

150TH ANNIVERSARY EXHIBIT

---

# KEEPING AMERICA INFORMED

THE U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

---

150 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE NATION

150  
YEARS  
1861-2011

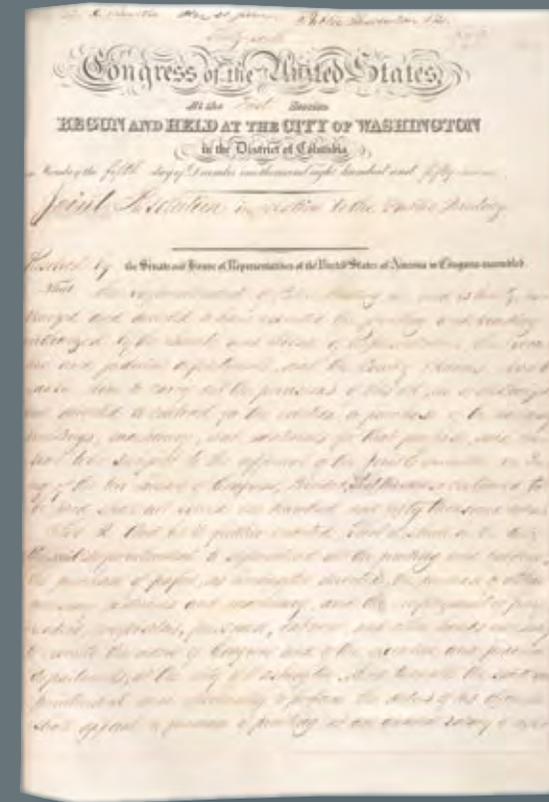
## 150 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE NATION

The U.S. Government Printing Office has been part of American life for 150 years, producing documents from the humble to the historic. This exhibit for the 150th anniversary year examines the role GPO plays in the work of the Government and the life of everyday citizens.

The exhibit uses images and examples of GPO's remarkable output to describe **WHAT WE DO** (the nature and variety of GPO's work for Congress, the White House, Federal agencies, and the courts), **WHO WE ARE** (the skilled and dedicated employees who do the work), **HOW WE DO IT** (the ongoing interaction of technology and skill that makes information available in print and online), and the ways in which we are still keeping America informed through our online service FDsys, the Federal Depository Library Program, and document sales.

The exhibit features books and documents on loan from the collections of Federal Depository Libraries nationwide, chosen to tell particular aspects of GPO's story, as well as other objects and photographs from GPO's collection.

► [Click here to view the exhibit video on YouTube.](#)



On June 23, 1860 President James Buchanan signed Congressional Joint Resolution 25 into law, directing that the Superintendent of Public Printing obtain “suitable buildings, equipment, and materials” for a printing office, which was to open March 4, 1861—the day Buchanan’s successor, Abraham Lincoln, was inaugurated.

Click each year on the timeline for a larger version.

1861  
Lincoln's Inauguration...  
Civil War...  
Lincoln Assassinated...  
Reconstruction

1875  
Industrialization...  
Inventions...  
The Gilded Age...  
Electricity

1900  
A New Century...  
Automobiles...  
The Progressive Era...  
World War I

1925  
Roaring 20s...  
Great Depression...  
New Deal...  
World War II

1950  
The Cold War...  
The Space Race...  
Civil Rights...  
Viet Nam

1975  
Watergate...  
Unrest...  
Computers...  
End of the Cold War

2000  
Digital Revolution...  
9/11

GPO was successful at ending waste and corrupt practices, saving the taxpayer \$205,000 in its first year. The Office grew steadily in size, output, and reputation, and in 1873 began its daily production of the *Congressional Record*.

GPO continued to grow between 1875 and 1900, with increasing volumes of Executive agency printing. In 1895 Congress added new responsibility for disseminating information to the public to GPO's existing printing tasks.

GPO began the new century in a spacious new building, and revolutionized its processes with the introduction of machine typesetting. Now the largest print shop in the world, GPO met the demands of World War I and set the pace for growth that continued for nearly 50 more years.

GPO entered the tumultuous decades of the 20s, 30s, and 40s printing and distributing more documents than ever before, and continued that growth through World War II. The Office hummed around the clock on three shifts, and by the end of the 30s three new buildings brought the total effective floorspace to 31 1/2 acres, with its own hospital, cafeteria, sports teams, musical groups, bowling alley, and credit union.

