

WHITE HOUSE SPECIAL FILES UNIT PRESIDENTIAL FILES, 1974-77

Collection Type

Federal Records

Extent

4.8 linear feet (ca. 9,600 pages)

Record Type

Textual

Access

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Processed by

Paul Conway, May 1984

Scope and Content Note

These files of the Special Files Unit consist of miscellaneous items accumulated by Gertrude B. Fry on President Ford's preparations for his debates with Jimmy Carter, his review of federal agency budget requests, and selected issues considered sensitive by Fry. Also included is a small file on the administration of the Special Files Unit. The Presidential Handwriting File and other files of the Office of Staff Secretary, originally maintained in the Special Files, are separate collections and not included here.

Functions of the Special Files Unit

Nixon assistant John Dean established the Special Files Unit in September 1972 and appointed Trudy Fry as supervisor. Dean expected the Special Files to be secure storage area for politically and administratively sensitive files, including retired files of senior level staff, the core of an eventual presidential library, and an aide to President Nixon in writing his memoirs.

While the Nixon administration Special Files Unit functioned as a high level storage facility, it fell far short of this goal in the Ford administration. Instead of retaining senior staff files and the most significant papers handled by President Ford, Fry and her assistant Hazel Fulton spent much of the fall 1974 reviewing the files of departing Nixon staff, providing secure storage for Nixon papers and tapes, and searching Nixon files in response to subpoenas. Throughout the Ford administration, Fry logged material from the President's outbox, retaining many items containing presidential handwriting or initials (the Presidential Handwriting File) or items considered by Fry to be sensitive. Until June 1975, she also maintained the staff secretary office files, presidential confidential chronological files, and the appointment forms of the Executive Protective Service, the gatekeepers of the White House.

In mid-1975, the White House Central Files (WHCF) was given greater authority for storing presidential papers, limiting Fry's duties to the President's outbox and the Presidential Handwriting File. This reorganization did not result in a more concentrated file of presidential handwriting.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Files

The files of the Special Files Unit consist of bulky or detained files on selected

issues that Trudy Fry considered sensitive or wanted to "keep together" for possible quick retrieval. Sensitive information, vaguely defined and subjectively interpreted by Fry, may have included briefing papers with "restricted talking points, information prepared exclusively for the President, or politically sensitive material," among other criteria.

Of particular value are the extensive debate briefing materials given to the President by Michael Raoul Duval and other senior advisers. Many items were extensively annotated by Ford in detailed preparation for his three debates. Also of interest are budget decision books, many containing the President's line item changes in agency program requests of personnel levels. The highly selective collection of issue decision papers, some of which were never forwarded to the President, largely document White House staff differences of opinion or the way the staff handled suddenly urgent issues. The small administrative file clearly documents the extent to which the Special Files Unit administered high level presidential papers.

Related Materials (May 1984)

The Special Files debate files complement similar materials available in the Michael Raoul Duval Papers, the Raoul Duval Files, and in the White House Central Files (PL 7). Collections containing material on the 1976 presidential campaign are described in the Ford Library handout "The 1976 Presidential Election: A Guide to the Manuscript Collections Available for Research."

The Ford Library has available sometimes extensive materials related to the issue decision papers and budget review papers filed here. See especially the files of the Domestic Council staff and the Office of Economic Adviser (L. William Seidman).

While much of the Presidential Handwriting File is not yet available for research, the handwriting items dated before mid-June 1975 are available in the WHCF via cross references in categories PR 52, RS 3, and other appropriate subject headings.

Last Modified Date

2024-05-14

Ford Carter Debates Files, 1974-76.

(Boxes 1-3, 1.2 linear feet)

Briefing papers on potential debate issues, flash cards containing concise response suggestions, memoranda from advisers, notes by the President, and others materials given to Ford in preparation for his three debates with Jimmy Carter. Most items are marked with the stamp "The President Has Seen..." and many contain marginalia and underlinings in Ford's hand. Arranged by debate and thereunder by subject.

