

# Unlocking the Vault

## Effective County Records Retention and Management

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# What is the Plan?

Topics to be Covered

What is a Public Record?

Retention Classifications

Historical Records

Data or Digital Records

Disaster Preparedness

# What is a Public Record?

## Idaho Code 74-101

1

**“Public Record”**  
Any writing containing  
information relating to  
the conduct or  
administration of the  
public’s business

2

**“Writing”**  
Handwriting,  
typewriting, printing,  
photographing, including  
letters, all papers, maps,  
or other documents

3

**“Custodian”**  
The person or persons  
having personal custody  
and control of the public  
records

Basically - any document created in your county!

# Records Need to be Managed

- Management of records is a vital function and understanding the basic principles of records management is essential for every county official.
- Idaho law provides that any “writing” prepared or used in conduct of public business qualifies as a public record. It also recognizes that records vary tremendously in their utility and significance.
- For instance, ordinances, resolutions and minutes are important for the day-to-day operation of government and also are historically significant, and Idaho law provides that these records are not to be destroyed.

# Retention Classifications

Idaho Code 31-871

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**(a)**

## Law Enforcement Media Recording

a digital record created by a law enforcement agency - recording of visual or audible or both.

**varies - 200 days/  
60 days / 14 days**

**(b)**

## Permanent Records

proceedings of the governing body, ordinances, resolutions, budget, general ledger, title and land records, or records deemed as such by the BOCC.

**not less than 10 years**

**(c)**

## Semipermanent Records

claims, contracts, canceled checks, license applications, departmental reports, financial records, purchase orders, or records deemed as such by the BOCC.

**not less than 5 years**

**(d)**

## Temporary Records

correspondence, building applications, and plans for noncommercial and nongovernment projects after final approval, cash receipts subject to audit, or records deemed as such by the BOCC.  
**not less than 2 years**

# Retention Classifications

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**Idaho Court  
Administrative Rules  
37 and 38  
Standards for Preservation  
of Court Records**

Records may be preserved either in the original form or as other archival media, including digital entry in the court's case management system.

**Original Wills Shall Never  
Be Destroyed**

**Election Records  
Idaho Code 31-217**

- (1) retain for 5 years
- (2) retain for 2 years
- (2) retain 1 year
- (4) 60 days for “other election supplies”

**Jury Records  
Idaho Code 2-214**

All records and papers maintained by the jury commissioner or the clerk in connection with selection and service of jurors.

4 years or longer

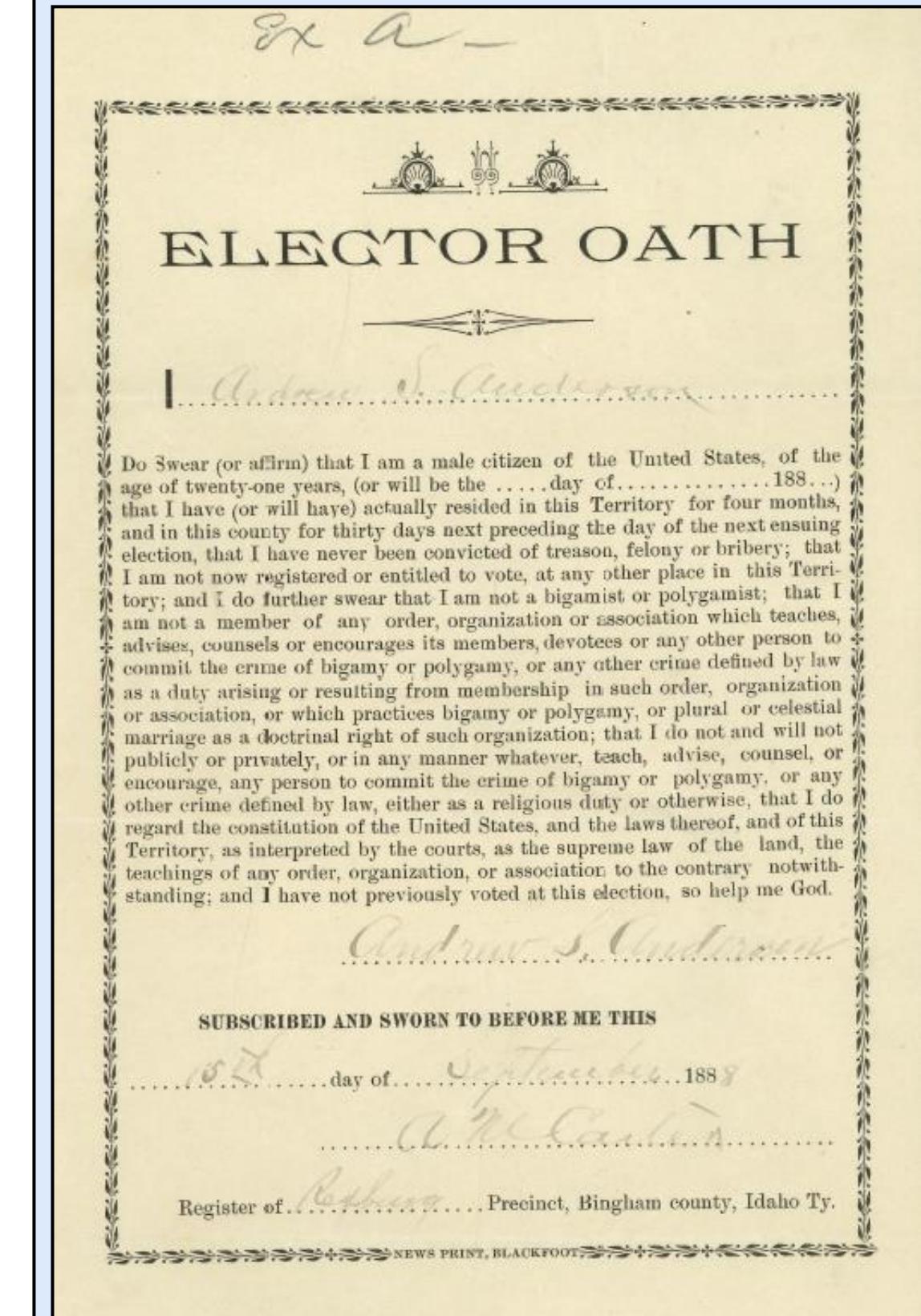
**Idaho Code 31-871A  
Retention of County  
Records Using  
Photographic and  
Digital Media**