The 50s and 60s brought GPO's last great industrial expansion, and the rise of offset printing, and as a dramatic increase in procurement of printing from commercial printers. The number of GPO employees reached a peak in the 1970s at nearly 8,000. The early 60s saw the introduction of computer technology that would later dominate GPO's operations and change the face of Government information.

While computers became more common and printing technology evolved, the era of hot metal typesetting at GPO ended in the 1980s. Substantial gains for the equality of female and minority workers were won in major court cases involving GPO in the 80s. Digital formats became a common dissemination method beginning in the 80s, and the *GPO Access Act* in 1993 created GPO's first online information service for the public in 1994.

Today, GPO offers an expanding array of Government information in digital and conventional print formats. The e-passport combines both digital and print features providing secure identity documentation. GPO introduced the Federal Digital System (FDsys) in 2009, equipped with state-of-the-art technologies, and began the digitization of historic print documents.

## GPO AND THE NATION

For 150 years the Government Printing Office has been part of American life, printing and providing access to documents related to every historic event and significant action of the Federal Government since the Civil War.

## THIS IS GPO

On the same March morning in 1861 when Abraham Lincoln became the 16th President, Congress' experiment in keeping America informed came formally into being: The Government Printing Office began work, with 350 employees, at the corner of North Capitol St. and H St. NW. From that beginning to today, GPO has documented every significant event in our National life, and put documents into the homes, offices, mailboxes, and hands of nearly all Americans.

Congress created GPO to stop the waste and corruption that had plagued its contracting for printing since the beginning of the Government. A large printing establishment was bought from Cornelius Wendell, on the same site we occupy today. The part of Washington where GPO has been for 150 years was open farm land in 1831 and still sparsely developed in 1861.

Click photos to view larger versions.



Three views looking from the Capitol toward GPO: (top) the area in 1831; (bottom) from the roof of the Senate in 1861 (GPO is visible in the middle distance just behind the flagstaff); and (background) today.

## WHAT WE DO

### What GPO Produces—*Documents of American Life*

By statute, GPO is responsible for the printing of all three branches of the Federal Government. We have selected a cross section of work, spread over the whole history of the Office, to provide a sense of the variety and significance of GPO's products.

### Congress—*Creating the Legislative Record*

Congress relies on GPO for documents and information that facilitate its daily work, and create a record for the people of the Nation.

#### The Congressional Record

Congress' daily paper has been produced by GPO since 1873, a "substantially verbatim" account of activity on the floor of both chambers. *The Record* was invented at GPO, and has remained a pillar of our work ever since. It is now produced in printed and digital form, every day that Congress is in session.

- ▶ [Click here to go to the online Congressional Record.](#)
- ▶ [Click here to go to the historic issues of the Congressional Record from the Law Library of Congress.](#)



### Work for Congress—*Whatever it Takes to Get the Job Done*

Congress relies on GPO to produce material rapidly, accurately, and often at very short notice. Thousands of bills, amendments, resolutions, reports, and other documents are ordered, set up, printed, and made available online during every session. Finished documents are often available only a few hours after they are ordered from Capitol Hill.

#### Journal of the Senate, 40th Congress 2nd session, 1868

(United States Senate Library)

Under Article 1 section 5 of the Constitution, "Each house shall keep a Journal of its Proceedings, and from time to time shall publish the same." This constitutional mandate is the foundation on which Americans' access to Government information is based. The journals themselves record the parliamentary essentials of the Senate and House proceedings. This volume records the sessions of the Senate in the impeachment trial of President Andrew Johnson, presided over by Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase.

- ▶ [Click here to go to the online Senate Journal.](#)
- ▶ [Click here to go to the online Senate Journal for the 1st through the 43 Congresses.](#)





### The Volstead Act (National Prohibition Act of 1919), H.R. 6810

(United States Senate Library)

Congressional bills are printed at GPO and often pass through many revisions, amendments, and consolidations before becoming law or remaining unpassed. The Volstead Act was the enabling legislation for the 18th amendment to the Constitution, which prohibited the production, sale, and transport of intoxicating liquors.

### The Congressional Serial Set

(Office of Congressional Publishing Services, GPO, and a private collection)

The Congressional Serial Set is the name given to the compilation, prepared at GPO, of all numbered reports and documents of the Senate and House. The resulting volumes are assigned a sequential serial number. The historian Dee Brown has said that the Serial Set, “contains almost everything about the American experience... our wars, our peacetime works, our explorations and inventions... .”

