

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES
& RECORDS SERVICE IN 1980

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The National Archives and Records Service (NARS) charted a new course in 1980, its forty-sixth year. A new archivist of the United States, Robert M. Warner, reorganized its administration to cope with growing holdings and increased demand from users, preserve archival materials, and make use of new technology.

The reorganization, announced October 16, established an Office of Program Development to study and improve basic archival and records and information management processes such as appraisal, arrangement, description, and preservation of records. The office will assess both the current and the potential application of modern technology to NARS records storage, preservation, and information retrieval problems.

Preservation planning is being assisted by a new Archives Advisory Committee on Preservation, organized early in 1980 under Acting Archivist of the United States James E. O'Neill. Its eighteen members are experts on the safekeeping and restoration of paper, magnetic tape, film, and other materials. NARS designated a preservation officer to coordinate policies and carry out liaison with professional organizations. A Paper Preservation Task Force, made up of staff members, completed the first in a series of studies to establish priorities for preservation of NARS holdings. Accompanying these organizational moves were new assignments for some of the senior executives of NARS.

Because of the massive number and wide variety of documents involved, NARS preservation projects are costly. The dimensions were clearly revealed by a study completed in 1980 of the nation's oldest paper records—those created prior to 1821. NARS identified some fifteen thousand cubic feet of pre-1821 records scattered through sixty record groups in the National Archives building and seven of its regional repositories. All such records are considered intrinsically valuable because of age, rarity, and association with the nation's birth. The preservation cost for these records, less than 1 percent of NARS holdings, was placed at \$17 million.

In a precedent-setting development for the archival world, a major documentary collection from the early history of Russian-American relations was published, the result of a four-year collaboration by archivists and historians from the two countries. *The United States and Russia:*

The Beginning of Relations, 1765-1815, which was published simultaneously in English and Russian, totals 1,184 pages in its English-language version and explores a panorama of commercial, scientific, cultural, and diplomatic contacts. Material was drawn from many repositories, and much of it is in print for the first time. Highlights are reports by John Paul Jones during his service as an admiral in the Russian navy, correspondence between Thomas Jefferson and Emperor Alexander I, and a letter from Catherine the Great to King George III in which the Russian empress turns down his request for her to send troops to help the English put down the American colonial rebellion. The United States editorial team was drawn from the Archives, the Department of State, and the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies. Their Russian counterparts were from the Soviet Academy of Sciences, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Main Archival Administration.

Many other significant publications were issued during the year, including a number of microfilm publications, seven descriptive pamphlets to accompany microfilms, two preliminary inventories, and the final two volumes in the *Guide-Index to Military Operations of the Civil War*. Also published was *Clio Was a Woman: Studies in the History of American Women*, a volume of papers delivered at an Archives conference.

To bolster protection of its valuable collections, NARS appointed a security and safety officer for the first time in its history. The responsibilities include oversight of public access to Archives facilities and records, the efficiency of fire and intrusion alarm systems, and of working conditions that promote safety for staff and the public.

Noteworthy during the year were these other developments:

- Conversion of the last nitrate-based motion picture films held by the Archives to safety-based stock and initiation of another massive audiovisual copying project involving 2.2 million frames of nitrate photographs;
- Opening to the public of the first segment of White House tapes from the Nixon administration;
- Continued increase in the volume of federal government records at the fifteen NARS records centers;
- Consolidation of the interlibrary microfilm loan program at the Fort Worth regional archives; and
- Preparation of space and packing and moving activities to assist the Carter administration in moving out of the White House.

Change of Administration

Robert M. Warner, director of the Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan, became the sixth archivist of the United States in mid-summer 1980. He was appointed by the administrator of general services. Warner has written extensively in the fields of history and archives, served as president of the Society of American Archivists, and was chairman of the planning committee for the Gerald R. Ford Library at Ann Arbor.

