News: The University of Washington Libraries has published microfiche editions of the inventories to the Henry M. Jackson and Warren Magnusen papers. The inventories include a short biography. The guide describes distinctive features to the arrangement of the particular installment. A table of contents lists the main record series and subgroups. The inventories list series, folder headings and subgroups with respective box and folder numbers. Subgroups are files that reflect distinct activities and interests. Aide’s papers are treated as a subgroup. An index lists personal and corporate names with substantive terms and phrases at the end of each section. Correspondence categories are divided into: 1) General (personal); 2) Departmental (case); 3) Legislative (constituent mail). The fiche and a useful printed guide are available from the Manuscripts and University Archives, FM-25, University of Washington Libraries, Seattle Washington 98195 for $5.00/collection.

The University of Vermont has published a guide Sources for the Study of Canadian-American Relations: Manuscripts at the University of Vermont edited by Michael P. Chaney. The guide includes information from the manuscripts collection, the rare book collection, the Wilbur Collection of Vermontiana, the Reference Collection and Documents and Maps. An index is included. This volume was funded by the U.S. Department of Education Strengthening Library Resources Program (Title II-C). The University also has available an inventory to the George D. Aiken Papers which indicates series in the collection as well as a special inventory noting the St. Lawrence Seaway material specific to the collection.

Connie Gallagher will be spending the coming year in Washington, D.C. working in the offices of Senator Robert Stafford and Congressman James Jeffords. He plans to interview permanent staff, learn filing procedures and will direct the identification, labelling, microfilming and shipping of materials to UMV over a 12 month period.

SPECIAL: Time magazine has graciously given us permission to publish 1 time an essay in the August 31, 1987 issue, "History Without Letters" by Walter Isaacson.

Pity the poor historian. The wonders of modern technology have combined with the dynamics of government scandals to make his task next to impossible.

First came the telephone, which replaced the letter as the preferred means of business and social discourse. Letter writing, like keeping faithful diaries, became a lost art. The advent of the tape recorder offered some hope, until Watergate made taping one’s own phone for posterity seem both sordid and self-incriminating. Anointing a personal Boswell to hang around the house also turned out to be troublesome, as shown by the ill-conceived rumbling about summoning
Edmund Morris, the President's designated biographer, to testify before the Iran-contra probers. Not even silicon chips offer much promise anymore. Those electronic messages that national-security staffers zapped to one another's computer screens, which were fortunately recorded in deep memory for future scribes, violated the cardinal rule of modern government: never leave footprints. Electronic memory shredders will, no doubt, be a feature of the next generation of DELETE keys.

As a result, historians may be left with nothing more than cabinets filled with butt-covering memos designed more to obscure than illuminate the origins of critical decisions. "It's a real problem," says Morris. "There is more paper now, but its value declines in inverse proportion to its bulk."

One of the great troves for students of 20th century American diplomacy was left by Henry Stimson, a tireless diarist and letter writer who served a number of stints as Secretary of War and State from 1911 until 1945. Stimson was the man who ordered the dismantling of a government code-breaking outfit, later explaining "Gentlemen do not read other people's mail." This mind-set led to some very frank and revealing letters and diary entries. Historians piecing together the momentous decisions of World War II have the luxury of comparing personal writings in which Stimson and Navy Secretary James Forrestal describe the same set of events.

Of course, some letters are a bit dry and impersonal, like those of General George Marshall. But others impart an intimate texture to the tide of history. The candid correspondence between Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill, for example, casts vivid light on the minds of these two great men and the depth of the wartime alliance that they were able to forge. Likewise, Eleanor Roosevelt wrote letters every day. "They provide a diary of the movement of her psyche," says Joseph Lash. "Without them, Eleanor and Franklin and Eleanor: The Years Alone could not have been written."

