

UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

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For Release on Delivery  
Expected at 10:00 a.m. EST  
November 6, 1979

STATEMENT OF  
DONALD L. EIRICH, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR  
LOGISTICS AND COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION  
BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TREASURY, POSTAL SERVICE,  
AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT  
OF THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS  
CONCERNING  
[ EXPENDITURES FOR OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE  
OF  
PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARIES ]

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Senator Chiles, Senator Pryor, and Members of the Subcommittee:

By letter dated August 6, 1979, the Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee requested that we undertake a study for your Subcommittee to identify pertinent issues surrounding expenditures of appropriated funds for operation and maintenance of Presidential libraries. The following reflects our observations during the period available for the study.

#### HISTORY

The Presidential Libraries Act was enacted on August 12, 1955, to provide for acceptance and maintenance of Presidential libraries. The act authorizes the Administrator of General Services to accept for deposit the papers and other historical materials of a President, former President, an official or former official (rank not defined in the act) of Government, together with the papers relating to or contemporary with the President or former President. It also allows the Administrator to accept land, buildings, and equipment offered to the Government for a Presidential archival depository and to maintain, operate, and protect them. The Administrator may not take title to property for a Presidential archival depository or enter into an agreement for the use as a Presidential archival depository of land, buildings, and equipment of certain public or private bodies until he has submitted a report to the Congress and observed a 60-day waiting period or received congressional approval of his plan.

The act was patterned after the joint resolution of the Congress in 1939 which established the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library. A considerable increase in the volume of Presidential papers during President Roosevelt's years in office and his desire to keep together the record of his public service led to his proposal in 1938 that a building to preserve his papers and historical materials and those of his associates be financed by popular subscription on land donated from the Roosevelt estate at Hyde Park and then be turned over to the United States to be administered at Government expense. The resolution was approved in substantially the form he proposed.

NEED FOR THE  
LIBRARIES ACT

At hearings in 1955 on the Presidential Libraries Act before a Special Subcommittee of the House Committee on Government Operations, the then Archivist of the United States, Dr. Wayne C. Grover, summarized his prepared statement as to why legislation was needed as follows:

1. From the beginning of the history of our Nation, it has been recognized that the papers of the Presidents form an immensely valuable part of our historical and cultural heritage and that the Nation has a special responsibility and interest in seeing that

they are properly preserved, protected,  
and made available for scholarly research.

2. The increase in volume of Presidential papers in recent years has made it impossible for ex-Presidents to assume the responsibility for personally caring for their papers and other historical materials until such time as they or their heirs are willing to make final plans for the disposal of the papers.
3. The establishment of Presidential libraries is the best method that has yet been devised for properly preserving Presidential papers. The Presidential library offers the advantages of geographical decentralization, service as a regional archival depository, a stimulus to the study of American history and the housing within one establishment of all the types of material that help to explain the history of a President and his period.
4. The cost of maintaining the libraries should not be excessive and probably one-third of the necessary expense could be born out of income.

It seems apparent from these words that the emphasis was primarily on the bringing together of, preserving, and maintaining Presidential papers for scholarly research.

#### EXPERIENCES UNDER THE LIBRARIES ACT

What has occurred since the passage of the Presidential Libraries Act? Libraries have been completed for Presidents Truman, Eisenhower, Hoover, and Johnson; President Kennedy's library was dedicated on October 20, and President Ford's library and museum are under construction.

#### Library costs

During the hearings on the Libraries Act in 1955, considerable discussion was given to the annual operating costs for Presidential libraries. It was estimated on the basis of the then costs at the Roosevelt Library that at the end of 100 years if 15 Presidential libraries were constructed and given to the Government, the annual net maintenance and operating cost would be about \$1.5 million for all 15 libraries. This amount assumed a \$150,000 operating and maintenance cost for each library which would be offset by \$50,000 in fees from visitors to the museums for a net operating cost of \$100,000 for each of the 15 libraries.

In fiscal year 1979, the operating and maintenance costs for the 6 Presidential libraries accepted during the 25 years since passage of the act and the Roosevelt Library

are estimated to be about \$7 million. However, this does not include the annual building maintenance costs for the Kennedy Library which will begin in fiscal year 1980, or the Ford library and museum which are under construction. The estimated fiscal year 1979 costs for each of the libraries follow: Johnson, \$1.8 million; Eisenhower, \$1.3 million; Truman, \$1.1 million; Roosevelt, \$1 million; Hoover, \$620,000; Kennedy, \$800,000, which does not include building maintenance costs that will begin in fiscal year 1980; and Ford, \$307,000, which does not include building maintenance costs.

