

9 Trucks Convoy Ford Presidential Papers to Mich.

1-27-77
By Stephen Klaidman
Washington Post Staff Writer

For almost every American, yesterday belonged to Jimmy Carter and the future. But one man watching the inaugural parade from the second floor of the National Archives was preoccupied with some unfinished business of President Ford and the past.

Richard A. Jacobs, deputy assistant archivist for presidential libraries, was worrying about the safe arrival in Ann Arbor, Mich., of nine trucks containing 10,000 cubic feet of White House documents—the public papers of the 38th President of the United States.

While Carter was making his inaugural address, the convoy, with its military escort, was rolling across Ohio carrying the papers to the campus of the University of Michigan, where a Ford library will be built.

Among the 10,000 boxes, each containing about 2,000 documents, were 215 holding the files of the National Security Council, as well as cartons of files from the Central Intelligence Agency and other classified material.

So it was no wonder that Jacobs was concerned when a longer than usual period of time went by without radio contact with the convoy. He joked about losing it. But his relief was evident when he learned that the delay was caused by the breakdown of one truck.

- The disabled truck was left behind with a military guard and the other eight pushed on to Ann Arbor where a team of three archivists, a CI employee and several federal security guards awaited them.

The Ford papers were boxed and moved out of the White House and the Executive Office Building in a matter of days. Ford signed a paper conveying the documents to the Archives in December, but the archivists did not actually get access to them until last week.

Trucks were hired, extra safes were bought and a paint locker was converted into a vault to receive the material in Michigan. The move is costing the Archives about \$35,000.

Things went relatively smoothly until it was discovered late Wednesday, according to Jacobs, that the paint-locker vault had no lock. The deputy assistant archivist scurried around

frantically until he found a large mechanical vault lock, which the Air Force delivered to Ann Arbor yesterday.

Jacobs said there were four additional truckloads of Ford material in the Archives Building and the Federal Records Center at Suitland, but that they were less concerned with moving those because they were adequately housed.

The Ford papers, although officially transferred to the Archives, will remain under the former President's control for 13 years. Under the law, an ex-President is entitled to set the terms under which his papers are housed, including a period of time during which he controls access to them.