Among the treasures of the Serial Set is a map from the U.S. Coast Survey Annual Report for 1854. The sketch of Anacapa Island in the Santa Barbara Channel was made by a young James A. Whistler, employed briefly by the Survey as an engraver after the unsuccessful end of his career at West Point. The sketch is his first published work, and he reportedly found the subject “dull” and so added the flocks of seagulls sailing overhead, a touch not appreciated by his superiors. After a similar infraction on a second assignment, he was dismissed as insubordinate.

### Thomas Jefferson. The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth (Jefferson’s Bible). GPO, 1904

(Wells Library, Indiana University–Bloomington)

Thomas Jefferson made a selection of passages from several translations of the Christian Bible that he considered “the most sublime and benevolent...” and that omitted elements he considered not rational or significant. The book, literally pieced together, was not published during his lifetime, but was found in the Smithsonian at the end of the 19th century. An edition was ordered from GPO in 1909, to be reproduced by a photographic process. Plans for the edition changed, and Congress found itself with several thousand copies of the book bound in red morocco. For 54 years (until the supply ran out) every new member of Congress received a copy.

- ▶ [Click here to go to a digital version of this document from the University of Virginia Electronic Text Center.](#)

Click photo to view a larger version.



### Work for the White House—*With All Due Ceremony*

GPO’s work for the President reflects both ceremonial and practical needs for printed documents. The case shows examples of work for the White House, and the video presents a short clip of President Obama being presented with his own copy of the first volume of his public papers, and the production of the official portraits of President Obama and Vice President Biden, and the production of the FY2012 Budget.

### Public Papers of the President, John F. Kennedy. GPO, 1961

(Jackson Distinct Library, Jackson, Michigan)

Presidential proclamations, executive orders, speeches, remarks at occasions, and other official communications of the Presidents are compiled annually by the Office of the Federal Register into Public Papers of the President. This is the single volume for President Kennedy, 1961.

- ▶ [Click here to go to a digital version of this document from the American Presidency Project of the University of California Santa Barbara.](#)

### Budget of the United States Government, FY 2012. GPO, 2011

Each year the President submits a budget to Congress for the coming year, and its release from GPO to the public and the news media is an major annual event.

- ▶ [Click here to go to a digital version of this document from GPO.](#)

### Fine printing for the White House

GPO does a variety of beautiful invitations, menus, and programs for State dinners, holidays, musical evenings, and the Inauguration.

### State of the Union Address, President George H. W. Bush. GPO, 1991

President Bush’s 1991 State of the Union address was produced in just a few hours on the afternoon of the address, January 29, 1991, a testament to the dedication and expertise of GPO’s skilled workforce. The President acknowledged the effort with this signed copy.



Click photo to view a larger version.

## In Time of War—GPO Serves

GPO started work only a few weeks before the Civil War, and has proudly served the Nation in wartime ever since. GPO's wartime production was immense. Declarations of war, technical manuals to support the armed forces, posters to inform and raise morale on the home front, ration coupons, maps, and a myriad of other products issued from GPO's presses. And when conflicts ended, GPO printed the treaties that ushered in peace and published the records of campaigns.

### The War of the Rebellion: A compilation of the official records of the Union and Confederate Armies Series 1 Volume 1. GPO, 1880

(Alden Library—Ohio University, Athens, Ohio)

The Official Records of the War of the Rebellion was probably the largest single job ever ordered from GPO, and its compilation by the War Department took 21 years. The 127 volumes encompass first-hand reports of key officers of both armies, as well as correspondence, orders, maps, and illustrations. No serious student of the Civil War can go without consulting it. Two complete editions were produced by GPO, the one seen here is the House Document version in document size (6" by 9"). The 9" by 12" departmental edition is held by many libraries as well.

► [Click here to go to a digital version of this document at Cornell University.](#)

### Address of President Wilson to Congress, asking for a declaration of war against Germany, April 2, 1917 Congressional Record volume 55, p. 102

President Woodrow Wilson addressed a joint session of Congress on April 2, 1919 seeking a declaration of war against Germany. Congress made the declaration and the United States entered "the war to end all war." Wilson's speech appeared the following morning in the *Congressional Record*.

