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FROM ESTABLISHMENT TO FINAL INDEPENDENCE:
A STUDY OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA FROM 1934-1985

by

DANIEL MATTHEW WEST FRETT

A master's thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, The City University of New York

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UNITED STATES FROM 1934-1985

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in satisfaction of the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

From Establishment to Final Independence:

A Study of the National Archives of the United States from
1934-1985

By

Daniel Matthew West Frett

Advisor: Martin J. Burke

This thesis is a study of the National Archives of the United States from the institution's establishment in 1934 under the presidency of Franklin Roosevelt to becoming the National Archives and Record Administration in 1985. The Archives during the 1930's and 1940's functioned as an independent agency, until the Archives lost their independence under the Hoover Commission. In 1949 the Archives became part of the newly formed General Services Administration. During the 1950's and 1960's National Archives helped change the archival profession. Furthermore, we see how the two independence movements in the 1960's and 1980's that were ultimately successful in the restoration of the Archives status as an independent agency.

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CHAPTER 1: ESTABLISHMENT

Archives have existed since the beginning of time as information has needed to be recorded for society to function. The Ancient Greeks and Romans preserved records to allow citizens proper knowledge of the activities of their government. The French Revolution was an important step in archival development as leaders of the Revolution desired that citizens have knowledge of the crimes of the monarchy. Furthermore, England later established a records office in 1838.

The United States is younger nation than France or Great Britain. From the founding of the country, government records were generated with each agency responsible for the collection and storage of its records. Government records were written on paper which led to easy destruction and misplacement. Records furthermore were lost due to rodent infestation, flooding, fire, and other natural calamities. Employees stole records either to sell for profit or keep for themselves. In 1810 the United States passed the first law establishing rules for the care of records.¹

The Civil War expanded the volume of government records. As the country grew in the 1870's the number of agencies expanded leading to more paperwork and storage issues. As a result, records that had no use were kept unnecessarily, while important ones were lost. In 1877 the Department of the Interior suffered a fire that caused the destruction of records. This led to increasing calls for a solution to the problem.²

President Rutherford B. Hayes called for the creation of a national archive in his annual messages to Congress in 1878 and 1879. The American Historical Association, established in 1884

¹ Donald R. McCoy, *The National Archives: America's Ministry of Documents 1934-1968* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press 1978) 3

² Ibid.

continually advocated for the establishment of a national archive. J. Franklin Jameson, the first recipient of a Ph.D. in history granted at Johns Hopkins University, spearheaded the AHA lobbying efforts by professional historians for a national archive for the United States. He founded the AHA's Public Archives Commission, and later the organization's Conference of Archivists.³

Jameson's years of lobbying alongside various historians, archivists, librarians, and other patriotic groups paid off in 1926. Under the administration of Calvin Coolidge, Congress approved funds of \$1,000,000 to construct an archive, and select a site for an actual government repository. Five years later ground was broken, and the cornerstone was laid in 1933, with a speech made by President Herbert Hoover.⁴

The concept of a national archive to deal with a bulk of records occurred at the right time. A committee in 1930 estimated that the government possessed two and a half million cubic feet of government records. The best way for a person to visualize that capacity is 350,000 cabinets full of records. Despite the imposing mass of records, only four-fifths had any type of value. This led to the government's lacking space for storage of important records. Moreover, keeping useless records complicated the efforts historians and other researchers desired in studying the operations of the United States government.⁵

As an embryonic institution the National Archives faced many questions. The Archives was designed to be the keeper of government records, and what records it would control needed to be answered. The Archives were younger than the Interior, Treasury, War, and State Departments by over seventy years. Previously each department were responsible for collection of their own

³ Ibid, 6

⁴ Ibid, 7

⁵ Phillip C. Brooks "The Historians Stake in Federal Records" *The Mississippi Valley Historical View* Vol. 43. No 2 (Sept. 1956) Accessed June 22,2017 260

records. The question needed to be answered was the Archives intended to simply amass old records or control newer records produced by the government? ⁶

Another question posed was should the Archives be under the authority the Library of Congress, an institution that functioned as the nation's library. Or should it be within the Interior Department led by Harold L. Ickes, named secretary after Franklin Delano Roosevelt was inaugurated president in 1933. In the end the decision was made to keep the Archives a separate agency to avoid any overlap of governmental activities.⁷

President Roosevelt preferred an independent agency. The two houses of Congress each had different plans for the Archives. The House of Representatives passed H.R Bill 8910, on April 2, 1934, which did not prefer an independent agency. The Senate passed the bill S.3681 on April 16, 1934 suggesting the Archives should be an independent agency. Roosevelt, using his political genius was responsible for both bills passage and combination in committee; he signed the law for establishment of the independent the National Archives on June 19th, leading to the launch for the agency in the fiscal year in 1935.⁸

The National Archives were created before the Archivist of the United States was appointed. The decision was made that the Archivist could access and collect records from different Federal agencies including access to records produced by the legislative and executive branches. Control of the building that was going to house the National Archives was granted to the Archivist. The Archives could acquire motion pictures expanding the scope of their mission beyond government record keeping. The legislation also established the salary for the position of Archivist of the

⁶ McCoy *The National Archives* 8

⁷ *Ibid*, 9

⁸ *Ibid*, 11

United States was up to \$100,000 a year.⁹

Due to the influence of historians in the creation of the Archives many thought it was natural that a historian involved in the movement become the head of the agency. Jameson was 73 and rejected any proffers that he would accept the job. Another person suggested was Waldo Gifford Leland, a major figure in American archival history be the head of the agency. Leland, like Jameson believed he was too old. That he was a Republican made him an unlikely candidate. A third candidate to emerge was Dunbar Rowland, the state archivist of Mississippi.¹⁰

Jameson suggested Robert Digges Wimberly Connor, the head of Department of History and Government at the University of North Carolina. Connor was also a Democrat just like the president and had been secretary of the North Carolina Historical Commission that controlled the Department of Archives and History in 1903.¹¹

Connor had the backing of AHA as the Archivist of the United States. Those involved in the archives movement thought he was the right choice. Connor, on the other hand, was reluctant to leave a successful academic career in North Carolina to assume the helm of a just created federal agency. He thought himself as too old to take command and be an “unsuccessful job seeker.”¹²

There was sufficient momentum in support of Connor as right candidate for the position. On October 2nd Connor and Roosevelt met at the White House. In Roosevelt’s opinion two factors favored Connor’s appointment as Archivist. He was a Democrat that would allow his appointment to move through a Democratic majority in Congress. Furthermore, the historical profession had coalesced around him as the right man for the job.

⁹ Ibid, 12

¹⁰ Ibid, 16

¹¹ Ibid, 16

¹² Ibid, 21

The meeting between Roosevelt and Connor would shape the future of the agency. Roosevelt and other figures, including Congressman Sol Bloom believed the Archives would house only the significant documents of the history of the United States. These documents would include the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, presidential proclamations, and even Roosevelt's own presidential papers. Connor argued that the Archives needed to collect not just the great documents of the past, but ordinary material and records conducted under government business that possessed value.¹³

Connor accepted the job offer. Roosevelt also directed Connor to visit the Interior Secretary Ickes regarding a government wide survey of historical records. On October 10th Connor was nominated as the Archivist of the United States, and the commission became a recess appointment on the 19th. By October 20th he became the official Archivist of the United States. This appointment was led to approval by many historians involved in the AHA, along with others in the archival movement.¹⁴

The Archives still lacked a building. A building was designed and constructed at 700 Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington D.C. As a building erected during the Great Depression, the Public Works Administration was responsible for construction that lasted for three years. Many people favored a hall of records idea, but this was denied. As a working archive the building featured stack areas for the collection and storage of documents. Due to the long history of the unplanned destruction of government documents, humidity, water and fire controls were installed. The building installed an exhibition hall for patrons to visit and view important documents of American history.¹⁵

¹³ Ibid,24

¹⁴ Ibid,24

¹⁵ Ibid,32

A staff needed to be assembled for the Archives to function as a repository. Due to the Great Depression many unemployed historians found work as staff in the Archives. Historians bypassed the Government's civil service rules that existed since the late nineteenth century, which were designed to discourage the spoils system by hiring unqualified people. Due to the small number of historians at that time, this was not a problem.¹⁶

As a new agency a structure was needed to be put in place. The structure the Archives utilized was comparable to the Library of Congress. The Archivist would oversee the organization with four assistants reporting directly to him. Thaddeus S. Paige was appointed Administrative Secretary and was responsible for handling general correspondence and authenticating copies of federal records. Solon Buck was both the Director of Publications and Secretary of the National Historical Publications Commission making him responsible for publicizing historical projects. Two men, Dorsey Hyde Jr., the Director of Archival Service, and Executive Officer Collas B. Harris were responsible for supervision of employees.¹⁷

Departments created at the founding of the Archives included Accessions, responsible for the collection of records, and a repair and preservation division to care for documents. Classification, Catalogue, and Reference Departments were also instituted to explain the function of government documents. Since the Archives would collect more than just paper documents, different departments on maps and charts, motion pictures and sound recordings were also formed. Due to the long history of loss of records and theft, a Custody Branch was established to safeguard documents.¹⁸

Federal Records began to arrive in December 1935. In June 1936 58,794 feet of bulk records

¹⁶ Ibid, 41

¹⁷ Ibid, 41

¹⁸ Ibid, 41

came and by 1937 29,911 cubic feet of records were obtained. These records were transferred from ten different government agencies. The Archives would also receive maps, atlas, sound recordings, photographs, and film. Its budget appropriation was set at \$477,000 in 1936, increasing to \$615,579 in 1937. By the end of the decade the budget would increase to \$789,000.¹⁹

President Roosevelt, the great champion of the Archives, visited on June 16th, 1937. He was accompanied by his son Colonel James Roosevelt, Colonel Edward Startling, the head of the Secret Service, and four members of the staff. He toured different parts of the facility such as the Stack Room, Division of Repair and Preservation, and other divisions and finally visiting at the Exhibition Hall. FDR was impressed by the many documents contained at the Archives due to his love of history.²⁰

The creation of the National Archives helped refine the archival profession. The professional home of archivists for many years was the American Historical Association. Solon Buck, a staff member and history professor at the University of Pittsburgh. decided that a newer organization was needed dedicated to the concerns of archivists. On December 29th, 1936 in Providence, Rhode Island the Society of American Archivists was formed. Of the first 124 members of the SAA, 53 came from the Archives.²¹

An interesting aspect of the founding of the SAA was how late it was founded as a professional organization. The American Historical Association was formed in 1884. The American Library Association. representing librarians was established even earlier during America's centennial in 1876. With the founding of the new association archivists desired to be the counterparts of

¹⁹ Ibid.,92

²⁰ "FDR visits the National Archives" R.D.W. Conner *The American Archivist* Vol12 No. 4 (Oct 1949) pp.323
Published by the Society of American Archivists Accessed 12-30-17

²¹ Connor. 93

historians and librarians.²²

Along with the creation of the SAA, the other major impact that the National Archives had on the archival profession was improvements to archival education. With the creation of the National Archives Americans heard the term archivist, since it was unfamiliar to certain parts of the country. Because of the growing influence of American archivist's nations such as Great Britain sent their staff to America for training. In 1937 Buck taught a course at American University in Washington titled "Historiography, Methodology, and Materials for research in American History." The next year a similar course was taught at Columbia University. Both courses had at least fifteen to twenty students. Ernst Posner, another employee of the Archives would teach courses in archival theory at American University.²³

The creation of the National Archives allowed the government to do another internal records survey. The survey discovered there was seven million feet of records created by the government. This meant that even during the hardship of the Great Depression the amount of records created kept growing. This is the reason for the Archives existence: to process records, improve government functions, and improve information that citizens could obtain about their government.²⁴

²² Richard J Cox: On the Value of Archival History in the United States" *Libraries and Culture* Vol. 2 (Spring 1988) Accessed August 17, 2017 135-151

²³ Connor 102

²⁴ Bahmer 260

Chapter II: The War Years

As a new agency responsible for the acquisition of government records the Archives needed a proper way to select and appraise documents. The selection and appraisal of records dates to the beginning of archives. Appraisal of government documents can be difficult to decide the records that possess value and what records can be disposed. Archivists have long estimated that two percent of records have enduring value. The other ninety-eight should be disposed for they take up too much space.²⁵

Before the creation of The National Archives, American archivists had not published major pieces on appraisal theory. Government archivists turned to Great Britain for text on appraisal. The most prominent British writer on appraisal was Sir Hillary Jenkinson, the Deputy Keeper (chief administrative officer) of Great Britain's Public Records office. Jenkinson believed archives only existed from the creators' own information and possession. The archivist simply received records and made no comment of their value. Furthermore, Jenkinson believed this gave an archivist "impartiality" and demonstrated the "authenticity" of the collection process.²⁶

A flaw in Jenkinson's approach for archivists in the United States was the type of records he was processing. He appraised records dating back to medieval times. On the other hand, the National Archives was created in response to the increasing bulk of modern records generated by an expanding modern United States government. American Archivists needed a way to deal with newer records.²⁷

²⁵ Gregory S. Hunter *Developing and Maintaining Practical Archives Second Edition A how to do manual* New York Neal Schuman Publishers 2003 12

²⁶ Ibid, 77

²⁷ Ibid, 77

Employees of the National Archives decided to explore proper appraisal techniques for the United States. In January 1940, in an edition of the *American Archivist*, the official publication of the SAA stated that new appraisal methods were needed to reduce records. As a result, this would create space and prevent the loss of valuable records. The National Archives responded with a new technique of converting records to microfilm. Among other methods was sampling certain records when faced with a large volume of homogeneous records to protect ones with value. and transfer certain records to reduce space.²⁸

