

**Old Weather Citizen Science Project  
Media Event**

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National Archives, Washington, DC

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Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere  
& NOAA Administrator  
*As Delivered*

- Thanks, Linda. Good morning, everyone! Thanks for joining us today.
- NOAA is excited to partner with the National Archives and Zooniverse to get the public involved in unlocking millions of weather, sea ice and other environmental observations.
- Those ancient observations will allow scientists to tackle the real world challenge of understanding the Arctic's climate record and its contribution to the Earth's climate.
- The Arctic plays a pivotal role in climate, often influencing what happens elsewhere.
- For example, earlier this month, research from NOAA's Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory in Seattle revealed a change in the summer Arctic wind pattern over the past six years that demonstrates a physical connection between reduced Arctic sea ice in the summer, loss of Greenland ice, and potentially, weather in North American and Europe.

- It's becoming more and more obvious that what happens in the Arctic doesn't stay in the Arctic.
- How do we understand these connections, present and past? How do we document the climate record? Modern climate science is built on recovered historical data.
- In earlier eras -- before satellites -- especially for remote places in the ocean, ship logs were the only source of weather data.
- The ship logs residing in the National Archives represent one of the largest and most underutilized collections of meteorological and marine environmental data in existence – a virtual treasure trove of information. Once converted into digital formats, new analyses of these data will provide new insights into the past state of the Earth's climate.
- For several months, NOAA and the National Archives have been working to mine these records -- photographing pages from U.S. Navy and Coast Guard ship logs from Arctic voyages dating back as far as 1850.
- In today's digital age, we are well aware of the power of crowd sourcing. And we know that good scientific design can take advantage of that power while protecting the integrity of rigorous analysis.
- So today, we ask volunteers to help by transcribing the weather data recorded in the logs so our scientists can analyze those data and gain unprecedented windows into the past.

- Volunteers gain much more than the knowledge they are uncovering valuable climate records. Volunteers will get to read about amazing adventures, disasters, and dramatic rescues as recorded by the sailors themselves. Interested in time travel? This may be as close as many of us are likely to get!
- This Arctic project is part of the larger Old Weather citizen science project, which started in 2010. Old Weather began with British Royal Navy ship logs from the World War I era. Climate scientists have developed new techniques for retrospective analyses of climate that require a smaller number of data inputs. These have remarkably increased the insight that can be squeezed from old weather observations.
- NOAA's Joint Institute for the Study of the Ocean and Atmosphere at the University of Washington is leading the NOAA side of the effort to convert ship log data from handwritten pages to digital formats. The digital data will become part of international climate databases.
- Dr. Kevin Wood, our project leader, is here today. His research focuses on improving the baseline climate record of the Arctic using data gleaned from ship log books and other historical sources. Before joining the NOAA joint institute at the University of Washington he sailed the world's oceans as a merchant marine officer for 25 years aboard both traditionally rigged sailing ships and icebreakers.
- Several months ago, Dr. Wood approached Mark Mollan from the National Archives about using old U.S. ship logs to build an Old Weather project focusing on the Arctic. Mark, who is also here today, and the Archives enthusiastically agreed to collaborate on this

project.

- Many thanks to our partners, including the millions of citizen scientists around the world, who are helping to contribute a piece of science and a piece of history so that we can build a more robust understanding of the Earth's climate. With their help, we will better be able to predict and adapt to a changing climate.