

The Papers of the Presidents

By BUFORD ROWLAND

The National Archives

SINCE the early days of the Republic, the papers accumulated by a Chief Executive of the United States have been considered his personal property. George Washington set the precedent in 1797 when he took with him into retirement at Mount Vernon all the correspondence and papers relating to his eight years in the Presidency. John Adams, on leaving the White House in 1801, followed Washington's example and sent his papers to his home in Quincy, Massachusetts. Prior to Franklin D. Roosevelt all the Presidents or their heirs had followed the precedent established by Washington and Adams. These records, mirroring vital phases of our social, economic, and political history, are basic source materials for the study of our national development. In some instances, unfortunately, these valuable records have been lost through neglect, fire, or willful destruction. It is the purpose of this compilation to trace in bare outline — a volume could be written on the subject — the fate of the Presidential papers.

GEORGE WASHINGTON

All but a very small percentage of the extant papers of George Washington are in the Library of Congress.¹ Professor Samuel Eliot Morison, of Harvard, furnishes some interesting background information on this collection:²

Jared Sparks, editor of the *North American Review*, was first of the tribe of nosy historians who go poking about in public and private papers for the real low-down on history. Around the fiftieth anniversary of American independence, Mr. Sparks observed that no proper history of the American Revolution had yet been written; and as a means to have it written — and also as means of legitimate profit to himself — he conceived the idea of publishing a generous selection of the letters and other writings of George Washington.

The General's papers were still at Mount Vernon in the possession of his nephew, Bushrod Washington, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. By making a flank approach on the Justice through Chief Justice Marshall the Yankee scholar obtained an agreement by virtue of which he,

¹ *Congressional Record*, 76th Cong., 1st sess., p. 9040 (Washington, 1939).

² Samuel Eliot Morison, "The Very Essence of History," in *Franklin D. Roosevelt Library*, Hearing before the Committee on the Library, House of Representatives, 76th Cong., 1st sess. (1939), p. 26.

who as editor was to do all the work, would receive 50 percent of the net profits. The owner, who furnished the raw material, was to have 25 percent, and Chief Justice Marshall the balance.

With Justice Washington's permission, 80 tightly packed cases of President Washington's papers were loaded on a mule wagon and started north toward Boston. En route Mr. Sparks borrowed a bale of diplomatic correspondence from the State Department and a bundle of Gates Correspondence from the New York Historical Society. Those were the happy days for historians.

In 10 years' time Sparks's "Writings of Washington" appeared, and proved a great success financially and otherwise. But in the meantime Judge Washington had died, leaving the papers to his nephew, George Corbin Washington, member of Congress from Maryland. Mr. Washington proposed to sell the "public" papers of the General to the Department of State. Legislation authorizing their purchase for \$25,000 was duly passed (Act of June 30, 1834); but Mr. Washington, who needed the money badly — he had been defeated in the election of 1832 — could not collect it all while Jared Sparks held the bulk of the papers, and Mr. Sparks was not to be hurried. Eventually 192 bound volumes of Washington papers, with several boxes of loose papers, were started on their way from Boston to the capital by the "burden cars" of the new railroad.

The State Department increased its collection of Washington items in 1849 when an appropriation of \$20,000 made possible the purchase of the remaining manuscript books and papers of the General from his heirs.³ The Washington papers remained in the State Department until 1903 when by Executive order they were transferred to the Library of Congress.⁴ The Library of Congress consolidated these papers with the Washington items which had been acquired with the Peter Force purchase in 1867.⁵ Since 1903, the Library has from time to time through gift and purchase added to its Washington Collection, and it is estimated that over 95 percent of all the surviving papers that belonged to General Washington are now in the Library of Congress. The records are open to the public.

JOHN ADAMS JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

The Adams papers, which are in the Massachusetts Historical Society in Boston, are under the control of the Adams Trust.⁶

³ Act of March 3, 1849, 9 *Stat.* 370.

⁴ The Executive order of March 9, 1903, was issued under authority of the Act of February 23, 1903. The Executive order also called for the transfer of the papers of James Madison, Thomas Jefferson, and James Monroe.

⁵ *Handbook of Manuscripts in the Library of Congress*, p. 512 (Washington, 1918).

⁶ *Congressional Record*, 76th Cong., 1st sess., p. 9040 (Washington, 1939).

