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NATIONAL  
ARCHIVES  
& RECORDS  
SERVICE  
IN 1979



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JAMES E. O'NEILL  
Acting Archivist of the United States

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### *Rhoads Retires*

The retirement of James B. Rhoads as archivist of the United States in mid-1979 ended his distinguished National Archives and Records Service career, which spanned twenty-seven years. Appointed to the position in 1968, Rhoads was the fifth archivist.

Administrator of General Services Rowland G. Freeman III accepted his retirement "with deepest regret" and said Rhoads "is a distinguished archivist who is universally respected in his profession and by the public. He has brought substance, growth, and improvement to the National Archives. He will be sorely missed." As deputy archivist, I became acting archivist while the search for a successor to Rhoads was undertaken by a panel appointed by the administrator.

Under the direction of Bert Rhoads, as he is known in the profession, the National Archives and Records Service had its greatest period of growth. Among the challenges faced were great increases in reference demands. The Bicentennial celebration and the publication of Alex Haley's *Roots*, as well as the television series made from Haley's book, stimulated interest in the past which, in turn, led to increased use of source materials. During his tenure, Rhoads also had to cope with sharp increases in the National Archives's workload caused by two declassification orders, the controversy that arose over opening Richard Nixon's papers and tapes to the public, and the proliferation of government paperwork.

Among his many accomplishments were the creation of a nationwide system of regional archives, passage of legislation establishing public ownership of presidential records, expanded public and scholarly outreach programs, and creation of the National Archives Advisory Council. His important contributions to the archival profession both in this country and abroad were recognized by his peers. He was elected president of the Society of American Archivists, 1974-75, and was serving a four-year term as president of the International Council on Archives at the time of his retirement. In the Bicentennial year, 1976, he was host to the International Congress on Archives in Washington.



*It was an affecting hour in the United States Archivist's Reception Room as James B. Rhoads, retiring Archivist, and his wife Angela bade farewell to hundreds of staff, colleagues, and friends.*



### *Kennedy Library Dedication*

The John F. Kennedy Library building was dedicated and opened to the public on October 20. The building, located on a twelve-acre site adjacent to the campus of the University of Massachusetts at Columbia Point in Boston, overlooks Dorchester Bay. It was constructed and equipped by the John F. Kennedy Library Corporation using funds raised by public subscription. The site was donated by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. I. M. Pei Associates of New York designed the building for the corporation. The library will be maintained and administered as part of the presidential libraries system in accordance with the Presidential Libraries Act of 1955. Although the corporation began raising funds for the library building shortly after the president's death, its construction was long delayed. Pending completion of the building, Kennedy library holdings were stored in the Federal Archives and Records Center at Waltham, Massachusetts.

President Kennedy's papers and related historical materials form the core of the holdings of the library. These were donated to the government on February 25, 1965, by Jacqueline, Robert, and Edward Kennedy, trustees of President Kennedy's estate. The Kennedy library also holds significant supplementary collections of donated papers from President Kennedy's family, associates, and prominent members of his administration. More than seven thousand persons attended the dedication ceremonies for the library, at which President Carter and Sen. Edward Kennedy spoke and the Boston Symphony Orchestra performed.

### *Preserving the Nation's Records*

Perhaps the most difficult problem facing the National Archives is preserving the more than three billion items in its custody—textual records, motion picture films, still pictures, sound recordings, maps, and machine-readable records. Many of these permanently valuable materials suffered years of neglect before becoming part of this institution's holdings.

To provide overall direction and coordination for preservation programs in Washington



and in the field, NARS established the position of preservation officer. A Preservation Advisory Committee consisting of experts from government, industry, and the archival and library professions will assist the archives with preservation problems. It will meet for the first time in 1980.

Recognizing the tremendous cost of preserving paper records, NARS is establishing firmer guidelines to determine the categories of documents to be permanently retained in their original form. The National Archives has made substantial progress in converting its holdings of highly flammable nitrate-base motion picture film to safety-base film. Other preservation-related activities under way include a survey of pre-1821 records and exploration of preservation needs in regional archives branches. Funding for preservation work during fiscal year 1980 reached \$2 million, with an expected increase to \$3 million in 1981. NARS also sought a supplemental authorization of \$3 million for the 1980 fiscal year to expand this vital work.

