

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 23, 1962

Dear _____:

Last November the President announced that plans were being made for the establishment of a Presidential library and museum at Cambridge, Massachusetts, for the preservation of papers and other historical materials relating to his Administration.

In making this announcement, the President was, of course, following the precedent established by the three previous Presidents. Statutory authorization for the operation of Presidential archival depositories is contained in the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended (44 USC 397). The new Presidential library will be administered by the National Archives and Records Service of the General Services Administration in close collaboration with Harvard University. Four existing Presidential libraries are also administered by the National Archives and Records Service.

The hope is that each of these Presidential libraries will become a center for the study of American history in the period of the President's tenure. The nucleus of each library's collections will, of course, be the President's papers, including those accumulated in the White House Office by him and his immediate staff. The resources of a Presidential library, however, are greatly enhanced by the acquisition of related materials. While the disposition of personal papers is naturally a matter for the personal decision of each member of the Administration, it is the President's hope that his friends and associates will wish to assist in making the collections as complete as possible.

It is not proposed, of course, that official records of your department or agency be given to the Kennedy Library. The disposition of official records is governed by the provisions of the Records Disposal Act of 1943 (44 USC 366). Official records of the Executive Branch must be scrupulously maintained so that they will properly document the conduct of this Administration.

As distinct from official records, however, certain papers may properly be maintained as your personal files and it is these that the President

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hopes will be placed in the Kennedy Library at the close of his Administration. Personal correspondence files, including family correspondence, are perhaps most valuable of all. Personal work aids, such as appointment books, are also useful, and personal notes or accounts of events written as reminders are indispensable. Materials of this kind, reflecting the activities and observations of a high official as an individual before, during, and after his public career, add immensely to the resources of Presidential libraries. Presidential libraries are authorized by law to accept such papers. I would emphasize that there is statutory authorization for donors to place whatever restrictions and stipulations they may wish to impose on their use.

Additional material which would appropriately come to a Presidential library would include such categories as an extra set of transcripts of your press conferences; a set of your press releases; reading copies and drafts of speeches; transcripts, printed or typescript of the testimony of yourself and associates at Congressional hearings; a "reading file" of extra copies of your outgoing official correspondence, arranged chronologically; microfilm or other copies of selected official records required to document major policies of the Administration (the originals going to the National Archives); and copies of photographs, sound recordings, and motion pictures of official or other events in which you participated. Scrapbooks of newspaper and publicity clippings are useful when well organized and mounted. More important are articles, books, pamphlets, broadsides and leaflets published in this country or abroad concerning you or your work, or written by you.

A statement of the acquisition policies of the proposed Kennedy Library is enclosed. Space in the Library building itself is not expected to be available until after the President leaves office, but arrangements for storage space during the interim period may be made by calling the Office of the Archivist of the United States.

Sincerely yours,

Arthur Schlesinger, jr.
Special Assistant
to the President