

Guide to the

**Records of the
U.S. Office of
Emergency
Planning,
1961–1963**

*From the John F. Kennedy
Presidential Library*

SR *Scholarly Resources Inc.*
Wilmington, Delaware

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This microfilm publication of records is made available with the cooperation of the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, Boston, Massachusetts.

ISBN 0-8420-4128-1

Manufactured in the United States of America

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104 Greenhill Avenue
Wilmington, DE 19805-1897

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of the Council of Economic Advisers, 1961–1964
(49 rolls)

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Introduction

BEFORE 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.¹

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."²

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."³

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.”⁴ 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.⁵

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.⁶

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 microfilmers from the National Archives processed the records that Department heads had designated as relevant to Mr. Kennedy's main interests.⁷

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.⁸ 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

THE OFFICE OF EMERGENCY PLANNING (OEP) was established on September 22, 1961, to advise and assist the president in the nonmilitary defense program of the United States. The OEP was a staff arm of the president, and as such it was distinct from the Office of Civilian Defense, which was an operational arm of the Department of Defense.

Under the direction of Edward A. McDermott, the OEP was comprised of eight regional offices, and was responsible for the mobilization and management of the nation's resources in the interest of national security. The OEP was designed to operate as the overall resource-control agency in the event of an emergency.

President John F. Kennedy identified the responsibilities of the OEP in Executive Order 11051. This order was a historic break with past efforts to assure the safety and security of the nation under any conditions of emergency, including nuclear attack. Kennedy later followed up this order with nine more, defining the functions of the OEP as follows:

- Management of resources
- Acquisition and disposal of strategic materials
- Survival of government
- Natural disaster relief
- Telecommunications planning
- Import and national security policies
- Development of the Executive Reserve

The Executive Reserve was established to train business executives for employment within the government in an emergency. It expanded upon President Dwight D.

Eisenhower's program for a National Defense Executive Reserve.

Although small, the collection of OEP records is important for researching the domestic response to the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962, the most dangerous crisis of the Cold War. On October 22, President Kennedy appeared on national television to report that aerial photographs of Soviet military installations on the island of Cuba contained "unmistakable evidence" that offensive missile sites were under construction. Kennedy declared a strict quarantine on all offensive military equipment under shipment to Cuba and ordered the Navy to carry out a blockade the next day. After a tense twelve days of high-level negotiations, Soviet technicians began to crate missile equipment for shipment back to the USSR on November 2.

ABOUT THE RECORDS

Materials relating to the Cuban Missile Crisis are still security classified. The subject breakdown, however, is reproduced in the roll contents that follow this introduction. What remains for researchers is a chronological arrangement of records within the Natural Disaster Relief Program detailing each of the natural disasters that occurred during the Kennedy administration.

Terry Lynch
Microfilm Editor

Roll Contents

<i>SR</i>	<i>JFK</i>
<i>Roll No.</i>	<i>Roll No.</i>
1	1 (S)*
	Coordination by the Office of Emergency Planning of Civil Preparedness Action in the Cuban Crisis
	All Regional Offices Called and Alerted, Senior Watch Duty Began, October 21, 1962, 8:20 p.m.
	Coordination by the Office of Emergency Planning of Civil Preparedness Action in the Cuban Crisis - Memoranda to the Staff
	Coordination by the Office of Emergency Planning of Civil Preparedness Action in the Cuban Crisis - Readiness Status Reports
	White House Emergency Information Program
	Meeting of Heads of Independent Agencies

*Material on this roll of film is classified as (S)-Secret. Scholarly Resources has left the roll numbers intact in the event that this roll would be released.

<i>SR</i> <i>Roll No.</i>	<i>JKF</i> <i>Roll No.</i>
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1

1

Committee on Civil Defense and Post-Attack Recovery of the Governor's Conference

White House Meeting (Cabinet Members)

Briefing of Agencies Having Support Functions under Department of the Treasury

Director's Meeting with Office of Emergency Planning, Regional Directors

Messages Received from Office of Emergency Planning, Regional Offices

Office of Emergency Planning, Regional Offices Report on Readiness Status and on Regional Civil Defense Mobilization Board Meetings

Coordination by the Office of Emergency Planning of Civil Preparedness Action in the Cuban Crisis - Letters of Commendation from the President

Natural Disaster Relief Program

1

2

Mississippi Floods - Major Disaster Declared, February 27, 1961

Alabama Floods - Major Disaster Declared, February 27, 1961

Georgia Floods - Major Disaster Declared, March 2, 1961

SR JKF
Roll No. Roll No.

1	2	Iowa Floods - Major Disaster Declared, March 31, 1961
		Arkansas Floods and Tornadoes - Major Disaster Declared, May 16, 1961
		Indiana Floods - Major Disaster Declared, May 20, 1961
		Illinois Floods and Tornadoes - Major Disaster Declared, May 27, 1961
		Missouri Floods - Major Disaster Declared, May 27, 1961
		Idaho Floods - Major Disaster Declared, June 24, 1961
		West Virginia Floods - Major Disaster Declared, July 23, 1961
		Texas Hurricane Carla - Major Disaster Declared, September 16, 1961
		Louisiana Hurricane Carla - Major Disaster Declared, September 19, 1961
		California Brush and Forest Fires - Major Disaster Declared, November 16, 1961
		Idaho Floods - Major Disaster Declared, February 14, 1962
		Nevada Floods - Major Disaster Declared, February 22, 1962