NARS has continued its studies of magnetic recordings with the National Bureau of Standards and of problems of fading in color film with the Eastman Kodak Company. Experimentation involving records preservation technology went forward in the NARS research laboratory, and efforts in this field by other institutions were monitored.

#### *Microfilming Accelerated*

Arrangements were made to accelerate microfilming. NARS planned to spend \$500,000 during fiscal year 1980 and \$750,000 the following year on copying records on microfilm. The copying program will enhance preservation and reference service and make more records available nationally through sales. Original records, once microfilmed, will be destroyed to free needed space if they are not intrinsically valuable and if the copies are of satisfactory archival quality.

Although useful and desirable, microcopying is not considered a panacea by NARS. For instance, after the first year of an accelerated program, the easy filming will be completed

and in following years the volume can be expected to drop as documents on odd-sized paper and with inks that photograph poorly are encountered. The need for careful quality control will add to costs. For the initial phase of the program, a cost ratio of one-to-one between preparation and laboratory costs has been estimated; the ratio later may be three-to-one.

#### *Congressional Oversight Hearings*

For the first time in its history, the National Archives was accorded congressional oversight



*President Carter speaks at the opening of the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston. Inset: the library.*



hearings. They were conducted by the House Government Operations Committee's Subcommittee on Government Information and Individual Rights, with Rep. Richardson Preyer of North Carolina chairing the subcommittee. The hearings paralleled oversight hearings held for the Smithsonian Institution in recent years.

The subcommittee inquired into the fire that destroyed 12.6 million feet of volatile nitrate newsreel film at the Washington National Records Center in Suitland, Maryland, late in 1978. The subcommittee then reviewed a Gen-

eral Accounting Office report on preservation practices and the administration of the National Archives Trust Fund, a nonappropriated revolving fund. NARS responded to the GAO report, and GSA gave its views on the trust fund.

The witness list for the inquiry into the Suitland blaze included film historians, Public Buildings Service officials, representatives of the Library of Congress and the insurance industry, and fire prevention experts, including the fire chief of Prince Georges County. Past and present methods of handling unstable,





highly flammable old nitrate film at NARS were discussed. There was no clear agreement on what caused the fire, which occurred while film vaults were undergoing renovation to improve fire safety. A consequence of the hearings was the adoption by the Archives of stringent protective measures for the remaining nitrate film at Suitland. An accelerated schedule for converting remaining historic footage to safety film was established, with completion expected in the spring of 1980. Remaining to be dealt with were two million nitrate aerial photographs.

After its study of preservation practices, GAO recommended a more systematic, expanded effort. NARS and GAO did not agree fully on solutions to certain problems of records preservation which are compounded by limited funds and the lack of cost-effective technology to preserve many records. But NARS acted promptly to increase its preservation commitment.

GAO also recommended that the National Archives Trust Fund be abolished. Its income accrues from the sale of microfilm and other reproductions of archival documents, sales of audiovisual materials, and from presidential libraries admissions. The recommendation stems from GAO's position that revolving funds are undesirable because they deprive Congress of control of agency activities. A subsequent GSA inspector general's report recommended that the fund be placed under the control of the GSA administrator. In its response, NARS conceded the need for administrative changes but defended the fund as vital to its operations because of the flexibility it permits for publishing and for educational programs. NARS took steps to tighten personnel and financial management and to improve reporting methods, believing these changes would meet most of the criticisms voiced. However, bills incorporating more drastic changes—abolishing the trust fund or vesting control of it in the GSA administration—were introduced.

For one day the oversight function switched to the Senate. Two subcommittees—the Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee for

Treasury, Postal Service, and General Government, chaired by Sen. Lawton Chiles of Florida, and the Government Affairs Subcommittee on Civil Service and General Services, chaired by Sen. David Pryor of Arkansas—considered the presidential libraries system as part of a broader inquiry concerning former presidents. GSA and GAO testified in favor of a centralized presidential records depository for the future, with greatly curtailed museum functions.