Through this trust, established in 1905, the Adams family exercises absolute control — including the right of destruction — over “the public letters, public letter-books and public documents, manuscripts, books, private diaries and family letters,” belonging to John and John Quincy Adams. The Trust expires in 1955 and since it is self-perpetuating it can be re-established. The papers are not open to the public but the custodian, Henry Adams, Jr., will furnish information on the request of scholars.⁷

THOMAS JEFFERSON

The great body of papers which Jefferson left are in the Library of Congress. These are the papers which the Government purchased from Thomas Jefferson Randolph, executor of the Jefferson estate, in 1848 for \$20,000. They were transferred to the Library from the State Department in pursuance to the Executive order of March 9, 1903.⁸ It is estimated that the Library of Congress has in either originals, letter-press copies or microfilm over 90 percent of the writings of Jefferson, and by purchase and gift is constantly acquiring items included in the remainder.⁹ No restrictions have been placed upon the use of the Jefferson papers.

In addition to the Library of Congress, other important Jefferson items are found in the Massachusetts Historical Society, Pierpont Morgan Library, Pennsylvania Historical Society, Buffalo Historical Society, Yale University Library, American Philosophical Society, the Missouri Historical Society, and others.¹⁰

JAMES MADISON

The magnificent collection of Madison's papers is in the Library of Congress. The collection, in the main, was acquired through two purchases from Mrs. Madison (the famous Dolly) and one from the Chicago Historical Society.¹¹ The story of the purchases from Mrs. Madison is told by Gaillard Hunt in *The Writings of James Madison*:¹²

⁷ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., “Washington's Missing-Papers Mystery,” in *The Saturday Evening Post*, July 12, 1947, p. 123.

⁸ Act of August 12, 1848, 9 Stat. 284; *Handbook of Manuscripts in the Library of Congress*, pp. 183-184 (Washington, 1918).

⁹ Estimate furnished by Manuscripts Division of Library of Congress.

¹⁰ *Congressional Record*, 76th Cong., 1st sess., p. 9043 (Washington, 1939).

¹¹ *Handbook of Manuscripts in the Library of Congress*, pp. 238-239 (Washington, 1918).

¹² Gaillard Hunt (ed.), *The Writings of James Madison*, Vol. I, pp. xxxiii-xxxiv (New York, 1900).

During the closing years of his life Madison occupied himself in arranging his papers and especially those relating to the framing of the Constitution. He bequeathed them to his wife, intending that she should immediately publish the debates in the Congress of 1782, 1783, and 1787, the debates in the constitutional convention, the proceedings of the Congresses of 1776, and a limited number of letters, as he had arranged them. Through St. George Tucker she offered the work to the Harpers and through her son to other publishers, but was unable to come to a satisfactory agreement with any of them. Francis Preston Blair, the publisher of the *Congressional Globe*, offered to publish the work, but doubted whether much profit would accrue and suggested that her best plan would be to fix a sum to cover the profit she expected and offer the manuscript to Congress at that price. He promised to assist her in securing the appropriation. She had, however, already offered the papers to the government in her letter of November 15, 1836, to President Jackson. A copy of this letter was laid before Congress in a special message dated December 6, 1836. Madison's neighbor and friend, James Barbour, acted as her agent and told her that \$100,000, the sum she at first said she expected, was out of the question, but that she could get \$30,000 for the papers. This amount was appropriated by Act of March 3, 1837. July 9, 1838, Congress authorized the publication of the papers. Henry D. Gilpin, of Pennsylvania, then Solicitor of the Treasury, was selected as the editor, and the work was published in three volumes in Washington in 1840 under the title of *The Madison Papers*. May 31, 1848, Mrs. Madison being then, through domestic misfortunes, in distressed circumstances, Congress appropriated \$25,000 to purchase all the remaining manuscripts of Madison's in her hands.

On Mrs. Madison's death it was discovered that the Government had not secured all the Madison papers. The material held back by Mrs. Madison was bequeathed to John Payne Todd, her son by her first husband. Todd sold the papers to J. C. McGuire of Washington. The Government had the opportunity of purchasing these papers from the McGuire heirs but since no appropriation could be secured for the purpose the valuable collection passed in 1892 into the hands of a New York autograph dealer, who in turn sold them to Marshall Field, the Chicago Merchant Prince, for the Chicago Historical Society. The equitable claim of the government to the Madison papers, plus a payment of \$10,000, led the Chicago Historical Society to transfer these records to the Library of Congress in 1910.¹³ At the Library of Congress this valuable addition was consolidated with the two Madison purchases which had come to the Library from the State Department under the Executive order of March 9, 1903.

¹³ *Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1910*, pp. 25-26 (Washington, 1910).

