

What Is New at the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum?

Located on the University of Texas campus in Austin, the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum houses over forty-five million pages of manuscripts, an extensive audiovisual collection, and oral history interviews with more than a thousand individuals.

The Papers of Lyndon B. Johnson, which form the core of the library's holdings, include the White House files of Lyndon B. Johnson's presidency (1963-1969) and papers from his service as a congressman (1937-1949), senator (1949-1961), and vice president (1961-1963). In addition, the library holds the papers of several hundred other individuals, including family, friends, and associates of Lyndon B. Johnson and members of his administration. Most of the material pertaining to foreign relations is from the presidency, and within that, the National Security File (NSF) is the largest single source. This file was the working file of President Johnson's special assistants for national security affairs, McGeorge Bundy and Walt W. Rostow. Documents in the file originated in the offices of Bundy and Rostow and their staffs, in the various executive departments and agencies, especially those having to do with foreign affairs and national defense, and in diplomatic and military posts around the world.

Parts of the National Security File have long been available for research, but due to ongoing processing and declassification, new material is continually making its way into the publicly available files. I would like to tell you a little about what is new and about the processes involved in **making** new material public.

A basic distinction we often need to explain is the difference between processing and declassification. *Processing* refers to all the things we do in order to make material initially available to the public. One of things we do is withdraw all the documents that cannot be opened, due to either national security classification or donor's deed of gift restrictions. All withdrawn documents are listed on a withdrawal sheet that stays in the front of the folder. In the NSF, a large majority of closures are for national security reasons. Processing often occurs at the folder level, so some folders in a box may become available years before the rest of them. *Systematic declassification* occurs during processing. That means we review **everything** and open what we can. After processing, additional declassification of individual documents occurs as researchers file *mandatory review* requests. In almost all cases the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) does not apply, since the vast majority of our holdings are donated historical materials, not federal records. Mandatory review operates under authority of the executive order governing security classification (currently E.O. 13292).

We had little authority to undertake systematic declassification prior to the late 1990s, so files processed in earlier years contain a higher percentage of security classified withdrawn material. Rather than go back and systematically review all the closed material in those files, we wait until researchers file mandatory review requests for items and review them at that time.

One interesting new addition to the traditional declassification process here at the library is the Remote Archives Capture Project. RAC was **created** by an interagency group in an effort to meet the declassification deadlines of Executive Order 12958, **signed by President Clinton in 1995**, by providing electronic copies of classified material from institutions outside the Washington, DC, area to agencies to review there. The RAC team visited the library in early 1999 and scanned about 500,000 pages of material, primarily concerning intelligence and military matters. The material is gradually being returned to the

library, with mixed results. Most of the newly declassified material is in files that had not been processed before the scanning. Often the RAC review decisions on documents from processed files simply reaffirm previous review decisions **without releasing anything** new.

In the National Security File, the date a folder is processed is added to the finding aid, so scanning through the finding aid is the best way to see what is newly processed. You may borrow a paper copy of most finding aids by mail. The National Security File and some related personal papers finding aids are available on CD as Microsoft Word files. Some sections of the NSF finding aid are available on the LBJ Library web site, through links in the list of holdings at

<http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/holdings/content.asp>.

There is no comprehensive method of reviewing recent mandatory review actions. Because **mandatory review** occurs at the document level and is tracked primarily by the requestor's name, **maintaining a list** would take a lot of time and effort. We would rather devote that time to processing new material. However, there are options. One of our cheerful and knowledgeable archivists **may be able to provide** information on **a particular** topic, and he or she may know of some recently declassified material. If certain folders in the finding aid look particularly appealing, **researchers can order** copies of the withdrawal sheets. Annotations on the withdrawal sheet will give the date of any declassification actions on each document. If the document is not fully open, the withdrawal sheet provides all the information necessary to request declassification. For documents that are open, **researchers can use** the information to order photocopies.

While not an exhaustive listing, the following covers much of what we have processed from the National Security File in the last three years.

In the Country Files segment, several African countries that previously were completely unprocessed are now available (Mali, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Tunisia). The Files of Edward Hamilton and International Meetings and Travel File also contain new material relating to Africa. The "Crisis" section of the Middle East Country files, processed in 2000, adds more detail regarding the Six Day War, a frequent research topic. In the same area, the Jordan Country File was processed in 2001. We processed a substantial part of the Cyprus Country File in 2000, **and** in 2001 Belgium joined the processed list, nearly completing the European section. While some of the USSR Country File has been available for quite some time, we added a significant portion in 2001. We have added some scattered folders to the Vietnam Country File, more of it pertaining to negotiations than anything else.

