

THE  
NATIONAL  
ARCHIVES  
AND  
RECORDS  
SERVICE  
IN  
1978

Cover photos by Judy Miller, Croyle & Associates

Cover: The neoclassical figure of an aged Roman scholar at the Pennsylvania Avenue entrance to the National Archives gazes down the corridors of time. An inscription below him reads "Study the Past."

# THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE IN 1978

By JAMES B. RHOADS  
Archivist of the United States

Calendar year 1978 was a year of significantly expanding horizons for the National Archives and Records Service. Our resources are becoming better known and used by researchers and laymen alike. Our management of federal government records is becoming more extensive and, we believe, more efficient. Our outreach to the American public is increasing. And an international dimension has developed swiftly for us — both leadership and learning roles in the world archival community as well as satisfying cooperative projects.

The year past seemed to us to point a direction for the 1980s. After the predictable flurry of American bicentennial activities in 1976 and the surprise research surge caused by "Roots" in 1977, our heavy 1978 pace indicated that the National Archives will be called upon for some years to provide even greater services to its various constituencies. If this is the trend, and we believe it is, it is a challenge we welcome.

Since use of our records is absolutely central to the mission of the National Archives and

Records Service, an interesting development of the past year was the continued climb in research. This has been the trend over the last decade; it is now speeding up. Reference service at the National Archives building in Washington, D. C., and at the eleven regional archives soared by 17 percent. Help was given in response to visits, letters, and telephone requests. Reflected here it seems is the increasing desire in our society to deal with basic documents rather than with interpretations of them.

In our management of federal government records, we scored a notable "first" against the paperwork menace by topping the one million-cubic-foot mark in disposals for the first time. This was an achievement of the fifteen records centers, which store nonpermanent records in inexpensive space until eventual destruction. One archivist described the centers as a kind of purgatory where records "go to await their time, after which the good records go to the heavenly archives and the bad ones go to the flames."

The declassification of thirty-year-old records continued at its customary forty-million-pages-a-year pace, with a hurdle added at the end of the year. President Carter by executive order lowered the declassification deadline from thirty to twenty years, thus creating an immediate ten-year backlog of records for NARS to cope with in the years to come. Additional staff will be necessary to deal with this huge volume of documents.

Because the presidential libraries are part of the National Archives system, legislation signed by the president establishing public



U.S. International Communication Agency

The National Archives, keeper of the nation's memory, at night.

ownership of presidential records was important to us. It ended a two-century tradition that presidential papers belonged to the president whose administration created them and could be disposed of as he saw fit. The new law calls for presidential papers to be turned over to NARS as the president leaves office.

In a related area, good progress was made in the initial processing of Richard M. Nixon's presidential materials, including 950 White House tape recordings. Meanwhile, the presidential libraries system continued to expand. Four major construction projects either began or were projected during the year.

Our outreach program, in Washington and at the presidential libraries and regional archives, embraced a variety of activities: conferences, scholarly and popular publications, film showings, lectures, courses. There were many fine exhibitions and one notable innovation. NARS initiated a traveling exhibit program by sending on national tour a collection of its choicest maps. As it began a two-year tour, the exhibit was well received in Minneapolis, Austin, and Chicago.

The international dimension evolved from my own work with the International Council on Archives, of which I am president. Among developments was creation of an international archival journal. A joint U.S.-Russian documentary publication on early relations be-

tween the two countries and an extensive microfilming project of our postwar American occupation records for the Federal Republic of Germany were other highlights in the area of international cooperation.

The following report will touch on a variety of other developments during the year — including a disastrous fire at our Suitland, Md., nitrate film storage facility. A bigger role for us in overseeing federal government audiovisual output, continued work on simplifying federal regulations for the benefit of business and the citizenry, and the bestowal of \$4.5 million in grants to support projects across the country upon recommendation of the affiliated National Historical Publications and Records Commission, are among the programs. All of them elaborate my theme that the National Archives and Records Service had a busy, fruitful year in 1978.

#### MAKING THE RECORDS AVAILABLE

Public use of National Archives records continued to expand sharply, both at the main Archives building and at its eleven regional branches. The amount of reference activity — individual visits, telephone calls, letters — increased 17 percent. Much of this demand was for genealogical information, for which the Archives is a prime source, although scholarly



High Tahoun, National Archives, and White House

Among the many researchers at National Archives facilities during the year was David Eisenhower, who is doing a biography of his grandfather Dwight D. Eisenhower. Below is a photograph from the White House days.

use of the records widened significantly too. At the Archives building, almost one hundred thousand visits were paid during the year by researchers. At the regional archives 463,000 rolls of microfilm were used. Under their inter-library loan program, the branches lent 234,000 rolls of microfilm to public and research libraries across the nation.

To a staff sometimes hard pressed by requests for aid, one body of records posed unusual and time-consuming problems. The Watergate Special Prosecution Force Records are a particularly important body of records. Throughout 1978 we were called on to make difficult decisions on access to the records where the public's right to know had to be weighed against the individual's right to privacy. Sensitivity of the subject matter, the recent date of the records, intense public interest in the material, and the nature of many of the requests for information made the decisions all the more difficult. Requests came from prosecution and defense attorneys, former defendants and targets of Watergate Special Prosecution Force investigations, journalists, and scholars. Each required careful research in published Watergate sources, a thorough knowledge of provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, and close cooperation with government lawyers.

NARS was heavily involved in aiding the House of Representatives' investigation of the assassination of President Kennedy. Many copies of records were provided to staff members of the Select Committee on Assassinations. Material relating to the assassination and autopsy were made available to the committee's panel of experts in night and weekend sessions and were sent to various locations in the Washington area, to Los Angeles, New York City, and Rochester for examination and photographing.

A second body of NARS records became the focus of congressional interest during the year. Our extensive documentation on the Panama Canal was carefully studied as the debate developed before ratification of a new Panama Canal treaty.

