

WHITE HOUSE GIFT UNIT FILES, 1974-77

Collection Type

Federal Records

Extent

13 linear feet (ca. 20,800 pages)

Record Type

Textual

Access

Open.

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Processed by

Nancy Mirshah, September 1995

Scope and Content Note

The White House Gift Unit is one of several permanent operating offices that provide support services to each administration. Marjorie Wicklein headed the office in the Ford administration, supervising a staff of eight. Wicklein reported to Robert Lindner, the Permanent Operations Offices' chief executive clerk, who in turn reported to the staff secretary, through David Hoopes, special assistant to the

President. The Gift Unit processed all gifts received at the White House for the First Family or other government officials, with the exception of Bicentennial gifts. Milt Mitler handled Bicentennial gifts through the Office of Public Liaison. In addition to receiving, recording, and distributing incoming gifts, the Gift Unit assisted the State Department's Chief Protocol Officer in recording and controlling the disposition of foreign gifts, as required by law.

The policies and procedures of the Gift Unit became a matter of high level review in the Ford administration, although this is not documented in the Gift Unit files. A GAO audit, requested of the Nixon administration by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and carried into the Ford administration, resulted in the development of new operating guidelines written by State Department, National Archives and White House personnel, according to the provisions of the Foreign Gifts Act of 1966, as amended. (See Appendices A and B). Under the Act, all gifts valued in excess of \$50 received by government officials from foreign donors became public property, with an ultimate disposition at a future presidential library of the National Archives. The Ford administration made gift records open to the public by charging the State Department with oversight of statutory gifts and public record-keeping, while the Gift Unit maintained original records for correspondence purposes. The files contain these original records evidencing compliance with the Act. Included are foreign gift lists, a head of state gift exchange register, a catalog card index, declaration of receipt cards for gifts exceeding \$50 value, and archives box lists.

The Gift Unit was the ultimate destination of all gifts coming into the White House, via the Mail Room, the First Family, or the White House staff. Wicklein's staff tagged the items and completed descriptions in sextuplicate on pink catalog cards. Head of state gifts were registered in foreign gift exchange binders, and described and photographed in declarations of receipt. Every two weeks, the State Department's Chief Protocol Officer viewed the statutory gifts in the Unit before their disposition. In addition, Wicklein sent the President monthly gift lists from which he selected items for temporary loan to the Residence, Oval Office or other areas of the White House. The items were either sent to the First Family for appropriate use or stored temporarily until packed and sent to the National Archives.

Letters of acknowledgement were drafted mostly by Gift Unit staff but also by senior and administrative White House staff, including the President's personal secretaries, Mildred Leonard and Dorothy Downton. The files contain, however, only the Gift Unit's outgoing carbons, with no background material.

The collection provides only scant documentation of the substantial policy issues surrounding gifts or of Wicklein's participation in any discussions. That material is best found in other collections. The Unit's administrative folders concern the staff's daily operations and resolution of issues left unresolved by regulations, such as definitions of "official use" and applicability to married children. They also contain the unit's financial records for a supply of small gift items and mementos, purchased by the Republican National Committee, and maintained by the Gift Unit for distribution by the First Family and White House staff.

Related Materials (September 1995)

Various Library collections contain substantial information related to gifts which may be retrieved with a PRESNET search. For instance, materials related to the legal aspects of presidential gifts and formulation of policy and procedures are found in the files of Counsel Phil Buchen, Associate Counsel Ken Lazarus, Counsellor John Marsh, and in the Presidential Handwriting Files. The White House Central Files Subject File, Category GI (Gifts), contains letter cases of foreign and domestic gift correspondence. Scattered folders related to Mrs. Ford and gifts are found in such collections as the Maria Downs Files and Sheila Weidenfeld Files.

Last Modified Date

2024-04-09

Foreign Gifts Subject File, 1974-77.

(Boxes 1-6, 2.4 linear feet)

Correspondence, memoranda, lists, handwritten notes, forms, and photographs related to foreign gifts. Included are recommendations from the State Department's Chief Officer of Protocol regarding head of state gift item selection, a register of items that were actually exchanged between heads of state, occasional draft thank you correspondence, and declaration cards with attached snapshots of statutory gifts exceeding \$50 in value. Also included are routine State Department memos delegating acknowledgement responsibility for gifts from foreign nationals

to the embassies and packing lists describing the contents of storage boxes sent to the National Archives.

Arranged alphabetically and chronologically thereunder.