Once the Archives selected materials, the information needed to be made available for researchers. Finding Aids, recommended by The Finding Medium Committee, were created describe the materials held by the Archives. That committee led by Solon J. Buck included National Archives employees and outside scholars. On February 28, 1941 the committee determined that each department would create its own finding aids that would eventually become available for use by the public.²⁹

The creation of finding aids led the Archives to utilize records according to *provenance*, a term developed by French archivists in 1840's, meaning that the original order of the record must be preserved. This also meant the records received by the individual agencies such as the War Department and Department of the Interior would not be mixed together when the agency received the records.³⁰

While war in Europe had started in 1939, The United States maintained a position of neutrality. Dallas Irvine, the chief of the War Department at the Archives, alerted staffers to the potential dangers that war would pose to the agency. He recommended that other government

²⁸ McCoy *The National Archives* 107

²⁹ *Ibid*, 106

³⁰ *Ibid*, 107

agencies shift their records to the Archives for preservation. Eventually, many would do so. Space, staffing, funds, and equipment in the Archives were increased as more records come under their control.³¹

The German occupation of France sped up the transfer of records. In preparation for the potential United States entry to the war more records were shifted to the Archives to create space for national defense. In addition, various agencies asked the National Archives for advice about how the United States had prepared for war twenty-three years earlier. The War and Navy departments began to transfer some of their records to the National Archives.³²

Archivists themselves began to prepare for war. Waldo G. Leland, head of the SAA, realized that something needed to be done of war preparation. The SAA acted by setting up three committees. The first committee lead by Robert Connor, the Archivist of the United States, dealt with the issue of protecting the National Archives buildings from the hazards of war. Collas G. Harris chaired a second committee that studied the storage of records. The third and final committee, chaired by Solon J. Buck, examined the history and organization of emergency agencies. These three committees helped the Archives prepare for war.³³

While the United States was preparing for war, the National Archives was preparing for a new head. Robert Connor desired to return to North Carolina to take care of his ailing wife and accepted the Craige Professorship of Jurisprudence and History at the University of North Carolina. He resigned after the last major project initiated under his administration, the Roosevelt Library opened in Hyde Park, New York in June 1941. Roosevelt asked Connor's opinion on a potential replacement as Archivist of the United States. Connor suggested Solon J. Buck as his

³¹ Ibid, 111

³² Ibid, 112

³³ Ibid, 112

replacement, since he was already a staff member.³⁴

Roosevelt and Connor both hoped for a smooth transition in leadership when the latter stepped down on Sept. 17, 1941. Other names suggested by interested parties included former Congresswoman Ruth Bryan Rohde for Archivist. Bernard R. Kennedy, director the Federal Register Division, along with Joseph Broadman, founder of the New York Broadman Library of World War, desired the job. Furthermore, Thomas M. Owen Jr., the chief of the division of the Veteran Administration Archives of the American Legion, applied for the position and received support from many people.³⁵

To help secure the position for Buck, a campaign in his favor was conducted comparable to the one that helped Connor land his position in 1934. Historians and archivists were involved in this campaign. Roosevelt was determined to appoint Buck as the Archivist of the United States., and was successful in doing so³⁶

Buck's first act as Archivist after his installation on September 18,1941 was a request to the War Department that the Archives become a defense agency based on three factors. The first was the realization that the Archives already possessed of government records, with the capacity to transfer valuable records to storage while disposing of useless ones. A second factor was that the technical services provided by the National Archives could be valuable for the distribution of maps, sound records, documents, and photographs in support of the war effort. The third and final factor was the recognition that the *Federal Register* published by the National Archives was an essential wartime publication. The arguments were successful, and the National Archives gained

³⁴ Ibid, 114

³⁵ Ibid., 114

³⁶ Ibid., 115

recognition as defense agency on October 30th, 1941.³⁷

After the declaration of war by Congress after Pearl Harbor attacks on December 8, 1941 changes came to the agency. The amount of services provided by the Archives increased annually each year from 132,772 in 1941 to 237,757 by 1945. The number of records housed increased from 459,932 cubic feet of records to 672,336 feet of records in 1945. This was accomplished with better appraisal by archivists and an increasing disposal of useless records. Staffing at the Archives fluctuated as many joined the military or were transferred to other agencies. Unfortunately, work was affected due to manpower shortages.³⁸

The War Department had shipped records dating from the Revolutionary War up to World War I from their locations scattered all over Washington D.C, Maryland, and Virginia. After their arrival at the Archives they were grouped into three separate record groups by the archivists. Each of the record groups were accompanied by a description that helped a researcher find what they were looking for, thus demonstrating that archivists could still accomplish their professional activities even with the United States at war.³⁹

Like the records of the War Department, the Navy Department sent its records to the Archives. Most of these records were open to researchers except ones restricted for wartime security. The records acquired by the Archives dated back to the founding of the Department in 1798 up until World War I. An interesting aspect of the collections was that certain records were already in bound volumes while some records located in vertical filing cabinets. This indicated the haphazard way that records had been kept by government departments before the creation of the

³⁷ Ibid..119

³⁸ Ibid. 122

³⁹ Elbert L. Huber "War Department Records in the National Archives" *Military Affairs* Vol 6. No 4 (Winter 1942) Accessed September 20, 2017 247-254

Archives.⁴⁰

As the new Archivist of the United States, Buck was concerned with more than defense activities. Proper records management for the government became another focus. Phillip C Brooks, a staff member at the Archives, had introduced in *The American Archivist* the concept of a 'life history' for records. This would mean that records were created, appraised for their proper use, and disposed of when they became useless. As a result, more space would be created, and archivists would have more time to deal with valuable records. The question that archivists faced is how to dispose of these records and preserve ones with enduring value.⁴¹

An initial venture into record disposal came with the passage of the Records Disposal Act in 1939. The law enabled the Archives to assist federal agencies in disposing of useless federal records. The next year, with support of the Civil Service Commission, the Archives sponsored meetings for employees who desired to learn about records management. This lasted throughout the war and spread to other agencies. In addition, the SAA established a committee to promote and enhance records management.⁴²

Over the next two years Buck brought disposal concerns to the attention of the rest of the federal government. On July 7th, 1943 FDR signed the Act Concerning the Disposal of Records. The law defined records as all books, papers, maps, photographs, or other documentary evidence in whatever format received by the government. The law also replaced the phrase "permanent value or historical interest to the federal government", with "sufficient administrative, legal, research, or

⁴⁰ Bes Glenn 'Navy Department Records in the National Archives' *Military Affairs* Vol 7 No.4 (Winter 1943)
Accessed June 19th, 2017 .247-260

⁴¹ Phillip C. Brooks "The Archivist Concern in Records Administration" *the American Archivist* Vol 6. No 3 (July 1943)
Accessed May 14, 2017 161

⁴² Grover .147

other value to warrant their continued preservation”⁴³

The most important aspect of the law was the creation of disposal schedules for federal documents. Recommendations for disposal for useless documents were created along with agreements for disposal of documents that posed threats to employees’ health or property. The reduction of useless records allowed for the greater increase in saving, space, time, and personnel. This was not the first attempt at government records management, but it was the most thorough and wide ranging. This focus on proper records management in 1945 led to the publication of a fifty-page manual published by the Archives for federal officials, entitled *How to Dispose of Records: A Manual for Federal Records*.⁴⁴

During the war, the Archives faced the issue of race and hiring just like the rest of the Federal Government. As of 1941 only approximately 10.25 percent of employees were African Americans, all employed in unskilled jobs. The American government’s agency charged with fair hiring, the Committee on Fair Employment was designed to change that. By March 1942 the number of minority staff increased up to 13.42 percent. Harold T Pickett, an African-American was appointed as the first professional staff member. Yet, most employees remained unskilled: fifty-nine employees, three clerical workers, and one subprofessional. These results were not great but compared to other agencies in the government the National Archives was a fair employer.⁴⁵

The Archives helped the war effort in various ways. Roosevelt encouraged the Archives to do microphotography in order to preserve many valuable records. Due to the hazards of war, backup copies of various agency records were created to increase space for more important records. Solon Buck estimated that this would increase space by ninety-five percent. In addition, in the technical

⁴³ Ibid, 154

⁴⁴ Ibid, 155

⁴⁵ Connor 126

arena, the Archives contributed to the war effort by producing better maps on higher quality paper to make bombing targets easier in order to find and by transferring movies to prints to aid in the war effort.⁴⁶

While the Archives aided the war effort they still performed the everyday, routine functions of government. Private researchers still needed government documents to do research. Citizens from all over the country submitted requests for documentation of citizenship, proof of military service, or eligibility for social security. Other government agencies continued to borrow records, but at times did not return materials in an efficient manner.⁴⁷

Under the direction of Solon Buck, the Archives became involved in documenting the War's history. The AHA had already established a commission dedicated to writing the history of the Second World War. The objectives of a commission were to collect, preserve, and arrange sources to be microfilmed, and to write a comprehensive war history. The Archives encouraged at least forty different agencies to write their own histories for future preservation.⁴⁸

The home front was not the only area where the Archives worked to preserve materials. Many archivists were concerned that cultural materials abroad needed safekeeping. After a speech delivered by Archives employee Ernest Posner in Washington, the government became an effective advocate for preservation of foreign records. His paper, entitled "Public Records Under Military Occupation", demonstrated that conquering armies used records found in combat as military tools. This helped focus on the work of the Dinsmoor Commission, entitled the Committee on the Protection of Cultural Treasures in War Areas, in protecting cultural records.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Ibid.,129

⁴⁷ Ibid, 131

⁴⁸ Ibid, 137

⁴⁹ Ibid, 139

Posner's paper stimulated the committee's and the government's interest in the protecting archival entities in Europe and Asia. As a result, the armed forces moved to help protect monuments and other cultural treasures in Europe. The plans were even translated from English to Italian to use the archival law of 1939 to protect Italian cultural treasures. For the troops serving in Germany, the National Archives produced a pamphlet called *Information on German Records*.⁵⁰

Archivists did not simply aid the war effort in Washington D.C. The army requested an archivist to serve in Algiers in 1943. Solon Buck assigned Fred Shipman, who due to communication issues and the need for presidential approval did not arrive until March 1944. Shipman's experience proved valuable as he worked with Sir Hillary Jenkinson in making Italian archives available for troops. This contrasted with France, where efforts to attach an archivist to the staff of General Dwight Eisenhower failed despite the archivist making a good impression.⁵¹

As the United States successfully conquered more territory of the Third Reich, German archives needed to be preserved. Sargent B. Child, former director of the Historical Records Survey, worked to properly house "homeless archives, records and books, located in war torn Berlin and western Germany. Child, and his immediate successor Lester K. Born, organized records for the military and returned records that were seized from their original owners. The activities United States activities and others in the postwar years helped reestablish German archival organizations, archives, and libraries.⁵²

The National Archives concentrated primarily on the European theater of war. In contrast, the Pacific theater did not command as much attention from the Archives. Buck did not assign an archivist to that front until February, 1945. Major Arthur E. Kimberly was assigned to Manilla, to

⁵⁰ Ibid, 139

⁵¹ Ibid, 140

⁵² Ibid., 141

help reconstruct their archives that had been destroyed by the war. Collas G. Harris served in Japan as an archival adviser to the military government. Neither country received the same amount of the attention as did Germany or Italy. This was due to two reasons: first, travel from Washington to Europe was easier than in Asia. Second was a greater familiarity with European archival practices and administration.⁵³

The National Archives made numerous contributions to the war effort. Yet this did not stop the Archives from being drawn in controversy. Solon Buck appeared before the Senate Appropriations Committee, chaired by Senator Kenneth McKellar of Tennessee to discuss the Archives budget. But the hearing devolved into a battle over German propaganda. The debate began over a piece published in *National Archives Staff Information Circular No. 11*, written by Ernest Posner, entitled “The Role of Records in Administration: German Administration”.⁵⁴

Posner’s article demonstrated the importance of records in efficient government in Germany. McKellar called the article “German propaganda” aimed at converting the country to totalitarianism. He made the outrageous claims that Posner’s advocacy of cardboard document containers would render documents made by American government susceptible to damage. Buck attempted to set the record straight and refute the charges made. Another Senator, Gerald P. Nye, came to the aid of Posner and Buck by asking questions that proved Posner was neither a communist nor a Nazi.⁵⁵

McKellar’s crusade was ill-informed, in Buck’s opinion probably coming from a disgruntled employee with an ax to grind against the agency. McKellar still targeted the agency for attack and voted against increasing its appropriation in the budget. Furthermore, he still criticized Posner as a

⁵³ Ibid.,141

⁵⁴ Ibid.,142

⁵⁵ Ibid, 142

tool of Germany even though he the latter became a naturalized American citizen. Due to the attacks by McKellar, Posner left the Archives and joined academia by becoming a professor at American University.⁵⁶

The battle over Posner policies was the last battle for the Archives faced in World War II. On April 12th, 1945 FDR who had been a great champion of the Archives, died. Harry S. Truman succeeded him, and the War was over in September.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Ibid, 143

⁵⁷ FDR due to his support for Archives was given an honorary membership in the SAA in 1942.