#### CURBING PAPERWORK

The fifteen NARS federal records centers for the first time in history managed to dispose of more than one million cubic feet of records

during a twelve-month period. The total was 1.12 million cubic feet, up from 934,000 cubic feet in 1977. At the same time this happy accomplishment was attained, the volume of government records significantly declined for the first time in twenty-one years. Holdings of federal records dropped from 34.2 million cubic feet to 33 million cubic feet. Not since 1957 when the figure dropped 438,000 cubic feet has there been such a dramatic decline in volume.

Both triumphs in the federal government's war on paperwork were the direct result of a concerted effort by the National Archives and Records Service to compel federal agencies to dispose of useless records within scheduled time limits, or in the case of documents already in records centers, to permit NARS to do it for them. Prompt disposal of records whose retention periods had expired was the result.

Scheduling involves appraising series of records to determine their value to an agency's operations and identifying permanently valuable records for eventual inclusion in the National Archives. By scheduling records for minimum periods of retention, the federal government will be able to further reduce the volume of records it maintains. It is expected that one hundred percent of government records will be brought under such control by the end of 1979, an important goal.

NARS published *The Disposition of Federal Records* during the year, replacing a 1949 edition. The guidebook is expected to attract a large audience in the public and private sectors. In looseleaf form, it can be updated easily and constitutes a link between the archival and records management communities.

Most regional records centers were reorganized during the year. New internal arrangements make possible tighter control and enable senior officials to give their attention to long-range problems, while day-to-day operations are delegated in part to lower-level supervisors.

Computers are being increasingly used in the centers. The NARS-5 program for control of holdings of federal records centers now operates in each of the fifteen centers, and complete conversion to the system will be accomplished early in 1979. Not only are modifications being made to enable it to provide more sophisticated management information, but the same computer that controls the NARS-5 system is now being used to prepare internal



Bob Greer, Washington Star

**A sculpture in front of the National Archives building proves fine vantage point for watching a Constitution Avenue parade.**

statistical reports. Shortly, it will begin to monitor the storage space available in records centers.

One way to curb paperwork is to block its creation in the first place. NARS helped agencies achieve this goal by inspecting federal records management programs and recommending improvements, training agency personnel, issuing new standards and guidelines,

and making studies of records management programs. The year's major inspection effort evaluated reports management in six agencies. Individual inspections were also conducted in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and in the Department of the Navy.

NARS formulated training courses on automated information management, micrographics, word-processing, directives, and

mail. It conducted more than one hundred records management courses for 2,900 managers, supervisors, and support personnel. New standards were formulated for micrographics programs, mail management, and word-processing systems.

NARS analysts conducted more than one hundred thirty studies of agencies' records management practices. They identified problems and recommended improvements that will enable agencies to manage their information flow more efficiently and economically. A typical study, that conducted in the Naval Audit Service, resulted in estimated savings of \$351,000 from improved correspondence management.

#### RECORDS DECLASSIFICATION

More than forty million pages of thirty-year-old classified records were reviewed for declassification in 1978. Assisted by specialists from the Department of Defense, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Department of State, we were able to declassify more than 99 percent of the documents.

Among valuable records in the National Archives released for scholarly use through this effort were those relating to the military governments of Japan and Germany after World War II; embassy, consular, and central files of the Department of State; records of the United States Strategic Bombing Survey relating to studies of the effects of aerial attacks on Japan, Germany, and German-occupied Europe during World War II; the Immigration and Naturalization Service's alien internment files for 1940-46; and files of the Plans and Operations Division of the Army Staff for the period 1946-50.

On December 1, Executive Order 11652 was replaced by Executive Order 12065. The new order calls for systematic declassification review of United States government documents when they are twenty years old; under the old order this review was conducted after thirty years. NARS has prepared a request for additional funds and manpower to cope with the heavy declassification burden, some 238 million pages, that the new order has created.

In addition, the order vested oversight of the national security program in an Information Security Oversight Office headed by a

full-time director to be appointed by the administrator of general services. This office replaced the Interagency Classification Review Committee of which I had been acting chairman since 1973. The speedup of declassification will open up more and more records to the public.

Our efforts to make records available to researchers as timely as possible has required extensive review of restrictions placed on records by the creating agencies so that we may determine whether they are consistent with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act. As a result, fifty-four record groups were identified as having restrictions that appeared not to conform to the requirements of the law. The responsible agencies were contacted and requested to accept revisions of their restriction statements or to eliminate the restrictions. Responses from the agencies have been rewarding: restrictions on twenty-seven record groups have been completely eliminated, restrictions on two more groups partially removed, and four other restriction statements revised.

Thirty cubic feet of records turned over to the Military Archives Division of the National Archives by the National Security Agency and opened to the public occasioned considerable excitement. It was the first NSA material accessioned by the Archives. The records included declassified summaries of top-secret Japanese military and diplomatic communications during World War II, as well as some German naval communications. The Japanese material is the so-called "Magic" file, the Nazi material the so-called "Ultra" file.

A score of journalists from five countries studied the records after they were opened at the National Archives. *Washington Post* reporters generated four front-page stories, as well as several other stories.

Among the revelations:

- Japan operated a ring of spies who were members of Spain's diplomatic delegation to the United States during World War II. The Japanese began to organize the ring three days after the attack on Pearl Harbor. The first months of its operation were financed with \$500,000 left in a wall safe when the Japanese were forced to leave their Washington embassy. Spanish diplomats occupied the embassy and represented Japan's interests in



**Enigma machines were used to encode German messages during World War II. British intercepts of these secrets speeded Allied victory.**

the United States during the war. The United States learned of the network's existence by breaking the Japanese diplomatic code, but no attempt was made to break up the ring because the Americans did not want to let the Japanese know that the code had been broken.

