

Appendix B

The White House Central Files comprise the largest collection in the Library, totaling approximately 6,500,000 pages. All of the major foreign and domestic issues and policies associated with the Eisenhower Administration, as well as the political events of the period, are documented by the Central Files. To date, approximately 3,570,000 pages of the Central Files comprising, for the most part, the more historically significant segments of the collection have been processed. Available for research at this time are the Official File (OF), the President's Personal File (PPF), the Confidential File (CF), the General File (GF), the General File Cross Reference Sheets, the Legal Size Case File, the Room 98 File, the Permanent File, the Bulk Mail File, the Pre-Inaugural File and portions of the Alphabetical File.

The Official File

The Official File (OF), totaling approximately 766,000 pages, contains a substantial quantity of high-level materials reflecting major issues of public policy and presidential actions. Included are correspondence, memoranda, drafts of speeches and executive orders, telegrams, reports, agenda, press releases, and other materials.

The President's Personal File

The President's Personal File (PPF), totaling approximately 790,000 pages, consists primarily of the President's social correspondence, congratulatory letters from the President to individuals, and human interest letters. There are, generally speaking, few substantive documents in this file.

The Confidential File

The Confidential File (CF), totaling approximately 84,000 pages, contains the highest level materials in the Central Files on many subjects. The correspondence, memoranda, telegrams, and reports in the file are especially rich on such subjects as national security policy, foreign relations, domestic and foreign economic policy, and natural resources. Security classified documents comprise approximately 30 percent of the file.

The General File

The General File (GF), totaling approximately 1,054,000 pages, consists essentially of expressions of public opinion on major issues by individuals and organizations, and materials pertaining to endorsements of individuals for public office. However, one can occasionally find in the files important correspondence and memoranda originated by members of Congress, the judiciary, and executive departments.

The General File Cross-Reference Sheets

The General File Cross Reference Sheets, totaling approximately 181,600 pages, contain cross reference sheets to match documents housed in other series of the White House Central Files with file codes in the General File.

The Legal Size Case File

The Legal Size Case File, totaling approximately 102,800 pages, consists primarily of oversized attachments to correspondence filed in other series of the Central Files. Most of the Central Files were stored in cabinets designed to hold letter-sized (8 ½ x 11) documents. In many cases, however, the correspondence received in the Central Files was accompanied by oversized or multiple copies of attachments. If the attachments were too bulky or numerous to retain with the correspondence, the case file would be divided. The original correspondence was filed in the main files after it was annotated to show the attachments had been removed. The attachments were placed in the Legal Size Case with a cross reference sheet to show the location of original correspondence.

The Legal Size Case also contains several files of original correspondence. Members of the White House staff frequently sent folders of correspondence to the Central Files for storage. In most cases the documents were removed from the folders and filed in the main files. However, if the staff member requested that the documents be kept together, the folder would sometimes be file in the Legal Size Case, particularly if it was a large folder.

SEE ALSO: Room 98 File and Large Items from Top of Cabinet, Cupboard, Rooms 65, 68, 71, 74, 98

Room 98 File

The Room 98 File, totaling approximately 19,000 pages primarily of oversized attachments to correspondence filed in other series of the Central Files. During the first few years of the Eisenhower administration most oversized material was placed in the Legal Sized Case File, a separate series of the White House Central Files which was set aside to hold oversized material. However, as the Central Files gradually ran out of space, the staff began to store oversized material in closets and cupboards and any room where extra storage space was available.

The Room 98 File contains oversized material that was stored in Room 98, a storage room in the basement of the Old Executive Office Building across the street from the White House . Most of the material dates from the last two years of the Eisenhower administration, and consists largely of routing material received from the general public.

The Room 98 File also contains several files of original correspondence of the White House Staff. Staff members usually sent individual pieces of correspondence to the Central Files for storage and these would be placed in the main files. Sometimes, however, entire folders of correspondence were sent to the Central Files at one time. If the file was especially bulky, or if the staff member requested that the documents be kept together, the file would sometimes be stored in Room 98.

SEE ALSO: Legal Sized File and Large Items from Top of Cabinet, Cupboard, Rooms 65, 68, 71, 74, 98

Large Items from Top of Cabinet, Cupboard, Rooms 65, 68, 71, 74, 98

During the Eisenhower administration the White House staff processing incoming mail occasionally received items that were too large or bulky to be housed with the normal mail. Items that did not fit neatly into normal filing cabinets or items that took up too much room in the filing cabinets were housed elsewhere. Cross reference sheets were added to the normal file folder and the large items were sent to alternate locations.

The series contains a wide array of items withdrawn from across the White House Central Files and is grouped into four sub-series according to the originating series. White House staff sent some items to oversized storage without a file code. When the appropriate file code could be determined by the archival staff, these were placed in the Alphabetical File and No File Code sub-series.