#### *Physical Security Measures*

In recent years, incidents of theft and defacement of research material have been on the rise in cultural institutions across the United States. While a basic mission of the National Archives is to make public records accessible, as well as to preserve them, adequate measures must be taken to protect records from theft. To improve physical security in the National Archives building, NARS in 1979 instituted an identification badge system. Staff members are now required to display the badges. The National Archives also appointed a security officer to direct the expanded security program which followed a survey of security needs in the National Archives building. The survey team made 148 recommendations, sixty-five directed to the Public Buildings Service, fifty to NARS, and thirty-three to both. NARS meanwhile continued to tighten security in its federal records centers and in the presidential libraries. It is expected that changes in security will not directly affect researchers, though inconvenience may result.

#### *Dispersal of Records*

The National Archives and Records Service has been sending records of regional interest to its eleven archives branches around the country for more than ten years. This has enabled the branches to provide increased service to their research communities. In a departure of potentially far-reaching consequences because of the number of records involved, plans were made in the second half of 1979 to increase and accelerate the transfers.



*The portico of the Archives building makes a fine vantage point to view a parade.*



Following visits to NARS facilities outside of Washington, Administrator of General Services Rowland G. Freeman III directed the National Archives to prepare a plan to decentralize more records as a cost-effective measure and to make more permanently valuable records available to researchers outside of Washington. NARS proposed to increase the flow of regionally oriented records to the existing branches and to add certain bodies of records not closely related to other records held in Washington, rather than fragment archival documentation by establishing subject archives in various locations. An initial body of fifty thousand cubic feet of records was earmarked for shipment, and three thousand cubic feet were sent out before the end of the year. Dispersal of fifty thousand feet more by the end of fiscal 1980 was proposed, with another two hundred thousand cubic feet of documents to be reviewed for transfer in coming years.

However, by year's end the plan prompted extensive criticism from researchers across the country who complained that dispersal would disrupt research patterns. Many researchers were worried that they would have to travel to several repositories to do their research rather than to one central location. Questions were raised about preservation and safety of records in regional locations if large quantities were shipped out from Washington. Another concern expressed was the unavailability to researchers working at regional locations of assistance from the diversely experienced central archival staff. In January 1980, the dispersal program was suspended pending further study. Teams of archivists were to review any bodies of records proposed for dispersal, and representatives of major user groups were to be consulted before new transfers were made.

In connection with the dispersal plan, a study will be undertaken to learn whether it is feasible—and if so at what cost—to use telecommunications to lessen the problems with multiple storage sites. A computer system to locate material in NARS and in other major repositories also will be studied.

#### *Emphasis on Information Technology*

Because of the rapid advance of information technology, the Office of Records Management was reconstituted as the Office of Records and Information Management in the spring of 1979. An Information Technology Division was created to explore innovative approaches to the use of electronic, micrographic, video, and optical information-handling processes with a view to combining various systems for greater efficiency. An Information Systems Division will focus on the information flow within federal offices to provide guidance on the development and operation of appropriate systems. An Interagency Committee on Records and Information Management was established. Chaired by the archivist of the United States, this advisory committee is composed of senior officials from fifteen cabinet departments and agencies.

The World-Processing Keyboard Productivity Research Project, conducted by NARS in the Washington area, compared electric typewriting against computerized word-processing. One hundred sixty typists from ten agencies were tested on forty-two different pieces of manual and electronic equipment. The study showed that the productivity rate on conventional typewriters was 188 lines per hour; word-processing equipment produced a lower yield. When documents had to be revised, however, as almost all were, word-processing was less expensive. The study gave agencies guidelines for determining cost effectiveness of word-processing.

NARS continued to shift its emphasis from single-agency records management inspections to reviews of important program elements of a range of agencies. A multiagency inspection was begun on word-processing, and final reports were issued for mail and reports management inspections. Based on the study of mailing procedures, the administrator issued a series of recommendations to heads of agencies. Savings of up to \$60 million annually were projected.

