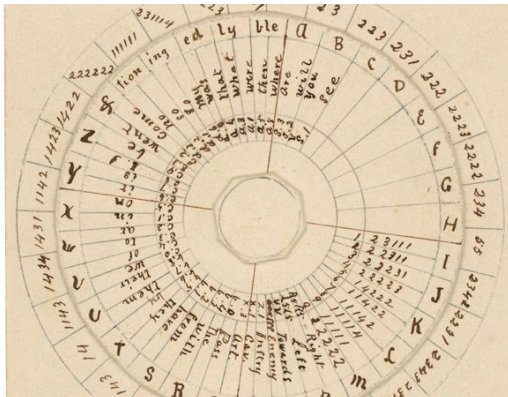
# CATALOG

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## Catalog Undercover

We are endlessly fascinated by stories of coded messages, espionage, and intelligence found in the historical records of the National Archives. Join us as we crack the code in this week's newsletter to bring you stories of spies, camouflage, and cryptography found in the National Archives Catalog!



L: Substitution Cipher Wheel, 1865. [National Archives Identifier 3854702](#)

R: WACS with the Army Air Forces. [National Archives Identifier 515997](#)

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## World War I Camouflage

When the United States entered World War I in 1917, a group of female art students in New York City joined the National League for Women's Service and trained to serve in the Camouflage Department of the United States Navy. Students studied the environment and tested camouflage suits, which were designed to keep the wearer safe from detection and blend in with the surrounding environment. Learn more on the [Unwritten Record blog](#).



The Women's Camouflage Reserve Corps of the National League for Women's Service, tested out camouflage suits at Van Cortlandt Park, New York, during WW1. [National Archives Identifier 45568270](#)

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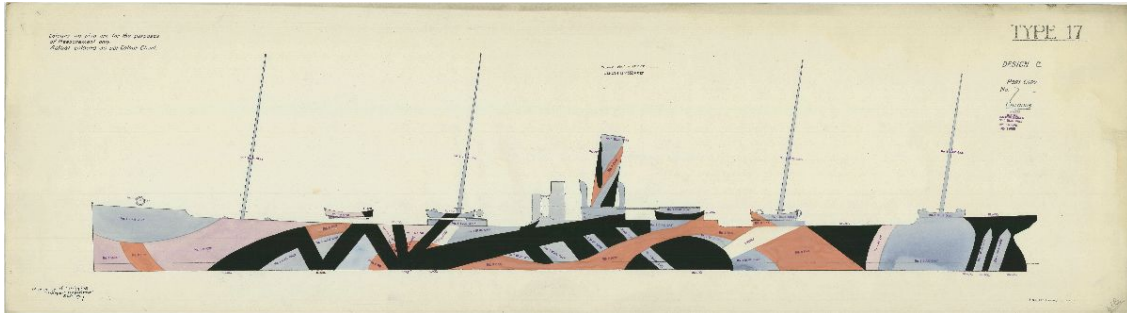


Women's Activities, Women's Reserve Camouflage, 10/11/1918. [National Archives Identifier 45568262](#)

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During WWI, allied forces painted naval ships in abstract patterns with bright colors to make it difficult for German U-boats to determine the speed and precise location of the ship. Beginning in March of 1918, the United States Navy painted a total of 1250 vessels with the unique design. Out of the 96 ships sunk by Germans after March 1918, only 18 of the ships were camouflaged. Learn more on the [Unwritten Record blog](#).



*British Camouflage, Type 17, Design C, Port.* [National Archives Identifier 56070827](#)