- The documents also showed that sophisticated eavesdropping was the secret weapon that broke the German U-boats' stranglehold on Atlantic sea lanes, not radar, as Adolf Hitler's high command had suspected.

- Japan's World War II ambassador to Germany unwittingly supplied the Allies with detailed plans of German fortifications along the coast of France more than six months before the invasion of Normandy.

- At about the same time the United States was reading these descriptions of Nazi defenses, it also learned about the secret German V-2 rocket weapon.

The National Archives looks forward to receiving additional material from the National Security Agency in the years to come.

There were other notable accessions. Our collection of Indian records was bolstered by some four hundred cubic feet of closed docket files and other records of the Indian Claims Commission, dating from 1946 through 1978. The records are important sources for studies of Indian social and cultural history.

We accessioned the oral arguments for the United States Supreme Court term that began in October 1977. The National Archives now holds court recordings for 1955 through 1977.

The U.S. Naval Air Technical Services Fa-

cility transferred to us 3,500 reels of 35mm microfilm of aeronautical drawings and plans from 1910 through 1942. The drawings document the navy's role in developing military aircraft. Sixteen thousand rolls of aerial photographs of the United States dating from the early 1940s to 1966 were also transferred. The photographs provide coverage of areas of the United States that was not previously available.

From the Defense Intelligence Agency came two million aerial photographic prints made by the Germans during World War II. The captured reconnaissance photos mainly document the fighting on the eastern European front. They were subsequently used by mapping agencies in the United States.

Occasionally our appraisal work involves helping agencies preserve records still in their custody. In October, the Bureau of the Census implemented our recommendation to preserve the 1960 decennial census. This required converting computer tapes containing the 1960 census from a system for which processing equipment no longer exists to one compatible with current data processing techniques. Over 99 percent of the records were preserved despite the long and complex process.

#### PUBLIC GIVEN OWNERSHIP OF PRESIDENTIAL PAPERS

Starting with George Washington, presidents leaving office retained control over their records. No longer.

Effective January 20, 1981, presidential and vice presidential records become the property of the public when they are created and will be turned over to the National Archives when each administration leaves office.

Legislation establishing the historic precedent was signed late in the year by President Carter. The law was passed in response to the controversy over ownership of Richard Nixon's papers.

To assure that sensitive matters will be documented with candor, the new legislation allows a president to delay release of certain documents for up to twelve years. The Freedom of Information Act will apply to all records not subject to such restrictions.

Congressman Richardson Preyer of North Carolina, chairman of the House subcommit-

tee that drafted the bill, called the legislation "an important turning point in preserving rightfully public records for the public's use and benefit." As archivist of the United States and a member of the Public Documents Commission whose studies and recommendations led directly to the Presidential Records Act, I agree with Mr. Preyer's enlightened view.

In other action, Congress passed, and President Carter signed, four bills important to NARS. Public Law 95-378 abolishes the Federal Records Council, and Public Law 95-379 appoints new members to the National Archives Trust Fund Board. Public Law 95-416 reduces from fifty to thirty years the period after which records must be offered to the administrator of general services for transfer to the National Archives and to the same number of years the period during which the transferring agency may restrict their use; this law also makes formal the 1952 agreement between the archivist and the director of the Bureau of the Census to release census schedules seventy-two years after the census was taken; the Census Bureau had sought a longer period. Finally, Public Law 95-440 makes mandatory the appli-

cation of general records schedules throughout government; this will result in an estimated annual savings of \$2.5 million.

#### PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARIES

The National Archives and Records Service has in its custody former President Richard Nixon's papers, White House tapes, and other presidential material. Archivists began processing them in January 1978. By the end of the year, approximately one-fourth of the textual material had been surveyed and priorities established for further processing. Archivists arranged and described most of the files of top staff members of the Nixon White House. These files are likely to contain material relating to Watergate.

All White House tapes were duplicated for preservation. Archivists are reviewing the 950 tapes and indexing the names of speakers and the subjects of conversations.

The staff also completed an inventory for the Department of State of foreign official gifts received by the Nixons during his presidency. Except for three objects of minor value, all such



Frank Wolfe, LBJ Library

The First Lady met Ladybird Johnson at the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library when she arrived to give a speech at a mental health conference. Between them is Professor Wayne Holtzman of the University of Texas.

gifts known to have been received are accounted for and remain in NARS's custody.

Public access to the Nixon presidential materials is still the subject of litigation and negotiation. The constitutionality of present regulations has been challenged by Mr. Nixon on the basis that the regulations allow an unreasonable intrusion into his privacy. He also has challenged the constitutionality of the procedures by which Congress adopted the regulations. Progress has been made toward resolving these differences through negotiation.

More progress was made toward opening the twelve hundred cubic feet of Mr. Nixon's prepresidential papers. In accordance with a letter from the former president authorizing public access to the materials, archivists reviewed the most important papers and shipped the collection to the Federal Archives and Records Center at Laguna Niguel, California. Many of the papers will be opened to the public in 1979.

Archivists at the Ford Papers Project arranged Gerald Ford's congressional and vice-presidential papers. The staff began processing the materials late in the year. Audiotapes of remarks by President Ford on occasions such as news conferences, state dinners, and addresses to Congress were processed and opened to the public.

Early in the year the National Archives established a liaison staff to provide archival services to the White House and to assure that full documentation of President Carter's administration will be preserved.

During 1978, construction of the John F. Kennedy Library progressed, plans for the Gerald R. Ford Library and Museum neared completion, and major renovations were undertaken at the Harry S. Truman Library.