Chapter III the Post War Years

At the end of war, the National Archives was barely ten years old. Even as a young institution it possessed the prestige of a Federal agency. Many state archivists viewed the establishment of the National Archives as an aid: with the complex issues state archives faced. In addition, state archivists believed that federal archivists should be able to answer any question they might have pertaining to archival issues. In contrast, the Library of Congress over one hundred and thirty years old was better able to provide support for state libraries and librarians throughout the country than was the Archives.⁵⁸

State archivists viewed the National Archives as the place to provide them with information and training on the newest archival techniques. As a result, state archivists would possess a better understanding of appraisal, sorting, classification, and disposal of records. Expertise in these activities helped advance the archival profession and increase the authority of the National Archives in archival circles. On the other hand, The National Archives at times failed to make their publications available for distribution in a printed form in a timely manner to state archivists to increase larger knowledge of archival practices.⁵⁹

A case study of state and federal archival relationship comes from the state of Virginia. The federal government returned certain Confederate records captured during the Civil War to the Virginia state archives. The request for the return came from the state, and the National Archives

⁵⁸ William D. McCain "Some Suggestions for National Archives Cooperation with the State Archives" *The American Archivist* JSTOR Accessed July 15th, 2017 Vol 14. No 3 (July 1951) 223

⁵⁹ Ibid..224

saved space in its facility. The National Archives at times were too busy dealing with federal matters to pay attention to state archival issues. The best way for a state archivist to attract the agency's attention was by communicating with their United States senators of that state along with their Representatives in the House districts they worked in to gain the attention to the Archives.⁶⁰

The relationship between state archives and National Archives paralleled the relationship between the state and federal governments. The Tenth Amendment of the Constitution “declares the Federal Government hold powers designated by the government. All the powers not designated to the federal government are given to the states and the people”. In terms of possession of state records, these belong to the states, and federal records belong to the federal government. A state archivist does not possess the right to hold federal records but can request their use.⁶¹

The separation of state and federal archives in the United States is unique to the nation. The state archives did not automatically become field offices for the National Archives after its establishment. A reason for this is many of the archives in the 48 states were established before the National Archives was created in 1934, with many containing records that dated before the founding of the United States. This contrasted with the more centralized archives in France with the local field offices representing their national archives.⁶²

The end of the war increased the ability of professional researchers and citizens to conduct research. In 1948 the Archives published a guide for researchers entitled *A Guide to the Records in the National Archives*. Researchers could find records in the Archives. Its staff publicized records allowing historians and researchers to find out what holdings matched their professional interests.⁶³

⁶⁰ Ibid..226

⁶¹ Oliver W. Holmes “Areas of Cooperation between the National Archives and State Archives” *The American Archivist*” Vol.14 No.3 (Jul.1951) *JSTOR* June 18th, 2017 216

⁶² Ibid, 216

⁶³ McCoy 169

After World War II a way for researchers to study the history of the United States is through the story of African-Americans. Researchers interested in African American history could consult the National Archives if they required additional knowledge. In 1950 there were 250 records groups amounting to 813,280 cubic feet of records. A way to visualize this is as 40,662 four-drawer file cabinets placed side to side stretching for an untold number of miles. Many of these records would pertain to African-American history but no record group description had been published primarily for researchers interested in African -American history. This could be viewed as positive: given the racial animus of the time archivists did not automatically dispose all records relating to African- Americans.⁶⁴

Records on African- American history before the founding of the country were quite scant. Most of the extant records dealt with slavery as all thirteen colonies permitted slavery throughout the period. In addition, records exist on African- American soldiers of the Revolutionary War as these men helped the country at times gain freedom along with their own. After the establishment of the United States, most records on African -Americans are about slavery, manumission, and abolition movement that defined American society from the Declaration of Independence to the end of the Civil War. Furthermore, each Federal Census from 1790 to 1860 when-- African American slaves listed as property-- up to the Census of 1870, when African Americans were free, had been transferred to the Archives.⁶⁵

Records on the African American experience expanded after the Civil War and through the years of Reconstruction. Records of black Civil war soldiers were in the Archives along with letters and documents on the lives of freed people and the terror they suffered under Ku Klux Klan.

⁶⁴ Roland C. McConnel 'Importance of Records in the National Archives on the History of the Negro *the Journal of Negro History*, Vol 34 No 2(April 1949) *JSTOR* Accessed March 16th, 2018 114

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 115

Furthermore, the Archives show both the negative and positive sides of American history. The records collected by the Archives up to the First World War document important in African-American history and the worsening racial story in that era.⁶⁶

The Archives focused part of their collection on African-American history, a need still existed to promote interest in the heroic parts of the American past. William Coblenz, the Assistant Director of Public Information., devised the Freedom Train to allow Americans to view historic materials and provide publicity for the National Archives. Solon Buck supported the project along with President Harry Truman, Librarian of Congress Luther Evans, business tycoon Henry Ford II, and newspaper publisher William Randolph Hearst. The celebrated composer Irving Berlin wrote a song in tribute to the Freedom Train. Furthermore, additional private funding was provided by the American Heritage Foundation for the Freedom Train. ⁶⁷

The Freedom Train began its journey on Sept 17th,1947 in Philadelphia on the 160th anniversary of the signing of the Constitution. The train carried 127 of the most important documents in the history of the United States. These documents onboard were The Bill of Rights, Thomas Jefferson's original draft of the Declaration of the Independence, and an original copy of Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*. Also, on the train were Abraham Lincoln's manuscript copies of both the Gettysburg Address and the Emancipation Proclamation. Furthermore, documents important to American history on the train included "The Star-Spangled Banner", and the Mayflower Compact.⁶⁸

The train contained more than just documents that linked Americans to the beginning of the

⁶⁶ Ibid,116

⁶⁷ Stephen Puleo *American Treasures the Secret Efforts to the Save the Declaration of Independence the Constitution and The Gettysburg Address* St. Martin's New York 2016 336

⁶⁸ Ibid, 336

nation's history. To celebrate the victory in World War II twenty documents pertaining to the war made the journey: such as Hitler's Last Will and Testament, and the surrender documents signed by Japan and Germany. In addition, the train also carried Emperor Hirohito's statement announcing the end of the War in the Pacific Theater.⁶⁹

The Freedom Train always traveled the country with the documents protected by a Marine regiment. A *Readers Digest* article was included on the Bill of Rights in the train's cargo and was distributed with 3.5 million visitors. Also, on board was a thirty-two-page booklet published by *Look* magazine about the Freedom Train's precious baggage. These texts helped better educate citizens about the history of the country.⁷⁰

The Freedom Train tour ended in 1949 in Washington during Harry Truman's second inauguration. The train travelled 37,000 miles through every state in the Union and visited some 326 cities and towns. The ability to travel to every single state forced the usage of fifty-two railroad lines. Three million visitors viewed the exhibit. Memorabilia from the recently concluded Second World War were among the most popular items. The only major difficulty occurred when the Train bypassed Birmingham, Alabama due to the government insisting African-American and white visitors be separated due to Jim Crow segregation.⁷¹

The end of World War II created a world in which the United States emerged as major power. The isolation of the American prewar life was over. Similar changes were taking place at the Archives. Beginning in 1945 fellowships were offered to students in Latin America to study American archival theories. A few years later additional fellowships were made available to Canadian, Chinese, and Indian scholars, thus expanding the influence of the National Archives and

⁶⁹ Ibid, 336

⁷⁰ Ibid, 337

⁷¹ Ibid, 338 Hawaii and Alaska are not part of the continental United States and were not states then.

American archivists in shaping other countries archival traditions.⁷²

An example of the influence the National Archives were improvements to the United Nation's Archives. The United States helped expand the management of this institution under the direction of Robert Claus. Due to the counseling provided by the National Archives, the United Nations developed into an effective archival agency. Based on this ability to protect records in the UN archive prevented the loss of valuable records.⁷³

The spirit of cooperation among governments to protect records and provide better archival services extended to the archivists themselves. In 1946 Solon Buck called for an international association of archivists modeled on the SAA. On June 9th through 11th, 1948, representatives from France, Great Britain, Italy, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Australia, Czechoslovakia, UNESCO, Occupied Germany, and the United States gathered to form the International Council of Archives.⁷⁴

A constitution was adopted that restricted ICA membership to the government administrators of member archival institutions that had voting rights. This allowed for the free exchange of ideas across countries about archival issues. The only drawback faced as the ICA grew during these Cold War years as many Soviet archivists accused the body of being an instrument of United States interests.⁷⁵

The National Archives was less than fifteen years old, but was gaining influence in worldwide archival circles. Inquiries for help and advice on archival issues came as far as way as Scotland, and Australia, even though both were members of the British Commonwealth. Even East

⁷² McCoy *The National Archives* 170

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 172

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 173

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 176

Germany, under Soviet control, reached out to the National Archives for advice in archival issues. Due to this the East German archivist had connections to their German counterpart in Western Germany, a relationship that existed nowhere else. The influence of the United States reached Africa and South Asia when the newly independent Ghana and the newly self-governing India named their archives “National Archives” in honor of the United States, even though they were both former British colonies and current members of the Commonwealth.⁷⁶

Canada, another member of the British Commonwealth, emerged as a country heavily influenced by the National Archives. William Kaye Lamb guided the creation of the Public Archives of Canada, which built their own Public Archives Record Centre in 1955. The Canadian archivists patterned their operations on the National Archives by using finding aids and records groups to document information. This was a surprise as Canada was part of the French and British empires at one point in time, and a large part of the population was still French speaking. A natural connection to French and British archivists should have influenced Canadian archivists more than those from the United States.⁷⁷

The rise in influence of American archivists came at the expense of the British and French. The British, led by Jenkinson theories on archives failed to keep up with modern developments in archival management. The same thing happened to the French who were the preeminent archival theorists before the war. On the other hand, the Americans were continually updating their archival theories.⁷⁸

While the Archives achieved success and prominence in the postwar period, problems remained. The number of maps, films, sound recordings, and records sent to the Archives increased

⁷⁶ Ibid, 177

⁷⁷ Ibid, 178

⁷⁸ Ibid., 175

after World War II. All the records had to be transcribed, described, and stored, leading to more staff needed to deal with this, leaving records management to suffer. To deal with these problems new regulations were put in place to slow the amount of records being received by the Archives. In addition, a new building was built in Suitland, Maryland to store records.⁷⁹

Reorganization at the agency occurred in the post-war years This occurred due to concerns over budgetary and efficiency issues facing the government. On December 31st, 1947 the thirteen record divisions were consolidated into six records offices: general records, industrial records, legislative references and records, photographic records, and war records. Eleven service units were consolidated into six service divisions: Cleaning and Rehabilitation, Finance and Accounts, Exhibits and Publications, Personnel Management, Printing and Publication, and Property.⁸⁰

A new Records Control Office was created that grouped together the World War II records project, the library, and general service office. The Property, Finance, Accounts, Printing and Processing, Cleaning and Rehabilitation divisions came under the control of the new office. On the other hand, *The Federal Register*, and the Roosevelt Library remained separate offices reporting directly to the Archivist of the United States.⁸¹

The reorganization generated mixed results. The wartime cuts to staff were still in effect and morale was still low. The number of employees had not increased despite more records that required to be processed. In fact, the Archives was told to reduce staff resulting in demotions for fifty-one people.⁸²

The various travails the National Archives faced wore heavily on Buck. In 1948 Buck, after

⁷⁹ Ibid, 193

⁸⁰ Ibid., 208

⁸¹ Ibid., 208

⁸² Ibid., 210

seven years decided to step down as Archivist of the United States. He had battled a serious illness throughout 1947. In January 1948 he informed Harry Truman's presidential assistant, Donald S. Dawson, that he would resign at the end of the fiscal year. Buck took a position as chief of the Manuscript Division and incumbent in the Chair of American History at the Library of Congress. He suggested either his friend Dean Theodore C. Blegen of the University of Minnesota, or another colleague, Professor Theodore Thomas Cochran, to assume the post of Archivist of the United States.⁸³

Wayne C. Grover, whom Buck had not recommended, was named to the position. He was a former employee of the Archives and, since 1943, served as the Army's leading records management officer. Another point in his favor Grover earned a Ph.D. in public administration from American University. He was also the son-in-law of Utah senator Elbert D. Thomas, and when Buck spent most of 1947 unable to lead the Archives he spent most of the year running the agency.⁸⁴

Grover was nominated by the White House on May 13th, 1948 and was confirmed by the Senate on June 3rd, 1948. At forty-two he was much younger than his two predecessors. Unlike the previous two Archivists, he was administrator, not a scholar or writer. In Grover's favor he possessed an awareness of politics and was adept at public relations. Furthermore, he had a deep appreciation of history.⁸⁵

Grover did face budgetary problems, and the ever-increasing bulk of records created by the government. The Archives building was in disrepair and needed to be fixed. Much like his predecessor he had to fight to secure adequate funding, to deal with records, and to improve service

⁸³ Ibid, 212

⁸⁴ Ibid., 211

⁸⁵ Ibid, 212

due to increased research demands not only from scholars but the public.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Ibid, 218

Chapter IV: The Hoover Commission

The origin of the Commission on the Organization of the Executive Branch of Government, later referred to as the Hoover Commission originated on January 10th, 1947. Clarence Brown, a Republican Congressman from Ohio, introduced a bill to create a commission to improve administration of the executive branch. Three days later Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts introduced a similar measure in the Senate. Both bills required that the President, Speaker of the House, and the President pro tempore of the Senate appoint four members of the commission, up to a total of twelve.⁸⁷

This was not the first attempt at a study for reorganization of the Executive Branch. The Dockery- Cockrell Committee was established by Congress in 1887 and served to 1889. It studied the business methods of the executive branch and other federal offices. The Keep Commission from 1905 to 1909 investigated methods of the executive branch. In 1910 President William Howard Taft established the President's Commission on Economy and Efficiency that sat until 1913. In 1921 Congress established the commission the Joint Committee on Reorganization of Government Departments and later passed the Budget and Accounting Act. During the Great Depression two committees, the Byrd Committee for the Senate, and the President's Committee on Administrative Management, led by Louis Brownlow studied the Executive Branch.⁸⁸

Concerns over partisanship was addressed by having two Democrats and two Republicans serve on the Commission. The members on this commission would be drawn from both the

⁸⁷ William E. Pemberton "Struggle for the New Deal: Truman and the Hoover Commission" *Presidential Studies Quarterly JSTOR Vol 6 No 3*. Leadership and National Security (Summer 1986) Accessed June 14, 2018 511-527. 511

⁸⁸ Robert W Krauskopf "The Hoover Commission and Federal Recordkeeping" *the American Archivist Vol 21 No.4* (Oct 1958) Accessed June 16th, 2017 pg.371-399 pg.371

government and the private sector. The results of the commission would not be released until after the 1948 elections. The bill passed both houses of Congress in July 1947.⁸⁹

