

*Guide to the*

**Records of the  
U.S. National  
Mediation Board,  
1961–1963**

*From the John F. Kennedy  
Presidential Library*

**SR** *Scholarly Resources Inc.*  
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# Contents

Introduction	v
Historical Note	xiii
Roll Contents	1



# Introduction

**B**EFORE A RESEARCHER attempts to analyze the agency records on file at the John F. Kennedy Library, it is important to understand the history of the collections and the acquisitions guidelines of the particular material selected. This introduction describes the history, planning, methodology, and scope of the collection of Kennedy administration records on microfilm.

## THE EARLY STAGES

Prior to John F. Kennedy's inauguration, historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Harvard President Nathan M. Pusey, and Harvard Librarian Paul H. Buck approached the president-elect in order to convince him to follow the examples of the most recent presidents and establish a presidential library administered by the National Archives and Records Service (NARS). Since the plan for these institutions usually were developed late in an administration, after many of the important collections had been donated to private institutions, these men believed that if the president made it clear early in the administration that he would like commitments from members of the staff to donate their papers to the library, the facility could offer historians and scholars a more complete picture of the Kennedy administration. This plan distinguished the Kennedy Library from the existing presidential libraries at the time—the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, the Harry S. Truman Library, and the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library—because these three institutions housed the personal and public papers of the president but few collections of the personal papers of members of the cabinet and staff. As Buck later wrote:

Our objective has been nothing less than the finest collection of primary source materials ever brought together under one roof for research in a specific period. . . . An outstanding collection, surpassing in quality any ever before assembled, is promised by the President's interest, by the early start that has been made in planning and collecting.<sup>1</sup>

On September 20, 1961, the president appointed an informal committee to develop and expand plans for a presidential library. Members of this committee included Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., special assistant to the president; Theodore Sorensen, special counsel to the president; Paul Buck and Garde Wiggins of Harvard University; Wayne C. Grover, archivist of the United States; and Herman Kahn, assistant archivist. In November, President Kennedy formally announced his intention to establish a presidential library in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to be operated by the NARS in association with Harvard University. The committee had to address several responsibilities: locating a suitable site, outlining an organizational structure, developing a fund-raising plan, and writing an extensive acquisitions policy. By May 1962 the committee had completed an acquisitions policy statement that Schlesinger sent to top executive personnel, in which he communicated the "President's hope that his friends and associates will wish to assist in making the collections as complete as possible."<sup>2</sup>

Personal correspondence files, official correspondence files, work aids, notes, memorandums, personal accounts of events written as reminders, observations of high officials, extra copies of speeches, congressional testimony, reading files, and press releases were the types of materials requested, not the complete official original records of each department or agency. Schlesinger also requested microfilm or paper copies of official records that would help document the administration's major policies.

Schlesinger's guidelines assisted the departments and agencies in identifying pertinent materials. The amount of documents in the White House was so enormous that by the end of April 1963 it was estimated that the Kennedy Library

would have to be much larger than initially planned in order to accommodate an expected eight years of presidential material. In October 1963, President Kennedy selected a building site next to the Harvard Business School along the banks of the Charles River. (These plans were later changed; the library is now located on Columbia Point in Boston.)

### A CHANGE OF PLANS

Kennedy's assassination and the resignation or replacement of many of his appointees accelerated the pace of the library's acquisitions. A systematic program directed by Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy was mostly completed in fewer than eight months. The microfilming of department and agency records was an essential part of this program.

On December 9, 1963, Robert Kennedy appointed a coordinating committee to compile lists of important issues and subjects during the Kennedy administration. These lists were then compared to the lists of available material being compiled by individual agencies. In a December 19, 1963, letter to the department heads, Robert Kennedy reemphasized the acquisitions goals: "Our most important immediate problem in connection with the John F. Kennedy Memorial Library is the collecting of the significant papers and documents of the Kennedy Administration. To do this quickly, while memories and experience are still fresh, will require the close cooperation of all agency and department heads."<sup>3</sup>