Box 1 - Ford-Carter Debates File

Status	Title
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>First Debate, 9/23/76 - Briefing Materials Miscellaneous Issues</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>First Debate, 9/23/76 - Carter and Crime</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>First Debate, 9/23/76 - Carter Interview with Harry Reasoner</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>First Debate, 9/23/76 - Carter on Economic Issues</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>First Debate, 9/23/76 - Carter Press Clippings</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>First Debate, 9/23/76 - Carter Record as Governor</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>First Debate, 9/23/76 - Domestic Issues Briefing Book</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>First Debate, 9/23/76 - Ford Notes Miscellaneous Issues</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>First Debate, 9/23/76 - Grain Embargoes Public Record of the President</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>First Debate, 9/23/76 - Press Clippings General</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>First Debate, 9/23/76 - Press Release Transcript</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>First Debate, 9/23/76 - Suggestions from Outside the White House</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>First Debate, 9/23/76 - Suggestions from Robert Hartmann</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>First Debate, 9/23/76 - Suggestions, Style and Themes</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Second Debate, 10/6/76 - Briefing Materials Miscellaneous</u>

Box 2 -Ford-Carter Debates File

Status	Title
OPEN	Second Debate, 10/6/76

Box 3 - Ford-Carter Debates File

Status	Title
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OPEN Second Debate, 10/6/76

OPEN Third Debate, 10/22/76

Issue Decision Papers for the President, 1974-77.

(Boxes 4-7, 1.6 linear feet)

Decision memoranda with supporting White House staff comments and background reports on eleven selected issues considered by Trudy Fry to be politically or administratively sensitive. A judicially restricted videotape of Ford's testimony in the case against Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme was part of this file, but it has been transferred to the Library audiovisual unit. Not all of the decision memoranda filed here went to the President for action. Arranged alphabetically by subject and thereunder chronologically.

Box 4 -Issue Decision Papers for the President

Status	Title
OPEN / DIGITIZED	Busing (1)
OPEN / DIGITIZED	Busing (2)
OPEN / DIGITIZED	Busing (3)
OPEN / DIGITIZED	Busing (4)
OPEN / DIGITIZED	Busing (5)
OPEN / DIGITIZED	Busing Background Book (1)
OPEN / DIGITIZED	Busing Background Book (2)
OPEN / DIGITIZED	Busing Background Book (3)
OPEN / DIGITIZED	Busing Background Book (4)
OPEN / DIGITIZED	Busing Background Book (5)
OPEN / DIGITIZED	Interagency Task Force on Indochina Refugees (1)
OPEN / DIGITIZED	Interagency Task Force on Indochina Refugees (2)

Box 5 - Issue Decision Papers for the President

Status	Title
OPEN / DIGITIZED	Interagency Task Force on Indochina Refugees Award For Julia Taft (1)
OPEN / DIGITIZED	Interagency Task Force on Indochina Refugees Award For Julia Taft (2)
OPEN / DIGITIZED	New York City (1)

Status	Title
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>New York City (2)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>New York City (3)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>New York City (4)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>New York City (5)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Nuclear Policy Review (1)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Nuclear Policy Review (2)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Nuclear Policy Review (3)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Nuclear Policy Review (4)</u>

Box 6 - Issue Decision Papers for the President

Status	Title
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Panama Canal Treaty Negotiations (1)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Panama Canal Treaty Negotiations (2)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Panama Canal Treaty Negotiations (3)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Panama Canal Treaty Negotiations (4)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Panama Canal Treaty Negotiations (5)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Panama Canal Treaty Negotiations (6)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Panama Canal Treaty Negotiations (7)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Peterson Commission Report on Executive Salaries (1)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Peterson Commission Report on Executive Salaries (2)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Peterson Commission Report on Executive Salaries (3)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Peterson Commission Report on Executive Salaries (4)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Peterson Commission Report on Executive Salaries (5)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Puerto Rico Compact of Permanent Union (1)</u>

Box 7 - Issue Decision Papers for the President

Status	Title
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Puerto Rico Compact of Permanent Union (2)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Puerto Rico Compact of Permanent Union (3)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Puerto Rico Compact of Permanent Union (4)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Republican Legislative Agenda (1)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Republican Legislative Agenda (2)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Republican Legislative Agenda (3)</u>

Status	Title
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Science and Technology Adviser (1)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Science and Technology Adviser (2)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Science and Technology Adviser (3)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Science and Technology Adviser (4)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Secret Service Protection for Vice President and Secretary of State (1)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Secret Service Protection for Vice President and Secretary of State (2)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>Secret Service Protection for Vice President and Secretary of State (3)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>U.S.A. v. Fromme Videotape of Gerald R. Ford Testimony [transfer sheet only, videotape not digitized]</u>

Budget Review Decision Papers, 1974-76.