Program mission inspections were initiated. Under this concept, NARS studies the impact of records and information management prac-



tices on an agency's mission. An inspection was begun at the Urban Mass Transportation Administration to determine how improved management could improve UMTA's grant programs. Inspection reports were prepared on records management programs at the Department of the Navy and the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

NARS began its new copy management pro-

gram with the issuance of Federal Property Management Regulation no. 101.11.3. The order establishes standards for dealing with copy resources, which have grown exponentially during the past decade. In 1977 alone, copying machines in federal agencies produced more than fourteen billion copies. The regulation is the first step in a new program to control this most pervasive of modern office technologies.



*Office of the Federal Register staffers use electronic typewriters to produce and update publications such as the Code of Federal Regulations. During 1979, the office completed conversion of its typesetting operations from manual to electronic.*



*Ansel Adams, America's grand old man of photography, examines prints he made more than four decades ago while working for the Department of the Interior. The National Archives's Still Picture Branch has 175 images by Ansel, some of them unique.*



### *Research Visits*

Researchers made some 200,000 visits to the National Archives and its branches during the year. About 70,000 were to the eleven regional archives branches, which also provided 450,000 rolls of microfilm to researchers and lent 380,000 rolls to local public and research libraries under the inter-library loan program. The "Roots" phenomenon continued to stimulate the most research activity. Family history now has strong appeal for many Americans, and the basic genealogical files in the National Archives—ships' passenger lists, military records, censuses—are key sources.

### *Accessions*

Among accessions of materials of high interest to researchers were United States District Court case files for Watergate-related cases. With the exception of some sealed records and records for a few pending cases, NARS now has all of this court's Watergate files. Secret Service records relating to the assassination of President Kennedy were also accessioned. They joined the Warren Commission records which were already at the National Archives.

Thirty-seven cubic feet of National Security Agency declassified cryptological records were accessioned for the pre-World War II and World War II periods, increasing the National Archives's holdings of NSA material to forty-eight cubic feet. There are cryptological studies and histories, diplomatic summaries for 1944 and 1945, Japanese diplomatic messages from 1938 to 1945, records of controlled German agents in 1944 and 1945, and seized German intelligence reports of radio communications intercepted by the German navy. Research interest in these records had continued unabated since the Archives first accessioned NSA records in 1977.

The United States Supreme Court sent its appellate and original jurisdiction case files and related records from 1972 and 1973, continuing the Court's policy of transferring relatively recent records to the National Archives. A large volume of records from the Office of Management and Budget were also accessioned. The National Archives has virtually all

of OMB's permanently valuable records through 1968.

### *Annex Vacated*

Pressed for space, the National Archives had since 1975 stored records in a nearby building, formerly Lansburgh's department store. When GSA calculated that upgrading the building to end a possible fire hazard would be too expensive, NARS was ordered to vacate the structure. Forty-nine thousand cubic feet of records were moved to the Washington National Records Center in Suitland, and 19,000 went to the main building for temporary storage. Gifts given to Richard Nixon and later stored in the building were shifted to a local storage company.

### *Declassifying Records*

President Carter's Executive Order 12065 providing for declassification review of national security records went into effect at the end of 1978. The Records Declassification Division in the Office of the National Archives then worked closely with more than thirty agencies in developing workable review guidelines covering twenty-year-old United States-originated information. By the end of June, thirty-seven agencies had completed new guidelines covering classified information under their jurisdiction. A similar effort involving seven key agencies, the Information Security Oversight Office, and the Records Declassification Division resulted in promulgating declassification guidelines covering thirty-year-old information provided in confidence by foreign governments or international organizations of governments. Experience in using the new guidelines is limited, but it appears that more classified information may be withheld during the course of initial review under the new guidelines than under the guidelines that they replace.

Much of the declassification program was devoted to reviewing under current guidelines nearly two million pages of documents reviewed earlier but not declassified. About 1.6 million pages were declassified. More than half a million pages of records over twenty



years old were reviewed because of researcher requests, while more than thirteen million other pages over twenty years old underwent review. Among the major groups of records reviewed during 1979 were records of the army's chief of engineers (1917-42), quartermaster general (1914-61), surgeon general (1917-46), Far East Command (1945-48), naval operating forces (1941-59), naval districts and shore establishments (1917-43), Allied Control Council for Italy (1943-47), Allied Commission for Austria (1945-47), Office of Military Government for Germany (1943-49), Selective Service System (1940-47), and Foreign Economic Administration (1941-45).