In a satiric essay called "Igor Stravinsky: The Selected Phone Calls," the humorist Ian Frazier pretends to rummage through old telephone bills for clues to the composer's life. For serious historians, the situation seems less funny. "I know more about the Kennedy assassination than anyone," says William Manchester, author of The Death of a President, "but I know more about the Dardanelles in 1915 than I do about the assassination. In 1915, people put everything on paper. Now, it's all done over the telephone." Notes Historian Barbara Tuchman: "Phone bills won't tell you much, and as a result, contemporary history has less perspective."

The last President to leave a cache of candid correspondence was Harry Truman, who wrote more than 1,200 letters just to his wife. Not only do they reveal his delightful personal style, they provide convincing insights on matters ranging from his dealings with Stalin to his decision to drop the atom bomb. There is even a book with letters that Truman wrote in moments of pique, then wisely filed away unmailed. His diaries, though intermittent, are no less revealing. In June 1945, as General Douglas MacArthur was closing in on the islands near Japan, Truman's entries foreshadow the bitter personal battles that lay ahead. He describes the General as "Mr. Prima Donna, Brass Hat Five Star MacArthur" in one entry and adds, "He's worse then the Cabots and the Lodges - they at least talked to one another before they told God what to do."
Robert Caro, now at work on the second volume of his definitive biography of Lyndon Johnson, says the historical record abruptly changes in the early 1940’s, when people began to rely on the telephone more than the mail. "Though Johnson’s detailed correspondence with his patron Alvin Wirtz and others, you could trace the most intricate deals and such matters as his stormy relationship with Sam Rayburn," says Caro. "Then, at a crucial moment, just when you want to know what someone is thinking, you’ll run into a telegram or note saying ‘Phone me tonight.’ That’s when you feel the impact of the telephone right in your gut." In researching L.B.J.’s role in the passage of the 1957 Civil Rights Bill, Caro says he has been reduced to deciphering scrawls at the bottom of telephone message slips.

Back when the telephone was a relatively new contraption, people often regarded it as too ephemeral for important communications. Averell Harriman and Robert Lovett, two great statesmen who had been Wall Street partners, talked on the phone regularly when they were apart and then would exchange letters the same afternoon, putting to paper what they had said. "As I told you over the telephone this morning..." they would typically begin. Back then, of course, the post was more efficient; the letter would usually arrive before the next morning’s phone conversation.

Their successors, on the other hand, abandoned letters in favor of obfuscating memos when it came to discussing, say, the Viet Nam War. Some of the most candid records of that period come from times when a few of the old statesmen were called in for counsel and then, as was their wont, exchanged letters about what they had discussed.

Harriman was one of those who believed in having important telephone conversations transcribed for his files. His personal papers describe a classic exchange with Robert Kennedy, who phoned after announcing on television that he was challenging President Johnson for the Democratic nomination. Kennedy: "I’m running for President." Harriman: "Next time tell the children to smile. Ethel looked great. The kids looked bored." Kennedy: "They were." Harriman: "I don’t expect to have a press conference soon, but if it does come around, I’m going to support the President."

Franklin Roosevelt was the first to set up a secret taping system in the Oval Office. A microphone was hidden in his desk lamp to record his press conferences, though some private talks got taped as well. In a conversation recorded in October 1940, Roosevelt had this reaction to a telegram written by a Japanese press official: "This country is ready to pull the trigger if the Japs do anything."

John Kennedy likewise used a rudimentary recording system. The tapes from such dramatic conversations as his telephone showdown with Governor Ross Barnett during the Ole Miss desegregation crisis provide historians with raw data that is even more gripping than most old letters. But Richard Nixon spoiled it all by going too far, both in what he said and how he recorded it.

As a result, taping phone conversations came to be regarded as terribly sleazy. At least a dozen states have laws against such secret self-taps, as U.S. Information Agency Director Charles Wick was reminded when he tried to resurrect the practice.

The national penchant for exposing as quickly as possible everything done by public officials, which is codified by the Freedom of Information Act, is, on balance, a good thing for democracy. But it is not the best thing for history. It has taught statesmen to be very
careful about what they put on paper. "For all its advantages, the FOTA inhibits people from writing," says Robert Donovan, whose noted biographies of Truman depended heavily on letters and frank memos. "Officials shred it all now. A lot of serious history is vanishing."