Senator Arthur Vandenberg of Michigan, the President pro tempore of the Senate, appointed two fellow Senators: Republican George D. Aiken from Vermont, and Democrat John L. McClellan from Arkansas, ranking and minority members of the Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments. His private appointments were James K. Pollack, a political science professor, from the University of Michigan, and businessman Joseph P. Kennedy, former ambassador to Great Britain.⁹⁰

On July 16th Speaker of the House Joseph William Martin Jr. nominated Congressman Clarence Brown and Carter Manasco, a Democrat from Alabama, as his government appointees. His civilian appointments were former president Herbert Hoover and James Rowe a lawyer who had worked in numerous government positions.⁹¹

President Truman announced his appointments the next day. James Forrestal, Secretary of Defense, was his first governmental appointee. Arthur Flemming, a Republican member of the Civil Service Commission, was Truman's other appointment from the executive branch of government. His appointments from the private sector were George Mead, a Republican with a long career of government service. The second figure Truman selected was Dean Acheson, former Assistant and Undersecretary of State from 1941 to 1947, who became the Secretary of State while serving on the Commission.⁹²

The commission acquired its name from the most prominent member former president Herbert

⁸⁹ Ibid., 512

⁹⁰ Pemberton, 513

⁹¹ Ibid., 513

⁹² Ibid., 515

Hoover. At seventy-five years of age, service on the commission allowed Hoover a way back into government after being ignored during the Roosevelt administration, due to his repeated criticism of the New Deal and FDR. As the only living former president, the recommendations of the commission could allow him to finally repeal of parts of the New Deal that he considered unamerican and unconstitutional. Furthermore, Hoover viewed Truman an unpopular incumbent would lose in 1948, and a Republican could enact all the proposals in 1949.⁹³

Hoover was also attracted to the commission purpose to improve government efficiency a goal he held even before he became the Secretary of Commerce under Warren G. Harding and Calvin Coolidge. Government waste in the postwar era was another concern for Hoover due to the expanding federal government. The Federal Government during his presidency had 600,000 employees working in 350 agencies. This swelled to more than 2,00,000 by 1947, while the number of agencies had quintupled.⁹⁴

The commission began its work on September 29th, 1947. Twenty-four principal problems facing the federal government were defined by the commission. These problems were defined as personnel issues, budgeting, accounting, and issues with the Post Office. Further study was needed on the National Security Organization, and at least six cabinet departments: State, Interior, Commerce, Labor, Treasury, and Agriculture. Other areas and activities such as Federal-State relations, Federal research, Veteran Affairs, Indian Affairs, were to be examined.⁹⁵

The commission divided itself into “task forces.” Each task force was supplemented with advice from experts in various fields. Each task force was scheduled to work for ten to fourteen

⁹³ Glen Jeansonne & David Lührssen *Herbert Hoover a Life* New American Library New York 2015 pg.368

⁹⁴ Richard Norton Smith *an Uncommon Man the Triumph of Herbert Hoover The Triumph of Herbert Hoover* Simon & Schuster New York 1984 370

⁹⁵ *The Hoover Commission Report on Organization of the Executive Branch of the Government* McGraw-Hill Book Company Inc New York

months to the study the topic and inform the commission of its results.⁹⁶

To avoid any question of politics the results would be released when the Eight-first Congress was seated over two years later. The Hoover Commission avoided the mistakes made by previous commissions by building a broad bipartisan base of support. The commission was split evenly along partisan lines. although led a former Republican president. ⁹⁷

Government records were part of the commission's interests. Emmet J Leahy, a former staff member at the Archives executive director of the National Records Management Council discussed with the nature of government records with the Commission's staff in January 1948. Leahy, on his own initiative, drafted his own plan detailing the scope of records management problem the Federal Government faced and ways to resolve the problem.⁹⁸

Wayne Grover, then serving as Assistant Archivist of the United States, wrote a letter to the commission stressing that better records management would save the government money. A task force was established to study records management and the responsibility of The Federal Government in that manner. Furthermore, Grover suggested that a new General Records Act, be passed and a new records center be established.⁹⁹

On April 12th, 1948 the National Records Management Council was tasked with the study of government records management. Leahy served as the research director for this part of the commission. Five consultants served on this committee. Herbert E. Angel, the director of the Department of the Navy's Office Methods Branch, served along with Wayne Grover. Robert Bahmer, the Assistant Archivist of the United States, also served on the task force. Edward Wilder,

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Krauskopf 374

⁹⁸ Ibid, 374

⁹⁹ Ibid, 376

an official from the State Department's Division of Organization, served on the task force. F.M. Root, an archivist employed at the Westinghouse Electric Company of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, represented the private sector.¹⁰⁰

Only one formal and several informal meetings of the task force were held. It recommended a new public records legislation and the establishment of a Federal Records Center. All the participants agreed on the ideas contained in the report. The final report was submitted on October 14th, 1948 and was known as the Leahy report.¹⁰¹

The report pointed out that the well-known fact that uncontrolled records maintenance cost the United States government money and space. Records created from 1930 onward would fill six buildings as big as the Pentagon. In terms of space at least 18 million square feet of records were filed, and the cost of space of those records is 20 million dollars annually. The cost to file all those records with proper equipment was 154 million dollars. A central record service was recommended to consolidate records management. Moreover, 50 percent of total records produced by the government could be eliminated from main office, with millions of savings to increase personnel, equipment, and space.¹⁰²

The report called for the creation of the Office of General Services, a central service agency that would operate record centers in Washington. The National Archives would be relocated within this organization, where all important federal records would be stored for use, serviced, and protected for value. The records held would also be screened to increase space and efficiency and avoid the duplication of useless records. In addition, a Bureau of Records management would

¹⁰⁰ Hoover Commission

¹⁰¹ Krauskopf. 377

¹⁰² Hoover Commission 79-80

determine policies and supervise records management throughout the government.¹⁰³

As with the rest of the task force findings, the recommendations were placed into reports. On November 11th, 1948 Hoover held a press conference and reviewed the findings of the reports. The public release of the reports continued throughout 1948, and in January 1949 the final report was released to the public. On February 12th, 1949 the final report was submitted to Congress. By the summer on June 12th the Task force disbanded.¹⁰⁴

The National Archives, as described in the Leahy Report to the Hoover Commission, was a records management service equivalent to a service organization. Members of the Hoover Commission equated the National Archives, an institution established thirteen years earlier dedicated to preserving the cultural heritage of America, with a general service agency and supply department of the government.¹⁰⁵

The Leahy report had supporters and critics. Supporters felt that the report did a good job describing the record management problems the government faced. Critics believed the report was too narrow in scope. The rest of the report proposed the decentralization of the government yet advocated the centralization of the Federal government's record management. The report was criticized by many of those who read the results as taking the Archives practices and skills in records management and distributing the practices to other agencies.¹⁰⁶

Wayne Grover, who had assumed the position as the Archivist of the United States, was asked for his opinion on March 1st, 1949. Grover and his aides wanted the Archives to retain full independence or quasi-independence while retaining the cultural importance part of their mission.

¹⁰³ Bradley D Nash and Cornelius Lynde *A Hook In Leviathan A Critical Interpretation of The Hoover Commission Report* New York The McMillian Company 1950 77

¹⁰⁴ Krauskopf 378

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, .380

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 380

As a young agency, the Archives would lose prestige without independence. Archivists in the agency were not all opposed to all changes outlined in the report but did not want to lose independence.¹⁰⁷

Grover stated that a creation of a records management bureau in a proposed office of general services was unnecessary. A better way to solve recordkeeping was to expand the existing facilities of the National Archives for better records management. Grover wanted to show that better federal records management was preferable to the changes proposed by the Hoover Commission.¹⁰⁸

Another issue with becoming part of a general service agency was the National Archives already considered itself the general service agency for the government. Records management provided by the Archives was emphasized in numerous government publications and the justification of budget increases for the agency from Congress. Employees of the Archives considered the agency to be both a cultural and service institution: a point of pride for the Archives.¹⁰⁹

Despite Grover's protests, the Archives could not stop the implementation of the recommendations of the Hoover Commission, and prevent the creation of the General Services Administration. This was one of the most popular recommendations in the Truman administration's opinion. By late April, Grover realized he could not halt the momentum toward reorganization. By June 30th, the bills passed through Congress and became the law of under the title the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act. The Archives did not have enough

¹⁰⁷ McCoy.225

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. 228.

¹⁰⁹ Oliver W. Holmes "The National Archives at the Turn at the Road" *The American Archivist* Vol 12 No 4(Oct 1949) Accessed June 16th, 2017 342

time to mount a campaign to challenge the law.¹¹⁰

On July 1st, 1949 the National Archives became subordinate agency to the GSA. After the initial years of independence and directly reporting to FDR and Truman, Wayne Grover would report to GSA head Jess Larson. Not everybody was necessarily upset with these developments. Oliver W. Holmes pointed out that military men serve in the military but must acquiesce to civilian control. Holmes pointed out The Department of the Interior employed geologists but had people who ran the department who were not professional geologists.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ McCoy *The National Archives* 229

¹¹¹ Holmes. 350

Ch. V: Life Under the GSA

The period after reorganization was full of turmoil. Services that the National Archives previously provided such as information on legislative matters, liaisons with other agencies, advise on some legal matters became part of the tasks of the GSA. On the other hand, employees still viewed themselves as personnel of the National Archives not the GSA. On December 11th, the National Archives received a new name: the National Archives and Records Services. The agency consisted of four different sections each reporting to the Archivist: the National Archives, the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, the Federal Register Division, and the newly created Records Management Division.¹¹²

Being housed under the GSA was not a complete negative for the National Archives. Many of the tasks archivists found unpleasant and irrelevant to their duties found those responsibilities assigned to other agencies. Reorganization of government was designed to increase efficiency in the government and the National Archives became a better run agency. Grover no longer had to plead for money from Congress: this became the responsibility of Larson as the GSA administrator.¹¹³

NARS had some successes after losing its independence. The National Archives were able to lobby Congress to pass the Federal Records Act of 1950. The act charged the head of the GSA with imposing standards, creating procedures, and improving methods for federal records management. As part of the law, the GSA administrator had the power to operate record centers. The Archivist of the United States would now accepted presidential papers, and the papers of other

¹¹² McCoy *The National Archives* 233

¹¹³ *Ibid*, 233

prominent individuals.¹¹⁴

The Act also established an advisory council named the Federal Records Council. Furthermore, the National Historical Publications Commission was expanded and assigned with increased functions. All federal agencies were better instructed to preserve records throughout the government. The GSA storage centers could be used, when convenient, to store certain records, and Congress had to approve the destruction of records¹¹⁵

Grover approved of the law's passage because the government would not be burdened by an excess of useless records. The archival and record management functions continued under the Archivist of the United States. Even after the loss of independence, Grover had a good working relationship with Larson which allowed for a smooth relationship between NARS and the GSA.¹¹⁶

The National Archives experienced a major success in this period. Wayne Grover led a movement to have the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution transferred from the Library of Congress to the National Archives. Grover asked Thad Page, the head of the Legislative and Fiscal Branch, to investigate the legal justification of having the documents placed under the authority of the Archives. Page stated that National Records Act of 1950 gave it the authority to house the documents. In addition, Preservation Division chemist Arthur E. Kimberly stated the documents would be safer at the National Archives.¹¹⁷

Grover was able to persuade the Librarian of Congress, Luther Evans, that the National Archives was better able to protect the documents than the Library of Congress. The Archive's facilities in Washington were more secure, and less vulnerable to attack. Many people worried

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 237

¹¹⁵ Ibid.,237

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 237

¹¹⁷ Puleo 328

during the Korean War and the beginnings of the Atomic Age that these documents could be destroyed due to an attack on United States soil. Grover lobbied Congress and the White House to explain why the National Archives was the best place for storage and exhibition for those documents. On December 15th, 1952 a ceremony was held transferring the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution to NARS. The ceremony was presided over by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Fred Vinson, that featured a speech by Harry Truman, along with attendance of over 100 national civic, patriotic, religious, labor, business, educational, and veterans' groups.¹¹⁸

The early 1950's saw the expansion of the record centers to handle government records. A Washington area records center was established in Alexandria, Virginia at the old Naval Torpedo Plant. New York City enlarged its record center along with both Chicago and San Francisco. Other record centers were established in Atlanta, Boston, Denver, and Fort Worth. The GSA established civilian record centers in Kansas City and Seattle. In addition, other record centers were established in Portland, Philadelphia, and Honolulu.¹¹⁹

NARS issued pamphlets to explain records management. These described records creation, organization, maintenance, and use. In addition, these pamphlets established fourteen record schedules for retention and disposal of records issued by the National Archives. These standards were designed for use for the care of tenth of all records with enduring value. These included payroll, administration, procurement, and supply. Further standards were established for travel issues such as motor vehicle and transportation, communication services, printing, binding, and other services.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Ibid, .328

¹¹⁹ McCoy *The National Archives* 247

¹²⁰ Herbert E Angel "Federal Records Management since the Hoover Commission Report *the American Archivist*

The new record centers came at the right time. Grover pointed out beginning in 1930, the federal government up to 1953 created seven times as many records in those twenty-two years, as in its previous history. This is due to the expansion of the government under the New Deal programs, World War II, and the Korean War. The records centers would help deal with the bulk of these records.¹²¹

Managing records was not the only responsibility the Archives. Scholars and members of the public continued to visit the Archives. Researchers and other citizens who visited the Archives could obtain records from the First to the Eightieth Congress. Valuable government records up to 1930 could be found at the Archives an impressive feat for an institution that did not exist until 1934. Newly created records of New Deal agencies such as the Works Progress Administration, and the National Recovery Administration were also stored at the Archives.¹²²