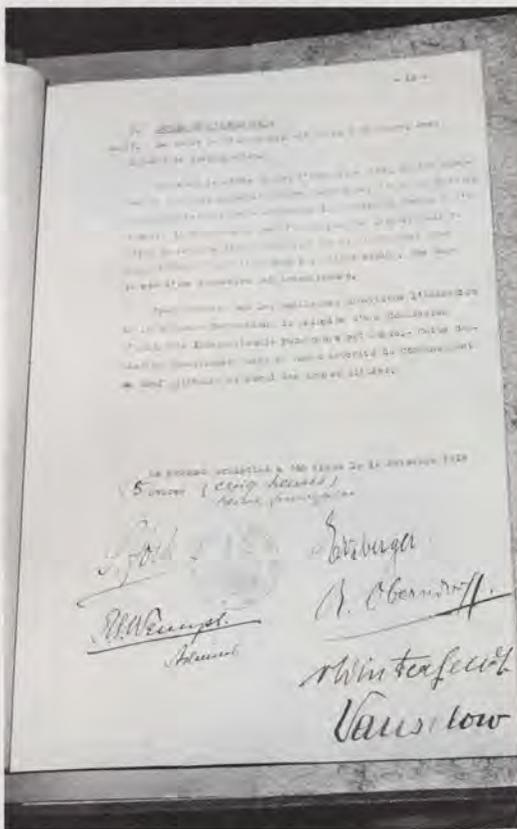
The Kennedy library is being built on an attractive harbor site adjacent to the campus of the University of Massachusetts in Boston. Contractors completed the exterior of the building in 1978 and we expect that the interior and the landscaping will be completed during 1979. Designed by internationally famous architect I.M. Pei, the building is a blend of triangular, square, and circular motifs. The plan for the 96,000-square-foot building is "so geometrically strong it could be a monument to Euclid," the *Christian Science Monitor* commented.

Meanwhile, the University of Michigan completed plans for the Ford library which will

be built on its campus in Ann Arbor. Construction will begin early in 1979. The library will be unique among the presidential libraries in that it will not have an attached museum; the museum will be built in Grand Rapids instead, President Ford's home town. The Gerald R. Ford Commemorative Committee is formulating plans for the museum and expects construction to begin late in 1979.

At the Truman library in Independence, the north wing, the auditorium, and the research room were renovated. Groundbreaking took place in September for construction of the building's final wing. The addition will give the popular library much-needed space and enclose the courtyard where President Truman lies buried.

The libraries continued to acquire and open historical materials. The Eleanor Roosevelt Oral History Project completed its first full year of operation at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Li-



The only surviving copy of the Armistice ending World War I was lent by the Federal Republic of Germany to the National Archives for display at the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library. This is the signature page.

Kathy King, National Archives

brary in Hyde Park. The project will document the career of Mrs. Roosevelt and expand our knowledge of the numerous political and social movements with which she was associated.

Significant accessions of manuscript collections in presidential libraries included the papers of New Deal economist Gardner Means at the Roosevelt library and the papers of Robert Hampton, chairman of the United States Civil Service Commission, at the Ford Presidential Materials Project. The Roosevelt library received an important accretion to the papers of Eleanor Roosevelt relating to her work with the American Association for the United Nations.

The number of research visits to the six presidential libraries rose to about six thousand. This was an increase of more than 9 percent over last year. About 1.3 million people visited the museums of the Hoover, Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, and Johnson libraries in 1978.

Extensive outreach programs were conducted by the libraries. The political science associations of Kansas and Missouri held a joint session at the Truman library in October to learn how political scientists could use the presidential libraries. Scholars, government executives, and elected officials gathered at the Johnson library in December for a symposium on government and the humanities. Visitors to the Eisenhower library's museum during the summer viewed a new exhibit depicting the programs and activities of the Eisenhower administration. At the Hoover library, a replica of a portion of the Oval Office was completed and opened to visitors. Temporary exhibits at the Johnson library included a display on the Panama Canal and one commemorating the sixtieth anniversary of the signing of the World War I armistice. For this outstanding exhibition, entitled "The War to End All Wars," the library borrowed the original German copy of the armistice agreement.

#### OUTREACH, CONFERENCES, PUBLICATIONS, EXHIBITS, FILMS

Distinguished scholars attended the National Archives's conference on legal history, eighteenth in a series on subjects that reflect the holdings of the National Archives. "The Law and American Society: New Historical Perspectives and Resources" focused on problems of privacy, development of wildlife law,

the impact of legal institutions on American women, and the federal government's response to Black protest.

In his keynote address before a standing-room-only audience, Chief Justice Warren Burger proposed that the nation devote three years to a serious rethinking of the roles of the three branches of the federal government. The chief justice suggested that such a study might aptly celebrate the bicentennial anniversary of the Constitution of the United States in 1987. Beginning in 1985, he proposed, a year each should be set aside for the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, although a portion of the final year would be "perhaps devoted to an overview of all that has been discussed." The result might be "a series of papers comparable in utility if not in quality with the Federalist Papers of 200 years ago," he said.

Highlights of the conference included papers on the potential of the Freedom of Information Act as a tool for the selective release of restricted information, presented by Allen Weinstein of Smith College; the federal court system as an "instrument for a revolution of racial justice" in the 1960s, by Burke Marshall, former assistant attorney general; the federal government as repressor of Black radicalism in the case of Marcus Garvey, by Robert Hill of the Center for Afro-American studies at the University of California, Los Angeles; and the National Archives's "infinite store of legal records," by Michael McReynolds, deputy assistant to the archivist of the United States.

One purpose of the conference was to acquaint the 180 participants with the resources of the National Archives. Traditionally, legal history has been written not from archival records but from published decisions. Recently, there has been a broadening of legal history research both in sources and subject matter. The National Archives is an integral part of that change.

Publications — scholarly and popular — are an important aspect of the NARS outreach program. The range of issuances for the year was unusually wide.

The National Historical Publications and Records Commission published its long-awaited *Directory of Archives and Manuscript Repositories*, with 3,250 institutions housing historical records listed, more than twice the number in the 1961 guide or in the fourteen-volume *National Union Catalog of Manuscript*





1944-47. The five rolls constituting this publication reproduce the agenda, minutes, and summaries of meetings of the highest advisers of the secretary of state during the last years of World War II and the following two years when James F. Byrnes filled the post.