### Installation, Care, And Operation Of 25 Kw Gasoline-Electric Generating Sets, Instruction Book No. 1. Engineering Dept., U.S. Army. GPO, 1916

(W. H. Doane Library, Denison University, Granville, Ohio)

The First World War began as a clash of 20th century technology and 19th-century tactics, with inevitably large casualties. With the entry of the U.S., however, the major armies, now numbering millions of men, had modernized and were making use of telephone, wireless communication, armored cars, tanks, and aircraft. The Army published a wide variety of manuals for the use and maintenance of machinery.

### Proof Sheets And Paper Samples For Ration Coupons GPO, 1943

Many everyday commodities including food, gasoline and oil, and rubber tires were rationed during World War II. GPO produced ration coupons and stamps such as these with highly specialized paper to prevent counterfeiting. This series features four military images on small stamps. The designs probably originated here at GPO.

### Hi Yank! The Army Show and About Face! Soldier Shows Blueprint Specials, U.S. Army GPO, 1944

(University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas)

Keeping soldiers' morale high was a big concern in World War II, which took a huge number of servicemen and women far from home for extended periods. Tapping talent found serving in the military, the Army produced these "kits" that gave complete plans, patterns, and instructions for sets, costumes, props, choreography, and staging, in addition to script and musical score for shows that were staged by the troops. Frank Loesser, José Limon, George S. Kaufman, and Al Hirschfeld, among many others, contributed to the "Blueprint Specials."

### This Is Ann, She's Dying To Meet You. War Department GPO, 1943

(Wells Library, Indiana University—Bloomington)

U.S. Army Capt. Ted Geisel—better known later as Dr. Seuss—illustrated this 36-page pamphlet for soldiers on avoiding malaria. Munro Leaf—later the author of children's books including Ferdinand the Bull—wrote the text.

► [Click here to go to a digital version of this document from the Systematic Entomology Laboratory. U.S. Department of Agriculture.](#)

### Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression. Office of the United States Chief Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality. GPO, 1946

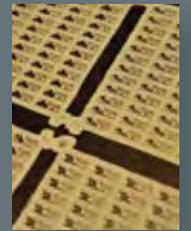
(Wyoming State Law Library, Cheyenne, Wyoming)

In the aftermath of World War II, 24 Nazi leaders were tried before an international military tribunal in Nuremberg. An additional 100 defendants from all sectors of German society were subsequently tried in a U.S. tribunal for war crimes and crimes against humanity. The eight volumes of the "Red Series" present documentary evidence and background from the later trials.

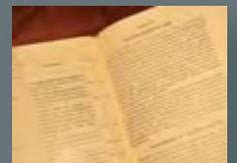
► [Click here to go to a digital version of this document from the Library of Congress.](#)



Click photo to view a larger version.



Click photo to view a larger version.





### World War II posters

(Northwestern University Libraries, Evanston, Illinois)

Among the most familiar of GPO's wartime products were the multitude of posters produced to educate, encourage, warn, and alert Americans about various wartime programs and concerns. The selection on display were digitized by the Northwestern University Libraries from their large collection.

- ▶ [Click here to view Northwestern University's complete collection.](#)

### Agency Publications—*Something for Everyone*

Federal agencies have used GPO for 150 years to fulfill their missions and educate the public. GPO produces publications for virtually every Federal agency, providing information on topics as diverse as the American people. From Census data to medical research, from Social Security information to National Park Handbooks, from treaties to tax forms, GPO, Federal agencies, and the courts collaborate to make important and useful publications available to everyone, in a variety of formats.

#### National Park Handbooks:

**Yellowstone (1999), Benjamin Franklin's Good House (1981)  
Custer Battlefield (1988), Grand Teton (1984)**

(Linus A. Sims Memorial Library, Southeastern Louisiana University)

Since 1949 the National Park Service has been publishing handbooks that have become a familiar part of American vacations.

- ▶ [Click here to go to a digital collection of historic National Park Handbooks from the National Park Service.](#)

#### U.S. Passports. GPO, 1920s–2010s

In the 1920s the League of Nations created an international standard for a booklet-style passport, establishing size, number of pages, and other aspects of the design. GPO began producing passport booklets at that time and the work has become one of our most important lines of work. Today's passports and other secure documents such as identification cards and badges, are produced with high-tech features to meet the requirements of the Department of State and many other agencies. The bright new internal design of today's passport booklet originated in GPO's Creative Services division.

