The Air Force Historical Research Agency.


During World War II, when the current U.S. Air Force consisted of the U.S. Army Air Force, the Air Force Historical Agency (AFHRA) began to archive material relevant to its history. Since 1949, AFHRA, now based at the Air University at Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama, has compiled more than 70 million pages dealing with United States Air Force history, making it one of the most comprehensive collections of U.S. Air Force and military aviation history in the world.

AFHRA’s Web site is well organized and easily navigable. The toolbar at the top of the homepage contains links to U.S. Air Force organizational records (major commands and air divisions), historical studies (classified and unclassified material, as well as PDFs of short operations schedules), documents containing personal papers and oral histories, historical timelines, and U.S. Air Force art and photographs. Researchers can search the AFHRA site for general information, photographs, videos, and RSS feeds, which makes for easier and more efficient searches of the Internet site.

A highlight of AFHRA’s online collection is the Captain Joseph J. Merhar, Jr. collection of aerial photographs, available for viewing on the site’s homepage. Also available to researchers are numerous and easily accessible links to U.S. Air Force museums, libraries, military sites, and relevant government sites. An important and useful feature of the site for researchers is a 260-page guide to Air Force literature from 1943 to 1983. AFHRA’s Web site also hosts U.S. history and program development courses for Air Force historians and archivists at Maxwell Air Force Base. It provides valuable information on sending materials to AFHRA’s archives and special collections, as well.

For those researchers (and Air Force and military history buffs) who cannot travel to Maxwell Air Force base in Alabama to view its collections in person, the AFHRA Web site is an essential and valuable research tool. Despite the fact that some material may be available only to Air Force personnel, the AFHRA site is a vital site for anyone interested in Air Force history. Highly recommended. —Larry Cooperman, University of Central Florida Libraries, Lawrence.Cooperman@ucf.edu


The Data Resource Center (DRC) for Child and Adolescent Health contains a wealth of national and state-level statistics on hundreds of child health indicators drawn from the National Survey of Children’s Health and the National Survey of Children with Special Health Care Needs. The DRC for Child and Adolescent Health is a project of the Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative, supported by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, and the Maternal and Child Health Bureau.

The newly designed site merges three Web sites into one robust tool. The primary audiences are government policymakers, family and state leaders, health professionals, researchers and students, and child health advocates. Users of the site can browse survey data by topic, survey name, survey year, and state or region. One can also search by keyword or topics and access interactive data tables and graphs, which the user can download. Also data is displayed within “State Snapshots,” “Data Trends,” and “U.S. Data Maps.”
The site design is simple, intuitive, and visually appealing. The main navigation of the site is accomplished through five drop-down menus. A nice feature on the homepage is rotating images that feature significant findings of the surveys available on the site. For example, some of the highlighted findings include, “Less than half of children age 0-5 years are read to everyday by a family member” and “Only 57% of youth age 12-17 years are getting adequate sleep every night.”

The DRC is well organized, but the immense volume of information may overwhelm some users. To assist the user, one of the main drop-down menus is titled “Get Help,” and this section provides easy-to-use instructions, as well as video tutorials on how to navigate the site and how to search the data. In addition, if users need more assistance, they can e-mail the DRC staff with questions and request enhanced analytical data sets based on the surveys’ interview data files. The content is up-to-date, and the site has many social media features that allow users to interact with DRC staff members and with each other as a user community.

In sum, the DRC site is extremely thorough and user friendly. It is highly recommended for anyone interested in obtaining survey information about children’s health on the state or national level.—Colleen Lougen, SUNY New Paltz, lougenc@zmail.newpaltz.edu


This Web site, a splendid companion to the Sophia Smith Collection at Smith College Libraries, offers a peek into the rich women’s history materials and programs in the Smith College archives. In existence since 1942, the Sophia Smith Collection preserves artifacts documenting the activities and experiences of women from the American colonial period to the present. The collection includes visual as well as textual materials, particularly in subjects such as reproductive rights, the American suffrage movement, women in the professions, and contemporary women’s rights struggles, including issues such as race, class, and sexual orientation.

The site provides clear instructions and collections information for researchers planning a visit, links to helpful advice on archives use for novice researchers, and, most notably, access to plenty of digitized material: photos, documents, online exhibits, even a book-length work commemorating the 50th anniversary of the collection. Scholars whose work includes use of archival materials are featured in the “News & Highlights” section, as are projects by undergraduate scholars and interns. Even someone unfamiliar with or uninterested in 19th- and 20th-century women’s history would be illuminated and intrigued by the content of the Web site.

Some of the highlights of the site include online exhibits on topics such “The Power of Women’s Voices,” “Unconquered by Flames: The Literary Lights of Yaddo,” and a variety of exhibits on women activists.

The Sophia Smith Collection Web site is a wonderful resource for historians and scholars from beginner to expert and with interests ranging from casual to professional. Although a main purpose of the site is to facilitate and promote onsite use of the collection, one could certainly use it to teach young historians about primary documents and historical events, and undergraduate students would also find the materials presented here useful for research projects.—Lia Vella, Colorado School of Mines, lvella@mines.edu

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