The National Archives Trust Fund Board issued a checklist of captured or monitored Nazi sound recordings. The sixty-four historically important recordings selected from this little-known holding of the Audiovisual Archives Division include speeches by Hitler, Himmler, Goering, and Speer.

Toward the close of the year, NARS issued an eighty-four-page catalog of the 1900 population census schedules. The catalog was circulated widely and stimulated a rush of microfilm orders.

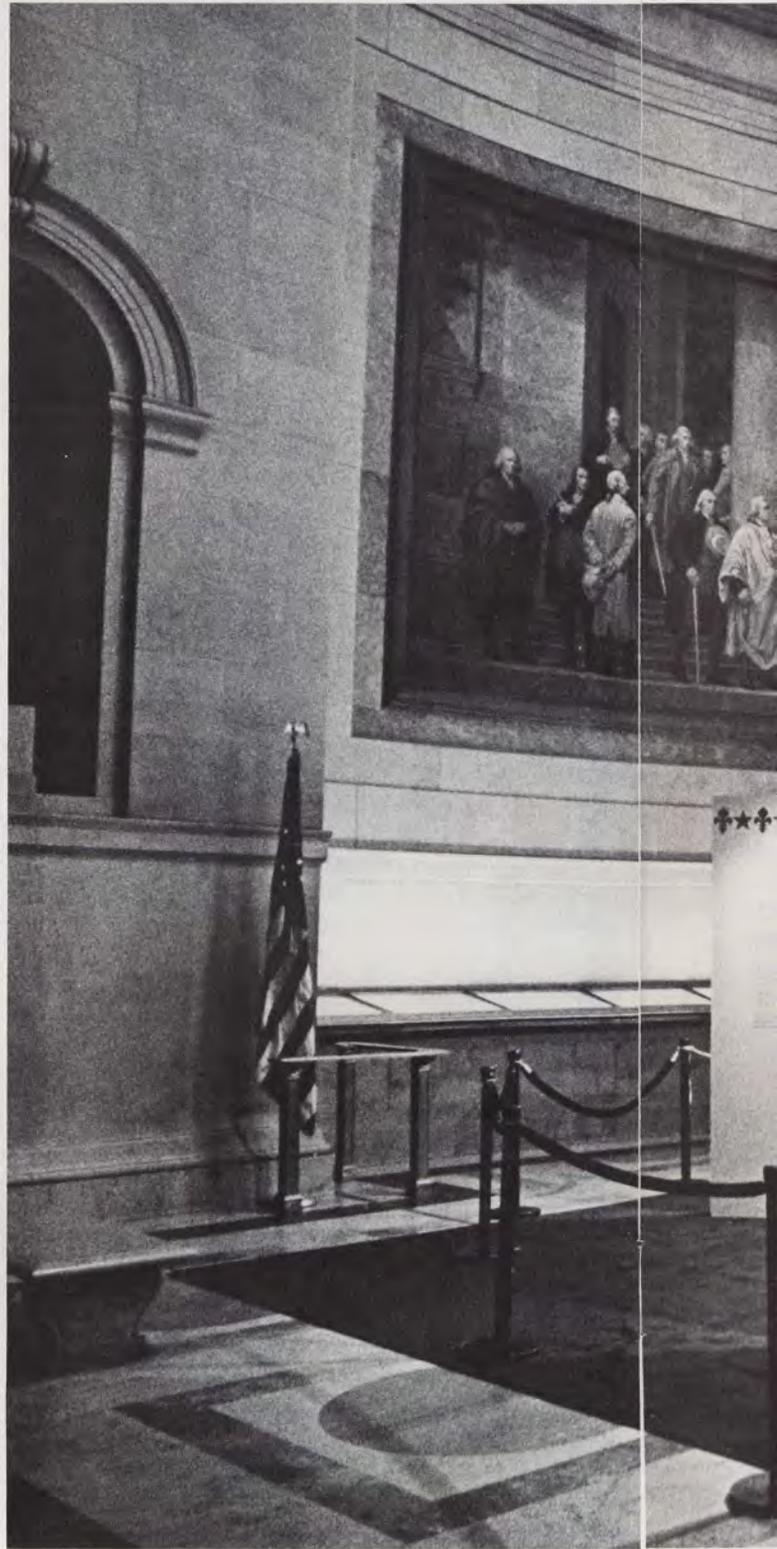
For a wider segment of the public, the Archives issued for sale a postcard packet of twelve photographs of old Washington, D. C.; a booklet on the United States Constitution; and reproductions of four colorful World War I posters.

For the first time, the Archives sent one of its collections on national tour. "Taking the Measure of the Land," an exhibit of seventy-five cartographic objects and documents, opened in Minneapolis and continued on to Austin and Chicago. The tour will include Dallas, Seattle, and Moorhead, Minnesota. More such traveling exhibits of important material from the National Archives are planned.

A second innovation was the publication of packets of educational materials on World War I, the Great Depression, and World War II, emphasizing the importance of original documents as sources. The packets include facsimiles of official documents, letters, photographs, and sound recordings. They are available to secondary schools for \$25 each.

The Archives marked the Fourth of July with its now traditional formal reading of the Declaration of Independence. For Constitution Day, September 17, a naturalization ceremony was held at which Congressman Newton Steers of Maryland spoke. Twenty-nine aliens from twenty-three nations took the oath of American citizenship in front of the United States Constitution.

Chief among the exhibitions in the Archives was "Vive la Liberté! The Marquis de Lafayette on Two Continents." Seventy-two documents and artifacts traced the career of the young hero





Cornell University

A major exhibition in the Archives's Rotunda traced the career of the Marquis de Lafayette.

of the American Revolution and lifelong fighter for freedom. Letters to and from Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and Webster; Lafayette's battle maps; his oath of allegiance to the United States; and such personal articles as a map case and the chair he sat in on the last day of his life were on display. Cornell University supplied most of the items from its large Lafayette collection with the Archives and the Smithsonian Institution contributing the others. Following display in the rotunda of the Archives Exhibition Hall, the exhibit was moved to the Johnson library in Austin.