#### Diseases of the Horse. Bureau of Animal Industry, U.S. Department of Agriculture. GPO, 1903 (Rev. Ed.) and Infant Care. Children's Bureau. GPO, 1914

(Edmon Low Library, Oklahoma State University Stillwater, Oklahoma, and W. H. Doane Library, Denison University, Granville, Ohio)

These two practical documents were GPO's top sellers of all time, both aimed at wide audiences. Diseases of the Horse looks back to a pre-automotive America in which veterinary care for large animals could be hard to obtain. Infant Care, first published in 1914, sold its 25 millionth copy in 1942, and remained in print, through many revisions, until the 1980s.

- ▶ [Click here to go to a digital version of Diseases of the Horse and Infant Care, from the Internet Archive.](#)

#### To Secure These Rights: The Report of the President's Committee on Civil Rights. GPO, 1947

(Thurgood Marshall Law Library, University of Maryland School of Law)

The President's Committee on Civil Rights was established by Executive Order 9808 on December 5, 1946, to strengthen and safeguard the rights of the American people. The Government's policy, announced in the same order, was that civil rights were guaranteed by the Constitution and essential to domestic tranquility, national security, the general welfare, and the continued existence of our free institutions. The final report of the committee was published in 1947 as this 178-page document.

President Truman used the report as the basis for a special civil rights message to Congress and for executive orders leading to the desegregation of the armed forces and an end to discrimination in the Civil Service system.

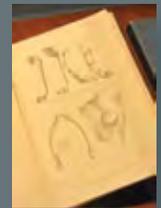
- ▶ [Click here to go to a digital version of this document from the Truman Library.](#)

#### Smoking and Health: Report of the Advisory Committee to the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service. GPO, [1964]

(Louisville Free Public Library, Louisville, Kentucky)

This landmark report was published in January, 1964 by the Advisory Committee on Smoking and Health, chaired by Surgeon General Luther Terry. While not the first declaration of the negative effects of smoking by a Government official, it is notable for being arguably the most famous, and certainly had widespread and enduring effects on the tobacco industry and on the worldwide perception of smoking.

- ▶ [Click here to go to a digital version of this document from the National Library of Medicine.](#)



Click photo to view a larger version.





### Report Of The President's Commission On The Assassination Of President Kennedy. GPO, 1964

#### Hearings Before The President's Commission On The Assassination Of President Kennedy. 26 vols. GPO, 1964

Alden Library, Ohio University

President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy, called the Warren Commission after its Chair, Chief Justice Earl Warren, November 29, 1963, to investigate the assassination of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy on November 22, 1963. President Johnson directed the Commission to evaluate matters relating to the assassination and the subsequent killing of the alleged assassin, and to report its findings and conclusions.

The Commission reviewed reports by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Secret Service, Department of State, and the Attorney General of Texas, and then requested additional information from federal agencies, Congressional committees, and State and local experts. The Commission held hearings and took the testimony of 552 witnesses. Its report to the President was issued on September 24, 1964.

One of the most eagerly anticipated Government publications in GPO history, the total sale of the report in the first few months topped 142,000 copies, especially notable because of the large number of commercial editions competing with GPO's run. The 26 volumes of the hearings initially sold 1,500 sets.

- ▶ [Click here to go to a digital version of this document from the National Archives.](#)

### The Federal Register—*Government Gazette*

In response to a mix-up that brought an invalid case before the Supreme Court, Congress created the *Federal Register* in 1936 to document presidential proclamations, executive orders, and agency regulations and rulemaking.

Like the *Congressional Record*, the *Federal Register* is a pillar of GPO's day-to-day work. Created as a means of officially publishing rules and regulations in a structured and orderly manner, the *Federal Register* remains a respected tool for openness and transparency in Government. It is published in partnership with the Office of the Federal Register every business day and in 2010 began appearing in online form along with the familiar printed gazette.

- ▶ [Click here to go to today's \*Federal Register\*.](#)

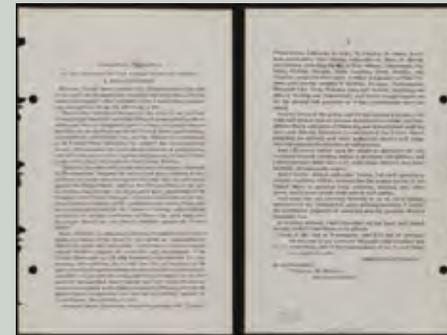
### Humble to Historic—*GPO Was There*

The number and variety of publications produced by GPO in 150 years is mind-boggling. From documents that record every significant action and historic national event, to books, pamphlets, forms, and sheets that have been in the hands of countless Americans who probably never considered where they came from.

