

Welcome to Civil Discourse. This podcast will use government documents to illuminate the workings of the American Government and offer contexts around the effects of government agencies in your everyday life. Now your hosts, Nia Rodgers, Public Affairs Librarian and Dr. John Aughenbaugh, Political Science Professor.

N. Rodgers: Hey Aughie.

J. Aughenbaugh: Good morning, Nia. How are you?

N. Rodgers: I'm good. How are you?

J. Aughenbaugh: I'm fine, in large part, because we get to talk about something that I'm pretty sure a big chunk of our listeners might not know about, but for government document geeks like you and me, this is like Christmas, thanksgiving, and Easter, all rolled up into one.

N. Rodgers: I will put to you that when it is called the nation's most treasured publication, that it really is true in terms of librarians, but also in terms of historians and political scientists and other people who want to know what came before. What we are talking about listeners is the Serial Set. One of the things that we're going to try to do this semester, is we're going to try to mix in some old-school documents because we did that a couple of semesters ago with the commission report.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yes.

N. Rodgers: I'm going to try to bring back some documents that maybe people don't know about, or they don't know exactly what's in them, and tell you what's going on with that. Serial Set, it has a real name.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yeah. But listeners, when we say serial, we're not talking about what you might eat with milk in the morning.

N. Rodgers: We're talking about the librarian word meaning multi-volume.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yeah, multi-volume.

N. Rodgers: S-E-R-I-A-L, as opposed to C-E-R-E-A-L, which is the staff that you eat.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yes. Its official name is the United States Congressional Serial Set, and its first publication was with the 15th Congress in 1817. Again, listeners, we're going back a couple of centuries.

N. Rodgers: Can I interrupt briefly?

J. Aughenbaugh: Yes.

N. Rodgers: 1817, and you say to yourself, wait, but there was stuff before then. There was stuff before then, it's called the American State Papers. We're not going to do an episode on that unless somebody requests one. The American State Papers gather from 1789-1838, and they're from the original Congresses, but they're not organized the same way. Aughie's going to tell you more about the organization of the Serial Set. The American State Papers are organized basically by department, foreign relations, Indian Affairs, finances, naval affairs, public lands, they're gathered in that way, and they're only 38 volumes. They're not huge number. It took a while for people to say, "Hey, you know what? We should have a more in-depth history of what we do and we should gather those documents somewhere so that future generations can look back and read, " and that's when you get the Serial Set.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yeah, the Serial Set, and it's also sometimes referred to, particularly by people who work in Congress, as the House and Senate Report.

N. Rodgers: Because that's a large part of what makes them up, although there's other stuff in there.

J. Aughenbaugh: What we're talking about with the Serial Set, is a 14,000 bound volumes, and I said that correctly, 14,000.

N. Rodgers: Which is why a lot of libraries don't have the print volumes because 14,000 is a lot to put on the shelf.

J. Aughenbaugh: You're talking about a rather large storage capacity.

N. Rodgers: They do have them at UVA, if you're wondering in Virginia. The regional libraries almost all have Serial Sets. Whatever state you're living in, in North Carolina, that would be UNC, in Virginia that would be UVA. It's not always at a university. Sometimes it's at a state library. It is also the Depository Library. By depository, we mean part of a larger program where the government sends them a free copy of certain books that they keep so that, locally, you can read it because that's, if you live in Hawaii, getting to DC to read a volume, would be super almost impossible which is why the University of Hawaii, I think it's the University of Hawaii, is a depository. They get stuff sent to them, then it's there for their local population to look at.

J. Aughenbaugh: Think about it in these terms. This is one of those good things that the government does.

N. Rodgers: Yes.

J. Aughenbaugh: Because we're talking about the transfer and the transmittance of knowledge.

N. Rodgers: Government transparency. What the heck are they doing over there in Washington? We don't know because we live in Hawaii and think about a 100 years ago. We live in Hawaii and there's no way to fly there, it's not thing.