Although small in size, the exhibit "Holocaust: The Documentary Evidence" at the Archives received considerable attention. Prepared in response to interest spurred by the "Holocaust" television series, the display included a deathbook from the concentration camp at Mauthausen, a report of the shooting of 33,771 Jews at Babi Yar, and a one-kilo metal canister that once contained Zyklon-B gas for use in "disinfection and extermination." Photographic copies of the exhibit on fourteen 18-by-24-inch posters are being sold internationally by the Archives as a public service.

In an unusual hands-across-the-sea gesture, the National Library in Jerusalem put on public view three documents from the Harry S. Truman Library. They were lent in honor of Israel's thirtieth anniversary as a nation. The documents were Chaim Weizmann's request for United States recognition of the new state of Israel on May 13, 1948; President Truman's draft statement the next day tendering de facto recognition only eleven minutes after the declaration of Israeli statehood; and a photograph of Weizmann presenting a torah to Truman at the White House. Sent in mid-summer to honor a state visit by Vice President Walter Mondale, the documents remained on view through the end of the year.

For those with a serious if not professional interest in history, the National Archives continued the sponsorship of its Associates program. Membership grew to more than 5,500 across the country. Special events for the Washington area included courses on genealogy; lectures by Pulitzer Prize-winner John Toland, columnist Robert Donovan, and David Eisenhower on the book he is writing about his grandfather; and a series of talks by seven distinguished university historians on the theme "The Immigrant Experience in the

United States." More than fifty-five volunteer docents are now guiding exhibit and behind-the-scenes tours.

Attendance in the exhibition hall, where beloved American documents such as the Declaration of Independence are on permanent display, topped 750,000 for the year.

Presentations in the Films at the Archives series attracted more than 12,800 people during the year, more than twice the total for 1977. Themes in the series included American life in the 1930s, ethnic Americans, oceanography, and the conflict between Germany and Russia during World War II.

A series of television news specials entitled "The Vietnam War on TV" was compiled from National Archives holdings of network news broadcasts. The series included commentaries by noted journalists and received a favorable response from the public and the scholarly community.

A counterpart of the Films at the Archives series was presented by the regional archives branch in Kansas City. In cooperation with the Harry S. Truman Library and the University of Missouri at Kansas City, the branch presented two film series, "Selected Social Issues in 20th Century America Through Documentary Films," and "America and 'The War.'"

Our eleven-minute animated film "Conquering the Paper Mountain," produced in 1977, received one of twenty-nine Council on International Non-Theatrical Events awards presented to outstanding federal government films. "Paper Mountain" also won second prize in the Washington, D.C. Film Festival (out of some 150 films accepted for presentation), and a number of awards in other film festivals.

#### THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION

The work of the International Council on Archives, of which I am president, was highlighted in 1978 by the first international archival meetings ever to take place in Third World countries. The International Round Table on Archives, made up of the directors of national archival institutions, met in Nairobi, Kenya, October 10-13 and discussed archival standards for preservation of records, accessions, personnel training, and other administrative matters. Another meeting, the annual gathering of the ICA executive committee, took place in Dar

es Salaam, Tanzania, following the Round Table gathering; the executive committee is responsible for the programs of the council in the years between quadrennial meetings of the ICA general assembly. Major actions taken included authorizing a second archivist for the ICA secretariat in Paris; election of Oscar Gauye, director of the Swiss Archives, as vice president of ICA, replacing Jeffery Ede who retired as keeper of the public records in England; and the approval of a new journal, *The International Journal of Archives*, to be published by ICA. The semi-annual journal will concentrate on matters of professional interest to archivists. Deputy archivist of the United States, James E. O'Neill, was appointed editor of the journal by the executive committee, and his work will continue the major role played by the National Archives in the international archival community.

Earlier in the year, we met with the ICA bureau for three days at Princeton University. The most significant discussions at these meetings were with Adam Wysocki, director of UNESCO's new general information program which is responsible for activities involving archives, libraries, and documentation centers. ICA and UNESCO have complementary programs for developing archival institutions in the Third World, and cooperation between the two organizations is obviously necessary. The ICA bureau was pleased with UNESCO's plans, and the two organizations are better coordinated in their efforts than ever before.

As part of the information program an inter-governmental council was established to advise the professional staff. I served as chairman of the U.S. delegation at the council's inaugural meeting, and was elected a vice president of the council at that time. I attended the bureau's meeting in Paris July 4-6 and reported to the State Department on the discussions and actions taken at that meeting.

This year the United States National Committee for the UNESCO General Information Program was also organized and held its first meeting at the National Archives. Representatives from library associations, computer documentation centers, and a wide range of international institutions formed a committee to advise the State Department and UNESCO on planning and promoting information exchange and development. I was a member of the organizing group that wrote the initial char-

ter and served as chairman of the nominating committee.

Relations with the archives of the Soviet Union were advanced during the year. Work proceeded on the precedent-setting archival project that has American archivists and historians and their Russian counterparts collaborating on a documentary publication on early relations between the two countries. The joint editorial board for *Russia and the United States: The Beginning of Relations, 1765-1815*, met in Washington for three weeks to choose documents to be included in the volume, which will be published in both English and Russian; the two sides are now editing and translating the documents with publication projected for 1980. The United States staff includes representatives from the National Archives, the Department of State, and the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

For almost three years the National Archives has been negotiating an exchange protocol with the Main Archives Administration of the USSR. Three drafts of the protocol have been proposed but to date no agreement has been reached. Exchanged would be personnel, professional literature, and microforms of records from the archives of each country. The major problem has been the question of encouraging greater access to the records of both nations by researchers. The State Department is reviewing the latest American draft of the protocol, and I hope to be able to sign the protocol with F. I. Dolgikh, director general of the Soviet archives.