The proposal to transfer records to the regional archives caused the Records Declassification Division to survey 44.5 million pages of records, and some ten million pages of scattered records were declassified.

Congress approved an administration proposal to enlarge the declassification program by authorizing a substantial budget increase and expanding the Records Declassification Division to 137 full-time positions. Reorganizations into three branches covering civil and military records and special review and control work took effect in the closing days of the year.

#### *The Paperwork Burden*

The buildup in federal paperwork was reflected at the fifteen NARS records centers across the country. Disposal for the year totaled 900,000 cubic feet of records while 1.3 million cubic feet of new records were received. Court-ordered freezes on destruction of certain documents needed in lawsuits were a factor in the continuing buildup.

During the year, some nineteen million requests for information or copies of records were received in the centers. Internal Revenue Service records were the documents most often consulted by the public and the government. Military personnel records were also heavily used.

Two handbooks were issued to revise long-outdated publications. *Disposition of Federal Records* provides a comprehensive guide to record managers for defining and describing





*The July 4th scene: The annual Fourth of July celebration at the Archives building draws a patriotic crowd. A dramatic reading of the Declaration of Independence by a costumed actor, cannonading by a group garbed as Revolutionary War soldiers, clowns, and even a bit of rain.*



major elements of a records disposition program. It covers the application of appraisal standards, preparation and application of control schedules, and overall management and evaluation of a disposition program. *Federal Archives and Records Centers* offers guidance to agencies in transferring their records to records centers. It also describes the activities of the eleven regional branches of the Archives, files maintenance and microfilming services, and the government's records program in general.

Further expansion of the computer system took place. Monthly statistical reports on major programs now are being fed to a computer by each of the centers. Fast sorting, arranging, and selection of the information is accomplished. A comprehensive tabulation and a report based on this information is returned to the regions and copies are forwarded to the Office of Federal Records Centers for analysis and action. As a result of computerization, laborious manual tabulations requiring a significant number of staff years have been eliminated. Regional and central office managers now receive the data quickly and can use it to evaluate programs more efficiently.

A committee was established to refine appraisal criteria for identifying federal records that merit permanent retention. When approved, the criteria will be issued to agencies to simplify the process of appraising government records. They will assist agencies in making preliminary decisions about which records to save or destroy, thus lessening the burden on the NARS appraisal staff.

Begun in 1975, systematic inspections of all NARS records centers continued in 1979 as a team from the Office of Federal Records Centers visited additional centers in the system to investigate the effectiveness of internal operations. A keynote inspection during the year was a three-week review of the complex operations at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis. Reports prepared immediately after each inspection have provided guidance in correcting problems.

Federal agencies continued to comply in scheduling their records for disposition; disposition approval was given for two thousand records series listed on six hundred separate records control schedules.

### *The Regulatory Maze*

Government regulations—rules issued by agencies to carry out laws passed by Congress—are published daily in the *Federal Register*, the government's legal newspaper. Because the 95th Congress in its second session passed fifty-nine laws requiring executive agencies to publish notices of certain of their actions, page production of the *Register* continued to rise in 1979. A record 77,497 pages were issued, a 25 percent increase over 1978. The number of rules and proposed rules increased by 40 percent over the preceding year.

In addition to the new statutes, the *Federal Register's* increase in size also reflected the Carter administration's program to improve the government rulemaking process. Since greater public participation was sought, many agencies began publishing advance notice of their rulemaking plans. Administrative actions were explained in great detail. The increased wordage was only partly offset by the administration's campaign to draft regulations in clear, succinct language. To keep up with this production spiral, the Office of the Federal Register collaborated with the Government Printing Office to use video terminals connecting the office's editorial operations with two mini-computer systems.