J. Aughenbaugh: These reports did not become known as the Serial Set until the late 1800s, particularly 1895, when a decision was made to actually put the numbers of the report on the spine of each volume.

N. Rodgers: Yeah. Like 80 years in, somebody thought, "Hey, shouldn't these be number?"

J. Aughenbaugh: That's why, for those of you who look for the Serial Sets, and you come upon a volume pre 1895, you may find the volume number hand written on the spine.

N. Rodgers: With a marker. Aughie's not kidding. Like with a pencil or marker or a pen or something.

J. Aughenbaugh: Because I was doing research for the episode Nia, and I actually came across photos of where you could tell. In some cases, whatever a librarian who was tasked with maintaining the Serial Set, some of them actually you like use calligraphy and other kinds of fancy writing, but others you could tell, somebody who was just like, "Yeah, this is from 1883. It's big block for an aid." You're like, wow, we've come so far in regards to how we present this.

N. Rodgers: The new volumes are printed on there. The Government Publishing Office, which used to be Government Printing Office, because the Government Printing Office for years and years was called the Government Printing Office because it wasn't [inaudible 00:07:35] publishing, it was only print. Then not too desperately long ago, they changed over to publishing because now of course, some of what they do is online and some of the Serials that is online, but some of it isn't. The Law Library of Congress is going back and digitizing volumes, but they have to do it very carefully because you don't want to destroy the original bound volume while you're trying to make the digitized and you also need to make them searchable, and that takes a lot longer. That's a different kind of digitization than just taking a picture.

J. Aughenbaugh: This is in many ways a challenging technological process.

N. Rodgers: Yes.

J. Aughenbaugh: It requires money. It requires the hiring of some really talented folks to do this kind of work. What's included in the Serial Set? Just fascinating stuff. Nia stopped me if I touch upon something that you would like to discuss in more depth. Hold on just a sec. It's one of those things about recording live.

N. Rodgers: Everyone's somehow somebody needs to cough.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yes.

N. Rodgers: But I can see Aughie and he does not have the plague so we're good.

J. Aughenbaugh: This listener was the frog in the throat.

N. Rodgers: Fact.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yes, those damn frogs. Always trying to interrupt us. It has information about committee reports related to bills and other matters. Presidential communication to Congress.

N. Rodgers: Which you and I have briefly discussed that we think that The State of the Union should be done by email, that will eventually be included in the Serial Set if we can ever convince them to do that.

J. Aughenbaugh: Okay. Treaty materials. Think about this as some of our listeners, particularly those of who have had the unfortunate experience of taking constitutional law with me will know, most presidents after FDR had not liked treaties, they rely upon executive agreements which don't need the confirmation of the United States Senate. But pre FDR, presidents wouldn't negotiate treaties. So all treaty related materials, that presidents wanted the Senate to consider before voting that's part of the Serial Set. Executive department publications because the United States Congress was concerned that the executive branch would publish stuff and Congress would not be getting formed. So they required that executive branch departments, convey all their publications to the United States Congress. This would be, for instance, guys, checks and balances. But what is the Executive Branch doing with the money we've given them?

N. Rodgers: On that Kinsey Report.

J. Aughenbaugh: You also had non-governmental publications. You might be thinking, well, what are some of these non-governmental publications. Annual reports of the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of America. The annual report of the Smithsonian Institution, which in a previous podcast, we had one of our colleagues come in and discuss the Smithsonian. The annual report of the Daughters of the American Revolution. The Proceedings of the National Convention of the American Legion and the Proceedings of the National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

N. Rodgers: Those quasi governmental. Aughie's talked about that in the past and we can go into more depth about at some point, but there are some institutions that are both governmental and private. They're a conglomeration of those two things. Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Smithsonian. They're not all government and they're not no government. They're the indigenous bodies.

J. Aughenbaugh: Many of these organizations I just mentioned are patriotic in nature. They are supposed to help develop love, affection, and continued belief in the American system of governance, the American form of democracy. But Nia, are there other important papers?

