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**ONLINE RESEARCH SOURCES ON THE PRE-MODERN PRESIDENTS  
(WASHINGTON-COOLIDGE)**

For advanced scholarly research on American presidents from George Washington through Calvin Coolidge, a diverse range of archival material is available online, in the Library of Congress, and in libraries, historical societies, and private collections across the country. Every president from Herbert Hoover onward has a presidential library and museum that contains his administration's full archival record and typically pre-presidential papers as well. But no central repository exists for the archival record of previous presidents.

The federal government first took responsibility for presidential records in 1939, when President Franklin Delano Roosevelt donated his personal and presidential papers, and pledged to raise private funds to build a presidential library and museum. President Harry S. Truman decided to do the same, and in 1955, Congress passed the Presidential Libraries Act to create the system of presidential libraries, which would be privately built but publicly maintained. The Presidential Records Act of 1978 affirmed that presidential records are public property. In addition to the presidents from FDR onward, the federal government oversees a presidential library and museum for FDR's immediate predecessor, Herbert Hoover, which the former president himself dedicated in 1962.<sup>1</sup>

This resource guide identifies useful online research sources, particularly archival material, on each of the American presidents from George Washington through Calvin Coolidge. It also discusses where archival collections on each of the presidents are available for scholarly research.

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<sup>1</sup> Basic historical information on the presidential libraries is available through the National Archives website at <http://www.archives.gov/presidential-libraries/about/history.html> . For the dedication of the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum, see Hoover's biographical timeline on the website at <http://www.hoover.archives.gov/info/HooverTimeLine.html> .

## GEORGE WASHINGTON

The documentary record on George Washington is quite extensive, as the following websites demonstrate:

Papers of George Washington, joint project between the University of Virginia and the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union

<http://gwpapers.virginia.edu/documents/>

This archive contains more than 135,000 documents, many of which are available digitally or have been published in volumes, and some that are original manuscripts. The project started in 1968 with a plan to publish 90 volumes of documents on George Washington's life and career, and as of 2014, 63 volumes are available. The existing volumes include the completed Colonial, Confederation, and Retirement Series. The full set is scheduled for completion by 2023. Each document available online is fully transcribed from the original, includes scholarly annotations, and has a box where researchers may send comments to the editors at the end of each document.

George Washington Papers at the Library of Congress,

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/gwhtml/gwhome.html>

This collection contains approximately 65,000 documents, all of which are available online and may be searched by keyword. The collection contains nine series: Exercise Books, Diaries, and Surveys 1741-99; Letterbooks 1754-99; Letterbooks Varick Transcripts: Continental Army Papers 1775-83; General Correspondence 1697-1799; Financial Papers 1750-96; Military Papers 1755-98; Applications for Office 1789-96; Miscellaneous Papers 1775-99; Addenda to George Washington Papers, 1763-97. Some documents have been reprinted as volumes – for example, *The Diaries of George Washington* are part of the multi-volume set joint project discussed above.

Digital Encyclopedia of George Washington, George Washington's Mount Vernon

<http://www.mountvernon.org/encyclopedia>

This online encyclopedia includes a wealth of information about George Washington, the colonial era, and the early American republic. Subject areas

include the American Revolution, Politics, and the Presidency. Entries sometimes include digital reproductions of original documents and images.

Rediscovering George Washington, Gilder Lehrman Collection Documents  
<http://www.pbs.org/georgewashington/collection/>

The New-York Historical Society in New York City holds this collection of American historical documents, all of which are available online as digital reproductions. Subject areas are: Post-Presidential Years; Pre-Presidential Years; Presidential Years; Revolutionary War Years; and Pre-Revolutionary War Years.

## **JOHN ADAMS**

John Adams: A Resource Guide, Library of Congress  
<http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/presidents/adams/memory.html>

The Library of Congress collection contains documents pertaining to John Adams's service in the Continental Congress, diplomatic career, and Vice Presidency and Presidency. The collection may be searched electronically, and document reproductions are available online.

The Massachusetts Historical Society  
<http://www.masshist.org/adams/explore-adams/index.html>

This collection of the Adams Family Papers includes John Adams's diary and autobiography, as well as correspondence between John and Abigail Adams. It also includes documents from exhibitions about John Adams, as well as documents discussed in the HBO miniseries about him.

## **THOMAS JEFFERSON**

The Thomas Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress  
[http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/jefferson\\_papers/](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/jefferson_papers/)

This collection contains approximately 27,000 documents pertaining to Thomas Jefferson, including correspondence (letters, notes, etc.), speeches, records, and other writings. The collection includes ten series of documents,

many of which are available online digitally. Selected transcriptions may be searched online.