Warner chose Edward Weldon, archivist of the state of New York since 1976, to be his deputy. In his New York position, Weldon supervised the organization of that state's first archives and planned the first comprehensive survey of the state's records. Previously, Weldon organized the NARS Regional Archives branch at Atlanta, then served as senior appraisal archivist and head of the NARS editorial branch in Washington, D.C. Instrumental in organizing two regional archival associations during his career, Weldon will serve as president of the Society of American Archivists in 1981-82.

Since the National Archives is central to the work of many scholars, Warner also set about renewing the Archives Advisory Council. Included on this body are representatives of the major national and regional historical and archival professional associations as well as five distinguished public members, a total of eighteen members.

The archivist energetically conveyed his belief that the Archives mission is a vital one by making an extensive series of speeches and appearances before professional groups across the country.

Access to Records

The Office of the National Archives is the heart of the National Archives and Records Service. It deals with the permanently valuable collections of records housed in the crowded National Archives building as well as a large body of records stored in the Washington National Records Center at nearby Suitland, Maryland. It also administers the eleven regional archives. It is one of the busiest NARS offices since it has had to cope with surging research demands in recent years.

During the year, the office responded to 2.9 million reference requests made through letter, phone call, or visit, of which 1.9 million were handled in the main archives and 1 million in the regions. There were 200,000 research visits to the main building and 49,800 to the regional facilities.





Robert Warner, the new archivist of the United States, addresses a meeting of the Federal Council on the Arts and Humanities at the Archives. Joan Mondale (center) was honorary chairman of the council and Deborah Sale (left) served as its deputy chairman.

NARS completed one major audiovisual copying project and began another. Having concluded a program to transfer the images on 6.4 million feet of chemically unstable nitrate motion pictures onto safety film, NARS embarked on a similar initiative for 2.2 million nitrate aerial photographs. The photos, taken for New Deal agricultural programs, survey 85 percent of the American landscape over the period 1934-42. They are the earliest photo survey ever made of the United States. The conversion, at the same size as the original, will benefit geologists, geographers, ecologists, archeologists, historians, and land-use planners. It is expected that the project will cost upwards of \$2 million and take several years to complete.

Another massive copying project, this one of paper records onto microfilm, reached high gear. Some 2.3 million images were microfilmed during the fiscal year ending September 30, 1980, at a cost of \$590,000. For fiscal 1981, an expenditure of three-quarters of a million dollars is projected. Microfilming of documents is expensive, but it can be offset by other savings. The originals, if not intrinsically valuable, can be destroyed or moved to less expensive space. Since multiple copies of microfilm can be made conveniently, microfilming makes records more widely available. Reference service costs can be reduced by furnishing copies of microfilm. Where originals are permanently preserved, microfilming spares original records excessive handling and deterioration.

Since 1969, microfilms of many of the nation's most frequently used federal documents have been placed in the eleven regional archives to facilitate interlibrary loan and onsite use across the United States. As loans from and research in these centers climbed, coping with it posed a burden, so during the year the National Archives streamlined the process by consolidating the interlibrary loan function in its Fort Worth, Texas, facility; each of the ten other regional archives, however, kept one complete set of microfilm for onsite research. By year's end, the consolidation was complete and the Fort Worth staff was efficiently answering loan requests.

Many valuable records were accessioned by NARS, including the records of the President's Commission on Three Mile Island. These records were in demand immediately after being received. The interested researchers included former commission staff members, regulatory agencies, counsel for the company that runs the plant, journalists, and foreign governments. Ten thousand photographs from another presidential commission, this one on the coal industry, were added to the audiovisual archives. They were taken to document improvements in

the coal mining industry and in miners' living conditions. The records of the Ervin committee's investigation of Watergate were another accession. Still another was the handsomely illustrated first volume of the journals kept by Commodore Matthew Perry on his historic expedition to Japan in 1852-54; it was a gift of the late Mrs. August Belmont, wife of a Perry descendant.