N. Rodgers: Everything in there is important. For me, this could be a really long episode because we would be talking about 14,000 volumes and what's in each one. What I find fascinating is it's not haphazard. That's too strong a word. But documents coming in and out of vogue in the Serial Set.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yes.

N. Rodgers: You'll have, for instance, the agriculture yearbook, but it doesn't appear in all of them. It only appears in about 100 of them. Oh, is it 80? Yeah, about 80 of them.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yeah. 1894 to 1795.

N. Rodgers: Right. Then suddenly in 1975, people are like, no more agriculture. That's not true. The agriculture yearbook can be found.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yes.

N. Rodgers: Up to this year, it's still being published.

J. Aughenbaugh: Nia, what's the agricultural yearbook? What's found in the agricultural yearbook?

N. Rodgers: Oh my gosh. The agricultural yearbook is such a fabulous thing. We should probably do an episode on it. If you wonder how many soybeans the United States produced last year, it can tell you down to the bushel of it. It's amazing because someone somewhere has to count all that. Someone somewhere has to know. When you go to Google, because let's be honest, that's how you're going to look it up. You go to Google and you say, most soybean production in the world and you get a list of countries. They tell you how many soybeans they produced. The agricultural yearbook is the place where that number comes from for Google. Almost all of those numbers that Google gives you about a country's mineral wealth or about its agricultural wealth or about its fishing habits or all those come from annual reports the government puts together because someone is required to do that. Usually when they get authorizing legislation for the money, somebody has to give you an annual report about how you spent it, and did it work?

J. Aughenbaugh: It's not only required by law. There's a larger theoretical purpose behind this, right?

N. Rodgers: Right.

J. Aughenbaugh: If you think about the enlightenment, and enlightenment you're thinking is predicated on human beings being able to observe and measure the phenomenon that they experience. If we do that, then we can better figure out how to improve our lives, our conditions, right?

N. Rodgers: Exactly.

J. Aughenbaugh: It flows from enlightenment era thinking, but knowing these are required by law, Nia. If the United States is entering into a trade deal with another country. United States State Department and the Office of Foreign Trade.

N. Rodgers: Are going to need to know those numbers.

J. Aughenbaugh: That's right.

N. Rodgers: They need to know what they're negotiating over.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yes. Making a best guess.

N. Rodgers: Also, barter doesn't work if you don't know what you have. Like hey, man, I'll trade you some soybeans for some corn, and the person says how many soybeans do you have? Then you say, I'll get back to you on that.

J. Aughenbaugh: Let me guess.

N. Rodgers: Exactly.

J. Aughenbaugh: That isn't going to work.

N. Rodgers: No. Because then I have to guess how much corn I'm going to give you for it. That's not how that kind of thing works. The minerals yearbook is in their weirdly limited years to what? '32-'68?

J. Aughenbaugh: '68, yeah.

N. Rodgers: It's not that mineral stopped being imported in '68. That's not what happened. It's just that the different minerals that the country exports and imports changed in part because of technology. '68 is when you start to see electronics which use different kinds of minerals. It's less important to have it in the Serial Set, but that report still exists as well. It still comes out annually. That's the thing which I find fascinating about the Serial Set is you can see what's in the political thinking in a given set of years, and then falls out of the political thinking. In 1975, most people were not working on farms, so the agriculture report is less important to Congress people who are representing farmers because there are fewer of them. It's that kind of thing.

J. Aughenbaugh: Or you see the creation of new federal agencies who as part of their authorizing legislation has to issue a report to the entire country.

N. Rodgers: Yeah.

J. Aughenbaugh: For instance, you see this in regards to the annual reports of the Public Health Service. We no longer have a "Public Health Service." Instead, we have a Surgeon General's Office, we have the Centers for Disease Control, and then we have a standalone federal department.

N. Rodgers: HHS.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yes. Health and Human Services. This also tracks, if you will, changes within the executive branch. Foreign relations papers lasted for 60 years until 1955. Guess what really starts to develop in the mid 1950s? The Cold War. A set of reports from the State Department wasn't going to cut it, right?