The director of the archives of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs, S. L. Tikhvinsky, in 1977 requested that the consular records for the Imperial Russian government (now housed in the National Archives) be returned to the Soviet Union. Since under international law the consular records are considered to be owned by the Soviet government, I stated that the National Archives would return the records after we had microfilmed them. Because the series is extensive and most of the records are in Russian, it may be several years before the records can be filmed and returned.

International interest in the holdings of the National Archives has increased greatly in recent years. The first major project involved the cooperation of the Archives and the Federal Republic of Germany to reproduce on 16mm

microfiche selected records of the post-World War II U.S. Office of the Military Government of Germany (OMGUS). Representing the federal and state archives of Germany and the Institute for Contemporary History in Munich, teams of German archivists and historians are describing the records on data sheets. These sheets are filmed together with the records they describe and placed in microfilm jackets. So far, nearly two million images on about thirty thousand jackets have been produced. This is nearly a quarter of the estimated total. Participating German institutions will receive copies of the data sheets and microfilm jackets. The Archives will retain copies of the microfilm.

Following the German lead, representatives of the National Diet Library of Japan began work on a pilot project to microfilm occupation records relating to the government section of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP). About three hundred cubic feet of documents were involved in the pilot project.

Representatives of the state archives of Romania surveyed and ordered reproductions of records relating to that country during the 1940s. Copies of military intelligence and foreign service post files of the Department of State were included.

#### OLD NEWSREEL FILM BURNS AT SUITLAND

The collections of the National Archives pose, in some cases, difficult storage problems. One such holding is millions of feet of unstable, highly flammable old nitrate film stored in a suburban Suitland, Md., facility. It awaits the expensive, time-consuming process of conversion to safety film.

The facility was struck by fire late in the year and approximately 12.8 million feet of newsreels were destroyed when twenty of twenty-seven vaults of one storage unit were burned out. Lost were newsreels from the 1930s and '40s, including films of the Depression, the bombing of Pearl Harbor, and World War II. All of the footage was "outtakes" — film not used in final releases. Because the value of the movies was historical, it was impossible to place an estimate on the loss.

At the time of the December 7 fire, contractors were installing new air-conditioning equipment in the building and were lowering sprinkler heads so the required clearance be-

tween the heads and the ceiling would be maintained after the new installation was completed. Salvaged from the fire was 3.4 million feet of film, a quarter of which was damaged by either smoke or water. The damaged footage was rewashed and dried in the Archives's photographic laboratory. The film was then temporarily stored in a refrigerated trailer at Suitland.

At year's end, an ad hoc GSA-NARS investigating team had not yet completed its probe of the blaze. In trying to determine the cause of the fire, NARS is investigating the physical properties of nitrate film, including the hypothesis that it will ignite spontaneously.

An accelerated program to copy the surviving film on modern safety film has been instituted by NARS, but lack of funds prevents the speedy effort that is so desirable. It is estimated that \$3.7 million is needed to finish the task in the next two years.

Commenting editorially on the fire, the *Washington Post* suggested that the project could be further speeded if funds to support this vital service were diverted from audiovisual budgets of other government agencies, particularly the military services, which spend many times that sum on new audiovisual productions each year.

#### AUDIOVISUAL ROLE EXPANDS

The National Audiovisual Center, the central information and distribution source for government-produced or sponsored audiovisual materials, was assigned major new responsibilities during the year by the Office of Management and Budget. OMB has called for greater accountability of federal agencies involved in government media projects, formation of oversight offices to insure proper management, and a reporting system designed to prevent duplication of effort. As part of its new role, the National Audiovisual Center received production reports and undertook a comprehensive management program designed to improve the efficiency of federal audiovisual productions.

Throughout the year, the center acquired more than two hundred titles for distribution — bringing the number of programs available to more than eleven thousand. Among acquisitions were the prestigious "Music Is. . . ." series, produced for the Public Broadcasting

This Government has been informed that a Jewish state has been proclaimed in Palestine, and recognition has been requested by the <sup>provisional</sup> Government thereof.

The United States recognizes the provisional government as the de facto authority of the new ~~United~~ <sup>State of</sup> ~~states.~~ *Israel*

*Harry Truman*

*Approved  
May 14, 1948.*

Truman Library



President Harry S. Truman issued this draft statement tendering de facto recognition 11 minutes after Israel declared its statehood.

Service by WETA of Washington, D.C., and sponsored by the Office of Education. Six award-winning films produced by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, including the Academy Award nominee "Universe," were also obtained. Both of these program sets were singled out for special promotional efforts. The marked increase in marketing activities — including subject area catalogs, brochures, and magazine advertisements — has brought the center holdings to the attention of a much larger audience than in previous years.

To handle effectively the increasing volume of inquiries and orders that the center received, the master catalog data base was modified and merged into a more sophisticated information storage and retrieval system able to meet the requirements of OMB. Second, an automated order-processing and inventory system was established. This provides an efficient means for the center to meet customer demand. The lowest possible price is maintained while the center at the same time makes available its eleven thousand titles in a wide range of audiovisuals, from 16mm films to slidestrips, from printed materials to multimedia packets.

#### ADVISING THE ARCHIVES

The National Archives Advisory Council, a group of eighteen distinguished citizens who represent the public and learned societies most interested in the contents and use of the Archives, met twice in 1978. Each of the three-day meetings yielded important advice for the archivist of the United States.

Increasingly, the council has been drawn to broad issues of policy. Among the topics investigated were the archival and other implications of the Public Documents Commission report, as well as the historic Presidential Records Act, long-range planning at the Archives, NARS space and preservation problems and



policies, the work of the Presidential Task Force on Reorganization of the Executive Branch, operations of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, and the NARS budget process, including processes for internal evaluation of programs.