By January 1, 1964, each agency head was to have submitted lists of topics involving presidential decision or interest. In a letter to department and agency heads, Robert Kennedy requested, as top priority, originals or copies of the papers, memorandums, notes, and correspondence of the head of each agency. The next priority was to make copies of selected portions of the official records of the department or agency. This material would include "staff papers, memoranda, and other documents relating to the major Kennedy Administration issues, as well as papers on any subject, major or minor, in which the President took a personal

interest, which went to him for decision, or which emerged in response to Presidential request.”<sup>4</sup> He further stated:

I know this project will be a drain on your time and resources. But only in this way can we hope to build a collection which accurately reflects the career, the hopes and the achievements of President Kennedy and which fully illuminates the issues of his time.<sup>5</sup>

President Lyndon B. Johnson instructed the department and agency heads to provide full cooperation. However, no matter how dedicated and organized the participants were, this project proved to be extremely intricate, time-consuming, and difficult at times. Even Robert Kennedy, after reviewing the lists of the Department of Justice material, stated:

Let’s decide what the issues are. . . . Could you say now or any of you say here what projects in the Department of Justice you should collect? In the Department of Defense? We would like to exchange views with someone. Would you want the weekly reports by the heads of Tax and Civil Divisions? I think and I am sure the other Cabinet members would like to get some guidelines.<sup>6</sup>

Questions about what to include were not limited to the Department of Justice. Most of the agencies deliberated the same question: What exactly is important in the history of the administration? The coordinating committee was to help solve this problem by reviewing the lists submitted by the agencies. The next step was to send microfilm teams to each agency from the NARS, with the exception of five agencies that used their own film crews.

On January 18, 1964, the *Washington Post* provided some insight into the project as a whole, specifically the filming of the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice:

The Federal Government began to turn itself upside down this week in a massive effort to put on microfilm the official records of the Kennedy Administration. . . .

Other presidential libraries contain the personal papers of the President, the files of the White House, personal papers of friends and associates and some kinds of audio-visual materials, “but no official Government records. . . .”



So yesterday, as they had done all week and as they would continue to do for no-one-knows-how-long, a group of micro-filmers from the National Archives processed the records that Department heads had designated as relevant to Mr. Kennedy's main interests.<sup>7</sup>

Unlike the filming of retired records, the filming of much of this material included active files still used by the agencies in question. Therefore, records were not removed to other locations but instead were filmed in and around the daily working offices. The filming continued at the other agencies in the same way and ran smoothly considering the obvious organizational obstacles. However, when the film crews encountered restricted or classified materials, many of the agencies refused to cooperate, citing Section 7 (c) of Executive Order 10501 as their justification. This order provides safeguards for the administration, access, and copying of classified materials. Agency heads refused to permit microfilming without presidential authorization.

In July, President Johnson was unwilling to issue authorization. Department of Justice attorneys then determined that section 7(c) was not applicable to the acquisition of documents for archival purposes, and therefore neither the approval of the originating agency nor of the president was necessary.<sup>8</sup> Filming resumed shortly. By mid-1964 over two million pages of documents had been microfilmed.

### THE COLLECTIONS TODAY

Presently, the John F. Kennedy Library's holdings are partially comprised of 2,573 rolls of federal records. Thirty-nine federal records collections were acquired in microfilm and 14 in hard copy. Twenty-three collections of personal papers were obtained in microfilm, with the remaining 147 collections in hard copy. Sixty percent of the rolls of microfilm remain closed.

Each agency's files consist of a variety of materials. General collection policy guidelines provided an outline as to the types of materials desired, but individual agencies were given the latitude to select documents that fit into the guidelines.

Each collection emphasizes various subjects and is organized differently. For example, the U.S. Department of the Interior records are comprised of files from several offices, including legislation papers from the Office of the Solicitor, Fish and Wildlife Service data on the use of pesticides, and Bureau of Indian Affairs records containing task force minutes and publications.

The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) collection includes files of several task forces, committees, and legislation enacted on subjects such as education, welfare, the National Service Corps, and mental retardation. For some subjects, such as the HEW mental retardation files, the microfilm offers the library's most complete resource of background material and working files on the President's Panel on Mental Retardation and the Secretary's Committee on Mental Retardation. This file includes the proposed commission, selection of panel members, meetings, and conference recommendations. In conjunction with these files a researcher could then refer to the library's nonmicrofilm collections of President's Office Files, the personal papers of Elizabeth Boggs, and the staff files of Myer Feldman and Stafford Warren.