N. Rodgers: Right.

J. Aughenbaugh: Also a lot of that information during the Cold War, as we previously discussed, becomes dark or black. It becomes classified.

N. Rodgers: Exactly.

J. Aughenbaugh: You're not going to include that in the "foreign relations papers."

N. Rodgers: My favorite of the patent decisions. That's not my favorite. I'm lying. They're all my favorites. I liked that the patent decisions were only 1925-1953. But when you think about the highly industrialized work that starts to happen in the United States, that totally tracks. That's when you get an explosion of technological devices that people were trying to build and patent.

J. Aughenbaugh: But again, think about what started to occur in the 1950s. As the United States begins to engage in a nuclear weapons race with the Soviet Union, and then a space race. A lot of these technological changes get reflected in other government documents. The patent decisions became less important to Congress, then these other technological changes. As we've discussed again with our colleague, Hillary Miller, patents are still important today, but they became less important to various members of Congress because remember, the serial set or documents that were either submitted to Congress or Congress thought was important.

N. Rodgers: That right there, that's the key phrase. Which is, the Congress thought was important and should be preserved in a unified version. It's not that Congress doesn't think the other stuff is important. But there's a unified gathering of these documents. That's the point of the serial set. It's that it gathers them in one spot as opposed to you having to hunt them down in various different places. All of these things still exist within the agencies or the agencies of agencies because remember the Department of War became a department of defense.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yes. Within departments or agencies, and some agencies are better at-

N. Rodgers: At preserving things than others which matched the long term aggravation of the Government Publishing Office, which is tasked by law with publishing government documents. They send out notices to the agencies and say, "Hey. If you have stuff we need to get it because we need to send it out" and agencies don't reply and there's no enforcement. It's too bad there's not a publishing enforcement office that could shut down your agency until you gave them your reports for the year. That would be really cool. No more money for you, don't come to work until you give us a report.

J. Aughenbaugh: Armed individuals.

N. Rodgers: They would shut down the building and-

J. Aughenbaugh: With staple guns in highlighters who are like,-

N. Rodgers: We will need your annual reports please. Dressed all in black with sunglasses would be awesome.

J. Aughenbaugh: Well, by the way listeners, if it seems like we're beating up on executive branch agencies, that's not our intent.

N. Rodgers: No.

J. Aughenbaugh: Even Congress. Again, this is one of the fascinating things about the serial set.

N. Rodgers: What's not in it is just as interesting as what's in it.

J. Aughenbaugh: A lot of times the house in the senate is not good. They haven't been good at preserving and maintaining what they've done. Because again, the house and senate reports doesn't need a class of publications which congressional committees formally report and make recommendations to the senate or the house concerning what they've done. But it's not a full report of what the committees do.

N. Rodgers: It's not in there things like debate.

J. Aughenbaugh: Congressional debate.

N. Rodgers: Texts of the hearings a lot of times they're not in there although some are.

J. Aughenbaugh: [inaudible 00:24:30] resolutions, hearings.

N. Rodgers: Although some are.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yes.

N. Rodgers: Because if something is big enough like for instance, the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal hearings, are in there. Iran-Contra is in there. Sometimes there is something in there, Teapot Dome Scandal is in there. But those things that are reported, part of it I know it seems like it's arbitrary but what it is is that if Congress thinks that something is potentially nation altering or history-altering they will include it in some way. For instance, the Titanic. They held hearings about the failure of the Titanic. Guess which committee did that. Agi can you name the committee that did that?

J. Aughenbaugh: No. I don't know.

N. Rodgers: It is the Committee on Commerce. Because if you're going to have people going back and forth across, like people is commerce. Commerce held hearings because they wanted to know if this is going to happen again. Is this going to keep happening because that's terrible.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yeah. That makes sense.