The most processing in a single file occurred in the Special Head of State Correspondence File. While much of this correspondence is greetings and other protocol-type messages, there are some documents of substance as well. A larger percentage of substantial messages can be found in Head of State Correspondence File, which also has some new material.

Quite recently we processed the remaining unprocessed portions of the Intelligence File. While a large portion of the material remains classified, we count it as progress since fewer of the folders titles are now sanitized!

The Files of Spurgeon Keeny, Robert Komer, Charles Johnson, Arthur McCafferty, and Alfred Jenkins have significant additions. Arms control is a major topic in the Keeny material. The new Komer material relates to the Middle East, Africa, and counter-insurgency policy. The Charles Johnson material relates to outer space and ocean issues. The

McCafferty files pertain to staffing and administration of the White House Situation Room. The Jenkins material relates primarily to China.

In the Agency File, State Department section, "President's Evening Reading" contains some new additions. This consists of State-prepared daily reports to the president with paragraph summaries of current events around the world.

While the National Security File is typically the first stop for anyone researching foreign affairs at the LBJ library, there are numerous other collections of interest. Once again, we are looking only at material made available in 2000 or later. In the Papers of Francis Bator, there is some material pertaining to NATO, non-proliferation, and "military matters." This material is a little atypical of the file overall, which deals more with monetary policy/balance of payments. In the Papers of Bromley Smith, a section on National Security Council meetings is now available. The NSC material duplicates much of what is in the NSF, NSC Meetings File, but adds some additional background and includes the handwritten notes from which the typed notes in the NSC Meetings File were made. Occasionally there are interesting differences between the two versions. A large accretion (thirty-five or so archives boxes) to the Papers of William Gibbons has given us copies of documents from originals housed at several different repositories. They are chronologically arranged, and all deal with Vietnam.

Items currently in the works are box 1 from the Papers of Morton Halperin (chronological file 1966-1967, with subjects including NATO, military assistance, reversion of Ryukyus, Vietnam), box 168 from the NSF, Vietnam Country File (State Department daily world summaries, 1967-1968), boxes 258-264, NSF, Country File (Korea/*Pueblo*), and NSF, Files of Robert Komer, box 13 (Chester Bowles correspondence, CENTO).

No listing of recently processed material would be complete without mentioning recordings of telephone conversations. About two-thirds of all our recordings are now available, from January through March 1966. Additional releases are forthcoming and will be announced on our website as the release dates are set. While Johnson himself is largely absent from the written record, he dominates the recordings. More information and a detailed finding aid are available on our website, www.lbjlib.utexas.edu. The site includes a few sample tracks you can hear. A larger sample of interesting excerpts is available on a CD from the LBJ Museum Store.

Once we have finished processing the telephone recordings, we plan to begin work on the recordings of meetings held in the Cabinet Room. The earliest recorded meeting was on 2 February 1968, the last on 9 December of that year. In all, there are about 200 hours of recordings of meetings, many concerning Vietnam. Portions of recordings of three meetings concerning the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia are available because they were published several years ago in the *Foreign Relations of the United States* volume on Eastern Europe.

One last item worth mentioning is our oral history collection. While we are no longer recording interviews, we will continue to add new transcripts to the collection as interviewees agree to release them. You can borrow oral history transcripts by mail. We also have an ongoing project to put them on our web site as Adobe pdf files. About eighty interviews are currently available on the web, including those with George Ball, Robert McNamara, Clark Clifford, Nicholas Katzenbach, Walt Rostow, and Dean Rusk. Since 2000, seventy-nine interviews with twenty-seven people have been opened, including Arthur Krim, Cartha (Deke) DeLoach, Horace Busby, J. Willis Hurst, Jack Albright, James Adler, James Jones, John Chancellor, John Gronouski, Joseph Laitin, Lucien Conein, Marie

Fehmer, Mary Margaret Valenti, Palmer Hoyt, Peter Braestrup, Robert G. (Bobby) Baker, Thomas H. Kuchel, Vicky McCammon, William Knowland, and William J. Jorden.

Should you decide to visit the library, please contact us ahead of time **both** for information and to set up an appointment for your orientation interview.

Contact information:

Reading Room (512) 721-0212 or 0213

Fax (512) 721-0169

E-mail Johnson.library@nara.gov

Mail 2313 Red River Street, Austin, Texas 78705