Washington Insider

National Archives to Release Hillary Clinton White House Records

In a legal brief filed in federal court, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) stated that by the end of March it would be releasing approximately 10,000 pages of Senator Hillary Clinton's (D-NY) daily schedule records from her time as first lady. However, the Archives told the court it would be one to two years before it could begin processing the approximately 20,000 pages of telephone logbooks that were requested by the watchdog group Judicial Watch under a Freedom of Information Act request filed in 2006. The Archives says the delay is exacerbated by the fact that the Clinton Presidential Library has only six archivists on staff for processing all of its pending FOIA requests for textual and electronic records. The Archives also stated that there are currently 30 FOIA requests pending ahead of Judicial Watch's telephone logbook request and that the group has no legal basis to move ahead of others in the queue.

NARA Makes Some Passenger Arrival Records Available Online

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) announced that it has made available for the first time online more than 5.2 million records of some passengers who arrived during the last half of the nineteenth century at the ports of Baltimore, Boston, New Orleans, New York, and Philadelphia. The records were transcribed from original ship manifests into electronic databases by Temple University's Center for Immigration Research at The Balch Institute. The Center donated the digital records to the National Archives. Access to these new electronic records is available through the National Archives Access to Archival Databases (AAD) system, a research tool that makes a selection of the National Archives' most popular electronic records available to the public over the Internet. The AAD system currently includes almost 80 million electronic records from 50 records series in 30 record groups, and four collections of donated historical materials.

National Archives Proposes Rule to Restore Research Hours

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) published an interim final rule in the Federal Register on February 1, 2008, to restore the weekly evening and Saturday hours for the archival research rooms at the National Archives Building in Washington, D.C., and the National Archives at College Park, MD, that had been reduced in 2006. At the beginning of fiscal year (FY) 2007, NARA reduced the extended hours that these research rooms were open to the public because of fiscal constraints. In the FY 2008 NARA budget, the Congress provided funding to increase the hours. This interim final rule is effective April 14, 2008.

The Future of Education Research

The American Enterprise Institute (AEI) held a discussion on the topic "What 2008 Holds for Research in Education?" on February 7. The discussants included Frederick Hess, of AEI; Grover "Russ" Whitehurst, head of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES); Gerald Sroufe, of the American Educational Research Association (AERA); and James Kohlmoos, of Knowledge Alliance. "There are unrealistic expectations for what questions research can answer," Hess declared. In the just released book, When Research Matters, published by AEI and edited by Hess, he argued that the desire to identify interventions quickly and have them take effect almost immediately generates reluctance on the part of researchers and policy makers to invest in slow-moving, long-term research. This enthusiasm for the quick fix can lead to over-promising on the part of research and unrealistic expectations for solutions in a short time frame. Hess noted that "this short-term perspective is at odds with the scientific process." By focusing attention and resources on what is perceived as important and relevant right now, policy makers and other influential groups have the ability to distort research agendas and weaken support for long-term research projects.

Magna Carta Returned to the National Archives

The only Magna Carta permanently in the United States returned to public display in the West Rotunda Gallery of the National Archives on March 12. The Magna Carta had been on display at the National Archives on loan from H. Ross Perot for more than 20 years. Last fall, Perot took back the copy and put it up for auction. In December 2007, it was purchased by financier David M. Rubenstein for $21.3 million. He has put the document on "permanent loan" to the National Archives. Only four originals of the 1297 Magna Carta remain.

Sources for this column include the National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History's NCC Washington Update *and the Consortium of Social Science Associations'* Washington Update.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096508330674 Published online by Cambridge University Press