Ever visited a national park? The handbook you got was printed by GPO. Applied for a Social Security card or Medicare benefits? GPO printed the form. Traveled abroad? The application for your passport and the passport booklet itself came from GPO's presses.

GPO's work has been in the hands, on the desks and shelves, and in the wallets of Americans since 1861. Income tax forms, census questionnaires, countless informational pamphlets and books, maps. GPO was there.

The multitude of humble documents displayed in the cases in this gallery show the range of GPO's reach. They stand alongside the very first history-making, history-altering document of GPO's official career, a single small document that freed an enslaved people.



### The Emancipation Proclamation

Abraham Lincoln drafted a proclamation emancipating slaves and discussed it with his cabinet in July, 1862. He renewed the discussion on September 22.

John Hope Franklin describes what happened: "The historic meeting of the cabinet was hardly over...before the printing and distribution of the preliminary Proclamation had begun. That afternoon

and evening the employees of the Government Printing Office worked late...The preliminary Proclamation had been long coming. But once the decision was made...there was no delay in presenting it to the world."

This copy bears proofreader's marks indicating slight revisions. The final Proclamation of January 3, 1863 bore those corrections.

Superintendent of Public Printing John Defrees said, "Only a few events stand out prominently on the page of the history of each century...the proposed proclamation of the President will be that one of this century."

The preliminary proclamation was issued as a general order of the War Department, and the copy on display was printed in that 6" by 9" format. It is on loan from the Rare Books and Special Collections Division of the Library of Congress.



- ▶ [Click here to go to a digital version of the Proclamation from the Library of Congress.](#)

Click photo to view a larger version.



## WHO WE ARE

### The GPO Workforce—*A Proud and Diverse Family*

The skilled and dedicated men and women of GPO's workforce have been the key to our success since we began business with 350 workers in 1861. In the 1970s 8,000 people worked here. Today about 2,200 work in Washington and in locations nationwide, the smallest number in 100 years, yet providing far more access than was dreamed possible in 1911.

In this section, you'll see historic photographs of various aspects of the life of GPO's people: Our apprenticeship programs, our unique relationship with organized labor, our many employee activities and organizations, our minority and women employees, and our long-serving employees. There are also photos by GPO photographer Glenn Fawcett of GPO's people today.

## HOW WE DO IT

### How the Job Gets Done—*From Hand-Set to Digital*

For much of GPO's history most print jobs have followed a similar path: Raw copy from Congress or an agency was received and set up in type, and estimates were prepared and approved; a trial or "proof" copy was run; proofreaders at GPO and the author(s) checked the proof and made corrections and adjustments. The type was then made up into page layouts and made ready for the press, usually by the production of printing plates. Sheets were then printed, cut, and bound according to specifications.

Beginning in the 1960s plates began to be made from photographic images derived from the capture of electronic keystrokes, and thirty years later plates began being made directly from digital files with no intermediary photographic negative.

In the late 1980s GPO began disseminating electronic publications derived from the same files.

### Composing

The many processes that transform a manuscript into printed pages, "not to vary with the writer's hand," are known as composing. GPO has used hand-set type, type set by amazing machines like the Linotype and Monotype, type set photographically, and type set by computers.

The shift to machine typesetting in the early 1900s was GPO's first great technology revolution, and paved the way for us to become the largest printer in the world. The shift to computerized typesetting 65 years later set the stage for GPO's role in the Digital Age.



Click photo to view a larger version.

One special Linotype, a Model 5 manufactured about 1910, served in World War I in a mobile printing brigade attached to Gen. John J. Pershing who commanded the American forces. It was requisitioned from a local newspaper in France and followed the general staff mounted in a truck.

After the war the machine was shipped to the U.S. and GPO, to join nearly 125 like it in the largest battery of such machines in the world. It served for nearly four more decades in the GPO Apprentice School before being retired to Harding Hall as a memorial to all who served.

### Proofreading

A vital adjunct of composing, proofreading ensures that the author's words are faithfully transcribed into type, "having been verified by proof."