May reproduce and retain documents in this form. Digitizing must be scanned at 200 dots per inch.

Reproduction of such document when certified by the county official is deemed a certified copy of the original

# Additional Consideration on Records

**Fiscal  
Administrative  
Legal  
Long-term value**





- Mark storage boxes with contents and destruction dates
- Have departments regularly monitor their records



## DESTRUCTION OF RECORDS

Idaho Code 31-871(2)(g)

Records may be destroyed only by resolution of the board of county commissioners after regular audit and upon the advice of the prosecuting attorney, except that law enforcement media recordings may be destroyed without a resolution.

A resolution ordering destruction must list, in detail, records to be destroyed. Such disposition shall be under the direction and supervision of the elected official or department head responsible for such records.

Non-confidential records may be disposed by landfill.

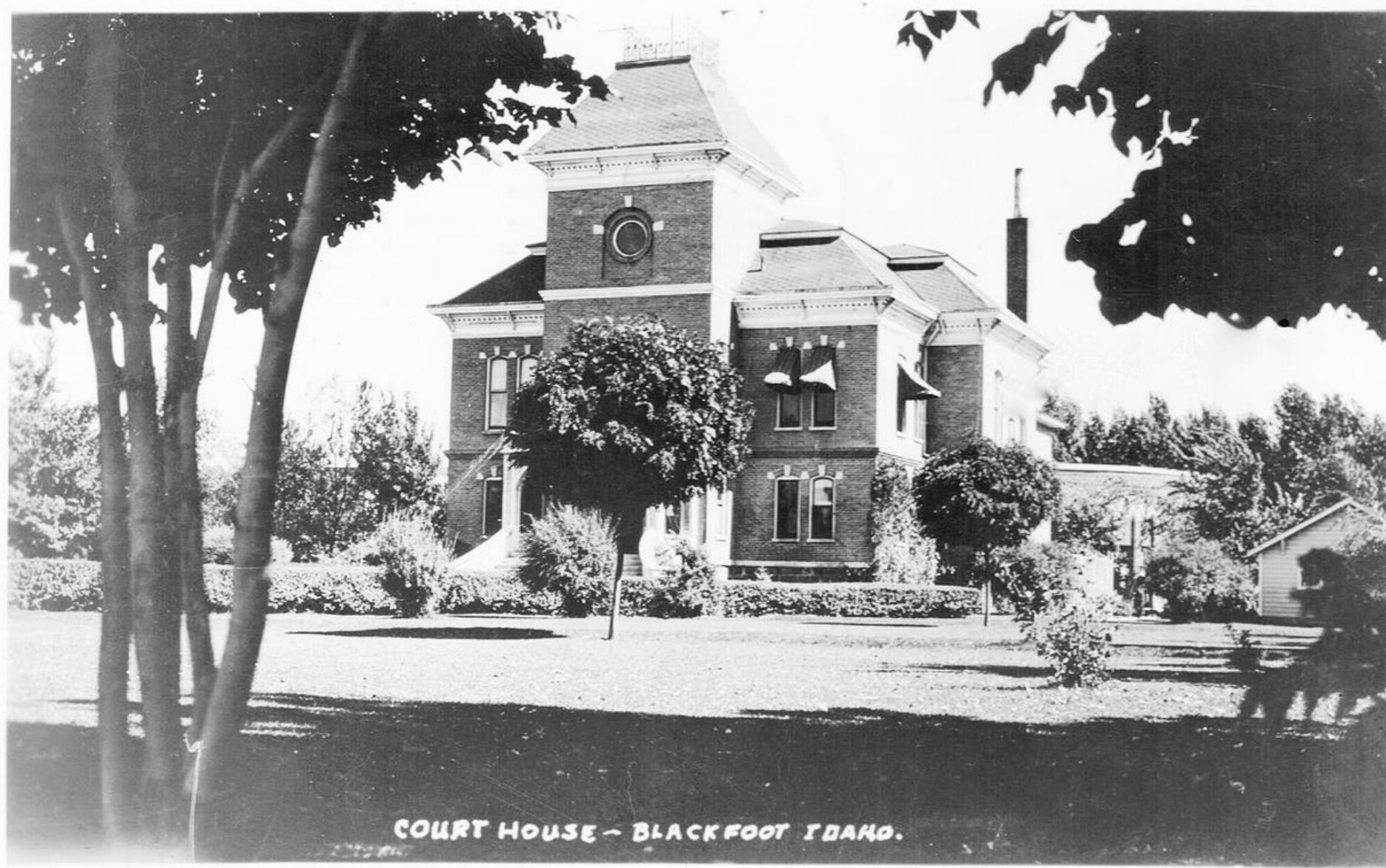
Confidential records must be shredded or burned.