Future historians will no doubt find different source material. Instead of rummaging through the Beinecke Library at Yale, they will spend their time in video archives watching old segments of Nightline and the MacNeil-Lehrer Report. "So much is preserved in audio and visual these days," says Morris, "that it gives you much of a person's life and demeanor." Well, yes, the historians of the next century will be a lot more accurate in their portrayal of how people looked and spoke. But it is naive to believe that the way Caspar Weinberger answers a Ted Koppel question about America's stake in the Persian Gulf could provide the same candid insight that is available in Dean Acheson's letters to his daughter on the same subject during the Iranian crisis 41 years ago.

One solution would be to make it once again respectable - perhaps even mandatory - to tape important discussions and phone conversations for the historical record. The tapes would become the property of the National Archives and could be tightly sealed from all scrutiny for at least two decades, the way that sensitive diplomatic cables were generally treated before the Freedom of Information Act came along. But aside from the legal and practical questions involved, such an idea would face philosophic objections: it could be seen as both an unwarranted invasion of privacy and a dangerous attempt to preserve the privacy of important exchanges.

Then again, preserving such a record may not be worth the vast effort, expense or constraints involved. After all, only history is at stake. But if top officials knew in the back of their minds that future generations were listening, it might have a salutary effect on the present. Had the judgement of history been hovering over their shoulders, the architects of the Iran-contra affair, for example, might have reflected a moment longer on the long-term implications of their actions. Indeed, the dulling of our historical sense could be one reason that the U.S. needs so many special prosecutors these days.

COMPUTERS ON CAPITOL HILL : SAA IN NY

This session was given for archivists interested in documenting Congress. They frequently voice concern about how computers are changing the shape, scope and the content of congressional collections. While they realize that similar concerns about rapidly changing technology and equipment, software dependence, and a variety of formats plague the entire archival community, congressional archivists recognize that sometimes extreme exigencies of political life also must be factored into an assessment of the impact of computers on the historical record of Congress. Summaries of papers follow for Joni Bell, Consultant at House Information Systems for Member offices on office automation, Victor Ferros, Head of the Senate Computer Center and Mary Boccaccio, Curator of Manuscripts at East Carolina University.
CONGRESSIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS - IT'S EFFECT ON MEMBER OF CONGRESS FILES
by Joni Bell

Paper and electronic record-keeping in the Member of Congress offices at the U.S. House of Representatives is being affected by dramatic changes in demographics that include Member and staff turnover, increased volume of work and greater participation of District office staff in carrying that workload.

The latest official profile of Member staff turnover is in a 1977 report from the Obey Commission and documents that in Member offices: 39% of Member staff had one year or less experience; 18% had two years; and 30% ranged from two to five years experience. I sense that the 30% figure has probably now halved. These statistics are the more startling when combined with later studies by House Information Systems of 176 offices that documented monthly mail volume

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<th>1978</th>
<th>1985</th>
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<tr>
<td>Incoming mail</td>
<td>372 items</td>
<td>850 items</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outgoing mail</td>
<td>378 items</td>
<td>1,540 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data base size</td>
<td>21,886 names</td>
<td>67,803 names</td>
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Since Member office budgets have not increased concurrently with the work volume, the shift of responsibilities to the District offices, where employment costs are generally less than in the Washington office, is becoming one of the logical solutions to the problem.

The cumulative effect of the changing demographics on filing is likely to be inconsistency in indexing and filing practices that can create havoc for any Archivist receiving a retired Member's documents. There are, however, some cues one can use to help organize a collection.

Approximately ninety percent of Member offices are automated, a boon to handling the increased mail volume and an assist to the waning institutional memory within offices. Although the House of Representatives offers no main frame correspondence management system on the House Computer, there are as many as ten vendors that provide services including one or more of the following within a Member office: an in-office Correspondence Management System (CMS); timesharing with a vendor's remote computer; and/or personal computers in a standalone or networked mode.