Jefferson Documents and Quotes, Monticello

<http://www.monticello.org/site/families-and-teachers/jefferson-documents-and-quotes>

The website for Jefferson's Monticello home contains several online research resources, including a database of Jefferson's library, a digital archive to accompany the Papers of Thomas Jefferson Retirement Series, and an online encyclopedia about Jefferson's background, interests, and many contributions to American politics.

## **JAMES MADISON**

The James Madison Papers, Library of Congress

[http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/madison\\_papers/](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/madison_papers/)

This collection contains approximately 12,000 items about James Madison, beginning with a selection of his father's letters before his birth and continuing through Madison's life and extensive political career, from the colonial period through his pivotal role in the Constitutional Convention of 1787 and into his years in Congress, as Secretary of State and President, and post-presidency.

The Papers of James Madison Digital Edition, University of Virginia

<http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/JSMN.html>

The University of Virginia Press has published the Papers of James Madison, which are available in print volumes, as well as through this digital collection. Users must purchase access to the online version.

## **JAMES MONROE**

James Monroe: A Resource Guide, Library of Congress

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/presidents/monroe/index.html>

Electronic documents about James Monroe – including personal papers and diary as well as his political career in Virginia politics and the Continental

Congress, and his service as secretary of state, secretary of war, diplomat, and President -- are available through the Library of Congress, which also provides links to external websites.

James Monroe Museum and Memorial Library, Commonwealth of Virginia  
(administered by the University of Mary Washington)  
<http://jamesmonroemuseum.umw.edu/>

The archive in this library contains more than 10,000 documents connected to the life and times of James Monroe. The library and museum contain books and other objects that belonged to Monroe's descendants. The website provides lesson plans and related resources for research on Monroe.

## **JOHN QUINCY ADAMS**

John Quincy Adams: A Resource Guide, Library of Congress  
<http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/presidents/jqadams/memory.html>

The Library of Congress collection contains documents pertaining to John Quincy Adams's political career as diplomat, secretary of state, member of Congress, and President. The collection may be searched electronically, and document reproductions are available online.

Adams Family Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society  
<http://www.masshist.org/2012/adams/adams-family-papers>

This collection of the Adams Family Papers includes images of the 51 volumes in John Quincy Adams's diary, which dates from 1779 (when he was 12) to shortly before his death in 1848. Diary entries may be searched by date or with the aid of a timeline, but not by keyword.

## **ANDREW JACKSON**

Andrew Jackson: A Resource Guide, Library of Congress  
<http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/presidents/jackson/>

The Library of Congress collection contains numerous files connected to Andrew Jackson, including manuscripts, letters, documents, and images. The collection may be searched electronically for references to Jackson.

The Papers of Andrew Jackson, University of Tennessee  
<http://thepapersofandrewjackson.utk.edu/>

The University of Tennessee oversees this project, which contains copies of every known and available Jackson document, totaling approximately 100,000 items. They have been published in 39 microfilm reels, and will be reproduced in seventeen print volumes as well. Selected documents are available on the website, with the original images as well as printed versions from the project's publications.

The Papers of Andrew Jackson, The Avalon Project, Yale Law School  
[http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject\\_menus/jackpap.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/jackpap.asp)

This website includes selected speeches and other public statements from the Jackson presidency.

Jackson's Papers, The Hermitage  
<http://www.thehermitage.com/jackson-family/jacksons-papers>

This website for Andrew Jackson's home contains historical information about Jackson and his family, and discusses the University of Tennessee's Papers of Andrew Jackson project.

## **MARTIN VAN BUREN**

Martin Van Buren: A Resource Guide, Library of Congress  
<http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/presidents/vanburen/related.html>

The Library of Congress collection contains approximately 6,000 items related to Martin Van Buren's political career as U.S. senator, secretary of state, vice president, and president. It also includes articles about Van Buren.

## **WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON**

William Henry Harrison: A Resource Guide, Library of Congress  
<http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/presidents/wharrison/>

The Library of Congress collection contains links to digital files, such as manuscripts, letters, and government documents, related to William Henry Harrison.

Guide to Research Collections on William Henry Harrison

<http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/guidedisplay.pl?index=H000279>

This website identifies archives that contain papers about William Henry Harrison.

## **JOHN TYLER**

John Tyler: A Resource Guide, Library of Congress

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/presidents/tyler/bibliography.html>

The Library of Congress resource guide identifies books and other studies of John Tyler.