Archival records can be transferred to the State Archives.



# Historical Records





Built in 1885



Built in 1987

# Records That Tell the Story of Your County

1

## Commissioner Minutes

*1885 - authorized the Commissioners to build an outhouse behind the county courthouse and buy spittoons for the rooms.*

2

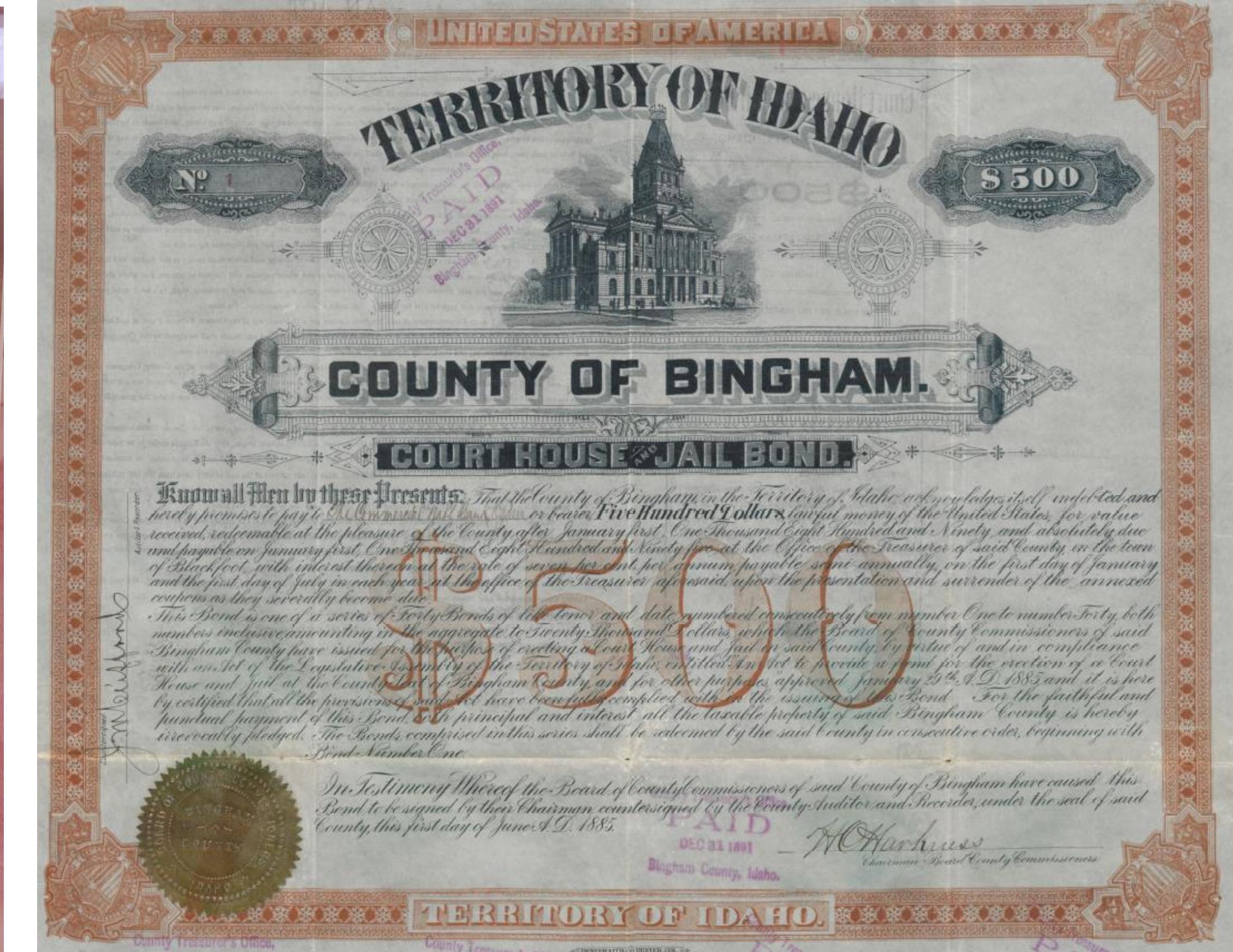
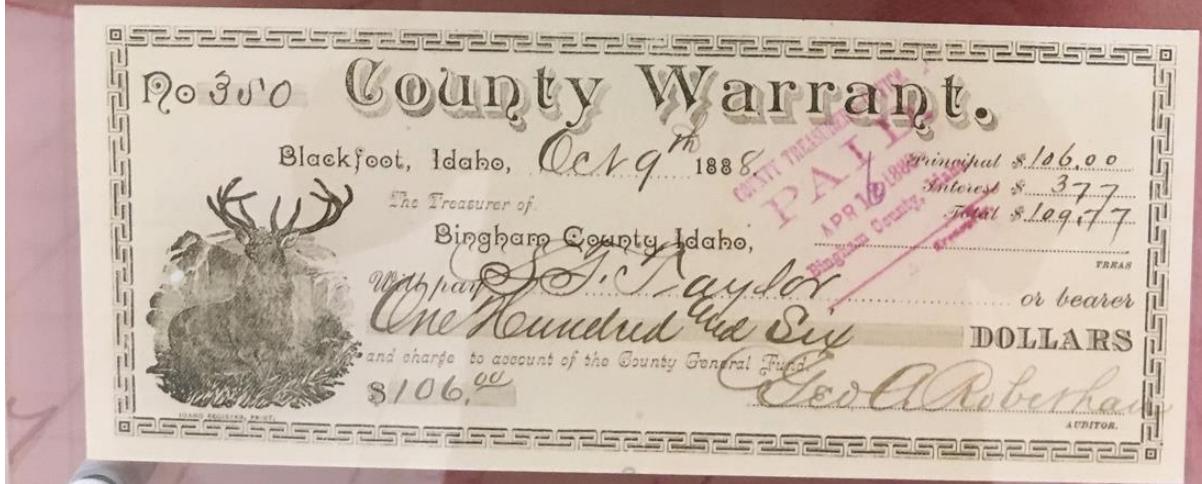
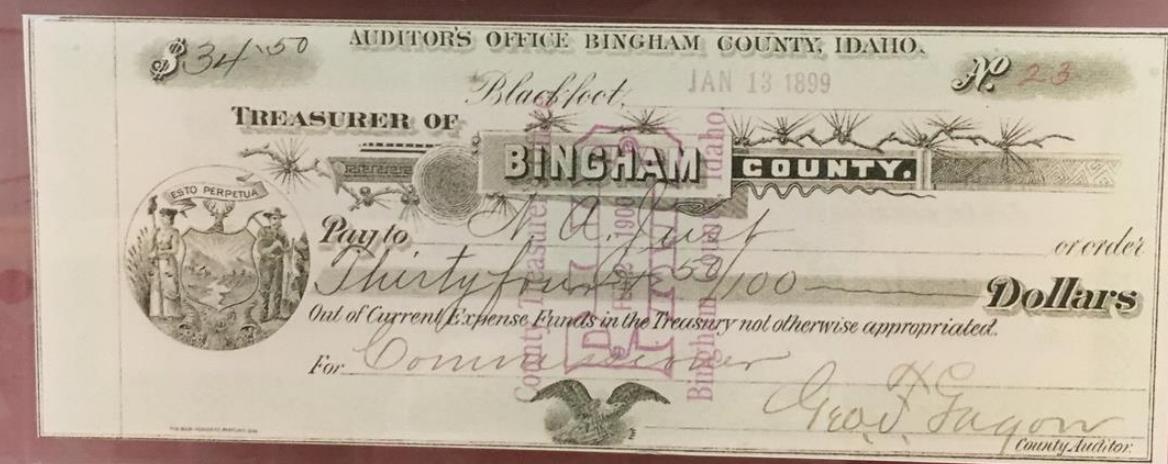
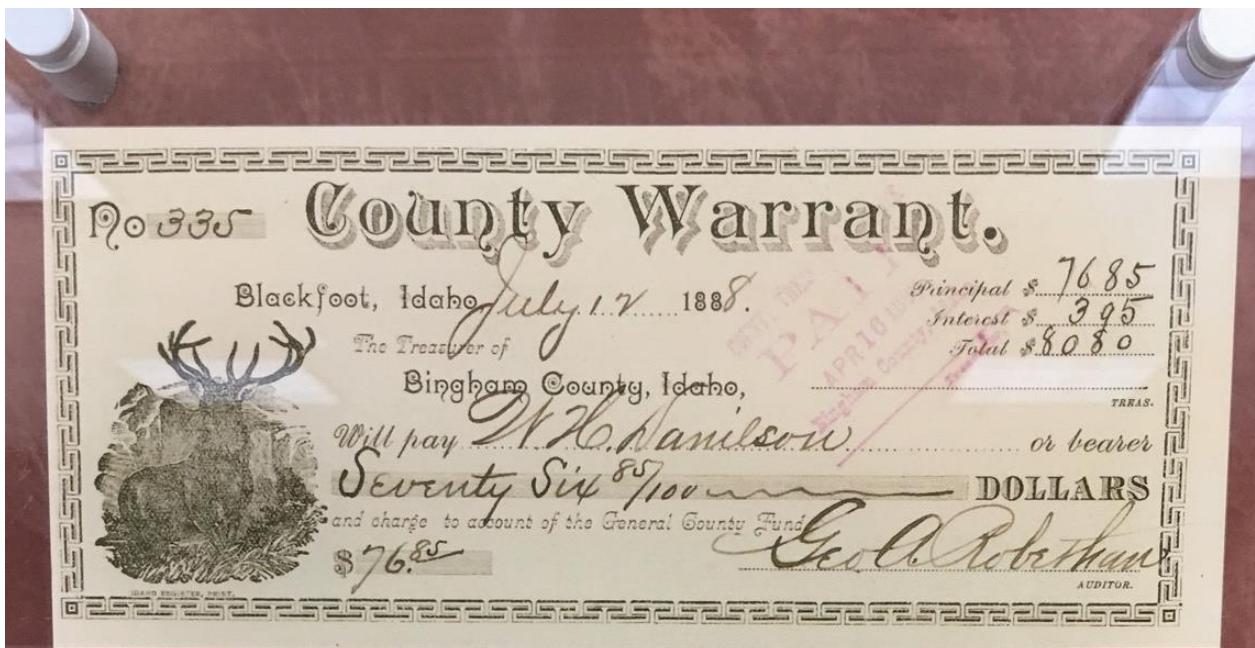
## Land Surveys, Road Books, Plat Maps, Deed Books, Mining Books, Brand Books, School Record Books