Public response to the major exhibition *The American Image: Photographs From the National Archives, 1860-1960* continued to be enthusiastic through the entire year. Exhibition hall attendance rose almost 190,000, to some 870,000, a tribute to the attraction of this much-praised show (another factor at work here was the increased availability of gasoline for tourist travel). Smaller exhibitions in the National Archives building—*The All-American Sport: Baseball as Business, An Afro-American Album, Summer Images*, and *Stars and Gripes Forever*, the latter an amusing documentary view of the government at work and sometimes not at work down through the years—drew favorable public response as well.

Genealogical and local history courses continued to be popular. The volunteer program expanded significantly. NARS now has ninety volunteers conducting guided tours of the main Archives building, staffing the information desk, and aiding record-holding units in certain specialized areas. NARS offered a diversified series of public lectures during the year. Among the speakers was Pulitzer Prize-winner John Toland, talking on World War I. A third secondary school teaching unit, on the Civil War, was released in 1980; earlier kits covered World War I and the Great Depression. NARS continued to offer its introduction to archival research course *Going to the Source*. Training in the use of archives was given to college groups and to more than one hundred visiting foreign archivists.

Coping With the Paperwork Glut

There was a continued buildup of records in the fifteen NARS records centers during the year. Federal agencies transferred 1.4 million cubic feet of documents to the system, approximately 103,000 cubic feet more than in 1979. While the transfer reflected the continued value of the records centers as relatively inexpensive storage space, it boosted the total holdings of the centers to 14.2 million cubic feet of records—42.6 billion pages. This was a 3.4-percent growth over '79.

Meanwhile, the centers were able to dispose of only 755,000 cubic feet of records, far below



Sam Ervin, former chairman of the Senate Watergate Committee, visits the National Archives' microfilm reading room to examine census schedules from the Carolinas.

the year's goal of 1 million cubic feet. Continuing court and agency freezes occasioned by government litigation against International Business Machines Company and American Telephone & Telegraph Company and by other suits now cover 1.3 million cubic feet of records. The IBM antitrust case began in 1969. (The number of cubic feet of records frozen exceeds the volume of records housed in the three smallest of the regional records centers.) As the impact of the freezes spreads, space problems in the NARS system become more acute.

Since many of the records stored in the records centers are recent ones, the staff is kept extremely busy answering reference requests. The Internal Revenue Service is the biggest client by far. During the year, it made 18 million requests for service, a sharp increase over the previous year's total of 15.6 million. Most affected were the centers in Boston, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Kansas City, Fort Worth, St. Louis, and San Francisco. Much of the extra burden resulted from special audits and other IRS projects outside normal reference requirements. General reference requests, on the other hand, declined slightly from 5.1 million to 5 million. This reflected a decrease in requests involving Social Security Administration and military personnel records.

Progress was made during the year in three important records center functions: microfilming, computerization, and scheduling of records for disposition. Scheduling provides for retention of the documents by an agency for a specific period, to be followed by destruction or permanent preservation in the National Archives or by disposal.

As more agencies realize the savings to be gained by having NARS microfilm semicurrent records for them, the copying program at the records centers burgeons. Also participating in the microfilming program were the governments of Japan and Germany, which are paying to have post-World War II American occupation records copied. During the year almost 18 million images were produced. The total microfilm output slightly topped the 1979 total. Documents microfilmed during 1980 included U.S. Army Corps of Engineers land records, Veterans Administration maps and drawings, Department of Transportation highway safety records, Department of the Interior historical landmark drawings, and National Labor Relations Board briefs. So that this program can grow, more sophisticated equipment has been ordered by NARS.

During 1980, the computerized records control system was for the first time able to provide

central and regional offices with management information on all major functions of the system. A new space information system enables NARS to project long-range building needs more accurately. A system to evaluate employee and unit accomplishment on a weekly, monthly, and yearly basis was tested.

The volume of records readied for disposition increased by six hundred thousand cubic feet during the year; Veterans Administration files were the principal group of records scheduled. Negotiations continued, meanwhile, on three major unscheduled series: military personnel files, IRS corporation tax returns, and IRS estate and gift tax returns. Since 26 percent of all records held in the centers remain unscheduled despite a concerted effort by NARS since 1976 to convince agencies to schedule all of the paperwork they create, a sustained promotional effort must continue to emphasize the value of scheduling.