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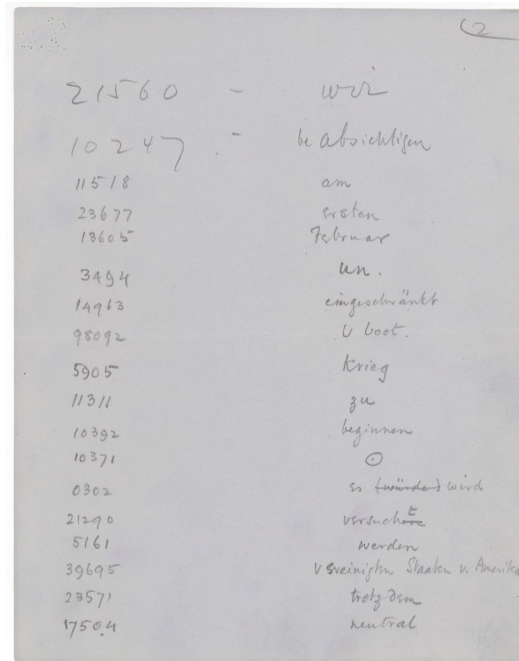
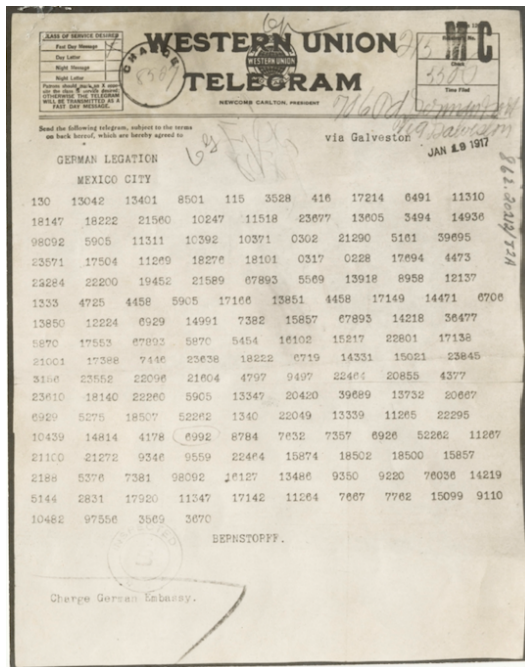
*Women's Activities, Women's Reserve Camouflage, 1918.* [National Archives Identifier 45568250](#)

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## **The Zimmermann Telegram**

In January 1917, British cryptographers deciphered a telegram from German Foreign Minister Arthur Zimmermann to the German Minister to Mexico, Heinrich von Eckhardt, offering United States territory to Mexico in return for joining the German cause. This

message helped draw the United States into the war and thus changed the course of history. Find [teaching activities and more with Educator Resources](#).



L: Zimmermann Telegram as Received by the German Minister to Mexico, 3/1/1917. [National Archives Identifier 302025](#)

R: Letter from Ambassador Walter Page to the Secretary of State, Original Decipher of the Zimmermann Telegram, 3/2/1917. [National Archives Identifier 302024](#)

## Code Talkers

During World Wars I and II, the U.S. military needed to encrypt communications from enemy intelligence. American Indians had their own languages and dialects that few outside their tribes understood; therefore, their languages were ideal encryption mechanisms. Over the course of both wars, the Army and the Marine Corps recruited hundreds of American Indians to become Code Talkers. Records at the National Archives document the origins of this program and the group's wartime contributions.

Find more [information and resources regarding Code Talkers](#) on our website. Read more on the Unwritten Record blog: [Navajo Code Talkers](#), and on History Hub: [The Unbreakable Choctaw Code](#).



*Photograph of Navajo Indian Code Talkers Preston Toledo and Frank Toledo, 7/7/1943.  
Photographer: Ashman. [National Archives Identifier 100378007](#)*

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## **The Pumpkin Papers**

These canisters contained film rolls known as the Pumpkin Papers, which were used in the House Committee on Un-American Activities investigation of Alger Hiss. The canisters and film stored inside were found inside a pumpkin on the farm of Whittaker Chambers in Maryland. [Learn more about the United States of America vs. Alger Hiss.](#)