When considering inflation of 275 percent between 1955 and 1979, the cost of \$150,000 for each library amounts to \$412,500; for 7 libraries the costs would be \$2.9 million. In addition to inflation, some portion of the increased costs might be attributable to the rental rates for the libraries (Standard Level User Charges) which are based on approximate commercial charges for comparable space and services. However, the increase in the size of buildings has added considerably to the cost of building operation, maintenance, and protection.

Income from fees or donations was expected to offset about one-third of the annual costs of the libraries. In fiscal year 1979, the offset is estimated to be \$732,000, or 10 percent of the costs of the 7 libraries. It should

be noted, however, that the offset does reduce the amount of appropriated funds that might otherwise be required by the libraries.

Size of libraries

Concerns have been expressed that library buildings keep getting larger. An examination of the square footage of space at the libraries follows:

- Roosevelt Library, 39,000 sq. ft. (Pre-Presidential Libraries Act). Since 1955 two wings have been added to the library.
- Truman Library, 55,000 sq. ft. An addition of 2,400 sq. ft. has been added since the library was accepted in 1957 and ongoing construction will add another 24,000 sq. ft.
- Eisenhower Library, 55,000 sq. ft. for the library building. Since the library building was accepted in 1960, GSA has accepted, as part of the archival depository, the Eisenhower Museum (35,000 sq. ft.), the Place of Meditation containing the gravesite, the Eisenhower home, and has built a visitor's center.
- Hoover Library, 25,000 sq. ft. This includes 3 additions totaling 19,500 sq. ft. that have been made since its acceptance in 1960. A



request for another 6,000 sq. ft. is to be submitted by the Library Director to Archives later this year.

--Johnson Library, 100,000 sq. ft.

--Kennedy Library, 90,000 sq. ft.

--Ford Library, 40,000 sq. ft. for the library at Ann Arbor. The museum at Grand Rapids will be another 40,000 sq. ft.

According to NARS, archival storage space at the Roosevelt Library is 18,700 sq. ft.; 19,700 sq. ft. at the Truman Library; 31,300 sq. ft. at the Eisenhower Library; 14,800 sq. ft. at the Hoover Library; 25,300 sq. ft. at the Johnson Library; and 13,800 sq. ft. at the Kennedy Library. Much of the remaining space in the libraries is used for museum activities.

What constitutes an archival depository

A factor which has probably contributed to the increased size of certain Presidential libraries is the definition in the Libraries Act of a "Presidential archival depository." The Presidential Libraries Act authorizes the Government to accept "buildings" for the purpose of creating a Presidential archival depository. The act defines a Presidential archival depository as:

"an institution operated by the United States to house and preserve the papers and books of a President or former President of the United States, together with other historical materials belonging to a President or former President of the United States, or related to his papers or to the events of his official or personal life."

Historical materials are defined as including:

"books, correspondence, documents, papers, pamphlets, works of art, models, pictures, photographs, plats, maps, films, motion pictures, sound recordings, and other objects or materials having historical or commemorative value."

These provisions provide GSA broad authority for determining what constitutes an archival depository and GSA is so using this authority.

To illustrate, the Roosevelt Library is located at Hyde Park, New York, on the same grounds as the Roosevelt home and the Roosevelt gravesites. Archives operates and maintains only the Roosevelt Library, which also includes a museum, and the National Park Service maintains the rest of the buildings and grounds. The Park Service also maintains the Hoover home and other buildings in West Branch, Iowa, and the Archives operates and maintains the Hoover Library.

In contrast to this, the Eisenhower Library in Abilene, Kansas, is located on grounds which also contain the Eisenhower home, Eisenhower Museum, visitors center, and the Place of Meditation containing the President's gravesite. Operation and maintenance of all the buildings and grounds which together have been determined to constitute the archival depository is administered by Archives.

