

Roosevelt, Franklin D.
Papers as President
Official File, 1933-1945
(NUCMC 75-574)
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Accession Nos.: 41-54, 41-55, 41-57, 41-58, 41-59, 41-60,
41-69, 42-25, 42-234, 42-314, 43-99, 43-137,
43-211, 43-212, 43-231, 43-249, 43-251,
44-53, 44-106, 44-117, 45-7, 45-49, 45-55,
46-15, 52-6, 52-12, 52-14, 53-12, 55-16,
60-18, 61-4, 61-5, 61-6, 70-18, 73-9

These papers were donated to the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Roosevelt began shipping Presidential materials to the Library as early as August 1940 but the bulk of the collection was received from his estate in December 1947. President Roosevelt donated his copyright interest in these papers to the United States Government; writings of other individuals are subject to copyright restrictions under Title 17 of the U.S. Code.

Quantity: 1174 linear feet (approximately 2,348,000 pages)

Restrictions: These papers contain documents restricted in accordance with Executive Order 11652; and material that might be used to harass, embarrass, or injure living individuals has been closed.

Related Material: The papers of Franklin D. Roosevelt as President are divided into five major groups: the Alphabetical File, the Official File, the President's Personal File, the President's Secretary's File, and the Map Room Papers. Most of the Library's other collections will also contain related material on given topics.

Franklin D. Roosevelt, as administrative head of the Executive branch of the United States Government, had the assistance of several secretaries, administrative assistants and special assistants as well as a personal secretary. During the Roosevelt administration, the White House received an average of 3,000 letters a day. Mail addressed to the White House was routed by the Assistant Executive Clerk either to the President, through his personal secretary; to an assistant with a specific area of responsibility; to the Office of the Chief of Correspondence for the preparation of a routine reply; or, if appropriate, routinely referred to another government agency for action. The correspondence which went to the President directly was either answered personally by him or sent to another agency for the preparation of a draft reply. Occasionally Roosevelt would merely initial his approval on an original letter and return it to its sender.

After the White House mail had been answered, it was routed to the Office of the Chief of Files for filing. At this time a record was also kept of all correspondence referred elsewhere. This White House office maintained what was known as the White House Central Files; the filing system used was that originally developed in 1906 during the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt.

The Central Files were divided into four categories of material. The Alphabetical File contained copies of letters of acknowledgment for mail referred elsewhere, copies of forwarding letters, lists of forwarded mail, abstracts of documents placed in the other filing categories, as well as some routine correspondence. Material in this file was arranged alphabetically by correspondent or subject.

The Official File was intended to consist of correspondence and other material related to the policy-making activities of the President. It includes correspondence, memoranda, and reports from government officials and other public and private individuals. Within this group of papers are files on government departments and agencies; subjects of concern to the President; important organizations and individuals; as well as files on less important persons or subjects. These files are arranged numerically by subject or individual concerned.

The President's Personal File was set up to contain correspondence concerned with matters in which the President took a personal interest. It includes files on gifts received by the President, birthday and holiday greetings, honorary memberships, fraternal organizations and philanthropic societies as well as files on personal friends and political associates of the President. This file is also arranged numerically by subject or individual concerned.

The fourth group of papers in the Central Files was known as the Confidential File. It contained material similar to that found in the other filing categories which had been designated confidential by the President or one of his secretaries or assistants. It was arranged alphabetically by subject.

The boundaries between these file groupings were often vague and similar material can be found in both the Official File and the President's Personal File. In many cases both groups of papers will contain files on a particular subject or individual. Researchers should thus consult both files to be assured of seeing all the material on their topic.

To facilitate the use of the Central Files, the Office of the Chief of Files prepared an index of important individuals and subjects and also adopted a system of inserting cross reference sheets in other related files throughout the four groups of papers. When correspondence was received by the Office a classifier determined the appropriate file for the original document and so marked the covering letter. Notations were also made on the document to indicate the other files where abstracts of that particular correspondence would be placed. The correspondence then passed to a typist for the preparation of the required number of abstracts. Subsequently, filing clerks would file both the original papers and the abstracts.

With a few exceptions, all of the mail received at the White House (or a record thereof) would thus end up in the Central Files. Occasionally large amounts of correspondence concerning a particular subject would be referred to another agency without a record being kept. Secretaries and administrative assistants might also retain small amounts of correspondence in their own files. The President's personal secretary, while sending ordinary correspondence to the Central Files, also maintained a file of documents deemed special and confidential by the President.

The correspondence retained by the personal secretary was arranged alphabetically by subject into a Diplomatic File, containing confidential reports from American representatives abroad; a Department File, containing material from various government agencies; a Famous People File; Secret File with correspondence from individuals such as Winston S. Churchill and Joseph Stalin; a Special Studies File; and a General File. This material plus the Confidential File of the Central Files has been incorporated into what is known as the President's Secretary's File.