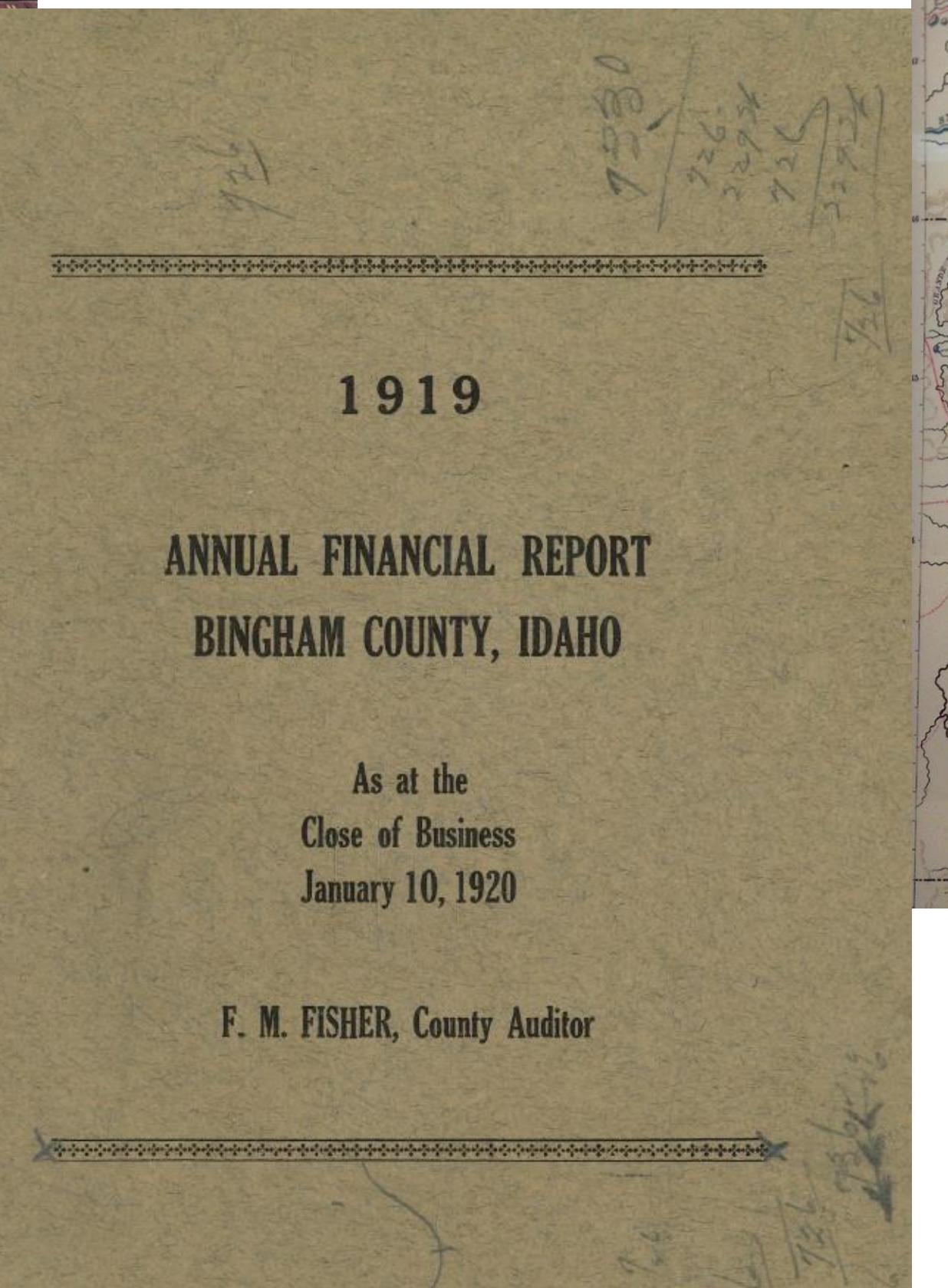
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## Financial Records, Audits, Probate Records, Marriage License Records