The library building alone was donated to the Government in 1962 as the Presidential library. Subsequently, in 1966, the Eisenhower home, museum, and Place of Meditation were donated and accepted by GSA under the Presidential Libraries Act. The relationship between Archives' role in assuming responsibility for administering Presidential homes and the role of the National Park Service in this regard is not clear. The National Park Service, for example, administers, maintains, and operates the homes of many Presidents including among others, Presidents Franklin Roosevelt, Herbert Hoover, and Lyndon Johnson.

President Ford's library and museum which are currently under construction establish precedent in that the buildings comprising the archival depository will not be at the same location. The Ford Library is being constructed in Ann Arbor, Michigan, while the Ford Museum is being constructed in Grand Rapids, Michigan, more than 100 miles away. Therefore,

the Federal Government will bear the expense of operating and maintaining facilities at two locations.

#### Researchers and visitors

Statistics show that the greatest interest of the public in Presidential libraries is as a museum rather than a library. During fiscal year 1978, 1,100 researchers visited the libraries. The Roosevelt Library was visited by the most researchers-- 381, or 35 percent of all researchers. The Kennedy Library was second with visits by 208 researchers followed by the Truman Library with visits by 198 researchers.

Museum visitors, on the other hand, totaled about 1.3 million in fiscal year 1978. The Johnson Library had the most museum visitors--502,000, or about 39 percent of all visitors. The Roosevelt Library with 277,000 and the Truman Library with 265,000 visitors were second and third, respectively.

Although Archives views the primary function of the Presidential libraries as preserving the valuable historical papers of Presidents and their associates and to make them available for research purposes, visits by researchers represent less than one percent of all visitors to the libraries.

#### ALTERNATE APPROACHES

As part of our study, you requested that we discuss alternative approaches to the current Presidential libraries

system. Following are some alternative approaches for maintaining Presidential papers and historical materials. The first three approaches were discussed in an Archives report entitled "The Presidential Libraries System: A Review" which was submitted to the Senate Committee on Appropriations earlier this year.

1. Central depository for all Presidential records.

The merits of a central depository for all Presidential records were discussed at the hearings preceding the Presidential Libraries Act as well as in the Archives report. Advantages mentioned are that scholars or researchers could examine materials of several Presidents or administrations without traveling around the country to visit individual libraries. Also, the costs of operating and administering a single building would be less.

Disadvantages expressed were that the Government would probably be required to finance the construction of the centralized depository since private groups associated with Presidents would be unlikely to offer to build and donate a structure for the papers of all Presidents; a centralized library would not be as accessible to people living outside the city in which the library is located; the potential for loss of all Presidential records by fire or other means if stored in a single building; and Presidents or their associates may be less willing to donate personal records or other

historical materials if the records are to be located in a central depository. (The Presidential Records Act of 1978 differentiates between personal records and records that relate to the President's conduct of his office which are Government property. The Archivist must take custody of the Government materials at the end of a President's term of office and maintain them in an archival depository operated by the United States.)

As you requested, we prepared a hypothetical cost analysis of the current Presidential libraries program over the next 100 years compared to a centralized library concept that would not include a museum component. The results of this analysis, which are included at the end of my testimony, show estimated costs using several variables. While the results are purely estimates and the cost reductions may be greater or lesser over the 100 years, it is apparent that economies would result under a centralized depository concept.

2. Designated regional centers. Further Presidential libraries might be located at designated regional centers either as individual buildings or in the same structure as other cultural or archival activities including regional archives branches of the National Archives. Regional centers which in the future might include papers of several Presidents

would be more economical to operate than individual libraries. Disadvantages are that the Federal Government would probably have to finance the construction and persons associated with Presidents may be less willing to deposit materials if the regional center is outside a President's state.

3. Curtail or eliminate museums. The President could choose the location of his Presidential library but to reduce costs in operations and building maintenance, museums could be curtailed or eliminated. By performing only archival functions and services, Presidential library staffs could be smaller and the size of the library structures would be reduced. The Archives report concludes that any savings would not be in proportion to program reductions because (1) public support and interest would not be sufficient to construct and donate a building and, therefore, the Federal Government would have to pay construction costs and (2) the programs currently are supported in part or wholly by fees and public contributions which might not be available without museums.

As regards public support for Presidential libraries performing only archival functions, we noted that the Eisenhower and Ford library buildings received donations from the public for construction of the libraries. This occurred even though the museums are in different buildings, and in the case of the Ford Library, a different city. As regards the

fees and public contributions for library operations, as we stated earlier, such income represented only 10 percent of the total costs of operating the Presidential libraries in fiscal year 1979.