The rules and regulations section of the *Federal Register* serves to update the *Code of Federal Regulations*. Because the *Register* has been photocomposed and its text stored on magnetic tape since January 1978, editors are now better able to extract and edit the *Register* material they need to bring the volumes up to date.

Another element now being developed in the electronic revolution transforming the work of the Office of the Federal Register is an information retrieval system that will permit much faster and easier public access to government regulations.

A third key effort of the office during the year concerned the *Index to the Code of Federal Regulations*, a primary finding aid. Because of sharply increased public concern over government regulations in recent years, NARS has increased the usefulness of the *Index* to those not familiar with the technical terms of regulations or with the complex structure of the federal government. A revised *Index* was issued



during the year reindexing the rules in the *Code* with terms more familiar to the public. As a further aid, related regulations issued by agencies are grouped together. Although the revised *Index* is almost twice the size of the previous year's volume, the new publication simplifies searches for specific regulations.

#### *Nixon Tapes and Papers*

A United States District Court decision in late July allowed NARS to continue processing the Nixon presidential papers and White House tapes for public use. In October, archivists began the final stage of processing Watergate-related textual material scheduled to be opened in 1981. Some materials not requiring extensive processing, such as photographs and the Watergate trial tapes, were readied for opening early in 1980. An appeal by the former president may delay the opening of the tapes.

#### *Presidential Libraries*

While the Kennedy library was being dedicated in Boston, the Gerald R. Ford Library was rising on the University of Michigan's north campus, next to the Bentley Historical Library. Work began in January and the cornerstone was laid by the former president in June. The two-level, 41,000-square-foot building is to be completed in the fall of 1980. In addition to Ford's papers, the library will house photographs, film, and audio- and videotapes. The building will have an auditorium, a special events area, and conference rooms.

For the first time, a museum in the presidential libraries system will be constructed apart from the library. President Ford's museum building is being built in his hometown of Grand Rapids. Ground was broken for the structure in June and completion is expected in 1982. As is customary with presidential libraries and museums, funds for the projects came from private and other donors. After the buildings open, the federal government will maintain and operate them.

Well over one million persons visited the six operating presidential libraries in 1979. During the same period, some one thousand researchers made more than five thousand research visits. New exhibits opened at the Truman and Johnson libraries.

#### *The International Dimension*

The archivists' community of interest—their "one world," as former Archivist of the United States Solon Buck called it—is the driving force behind the International Council on Archives. Working under the general direction of an editorial board that reflects the diverse nationalities and archival traditions of the ICA, the acting archivist of the United States, as editor, put together the first issue of the *International Journal of Archives*, to be issued in the first half of 1980. ICA's *Journal* will be published twice yearly, in French and in English, and will have abstracts of articles in English, French, Spanish, and German. It will concentrate on areas of common concern to archivists around the world: direction and planning, conservation, records management, buildings and equipment, automation, reprography, and education and training.

Articles in the first issue concern the training of archivists in the Federal Republic of Germany and the planning required to centralize Nigeria's previously dispersed archival sources. The director general of the archives of France, a distinguished medievalist, has written on the effect of current methods of historical research upon the kinds of records selected for preservation. New archival legislation in Australia and a description by an English archivist of the ways in which archival material can be used to teach local and national history to children are other features.

A second international collaboration, this one between the United States and the Soviet Union, neared completion. American and Soviet archivists held final meetings in Moscow in February and in Washington in June to select documents for a publication in both English and Russian entitled *The United States and Russia: The Beginning of Relations, 1765-1815*. The volume will contain 560 documents and 100 illustrations.

In one of the largest microfilming projects ever undertaken, NARS continued copying thirty million pages of records of the postwar American occupation of Japan. The Japanese government is paying for the project, which is expected to last ten years and cost \$1.4 million. The documents are held by the National Ar-



Filmmakers Frank Capra (left) and Pare Lorentz talk with actor-producer John Houseman (right) and National Archives staff members at a National Audiovisual Center film gala. The screening celebrated the center's new sales and rental catalog Documentary Film Classics. Lorentz' *The River* (1937) and Capra's *Why We Fight* series (1942-45) are included in the listings.

chives at its Washington National Records Center. Some 90 percent of the records of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers are being microfilmed for the National Diet Library in Tokyo. The documents of Douglas MacArthur's command cover political, military, and diplomatic developments for the period 1945 to 1952. The enormous undertaking parallels a similar copying project that the Federal Republic of Germany has had under way at the records center for some years.