## **JAMES K. POLK**

James K. Polk: A Resource Guide, Library of Congress

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/presidents/polk/related.html>

The Library of Congress resource guide identifies articles, photographs, and other material about James K. Polk. It includes a link to a finding aid for its collection of Polk's papers, which include correspondence, diaries, speech drafts, and family files.

## **ZACHARY TAYLOR**

Index to the Zachary Taylor Papers, Library of Congress

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/service/gdc/scd0001/2009/20090611001za/20090611001za.pdf>

This guide identifies the Library of Congress's collection of correspondence for Zachary Taylor, as well as papers, portraits, and miscellaneous items about him. Most of Taylor's personal papers were destroyed during the Civil War.

## **MILLARD FILLMORE**

Millard Fillmore: A Resource Guide

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/presidents/fillmore/related.html>

The Library of Congress resource guide identifies articles, exhibits, photographs, and other sources about Millard Fillmore.

## **FRANKLIN PIERCE**

Franklin Pierce: A Resource Guide

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/presidents/pierce/related.html>

The Library of Congress resource guide identifies articles, exhibits, photographs, and other sources about Franklin Pierce. It also includes a finding aid for its collection of Pierce's papers, which include correspondence, a diary, and draft speeches.

## **JAMES BUCHANAN**

James Buchanan: A Resource Guide

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/presidents/buchanan/memory.html>

The Library of Congress resource guide identifies sources in its collection about James Buchanan's political career as legislator, diplomat, and president.

Papers of President James Buchanan

[http://www.lancasterhistory.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1256&Itemid=282](http://www.lancasterhistory.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1256&Itemid=282)

This website identifies repositories for James Buchanan's personal and public papers, including its own collection, which includes two boxes of letters, speech drafts, and other files.

## **ABRAHAM LINCOLN**

Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/alhtml/malhome.html>

The Library of Congress collection contains approximately 20,000 documents about Abraham Lincoln, mostly correspondence, speech drafts, notes, and

printed material from the 1850s through his presidency. The papers are organized as three General Correspondence Series, and the files may be searched online by keyword or date.

The Papers of Abraham Lincoln

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

This project aims to develop a complete set of all documents written by or to Abraham Lincoln during his lifetime. It is organized as three Series – Legal Papers, Illinois Papers, Presidential Papers – and some of the material is available, and can be searched, online.

Abraham Lincoln -- Documents

<http://www.idaillinois.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/isl6>

The Illinois Digital Archives collection contains files about Abraham Lincoln's life, political career, and assassination. The files can be searched online.

## **ANDREW JOHNSON**

The Impeachment Trial of President Andrew Johnson

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lwcg-imp.html>

This official record of the impeachment trial of Andrew Johnson contains records of documents and debates, which are available online, with an online index included.

Special Collections Online at the University of Tennessee

[http://dlc.lib.utk.edu/spc/view?docId=ead/0012\\_002324\\_000000\\_0000/0012\\_002324\\_000000\\_0000.xml](http://dlc.lib.utk.edu/spc/view?docId=ead/0012_002324_000000_0000/0012_002324_000000_0000.xml)

This collection contains three documents pertaining to Andrew Johnson's career and presidency. The documents are described in detail in the online finding aid.

## **ULYSSES S. GRANT**

Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library, Ulysses S. Grant Association at Mississippi State University Libraries

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

The Ulysses S. Grant Association owns this collection of papers, which is available for research through Mississippi State University. See link below for access to the digital collection of documents and other files.

The Ulysses S. Grant Collection, Mississippi State University Libraries  
<http://digital.library.msstate.edu/cdm/usgrantcollection>

This collection contains correspondence, photographs, memorabilia, and other items from Ulysses S. Grant's childhood through his military career, presidency, and post-White House years. The collection may be searched online, and selected materials are available in print volumes as well.

## **RUTHERFORD B. HAYES**

Rutherford B. Hayes and Hayes Family Collections, Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center  
[http://www.rbhayes.org/hayes/collections/collections.asp?col\\_id=274&subj=collections](http://www.rbhayes.org/hayes/collections/collections.asp?col_id=274&subj=collections)

This collection includes Rutherford B. Hayes's diaries, correspondence, speeches, military and government records, and other materials. The diary and letters were published in five volumes, which have been digitized and are available online. They may be searched by keyword or viewed in individual pages. Some of the papers are available on microfilm through interlibrary loan as well.

## **JAMES A. GARFIELD**

Garfield, James A., Guide to Research Collections, Library of Congress  
<http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/guidedisplay.pl?index=g000063>

This collection contains correspondence, speeches, papers, and other materials from James A. Garfield's personal life, military service, and political career. The website also identifies other libraries that contain documents pertaining to Garfield's life and career.