Proofreading also assures that standards of usage and style are observed in the interest of economy in printing and consistency in the official publications of the Government.

### Press

Presswork is the heart of printing, the point at which words are impressed on paper, "fixed in time." GPO's presses have spanned the history of printing technology from iron hand presses differing little from Gutenberg's 1455 invention, through steam- and later electricity-driven presses for every class of work, to the sophisticated color digital presses of today

### Bookbinding

Bookbinding gathers printed leaves into useful, manageable packages, like books and pamphlets, that can be conveniently distributed, so that "words may fly abroad." GPO has produced everything from folded or stitched pamphlets to intricately produced books bound in leather and stamped in gold, with every kind of cloth and paper binding in between. Today only a few printing establishments in the U.S. have such capabilities under one roof.

The case presents a selection of well-worn handtools from GPO's bindery section, used for folding, scoring, embossing, stamping, and finishing cloth, leather and paper bindings.

Click photos to view larger versions.





## Partnership With Industry

Except for Congressional work, secure documents such as passports, and publications like the *Federal Register* and the President's budget, GPO produces virtually all work on contracts in partnership with the private sector printing industry. Our procurement staff handles about 75 percent of all work sent to GPO for production, amounting to over \$450 million annually.

This system is one of the Government's longest running and most successful partnerships with the private sector. More than 16,600 firms nationwide are registered to do business with GPO; the majority are small businesses averaging 20 workers per firm.

Contracts are awarded on a purely competitive basis. This partnership creates jobs across the nation and saves a significant amount of taxpayer money.

## Still Keeping America Informed— *Documents to the People*

GPO's fundamental mission has remained the same since 1861: Keeping Americans informed about their Government. The ways that mission is accomplished have changed radically, but GPO continues to meet the challenge.

GPO took responsibility for distributing information along with printing it in 1895. Through its dissemination programs, and more recently using its online sites, GPO has worked to make Government information available, accessible, and useable.

GPO's Depository Libraries bring Government information into every Congressional district in all 50 states. Its sales program makes popular documents available to everyone. And the Federal Digital System uses the power of the Internet to provide greater access than ever before.

## Federal Depository Library Program— *Reaching Across the Nation*

Congress designates Federal Depository Libraries in every state. They agree to receive Government publications from GPO and make them freely available, and to provide expert assistance in finding exactly the right information.

There are libraries of every type and size in the FDLP, from small local public libraries to large universities and law schools. They're backed up by a team of experienced GPO employees who find, acquire, catalog, and distribute publications in every format from Congress, the courts, and every Federal agency.

► [Click here to find out more about depository libraries.](#)

## GPO Online—*Into the Future*

When GPO opened in 1861, there were still hand-operated Hoe "Washington" presses (like the one on display) in service, delivering about 250 impressions on one side of a sheet of paper per hour. But already technology was changing the business of keeping America informed. The new steam-powered presses of 1861 gave way to faster and more sophisticated machines capable of exponentially faster output; hand typesetting was overtaken by machines; offset printing eventually replaced letterpress, further reducing time spent and costs to the taxpayer.

The same progression of technology that made GPO the largest printer in the world in the 20th century has continued to transform us into a multi-faceted 21st century publishing facility, providing a broad range of conventional and digital services to support the evolving information needs of the Government and the public, including state-of-the-art print/digital hybrid products like the e-passport and smart cards.

Beginning in the 1980s the products we deliver began to move beyond ink and paper to computer diskettes and CD-ROMs. Congress passed the Government Printing Office Electronic Information Access Enhancement Act (the GPO Access Act) in 1993, expanding GPO's mission to provide electronic access to Government information alongside printed documents. The following year we introduced GPO Access, which for more than 15 years was America's trusted source for Government information online.