JAMES MONROE

The papers of President Monroe are widely scattered. The largest single collection is in the Library of Congress but the Gouverneur collection of Monroe papers is owned by Lawrence M. Hoes of Washington, D. C.; approximately twelve hundred items are in the New York Public Library, and other individual letters and documents are held by private collectors and libraries.¹⁴ The greater part of the Monroe collection now in the Library of Congress was acquired in 1849 from the Monroe heirs for \$20,000.¹⁵ This purchase which was originally deposited in the State Department was transferred to the Library of Congress in 1905 under provisions of the Executive order of March 9, 1903.¹⁶

The Library of Congress has imposed no restrictions on the use of the Monroe papers.

ANDREW JACKSON

Andrew Jackson preserved his papers with much care. He was keenly aware of the controversial role he played in the history of his times, and it was his hope that the great mass of material he assembled would serve his biographer in the defense of his record.¹⁷ At General Jackson's death the biography had not been written, and in accordance with his wishes the official and public papers were turned over to Francis Preston Blair. The papers remained in the possession of the Blair family until 1903 when they were presented to the Library of Congress.¹⁸ When the Jackson papers were sent to Blair, Andrew Jackson, Jr., retained many letters of a personal nature. In 1911 the Library of Congress acquired these letters by purchase from Jackson's heirs.¹⁹

The so-called Kendall collection of Jackson papers came to the Library of Congress by purchase in 1932. This material, consisting of 1,200 items, had been turned over to Amos Kendall in 1842 for use in writing Jackson's biography, and after his death went to his daughter, Mrs. Stickney. For years it was thought that these letters had been destroyed in the burning of a warehouse in Washington.²⁰

¹⁴ *Congressional Record*, 76th Cong., 1st sess., pp. 9040, 9043 (Washington, 1939).

¹⁵ Act of March 3, 1849, 9 *Stat.* 370.

¹⁶ *Handbook of Manuscripts in the Library of Congress*, p. 274 (Washington, 1918).

¹⁷ *Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1932*, p. 36 (Washington, 1932).

¹⁸ John Spencer Bassett (ed.), *Correspondence of Andrew Jackson*, Vol. I, p. xxiii (Washington, 1926).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. xxiii.

²⁰ *Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1932*, p. 36 (Washington, 1932).

More than half of the Jackson papers are in the Library of Congress; the rest being widely scattered in the hands of individuals and libraries. The collection is said to have cost the Government \$18,000.²¹

MARTIN VAN BUREN

The Library of Congress houses the principal collection of Van Buren papers. Following Van Buren's death in 1862 his papers remained in the possession of the family until 1904-1905 when they were presented to the Library of Congress by Mrs. Smith Thompson Van Buren, widow of the President's son, Mrs. Ellen James Van Buren Morris, and Dr. Stuyvesant Fish Morris.²² The papers were carefully selected, first by the ex-President, and later by his heirs before they went to the Library. It is said that Van Buren probably burned the material he did not care to retain.²³ There are no restrictions on the use of the Van Buren collection. The New York State Library in Albany also owns valuable Van Buren letters.

WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON

William Henry Harrison's tenure in the White House was brief. The manuscript material relating to these few months of his career together with other records accumulated by the General are believed to have been burned when fire destroyed the Harrison homestead at North Bend, Ohio, in 1858.²⁴ The Library of Congress, largely through gifts of Mrs. Benjamin Harrison, has built up a collection of Harrison manuscripts, which though small is considered the best in existence.²⁵ The records are open to investigators.

JOHN TYLER

President Tyler's papers were left to his widow and a large part of this collection was destroyed in the burning of Richmond in 1865.²⁶ The most important group of remaining Tyler papers, a small collection, was purchased by the Library of Congress in 1919

²¹ *Congressional Record*, 76th Cong., 1st sess., p. 9046 (Washington, 1939).

²² *Handbook of Manuscripts in the Library of Congress*, p. 499 (Washington, 1918).

²³ Holmes, Alexander, *The American Talleyrand*, p. 422 (New York, 1935); *Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1904*, p. 42 (Washington, 1904).

²⁴ Logan Esarey (ed.), "Governor's Messages and Letters—Messages and Letters of William Henry Harrison," in *Publications of the Indiana Historical Society*, Vol. I, p. 3 (Indianapolis, 1922).

²⁵ *Hearings on H. J. Res. 268, The Franklin D. Roosevelt Library*, 76th Cong., 1st sess., p. 27; *Congressional Record*, 76th Cong., 1st sess., p. 9040 (Washington, 1939).

²⁶ *Congressional Record*, 76th Cong., 1st sess., p. 9043.

from Dr. Lyon G. Tyler, son of the President, for \$1,000. This collection has been augmented from time to time by gifts from the Tyler family and the purchase of a few miscellaneous items.²⁷ No restrictions have been imposed on the use of these papers.

