

Hofstra University
Peter S. Kalikow Center for the Study of the American Presidency
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Spring 2014

GUIDE TO ONLINE RESEARCH ON THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY

In the twenty-first century, online research sources on the American Presidency abound. From general reference information on the White House website to compilations of speeches and other documents in public databases on university websites to primary sources on presidential library websites, information about the institution of the chief executive as well as individual presidents is vast and diverse.

The Peter S. Kalikow Center for the Study of the American Presidency seeks to advance research on the institution of the presidency and individual presidents through guides that identify sources for basic reference research as well as specific primary research opportunities through the websites of the National Archives and presidential libraries. While some research requires travel to the archives to review boxes of documents, the vast array of documentary material available online can be informative for both introductory and advanced research.

In 2014, the Kalikow Center created an undergraduate minor in presidential studies, the only one of its kind in the nation. These resource guides will be useful for students and faculty who participate in the minor to develop and oversee independent, primary research in presidential studies.

This guide identifies basic online reference sources about the American Presidency and online university databases that are open to the public. Separate guides are available for conducting research through each of the thirteen presidential library websites.

BASIC ONLINE REFERENCES ON THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY

C-SPAN, "American Presidents: Life Portraits"

<http://www.americanpresidents.org/>

- C-SPAN's website contains four areas of information on the American Presidency: Presidential Places (including birthplace and gravesite); Portrait Gallery; Teacher Resources (C-SPAN in the Classroom); and biographical material, facts, trivial, and key events for each president (Pick a President). Teacher Resources include lesson plans and activities, using information on the website and related C-SPAN links.

History Channel, "U.S. Presidents"

<http://www.history.com/topics/the-us-presidents>

- The History Channel website contains a detailed biography of each president, a section on Presidential Facts, selected presidential videos, photos, and speeches, and links to themes, events, and related topics about the American presidency.

The White House, "The Presidents"

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/presidents>

- The White House website contains biographical material on each president and first lady, as well as information about places and resources associated with the presidency, such as Air Force One, Camp David, the Oval Office, and the Vice President's Residence and Office.

National Archives on presidential libraries

<http://www.archives.gov/presidential-libraries/visit/>

- The National Archives website contains links to the websites of each of the thirteen presidential libraries, along with guides to studying public documents, and links to public programs sponsored by the presidential libraries. The website also contains resources prepared by the White House Transition Project, namely, PDF transcripts of interviews with former administration about presidential transitions. The offices discussed in this project include Chief of Staff, Staff Secretary, Communications Office, Press Secretary, Management and

Administration, White House Counsel, and Presidential Personnel. Interview transcripts with officials from the Nixon through Clinton administrations are available.

PUBLIC ONLINE DATABASES ON/RELATED TO AMERICAN PRESIDENCY

The American Presidency Project, University of California at Santa Barbara
<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/>

- Two political science faculty at the University of California at Santa Barbara established this archive, containing more than 100,000 documents on the presidency, in 1999, and it is updated to the present. It focuses on presidential communication, with a unique and searchable database of all presidential public texts – speeches, press conferences, party platforms, official statements, and much more. It also contains extensive data sets on presidential elections, presidential job approval ratings, executive relations with Congress, growth of the executive branch, and other topics.

American President: A Reference Resource, Miller Center, University of Virginia
<http://millercenter.org/president>

- This online archive contains numerous resources for presidency studies, including presidential biographies and speeches, a presidential classroom with lessons and exhibits, and a section (“Riding the Tiger” – Harry Truman’s description of being president) that examines contemporary presidential leadership and politics with a historical perspective.

Presidential Oral History Program, Miller Center, University of Virginia
<http://millercenter.org/oralhistory>

- The Miller Center’s Presidential Oral History Program provides multiple perspectives on recent American presidents (Jimmy Carter onward, with links to National Archives oral histories for the Hoover and Lyndon B. Johnson presidencies) by interviewing former administration officials as well as selected members of Congress and informal, often unofficial, advisers to the president. Full transcripts are available online, subject

to restrictions imposed by interviewees. The program also contains special oral history projects on such topics as the Falklands War and the life and career of Senator Edward M. Kennedy.

University of Wisconsin Digital Collections, *Foreign Relations of the United States*

<http://uwdc.library.wisc.edu/collections/FRUS>

The *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) series is the official declassified documentary record of American foreign policy. The State Department's Office of the Historian produces these volumes, which begin in 1861. Many documents in these volumes are of interest in presidential studies, and digital copies of several volumes are available through this website, which is a joint collaboration by the University of Wisconsin-Madison Libraries and the University of Illinois at Chicago Libraries. This website currently contains 375 volumes published between 1861 and 1960, and individual volumes or the entire collection may be searched electronically.

Also see U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian website:

<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/volume-title-search>

This website includes the full text of many FRUS volumes that have been published since 1945, and may be searched electronically.

Also see National Archives, Using Department of State Records website:

<http://www.archives.gov/research/foreign-policy/other-resources.html>

The National Archives website discusses the FRUS series and also identifies other volumes of American foreign policy documents published by the Department of State through 1991 (which are not available electronically on the website, but may be found in libraries that are government repositories). More recent public documents are available through websites identified on this site.