Box 1 - Foreign Gifts Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Algeria
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Amman (Jordan)
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Argentina
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Austria
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Belgium
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Burma
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Canada
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - China (People's Republic of)
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Columbia
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Cyprus
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Denmark
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Egypt
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - England
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Finland
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - France
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Germany
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Ghana
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Hungary
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - India
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Indonesia
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Iran
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Ireland
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Israel
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Italy
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Japan
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Korea

Box 2 - Foreign Gifts Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Liberia
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Luxembourg
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Mexico
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Morocco
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Nepal
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Oman
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Pakistan
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Philippines
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Poland
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Portugal
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Romania
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Russia
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - South Africa
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Spain
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Sudan
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Sweden
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Syria
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Taiwan
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Tunisia
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Uruguay
OPEN	Foreign Gift Declarations - Yugoslavia
OPEN	Foreign Gifts Reference File (Archives Boxes 1 - 43) - copy (1) - (2)
OPEN	Foreign Gifts Reference File (Archives Boxes 1 - 43) - original (1) - (2)
OPEN	Foreign Gifts Under 1966 Gifts and Declarations Act

Box 3 - Foreign Gifts Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	Head of State Gift Exchange - Africa through Burma
OPEN	Head of State Gift Exchange - Canada through Cyprus

Status	Title
OPEN	Head of State Gift Exchange - Denmark through France
OPEN	Head of State Gift Exchange - The Gambia through Indonesia
OPEN	Head of State Gift Exchange - Iran through Italy
OPEN	Head of State Gift Exchange - Jamaica through Jordan
OPEN	Head of State Gift Exchange - Korea through New Guinea
OPEN	Head of State Gift Exchange - Nicaragua through Poland
OPEN	Head of State Gift Exchange - Portugal through Syria
OPEN	Head of State Gift Exchange - Thailand through Zambia

Box 4 - Foreign Gifts Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	Head of State Visits - General
OPEN	9/10/74 - Head of State Visits - Israel (Rabin) to the White House
OPEN	9/25/74 - Head of State Visits - Italy (Leone) to the White House
OPEN	10/8/74 - Head of State Visits - Poland (Gierek) to the White House
OPEN	10/21/74 - Head of State Visits - U.S. (Ford) to Mexico
OPEN	11/12/74 - Head of State Visits - Austria (Kreisky) to the White House
OPEN	11/17 - 25/74 - Head of State Visits - U.S. (Ford) to Japan, South Korea and U.S.S.R. (1) - (2)
OPEN	12/5/74 - Head of State Visits - Germany (Schmidt) to the White House
OPEN	12/14/74 - Head of State Visits - U.S. (Ford) to Martinique (Giscard)
OPEN	1/30/75 - Head of State Visits - England (Wilson) to the White House
OPEN	2/5/75 - Head of State Visits - Pakistan (Bhutto) to the White House

Status	Title
OPEN	3/3/75 - Head of State Visits - Israel (Katzir) to the White House
OPEN	3/20/75 - Head of State Visits - Yugoslavia (Bijedic) to the White House
OPEN	5/1/75 - Head of State Visits - Tunisia (Nouira) to the White House
OPEN	5/28/75 - 6/3//75 - Head of State Visits - U.S. (Ford) to Europe
OPEN	6/16/75 - Head of State Visits - Germany (Sheel) to the White House
OPEN	7/5/75 - Head of State Visits - Indonesia (Suharto) to the White House
OPEN	6/26/75 - 8/4/75 - Head of State Visits - U.S. (Ford) to Europe (1) - (3)

Box 5 - Foreign Gifts Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	9/25/75 - Head of State Visits - Columbia (Lopez) to the White House
OPEN	10/2/75 - Head of State Visits - Japan (Hirohito) to the White House
OPEN	10/27/75 - Head of State Visits - Egypt (Sadat) to the White House
OPEN	11/29/75 - 12/7/75 - Head of State Visits - U.S. (Ford) to China, Indonesia, Phillipines
OPEN	1/22/76 - Head of State Visits - Israel (Rabin) to the White House
OPEN	3/17/76 - Head of State Visits - Ireland (Cosgrave) to the White House
OPEN	3/30/76 - Head of State Visits - Jordan (Hussein) to the White House
OPEN	5/17/76 - Head of State Visits - France (Giscard) to the White House

Status	Title
OPEN	6/2/76 - Head of State Visits - Spain (Carlos) to the White House
OPEN	7/15/76 - Head of State Visits - Germany (Schmidt) to the White House
OPEN	9/20/76 - Head of State Visits - Liberia (Tolbert) to the White House
OPEN	State Department Protocol Memos (1) - (6)

Box 6 - Foreign Gifts Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	State Department Protocol Memos (7) - (10)

Domestic Gifts Subject File, 1974-1977.

(Boxes 6-18, 4.6 linear feet)

Lists, handwritten notes, and carbons of outgoing correspondence. Included are the President's monthly gift lists and occasional staff recommendations, annotated with the President's selections for personal use or display in the White House. The bulk of the series is a chronological file of carbons of thank you letters drafted by Gift Unit staff for members of the First Family.

Arranged alphabetically and chronologically thereunder.