(Boxes 8-11, 1.3 linear feet)

Briefing books, each containing program funding requests and recommended OMB changes, for several large federal agencies and related small agencies. The President used these books in his annual series of meetings to make final decisions on federal budget proposals to Congress. Also included are background papers for selected agencies or issues and briefing papers for meetings to hear agency appeals. Several books contain the President's handwritten comments or pencilled changes in specific dollar amounts or personnel levels. Arranged by fiscal year (FY) and thereunder chronologically by date of meeting.

Box 8 - Budget Review Decision Papers

Status	Title
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>12/4/74 HEW and Labor</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>12/6/74 Commerce, Treasury, SBA, Small Agencies</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>12/9/74 DOD, Small Agencies</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>12/10/74 International Programs, Selective Service (1)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>12/10/74 International Programs, Selective Service (2)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>12/11/74 Justice, Treasury, Small Agencies</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>12/17/74 FEA, ERDA, Small Agencies</u>

Status	Title
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>12/18/74 USDA Food Agencies, Human Resources</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>12/19/74 Transportation, Small Agencies</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>12/20/74 Labor, HUD, EPA, NASA</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>12/23/74 Final Issues for Decision, Army Corps of Engineers</u>

Box 9 - Budget Review Decision Papers

Status	Title
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>9/18/75 Budget Reduction Proposals (1)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>9/18/75 Budget Reduction Proposals (2)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>9/18/75 Budget Reduction Proposals (3)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>9/18/75 Budget Reduction Proposals (4)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>11/21/75 Defense, Intelligence (1)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>11/21/75 Defense, Intelligence (2)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>11/21/75 Defense, Intelligence (3)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>11/21/75 Defense, Intelligence (4)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>11/22/75 Security Assistance, Development Assistance, State Department, ExIm Bank (1)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>11/22/75 Security Assistance, Development Assistance, State Department, ExIm Bank (2)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>11/22/75 Security Assistance, Development Assistance, State Department, ExIm Bank (3)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>11/22/75 Security Assistance, Development Assistance, State Department, ExIm Bank (4)</u>

Box 10 - Budget Review Decision Papers

Status	Title
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>11/24/75 HEW, USDA Feeding Programs, Small Agencies (1)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>11/24/75 HEW, USDA Feeding Programs, Small Agencies (2)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>11/26/75 FEA, ERDA, Justice, Civil Service, Regulatory Agencies (1)</u>

Status	Title
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>11/26/75 FEA, ERDA, Justice, Civil Service, Regulatory Agencies (2)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>11/26/75 FEA Background Book</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>11/26/75 ERDA Background Book (1)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>11/26/75 ERDA Background Book (2)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>12/15/75 HEW Appeals</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>12/75 Final Budget Decisions</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>12/75 Fifty Issues (1)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>12/75 Fifty Issues (2)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>12/75 Fifty Issues (3)</u>

Box 11 - Budget Review Decision Papers

Status	Title
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>11/16/76 Defense, Small Agencies (1)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>11/16/76 Defense, Small Agencies (2)</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>12/76 DOD Base Closings, Ship Building</u>
OPEN / DIGITIZED	<u>12/8/76 FEA Petroleum Storage</u>

Special Files Administration, 1970-75.

(Boxes 11-12, 0.7 linear feet)

Logs and lists of incoming materials, correspondence, memoranda, reference materials and rubber stamps used by Trudy Fry in administering the Special Files Unit of the Staff Secretary prior to its reorganization in June 1975. Arranged by subject.

Box 11 (Continued) - Special Files Administration

Status	Title
OPEN	Chronological File
OPEN	Confidential File Box Lists, AZ
OPEN	Confidential File Oversize Attachments
OPEN	Diebold Files Handbook
OPEN	President Ford's Outbox List of Items Received
OPEN	President's Ford's Outbox Log of Material Received

Status	Title
OPEN	President Ford's Staff Press Release Biographies (1)
OPEN	President Ford's Staff Press Release Biographies (2)
OPEN	President Ford's Staff Press Release Biographies (3)

Box 12 - Special Files Administration

Status	Title
OPEN	Presidential Libraries (1)
OPEN	Presidential Libraries (2)
OPEN	Presidential Libraries (3)
OPEN	Presidential Libraries (4)
OPEN	Security Classification Procedures
OPEN	Special Files Boxed Files Received
OPEN	Special Files Box Log
OPEN	Special Files Classified Cases Received
OPEN	State Department Foreign Affairs Manual (1)
OPEN	State Department Foreign Affairs Manual (2)
OPEN	White House Staff Memos
OPEN	Rubber Stamps for Special Files