N. Rodgers: That's actually included. But then other things aren't included because part of it is that they have to decide whether to include in the time, and they don't have the historical knowledge that you have when you look back 20 years and say, they probably should have included that hearing because it turned out to be hugely important. At the time they held the hearing and didn't know it was important then so they didn't include it. That's why it's a good thing that all of these documents are also in other places because if a scholar finds out they exist they can go find them. Think of this as the highlight reel. The serial set a highlight reel.

J. Aughenbaugh: The highlight reel and I'm glad you described it that way. Because it chronicles listeners what was important throughout our country's history. It doesn't capture everything, but it really gives you a sense of the changing interests, passions, points of focus for the United States Congress.

N. Rodgers: It also includes odd stuff that you think. What it doesn't include, it does not include presidential proclamations or executive orders. But it does include the economic report of the president, which by the way takes up like 64 volumes each time. It's not really 64, it's like three or four volumes because it's huge.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yeah. It's huge.

N. Rodgers: In a serial set sometimes what you get are individual volumes that are a thing. You'll get an individual numbered volume that is the economic report of the president. But things like vetoes are all in there because it's really important to Congress when the president vetoes what they've said across. Again, your checks and balances.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yes.

N. Rodgers: Thing, which I think is one of the more fascinating. But can I talk about a little thing that's in there? Well, it's not a little thing. But it's big to me, that makes me excited about when people say, it's all boring and it's all bla bla bla. Anybody who's ever been to DC has heard of L'Enfant Plaza.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yes.

N. Rodgers: It's named for Pierre L'Enfant, who was the architect of the city of Washington. He was appointed by Washington, who I'm sure took him to the swampy mess and said, see, it's going to make a great city. I'm sure he thought to himself, you are a nutcase.

J. Aughenbaugh: Knowing it.

N. Rodgers: But nobody ever said that to George Washington, you're a nutcase, sir. He asked Jefferson, he said, can I get from you maps and data from London, Madrid, Paris, Amsterdam, Naples, Venice, and Florence. Now notice three of those, are Roman cities, Naples, Venice, and Florence.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yes.

N. Rodgers: It's the enormous influence that you can see in Washington DC of the Roman write the columns in the big tall buildings and the whole like we will make it end of the sea. But all of those plans are in the serial set.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yes.

N. Rodgers: Because somebody said to themselves, this is going to be really important for scholars one day. They're going to want to know what we were doing when we planned the city. At the time, I think Washington said only St. Petersburg strips this city in terms of capital cities of nations because it's been so deeply planned. Park, system and street, he knew early on that he wanted street going in one direction to be alphabetical and streets going in the other direction to be numerical.

J. Aughenbaugh: Numerical. Yes.

N. Rodgers: It's amazing. It's really cool, and you can look at all his maps and read his notes.

J. Aughenbaugh: Again, this reflects enlightenment era of thinking. Because the architect was just like, what can we learn from the best constructed cities of the world?

N. Rodgers: The most beautiful. We want beautiful cities.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yes. We want the citizens of this country to be proud of it's capital like citizens of capital cities around the world are proud of, take ownership of. Again, this reflects enlightenment era thinking. We can observe what others have done, or what's going on, and then we can decide what to change, what to improve, what to keep, etc. It is fascinating. Nia, you mentioned in our notes in preparation for this episode, the Louisiana Purchase, right?

N. Rodgers: Right.

J. Aughenbaugh: In the letter that Jefferson wrote to basically tell the United States Congress, I've already negotiated this deal. I basically now want you guys to pay for it. To me, that's just remarkable to have that recorded. Because there's no interpretation there. Jefferson basically went ahead and did this. What's truly remarkable is Jefferson, before he became president, was extremely skeptical and fearful of national government power, but in particular presidential power until he became president. It's a really fascinating example of Miles' law, where you stand is where you sit. Because if you're not president, you're like, "Yeah, we got to be concerned about the president exercising too much power." But then when you become president, you're like, "Well, I got to do some important stuff for the country. How do we make sure that we protect our westernmost border?" Well, we go ahead and buy a whole bunch of land. We make the Louisiana Purchase.