JAMES K. POLK

The major portion of President Polk's papers, including his famous Diary, is in the Library of Congress. The first large group of Polk papers, some 10,500 letters and papers, was acquired for \$10,000 in 1903 from Mrs. George W. Fall of Nashville, Tennessee, an adopted niece of the ex-President.²⁸ The Diary covering the Polk administration, together with a mass of letters and miscellaneous papers preserved by the President, was purchased from the Chicago Historical Society for \$3,500 in 1910; the Society having bought this material from the Polk family in 1901.²⁹ There are no restrictions on the use of the Polk collection.

ZACHARY TAYLOR

Zachary Taylor's papers are widely scattered in the hands of his descendants. The Library of Congress has gathered, largely by gifts, a small but important collection of Taylor papers.³⁰ This collection is open to investigators.

MILLARD FILLMORE

When President Fillmore vacated the White House he took with him into retirement every important letter and document which he had received during his administration. Unfortunately, the President's only son, Millard Powers Fillmore, directed in his will that his executor "at the earliest practicable moment . . . burn or otherwise effectively destroy all correspondence or letters to or from my father, mother, sister or me." Following the son's death in 1889, the President's papers were destroyed.³¹ Luckily the executor did not do a thorough job and in 1908, quite by chance, letters making 70 bound volumes were discovered in a Buffalo attic. This material is

²⁷ *Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1919*, p. 32 (Washington, 1919); *Congressional Record*, 76th Cong., 1st sess., p. 9046.

²⁸ *Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1904*, p. 49 (Washington, 1904).

²⁹ *Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1910*, p. 26 (Washington, 1910).

³⁰ *Annual Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1940*, p. 94 (Washington, 1941).

³¹ Frank H. Severance (ed.), "Millard Fillmore Papers," in *Publications of the Buffalo Historical Society*, Vol. X, pp. vi-vii (Buffalo, 1907).

now in the Buffalo Historical Society, which Society, incidentally, houses the principal Fillmore collection.³²

The Library of Congress has only a few Fillmore letters and no restrictions have been placed on their use.³³

FRANKLIN PIERCE

Roy Franklin Nichols, the author of the authoritative biography of President Pierce, in discussing the disappointing sources for the Pierce administration states:³⁴

. . . Pierce seemingly destroyed his papers for those four years, carefully saving a few odd pieces such as some letters from Geary in the matter of Kansas, some vouchers for the expenditures of I. D. Andrews in promoting Canadian enthusiasm for the reciprocity treaty, and a few miscellaneous items noted in the calendar of the Pierce MSS. in the Library of Congress; these papers include most of his rough message drafts. The New Hampshire Historical Society has his letters to George and those from Sidney Webster to the same person, items provokingly few, together with some miscellaneous papers. The family have another miscellany including his accounts, some canceled checks and even his bankbook. The great mass of White House correspondence, official and personal, except as it is found in the files of the departments, has disappeared.

The Library of Congress has a small collection of Pierce material which is open to investigators.³⁵

JAMES BUCHANAN

The Historical Society of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia owns the outstanding collection of Buchanan manuscripts.³⁶ Buchanan, it is said, had a habit of preserving nearly everything that came into his hands, and in the interval between his retirement from the Presidency and his death he busied himself in gathering additional documents relating to his career.³⁷ These papers after having been used by three biographers, only one of whom finished his task, were presented to the Society in 1897 by the nieces of the President.³⁸ The collection, numbering some 25,000 items, covers all phases of

³² *Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1926*, p. 58 (Washington, 1926).

³³ *Annual Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1940*, p. 94 (Washington, 1941).

³⁴ Roy Franklin Nichols, *Franklin Pierce, Young Hickory of the Granite Hills*, p. 547 (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1931).

³⁵ *Congressional Record*, 76th Cong., 1st sess., p. 9040 (Washington, 1939).

³⁶ *Annual Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1940*, p. 94 (Washington, 1941).

³⁷ George Ticknor Curtis, *Life of James Buchanan*, Vol. I, pp. vii-viii (New York, 1883).

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. iv; Hampton L. Carson, *A History of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania*, Vol. II, p. 116 (Philadelphia, 1940).

Buchanan's legal, diplomatic and political career.³⁹ No restrictions have been placed on the use of the papers.

