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PRESIDENT'S TELEPHONE LOGS, 1974-77

Collection Type

White House Office Files

Extent

1.3 linear feet (ca. 2,600 pages)

Record Type

Textual

Access

Open. Some items are temporarily restricted under terms of the donor's deed of gift, a copy of which is available on request, or under National Archives and Records Administration general restrictions (36 CFR 1256).

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Processed by

Sandra Raub, May 1984

Scope and Content Note

Most telephone calls placed or received at the White House were handled by the main White House switchboard. Calls could also be made or received over a signal line (the White House Communications Agency switchboard). In addition, the White House Communications Agency maintained a separate secure line for handling security sensitive calls. Both switchboards kept their own separate logs of calls which they handled; the Ford Library, however, does not have logs for telephone calls made over the secure line.

This group of logs of presidential telephone calls was held in the custody of Nell Yates, a staff assistant in the office of Aide to the President Terry O'Donnell. Included here are logs kept by the White House switchboard; logs of signal line calls; and logs kept by Yates herself. The logs, which are interfiled chronologically, cover the period from August 14, 1974 to the end of the Ford presidency and were the source used by Susan Yowell in compiling the President's Daily Diary.

The logs include entries noting the participants in a conversation, the time the call was placed, whether it was incoming or outgoing, and the time it was completed. If there was any difficulty encountered in completing the call, this was recorded with notations such as WCL (Will Call Later), WCB (Will Call Back), CA (Call Again), and DA (Didn't Answer). When the call was transferred to someone other than the President, this was also indicated. Also found scattered throughout these files, particularly for the early months of the Ford Presidency, are memoranda to and from the President concerning both incoming and outgoing calls.

Nell Yates' Logs

During normal business hours, the office of O'Donnell/Yates usually first placed the President's outgoing calls and further screened those which were received for him. The office was also responsible for seeing that calls were returned when necessary and reminded the President to make calls suggested by other White House Staff. Nell Yates kept daily logs from August 14 to October 30, 1974 and apparently discontinued the practice thereafter. Her logs cover only those calls placed or received during office hours and usually include only those calls which the President completed.

White House Telephone Operators' Logs

The operators at the White House switchboard logged in calls which were received and also logged all outgoing calls made through them. Separate daily logs were compiled for the President, Mrs. Ford, and other individuals on the White House Staff.

The telephone operator's logs are complete except for missing logs August 16-29, 1974. They contain entries in several individuals' handwriting. These logs are more complete than the Yates logs as they cover a 24-hour period rather than just business hours. Also, they include all presidential calls placed or received, not just those actually completed. Since most calls were made through the White House switchboard, except on occasions when the President was outside of Washington, this is the most extensive set of logs.

Signal Line Logs

Logs of presidential calls made over the signal line were also kept on a daily basis. These logs also date from October 31, 1974 to January 20, 1977; they are

usually typewritten. In general, the President's signal line conversations were conducted with high administration officials or members of the Ford family, although such calls were often made through the White House switchboard also. The signal line logs are usually more extensive during periods when the President was outside of Washington.

The telephone operators' and the signal line logs usually record different calls and taken together should provide a reasonably complete record of presidential telephone calls. Occasionally (and inexplicably), however, the same call will appear on both logs.

Filing Procedure

At the beginning of the Ford administration, the telephone operators' and signal line logs were apparently held by the respective switchboards. Nell Yates maintained her own set of logs to enable the Staff Secretary's office to keep track of presidential telephone conversations. In November 1974, the switchboards began passing their logs to Yates for filing and she discontinued the production of her own log. The telephone operators' logs for August-October 1974 were added to this collection by Ford Library archivists in 1984.

Related Materials (May 1984)

Additional information concerning presidential telephone calls may be found in White House Central Files category PR 7-2 Presidential Telephone Calls. In many cases, the files of staff members in the Offices of Scheduling and Advance, Staff Secretary, and White House Operations also contain memoranda concerning recommended presidential telephone calls. Material on the White House telecommunications system may be found in White House Central Files, WH 9 Telecommunications.

Last Modified Date

2025-03-11

President's Telephone Logs, 1974-1977.

(Boxes 1-4, 1.3 linear feet)

Daily listings of Presidential telephone calls placed or received. These logs were compiled either by staff assistant Nell Yates, the White House Operators, or the

White House Communications Agency. The logs merely indicate the name of the caller and length of the call. In only a few cases is any indication given of the topic of the calls.

Arranged chronologically.

Box 1 - President's Telephone Logs

Status	Title
OPEN	August 1974 - April 1975

Box 2 - President's Telephone Logs

Status	Title
OPEN	May 1975 - January 1976

Box 3 - President's Telephone Logs

Status	Title
OPEN	February - September 1976

Box 4 - President's Telephone Logs

Status	Title
OPEN	October 1976 - January 1977