N. Rodgers: 1803, I think.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yeah.

N. Rodgers: We negotiate with France, which of course, Jefferson loved because he loved France. It's that kind of thing that ends up in the serial set. Part of what a librarian will tell you that the reason that the serial set is so important is because it is important for a nation to gather its historical material and keep it for future generations because we never know what's going to be important to historians of the future. When someone proposes a piece of legislation, we don't know if it's going to end up being a huge pattern across their life where they are, for instance, the Udalls. The Udall brothers who served in the Congress did huge amounts of work with the interior and environment and all that kind of stuff in the '50s and '60s before Earth Day, before it became a thing. They were working on that. At the time, nobody would have known that that was going to be the arc of their legacy. That's part of what's so important about the serial set, is it's not just for political science students, it's also for historians, it's also for people who want to, as you said, see the connections that get made across a long term set of documents. What's important, what's not important, what gets included, what doesn't get included. For a long time, the statistical abstracts was included. We may do an episode on the statistical abstracts because it's my single favorite document of all the documents. I love them all, which says something to you. We used to say to people when they got hired into the Government Documents Department where I worked at North Carolina State, what's your favorite government document and why? For me, it was the statistical abstracts because it's tables and tables and tables. It's labor tables, it's education table, everything. If you want to know a mathematical thing about the United States, the statistical abstracts had it in there. If you were answering reference questions by phone on a desert island, which I don't know why you would do that, that's all you needed, was the stat abs. So I love the stat abs. One of the things that you can track in something like the Cisco abstracts is a city's population decline. If you want to know how many people left Detroit between 1980 and 2000, the statistical abstracts will show you that. It's that kind of thing that allows us to answer these sociological questions about us as a society.

J. Aughenbaugh: Right. Again, it's the difference between what we perceive and what we know. Because the statistical abstracts measure things, right?

N. Rodgers: Right.

J. Aughenbaugh: Population increase or population decline. How many people work in the medical profession versus how many people work in agriculture versus how many people work in retail. How many Americans commute 5-10 miles to work every day versus 15 to 20. These are all the kinds of things that are in the Statistical Abstract. I've told reporters, if you guys want to know the background on a story that you're doing, go to your library or today go online and bookmark US Statistical Abstracts. Because you can verify, you can learn, you can know, you can write informed questions of elected officials, government officials, people involved in stories, you can ask informed questions because of the Statistical Abstracts.

N. Rodgers: They were in there from 1879 to 1976. That's a lot of years. It's interesting you come at it from a professional point of view of you can ask these intelligent questions of, whereas I come at it from a story-telling point of view. Those numbers tell a story. Those numbers, as you see people in agriculture stop working in agriculture and the rise of other jobs, that tells a story. That tells a story about the American experience and who we are as a people. I will wax poetic for days if you allow me.

J. Aughenbaugh: Oh no, Nia.

N. Rodgers: That's why I love the Serial Set because I think that it tells a very long involved story about the United States. Are there things missing? Absolutely. There are things that are missing. There are things that we don't have a lot of storytelling of racial problems in this country. We don't have a lot of storytelling of our native population and the things that happened with our native population. There are some gaps. I'm not suggesting that it's in any way perfect because it's not.

J. Aughenbaugh: But even the gaps-

N. Rodgers: -tell a story.

J. Aughenbaugh: Tell a story. Listeners, Nia and I have mentioned this a couple of times during this episode. What in part fascinates both of us about the Serial Set is what's not included or what was included for the periods of time that it was. Nia, before we conclude this episode, can you guess, what feature of the Serial Set? First, expose me or turn me on to the value of the Serial Set.

N. Rodgers: Oh my gosh. I have no idea.

J. Aughenbaugh: I took an undergraduate class in public administration at the University of Pittsburgh and one of our assignments was, we had a list of things that we could pick, and we had to go find them in the government document section of the university library, and I picked the annual budget of the United States, and the annual budget of the United States beginning in fiscal year 1923 is included in the Serial Set. In some of the volumes, there were actually handwritten notes of changes for the inclusion of appendices for a particular fiscal year's budget, and that just fascinated me. I was just like, I could not believe that there was a single source of the federal governments in your budget. For listeners who have faithfully listened to our podcast through the various years, in my estimation, one of the best set of episodes is where Nia and I discussed the budget process.