#### *Expanded Audiovisual Role*

As the central distributor for government-produced and sponsored films, the National Audiovisual Center carried out a major new responsibility assigned to it by the Office of Management and Budget. As a start toward attaining greater accountability for federal media

projects, the center made a detailed study of such activities by the agencies and in May issued its first annual *Federal Audiovisual Activity Report*. Later in the year, the center circulated two guidance packets to assist agencies in defining their audiovisual activities and in assessing the costs of their projects.

The center also issued a catalog of thirty-six documentary classics produced by the government between 1934 and 1965 that it has available for sale or rent. An evening of screenings for film buyers and other interested professionals was held. Former movie directors Frank Capra and Pare Lorentz were guests of honor; actor-producer John Houseman served as the moderator. Lorentz, whose documentaries remain highly influential four decades after they were created, told about filming *The River* in 1937 for the Farm Security Administration.



Matching this recital for drama was Capra's discussion of his World War II series *Why We Fight*—seven films made between 1942 and the end of the war to, in the director's words, "let the enemy prove to our soldiers the . . . justice of our [cause]." Capra produced the films from German and Japanese news and propaganda footage.

#### *Educational Outreach*

Part of the National Archives's mission is to make available to the public the records of the federal government. The Office of Educational Programs plays a principal role in bringing knowledge of our documentary heritage to average citizens, to schoolchildren, and to the scholarly community. The office carries out its responsibility through exhibitions, publications, conferences, and films.

One of its most important productions this past year was *The American Image: Photographs From the National Archives, 1860-1960*—an exhibit and a book. The book, undertaken in conjunction with Pantheon Books, catalogs a major exhibition of archival photographs that opened at the Archives in November 1979. Both the exhibit and book drew critical and popular acclaim.

Earlier in the year, NARS collaborated with the United States Geological Survey to honor the Survey's 100th anniversary with an exhibition entitled *National Treasures: Land, Water, Minerals*. Meanwhile, the tour of a third NARS exhibit, *Taking the Measure of the Land*, a selection of cartographic objects and documents, concluded with showings in Chicago, St. Louis, Dallas, Little Rock, and Moorehead, Minnesota. During its tour of eight cities over a two-year period, *Measure* was viewed by more than 300,000 people.

A second publication, *Index to the Papers of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789*, was a landmark scholarly publication. Since the index lists persons, important places, and subjects among the most valuable papers in the National Archives, it will enable scholars to study the documents in great depth. *Versatile Guardian: Research in Naval History* documented an Archives conference on naval history, the eleventh in a series of conferences examining topics on which the Archives has broad holdings. The 295-page volume was published by Howard University Press.

A panoply of microfilm publications was issued in 1979. One hundred sixty rolls of *Annual Reports of the War Department, 1822-1947*, were completed. A twenty-six-roll publication covering State Department documents relating to the internal affairs of Palestine in 1944 also was completed. Of significance to genealogical researchers are the records of the volunteer soldiers who served in state organizations during the Florida Indian War of 1835-42. Rolls documenting this service were compiled in 1979. Other works in progress range from Department of the Army investigation and trial records of war criminals to presidential proclamations for the period 1789 to 1936.



Among popular publications were a folio of Norman Rockwell's "Four Freedoms" posters; *Conquering the Paper Mountain*, an illustrated booklet based on a film describing the history and role of the National Archives; and a set of World War I posters.

One of the National Archives's most popular education programs is the "Films at the Archives" series, in which important films from holdings of government-produced or commissioned movies are shown. Screenings of three series with very different subject matter were given during the year. "Portraits of Power," a twenty-six-episode series of television documentaries produced by Nielson-Ferns International of Canada and the *New York Times*, examined the careers of major world leaders of the twentieth century. "The Rise and Fall of Germany," six documentaries produced by Chronos Films of Germany, depicted major events and personages in German history from 1871 to 1945. *America's Adventure in Space*, a film retrospective of NASA productions, commemorated the tenth anniversary of man's first walk on the moon.