After the United States' entry into World War II, a White House Map Room was established in January 1942 under the supervision of the President's Naval Aide. This office also maintained files, arranged by subject, which are now known as the Map Room Papers. Included are wartime messages sent and received by the President,

including those exchanged with Churchill, Stalin, and Chiang Kai-shek, as well as a number of documents sent by the War and Navy Department for the President's information.

President Roosevelt began shipping those portions of his White House files which were not in current use to the Roosevelt Library in August 1940. Additional accessions were received throughout his presidency. After his death, the remainder of the Central Files were received from his estate in December 1947. Security classified material in the President's Secretary's File and the Map Room Papers was received from storage in the National Archives in November 1951.

Anyone wishing more information concerning the recordkeeping practices of the White House may consult Fred W. Shipman's "Report on the White House Executive Office," available in the Research Room.

The President's Secretary's File contains incoming and outgoing correspondence, memoranda, printed material, and newspaper clippings, deemed special or confidential, which were in the custody of the President's personal secretary. These papers, arranged alphabetically by correspondent or subject, are presently divided into five series as follows:

Safe File: Formerly security classified material, mainly from the World War II period. Includes files on United States government departments, a number of foreign countries, and important individuals. Containers 1 - 6.

Confidential File: Material similar to that in the Official File and the President's Personal File which was considered confidential by the White House filing staff. Once a part of the White House Central Files. Includes files on government departments and agencies, 1933 - 1945, and copies of State Department dispatches from a number of European countries and Japan, 1937 - 1943. Containers 6 - 23.

Diplomatic Correspondence: Confidential reports sent to the President from American representatives abroad, letters from royalty and heads of state, as well as State Department correspondence concerning particular countries, 1933 - 1945. Containers 23 - 53.

Departmental Correspondence: Confidential material sent to the President from the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Interior, Justice, Labor, Navy, Post Office, State, Treasury, and War, 1933 - 1945. Containers 53 - 91.

Subject File: Includes files on lesser government agencies, members of the Executive Office of the President, other public officials and personal friends, 1933 - 1945. Also material on personal affairs of the Roosevelt family, Hyde Park and Warm Springs. Grace Tully's White House correspondence after the President's death are filed in containers 167 and 168. Containers 91 - 174.

The Official File consists of 5709 name and subject files, arranged in numerical order, containing material relating to official actions of the President. The files vary in size according to subject matter and include correspondence, memoranda, printed material and newspaper clippings received by the President as well as copies of his replies. Many of the larger files contain correspondence from governmental entities such as the Departments of State, War, Navy, Treasury, Justice, and Agriculture and various New Deal relief agencies. There are also numerous files on topics such as oil, Negroes, labor, unemployment, money (inflation), business, the Democratic National Committee, and federal appointments as well as files on many foreign countries. An index of the titles to the name and subject files is available in the research room; the Official File numerical listing should be consulted to ascertain the contents of each box of a particular file. An appendix at the end of the numerical listing details additional material received from the White House in 1972; this material had been retained after FDR's death as part of the permanent White House files. Special finding aids to OF 200 (Trips of the President), OF 300 (Democratic National Committee), and OF 400 (State File, Federal Appointments) are also available in the Research Room.

MISSING FILES

The following list of Official File numbers represents files for which the papers were missing at the time the Shelf List was prepared. It is presumed that many of these documents were misfiled or lost during their tenure as active records of the White House Executive Office.

39	2688	4383
240	2756	4491
253	2812	4903
540	2932	5253
760	2988	5302
1122	3051	5316
1220	3086	5359
1293	3196	5373
1306	3461	5411
1879	3464	5500
2040	3623	5551
2239	3847	5630
2512	3849	5652
2520	4016	5659
2600	4263	5680

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3103

Untitled Folders in the Official File for which
Titles Were Supplied

1Y Agricultural Marketing Administration
11B Endorsements
11C Technical Mission to Brazil
43A Retirement Exemption Requests
101D Requests for the President's Autograph
144F War Correspondents
153A Miscellaneous
156A St. Lawrence Seaway and Power Conference
156B St. Lawrence Advisory Commission
162A Miscellaneous
162B Endorsements
167A Miscellaneous
167B Endorsements
173A Suggestions
173B Miscellaneous
208Q Kentucky
208GG Arizona
208KK Canal Zone
227A Name and Subject File A-Z
230C Banking Coordination Committee
230D Small Loan Companies
268B Committee on Civilian Conservation Corps Personnel
335XYZ Suggestions for National Defense and Military Inventions
419F State of the Union Messages
526A Force Accounts
643C Regional Agricultural Credit Corporation
643D Deposit Liquidation Board
643E RFC Mortgage Co.
643F War-Risk Insurance Corporation
773A Board of Surveys and Maps
4245G Abstracts Concerning Racial Tensions
FBI Materials Concerning Minorities
War Department Materials Concerning Minorities
War Production Board
Shipping Priorities Advisory Comm.
Office of Production Management