APPENDIX A

Conducting Research at Presidential Libraries

The first step for anyone interested in conducting research at a presidential library is to check out the library's web page for instruction, procedures, and, most importantly, the availability of documents and other materials for the specific research topic. Each library has an extensive web page that details the number and scope of collections, online finding aids, as well as specific instructions on how to arrange for a research visit. In addition, each library has digitized numerous documents in recent years that are now available directly on the library's web page.

Next, it is always recommended to contact an archivist to talk about specific research topics and the availability of documents before arriving at the library. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) archivists have extensive knowledge of the collections in their respective libraries, and they are a crucial resource in guiding even the most experienced researcher through the many files, documents, photos, videos, and oral histories. Knowing which documents are essential to access ahead of time can maximize the efficiency of the time spent at the library.

While each library sets its own hours and, in some cases, specific procedures for research, general rules apply to all NARA presidential libraries. For example, each researcher must fill out a brief, one-page application that describes the purpose of the research visit. In addition, each researcher is given a brief orientation by one of the archivists prior to the start of research. NARA presidential libraries provide the use of photocopiers at a small fee to researchers, and each library has slightly different, yet specific, rules for how to go about photocopying documents. Digital cameras are also allowed for those who do not wish to make photocopies. Laptop computers are also allowed in the research room, as are any papers needed by the researcher (such as a list of boxes or documents) as long as they are checked and marked in advance by the archivists. The use of pens is not allowed; pencils, paper, and other necessary items are provided by the library.

Most documents at presidential libraries are kept in archival boxes and are numbered and organized by collection. For example, the files of Marlin Fitzwater, Press Secretary to George H. W. Bush, are found in the White House Press Office

collection. There are four series, with subseries, included in the Fitzwater files: Subject File (Alpha File, Boxes 1–31, Bush Alpha File, Boxes 23–24); Correspondence File (Alpha/Chron File, Boxes 35–41, Chron File, Boxes 42–44, Alpha File, Boxes 45–53); Guidance File (Boxes 54–128); and Trip Boards (Boxes 129–147). Researchers interested in Bush's press relations, communication strategies, public opinion, or other public relations activities, would also look in the White House Office of Speechwriting collection, or the White House Office of Records Management collection under the subject files of public relations, speechwriting, or other specific policy topics.

Researchers then request to look at certain boxes which are delivered to the research room on a cart (not to exceed eighteen boxes at a time). Only one box can be placed on the researcher's table at a time, only one folder can be removed from a box at a time, and a place holder must be used in the box to mark the location of the folder. All of these rules, as well as others, help to ensure that the collection stays in its proper order for use by future researchers. In addition, video surveillance cameras are used in all presidential libraries to protect against the theft or destruction of any documents. All documents with writings, signatures, or other markings by the president are not open to researchers, but photocopies are available in their place. This is true for many other valuable documents as well that have signatures of certain high-profile officials or dignitaries.

Perhaps the two most important things to remember about conducting research at a presidential library is to prepare for the trip ahead of time by accessing online finding aids and being organized about what documents to access, and to rely on the help and expertise of the archivists. While the archivists may work at specific presidential libraries, they are employees of NARA and their job is to preserve and organize the massive collection of materials and to provide access to those materials to researchers; they do not represent the president, his administration, his family, or any specific political or partisan objective. Beyond the documents themselves, the archivists represent perhaps the most valuable asset to researchers at each presidential library.

National Archives Presidential Libraries Home Page:
http://www.archives.gov/presidential-libraries/

Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum
210 Parkside Drive
West Branch, IA 52358
319–643-5301
http://www.hoover.archives.gov/
E-mail: hoover.library@nara.gov

Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum
4079 Albany Post Road
Hyde Park, NY 12538
845–486-7770
http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/
E-mail: roosevelt.library@nara.gov

Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Museum
500 W. US Highway 24
Independence, MO 64050
816–268-8200
http://www.trumanlibrary.org
E-mail: truman.library@nara.gov

Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum
200 S.E. 4th Street
Abilene, KS 67410
785–263-6700
http://www.eisenhower.archives.gov
E-mail: eisenhower.library@nara.gov

John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum
Columbia Point
Boston MA 02125
617–514-1600
http://www.jfklibrary.org/
E-mail: kennedy.library@nara.gov

Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library and Museum
2313 Red River Street
Austin, TX 78705
512–721-0200
http://www.lbjlibrary.org/
E-mail: johnson.library@nara.gov

Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum
18001 Yorba Linda Blvd.
Yorba Linda, CA 92886
714–983-9120
http://www.nixonlibrary.gov
E-mail: nixon@nara.gov

Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum
Library: 1000 Beal Avenue
Ann Arbor, MI 48109
734–205-0555
Museum: 303 Pearl Street NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49504 616–254-0400
http://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/
E-mail: ford.library@nara.gov

Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum
441 Freedom Parkway
Atlanta, GA 30307

404–865-7100
http://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/
E-mail: carter.library@nara.gov

Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum
40 Presidential Drive
Simi Valley, CA 93065
805–577-4000
http://www.reagan.utexas.edu
E-mail: reagan.library@nara.gov

George Bush Presidential Library and Museum
1000 George Bush Drive West
College Station, TX 77845
979–691-4000
http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/
E-mail: bush.library@nara.gov

William J. Clinton Presidential Library and Museum
1200 President Clinton Avenue
Little Rock, AK 72201
501–374-4242
http://www.clintonlibrary.gov
E-mail: clinton.library@nara.gov

George W. Bush Presidential Library
1725 Lakepointe Drive
Lewisville, TX 75057
972–353-0545
http://www.georgewbushlibrary.gov/
E-mail: gwbush.library@nara.gov