The National Archives posed some disadvantages for researchers. The sheer bulk of records accumulated could leave certain researchers bewildered and frustrated when trying to find information. Travel to Washington could be expensive and time consuming in an age of train travel, when the interstate highway system was not yet built, and plane travel was still in the infancy.¹²³

Restrictions on certain records was in issue for those visiting the National Archives. The United States position on records encouraged wide-open access with seventy percent being able to be used. For the other thirty percent of records certain restrictions existed. Personal and employment information were restricted, along with investigative reports on living persons. Any

Accessed November 14th, 2017 Vol 16. No.1 (Jan 1953) 17

¹²¹ Ibid, 147

¹²² Wayne C. Grover "The National Archives and the Scholar" *Military Affairs* Vol.15 No.1 (Spring 1951) Accessed October 1st, 2017.7

¹²³ Ibid, 7

report that could lead to the harassment of living people or damaging the reputation of the deceased was restricted. In addition, records on national security and relationships between the United States and foreign countries needed to be restricted.¹²⁴

The expanse of records and researchers wanting to use the Archives led to a better educated staff. In 1953 the requirement for being hired as an archivist now included a college education, and twelve hours of archival training in United States history. Applicants needed knowledge of appraisal of records important to the history of the United States with knowledge of their creation, and the reason for their enduring value if needed or for their disposal.¹²⁵

An entry level position at the Archives was classified as GS-5, with the ability to do any job at the agency. After working in the Archives an archivist could advance to GS-7, a more advanced position at any branch in the Archives. The next step up for an employee would be the category of GS-9. To make these steps up the ladder one needed knowledge of the Archives rules and regulations, the records groups of the National Archives, and what understanding is in the records groups.¹²⁶

Promotion above the level of GS-9 would place a person in a supervisory role. To become a supervisor, one must hold a Ph.D. This provided an individual's great credentials and knowledge to supervise both the professional archivists and non-professional staff. As a relief to the junior archivists, many routine tasks were passed on to clerical workers. All employees were offered the possibility more training and education to advance up the ranks of the agency.¹²⁷

The United States and the National Archives in the 1950's grew in size and complexity. This

¹²⁴ Ibid.,7

¹²⁵ G. Phillip Bauer "Recruitment, Training, and Promotion in the National Archives *the American Archivist* Vol.18 No.4 (Oct 1955) Accessed June 26th, 2017 294

¹²⁶ Ibid,295

¹²⁷ Ibid, 212

led to the archivist's job growing and becoming more multifaceted with more records being produced and more researchers coming to visit the Archives. In response, Wayne Grover created a code of conduct for archivists. The first rule of the code of conduct requires an archivist must preserve valuable records and dispose of useless ones. Proper selection of records for future use was the second code of conduct. The third and fourth rules dealt with protection of records from harm and promoting access of records in their care to researchers.¹²⁸

The fifth code explained the archivist relationship to researchers. An archivist must be polite and make records for the researchers use, and do not waste their patron's time. The sixth code stated archivist should not try to profit in any commercial way from the records in their care or prioritize their professional interests over researchers. The last code of the conduct stated archivists possess a responsibility to pass on their knowledge to future archivists and leave proper documentation of their activities for future archivists.¹²⁹

The Korean War ended in 1953. A second commission on the Executive Branch was required due to many of the previous recommendations being ignored during the war. New Republican President Dwight D. Eisenhower appointed Herbert Hoover to head the commission, with most members being Republicans appointed by Hoover personally with no vice chairman. The Second Hoover Commission was devoted to ending overlap between agencies as opposed to reorganization of the government. Furthermore, to the chagrin of Democrats who were in position to reclaim Congress in 1954, Hoover wanted to eliminate as many New Deal regulations as he could.¹³⁰

Emmet Leahy was named the head of the Records Administration Task Force to document

¹²⁸ The Archivist Code *the American Archivist* Vol 18. No 4 (Oct 1955) June 11th, 2017 307

¹²⁹ Ibid, 307

¹³⁰ Jeansonne & Lührssen *Herbert Hoover* 386

records management programs. Herbert E. Angel, who was the Director of Records Management of NARS represented the agency. The rest of the task force consisted of two people from the private industry and government service. The goal of this task force to reduce the number of government records and improve the quantity and handling of the current records. In addition, separate paperwork management for the GSA was recommended.¹³¹

The report of the Hoover Commission was submitted to Congress on January 19th, 1955. It advocated the reduction and the variety of the records produced. The report also recommended that the president initiate a government wide paperwork management program. The real aim was to reduce and streamline paperwork and increase the capacity for filing records. Eliminating duplicate records and other waste could save the government millions of dollars a year.¹³²

¹³¹ McCoy *the National Archives* 275

¹³² *Ibid.*, 283

Chpt VI: Schellenberg's Influence

Theodore Roosevelt Schellenberg was born on February 24, 1903 in Harvey County, Kansas. He grew up in Kansas and attended the University of Kansas where he received his A.B degree in 1928, and a M.A degree in history in 1930. Schellenberg was a Phi Beta Kappa who earned his doctorate at The University of Pennsylvania in 1934. The following year, after working as the National Park Service historian, he received an appointment to the staff of the National Archives.¹³³

Two years later he served briefly as Associate National Director of the newly established Survey of the National Archives. In 1938 Schellenberg received his first major administrative job at the agency as the chief of the Division of Agriculture Department Archives. During this period Schellenberg became interested in archival theory due to his office's concentration on the bulk of records being produced by the United States Government.¹³⁴

After the end of the war in 1945 Schellenberg left the Archives for a position as the Records Officer at the Office of Price Administration. In his new job at another agency in government he dealt with another large bulk of government records that needed to be appraised and disposed. Three years later Schellenberg returned to the National Archives and assumed the position of Director of Archival Management.¹³⁵

In 1954 Schellenberg, supported by a Fulbright Grant travelled to Australia to deliver a series of lectures on archival topics. Australians had reached out to an American archivist employed at

¹³³ Jane F. Smith 'Theodore R Schellenberg: Americanizer and Popularizer *the American Archivist*, Vol.44, No 4 (Fall, 1981) Accessed March 15, 2017 316-336

¹³⁴ Ibid,317

¹³⁵ Ibid,317

the National Archives to acquire more information about archival theory rather than to the British archivist such as Sir Hillary Jenkinson. This is a proof in the post-World War II ascendancy of influence that American archivists and the National Archives held in the world-wide archival community. Accompanied by his wife Alma, he held seminars, gave speeches, and spoke with various librarians and archivists.¹³⁶

During his trip to Australia Schellenberg started to think about publishing a new work on archival theory and administration to replace Jenkinson's book *Manual of Archive Administration*. After returning from Australia in 1954 two years later Schellenberg published his textbook for archival administration called *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques*. The book received very positive reviews from the archival community.¹³⁷

Schellenberg's volume concentrated on appraisal. His core concepts of appraisal described the nature of evidential and informative value of records. Evidential value, in his opinion, preserved records if the origin of each entity is known and important. An archivist would need documentation of the material and entities produced by the institutions in describing the records. The concept of evidential value was important due to the United States government increasing into diverse agencies in the 1950's, each generating records that needed to be preserved for enduring value and archivists deciding what needed to be disposed.¹³⁸

The second part of Schellenberg's theory was informational value. This part of appraisal would shed light on both individuals and corporate bodies. The second part dealt with buildings and other objects; the third part described events considering the interaction between persons and things. To achieve informational value archivist must use three tests. The first test was uniqueness

¹³⁶ Ibid.,319

¹³⁷ Ibid, 319

¹³⁸ Hunter 58

meaning that the information found anywhere else and cannot be duplicated. The second question an archivist must answer was the concentration of information that could lead to either preservation or disposal. The last question was the importance of the document to the creator's intention and if people would be interested in the document for future research.

Schellenberg's theories on archives were a distinct departure from Jenkinson's concepts. He considered that Jenkinson's *Manual* "unreadable" and giving Australians a "wrong start on their archival work", which he believed was corrected by his book. His differences with Jenkinson became personal as Schellenberg referred to him "an old fossil", Jenkinson responded in kind calling Schellenberg's theories "dangerous". The insults were a culmination of Schellenberg's arguments that Jenkinson's theories on archives were unsuited to the United States, because he was working with a massive bulk of modern records.¹³⁹

Schellenberg's book, theories, and lectures abroad led to a greater prestige for the Archives around the world. This led to conflict with Wayne Grover over his role in the Archives. Grover felt that he was too involved in his outside activities, while Schellenberg believed he was not kept abreast of the policies and situations occurring at the Archives. He wanted a reorganization of the archives and requested that his title changed to Director of the National Archives due to the prestige his work gave the Archives rather than maintain his original title Director of Archival Management which he thought was useless.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ Reto Tschan "A comparison of Jenkinson and Schellenberg on Appraisal *the American Archivist* Vol 65, No.2 (Fall-Winter 2002) Accessed October 16, 2017. 176

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 322

Chpt VII: The Presidential Library System

The National Archives faced another change in the 1950's with the development of the Presidential Library System. President Truman began depositing many of his speeches, papers and other memorandums in the National Archives beginning in 1949. He did this after learning that many of his predecessors took their papers with them as they left the office. These were often kept by their families, which at times led to the destruction of many papers.¹⁴¹

Truman also decided to build his own Presidential Library under the direction of the National Archives like the man he had served as Vice-President, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Truman faced a problem unlike his two immediate predecessors in office. In contrast to Roosevelt and Hoover, then the only other living former President, he lacked the wealth and estate to house his papers; he had spent a lifetime in public service, neither being born to great wealth like Roosevelt nor making a fortune in mining like Hoover. Therefore, he needed the help of Archives.¹⁴²

Due to lobbying by staff at the Archives, the Presidential Library Act was signed into law by President Dwight Eisenhower on August 12th, 1955. The law allowed the Archives to create presidential libraries maintained by the government that were eligible to receive presidential papers. Manuscript collectors criticized the law, arguing they would not be able to gain access to presidential papers anymore. This would lead to subsequent presidents establishing their own libraries.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ McCoy *The National Archives* 292

¹⁴² Ibid, 298 Truman's financial situation also is why ex-Presidents receive pensions, as he had none when he retired.

¹⁴³ Ibid, 300

The National Archives were part of the Executive Branch under the control of the GSA. They had a relationship with Congress because due to budget approval. The third branch of government, the judiciary, had little in the way of a relationship to the Archives. In 1935 and 1936 R.D.W. Connor requested information from the Clerk of the Supreme Court regarding their records. The clerk expressed the view of the Chief Justice Charles Evan Hughes that none of the records of the Court be transferred from the Supreme Court to the National Archives. This proved the fears many had in the early years of the Archives that much older institutions such as the Supreme Court-- older by one hundred and forty years-- would not respect the authority of the National Archives to collect their records. ¹⁴⁴

In the years following the original request small files of Supreme Court records were sent to the Archives for repair and preservation. As the records were microfilmed, the realization grew that most of the older records of the Court should be stored in the Archives. By 1956 Chief Justice Fred Vinson authorized the Clerk to transfer records dating up to 1832. Two years later, Earl Warren, the succeeding Chief Justice transferred records up to 1860. One year later, the Clerk allocated records up to 1890 and reached an agreement that records fifty years and older would be transferred to the National Archives. ¹⁴⁵

An interesting aspect to the records of the Supreme Court is they amounted too little over two thousand feet of records. This was due to common destruction of records due to fire and misplacement over the years. The Supreme Court also did not keep records of cases heard until 1832. In addition, the Court was in a constant state of flux throughout the 19th Century as cases

¹⁴⁴ James R. Browning and Bess Glenn "The Supreme Court Collection at the National Archives *the American Journal of Legal History* Vol.4, No 3 (Jul 1960) Accessed March 1st, 2018 241

¹⁴⁵ Ibid,145

were not always heard, and the number of justices was not always set at nine.¹⁴⁶

The early years 1960's saw the Archives continuing to expand. By 1960 there was some nearly 912,000 feet of records possessed by the Archives with thirteen percent stored in Alexandria, Virginia. A backlog of records led to the inability of archivists to access and do appraisal. This was solved by having more records were microfilmed. In addition, a larger number of researchers came to do research at the Archives with more of the public visited. This led to the problems with the GSA which cared only about the controlling NARS budget, not about research or visitors.¹⁴⁷

In the 1960's, the preservation of the two percent of valuable records became a renewed focus of the Archives. In 1962 newer record retention plans were developed under the direction of NARS with better disposal schedules, and clarification of what records offered enduring value. This also made the transfer of agency records to the Archives clearer.¹⁴⁸

The Archives also did another internal reorganization. Grover and Bahmer decided on January 1st, 1962 the functions of the Archives was to change again. Schellenberg's position was abolished and the Archives were to be divided into the Office of Military Archives, Office of Civil Archives, and a new Office of Records Appraisal. Each of the three departments were to be headed by an Assistant Archivist who would report to the Archivist of the United States, Wayne Grover.¹⁴⁹

Schellenberg had feuded on and off with Grover for several years After reorganization, he was offered the post as Head of the Office of Records Appraisal. Schellenberg only accepted the job because retirement was two years away.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 146

¹⁴⁷ McCoy *The National Archives* 314

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 319

¹⁴⁹ Smith.322

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.,322

By 1960, Schellenberg's theories on archives had become and more refined. He decided that the best place to train future archivists were the library schools in United States. At the time he stated that the collections librarians were responsible for were similar to archives. Librarians selected books and other materials for their patrons in the manner that corresponded to Schellenberg's theories of archivists being active in record appraisal. Librarians utilized the Dewey Decimal Classification, created by Melvil Dewey, for cataloging and classification. Archivist used finding aids to describe their information. This marked the start of transformation of the profession of archivists from the historian and manuscript collector to that of librarian. By 2018, of the forty-five accepted SAA graduate training programs in Archives thirty-eight of them are in Library schools ¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹ William M. Hardesty "A Proper Function of Library Schools" T.R. Schellenberg's Archives Institute at The University of Texas, 1960 *Libraries & the Cultural Records* Vol 42 No.2 (2007) 139 The seven schools are: Auburn University, UMass Boston, New York University, University of Akron, Wright State University, and Western Washington University.