SEE ALSO: Legal Sized File and Room 98

The Permanent File

The Permanent File, containing approximately 3,500 pages of manuscript materials and 3,500 pages of microfilm images, is a continuation of what was formerly called the "Precedent File" from 1869 to 1945. Letters, memoranda, notes, proclamations, executive orders, press releases and other materials, which related to specific situations, events, housekeeping matters, or administrative problems were kept in a file at the White House from one administration to the next so that the documents could be used as a reference or models for action in similar situations.

The manuscript materials located in the first five boxes date from 1941 to 1960, and are filed under broad subject categories such as "Appointments and Nominations," "Cabinet," "Death and Funerals," "Gifts to Foreign Governments," "Powers of the President," "Service Academies," "Tomb of the Unknown Soldier," "White House Files," and "Wreathlaying."

The microfilmed portions of the Permanent File in microfilm rolls #1 and #2 are a partial duplication some of the files in the manuscript material described above, but they also contain additional materials not found in the manuscript files.

The Bulk Mail File

The Bulk Mail File, totaling approximately 548,000 pages, contains opinion letters, telegrams and post cards from the general public commenting on various issues which arose during the Eisenhower administrations. The volume of mail on specific issues varied widely, from less than one box on minor issues, to over one hundred boxes on major issues such as McCarthyism or segregation.

The Pre-Inaugural File

The Pre-Inaugural File, totaling approximately 20,000 pages, was created by the staff of

Dwight D. Eisenhower prior to his inauguration as President. The file, which covers the period from June 1952 to January 1953, consists primarily of correspondence of Eisenhower and his staff with the general public concerning the 1952 presidential campaign and the 1953 inauguration. The file also contains a small quantity of Eisenhower's correspondence with party leaders, prominent public figures, and friends.

The Alphabetical File

The Alphabetical File, totaling almost 3,000,000 pages, is largely unprocessed. The "Alpha" File consists of routine letters from the general public, referral sheets indicating that certain items of public mail were forwarded to government departments for responses, and cross-reference sheets to most of the documents in the OF, GF, and PPF segments of the Central Files. These cross-reference sheets serve as a valuable index which assists the staff in locating documents that cannot be found in the obvious file locations.

The remaining segments of the Central Files, most of which are unprocessed, consist of oversize reports and charts, publications, and a small quantity of materials similar to those found in OF, GF, PPF and the Alphabetical File.

Finding aids to the Official, General, and President's Personal Files consist of filing manuals created by the White House Files Section during the Eisenhower Administration, and container (folder title) lists prepared by the staff of the Eisenhower Library. The Official, General, and President's Personal Files were organized by the Central Files Section under a numeric-subject system. That is, code numbers were assigned to government departments, to major policy issues and to foreign nations, and all documents pertaining to each subject were then filed under the assigned codes. For example, high-level materials pertaining to the Department of Defense were filed under OF 3. The numeric codes were broken down further if necessary to incorporate subtopics-for example, OF 3-A is the code for the Department of the Army, and OF 3-B for the Navy. When necessary, these codes were divided even further-for example, OF 3-B-1 is the numeric designation for the Chief of Naval Operations. The General File and the President's Personal File are arranged in the same fashion.

The filing manuals have a dual organization based upon the subject-numeric system. The first part of the filing manual consists of a sequential numerical listing, the code numbers listed in the left column and the corresponding subjects in the right. The second part of the manual is set up in reverse fashion, with an alphabetically-arranged subject listing in the left column and the corresponding code numbers in the right. These filing manuals are quite large-the OF manual consists of approximately 650 pages, the GF manual is about 400 pages, and the PPF manual is the smallest at 350 pages.

In addition to the manuals, the Library has made available to researchers container lists which consist essentially of the numeric-subject lists with box numbers and folder titles

added. Ordinarily, a researcher would look for materials pertaining to his subject by first examining the alphabetical subject listing in the filing manuals and determining which code numbers are pertinent. He then would locate these code numbers in the container lists to determine the quantity of relevant materials and to pinpoint specific folders of interest. For example, a researcher interested in the Federal Communications Commission would find in the filing manual to the Official File that the code number assigned to the FCC is OF 16. Checking the OF container list he would find that the OF 16 materials are in boxes 190-191 and that there is a single FCC file folder for each year of the administration. These container lists, like the filing manuals, are quite large. The OF list is 309 pages, the GF list is 788 pages, and the PPF list is 406 pages.

A container list is available for the Confidential File. This file is arranged alphabetically, and most folder titles pertain to government agencies, public and private organizations, and major policy and political issues. For example, there are folders titled "Department of the Army," "American Bulgarian League," and "Atomic Energy and Bomb." The finding aid to the Confidential File is relatively small, amounting to only 39 pages.