N. Rodgers: The nightmare, that is the budget process.

J. Aughenbaugh: The process. But for those of you who are like, why was Aughen so enthusiastic about the US budget? It goes back to a simple assignment in a class when I was an undergrad, and I had a government documents librarian at the University of Pittsburgh who was just like, well, Mr. Aughenbaugh, let me show you an important document. I was just like, a important document? It's the budget. How freaking important can it be? She goes, let me introduce you to the Serial Set. I was just like, okay. There were all the budgets.

N. Rodgers: That relates to this house documents, I think. I could be wrong about that. The thing about the Serial Set for me is that, one, it's a history of the United States, but also I like the weird things you come across when you're looking for something else. Because the Serial Set is like early Wikipedia. You're on your way to an annual budget report, and you're like, wait, what's this volume on this? You pull it down and you start looking, and then you're like, dude, and you get totally sidetracked. That's one of the magical things to me about the Serial Set.

J. Aughenbaugh: If you are even remotely curious.

N. Rodgers: It's going to suck you in for days, weeks, months, potentially the rest of your life. It's just totally fascinating. Before we go, I want to mention, many, many libraries no longer have physical volumes of the Serial Set. They are coming online as they get digitized. I will put the links for that in the research guide. There are several libraries that have done some of that work, and there's a huge number of 14,000 volumes. It's going to take a while for it to all make it up there. But do keep in mind that any library can borrow a volume for you.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yes.

N. Rodgers: If there's something you want to look at, there are almost all lendable from depository libraries. Or they can copy out specific pages if you're what you're too interested in it, something as simple as the map of Washington, versus if you want the annual budget, you're going to need volumes. You're going to need to ask for volumes, but you can do that at your local library because your local librarians will be delighted to get those for you, trust me. When anybody comes up with a Serial Set question, it's very exciting for government documents librarians because we're like, really? You want to play in the Serial Set? Excellent. Let me help you.

J. Aughenbaugh: But, folks, it's Nia's excitement right now it's too bad, you guys can't see it. What's comparable for me is when a student comes up to me, and says, Professor Aughenbaugh, do you know about proposed regulation X coming from this department? I'm like, well, let's go look in the Federal Register.

N. Rodgers: You see, your whole world is administrative law, and that's what the Federal Register is.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yeah, right? Students are just like, you need to really calm down professor on the block because this is getting a little weird.

N. Rodgers: This isn't that interesting, and you're like, whoa, but they did this. Look at this. That's how I feel about the Serial Set, not for long.

J. Aughenbaugh: The proposed rule has references to other regulations. I'm like, oh, let's go look at those other regulations.

N. Rodgers: Exactly.

J. Aughenbaugh: No, I just want to know about X. I'm like, do you really only want to know about X? Do you really?

N. Rodgers: Oh my goodness. We invite you, listeners, to play around with your local Serial Set wherever you are. If you don't have access, like I said, I'll put up the links.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yes.

N. Rodgers: Thank you, Aughie. I love the Serial Set, so thank you for talking to me about it.

J. Aughenbaugh: Oh, no. Months ago you went ahead and said, can we talk about the Serial Set? I was just like, oh yes.

N. Rodgers: For days.

J. Aughenbaugh: For days. Fortunately for you-all listeners, we kept it to about 40-45 minutes. But again, like Nia just mentioned, I strongly encourage you to explore the Serial Set. It does tell a story about the country, and it's fascinating. What we have collected, what we have observed, measured, the reports, it is a fascinating history.

N. Rodgers: It's magic.

J. Aughenbaugh: Yeah.

N. Rodgers: Thank you, Aughie.

J. Aughenbaugh: Thank you, Nia.

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