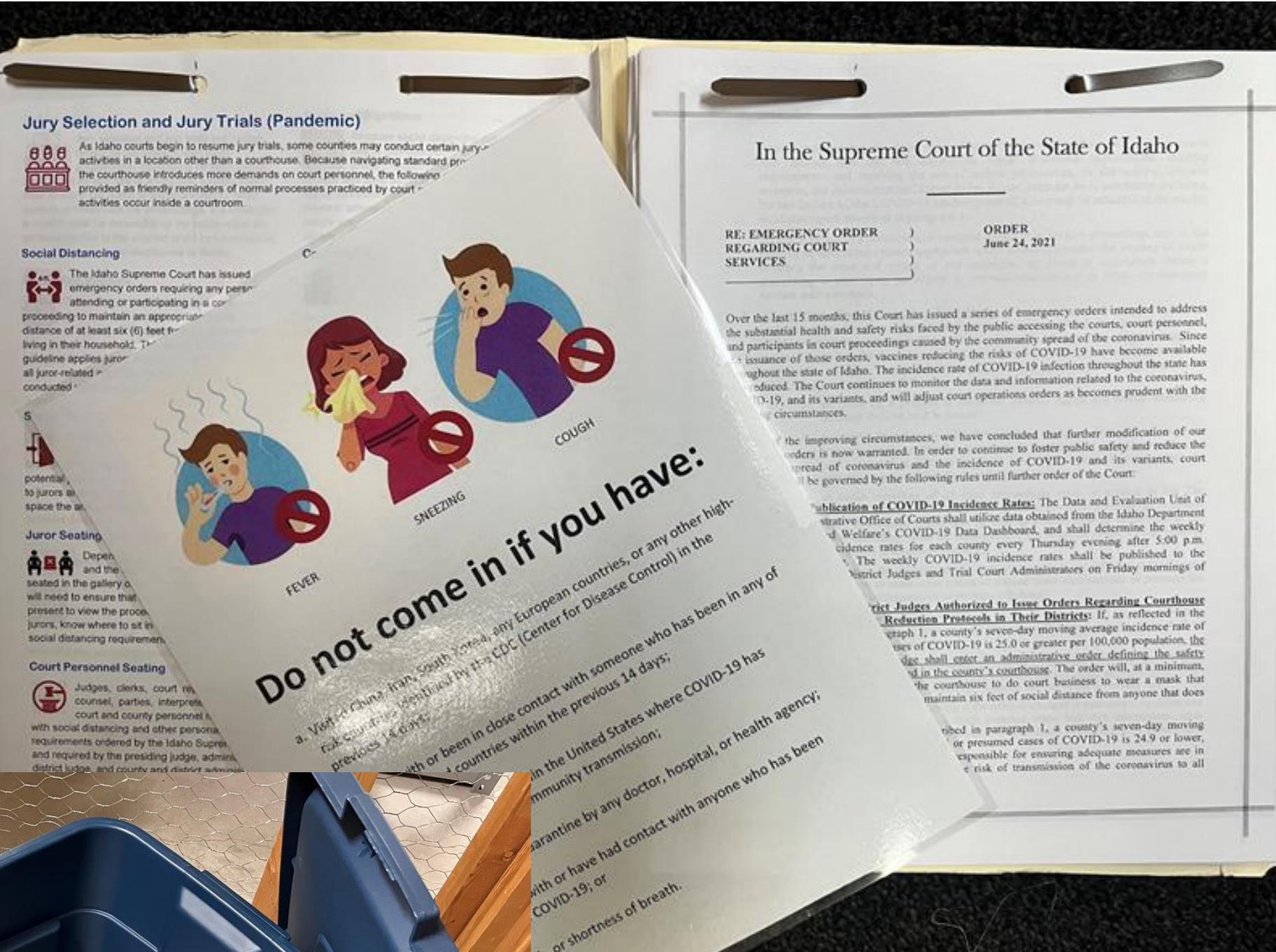
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Documents saved because someone thought they might be of interest in the future.