All of these alternatives provide for the capability of using indexing codes that can track all incoming and outgoing correspondence by subject. Within the same systems word processing enables speeches and legislative text (Congressional Record speech drafts, bills, resolutions, amendments) to be quickly drafted. Furthermore, most systems have a communication capability enabling them to use the House Information Systems' Member Information Network (MIN). MIN provides access to many services including: Associated Press newswire, the Congressional Record, House Floor, Federal Grants and Contracts database, scheduling, electronic mail, casework tracking and Budget. Staff can electronically cut-and-paste excerpts from any of these applications into a word processing or piece of correspondence.

With the exception of stand alone personal computers (which provide floppy disk media), all vendors are required, on request by the Member,
to provide their entire data bases on 9-track ASCII formatted data tape/s. Archivists receiving a Member’s electronic files should request a copy of the system operating manual and ask/look for paper histories of coding by: topic, type of document (ie legislative, draft, speech, correspondence), revisions and subject. It is likely that since no visible coding system is static and because of the high staff turnover, there will be several paper versions of the coding systems. The most recurrent problem with these documents, when they are available, is the systems operator’s neglect to date the time span that is covered in a version.

Although all Member office activities are similar, that is constituent and legislative (House floor, Committee/Subcommittee work), the filing systems used are very diverse. They may be centralized (by document number or subject) or decentralized, where each Administrative Assistant maintains their own paper and electronic record files.

The need for electronic filing was created by the increased number of incoming paper documents - there are ways to correlate the two in a filing system. All CMS systems do include the option of assigning a unique number to each outgoing correspondence. This number is then written or stamped on the original incoming letter enabling filing in numeric order. For those few offices using microfilm media, the document number range is on the right hand corner of the microfiche.

Some offices use a decentralized paper filing system. The result, particularly in those offices with a high turnover, can be chaotic. The first place to start with each bundle of individualized filing is the electronic CMS since it is likely each staff will have maintained their own electronic work area as well, usually defined by their initials. Correlation between the electronic filing and the paper filing might then be made.

Member office budgets have not increased concurrently with the work volume, the shift of responsibilities to the District offices, where employment costs are generally less than in Washington, is becoming one of the logical solutions to the problem. Increasingly, these offices will become automated as well - hopefully with the same automated system as the Washington office, but this is not always the situation because the District office is dealing with a much smaller equipment budget.

District office responsibilities previously had been limited to casework and tracking the Member’s schedule during his District visits. That purview is now expanding to speech writing and constituent mail. The result can be an entirely different filing system than that found in the Washington office.

In the District office, the Member has likely entrusted one person in that office with decision-making powers, since he or she cannot be present to the same extent as in the Washington office. This person will probably have the institutional memory not available in the Washington office, so coding schemes will likely be more consistent.

Keep in mind that Members of Congress and their staffs have good intentions matched with expertise in maintaining their files. They are, however, often compromised by an incredible workload in an environment with fluctuating levels of expertise.

My advice to Archivists receiving Member office files would be this; divide and conquer! First by separating District and Washington files, then identifying electronic systems within each office, followed by the types of coding systems used. There is likely to be little data
sharing between the two offices since their work profiles are different.

The ideal scenario, as most of you already know, is for an institution to receive a Member's files as they are developed. Some Members retire their next-to-the-last Congress files every two years with the receiving institution. This not only prevents being overwhelmed by a collection, but enables the records managers at the institution to advise the Member on the consistency of their record keeping practices, ensuring a valuable addition to their institution's archives.

THE CHANGING NATURE OF HISTORICAL DOCUMENTATION OF CONGRESS;
THE SENATE by Victor Ferros

Changes in computer technology over the past 5 years have significantly affected the nature and scope of information reflecting the activities of U.S. Senators during their tenure on Capitol Hill. At least three factors in the existing technological environment have direct bearing on issues of interest to the archival community: the diversity of the technology; the decentralized nature of office automation in the Senate; and the traditional autonomy of Senate offices. These issues are antecedent considerations to the familiar archival concerns of file standardization, software dependence and user identification.

