



Pool Reports Collection

White House Correspondents' Association

The White House Correspondents' Association (WHCA) was founded in 1914 to promote excellence in journalism, robust reporting on the U. S. presidency, and support democracy through a free press. The White House Press Corps is made up of journalists credentialed by WHCA. This press pool provides reporting on the President's daily activities and events.

[SEARCH THE COLLECTION](#)

This collection is comprised of email pool reports created while covering the U.S. President and Vice-President from June 27, 2020 through January 31, 2021. At the request of WHCA, these reports have been lightly redacted to remove personal information. Redacted elements include email addresses, phone numbers, and physical addresses. Social media handles and addresses have been retained. Born-digital pool reports, disseminated as emails, continue to be collected and are added periodically. The most recent batch is called the Insurrection Files, as they cover the period of November 1, 2020 through January 31, 2021.



WHCA Pool Reports Digital Collection

<https://whpool.lib.umd.edu/>

Patti Cossard, Chuck Howell, Mat Schumer, Timothy Kanke
Libraries Research and Innovative Practice Forum
June 8 2:30pm 2023



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Outline

1. Project, Team, and Collection Updates (Patti Cossard)
2. What is it? WHCA, Pool Reports, Significance to the discipline of Journalism (Chuck Howell)
3. Content: Profiles, News, & Features (Mat Schumer)
4. Digital Tools: Library R & D (Tim Kanke)
5. What's Next! (all)

The Project Timeline

- 2016: RFP issued by WHCA for partners to provide a digital archive of pool reports
- 2018: MOU signed
 - Original collaborators UMD Libraries (SCUA and DSS), Merrill School of Journalism, Ischool with Freedom Forum, the Newseum, and WHCA
 - Governing Board convened in Summer 2020
 - Purpose to collect pool reports in a single searchable database.
 - Varied sources: born-digital (email), print (presidential libraries)
 - Collection and processing strategies differ according to format
- 2020: Demonstration project released
 - Unique Collection; Part of Digital Collections, searchable database
 - Current coverage is June 2020 - June 2020 sourced from born-digital emails
 - Technological Innovation needed for processing emails
- 2021: Chuck Howell serves as the Libraries' Digital Collections Liaison for Distinctive Digital Collections related to journalism and communication

The Project Timeline

- 2022: Gift of Merrill Foundation provides funding
 - Research Developer: to automate born-digital collection processing
 - Graduate Assistant: to assist in website content-enhancement and collection strategies of print legacy materials
- 2023: Major restart of Project
 - Patti Cossard becomes interim Project Leader
 - Project Roles are reaffirmed
 - Workplan is developed
 - Milestones and targets
 - May 2023
 - Move from project demonstration to live active website
 - Pool reports Coverage increased to January 2021
 - Website structure, editorial principles, and content templates defined
 - Enhanced content added
 - Next batch: August 2023 "Biden Administration's first 100 days"

The Current Team

Technical Research & Development

Ben Wallberg, Tim Kanke, Patti Cossard, Amy Wickner SCUA Born-digital consultant

Processing emails for uploading

Ben Wallberg, Tim Kanke, Patti Cossard, Josh Westgard, Peter Eichman

Website Architecture & Editorial Standards

Patti Cossard, Amy Swackhamer, Jeremy Gottwig, Chuck Howell, Mat Schumer

Website Content

Chuck Howell, Mat Schumer, Patti Cossard, Tim Kanke

Outreach & Curricular Integration

Chuck Howell, Mat Schumer, Patti Cossard

Collection Development

Chuck Howell, Mat Schumer, Patti Cossard, SCUA consultant (TBA)

Governing Board

Adriene Lim (LIBR), Rafael Lorente (JRNL), Steven Thomma (WHCA)

Special Thanks to MD Galvin and Kate Dohe!

The Collection

This collection is comprised of email pool reports created while covering the U.S. President and Vice-President. At the request of WHCA, these reports have been lightly redacted to remove personal information. Redacted elements include email addresses, phone numbers, and physical addresses.

Born-digital pool reports disseminated as emails continue to be collected and are added periodically.

The most recent batch is called the Insurrection Files, as they cover the period of November 1, 2020 through January 31, 2021.

The collection is stored as a web-based digital archive on the Fedora platform. Discovery is provided through SOLR, which provides full-text searching.

The collection is accessible and searchable by journalists, academic researchers, and members of the general public. The collection is a resource for all who are interested in journalism and U.S. presidential history.

Collection Updates

- Currently we will be batching updates to the collection until target accuracy is met by the automated processing routine.
- Emails are collected daily and downloaded monthly. They are stored until they can be manually reviewed and redacted.
- Currently there isn't an efficient off-the-shelf “email editor” so the manual process requires moving folders to various platforms for editing. Our goal currently is to balance manual review and redaction with tool development with ultimately being current with uploads.

Updates

Pool Reports Collection Website SPLASH!

May 19, 2023

The University Libraries is pleased to announce the major upgrade to the Pool content about the White House Correspondents' Association, Profiles of past topics (including bibliographies for further study), News and Press Releases,.