Because of the 1980 decision in the case of the *American Friends Service Committee et al. v. William H. Webster et al.*, NARS was ordered to develop a retention plan for Federal Bureau of Investigation investigative records to be submitted to the court for approval. The project requires an examination and appraisal of FBI records at headquarters and in the field. These tasks have been delayed pending the resolution of questions of access raised by both the FBI and the IRS. NARS has reached agreement with the FBI concerning the selection of cases and procedures for insuring the confidentiality of informant names. Having reached an impasse over the final issue, access to records containing taxpayer information, grand jury information, and wire tapping information acquired from the IRS, NARS referred the matter to the Civil Division of the Department of Justice for resolution. At the end of the year, Justice ruled that NARS could not have such access, that the FBI must first do the screening, thus making the task much more laborious.

Honoring Our Recent Presidents

The presidential libraries system showed great vitality during 1980. At a press conference, President Jimmy Carter announced his intention to establish his own library. In Michigan during the year, exterior construction of the Gerald R. Ford Library on the campus of the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor was completed and the staff moved into the building. Meanwhile work progressed on the affiliated Ford museum in Grand Rapids, with an opening planned for autumn 1981. In Boston, the John F. Kennedy Library attracted more than six hundred thousand



The publication of the first volume of The Papers of Andrew Jackson was honored in a ceremony in the Oval Office at the White House on April 17, as Co-Editors Sam B. Smith and Harriet Owsley presented the first two copies to President Carter.



Runners carrying the Olympic flame to the Winter Olympic Games at Lake Placid, N.Y. light a flame at the Franklin D. Roosevelt gravesite in the Rose Garden of the FDR National Historic Site in Hyde Park.



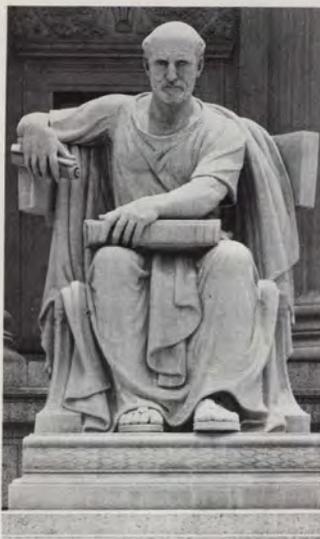
visitors in its first full year of operation, while in Washington, D.C., twelve and one-half hours of Watergate trial tapes were opened to the public.

President Carter took steps toward establishing a library in his own name by confirming that he would donate most of his presidential materials to the public and would transfer his papers to the old post office building in Atlanta for temporary storage while a site for a library was being selected and private funds raised for the construction. He appointed three aides to advise him on library matters. Meanwhile, a National Archives staff of sixteen spent the close of the year identifying material in the White House complex to be shipped to Atlanta. Nineteen large vanloads of papers as well as memorabilia suitable for a museum were transported south just before Carter's departure from office in January 1981.