The U.S. Senate's computer environment consists of a number of different technologies that pose major problems in the areas of managerial control, data communications and connectivity. The environment consists of mainframe systems, office and committee minicomputers, microcomputers linked in local area networks and a state office network consisting of dumb terminals and printers.

The mainframes are at the heart of the Senate environment. Over 5,000 terminals and workstations are linked to two IBM 308X mainframe computers that process the Senate's legislative information system and a host of administrative systems. A data PBX front ends the mainframe computer complex and provides the gateway to correspondence processing and commercial information services for the Senate user population.

In 1984, minicomputers were installed in the Senate and the office automation program began in earnest. Currently there are over 119 minicomputers of three different brands installed in offices and committees. Ninety percent of the usage on the minicomputers has to do with word processing.

Microcomputers came late to the Senate. Although 3270 type personal computers were employed by Senate committees since 1981, not until 1987 have personal computers been authorized for member offices...In the committees, microcomputers have been used primarily for analytic purposes such as committee research and budget analysis.

There are approximately 168 Senate state offices that are linked to the Senate Computer Center's asynchronous dedicated line network. The devices in these offices consist of dumb terminals and network printers. The equipment is used primarily for processing casework: constituent problems with federal agencies.

Decentralized computing and distributed processing will continue to
be the trend in the Senate environment. Although the 100 minicomputers
installed in member offices are linked to the mainframes via
asynchronous lines, much of their workload consists of local word
processing. Virtually all the information in a Senate office outside
of correspondence and legislative activity is currently processed using
minicomputers.

The trend toward distributed processing is further evidenced by the
growth of personal computers linked within local area networks. It is
anticipated that there will be at least five large local area network
configurations with an average of fifty workstations each, installed in
committees in the Senate by the first quarter of 1988.

The state office network will probably see some changes in 1988. A
state office automation pilot is now underway using personal computers
as standard workstations in senate offices. Full implementation of the
state office automation project will involve widespread use of
microcomputers connected to the Senate computer complex in Washington,
D.C.

Indications are that most of the Senate’s computer systems are
nearing obsolescence and near saturation or at critical junctures in
their useful life. It appears that technology will continue to change
with standardization, connectivity and compatibility as the major
factors in the next generation of Senate technology.

The capability for preserving Senatorial collections resides in the
Senate offices. The Senate Computer Center assists in the archiving of
Senator’s correspondence files and associated indexes as well as
assists in the production of legislative activity reports for
individual Senators. However the capability to archive other kinds of
data reside with the individual office.

The Senate Computer Center and the Senate Historical Office have
already developed automated archiving procedures for 73 Senate offices.
Procedures aside, what an office might use would be quick and makeshift
in response to discrete events such as departures, retirements or the
death of a Senator. There is though, a growing awareness on the part
of Senate offices to begin to think about archiving as part of a normal
cycle of housekeeping. Systems Administrators who maintain
minicomputer operations in Senate offices have become more technically
sophisticated and as a result are increasingly more concerned about
such issues as records retention and data integrity. Furthermore, the
three Senate office automation user groups have been instrumental in
promoting better records management and record keeping practices.

The next wave of technological change in the Senate is literally
around the corner. The continued improvement in documenting Senatorial
collections and the nature of these records is going to depend on the
cooperative efforts of the Senate Computer Center, the Senate
Historical Office, the Office Automation Steering Committee and the
Senate’s System Administrators.

THE TYPICAL CONGRESSIONAL COLLECTION OF THE 1980´S: ACQUISITION,
APPRAISAL AND DOCUMENTATION  by Mary Boccaccio

Computers are making xeroxes, staples and paperclips passe’, most
hardcopy too, eventually. When all goes well, microfilm and the
computer indexes do away with hardcopy. But computers also create some
difficulties in the thread of historical documentation which can be a
real long-term problem. What is historical - last week, last month,
last year or is it the thread of activity that provides documentation?