The National Archives holds periodic historical conferences based on its holdings. The conference for 1979, entitled "Soldiers and Civilians: The U. S. Army and the American People," attracted some two hundred registrants, guests, and participants. Several regional archives branches cooperated in sponsoring meetings and symposiums on historical research and on resources in their areas. The Los Angeles branch, in cooperation with the University of California at Santa Barbara, presented a symposium on family history with Alex Haley as a speaker. The Philadelphia archives branch, in cooperation with Temple University and local historical organizations, sponsored a symposium on the history of Philadelphia as the city approached its tricentennial anniversary. In cooperation with Texas Christian University and the University of Texas at Arlington, the Fort Worth archives branch sponsored a symposium on research into the history of the Indians of Oklahoma, which drew attention to the branch's outstanding holdings of regional records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.





*Joan Mondale, wife of the vice president of the United States, admires a photograph at the opening of "The American Image: Photographs from the National Archives, 1860-1960." She is accompanied by Caryl Marsh, curator of exhibitions of the Office of Educational Programs, who helped organize the show. More than 700 guests attended.*



### *Preserving and Publishing Historical Documents*

The archivist of the United States is presiding chairman of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, an affiliate of the National Archives. During 1979, the NHPRC recommended grants totaling \$4 million to assist public and private nonprofit institutions in preserving, arranging, describing, and publishing documents important to the study of United States history. The grants usually required the contribution of nonfederal funds in a matching or cost-sharing arrangement.

The records preservation part of the grant program celebrated its fifth anniversary in December. For the second consecutive year, the commission considered more than 175 proposals requesting nearly \$6 million dollars for records projects. The ninety-four projects selected by the commission received \$2,022,241 altogether. State Historical Records Advisory Boards played important roles in the review process. Collectively, the work of the boards enabled the commission to estimate needs from a national perspective. As the boards have become more proficient, the commission has begun to consider ways and means of strengthening their role in program decision-making.

Commission-supported projects active in 1979 will serve as examples and provide guidance for programs in other states or regions of the country. The Western Council of State Libraries began preparing its recommendations on conservation issues and problems in each of the council's seventeen member states to develop a coordinated conservation plan for the West. In New York, the NHPRC's State Historical Records Advisory Board provided consultation and financial assistance to ten governing authorities in the state to develop local archives programs. The California State Historical Records Advisory Board also began to assist institutions interested in developing improved archival and manuscript programs. The Kentucky State Historical Records Advisory Board began a comprehensive statewide survey of archival holdings. The commis-

sion will continue to fund projects such as these since they offer practical solutions to common archival problems.

The commission staff has continued to coordinate its automated historical records data base which in 1978 produced the *Directory of Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the United States*. This work contains information on 3,250 institutions holding historical records. In addition to beginning a revised second edition of this guide, the staff has provided technical assistance to field projects for compiling more detailed information for the revised directory.

The publications program continued to support more than fifty documentary projects. New grants included \$20,000 to the Dunlap Society to publish a microfiche edition of United States county courthouse photographs; \$33,000 to Indiana State University for a book and microform edition of the papers of Eugene V. Debs; and \$33,000 to the State Historical Society of Wisconsin and the University of Wisconsin for a microfilm edition of the papers of prominent Progressives from Wisconsin.

The commission sponsored a conference of editors to promote communication and develop new techniques in documentary editing. This conference brought together twenty editors from around the country. The commission also sponsors an annual editing institute and one-year fellowships for beginning documentary editors. This educational program, including the conference, is supported almost wholly by private funds, and NARS is grateful for the continuing support of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Lila Acheson Wallace Fund.

### *Summation*

In summary, the year 1979 was one in which the programs of the National Archives and Records Service were closely reexamined, and there were changes in emphasis to meet current and emerging needs within the framework of the institution's basic mission: to preserve and make available for use the valuable records of the United States government. □