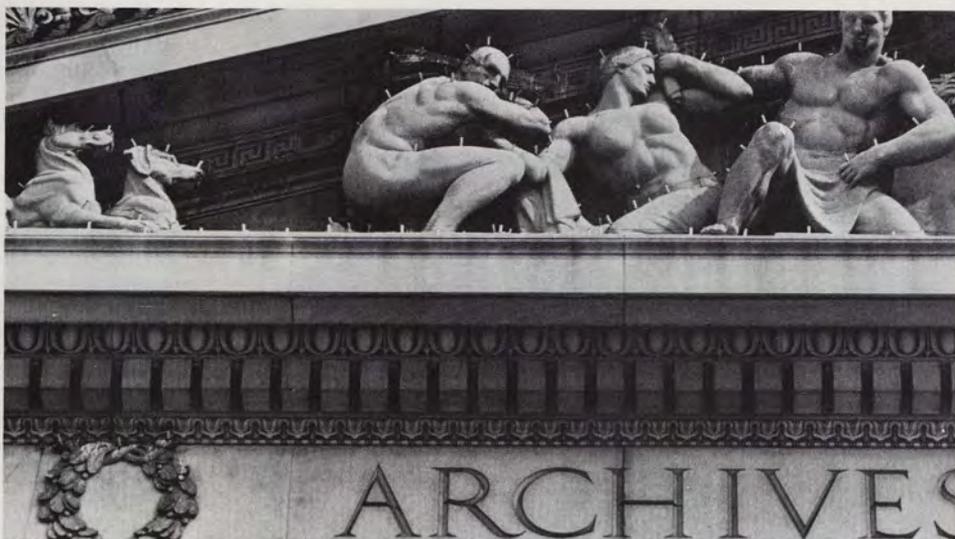
Carter is the last U.S. president to own his papers. Starting with the new administration, the Presidential Records Act of 1978 takes effect. Presidential records will be owned by the federal government and will be subject to continuous archival custody. Materials relating to private political associations and purely personal matters, however, will remain the president's personal property. The law provides that the president may dispose of papers during his term of office with the permission of NARS. The necessary records management controls are the responsibility of the president, overseen by NARS. Access to the presidential materials will be restricted for twelve years before freedom-of-information provisions will apply.



Construction of the exterior of the Gerald R. Ford Library has been completed on the campus of the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. Dedication of the facility and its opening to the public is planned for April of 1981.



"Study the Past"



Detail from south pediment of the Archives.

*A flagstaff
proves a handy
place to hang a
uniform.*



The 1st Virginia Regiment fires a round from muskets.

*An actor gives the
traditional dramatic
reading of the
Declaration of
Independence.*





JULY 4, 1980 AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES



The 1st Virginia Regiment demonstrates cannon fire.



Soldiers draw a child's undivided attention.

During the summer, personnel moved eight thousand cubic feet of Ford presidential and other materials from temporary storage to the new Ford library. Constructed at no cost to taxpayers, the brick and glass structure is two stories high, has forty thousand square feet of space, and has been described as "bright and airy, a high-quality building." Its staff of fourteen is now arranging the Ford documents for use by scholars. A search committee in the meantime began the hunt for a well-qualified director. Construction of the companion Ford museum, a two-story, contemporary-looking facility, continued at Grand Rapids, Gerald Ford's hometown.

The Kennedy library made a substantial impact on the life of Boston. In addition to drawing visitors, it sponsored or served as host for courses, seminars, lectures, and concerts. There was a series of seven talks celebrating Boston's 350th anniversary. The library also cosponsored a conference for thirty-five of the nation's top mayors. During the summer, the library became fully operational after it completed moving fifteen thousand cubic feet of archives to the new building. The library opened an Ernest Hemingway Room, a storehouse of the noted author's personal papers and related materials.

Twelve and one-half hours of former President Nixon's White House tape recordings which had been played at the Watergate trials, were opened for public listening in the National Archives building. Given extensive television, radio, and other coverage, the tapes drew packed houses for the first several months, but, with the waning of the summer traveling season, attendance fell off and listening sessions were cut in half. Some thirteen thousand people heard portions of the tapes through the end of the year. When interest drops still further, the tapes will be made available for listening on request. Public access was granted when the Congress earlier in the year approved proposed GSA regulations. Altogether there are six thousand hours of Nixon White House tape recordings, and archival logging of this material continues steadily. By year's end, 68 percent of the tapes had been logged as to date, participants, and topics. Processing of the thirty-six million pages of documents from the Nixon administration continued apace.

Scholarly use of the six fully operating presidential libraries continued to grow. Applications to engage in research jumped from 1,130 to 1,933 and the number of daily visits by researchers climbed significantly. Reproductions of materials furnished to scholars rose for the fourth straight year, to 29 percent over that of 1976.