Acquiring a congressional collection entails answering the larger
questions of what makes a good collection. What does it document - the
Member as a person, his constituents, state issues, the man as a member
of his party, the party itself, the man as an interactive member of the
House or Senate, a committee member, the committee/s he served on, the
man as a legislator, his legislative interests, the man as a
campaigner, his supporters? These are likely answers and the very next
question should be 'How will these various new technologies document
these activities?'

Ideally before an archives accepts a collection it has already been
appraised in terms of historical value and technological access. While
not always possible, the earlier the process of talking begins, the
better. It saves surprises later and allows the archives to obtain
information necessary for processing and to refine appraisal. This
contact becomes critical as hardcopy declines and computerization
increases. Early participation in records management set-up will help
the Member and staff meet their needs for improved information
retrieval and at the same time provide for more thorough documentation
of the Member's career.

In 1976 the Senate started a centralized computer system (CMS) for
bulk (constituent) mail and offered a standard coding system which
could be altered for the convenience of the Member's office. A variety
of COM indexes are available, the name and topic indexes probably
being the most useful for long term access. Recently the Senate has
also offered the use of several decentralized or in-office systems and
generally these are being used for individual letters. Not all these
systems are equally capable so I was surprised and very pleased to see
in a collection we recently acquired that the decentralized system
material was indexed in the COM reports and microfilmed. Correspondence was computer coded, numerically filed and microfilmed in
batches. Our film shows the incoming letter, attachments and responses
in either paragraph number/s or copy. Certainly we felt comfortable
enough with the access provided by the microfilm and the system
indexes to retain only personal files, which were not indexed or
filmed, in hard copy.

Both the CMS and OA tapes, 9 track, are available to the Archives on
the request of the Member. Some OA tapes are available in ASCII
format. In this recent collection, system coordination and indexing
were good and the microfilm complete, so we did not feel compelled to
ask for the tapes. We were able to get current memos printed from the
OA system. Older material unfortunately had been erased. This is
likely to happen in offices where historical consciousness has not been
raised to the level where documentary and permanent information is
automatically transferred to a historical tape. The kinds of things we
are missing from the OA system are memos and drafts of changes. These
were kept for the first two years and then are missing for the last
four. What exists is indexed and accessible. The major problem is
what was erased. The existing tapes would not have helped us here.

Archivists are faced either with records of overwhelming bulk or
information accessible through a new and rapidly changing technology
with its associated problems of hardware and software dependence. As
long as proper records management systems exist though, the advantages
of the new technology far outweigh the disadvantages. It will be increasingly important for archivists to establish early contacts with the House and Senate Historical Offices as well as the Member and his staff to learn how that particular office retained information. Was it on the system, on film, with indexes and which ones, on paper or a combination of these? What was their policy for deleting information, did they keep a historical file and did they create any special databases? Computers confront archivists and staff with new records management problems. We all need to have a very clear idea of system output desired at the beginning when the system is being set up and this means a records management program for each Member. The goal is to provide ready daily access for the staff and clear historical documentation in a format accessible to the archives and researchers.

At the same time archivists will need to take a hard look at what is not being collected or documented as well as what is overlap and duplication. Our own double-edged problem is whether the collection documents the Member and his various activities adequately and also if that documentation is accessible to us, the depositories, in a format we can use. Given the computer and depending on the quality of records management, it will either be easy or impossible. I hope the Congressional Papers Roundtable will systematically study this whole area of documentation of Congress, identifying deficiencies and recommend solutions. In the end archivists, computer specialists and office staff will have to participate in discussion early on and continually in order to insure adequate documentation of Congress as well as documentation that is in a format accessible to future users.

NEXT AND COMING ISSUES

We hope to include articles on collections in the various depositories. Everyone is invited to contribute. Please send articles, information, news notes to Mary Boocaccio, Archives & Manuscripts, Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, N.C. 27858.