4. Centralized storage and microcopying. Under this alternative the Federal Government would discontinue acceptance of land and buildings for Presidential libraries. Instead, the Government could, by their right of ownership under the Presidential Records Act of 1978, centralize the storage, preservation, and processing of the Government portion of the Presidential papers. These papers would be indexed and sorted, perhaps, through the use of modern computerized techniques and reproduced on microform. Indexed lists and copies of the microform containing the contents of the papers would be made available at a reasonable cost to the public. The monies saved by not funding the operation and maintenance of Presidential libraries could be used for the microcopying process. Additional income would be generated from the sale of the indexed lists and the microform itself. The Library of Congress used this procedure for the first 23 Presidents although on a more limited basis because of the substantially lesser volume of records.

The advantages of this process are that (1) Presidential records would be available to the public without the high cost



of operating and maintaining numerous Presidential libraries and (2) microform copies would be available to local supporters that wish to construct a museum for the President.

Major disadvantages would include (1) Presidents may donate their personal papers elsewhere (as he can now) and (2) start-up costs would be high for space, staff, and equipment.

5. Decentralized libraries, centralized museums. Presidential libraries, perhaps attached to a university, would perform only archival functions and services and have limited space for displaying historical materials. A centralized President's museum could be built and perhaps operated by the Smithsonian which would house the historical items, including gifts from foreign countries, of all Presidents. Various items could be displayed periodically at the Presidential libraries. The cost of the President's museum would be born by the Federal Government. Although the size of the Presidential libraries would be reduced, we think the public would probably continue to contribute funds for construction of libraries. The Federal Government could pay the operation and maintenance costs for the libraries.

The Archives report concludes that no alternative to the current Presidential libraries system appears to offer a superior method for providing effective archival care of Presidential records and assuring their full use and availability to a broad cross section of the American public.

Archives states that the current system has developed on a firm foundation of public support and has been widely used since its inception.

While at present a library is likely to be added for each President, Archives says the system has built in checks to prevent this. These checks are that (1) if public interest wanes, the libraries will cease to grow since funds from the public are needed to construct the libraries and (2) congressional approval is needed for each library and inappropriate growth can be stopped through congressional action.

We are aware, however, of no basis for an expectation that public interest will wane because contributions for libraries can be solicited while a President is still in office and, therefore, it is likely supporters would have little trouble obtaining the needed funds. As regards congressional approval, approval is automatic unless some action is taken by the Congress to disapprove acceptance of a library.

The Archives study further points out that the Presidential Libraries Act permits acceptance of the libraries by the Government, but does not give the Government a clear role either in selecting the site for the building or in its design. As a result, Presidential libraries may be constructed at sites inaccessible to researchers and

difficult to reach by members of the public. Archives suggests that the Congress require libraries to be constructed with archival and efficiency standards developed by GSA and that buildings not meeting such standards cannot be accepted. This need was also expressed by several library directors.

#### CONCLUSIONS

In our opinion, size and uses, and thus costs of most Presidential libraries exceed what was intended by the Presidential Libraries Act. The definition of Presidential archival depository in the act is open to broad interpretation and wide discretion is being used by GSA in accepting depositories. Archives is administering various buildings at one location, which raises questions regarding the applicability of some of them as part of an archival despository; and in another instance, buildings of a single archival depository are located in two different cities.

The primary purpose of archival depositories is preserving Presidential papers and making them available for research. However, since the greatest interest in libraries from the public view is not the library function but the museum aspect (researchers represent less than one percent of all visitors), we believe there is a tendency for management to direct much of its attention toward the museum function.

If economy were the primary consideration, it seems clear that costs could be reduced considerably if the museum functions

were eliminated or curtailed. Also, it seems apparent that the concept of a centralized archival depository would be the preferred cost alternative. We recognize, however, that there are value judgments involved--in service to the public and other factors. Nevertheless, 25 years have gone by since the Presidential Libraries Act was passed and, in view of the increasing costs and the inevitable growth in the number and size of Presidential archival depositories, we believe careful consideration should be given to alternative solutions. Such consideration should include questions regarding the current library program such as:

--On the basis of the small number of researchers, are the Presidential library buildings becoming too large?