Watergate trial tapes draw a full house to the National Archives. Opened in May 1980, the 31 tapes were a decided tourist attraction for months, but interest in them tapered off by autumn and daily listening sessions were cut in half.

Researchers in 1980 were furnished 216,000 items, 16,600 written and 38,000 oral inquiries were responded to, 539,000 reproductions were furnished, and 7,066 visits were paid by scholars.

Aided by the new Kennedy library's drawing power, visitor totals at the museums in the libraries swelled sharply to 1.7 million people for the year. Exhibits on such themes as the life and times of a president and on the American political process were among the attractions. The ten-year visitor total for the system now stands at 14 million people.

The existing libraries, together with the Ford library and museum and the Nixon presidential materials project, continued to augment their holdings through donations of private papers and the transfer of federal records. The libraries acquired 1.6 million manuscript pages, 3,100 museum objects, 12,000 still photographs, and 143,000 feet of motion picture film during the year. The holdings of the libraries now comprise 170 million pages of personal papers, federal records, and presidential materials; 1.7 million photographs; 11 million feet of motion picture film; and 150,000 assorted objects. Carter administration holdings will expand these totals in 1981.

Among the symposia held during the year by the libraries was a conference at Abilene on "America in the 1950s" sponsored by the Eisenhower library and the Kansas Committee for the Humanities. Participants included humorist John Henry Faulk and poet Allen Ginsberg.

Audiovisual Role

Charged with the rental and sale of thirteen thousand federal government films and other audiovisual materials, the National Audiovisual Center expanded its marketing and information

outreach programs in 1980. Direct mail campaigns, exhibits, advertisements, and special screenings spread the word of the center's work. A major reference catalog on medical audiovisuals and a supplement to the general reference catalog of 1978 were published. An update of all materials acquired is being published quarterly. Seventeen film bibliographies were prepared and disseminated. As a consequence of the increased activity, telephone and mail requests for information and for the rental and purchase of audiovisual materials increased 17 percent over 1979.

Because the center has expanded its holdings and its work in recent years, it turned in 1980 to computerization to handle financial and distribution data more efficiently. Efficiency is vital to the center since it is financially self-sufficient.

In an effort to control federal government media projects more closely, the Office of Management and Budget in 1979 assigned the center responsibility for surveying the activities of federal agencies and for issuing guidance on audiovisual project costs. An improved response by agencies enabled the center to put out an expanded second annual *Federal Audiovisual Activity Report*. Along with OMB and the Office of Federal Procurement Policy, the center began an evaluation of government audiovisual policy with a view to improving its management.

Making Regulations More Intelligible

During 1980 the Office of the Federal Register worked to improve its communication to the public of information about the administrative actions of the government. For instance, the administrative committee of the Federal Register approved a rule which requires government agencies to identify, using a standard vocabulary, major topics and categories of persons affected by their regulations. Common use of the



Annually hundreds of thousands of visitors view the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

Federal Register Thesaurus of Indexing Terms will help users of the *Federal Register* and the *Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)* find more easily those provisions of regulations affecting them.

The rule requires agencies to provide a list of subjects from the *Thesaurus* for existing *CFR* parts by the end of 1981, and beginning on April 1, 1982, to provide a list of the pertinent subjects each time a document is submitted for publication in the *Register*. The use by agencies of different terms for the same subjects has been a hindrance to persons searching regulations for provisions affecting them. The new move will enable NARS to improve information services to the public and will facilitate the development of computer-assisted editing, publishing, and retrieval systems for regulations.

Innovations and improvements in indexes and other finding aids have been given high priority at the Office of the Federal Register in response to increased emphasis on the public's right to know and to the steady rise in the volume of documentation carried by the various publications issued by the office. In calendar year 1980, the number of manuscript pages processed by the office totaled 1,009,871, compared to 933,106 the previous year. This includes the manuscript material published not only in the *Federal Register* and *CFR* but also in the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* and the *Public Papers of the Presidents*. The last quarter of the year was one of the most active in *Federal Register* history. Of the twenty-one daily *Federal Registers* published in December, five required two volumes and one needed three volumes.