SR *JKF*
Roll No. *Roll No.*

1 2 California Floods - Major Disaster
Declared, March 6, 1962

2 3 Delaware Severe Storm, High Tides and
Flooding - Major Disaster Declared,
March 9, 1962

Maryland Severe Storm, High Tides and
Flooding - Major Disaster Declared,
March 9, 1962

New Jersey Severe Storm, High Tides and
Flooding - Major Disaster Declared,
March 9, 1962

Virginia Severe Storm, High Tides and
Flooding - Major Disaster Declared,
March 9, 1962

West Virginia Floods - Major Disaster
Declared, March 9, 1962

Kentucky Floods - Major Disaster
Declared, March 12, 1962

New York Severe Storm, High Tides and
Flooding - Major Disaster Declared,
March 16, 1962

North Carolina Severe Storm, High Tides
and Flooding - Major Disaster Declared,
March 16, 1962

Nebraska Floods - Major Disaster
Declared, May 10, 1962

SR *JKF*
Roll No. *Roll No.*

2 3 South Dakota Floods and Tornadoes -
Major Disaster Declared, July 27, 1962

Nebraska Floods - Major Disaster
Declared, May 10, 1962

South Dakota Floods and Tornadoes -
Major Disaster Declared, July 27, 1962

Nebraska Floods - Major Disaster
Declared, September 5, 1962

Iowa Floods - Major Disaster Declared,
September 5, 1962

Mississippi Chlorine Barge - Major
Disaster Declared, October 10, 1962

Oregon Severe Storms - Major Disaster
Declared, October 16, 1962

Washington Severe Storms - Major
Disaster Declared, October 20, 1962

California Severe Storms and Flooding -
Major Disaster Declared, October 24,
1962

3 4 Louisiana Chlorine Barge - Major Disaster
Declared, November 5, 1962

Guam Typhoon Karen - Major Disaster
Declared, November 12, 1962

Florida Abnormally High Tides - Major
Disaster Declared, December 17, 1962

<i>SR</i> <i>Roll No.</i>	<i>JKF</i> <i>Roll No.</i>
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3

4

Nevada Floods - Major Disaster Declared,
February 14, 1963

Idaho Floods - Major Disaster Declared,
February 14, 1963

Oregon Floods - Major Disaster Declared,
February 25, 1963

California Excessive Rainfall, Floods and
Severe Storms - Major Disaster Declared,
February 25, 1963

Washington Floods - Major Disaster
Declared, March 2, 1963

West Virginia Severe Storms and
Flooding - Major Disaster Declared,
March 13, 1963

Kentucky Severe Storms and Flooding -
Major Disaster Declared, March 13, 1963

Virginia Floods - Major Disaster Declared,
March 21, 1963

Georgia Severe Storms and Flooding -
Major Disaster Declared, March 26, 1963

Tennessee Severe Storms and Flooding -
Major Disaster Declared, March 29, 1963

Hawaii Excessive Rainfall and Flooding -
Major Disaster Declared, April 24, 1963

Guam Typhoon Olive - Major Disaster
Declared, April 30, 1963

SR *JKF*
Roll No. *Roll No.*

3 4 Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands,
Typhoon Olive - Major Disaster Declared,
April 30, 1963

Wyoming Excessive Rainfall and
Flooding - Major Disaster Declared,
July 4, 1963

Nebraska Excessive Rainfall and
Flooding - Major Disaster Declared,
July 17, 1963

Arkansas Excessive Rainfall and
Flooding - Major Disaster Declared,
August 2, 1963

New York Excessive Rainfall and
Flooding - Major Disaster Declared,
August 23, 1963

Texas Hurricane Cindy - Major Disaster
Declared, September 24, 1963

Vermont Severe Drought Condition and
Impending Freeze - Request for Major
Disaster Denied on November 20, 1963;
Later Approved on November 27, 1963

4 5 Texas - Request for Major Disaster
Denied, February 13, 1961

Oklahoma - Request for Major Disaster
Denied, March 16, 1961

Georgia - Request for Major Disaster
Denied, April 10, 1961

<i>SR</i> <i>Roll No.</i>	<i>JKF</i> <i>Roll No.</i>
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4

5

Iowa - Request for Major Disaster Denied,
August 25, 1961

North Dakota - Request for Major Disaster
Denied, August 31, 1961

Missouri - Request for Major Disaster
Denied, October 9, 1961

California - Request for Major Disaster
Denied, October 9, 1961

Oklahoma - Request for Major Disaster
Denied, March 6, 1962

Louisiana - Request for Major Disaster
Denied, July 18, 1962

Texas - Request for Major Disaster
Denied, July 18, 1962

Wyoming - Request for Major Disaster
Denied, August 7, 1962

Florida - Request for Major Disaster
Denied, February 11, 1963

Alabama - Request for Major Disaster
Denied, March 1963

Alabama - Request for Major Disaster
Denied, July 26, 1963

Alaska - Request for Major Disaster
Denied, August 1963

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

4	5	Alaska - Request for Major Disaster Denied, October 15, 1963
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Correspondence Regarding Minor
Undeclared Disasters, 1961-1963

Miscellaneous Correspondence

President's Reports to Congress on
Federal Disaster Relief, 1961-1963

Studies at White House Request on
Federal Disaster Relief Program