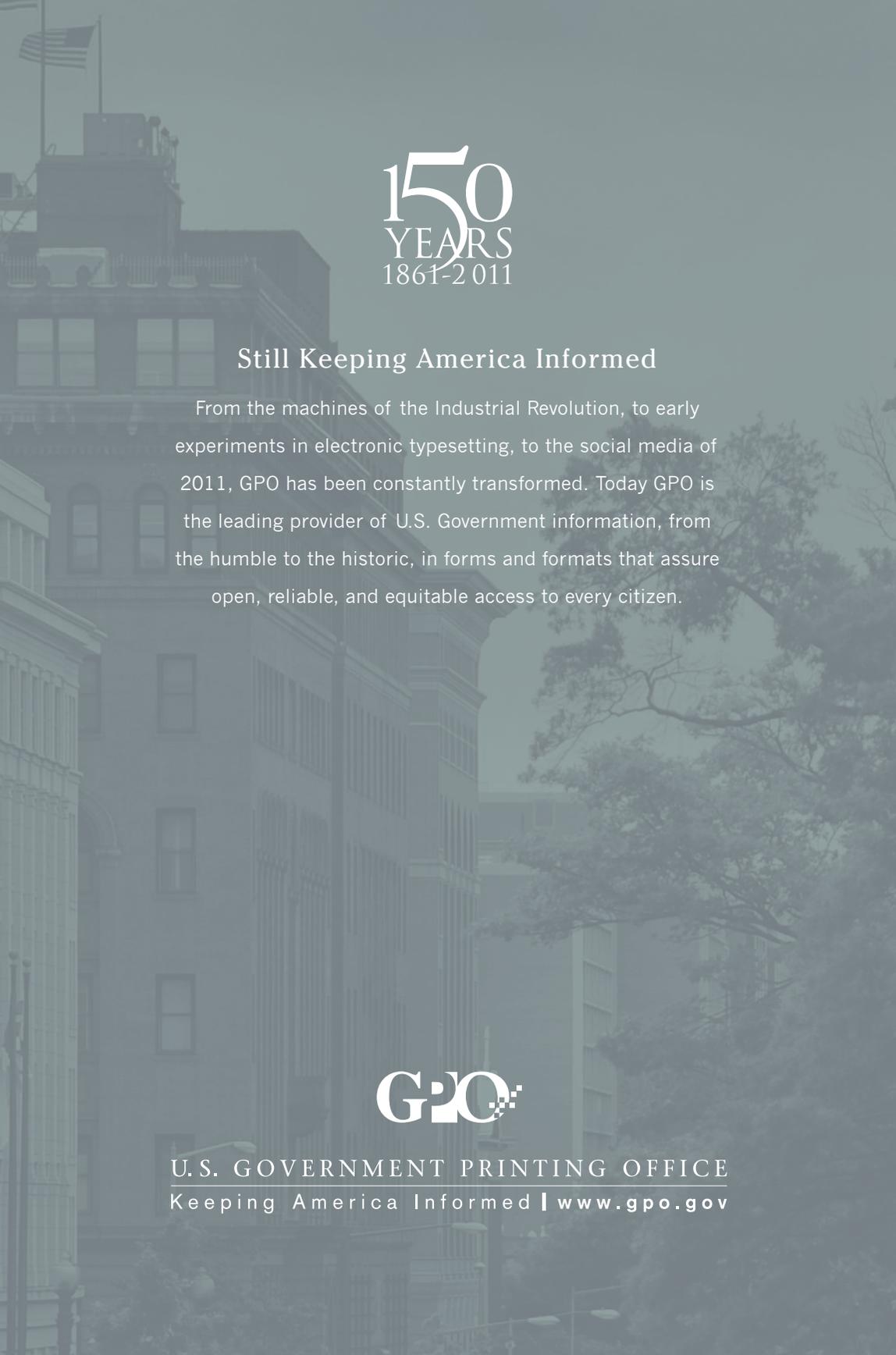
GPO provides the digital files for services like the Library of Congress' Thomas, and now offers access to a wider universe of information than ever before in the Federal Digital System (FDsys), introduced in 2009 with improved search capabilities and an initial collection of over 210,000 documents. GPO added e-book formats to its product offerings in 2010.

- [Click here to go to see FDsys for yourself.](#)
- [Visit GPO's online U.S. Government Bookstore.](#)



Technological change is part of the fabric of GPO's history. The tools we use have been constantly improving since 1861, and the adaptability of our workforce to these changes has been demonstrated time and again.





150  
YEARS  
1861-2011

## Still Keeping America Informed

From the machines of the Industrial Revolution, to early experiments in electronic typesetting, to the social media of 2011, GPO has been constantly transformed. Today GPO is the leading provider of U.S. Government information, from the humble to the historic, in forms and formats that assure open, reliable, and equitable access to every citizen.



U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE  
Keeping America Informed | [www.gpo.gov](http://www.gpo.gov)