In an effort to improve the clarity of regulations and other material carried in the *Federal Register* and to help the public participate in the rulemaking process and make better use of the publication, the office conducts workshops on document drafting and on how to use the *Federal Register*. The former are for agency personnel who write the regulations for their agencies, the latter for the public. In 1980, 100 of these workshops were held with 4,427 people attending, compared to 81 workshops with 3,873 attending in 1979.

One of the lesser known but important responsibilities of the Office of the Federal Register involves the voting in a presidential election year. By delegation from the administrator of general services, the office collects certificates from the states attesting to the votes cast for the slates of presidential electors. Copies are forwarded to the Senate and House of Representatives. Then the office, as well as the Senate, receives the "certificates of votes" cast for president and vice president by the electors in each state. Congress receives the necessary docu-



For the first time since it was established in the mid-1930s, the National Archives was visited by an official delegation from China.

mentation before the joint session of Congress at which the electoral votes are tallied. This duty was carried off without a hitch following the 1980 election.

In an effort to slash the production time of the widely used *CFR*, NARS undertook a project to update, on a daily basis, one of the most active titles—protection of the environment—of the *CFR*. Using text-editing equipment, editors began to integrate amendments published in the daily *Federal Register* into the production data base for the experimental title. The objective of this experiment is to deliver the printed volume within one month of the cover date. Present production procedures normally require three or more months for delivery. The eventual goal is the rapid-fire production of all *CFR* volumes. A side benefit may well be the creation of an on-line current *CFR* data base for information retrieval.

Managing Government Information

In a pioneering study, the Office of Records and Information Management surveyed forty-five government automation systems to determine the impact of records and information technology on productivity. The systems embrace such fields as word processing, data processing and transmission, electronic mail, and information storage and retrieval. NARS set up a clearinghouse in order that government agen-



cies could share the information. Then it selected several systems for an in-depth study. Rationale, cost, and performance will be identified and such elements as design, installation, and productivity improvement assessed. At the end of the two-year project a set of guidelines on cost-effective automation will be issued and widely disseminated.

Although one thinks of automation as adding vastly to the amount of information collected, one project aims to curb the amount of data that the Labor Department's Employment and Training Administration collects from the public. This attempt to ease the reporting burden on the public focuses on duplications. By storing and manipulating 4,000 data elements contained on 110 forms that grantees, contractors, and others must fill out, the collection should permit the ETA to manage its data more efficiently. The result will be a *Data Element Dictionary* which the department will use during 1981 to reduce and standardize data elements. Program offices will be required to consult *Dictionary* managers before adding new data collections or revising old ones.

A survey of methods of cutting postage costs elicited a variety of replies from participating government agencies. Some of the more common methods used to slow soaring mailing costs included the use of letter-size envelopes instead of more costly flat envelopes for mailing lightweight matter, third-class instead of first-class

Charles A. Grant, 56, reads a copy of the Declaration of Independence following his naturalization as an American citizen at the National Archives. Grant, who was born in Jamaica, was one of 27 people each from a different country who participated in the Citizenship Day ceremony honoring the 193rd anniversary of the U.S. Constitution.



mail where speedy delivery was not needed, in-house courier service, fourth-class parcel post, and the elimination of registration. Eight agencies claimed that they had cut a total of \$8 million from their costs as a consequence of their mail management initiatives. NARS plans further analysis of the program before publishing a report on it.

A *Directives Management Self-Inspection Guide* to aid agencies in assessing the half-million pages of directives published each year was issued by NARS, and two books on forms analysis were replaced with a new publication, *Forms Analysis and Design*. NARS study revealed that rewriting parts of the federal travel regulations and redesign of the government-wide travel voucher—15 million are used annually—might save up to 40 million staff hours a year. GSA was urged to act on the proposal and was doing so at the close of the year.