The holdings of the Kennedy Library also contain the files of the President's Commission on the Status of Women and several oral history interviews involving the issue of equal pay. The Women's Bureau records from the U.S. Department of Labor collection also present further information. The files include state programs, legislative proposals, and background materials on the Equal Pay Act of 1961.

Often the microfilm collections not only provide background information complementing existing files but also serve as a primary source on a particular topic. The U.S. Housing and Home Finance Agency files on the legislative history of the Housing Act of 1961 are more detailed than the other collections on the housing issue. Records of the U.S. Office of Emergency Planning also provide a firsthand look at the government's response to natural disasters nationwide.

The papers and records of Walter Heller are also distinctive. This collection provides both the files of the Council of Economic Advisers and government committees, as well as his personal files from 1941 to 1971. Researchers interested in the economic policies of the Kennedy administration should regard these files as a critical resource.

Sometimes a subject is included in more than one microfilm collection. For example, if a researcher is interested in examining the Kennedy administration's approach to youth services and programs, aside from the president's papers and selected personal papers, he should also examine the following HEW records: committee files and legislative data on juvenile delinquency and on school dropouts; public assistance programs, including Aid to Dependent Children; legislation details on tax deductions for child-care expenses; models and background information on the National Service Corps; and reports and summaries of other action programs. The Department of the Interior records provide further details on youth employment, with specific emphasis on the Youth Conservation Corps, and a legislative history of the act establishing the Corps. The Department of Labor files provide data on the Youth Employment Act of 1961, the President's Committee on Youth Employment, as well as the 1960 White House Conference on Children and Youth.

These and other collections offer important insights into the Kennedy administration's response to the domestic problems of the early 1960s. From a historian's perspective, an agency's records can offer a unique view into how and why certain issues were important, how they were handled, to whom they were referred, and how they were solved. The agency records supplement files of administration personnel and demonstrate the implementation of the Kennedy administration's policies by the bureaucracy. Many times even the personal papers of agency heads do not offer a complete perspective of the agency itself. Just as research would be incomplete if the papers of key administration personnel were not examined for a particular project so, too, would research

that did not include a review of the agency files. Such an examination of the agency's working records presents a more complete picture of historical discussion.

*Maura Porter*  
*Reference Archivist*  
*John F. Kennedy*  
*Presidential Library*

## NOTES

1. Letter by Paul Buck, "Kennedy Library 1963" folder, President's Office Files, box 130, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Massachusetts (hereafter JFKL).
2. Letter, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., May 23, 1962, "Kennedy Library 9/2/61-12/24/63" folder, Theodore C. Sorensen Papers, box 35, JFKL.
3. Letter, Robert F. Kennedy to heads of departments and agencies, December 19, 1963, "Collection of Materials-Letter to Agency Heads" folder, Papers of Robert F. Kennedy, Attorney General's Papers, JFK Library File, box 11, JFKL.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Minutes, JFK Library Corporation meeting, December 9, 1963, "Meetings and Memoranda, 11/63-12/63" folder, Robert F. Kennedy, Attorney General's Papers, JFK Library File, box 15, JFKL.
7. Susanna McBee, "Records of Kennedy Era Microfilmed for Library," *Washington Post*, January 18, 1964, "Kennedy Library, 1/2/64-1/30/64" folder, Theodore S. Sorensen Papers, box 35, JFKL.
8. Memorandum, Norman Schlei to Robert Kennedy, July 13, 1964, "Collection of Materials Memorandum, 7/13/64" folder, Robert F. Kennedy, Attorney General's Papers, JFK Library File, box 11, JFKL.

## Historical Note

**T**HE NATIONAL MEDIATION BOARD was created by the amended Railway Labor Act of June 21, 1934, to mediate railroad labor disputes. This function evolved from an 1888 act that authorized the president to establish temporary commissions to investigate and report on railroad labor controversies and provided for voluntary arbitration of disputes between carriers engaged in interstate commerce and their employees. The Railroad Labor Board—representing management, labor, and the public—was created by the Transportation Act of 1920. It was superseded, under the terms of the Railway Labor Act of 1926, by the Board of Mediation, which was superseded by the present National Mediation Board.