Ch. VIII: The Mid- 1960's

By the 1960's NARS entered into a court case involving the papers of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. In 1952 some field notes and letters written by Clark during their Expedition of Discovery from 1803-1806 were discovered in a desk belonging to John Henry Hammond located at The Minnesota Historical Society. In 1953 the Clark heirs sought custody in order to put them up for sale.¹⁵²

The National Archives became involved in this case because it was brought to their attention that the diaries were written while Clark was a government employee. Thus, the letters were government records. Even as they entered the case, NARS recognized the Minnesota Historical Society could properly care for the letters. The Archives had a long history of respecting the rights of custody to documents of state archives and historical societies.¹⁵³

The United States lost this case in the Minnesota District Court. A similar case took place in the 1962 when Kenneth D. Sender representing NARS attempted to obtain ownership of Spanish and Mexican documents in New Mexico. The United States lost this case too. Due to the decisions these cases, NARS continued in its tradition of respecting the rights of other people and other institutions to the possession of documents. The two cases proved the Archives did acknowledge

¹⁵² McCoy *The National Archives* 328

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, 329

the rights of state institutions to documents and opening access to researchers.¹⁵⁴

NARS relations with researchers depended on honesty since the Archives represented a democratic country. As an institution devoted to making records available, the theft of documents by the public would always be a concern. From the Archives opening to the 1960's, there were no serious cases of theft due to the honesty of staff and effective use of guards. This would change in September 1963, when an autograph dealer acknowledged he received three letters signed by Andrew Jackson and Ulysses S. Grant belonging to the Archives.¹⁵⁵

The FBI became involved and the two perpetrators, Robert and Elizabeth Murphy, under the alias of Dr. and Mrs. Bradford Murphy were arrested and charged with theft. They employed at least eight other aliases to enter the Archives and gain trust with the institutional staff. Fifty documents were stolen from other repositories beside the Archives. In January 1964 they were arrested, and by June 1964 they were sentenced to ten years in prison.¹⁵⁶

During this time NARS became cognizant of other ways records are created with the rise of computers and electronic records. The government played a role in the development of the computer in 1946 with the creation ENIAC to determine a shell's trajectory. The National Bureau of Standards made further improvements with the development of Univac used by the Census Bureau in 1951. Furthermore, computers continued to improve and were able to process and print out greater amounts of information.¹⁵⁷

The computer records produced were stored on punch cards. The computer had a card reader that sensed electronically the holes in the cards. Punch card records had been defined as records

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 329

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 330

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 330

¹⁵⁷ Meyer H Fishbein "A Viewpoint on Appraisal of National Records" *The American Archivist* JSTOR Vol.33. No 2 (April 1970) Accessed January 15th, 2018 181

by the government since the 1939 Records Disposition Act. This led to the creation term of the term machine-readable records, later called electronic records.¹⁵⁸

Archivists at NARS accessioned not only electronic records but statistical databases created by the government. The type of electronic records collected were programmatic and text records. Schellenberg's theories on archives expressed in 1956 were followed as electronic records were appraised for both their evidential and informational value. The standards for description used were NARS archival standards traditionally used for paper documents.¹⁵⁹

The introduction of electronic records did not end paper records growth. Records kept for value accumulated 200,000 cubic feet a year. This added to the 5.7 million government records possessing enduring value. This, in turn, added to the already 24.5 million cubic feet of records, with 24 percent already scheduled for retention. Furthermore, records scheduled for disposal were lessened by a million cubic feet.¹⁶⁰

Appraisal was not the only aspect of archival theory that the National Archives helped refine. In January 1964 Oliver W. Holmes, in an issue of *the American Archivist*, presented a new framework for arrangement depending on the designated level. The five archival levels of Depository, Record Group and Subgroup, Series, Filing Unit, and Document each required a different type of arrangement. The way arrangement ensues is in both alphabetical and chronological sequence, and at other times hierarchical or by what form the record is created. This is another way that the National Archives helped to refine the archival profession.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ Margert O'Neill Adams "Punch Card Records: Precursors of Electronic Records" *The American Archivist* Vol. 58, No 2 Special Issue on Case Studies (Spring 1995) Accessed August 29th, 2017 .188

¹⁵⁹ Linda J. Henry "Schellenberg in Cyberspace" *The American Archivist*, Vol 61, No 2 (Fall 1998) Accessed June 14th, 2017 312

¹⁶⁰ J.J Hammitt "Government Archives and Records Management" *The American Archivist* Vol. 28, No 2(Apr.1965) 220

¹⁶¹ Terry Abraham "Literature Survey: Oliver W. Holmes Revisited: Levels of Arrangement and Description in Practice

In 1965 restrictions on certain records had existed at the Roosevelt and Truman Libraries due to national security concerns. The National Archives also possessed military records that needed to be declassified. President Kennedy in 1961 issued an Executive Order 10904 to make declassification procedures easier. This helped due to the number of researchers visiting the Archives.¹⁶²

The United States remain committed to demonstrate the success of open archival access in a democratic country. In 1966 at a meeting of the Extraordinary Congress of the International Conference of Archives, two Archives staff members Albert Leisinger and Morris Rieger, challenged the French Position of archival control of access by archivist to researchers. American archivists believed in equal access to archives for everyone, just not those researchers approved by the government. This was similar to the sentiments expressed as far back as The French Revolution that government information makes them accountable to people.¹⁶³

Issues of archival access were also demonstrated in the Presidential library system. Francis Lowenheim, a researcher using the Roosevelt Library, charged the institution withheld documents he needed for his research, to keep them for their own publication of volumes on Roosevelt and foreign affairs. A joint committee of the OAH and AHA found the charges were without merit. The National Archives took from this case a lesson from this case that records restricted from the public should better understood and would be published by the Archives.¹⁶⁴

The American Archivist Vol 54, No 3 (Summer 1991) Accessed May 7th, 2017 371

¹⁶² McCoy *The National Archives* 319

¹⁶³ Trudy Huskamp Peterson “*The National Archives and the Archival Theorist Revisited, 1954-1984*” *The American Archivist*, Vol 49, No 2 (Spring 1986) Accessed June 13th, 2017 131

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 131

Ch. IX: The First Independence Movement

The initial relationship between NARS and the GSA was positive. For the most part each agency stayed out of the other's way. NARS became part of the GSA due to latter's records management responsibilities but still considered itself the guardian of the nation's history. This meant why should they be placed under an agency dedicated to the maintenance of government buildings and procuring supplies for other agencies. Belief was held among Archives staff that employees of the GSA did not understand the function and responsibilities of NARS.¹⁶⁵

Jess Larson had won enthusiastic reviews from NARS staff for his handling of the Archives while serving as GSA administrator. His two successors, Edmund F. Mansure, and Franklin G. Floete, both had positive relationships with Wayne G. Grover who was their subordinate as Archivist of the United States. This changed during the administrations of Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. Grover became frustrated with Kennedy's appointee John L. Moore during his short tenure in 1961, and his successor businessman, Bernard L. Boutin. He was further alienated by Johnson's appointment in 1965 of career civil servant Lawson B Knott. Between the lack of government experience possessed by Moore and Boutin, or the lack of understanding of NARS duties by Knott, relationships frayed due to the business minded attitude of the GSA and the cultural recordkeeping duties of NARS.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ McCoy *The National Archives* 342

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 343

The lack of independence concerned Grover because he not only had to deal with the GSA administrator and their assistants, but Grover lacked direct access to the President, in contrast to the days when R.D.W Connor had direct access to President Roosevelt. After thirty years in government service, with a record breaking seventeen years as the Archivist of the United States, Grover decided to retire. He decided to use his retirement as the issue that would make the Archives an independent Federal agency.¹⁶⁷

On November 2nd, 1965 Grover sent President Johnson a retirement letter outlining a new plan for NARS. In his retirement letter he advised Johnson that the Archives should become a federal agency including, the Archives, the *Federal Register*, presidential library system, and record centers: all under the control of the Archivist of the United States. Instead of being under the authority of the GSA administrator, the Archivist would answer to a board of governors comprised of different officials such as living ex-presidents, and government officials from the various branches of government. In addition, two appointments to the board would come outside of government from two members from the AHA.¹⁶⁸

Issues over government records management led to the loss of independence under the Hoover Commission in 1949. In the intervening years advances in records management created another reason for NARS to gain its independence from the GSA. The business management side of government could be a focus of the GSA, leaving the cultural administration of the nation's history to the Archives. In his letter, Grover endorsed Robert Bahmer as his successor as Archivist of the United States. Neither President Johnson nor GSA administrator Knott replied to the ideas contained within the letter.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 345

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 346

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 347

Bahmer became the Archivist of the United States on January 16th, 1966 after serving as Acting Archivist of the United States. After his promotion to Archivist, he appointed James B. Rhoads, at thirty-seven, as his assistant and his eventual successor to the position of Archivist of the United States. Both Bahmer and Rhoads were both PhD's in history.¹⁷⁰

Johnson approved of Grover's retirement plan and designated one his aides, Douglass Carter, to study the issue. Carter consulted with Richard E. Neustadt, a former assistant to President Truman, and expert on presidential affairs at Harvard University. On January 3rd, Neustadt embraced the idea of an independent NARS that would protect the presidential library system. In contrast, Charles L. Schultze, the Director of the Budget Bureau, opposed the idea of an independent NARS, arguing the agency functions were administrative, and a board of governors would remove control of record management from the President and Congress. His aide David Reynolds went further stating that archivists were "poor managers and not aggressive enough"¹⁷¹

Unfortunately for NARS, no progress was made under the Johnson administration. Yet the issue did not end the movement. On May 9th at a meeting of the Extraordinary Congress of the International Council of Archives, Lyman Butterfield called attention to the lack of independence from the GSA that had handcuffed NARS. He wanted the status of an independent agency restored, and a direct relationship to the president reestablished. The aim of the speech was to generate publicity, and to bring other archivists and historians into the fight.¹⁷²

Along with Butterfield's speeches, Grover and the First Lady of the United States Lady Bird Johnson established a relationship during the planning of the Johnson Presidential Library. He tried to have her lobby the president to grant NARS independence. Another step taken was attempt to

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 347

¹⁷¹ Ibid,348

¹⁷² Ibid, 348

force Johnson's hand with a resolution from the AHA council. None of this worked as Johnson, facing an increasingly unpopular in Vietnam did not respond to any of the overtures.¹⁷³

The Organization of American Historian worked to achieve independence by forming a super committee. They wanted the Society of American Archivists, and American Historical Association to help in achieving this goal. As a result, the Joint Committee on the Status of the National Archives was formed. The AHA was represented by Julian P. Boyd and Army Chief Historian Kent Roberts Greenfield. The OAH was represented by Fletcher Green of the University of North Carolina and David Shannon of the University of Maryland. The SAA representatives were William T Alderson of the American Association for State and Local History, and North Carolina's State Archivist H.G. Jones.¹⁷⁴

During the external battle over the relationship between GSA and NARS, the director Knott tried to improve the relationship internally. On February 27th, 1967 he requested \$50,000 from Congress to improve the National History Public Commission to support the grants-in-aid publication program. He was trying to prove to NARS they could function under the management of the GSA. This was designed to increase the level of interest in the holdings of the Archives. He would spend the rest of the year doing everything to keep NARS under the GSA.¹⁷⁵

The Joint Committee on the Status of the National Archives met on April 15th, 1967. A grant issued by the Council of Library Resources, allowed H.G. Jones to write and publish a study on independence by October. The committee would publish a report of the findings. During the writing of this report the Budget Bureau Office of Management and Organization issued its own report stating the National Archives should be transferred from the GSA to the Smithsonian

¹⁷³ Ibid, 351

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 351

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, 352

Institution, which functioned as America's museum.¹⁷⁶

The H.G Jones report was issued on December 14th, 1967. It concluded that the positions of archivists and records managers should stay under the same umbrella of responsibility and leadership. Better funding was needed to maintain the cultural and educational programs of NARS. The main point of the reports was NARS was to become an independent agency with the Archivist appointed by the President, along with a Board of Regents consisting of prominent citizens.¹⁷⁷

The reaction to the report twelve days later caused a stir. Both the *New York Times* and The *Washington Post* supported the document. Two Republican members of Congress Senator Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania, and Congressman Charles McCurdy Mathias of Maryland drafted resolutions in Congress calling for independence. In addition, the SAA expressed support for the report.¹⁷⁸

Bahmer supported some aspects of the independence movement. Yet he was also afraid that NARS would lose the record centers they controlled to the GSA if there was a split. He was fearful that his succession plan for Rhoads being appointed as his successor would be jeopardized. This was a death knell for the independence movement. It eventually split apart as each side wanted their own issues advocated for the Archives.¹⁷⁹

Various increases in Federal budget mollified many independence movement advocates. The GSA established a National Archives Advisory Council. The audiovisual division of the Archives improved because it was a favorite of Bahmer. A conference was held in August of 1967 between GSA and pro-independence advocates in the Archives on a subject that resolved issues that quieted

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 354 The Smithsonian Institution lost this designation in 1968.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 356

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, 356

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.,358

calls for independence A new meeting of the joint committee was held on April 11th, that resolved the issues both sides had raised. In sum, by 1968, the movement for NARS independence was moribund.¹⁸⁰

Bahmer retired and Rhoads became the Archivist of the United States in 1968. This was also the end of an era of men who started their career with the Archives in the 1930's retired and moved on. New programs came to the Archives with the expansion of the National Audiovisual Center in 1969.¹⁸¹

The struggle for independence led to the creation in Spring of 1969 of a journal published by NARS, *Prologue: The Journal of the National Archives*. The journal was conceived as an equivalent to the *Quarterly Journal of The Library of Congress*, and the *Smithsonian Journal of History*. The point of this journal was to provide an academic view of the world of archives. The journal was published three times a year and gave readers a window into the world of presidential libraries and federal records centers.¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 369

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 370

¹⁸² Lester J. Cappon "The National Archives and the Historical Profession" *The Journal of Southern History* Vol.35, No.4 (Nov.1969) Accessed June 16th, 2017 .496

Chpt. X The 1970's An Era of Changes.