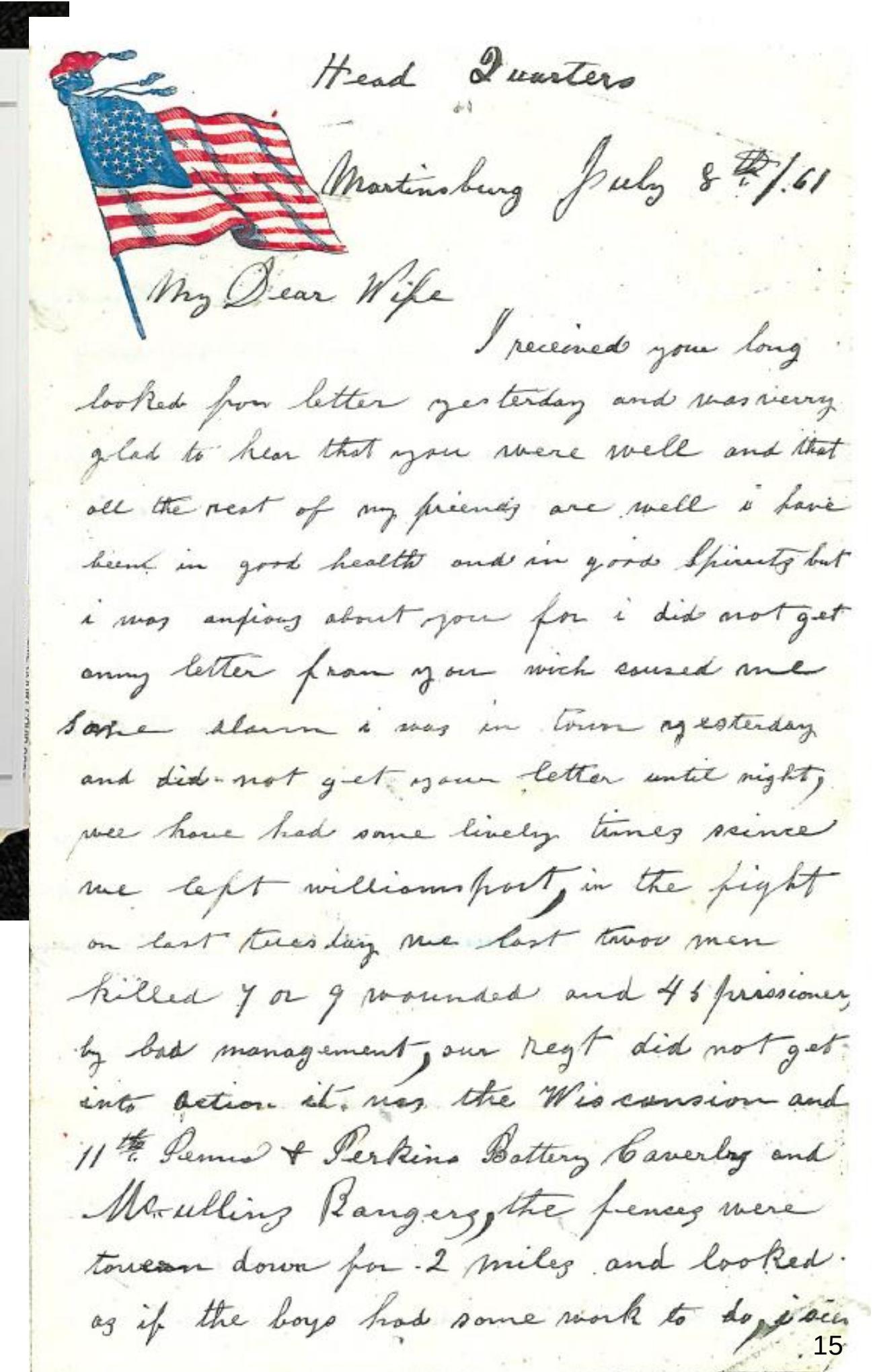


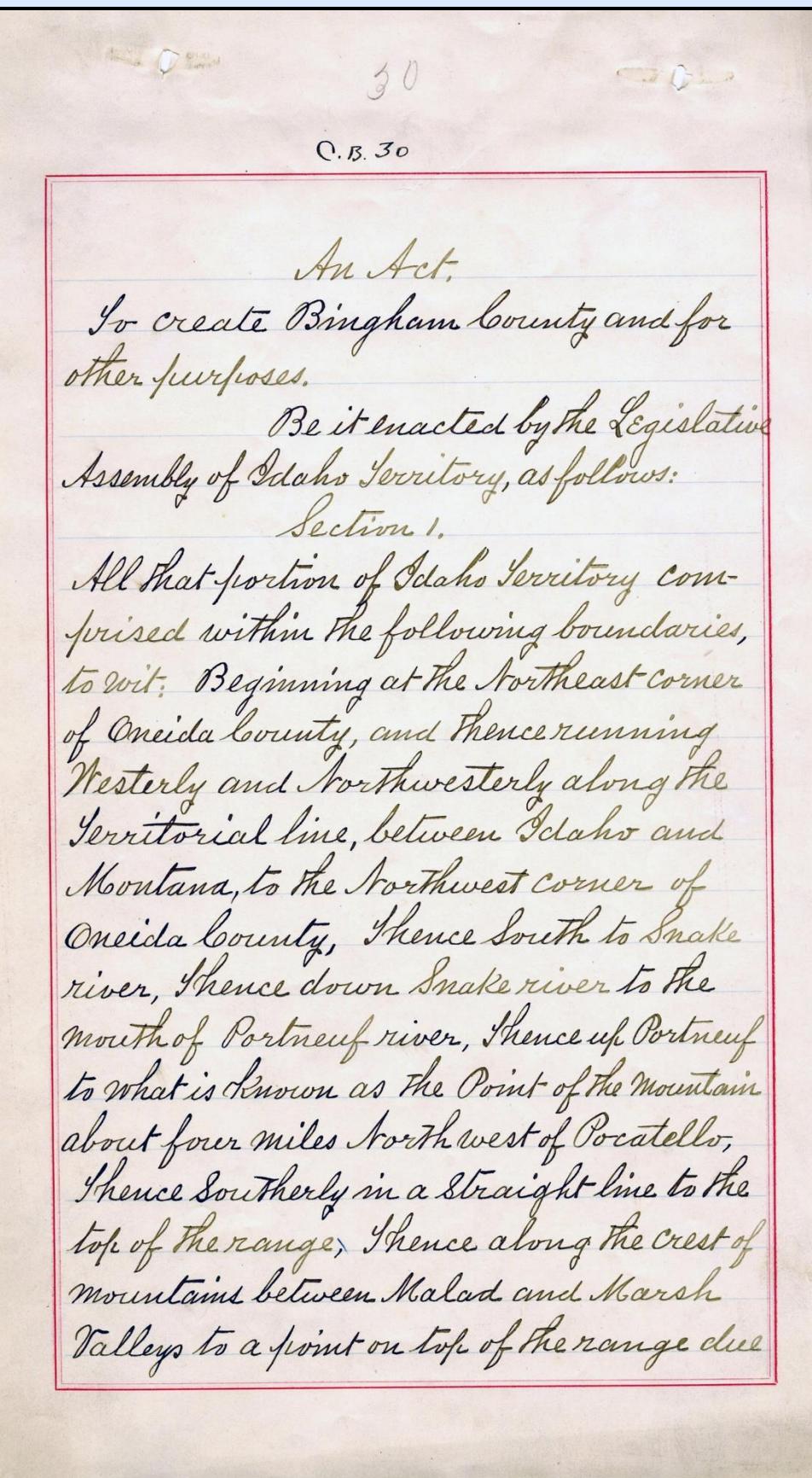


# COVID DOCUMENTS



## Civil War Letter from a 1907 Probate

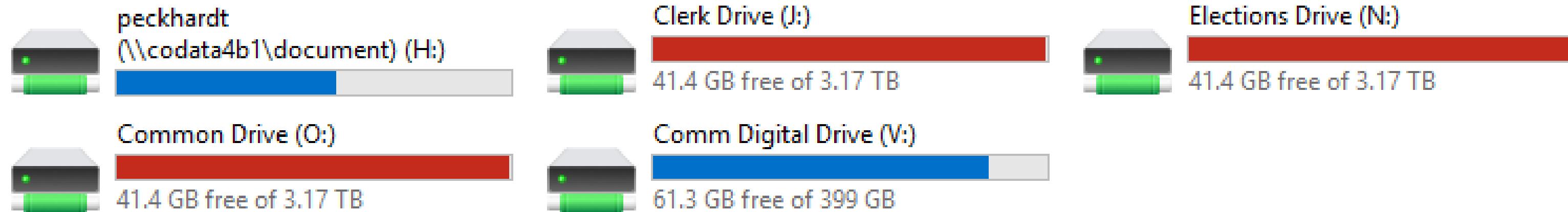




Learn to preserve them correctly

# Data or Digital Records

## Network locations



- Todays records are primarily data driven and created electronically.
- Records management needs to evolve.
- Record custodians + IT + Legal will need to collaborate.
- IT will need to take the lead to work on retention schedules.
- Meta data is the key!



# Disaster Preparedness

# Preventative and Protective Measures

A records disaster is a sudden, unexpected event that significantly damages or destroys records or prevents access to the information they contain.

- 1 **Natural Environment:** floods, wildfires, blizzards - could lead to water damage, fire, electrical disruptions, etc.
- 2 **Building Structure:** Evaluate the roof, walls, and windows for leakage. Check electrical wiring, sewer lines, water pipes for necessary repairs or upgrades. Adequate fire suppression or fireproofing.
- 3 **Storage Conditions:** Facilities used for records storage should be clean, well lit, dry, and free of mold. Store records on metal shelves 4-6 inches from floor for flooding.
- 4 **Human Threat:** Humans are the most common cause of disasters affecting records. Theft, vandalism, careless mishandling of records, construction accidents, and bad actors on the internet.
- 5 **Threats to Electronic Records:** Hard drives and USB drives and misplaced or stolen, no secure backups, ransomware and computer viruses, and accidental erasure by employees.
- 6 **No Record Inventory:** Would you know what records were affected?

# Disaster Response Plan



AI Generated

1. Work with your Emergency Management Director to create a response plan and practice the plan.
2. Phone Tree and Emergency Contact Numbers
3. Floor Plans and Area Maps
4. Assess the Situation
5. Stabilize the Environment
6. Take Photographs
7. Wet records are of critical concern as they begin to grow mold within 48 hours



Congratulations!  
You opened the vault.  
Now get to work

Resources:

- Records Retention Manual - Idaho Association of Counties
- Gaylord Archival - Guide to Collections Care: [gaylord.com](http://gaylord.com)
- Idaho State Archives - [history.idaho.gov](http://history.idaho.gov)
- Idaho State Archives - General Retention Schedule
- Idaho Public Records Law Manual - Office of the Attorney General