The jurisdiction and functions of the National Mediation Board were expanded beyond those of its predecessors to cover air as well as rail carriers and to include the settlement of collective-bargaining representation disputes. The National Railroad Adjustment Board—which for the most part operates independently from the National Mediation Board in adjudicating grievances and disputes related to the interpretation and application of collective-bargaining agreements—was also created by the 1934 act. Since 1926 the president has appointed, under section 10 of the Railway Labor Act, emergency boards to investigate and make recommendations for the settlement of disputes, unresolved by mediation, that threatened serious interruption of interstate commerce through imminent strike action.

By executive orders on March 24 and June 12, 1961, President John F. Kennedy created the Railroad Marine Workers Commission and the Railroad Lighter Captains

Commission to assist in settling disputes in the New York Harbor area that had not been successfully adjusted by the National Mediation Board and presidential emergency boards.

Records of the National Mediation Board are classified as Record Group (RG) 13 within the holdings of the National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

### ABOUT THE RECORDS

The two microfilm rolls of case files of the National Mediation Board do not have any clear arrangement, although they appear to be in rough chronological order. The records include adjudications, executive orders, press releases, memorandums, reports, general correspondence, and newspaper clippings. Researchers should scan the list of roll contents that follow this introduction for the subjects and roll numbers appropriate to their interests. Subject headings are usually handwritten on single sheets of paper to break the records on microfilm.

*Terry Lynch*  
*Microfilm Editor*

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# Roll Contents

*SR*      *JFK*  
*Roll No.* *Roll No.*

## *Mediation Cases*

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | 1 | Pan American World Airways, Inc., and<br>Flight Engineers' International Association,<br>PAA Chapter   |
|   |   | Northwest Airlines, Inc., and International<br>Association of Machinists   |
|   |   | Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and Other<br>Carriers Represented By: Eastern, Western<br>and Southeastern Carriers' Conference<br>Committees and Railroad Yardmasters of<br>America |
|   |   | Southern Pacific Company (Pacific Lines)<br>and Order of Railroad Telegraphers   |
|   |   | The Pullman Company and Chicago, St.<br>Paul and Pacific Railroad Company vs.<br>Order of Railway Conductors and Brakemen  |
|   |   | Trans World Airlines, Inc., and Transport<br>Workers Union of America, AFL-CIO   |
|   |   | Reading Company and International<br>Organization of Masters, Mates and Pilots   |

*SR*      *JFK*  
*Roll No.*   *Roll No.*

1      1      Trans World Airlines, Inc., and Air Line  
Pilots Association, International

Pan American World Airways, Inc., and Air  
Line Pilots Association, International

Eastern Airlines Inc., and Flight Engineers  
International Association

Akron and Barberton Belt Railroad and  
Eleven Cooperating Railway Labor  
Organizations

2      2      Trans World Airlines, Inc., and Flight  
Engineers' International Association

Chicago and North Western Railway  
Company and the Former Chicago, St. Paul,  
Minneapolis and Omaha Railway Company  
(By Merger) and Order of Railroad  
Telegraphers

New York Central Railroad Company  
System and Pittsburgh and Lake Erie  
Railroad Company and Order of Railroad  
Telegraphers

American Airlines, Inc., and Transport  
Workers Union of America, AFL-CIO

The Belt Railway Company of Chicago and  
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers

Southern Pacific Company (Pacific Lines)  
and Brotherhood of Railway and Steamship  
Clerks, Freight Handlers, Express and  
Station Employees



<i>SR</i>	<i>JFK</i>
<i>Roll No.</i>	<i>Roll No.</i>

2	2	Pan American World Airways, Inc., and Transport Workers Union of America, AFL-CIO
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International Brotherhood of Teamsters

Carriers Represented by Eastern, Western  
and Southeastern Carriers' Conference  
Committees and Brotherhood of  
Locomotive Engineers, Brotherhood of  
Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen, Order  
of Railway Conductors and Brakemen,  
Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen and  
Switchmen's Union of North America

The Pullman Company, Chicago, Rock  
Island and Pacific Railroad Company, New  
York Central System, Soo Line Railroad  
Company and Brotherhood of Sleeping Car  
Porters

United Air Lines, Inc., and International  
Association of Machinists, AFL-CIO

Florida East Coast Railway Company and  
11 Cooperating Railway Labor  
Organizations