The Library of Congress has a small group of Buchanan papers.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

The Lincoln collection of White House papers was deposited in the Library of Congress by Robert Todd Lincoln on May 7, 1919.⁴⁰ On January 23, 1923, Mr. Lincoln, by deed of gift, conveyed these papers to the Library of Congress subject to the following reservation:

... to be deposited in the Library of Congress for the benefit of all the PEOPLE, upon the condition, however, that all of said letters, manuscripts, documents and other papers shall be placed in a sealed vault or compartment and carefully preserved from official or public inspection or private view until the expiration of twenty-one (21) years from the date of my death.⁴¹

In January 1926 the deed of gift was modified as follows:

... It is now my desire to modify the condition of the above deed with regard to inspection of these papers, and I do hereby modify it, so as to give access to said papers to my wife, Mary Lincoln, and to vest in her power and authority at any time during her life or until the expiration of the 21 years from my death to grant a permit to examine said papers to any person or persons who, in her judgment and discretion, should have permission to make such an examination.

And I hereby further modify said deed of gift so as to give the Librarian of the Library of Congress power and authority to have made a complete index of said letters, manuscripts, documents, and other private papers to the end that their safety may be preserved against the time when they shall be opened to the public.⁴²

Robert Todd Lincoln died on July 26, 1926, and under the terms of the gift the papers were opened to the public on July 26, 1947.

The Lincoln Collection is composed primarily of the files which were removed from the Executive Mansion soon after the assassination of President Lincoln. The papers were sent to Illinois where they were closed save to Nicolay and Hay in the preparation of their biography. During the years Robert Todd Lincoln eliminated from the Collection all material he regarded as "useless."⁴³

³⁹ B. S. Levin (ed.), *Guide to the Manuscripts Collections in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania*, pp. 22-23 (Philadelphia, 1940).

⁴⁰ *Annual Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1948*, p. 14 (Washington, 1949).

⁴¹ Helen Duprey Bullock, "The Robert Todd Lincoln Collection of the Papers of Abraham Lincoln," in *The Library of Congress, Quarterly Journal of Current Acquisitions*, November 1947, p. 5.

⁴² *Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1926*, p. 59 (Washington, 1926).

⁴³ Bullock, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

ANDREW JOHNSON

Howard K. Beale in discussing the manuscripts sources for his study of President Johnson and reconstruction states:⁴⁴

. . . During his presidency Johnson suffered from writer's cramp and therefore wrote little; that little was always in pencil. Few, then, of the President's own letters remain. But his other papers were preserved with meticulous care; in fact, it was he who first systematized the filing arrangements of the executive offices. His correspondence was voluminous. Many of his letters, to be sure, were from office-seekers and unknown, unsought advisers. But even these present a full and varied record of all shades of opinion.

Johnson's rehabilitation, according to one of his biographers, is no doubt due to the detailed and unexpurgated collection of records which he left to his family.⁴⁵

The Library of Congress acquired this very important collection for \$7,500 in two purchases from the Johnson heirs. The first purchase was made in 1904 from the grandson of the President, Andrew Johnson Patterson of Greeneville, Tennessee; the second from Mrs. Andrew Johnson Patterson of Greeneville in 1931.⁴⁶ The letter books of outgoing correspondence from the Executive Mansion are missing from this collection, having been lost by a person to whom Johnson's family had loaned them.⁴⁷

The Johnson papers are open to investigators.

ULYSSES S. GRANT

There is no large body of Grant manuscripts extant. The General was not a prolific letter writer and had but a limited correspondence with his political associates.⁴⁸ Some of the letters he received were returned to the senders in the years after his Presidency and many are said to have been destroyed by Grant himself.⁴⁹ The Library of Congress has a small collection of Grant material, the bulk of which was presented to the Library by U. S. Grant III, grandson of the President.⁵⁰ The Library has also made purchases

⁴⁴ Howard K. Beale, *The Critical Year, A Study of Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction*, p. 408 (New York, Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1930).

⁴⁵ Robert W. Winston, *Andrew Johnson, Plebian and Patriot*, p. 529 (New York, 1928).

⁴⁶ *Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1904*, pp. 50-51 (Washington, 1904); *Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1931*, p. 59 (Washington, 1931); *Congressional Record*, 76th Cong., 1st sess., p. 9047 (Washington, 1939).

⁴⁷ Beale, *op. cit.*, p. 407.

⁴⁸ W. B. Hesseltine, *Ulysses S. Grant, Politician*, p. vii (New York, 1935).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. viii, Samuel Eliot Morison, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

⁵⁰ Information furnished by Manuscripts Division of the Library of Congress.

of scattered Grant items from time to time. There are no restrictions on the use of the Grant material.⁵¹

RUTHERFORD B. HAYES

Most of the Hayes papers are filed in the Hayes Memorial Library, located on President Hayes' estate, Spiegel Grove, Fremont, Ohio. The Library was erected in 1914 by the State of Ohio in fulfillment of the conditions under which Spiegel Grove was deeded to the State by Colonel W. C. Hayes, son of the President. It is controlled and managed for the State by the Ohio Archaeological and Historical Society which has its headquarters in Columbus, Ohio. The deed of gift directed that President Hayes' library, papers, pamphlets, and memorabilia be housed in the completed building, which was to be maintained by the State in cooperation with the Rutherford B. Hayes-Lucy Webb Hayes Foundation. The manuscript collection, which is open to the public, contains over 75,000 pieces and is believed to be fairly complete.⁵²