Box 6 (Continued) - Domestic Gifts Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	Ford Children's Gift and Book Lists
OPEN	President's Gift and Book Lists (1) - (5)

Box 7 - Domestic Gifts Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	President's Gift and Book Lists (6) - (10)
OPEN	Thank You Correspondence - Ford, Children
OPEN	Thank You Correspondence - Ford, Jack
OPEN	Thank You Correspondence - Ford, Michael
OPEN	Thank You Correspondence - Ford, Mrs. [August 1974 - September 1974]

Box 8 - Domestic Gifts Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	Thank You Correspondence - Ford, Mrs. [October 1974 - September 1975]

Box 9 - Domestic Gifts Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	Thank You Correspondence - Ford, Mrs. [October 1975 - July 1976]

Box 10 - Domestic Gifts Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	Thank You Correspondence - Ford, Mrs. [August 1976 - January 1977]
OPEN	Thank You Correspondence - Ford, President [August 1974 - September 1974]

Box 11 - Domestic Gifts Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	Thank You Correspondence - Ford, President [October 1974 - January 1975]

Box 12 - Domestic Gifts Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	Thank You Correspondence - Ford, President [February 1975 - May 1975]

Box 13 - Domestic Gifts Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	Thank You Correspondence - Ford, President [June 1975 - September 1975]

Box 14 - Domestic Gifts Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	Thank You Correspondence - Ford, President [October 1975 - January 1976]

Box 15 - Domestic Gifts Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	Thank You Correspondence - Ford, President [February 1976 - June 1976]

Box 16 - Domestic Gifts Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	Thank You Correspondence - Ford, President [July 1976 - October 1976]

Box 17 - Domestic Gifts Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	Thank You Correspondence - Ford, President [November 1976 - January 1977]

Box 18 - Domestic Gifts Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	Thank You Correspondence - Ford, Steven
OPEN	Thank You Correspondence - Ford, Susan (1) - (5)

Administrative Files, 1974-1977.

(Boxes 18-23, 2.0 linear feet)

Correspondence, memoranda, handwritten notes, loan agreements, memorabilia, packing lists, copies of catalog cards, invoices, and statements. Topics include transmittal of gifts and gift information to the President and Mrs. Ford, the valuation of gifts, various legal matters, and a supply of small gift items and mementoes for First Family and White House staff use. Included are messages exchanged between Margorie Wicklein, Mrs. Ford, Mildred Leonard, Dorothy Downton and the State Department. Also included is information regarding the loan of public gifts for exhibition, including a space-grown crystal from Skylab given to the President by NASA, a commemorative plaque from the Apollo-Soyuz astronauts, and a basketball from the Harlem Globe Trotters. Also included are samples of presidential mementos and gifts, including silver cups, a crystal ashtray, tie clasps, and paper weights. Vendor files document purchase of mementos by the Republican National Committee.

Arranged alphabetically and chronologically thereunder.

Box 18 (Continued) - Administrative Files

Status	Title
OPEN	Archives Box Lists - Domestic Gifts (1) - (6)

Box 19 - Administrative Files

Status	Title
OPEN	Archives Box Lists - Domestic Gifts (7) - (13)
OPEN	Archives Box Lists - Foreign Gifts
OPEN	Archives Box Lists - Gift Books (1) - (5)

Box 20 - Administrative Files

Status	Title
OPEN	Archives Box Lists - Gift Books (6) - (7)
OPEN	Archives Box Lists - Prepresidential
OPEN	Archives Box Lists - Regular (1) - (8)

Box 21 - Administrative Files

Status	Title
OPEN	Archives Box Lists - Regular (9) - (17)
OPEN	Bicentennial Gifts
OPEN	Correspondence Notes
OPEN	Donated Items

Box 22 - Administrative Files

Status	Title
OPEN	Ford - Dole Committee
OPEN	Foreign Gifts (1) - (2)
OPEN	Gifts and mementos - samples
OPEN	Gifts Displayed in the President's Offices
OPEN	Loaned Items
OPEN	Memoranda
OPEN	Mrs. Ford
OPEN	Presidential Awards Received
OPEN	Vendors - Alperstein, Bros, Inc.
OPEN	Vendors - Balfour Co.
OPEN	Vendors - Dion Manufacturing
OPEN	Vendors - Fostoria Glass Co.
OPEN	Lordship - Simco (1) - (2)

Box 23 - Administrative Files

Status	Title
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OPEN	Lordship - Simco (3)
OPEN	Lucas Advertising Consultants
OPEN	Parker Pen
OPEN	Stieff Co.
OPEN	Wilson Sporting Goods

Gift Card Index, 1974-1977.

(Box 23, 4.0 linear feet)

Gift catalog cards. Includes four of six original sets created and synchronized by Gift Unit and Mail Room staff. The Mail Room maintained the other two sets. Information on the card includes donor name and address, category and description of gift, item number, archives box number, and the date and site of receipt and disposition. Category topics included books, photographs, artwork, and general. The Gift Unit filed the ribbon copy by donor name, and kept alphabetical and permanent sets. The entire series is located at the Ford Museum in the office of the Registrar.

Arranged alphabetically by name of donor and category, and chronologically or numerically thereunder.

Box 23 (Continued) - Gift Card Index

Status	Title
OPEN	[Series transferred to Ford Museum Registrar's Office]