James A. Garfield Collection, Hiram College Library

<http://library.hiram.edu/index.php/finding-aids/personal-papers-finding-aids/1335-james-a-garfield-collection?showall=&limitstart=>

This collection contains documents, photographs, and related memorabilia about James A. Garfield. Descriptions of the materials are available online.

## **CHESTER ARTHUR**

Chester Alan Arthur Papers, A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/service/mss/eadxmlmss/eadpdfmss/2009/ms009139.pdf>

This collection contains correspondence, financial papers, and other documents from Chester A. Arthur's political career and presidency. The papers are available on ten reels of microfilm, and the index is available online in the finding aid.

## **GROVER CLEVELAND**

Grover Cleveland Papers, Library of Congress

<http://findingaids.loc.gov/db/search/xq/searchMfer02.xq? id=loc.mss.eadms.s.ms008094& faSection=overview& faSubsection=did& dmdid=>

This collection contains correspondence, diaries, messages to Congress, speeches, and other documents from Grover Cleveland's political career and presidency. The finding aid contains a Contents List and Index Terms, and may be searched online.

## **BENJAMIN HARRISON**

Benjamin Harrison Papers, A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/service/mss/eadxmlmss/eadpdfmss/2009/ms009029.pdf>

This collection contains correspondence, speeches, and other documents from the life and career of Benjamin Harrison. The finding aid provides specifics on documents in each of the twenty-two series in the collection.

Research Library at the Benjamin Harrison Presidential Site  
<http://www.presidentbenjaminharrison.org/learn/collections/research-library>

This collection includes Benjamin Harrison's personal library as well as collections about Harrison and his times. The website includes some information about materials in the collection.

Benjamin Harrison Collection, Indiana Historical Society  
<http://www.indianahistory.org/our-collections/collection-guides/benjamin-harrison-collection-1853-1943.pdf>

This collection contains two boxes of selected personal and professional papers about Benjamin Harrison's life and career. The online Box and Folder List includes some specifics about the materials in the collection.

## **WILLIAM MCKINLEY**

William McKinley Presidential Library & Museum  
<http://www.mckinleymuseum.org/>

This collection contains images, documents, and other material about William McKinley's life and career. It is open to the public for onsite research, and an online list of the library's holdings is under development.

## **THEODORE ROOSEVELT**

Theodore Roosevelt Center at Dickinson State University  
<http://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/>

This Center seeks to compile and digitize all material about Theodore Roosevelt's life and political career and. The digital library contains correspondence, diary entries, speeches, photographs, and audio-visual recordings. The digital library may be searched online.

Theodore Roosevelt Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University  
<http://hcl.harvard.edu/libraries/houghton/collections/roosevelt.cfm>

This collection contains correspondence, original manuscripts, speeches, articles, books, and other material by and about Theodore Roosevelt. A catalog of contents is available online.

## **WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT**

William Howard Taft: A Resource Guide

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/presidents/taft/bibliography.html>

The Library of Congress has many books by and about William Howard Taft, and a selected bibliography listing is available online.

Manuscripts and Archives Blog, Yale University Library

<http://mssa.common.s.yale.edu/2013/03/07/william-howard-taft/>

This website contains an interesting narrative about Yale University's consideration of Taft for university president in the late nineteenth century, and his concerns about his suitability for the position.

## **WOODROW WILSON**

Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum

<http://www.woodrowwilson.org/library-archives>

This archive contains extensive materials about Woodrow Wilson's life, times, and legacy, including letters, diaries, speeches, newspaper articles, and much more. Copies of many documents are available in the 69-volume print collection *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*. Some documents are available through the website's e-library, which may be searched by keyword, date, topic, author, and image.

## **WARREN HARDING**

Speeches of Warren G. Harding, 1920 Presidential Campaign

<http://archive.org/details/speechesofwarren00hard>

The Library of Congress has a booklet of selected speeches from Warren Harding's 1920 presidential campaign, from his acceptance of the Republican Party's nomination into the fall. Apart from the electronic resources identified

in the general Guide to Online Research on the American Presidency, archival sources on the Harding presidency are not available online.

## **CALVIN COOLIDGE**

Calvin Coolidge Memorial Foundation

<http://www.calvin-coolidge.org/>

This website includes selected documents, images, and speeches from the Coolidge era, including both pre-presidential years and the presidency. Bibliographies, materials from conferences about Calvin Coolidge, quotations, and other information also are available online.