Preserving and Publishing Historical Documents

The archivist of the United States also serves as chairman of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, an affiliate of the National Archives. During 1980, the NHPRC made federal grants totaling \$4 million to help preserve, arrange, and describe nonfederal documents and to publish documentary collections important to the study of U.S. history. 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 included \$5,817 to the University of Nebraska for a comprehensive microform edition of the papers of botanist Charles E. Bessey; \$16,645 to the University of New Mexico for a comprehensive microform and selective five-volume printed edition of the papers of Diego de Vargas, governor and reconqueror of New Mexico, 1690-1704; \$25,802 to the University of Louisville for a microfilm edition of the papers of pioneer filmmaker D. W. Griffith;

and \$18,483 to West Virginia University for a one-volume book edition of the correspondence of Mary Harris ("Mother") Jones, labor leader and one of the organizers of the United Mine Workers Union.

In all, the commission provided seventy-five publication grants, averaging \$28,000 each, to historical editing projects at universities, historical societies, libraries, and state agencies from New England to California. It also made available to university and other nonprofit presses grants to help in publishing the editions sponsored by the commission. Moreover, the NHPRC is participating in a committee to promote higher quality book production standards, and is now making plans to sponsor a large conference on the use of word processing in documentary editing. It continues to offer editing fellowships and to conduct an annual two-week historical editing institute. The commission is grateful for the continuing support of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Lila Acheson Wallace Fund, which provide major aid for these educational activities.

In addition, the Mellon foundation made a grant of \$425,000 to the commission in March 1980 to support continuing publication of the documentary editions of the papers of George Washington, John Adams, John Quincy Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison. The grant is intended to help finance the projects for three years while the editors and sponsoring institutions develop long-term financial bases. The grant includes \$25,000 to sponsor a study examining some of the problems now facing these and other long-term editions of papers. The resulting report will be designed to assist private foundations and federal funding agencies such as the NHPRC and the National Endowment for the Humanities in directing their future programs, and should provide needed information and direction for editors, prospective editors, and others interested in this field.

The commission's records program made eighty-six grants to projects in thirty-six states for the preservation, arrangement, and description of manuscripts and records. Among the most significant were those awarded to national or regional bodies for the coordination of archival preservation activities within their constituent organizations. For example, grants were made to the United Negro College Fund to sponsor a conference on the development of archival programs at black colleges and universities; to the George Meany Center for Labor Studies to hold a conference on labor records;

and to the Institute for the Study of Contemporary Social Problems, working with the Police Foundation, to sponsor a conference on the management and use of police records. Each conference brings together records creators, archivists, and users to share their concerns and expertise, and to make specific recommendations toward improved archival programs.

Other records grants included \$34,732 to the city of Los Angeles to provide a consultant, an archivist, and other assistance to develop an archival program for the city; \$33,862 to the Kentucky Historical Society for the first phase of a joint project with the Kentucky State Archives to arrange, describe, and make available the papers and records of Kentucky governors for the period 1792-1927; \$20,728 to the University of Massachusetts to arrange and describe the papers of prominent black educator Horace Mann Bond (1904-72) and his family; and \$32,938 to the Grand Rapids Public Library to develop a local records program.

The commission continues to seek the advice of state historical records advisory boards (appointed so far by governors in every state but Maine) for evaluating grant proposals and for establishing state grant priorities. Consisting of archivists, historians, and others involved in historical programs, the boards evaluate proposals for activities that take place within their own states. To encourage a wider role for the boards, the commission sponsored a meeting of the state coordinators in June 1980 and is currently considering the recommendations drafted at that time.

Summation

For the National Archives and Records Service, 1980 was a year of special significance. A new archivist of the United States took the helm and he reorganized the institution's administration. Preservation of documents was given a higher priority, as were the development and use of new technology in archival fields. There was an increased emphasis on security of the records. Such problems as the growth of holdings and increased research demand were studied as a preliminary to seeking ways of coping with them over the long term. It was a year of reappraisal and of new directions carried out within the framework of the institution's basic mission—to preserve and make available for public use the valuable records of the United States government. □