The few Hayes papers in the Library of Congress were acquired mainly by gift but there have been minor purchases of scattered items. No restrictions are imposed on the use of this collection.⁵³

JAMES A. GARFIELD

Garfield began his brief tenure as President after a long period of public service — two years in the Union Army and eighteen years of prominence in the House of Representatives. During this period he carefully preserved

... all his official papers; his letter-books and letters; his manuscript journals, school and college notes and memorabilia; the vast mass of letters received by him and a large collection of pamphlets and newspaper clippings bearing on his career. All this material, through the wise judgment of his wife, was systematically organized, classified, bound up in volumes and indexed — a task which occupied the time of Joseph Stanley-Brown, formerly his secretary, for the space of about eighteen months. This done, the papers were placed in a memorial room at Mentor, built as an addition to the house which had been the Garfield residence since 1877, and there they remained untouched for thirty years.⁵⁴

⁵¹ *Annual Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1940*, p. 94 (Washington, 1941).

⁵² *The Hayes Memorial Library, Annual Report, 1937-38*, pp. 5-7; Samuel Eliot Morison, "The Very Essence of History," *op. cit.*, p. 27.

⁵³ *Annual Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1940*, p. 94 (Washington, 1941).

⁵⁴ Theodore Clark Smith, *The Life and Letters of James Abram Garfield*, Vol. I, p. vii (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1925).

The papers were then placed in the hands of Professor T. C. Smith of Williams College, of which Garfield's son Harry was President, for use in the preparation of a biography of the President.⁵⁵ In the period 1930-31 this material was presented to the Library of Congress as a joint gift from Garfield's children James R. Garfield, Harry A. Garfield, Irvin McDowell Garfield, Abram Garfield, and Mrs. Joseph Stanley-Brown.⁵⁶

The material is restricted and can be examined only by permission of the Garfield family.

CHESTER A. ARTHUR

The main collection of Arthur's papers was destroyed.⁵⁷ The Library of Congress has a small Arthur collection, primarily a deposit from Chester A. Arthur, III, which is open to the public.⁵⁸ Other Arthur papers were obtained from Mrs. L. R. Mitchell whose father J. C. Reed often helped the President in the preparation of state papers. This collection is small and not of great historical importance.⁵⁹ The Library has spent \$500 in the purchase of miscellaneous Arthur letters.⁶⁰

GROVER CLEVELAND

The papers of Grover Cleveland are in the Library of Congress. Some 30,000 Cleveland manuscripts were deposited with the Library before 1918 and to this collection was added in 1923 and 1924 the material used by Professor Robert M. McElroy in the preparation of his biography of Cleveland.⁶¹ Professor McElroy in describing the material which came to the Library in 1923 and 1924 wrote:

Mr. Cleveland, as have all our Presidents, left an enormous mass of manuscript material, but he left it in chaotic condition. The papers were packed into rough wooden boxes, without systematic arrangement, the important and the unimportant thrown together; and many of the most valuable manuscripts contain neither title, date, nor other indication of the purpose for which they were prepared. In most cases, except personal letters, the very authorship of

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. ix.

⁵⁶ *Annual Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1931*, p. 59 (Washington, 1931).

⁵⁷ George Frederick Howe, *Chester A. Arthur, A Quarter-Century of Machine Politics*, p. 292 (New York, 1934).

⁵⁸ *Annual Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1938*, p. 44 (Washington, 1939).

⁵⁹ *Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1925*, pp. 56-57 (Washington, 1925).

⁶⁰ *Congressional Record*, 76th Cong., 1st sess., p. 9047 (Washington, 1939).

⁶¹ *Handbook of Manuscripts in the Library of Congress*, p. 63 (Washington, 1918); *Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1923*, p. 44 (Washington, 1923).

the manuscript would be in doubt but for the fact that all are written in "copper plate," as he called his own neat but distressingly illegible handwriting. Practically every letter, message, proclamation, executive order, even the publicity notices and the successive copies of addresses often revised, are wholly in his own hand.

He apparently made no attempt to keep his files complete, and frequently the only copy of an important document was given to some friend who wished a specimen of his handwriting.

