

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

National Archives and Records Service
Washington, DC 20408



OCT 30 1974

Mr. Harold Weisberg
Route 8
Frederick, Maryland 21701

Dear Mr. Weisberg:

This is in reply to your letter of September 17, 1974.

You request "copies of all your regulations, precedents, etc., controlling the availability of all Warren Commission materials as of the date the first responsibility the National Archives had for these records to the present." The unpublished records of the Commission were withheld from research at the time they were received by the National Archives as investigatory records under our General Restrictions, part I. Because of the public interest in the records, a special procedure for reviewing documents furnished to the Commission by other agencies and making them available for research was established by a memorandum of Attorney General Katzenbach of April 13, 1965, to Mr. McGeorge Bundy, Special Assistant to the President; Mr. Bundy's memorandum to the Attorney General dated April 19, 1965; and the guidelines established by the Department of Justice. The numbered documents of the Commission were reviewed under the guidelines in 1965. The Department later authorized the National Archives to review other records of the Commission by a letter of Assistant Attorney General Wozencraft to the Archivist of the United States dated August 17, 1966. The Archivist in 1966 established regulations of the National Archives (later revised) for making the Warren Commission materials available to researchers. These are in addition to the general "Regulations for the Public Use of Records in the National Archives and Records Service." The General Services Administration in 1967 established regulations for making records available under the "Freedom of Information Act" (5 U.S.C. 552). Enclosed are copies of these documents.

We are enclosing copies of page 16 of our handbook, National Archives Procedures, relating in part to time limits for answering reference correspondence, and of your letter of August 9, 1974. A reply to your letter of August 9 was prepared within the period of five work-days after the receipt of the letter by the branch responsible for preparing the reply. Because of your constant references to past and potential litigation, we routinely have our replies reviewed by the GSA Office of General Counsel, which review consequently results in the delayed responses.

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Enclosed also are the copies of Commission Documents 1131 and 1552(a) that you requested, as well as the letter of the CIA declassifying CD 1131 and the deleted sentence on page 26 of CD 1552(a). The declassification was apparently the result of a request directed to the CIA by a researcher, as the National Archives had made no request for a review and none was due under the guidelines.

Sincerely,



JAMES B. RHOADS
Archivist of the United States

Enclosures

March 14, 1973

for reply. Such referrals may be made by means of GSA Form 6780, Referral Slip. The person referring the inquiry writes his initials on the slip. The inquirer should be notified of the referral by a brief letter or by a post card acknowledgment on GSA Form 148, Interim Acknowledgment and Followup Post Card.

46. Time limits. Reference correspondence must be answered within the following time limits: 5 workdays for general correspondence; 3 workdays for Congressional correspondence; 7 workdays for reproductions. If a request cannot be answered within these time limits, an acknowledgment must be sent to the requester indicating when the reply will be made. Non-Congressional acknowledgements must be made by letter. Units in the National Archives Building and the General Archives Division report to the Assistant Archivist each Monday the number of reference letters received during the preceding week and the number of replies overdue at the end of the week.

47. Form replies. Forms and form letters should be used whenever possible to answer routine requests for publications or nonarchival materials, requests for information that cannot be found after a reasonable search, and requests for recurring information from or about the records. Forms currently used in handling reference inquiries are listed in figure 5-47.

48. Reference reports. Reference reports are prepared when the information to be provided is too extensive to be conveniently incorporated in a letter or when repeated inquiries on the same subject are anticipated. These reports are prepared in the style shown in figure 5-49. Reports should normally be written in the third person without identifying the inquirer and without specifying that it has been prepared in response to a particular inquiry, except by reference to the subject. Records should be referred to in terms of record groups rather than in terms of the unit to which the records are allocated. Reference reports are sent to the inquirer under a covering letter. When reference reports are prepared in response to an inquiry involving more than one unit, each unit involved sends its report to the coordinating unit which prepares the covering letter.

49. Preparation of written replies.

a. References.

(1) The HB, NARS Administrative Procedures, chap. 3, parts 1 and 2 (NAR P 5410.2).

(2) The GSA Administrative Manual, chap. 5, part 3 (DOA 5410.1).

(3) The United States Government Correspondence Manual and GSA supplement (yellow) pages (OAD P 1804.3A).

b. Format. Sample reference letters showing the proper format to be used are included in figure 5-49.