--Is the museum aspect of Presidential libraries being overemphasized?

--Should buildings which constitute a Presidential archival depository be located in different cities some distance from each other?

--Is there a need to refine the definition of "Presidential archival depository" in terms of scope and define "buildings" as to types in the Presidential Libraries Act?

This concludes my statement. We will be pleased to respond to any questions you may have.

PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARIES COST OVER NEXT 100 YEARS  
BASED ON 1979 CONSTANT DOLLARS  
(20 LIBRARIES--EXCLUDES CURRENT LIBRARIES)

	Current method-- decentralized and museum (note a)	Centralized-- no museum (note b)	Decentralized-- no museum (note c)
	----- (millions) -----		
<b>Comparison of costs using for each President in the centralized library:</b>			
1. \$8.30 sq. ft. 25,000 sq. ft.	\$1,377	\$785	\$ 979
2. \$10.00 sq. ft. 25,000 sq. ft.	1,518	831	1,049
3. \$8.30 sq. ft. 30,000 sq. ft.	1,377	831	979
4. \$10.00 sq. ft. 30,000 sq. ft.	1,518	886	1,049
5. \$10.00 sq. ft. 40,000 sq. ft.	1,518	995	1,049

a/Based on 90,000 sq. ft. libraries with one library added every 5 years.

b/Based on square footage for 2 Presidents added every 10 years.

c/Based on 40,000 sq. ft. libraries with one library added every 5 years.

PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARIES COST OVER NEXT 100 YEARS  
BASED ON 1979 CONSTANT DOLLARS  
(20 LIBRARIES--EXCLUDES CURRENT LIBRARIES)

	Current method-- decentralized and museum	Centralized-- no museum	Decentralized-- no museum
	------(millions)-----		
1. Comparison using \$8.30 a sq. ft. (average for current libraries) for operating costs and 25,000 sq. ft. of space for each President in the centralized library.			
Building costs (note d)	a/\$ 784	b/\$228	c/\$349
Program costs (note e)	746	557	630
Less: Fees and donations	(153)	-0-	-0-
Total	<u>\$1,377</u>	<u>\$785</u>	<u>\$979</u>
2. Comparison using \$10 a sq. ft. for operating costs and 25,000 sq. ft. of space for each President in the centralized library.			
Building costs (note d)	a/\$ 941	b/\$274	c/\$ 419
Program costs (note e)	746	557	630
Less: Fees and donations	(169)	-0-	-0-
Total	<u>\$1,518</u>	<u>\$831</u>	<u>\$1,049</u>
3. Comparison using \$8.30 a sq. ft. for operating costs and 30,000 sq. ft. of space for each President in the centralized library.			
Building costs (note d)	a/\$ 784	b/\$274	c/\$349
Program costs (note e)	746	557	630
Less: Fees and donations	(153)	-0-	-0-
Total	<u>\$1,377</u>	<u>\$831</u>	<u>\$979</u>
4. Comparison using \$10 a sq. ft. for operating costs and 30,000 sq. ft. of space for each President in the centralized library.			
Building costs (note d)	a/\$ 941	b/\$329	c/\$ 419
Program costs (note e)	746	557	630
Less: Fees and donations	(169)	-0-	-0-
Total	<u>\$1,518</u>	<u>\$886</u>	<u>\$1,049</u>
5. Comparison using \$10 a sq. ft. for operating costs and 40,000 sq. ft. of space for each President in the centralized library.			
Building costs (note d)	a/\$ 941	b/\$438	c/\$ 419
Program costs (note e)	746	557	630
Less: Fees and donations	(169)	-0-	-0-
Total	<u>\$1,518</u>	<u>\$995</u>	<u>\$1,049</u>

a/Based on 30,000 sq. ft. libraries (average of recent libraries and older libraries with additions) with one library added every 5 years (average length of Presidencies over last 200 years).

b/Based on square footage for 2 Presidents added every 10 years. Includes archival storage, administrative office space, and researcher space, etc.

c/Based on 40,000 sq. ft. (figure provided by GSA) with one library added every 5 years.

d/Standard Level User Charges (SLUC) for building operation, maintenance, and protection. Construction costs of centralized libraries included in SLUC charges.

e/Includes costs for staff salaries, equipment, supplies, preservation, etc.