The forty or fifty thousand miscellaneous documents, mostly letters to the President, but including the final copies of many of his presidential messages, which he brought from Washington at the end of his public life, he stored in a wing of Colonel Lamont's country house at Millbrook, New York, and apparently forgot.⁶²

After finishing his biography, Professor McElroy arranged with Mrs. Preston, the President's widow, to deposit the papers in the Library of Congress.

The Cleveland papers, which are now owned by the Library of Congress, are open to investigators.

BENJAMIN HARRISON

The papers of Benjamin Harrison were deposited in the Library of Congress over a period of years beginning in 1915 by the President's widow, and daughter, Mrs. James R. McKee. In 1933 these deposits were converted into a gift. The Harrison material, described by the Library as voluminous and illustrating all portions of the President's life, is open to the public.⁶³

WILLIAM MCKINLEY

The papers left by President McKinley were presented to the Library of Congress in 1935 by George B. Cortelyou, the President's executor, who as Secretary to the President was associated with him more intimately than any other man.⁶⁴ One biographer, who had access to these records before they came to the library, wrote that Mr. Cortelyou kept a close lookout for biographical material and that he

. . . treasured all the official and private correspondence, documents of every description, memoranda in the President's handwriting, drafts of speeches and messages, reports of telephone conversations, photographs, pamphlets, and

⁶² Robert McElroy, *Grover Cleveland, the Man and the Statesman*, pp. 387-388 (New York, Harper and Brothers, 1923).

⁶³ *Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1933*, pp. 27-28 (Washington, 1933).

⁶⁴ *Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1935*, p. 33 (Washington, 1935).

countless other items of interest. In addition he preserved his own shorthand notes of occasional remarks made by the President, and kept a diary in which were recorded, from a peculiarly intimate point of view, all the daily happenings of importance, in the White House, at Canton, or in the trains which carried the President to various parts of the country.⁶⁵

The McKinley papers are restricted and permission of the Cortelyou family must be obtained to examine this material.⁶⁶

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

Theodore Roosevelt presented his papers to the Library of Congress in 1917. The collection which has been increased by gifts from the Roosevelt family is now regarded as complete as may be. The records, originally subjected to reasonable restrictions which permitted their examination to 1909, are now open to the public.⁶⁷

WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT

The voluminous collection of President Taft's private and official papers, estimated to contain a half million items, is on deposit at the Library of Congress.⁶⁸ William Howard Taft made the first deposit in 1919 and since that time the collection has been augmented by Mr. Taft and members of his family. Access to the Taft papers is subject to the approval of his literary executors — Robert, Charles, and Helen Taft (Manning).⁶⁹

WOODROW WILSON

The papers of President Wilson were given to the Library of Congress by Mrs. Wilson in 1939. This material, described by the Library as one of its most distinguished collections of manuscripts, consisted of approximately 180,000 pieces and covered the whole of President Wilson's life. Before transfer to the Library the papers had been in the possession of Ray Stannard Baker for use in the preparation of his *Woodrow Wilson: Life and Letters*.⁷⁰ The

⁶⁵ Charles S. Olcott, *The Life of William McKinley*, Vol. I, p. vii (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1916).

⁶⁶ Information furnished by Manuscripts Division of the Library of Congress.

⁶⁷ *Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1919*, p. 33 (Washington, 1919); "Theodore Roosevelt" in *D.A.B.*; and information furnished by Manuscripts Division of the Library of Congress.

⁶⁸ Henry F. Pringle, *The Life and Times of William Howard Taft*, Vol. II, p. 1081 (New York, 1939).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. vii; *Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1920*, pp. 36-37 (Washington, 1920).

⁷⁰ *Annual Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1940*, pp. 92-93 (Washington, 1941); *Annual Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1946*, p. 356 (Washington, 1947).

Wilson records fall into six main categories: the Executive or Official File, the Confidential File, the Personal File, the Peace Conference File, correspondence covering the period from retirement to death, February 3, 1924, and pre-Presidential letters and documents. The weight of these files, with the containers, was more than five tons.⁷¹

The collection is open only to those receiving special permission from Mrs. Wilson.⁷²

WARREN G. HARDING

Mrs. Harding before her death collected and destroyed much of President Harding's correspondence. What remains, outside of scattered specimens, is in the possession of the Harding Memorial Association at Marion, Ohio. It is understood that this material is closed alike to general reading and to individual research.⁷³ The Library of Congress has a small Harding collection, gifts of the President's sisters and others, which is open to the public.⁷⁴

CALVIN COOLIDGE

Shortly after President Coolidge retired to private life he directed that 50 steel transfer files of his correspondence and other papers which had been left at the White House be transferred to the Library of Congress. The papers, however, remained under Mr. Coolidge's control with respect to access or consultation, a right which Mrs. Coolidge exercises today.⁷⁵ A considerable body of Coolidge papers, mostly of a personal nature, remain in the hands of his widow.⁷⁶

HERBERT HOOVER

President Hoover's White House papers are in the Hoover Library on War, Revolution and Peace at Stanford University, Palo Alto, California.⁷⁷ This voluminous collection is open only to those

⁷¹ Ray Stannard Baker, *Woodrow Wilson: Life and Letters*, Vol. I, pp. xvii-xx (Washington, 1927).