Two important procedural changes made the previous year took full effect. Council members are nominated by their professional organizations, but the organizations are now required to submit a slate of nominees that includes women and members of minority groups for the administrator's selection. And a member of the council, rather than the archivist, now serves as chairman. Clement E. Vose, professor of government at Wesleyan University and the representative of the American Political Science Association on the council, served as the first chairman.

Joining the council as new members on Jan-

uary 1, 1978, were James E. Cheek, president of Howard University, as a public member; G. Alexander Heard, chancellor of Vanderbilt University, as a public member; Andrea Hinding, of the University of Minnesota, representing the American Historical Association; Richard W. Leopold, of Northwestern University, representing the Organization of American Historians; Louis L. Tucker, of the Massachusetts Historical Society, representing the American Association for State and Local History; Halliman H. Winsborough, of the University of Wisconsin, representing the Social Science Research Council; and Malcolm H. Stern, representing the National Genealogical Society.

At the end of the year, the terms of four members of the council expired: Robert Gallman, of the University of North Carolina, representing the American Economic Associa-



White House

In a ceremony at the White House, President Carter is presented with leather-bound copies of the first two volumes of his public papers. Making the presentation was Jay Solomon, administrator of the General Services Administration. Looking on were (left) James B. Rhoads, Archivist of the United States, and members of the Archives's Office of Federal Register staff, who compiled the books.

tion; Donald McCoy, of the University of Kansas, representing the American Historical Association; W. D. Aeschbacher, of the University of Cincinnati, representing the Organization of American Historians; and George Elsey, president of the American Red Cross, a public member.

#### GOVERNMENT RULES SIMPLIFIED

Simplifying federal regulations is one facet of President Carter's drive to lighten the load of government regulations on businesses and the citizenry. The National Archives continued its leadership in this program by holding a number of workshops to help agencies draft their

rules in clear, simple language. The campaign appears to be bearing fruit.

Two other significant steps were taken by NARS to improve the government's communication with its citizens. Early in the year, an updating supplement to the *United States Government Manual* was issued. Then the Chicago and Los Angeles Federal Information Centers initiated new services to patrons seeking information on the latest federal regulations. Recorded telephone messages about regulations published daily in the *Federal Register* were made available regionally. And walk-in information seekers were offered help on the same subject. Both services were organized by NARS.

A significant cost-saving step was taken. The Office of the Federal Register has for years published a weekly compilation of White House documents, then a separate annual volume of selected presidential papers. Each required editing, indexing, proofreading, and typesetting. Under a new arrangement in 1978, the computerized weekly compilations were collected at the end of the year and issued as a bound book. In addition to curbing duplication, the innovation resulted in the more timely issuance of the volume.

Legislation by the Ninety-fifth Congress just before it adjourned produced the largest publishing workload in history for the Office of the Federal Register. More than 225 laws totaling 3,300 pages reached us in October for issuance in the *Statutes at Large*; this was a record for a single month. To make the laws available to the public on a timely basis, many staffers worked overtime. For 1978, more than 410 public laws totaling more than 3,700 statute pages were received, processed, annotated, and published in separate pamphlets and in the *United States Statutes at Large*.

#### PRESERVING AND PUBLISHING HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS

As chairman of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, an affiliate of the National Archives, I had the satisfaction to oversee the awarding of \$4.5 million in grants for the preservation and publication of historical documents during 1978. The grants, usually requiring the contribution of nonfederal funds in a matching or cost-sharing plan, were made to public and private nonprofit institutions across the country.

New publication grants include \$20,393 to the U. S. Naval Academy for a book edition of the papers of Revolutionary War hero John Paul Jones, \$28,944 to the University of Wisconsin for a microform and book edition of Indian rights leader Carlos Montezuma, and \$21,614 to the University of Maryland for a microfilm edition of the papers of Charles Carroll of Carrollton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

Among new records grants were \$34,715 to the National Council of Negro Women to arrange and describe its records; \$56,000 to Portland, Oregon, to develop a model urban archives program to serve as a guide for other

cities; and \$87,675 to the Yivo Institute in New York City to save records of mutual aid societies (*landsmanshaftn* in Yiddish) formed by Jewish immigrants to the United States.

The NHPRC continues to seek the advice of state historical records advisory boards, appointed so far by governors in all of the states except Maine and Mississippi, for evaluating records grant proposals and for establishing priorities and proper approaches. The boards, consisting of archivists, historians, and others experienced and interested in historical records programs, evaluate proposals for activities that take place within a single state. The commission also supports regional and national projects, such as those recently proposed by the Society of American Archivists for preparing record preservation manuals. Another example is the Eleutherian Mills Historical Library's regional survey of records of the railroads merged into Conrail.

The commission sponsored two conferences of editors during the year. Designed to promote communication and develop new techniques in the field of documentary editing, these conferences brought together editors from around the country. Another educational function is its annual sponsorship of a two-week editing institute, held in the summer of 1978 at the University of Wisconsin. Beginning editors participated in a series of seminars led by experienced editors. In addition, the commission's fellowship program provided four young editors an opportunity to spend a year working with established publication projects. The educational program, including the conferences, is supported almost wholly by private funds, and the commission is grateful for the continuing support of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Lila Acheson Wallace Fund.

With the growing size of the editorial profession, the commission staff concluded that many of its educational functions should be managed by a professional organization of editors and encouraged the formation of such an association. The profession responded affirmatively at the annual meeting of the Southern Historical Association in St. Louis. Later, an organizational meeting formally launched the Association for Documentary Editing. The commission wishes the new association success as it leads the profession, and those interested in it, to meet the challenges of the future. □

Back cover: A  
young woman  
contemplates the  
future. The  
inscription beneath  
her is "What Is Past  
Is Prologue."