The early 1970's saw several changes in how NARS functioned. President Richard Nixon signed Executive Order 11652 on March 8th, 1972 a new order on National Security Classification. The order stated the Archivist of the United States was the authority on declassification of documents that originated in the White House. The Archivist was named the chair of an interagency group to review researchers' questions on the release of classified documents. This made NARS the final authority on the declassification of government documents.¹⁸³

During this time the Archives still focused on its mission as a cultural institution. On July 4th -5th, 1973 a conference was held on Federal Archives as Sources of Research on African - Americans. This was done to publicize the 140 records groups held by the Federal government relating to the experiences of African-Americans. This was a response to the civil rights movement creating a greater interest in the Federal government's relationship to African- Americans. As with most of the records created by the federal government they were not kept in the best condition, this was not due to any malicious dislike of African Americans by the creators, but the continual problems in federal record keeping.¹⁸⁴

On July 12th, 1973 a devastating fire swept the National Personnel Records Center in Overland, Missouri. The building contained the personnel records of both civilian employees and

¹⁸³ Peterson 131

¹⁸⁴ Thomas C. Battle "Reviewed Work(s): Black History: A Guide to Civilian Records in the National Archives by Debra L. Newman" *The American Archivist*, Vol 49. No 3 (Summer 1986) Accessed July 14 2023

military records of the government. The building was planned to be a records center but functioned more as a warehouse and office space. Furthermore, unlike at most record centers, fire precaution measures were not established.¹⁸⁵

The fire burned for the next two days. Due to the local fire department's initial water problems, water was eventually poured on the roof down the floors of the center in hopes of extinguishing the blaze. The fire kept spreading causing more water to be poured. It eventually took six departments to eventually put out the blaze. After the fire was extinguished the recovery effort had to start. The first thing done was to stop the Post Office from sending requests for records that might have been destroyed.¹⁸⁶

The two types of records affected were Army and Air Force records from 1912 to 1959. This led to a loss of personal information and valuable records. To protect other records from being destroyed several disposal schedules had to be altered to prevent the destruction of other records. The recovery efforts required to deal with the loss of records occurred throughout the rest of the decade.¹⁸⁷

The next year changed the way that NARS functioned. The Freedom of Information Act was first passed in 1966, allowing citizens the right to access government information. By 1974 amendments were added to the FOIA expanding the powers of the law. The National Archives issued procedural guidelines for staff to handle requests, while formalizing the process of restriction and review of federal records. The materials located in presidential libraries also came under review. After forty years, The National Archives finally had a formal set of policies over

¹⁸⁵ Walter W. Stender and Evans Walker "The National Personnel Records Center Fire: A Study in Disaster" *The American Archivist* "Volume 37 Number 4 October 1974 Accessed December 12th, 2017 p327

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, 327

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, 530

access.¹⁸⁸

The United States at the time was forced to confront the public misdeeds of elected officials during the Watergate Scandal. Next to FDR no president had a greater effect on the Archives than Richard Nixon. His first two appointments as GSA administrators were Pennsylvania Republicans Robert L. Kunzig (1969 to 1972), and his successor Arthur F. Sampson (1972 to 1975). These two men contributed to increasingly poor relationship between NARS and the GSA.¹⁸⁹

Nixon first caused controversy for the NARS with his gift of his 1969 presidential papers. Since the passage of the Presidential Library System Act in 1958, Presidents Truman, Eisenhower and Johnson deeded a portion of their papers to the Archives. Each new president was expected to donate a portion of his papers to help establish his future presidential libraries. Nixon was elected President in 1968; donated his personal records for that year to the Archives on December 30th. The contents of Nixon's gift were 21 containers relating to his career as Congressman, Senator and Vice President.¹⁹⁰

Nixon's 1968 gift to NARS followed the rules that Archives used to establish a concept of a gift. A gift to an archive must possess a clear intent in order to be construed as a gift. Nixon did this by declaring his intent to donate papers to NARS. The second part of a gift involves of the physical transfer of the material of the Archive, this was done in December 1968. Finally, the Archives followed the rules for the acceptance of the gift.¹⁹¹

Nixon's donation of papers in 1968 followed the NARS procedures, but the gift of 1969 did not. The physical transfer of papers to the Archives occurred in March 1969. During this period

¹⁸⁸ Peterson 131

¹⁸⁹ McCoy *The National Archives* 370

¹⁹⁰ Matthew Brown "The First Nixon Papers Controversy: Richard's Nixon's 1969 Presidential Papers Tax Deduction" *Archival Issues* Vol 26. No 1(2001) Accessed January 14th, 2018 13

¹⁹¹ *Ibid*, 11

Congress was debating the Tax Reform Act of 1969. Under the Act, charitable donations of personal papers made after July 25th, 1969 were not eligible for tax deductions. Nixon's lawyers realized this, so they backdated his donation to the Archives in order that he would benefit with from a tax write-off with an amount of \$576,000.¹⁹²

For NARS, the Tax Reform Act would affect the flow of gifts to presidential libraries. No papers were donated in 1969 following the 1968 contributions. In this period other figures, such as President Johnson, and Nixon's chief of staff, H.R. Haldeman declined to donate papers to the Archives. Moreover, NARS had physical custody of Nixon papers but did not possess legal guardianship to appraise them.¹⁹³

The legal case stretched from Nixon's papers appraisal in December 1969 to March 1970 before the tax deadline took effect. Nixon never signed a deed of gift which became an important part of the case. Other presidents who had donated to the Archives including Truman, Eisenhower, and Johnson signed deeds for the years their papers were donated. Evidence of wrongdoing by Nixon and his attorneys regarding his taxes and the deed was found by two employees of the Archives who located a deed in 1973, forcing the question if the deed had been signed before July 1969. In addition, this case was considered for inclusion with the other impeachment articles against Nixon by the House Judiciary Committee.¹⁹⁴

For the Archives, one of the lessons learned from this case revolved around the language of a deed of gift. Nixon's deed of gift was too ambiguous to be a proper gift. Another lesson learned was the Archives were dedicated to the preservation of documents, while the GSA was more concerned about government efficiency. The politicization of the GSA prevented archivists from

¹⁹² Ibid,17

¹⁹³ Ibid, 13

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 20

finding the fraud in the deed of gift.¹⁹⁵

Just like his abuse of the FBI and CIA, Nixon used the GSA was used to harass his enemies, along with withholding documents from the Archives. Arthur L. Sampson, the GSA administrator, ruled that documents belonging to Nixon did not have to be viewed by the Archives. This was contrary to the concept of the Archive's mission as the recordkeeper of the government, along being an institution responsible for Presidential papers.¹⁹⁶

After Nixon's resignation in disgrace on August 8th, 1974 concern was held by many in the Archives and the rest of the government that Nixon would attempt to collect his papers and keep them from the government. Sampson placed unqualified GSA representatives to guard Nixon's papers rather than the qualified archivists of NARS. By late 1974 Congress impounded the documents and granted NARS control the documents. Furthermore, Congress's response to Nixon's actions was to create the National Study Commission on Records and Documents of Federal Officials responsible for the status, disposition, and administration of the papers of government officials.¹⁹⁷

Nixon crimes helped increase the visibility of the Archives. On January 23rd, 1977 the miniseries "Roots", based on the book by Alex Haley ran for the next eight nights on the American Broadcasting Network. This television sensation made the goals and mission of Archives more relevant to Americans. Not the just the scholar or researcher working on a thesis, dissertation, or book would come to use the Archives for research. Now everyday citizens were coming to the Archives to do research about the nation's history or to learn more about their family's past. This contributes to the ideal of America where every citizen can use the Archives to learn not only about

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, 20

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, 20

¹⁹⁷ McCoy *The National Archives* 372

the country's past, but their own.¹⁹⁸

Issues of GSA control over NARS arose again in 1979. GSA administrator, Rear Admiral Rowland G. Freeman III, sought to transfer of 300,000 cubic feet of records from the Archives in Washington to the various branches of NARS. Historians and archivists when informed of the plan formed the Coalition to Save Our Documentary Heritage. The campaign was a success as Freeman, due to Congressional pressure, had to abandon his idea. This along with Nixon's various transgressions led for a renewed effort and calls for independence of NARS from the GSA.¹⁹⁹

In the same year a court case was filed in U.S District Court called *American Friends Service Committee, et al v known as William H. Webster, et al* known as the FBI files case. The case was filed by a series of plaintiffs including the Alliance to End Repressions, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom., Angela Davis, and the adult sons of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. The plaintiffs sought to stop the destruction of FBI records by the National Archives. They sought to preserve what they viewed as the destruction of governmental records that would illustrate FBI crimes against American citizens.²⁰⁰

The political climate behind the case occurred as the nation was recovering from the Watergate Scandal and the Vietnam War. Citizens trust in government was low due to revelations about FBI misconduct encouraged by J. Edgar Hoover. These included bugging Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr and destabilizing the Black Panthers under Countelpro, as well as monitoring anti-war protestors phones.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸ Robert M. Warner "The National Archives at Fifty" *The Midwestern Archivist*" Vol 10, No 1 (1985) June 19th, 2017 30

¹⁹⁹ Mattie U. Russell "The Influence of Historians on the Archival Profession in the United States *the American Archivist*" Vol 46. No 3 (Summer 1983) April 23^{ed}, 2017 285

²⁰⁰ Susan D Steinwall "Appraisal and the FBI Files Case: For Whom Do Archivists Retain Records? *The American Archivist*, Vol. 49 No 1 (Winter 1986) Accessed May 14th, 2017 54

²⁰¹ *Ibid*, 53

The FBI was the defendant but NARS was caught in the middle. Plaintiffs viewed NARS as collaborators in the destruction of government documents. Furthermore, archivists at NARS were viewed as lackeys simply trying to retain the FBI's positive image widely held from the 1930's to the 1970's. The Archivists were considered to be too trusting in their decision making, and not engaging in critical thinking about United States Government's activities.²⁰²

NARS earlier granted the FBI's request for disposal of records stretching from the 1910's to the 1940's. The FBI had previously destroyed some maps, photographs, charts, and sound recordings assuming that these had no value as records. By the 1970's NARS announced records could be destroyed after ten years including field office materials with no prosecutorial action taken. To determine the value of the records by the 1970's, Archivist were still using the theories of appraisal developed by T.R. Schellenberg twenty years earlier.²⁰³

In the course of the trial, Thomas Wadlow, head of NARS Office of Federal Record Centers, testified that appraisal decisions begin with parent agency delivering the records, while the archivist decided what has enduring value, and then establishes retention periods for useless records. James Awe, a former bureau records system chief, stated that FBI records were growing at an exponential rate. He estimated that 6.5 million files at FBI headquarters were filed in 7,000 six-drawer filing cabinets in 1975. Furthermore, records would grow if they were never disposed properly.²⁰⁴

During the trial Wadlow pointed out that records destruction still occurred. Between October 1976 and September 1978, approximately 710,000 cubic feet of field office material along with 7,000 cubic feet of records from headquarters were destroyed. Another option for preservation of

²⁰² Ibid, 54

²⁰³ Ibid, 54

²⁰⁴ Ibid, 56

FBI records was conversion of paper files into machine-readable format of punch cards. This was dismissed as too expensive and time consuming. Awe gave an example that fifty employees working two or three shifts would need to automate some of 12-15 million index cards created by the FBI.²⁰⁵

Researchers and historians on the plaintiff's side challenged this view. Many disgruntled ex-FBI agents challenged the view in the press of NARS was doing simple records management. In their opinion, record destruction was designed to keep suspicious files from the public. A writer from *The Nation*, John Rosenberg, stated that the Mobile, Alabama FBI office destroyed materials accidentally after he submitted a FOIA request. NARS archivists acted after being informed by the F.B.I that field office reposts possessed no value, but many field offices had information about the activities of civil rights protesters, and communist sympathizers.²⁰⁶

After a five-day trial was held in Washington D.C., the judge Harold H. Greene agreed with the points of the plaintiffs. The FOIA influenced the FBI to favor destruction over preservation. NARS was found at fault for believing the FBI explanations and not examining the records critically. Judge Greene imposed a moratorium on FBI records destruction, and ordered a new plan to deal with FBI records. The new plan for records disposal was a sampling method of selecting certain records to be destroyed, as explained to the court in November 1981.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁵ Ibid, 56

²⁰⁶ Ibid, 58

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 59

Chapter: XI the Second Independence Movement

On August 31st, 1979, after eleven years as Archivist of the United States, James B. Rhoads decided to step down from the position. James E. O'Neill became the interim archivist on September 1st, 1979. He would serve to July 23rd, 1980, when, after a long search Robert M. Warner became the sixth Archivist in the agency's history. Warner, just like his predecessors earned a PhD in history his from the University of Michigan. His previous archival experience was as the third director of Michigan Historical Collection.²⁰⁸

Warner's main goal as Archivist was independence for NARS. After the failed independence movement some twelve years earlier, the situation between the GSA and NARS had deteriorated during the Nixon Administration. The attempted politicization of NARS through the Nixon administration wounded the staff's feelings along with the GSA's rejection for a request for a new archival building. In this climate the GSA's control of NARS budget led to a loss of prestige and services when compared to the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian Institution.²⁰⁹

After Ronald Regan became president in 1981 the movement for independence gained steam. At an inauguration party Warner had a conversation with the Secretary of the Smithsonian Dillon Ripley. Warner expressed the belief that NARS should be independent from the GSA and unite with the Smithsonian because of their close cultural connections. Dillon suggested that the