⁷² *Annual Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1940*, p. 93 (Washington, 1941).

⁷³ Samuel Hopkins Adams, *Incredible Era, The Life and Times of Warren G. Harding*, p. v (Boston, 1939); "Warren G. Harding" in the *Dictionary of American Biography*.

⁷⁴ *Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1926*, p. 61 (Washington, 1926); *Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1940*, p. 94 (Washington, 1941).

⁷⁵ *Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1929*, pp. 52-53 (Washington, 1929).

⁷⁶ Samuel Eliot Morison, "The Very Essence of History," *op. cit.*, p. 27.

⁷⁷ *The Hoover Library on War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford University, Annual Report of the Chairman of Directors, 1939-40*, p. 21 (Stanford University, 1940).

securing special permission from Mr. Hoover and upon specification of the purpose.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

The papers of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, by far the largest collection of Presidential papers in existence, are by the President's action the property of the Nation. This collection, over 4,400 cubic feet of material, is housed in the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park, New York. The Library, built on land donated by the President and his mother with funds contributed by some 28,000 persons, is maintained by the Federal Government, and is administered by the National Archives and Records Service of the General Services Administration.⁷⁸

The Roosevelt papers are remarkably complete. The President attributed the kindling of his collector's instinct to William H. Chase of Bartlett's Book Store in Boston whose advice he frequently sought when serving as librarian of the Hasty Pudding Club:

"One of the first things that old man Chase said to me, . . . was, 'Never destroy anything.' Well, that has been thrown in my teeth by all the members of my family almost every week that has passed since that time. I have destroyed practically nothing. As a result, we have a mine for which future historians will curse me as well as praise me. It is a mine which will need to have the dross sifted from the gold. I would like to do it, but the historians tell me I am not capable of doing it . . . It is a very conglomerate, hit-or-miss, all-over-the-place collection on every man, animal, subject or material. But, after all, I believe it is going to form an interesting record of this particular quarter of a century . . . to which we belong."

⁷⁸ Proposed legislation designed to bring about the deposit of the personal papers and other personal historical documentary materials of the President, his successors, and other high level Government officials, with the National Archives of the United States has recently been introduced in Congress. Three bills, H.R. 7545, H.R. 8353, and H.R. 8416, in which such a provision is included, are at present pending before the Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments of the House of Representatives. These bills authorize the Administrator of the General Services Administration to accept for deposit in the National Archives:

"The personal papers and other historical documentary materials of the present President of the United States, his successors, heads of executive departments, and such other officials of the Government as the President may designate, offered for deposit under restrictions respecting their use specified in writing by the prospective depositors: *Provided*, That restrictions so specified on such materials, or any portions thereof, accepted by the Administrator for such deposit shall have force and effect during the lifetime of the depositor or for a period not to exceed twenty-five years, whichever is longer, unless sooner terminated in writing by the depositor or his legal heirs: *And provided further*, That the Archivist determines that the materials accepted for such deposit will have continuing historical or other values."

Approximately 85 percent of the Franklin D. Roosevelt papers are now open for research. For the time being the following categories are restricted: (1) investigative reports on individuals; (2) applications and recommendations for positions; (3) documents containing derogatory remarks concerning the character, loyalty, integrity, or ability of individuals; (4) documents containing information concerning personal or family affairs of individuals; (5) documents containing information of a type that could be used in the harassment of living persons or the relatives of recently deceased persons; (6) documents containing information the release of which would be prejudicial to national security; (7) documents containing information the release of which would be prejudicial to the maintenance of friendly relations with foreign nations; and (8) communications addressed to the President in confidence.

These papers are to be re-examined periodically, and it is believed that within 25 years all but a comparatively few items will have been removed from the restricted list.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ *Tenth Annual Report of the Archivist of the United States on the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, 1948-1949* (Washington, 1950); Theodore C. Blegen, "Preserving the President's Papers," an address of May 5, 1939, before the Minnesota Committee for the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Inc.; Waldo Gifford Leland, "The Story of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library," address on the occasion of the opening of the Franklin D. Roosevelt papers for research, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N. Y., March 17, 1950; and various press releases issued by the Office of Public Information and Reports, G. S. A., in connection with the opening of the FDR papers on March 17, 1950.