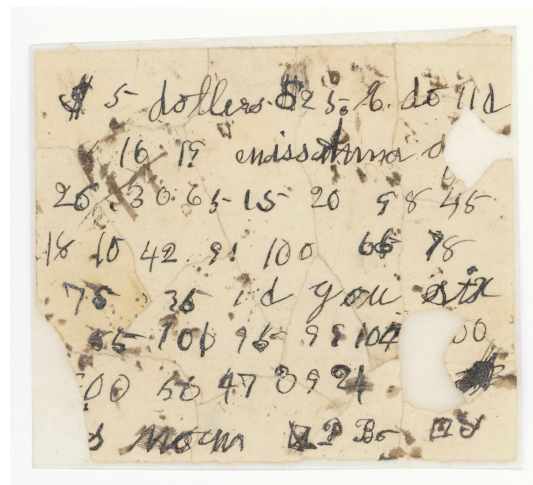
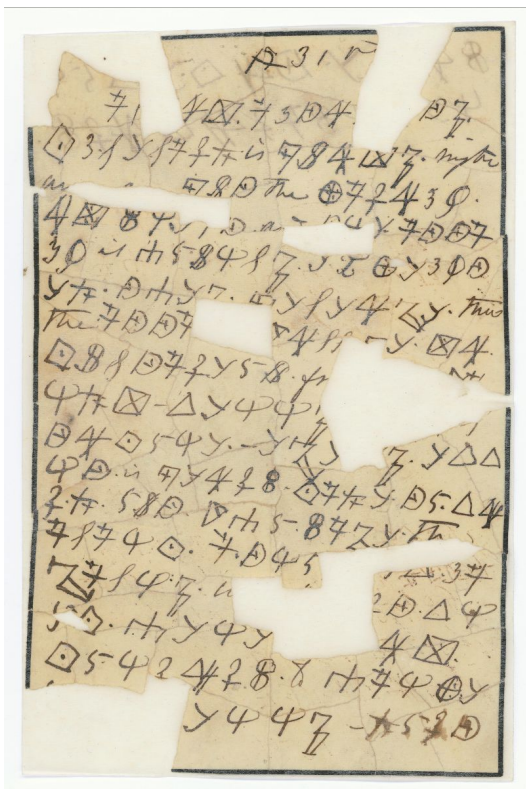
*Records Relating to the Investigation of Alger Hiss, 1948 - 1951, Pumpkin Papers Canisters, 1948.  
[National Archives Identifier 7797870](#)*

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## Rose Greenhow

Rose O'Neal Greenhow (1817-1864) was a popular socialite in Washington, DC, and a spy for the South during the Civil War. During the Civil War, Greenhow wrote ciphered messages to the Confederates and provided information about Union military plans. Confederate President Jefferson Davis credited her with helping the South win the First Battle of Bull Run. Greenhow provided a message about the Union troop's movements in time for Brigadier Generals Beauregard and Johnston to meet at Manassas, Virginia. A young woman working with Greenhow named Betty Duvall carried the message wrapped in a tiny black silk purse and wound up in a bun of her hair. Learn more about the [Seized Correspondence of Rose O'Neal Greenhow](#).



Letter Written in Cipher on Mourning Paper by Rose Greenhow. [National Archives Identifier 1634036](#)

## Start your research on History Hub

Have a question? [Find your answer on History Hub!](#)

For those looking to conduct research or learn more about cryptography, espionage and intelligence-related records, we encourage you to browse recent posts and questions on History Hub. Recent posts include:

- [When has the government used "Cannot Confirm or Deny"?](#)
- [Was my great-aunt a spy for the OSS during WWII?](#)
- [Was my uncle a CIA operative?](#)
- [Seeking help on locating sources of female codebreakers in WWII](#)
- [Seeking records for Jimmy King, Sr, a Navajo Code Talker during WWII](#)
- [Did Congressman Andrew May's loose lips ever sink ships during WWII?](#)
- [Did any Japanese-Americans infiltrate Japanese intelligence organizations?](#)
- [Seeking report of investigation by Office of Naval Intelligence](#)
- [Seeking papers in German spy Heinrich Albert's briefcase](#)
- [Seeking photographs of the Gimpel and Colepaugh espionage trial](#)
- [Seeking information about my aunt, a women code breaker during WWII](#)
- [Seeking personnel records for WWII War Department Cryptologist](#)
- [Seeking OSS records of Italian Capt Gino Ponzi](#)

History Hub is our support community for researchers, genealogists, history enthusiasts, and citizen archivists. Ask questions, share information, work together, and find help based on experience and interests. Researchers can ask—or answer—questions on [History Hub](#), or search to see if a question has been asked before.



*Battleship Disguised as an Island. [National Archives Identifier 6997114](#)*



You can help us unlock history! Take a look at our latest [Citizen Archivist missions](#), and jump in to participate! Our current missions include records about Tennessee Valley Authority Family Removal and Population Readjustment Case Files, Protection from Pirates, State Department Briefs Files, and more. Every contribution you make helps make these records easier to find in our Catalog.

New to the Citizen Archivist program? [Learn how to register and get started.](#)

Already have an account? [Login here.](#)

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### COVID-19 Update

The National Archives is committed to the health and safety of our visitors and staff. We are closely monitoring the situation regarding COVID-19, and we are working with public health officials and our counterpart agencies to monitor and respond to the evolving conditions and following CDC guidelines.

For more information, visit <https://www.archives.gov/coronavirus>

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Questions or comments? Email us at [catalog@nara.gov](mailto:catalog@nara.gov).





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