²⁰⁸ Warner M. Robert *Diary of a Dream A history of the national Archives Independence Movement 1980-1985*The Scarecrow Press, Inc Metuchen, N.J & London 1995

²⁰⁹ Ibid, 9

Smithsonian would consider the project. Yet he was concerned that it would be overshadowed by the larger NARS.²¹⁰

Another possibility for Warner was NARS to be placed under the direction of the Library of Congress. This would result in NARS moving the Executive Branch to the Legislative Branch. This would not make life easier for NARS.²¹¹

During this time the GSA had a new administrator. Gerald P. Carmen, a former tire dealer who managed President Ronald Reagan New Hampshire campaign, was appointed to the position in 1981. He was, like many of his predecessors as GSA administrator a political person not familiar with how the Archives were run. This was reminiscent of the Nixon's administration's placement appointment of figures who had little in common with the senior employees at NARS.²¹²

In contrast to the previous movement for independence, NARS did not limit its efforts to the executive branch. Senator Thomas Eagleton, a Democrat of Missouri, and Senator Charles Mathias, a Republican of Maryland, introduced Senate Bill 1421 on June 21th, 1981 to create an independent National Archives. Eagleton's justification for independence was the well-known issues of Nixon's attempt to prevent the delivery of his papers to the Archives. In addition, previous GSA director Freeman's attempt to disperse records held by NARS to the record centers caused the introduction of the bill along with attempts to replace Warner as archivist.²¹³

Warner continued to lobby for independence into 1982. He made contacts with various historians such as William Leuchtenberg and James MacGregor Burns to persuade them to support independence. He attended various events at the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars in

²¹⁰ Ibid, 15

²¹¹ Ibid, 17

²¹² Ibid, 19

²¹³ Ibid, 21

Washington D.C, and the centennial of FDR's birth at the Roosevelt Library to lobby and gain allies for independence. During the Roosevelt event Warner spoke to the Postmaster General William Bolger about a 50th anniversary stamp to celebrate the establishment of the National Archives.²¹⁴

On Tuesday, March 1st, 1982 hearings on the status of NARS were held by the House Subcommittee on Government Information and Individual Rights. The chairman of the committee was Glenn English, a Democrat from Oklahoma, and the ranking minority member Thomas Kindness from Ohio. The person responsible for conducting those hearings was Edward Gleiman who was a good friend of Robert Warner.²¹⁵

The two sides of the independence movement were represented at the hearings. The professional organizations connected to the movement sent representatives to testify: Joan Hoff Wilson for the OAH; Samuel Gammon for the AHA, Charles Lee on behalf of the SAA. In addition, Alex Haley author of *Roots*, represented the cultural world along with Barbara Tuchman, and David Trask, the State Department Historian, who represented the executive branch. On the other side against independence: were Dan Bahmer and Robert Wolfe who represented the GSA.²¹⁶

Jess Larson, the first administrator of the GSA testified that NARS should remain under the GSA. Larson argued that due to the events of the Nixon Administration, the President should directly appoint the Archivist. In addition, stronger laws should be passed to protect the Archivist from political intrigue and provide more independence in operating in government functions. Warner testified on the benefits of independence. Carmen, however, testified against independence citing that only a million visitors a year visited the Archives, while the Air and Space

²¹⁴ Ibid, 40

²¹⁵ Ibid, 45

²¹⁶ Ibid, 48

museum had seven million visitors. The problem with this argument was the Archives were designed for research, not just as a museum.²¹⁷

After the hearings the business of NARS went on. People still visited the Archives for research. Plans were made for a presidential library for Ronald Reagan. Warner continued his activities to help the movement gain momentum for independence. He converted the head of the CIA William Casey to his side and desired to bring the President to support his cause.²¹⁸

The Smithsonian Institution commissioned a study on the Archives. The study recommended that the Archivist of the United States be appointed for a six-year term by the President from the National Archives Board created by Congress from qualified candidates. Budget issues would be addressed by having the Office of Management and Budget by set its budget as it already did for the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian. Private funding should be used for public outreach. This study led to the push for independence by bringing more people to their side.²¹⁹

Warner decided to lobby Congress directly in contrast to the first independence movement. He could not meet with Congress directly without alienating the GSA members who still hoped for compromise. However, as the Archivist of the United States he was invited to many cultural events where he could attempt to bring people to this side. He also used NARS publications to highlight the benefits of independence to members of Congress.²²⁰

Carmen and the rest of the GSA still opposed independence. To combat independence a plan was devised to find a senator friendly to their side and to keep the Archives under the GSA. A bill

²¹⁷ Ibid.,45

²¹⁸ Ibid, .67

²¹⁹ NARS memo: Smithsonian Report Recommendations with Provisions of S.905” Unknown author Issued Nov 7, 1983

²²⁰ Warner *Diary of a Dream* 93

was planned to be drafted that would allow NARS to become part of the Library of Congress and thus divide the supporters who wanted a separation from the GSA and full independence.

Eventually Senator Howard Baker of Tennessee came to the side of the GSA when he wrote to Carmen asking for his opinion regarding independence for NARS.²²¹

The press would play a role in the battle over NARS. As the relations between NARS and the GSA worsened, journalists sympathetic to the GSA wrote negative articles on NARS. Myron Struck, who covered the GSA for the *Washington Post*, had written a series of articles on NARS bashing the agency. Warner met with him to attempt to restore a balance in coverage and advance the case for administrative independence.²²²

By August 1983 the situation continued to worsen. Employees working in the GSA who were friendly to NARS claimed that the GSA was preparing amendments which would keep such entities as the *Federal Register* along with Federal Record Centers under the control of the latter administration. To counter this possibility, NARS stepped up its lobbying of Congress for independence.²²³

The Senate had introduced its own independence bill earlier. Now Jack Brooks and Oklahoma Congressman Glenn English introduced an independence bill in the House of Representatives. This caught the GSA off guard, since they assumed Congressman Brooks supported the agency. In the background of this matter a confrontation between NARS and the GSA over staffing of the future Reagan presidential library.²²⁴

The rest of the year saw the relations between the two sides continue to worsen. Carmen's

²²¹ Ibid, 95

²²² Ibid, 95

²²³ Ibid, 95

²²⁴ Ibid, 97

interference in NARS activity continued to increase. This approach drove more people to support independence. The personal relationship between Carmen and Warner continue to deteriorate in contrast to the days when Jess Larson and Wayne Grover enjoyed a positive working relationship. On December 19th change came when Carmen decided to resign as GSA administrator to become the U.S. Representative to the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland.²²⁵

Carmen's departure did not immediately resolve the situation. He could still attempt to remove the senior staff at the Archives as he was rumored to do earlier in the year. Among the Archives staff there were worries that whoever would replace him might be a worse administrator. The staff at the Archives involved in the independence movement had to wait and see who the next administrator would be.²²⁶

While awaiting Carmen's departure, Warner continued to search for new allies in of independence. He became friends with Ursula Meese, wife of Attorney General Ed Meese, who was interested in obtaining a microfilm copy of the law that created the Department of Justice. After the copy was located, the Attorney General also became a supporter. In addition, his role as chief negotiator for the future site of the Reagan Library made him an influential ally.²²⁷

A series of hearings were to be held in March on independence. A problem noted by pro-Independence people was NARS would lose records management authority if there was a split with the GSA. A case could be made that record centers had little value for Archives if they were a cultural institution. In the House hearings Warner, Sam Gammon, and James B. Rhoads all testified on behalf of independence. By this juncture, many in the GSA realized that independence for NARS was only a matter of time; the only question was if the bill would be passed during the

²²⁵ Ibid, 113

²²⁶ Ibid, 116

²²⁷ Ibid, 125

current legislative session.²²⁸

After the hearings a bill moved through the House. A House Subcommittee passed the marked up the bill seven to nothing. The Senate was moving to release its own for administrative bill on independence. In an op-ed piece published in the *New York Times* on April 6th, 1984, written by Karl Meyer called for independence. He put forward an argument that many had made for years: NARS is concerned with the nation's cultural heritage, while GSA is primarily a housekeeping agency of the federal government.²²⁹

During this period the greatest problem supporters of independence faced was not from the GSA but from the Departments of Justice and the Treasury Department. The Justice Department was concerned that the Archivist would accrue too much power in the House version of the bill. The Treasury Department controlled the Internal Revenue Service and expressed concern over the Archives control over tax records. Yet these were temporary setbacks for the Senate bill. The GSA was still trying to prevent independence, but these efforts were futile.²³⁰

Tuesday June 19th, 1984 was the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the National Archives. The Postal Service issued commemorative stamp was issued highlighted the history of the Archives. An exhibition was held that emphasized each of the fifty years of NARS. A NARS picnic was held with presidential libraries contributing items along information sent from the Federal record centers.²³¹

Michael David Brown designed the stamp for the Archives. The stamp featured the profiles of both George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. It depicts the Archives as an administrative

²²⁸ Ibid, 137

²²⁹ Ibid, 145

²³⁰ Ibid, 157

²³¹ Ibid, 171

agency responsible for both the government and citizens, along with its duties as a cultural agency responsible for protecting the nation's heritage. Engraved on the stamp are the Archives motto "What Past is Prologue" the words "National Archives" with the dates 1934-1984.²³²

Two days later the Senate passed the bill S 905 authorizing independence for the Archives. After the Senate vote all that was left taken by the House. The House would pass the bill HR 3987 on August 2. Once the bill was passed the versions needed to be reconciled and sent to President Reagan for his signature. For all intents and purposes the National Archives would become an independent agency.²³³

The bill was signed into law on October 19th, 1984 by President Reagan. No signing ceremony was held since the President was busy running for the reelection against former Vice-President Walter Mondale. The effective date for the transition to independence was April 1st, 1985. On that date Section 2102 would come into effect stating: "There shall be an independent establishment in the executive branch of the Government to be known as the National Archives and Records Administration. The Administration shall be administered under the supervision of the Archivist."²³⁴

On November 6th, 1984 the acting GSA administrator Ray Kline transferred all administrative activities to the Archivist of the United States, effectively making the Archives independent. Two days after Reagan's massive electoral victory a celebration was held in the National Archives to commemorate the achievement of administrative independence. Staff members, friends of the Archives, and allies in the struggle were in attendance. Frank Horton represented the

²³² Sarah Quigley "Cultural Record Keepers: The National Archives of the United States *Libraries & the Cultural Record* Vol.42 No.1 (2007) January 3rd, 2018 .82

²³³ Warner *Diary of a Dream* 192

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 192

Congressional branch, Edwin Meese represented the Executive Branch, and Sam Gammon represented the outside allies that helped in the struggle for independence. The formal program was held in front of a copy of the Declaration of Independence.²³⁵

The movement succeeded due to three factors. First was the help from the outside groups such as the SAA, AHA, ALA, National Geographic Society, NAGARA, and others who applied outside pressure. Second was the strategy was appealing to powerful legislators such as Senators Thomas Eagleton, Charles Matthias, and Mark Hatfield, and Congressman Glenn English, Frank Horton, and Jack Brooks. These men brought legislative pressure. Finally, the administrators and staff at NARS made a better case for independence than maintaining the status quo ²³⁶

²³⁵ Ibid, 198

²³⁶ Ibid, 203

Epilogue

The National Archives as an institution has existed since 1934, with the movement for a national archive reaching back into the nineteenth century. The Archives are 130 years younger than the Library of Congress, and nearly 82 years younger than the United States' other great cultural institution the Smithsonian. The Archives youth meant they has meant that it must work to establish the cultural connections to the American people when compared to the other two institutions. Furthermore, the other two institutions are a tribute to American exceptionalism and part of American lore. The British burned the Library of Congress in the War of 1812; it was rebuilt after Thomas Jefferson sold his library for money after a lifetime of profligate spending. The Smithsonian Institution exists because James Smithson decided to donate to a country that he had never visited. In contrast, the National Archives exist due to the reality that the United States required an institutional setting for public papers and records.

During the Second World War, the Archives contributed to the nation's efforts by aiding the Federal government management of records. In the wake of war, the reputation of the Archives increased in a manner similar to the stature of the United States in the world. The theories and practices of American archivists became important in international archival circles. The theories and practices created at the National Archives influenced archives all over the world.

After fifteen years of autonomy, the National Archives lost administrative independence in

1949. The Hoover Commission examined records management in the executive branch, and due to the recommendations, they became part of the newly formed General Services Administration. Certain people had no problems with being part the GSA, while others regretted the loss of independence.

The decade of the 1950's saw the emergence of the theories of T.R. Schellenberg in his book *Modern Archives*. This lead to rethinking archival appraisal by prompting archivists to confront the situation of the bulk government records as an American problem. Archivists with a more activist approach to records moved from being closer to the historian and manuscript collector to having more in common with the position of librarians.

As the 1960's dawned the National Archives became a leader in electronic records. The dawn of the computer age led that records would be created on just more than paper. This led to the changes in appraisal, preservation, and storage of records. The 1960's also saw the first, unsuccessful independence unsuccessful movement to break with the GSA and reestablish independence for the Archives. As part of the GSA cost the National Archives the prestige of the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian.

No person helped hasten independence more than Richard Nixon. His attempt to appoint political cronies to direct the GSA led to concerns about politicizing the National Archives. His attempt to break tax laws and keep his papers after Watergate forced concern about the preservation of government records. In a post-Watergate era of distrust of government, the FBI records case demonstrated that something as obligatory as appraisal could become a political issue.

The 1980's would see the emergence of a successful independence movement that led to autonomy. Robert Warner, the Archivist of the United States, was able to marshal Congress, the

press, and other organizations to push for independence. In 1985 the National Archives became independent agency of NARA, yet even today it still must deal with questions of access, preservation, and the rights of citizens to possess information.

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