Categories: [Updates](#)

We have an update section on the website about page to keep interested parties informed of progress

- Updates can be subscribed to through RSS feeds on the News page

[Subscribe to WHPool News](#)



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White House Correspondents' Association

- Founded in 1914, the WHCA is a non-profit organization whose members are journalists covering the White House (the President, Vice President, other Executive Branch officials).
- The association's mission is to "advance the First Amendment by fostering an open and cooperative relationship between the White House and the news media."
- WHCA serves as a gatekeeper, vetting the credentials of reporters wishing to cover the White House.
- WHCA hosts daily press briefings in the the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room. The organization assigns the limited number of seats to reporters of various accredited news outlets. Members without an assigned seat may still attend as space allows.
- WHCA also assigns a small group of reporters for various media to accompany the President on activities outside the White House - from a short jaunt to a local event to major overseas travel.
- WHCA holds the annual White House Correspondents' Association Dinner, which is a major event in Washington, D.C. At that event, scholarships are awarded, along with the Aldo Beckman Award for Excellence in White House Coverage and the WHCA Award for Excellence in Presidential News Coverage Under Deadline Pressure.

James S. Brady Press Briefing Room

Named for Reagan Press Secretary James Brady, in 2000, who was permanently injured during John Hinkley's attempt on President Reagan's life in 1981 (below right).

The Briefing Room opened in 1969 (below left - President Nixon and the press).

As the image of President Truman at right shows, prior to that, Press Conferences often took place in the Oval Office or other areas of the White House.



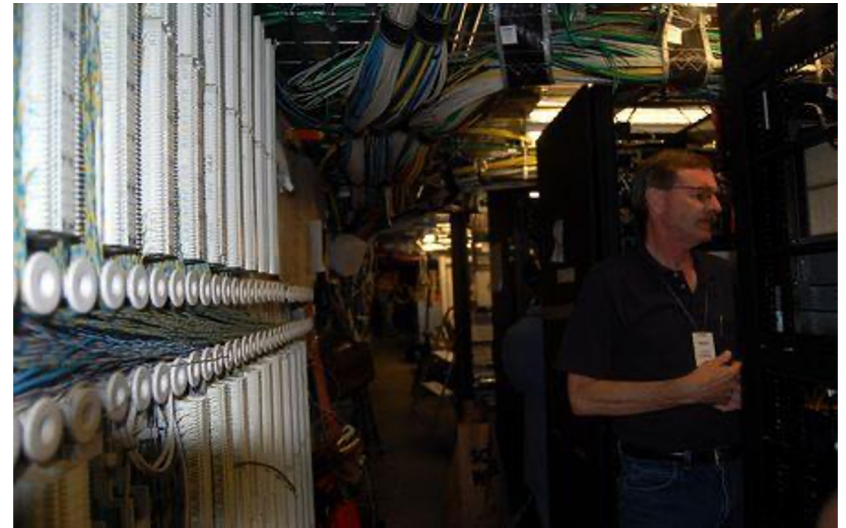
The White House (Press) Pool?

Though the idea of “pooling” resources - meaning sharing and/or combining - predates the coinage of the term Press Pool (in which a small part of the entire Press Corps shares their reporting with the whole), some say there is a different etymology at work. The Brady Briefing Room is actually built on top of the swimming pool installed for the use of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt during his first term, so today's Press Corps stands inches above this still-intact pool while asking questions of the administration. They are indeed the Press Pool.



Left - the White House swimming pool as it looked in FDR's day.

Right - tending to the servers under the Briefing Room in the empty pool.



The “Protective” Pool

As the so-called “Leader of the free world,” the actions of the President of the United States are of global interest and import. Because of this, the President is accompanied by a protective press pool when not at the White House.

- 13 members of the press, representing print, radio, television, the major wire services, web services and photographers are allotted seats on Air Force One.
- The use of the word “protective” is deliberate. Traveling with the President allows reporters to confirm that he actually arrived safely, and their presence means “history in the making” will be faithfully documented.
- The Press Pool also keeps the President’s own PR and information operation “honest,” sometimes correcting “inaccuracies” that creep into press releases on recent events for reasons of politics.

This famous image of LBJ being sworn in on Air Force One after the assassination of John F. Kennedy illustrates the importance of the Protective Press Pool.





Pool Reports Collection

White House
Correspondents' Association

Features



CONNIE LAWM (1944-2018): LONGEST SERVING MEMBER OF WHITE HOUSE PRESS CORPS



POLITICAL JOURNALIST: ROBERT E. THOMPSON (1921-2008)



FIRST LADY OF THE PRESS: HELEN THOMAS (1928-2013)

News



**July 21, 2022
JOHN A. JENKINS DONATES PAPERS: DOCUMENTING HIS REMARKABLE CAREER**



**May 02, 2022
MERRILL GIFT MAKES WHCA POOL REPORTS COLLECTION PUBLIC**



**April 09, 2020
UMD AND WHCA PARTNER TO CREATE ARCHIVE OF PRESIDENTIAL POOL REPORTS**

Profiles



**Pool Reporter
ELIZABETH CRISP**



**WHCA/Merrill College Scholar
CONGRATULATIONS! CLASS OF '23 GRADUATE: ERIN HARPER**



**Pool Reporter
ROBERT (ROB) CRILEY**

Content: Features

Significant events covered by the WHCA Pool

Longer profiles of prominent members of the WHCA

Pieces covering the nature of WHCA coverage of the White House during certain historical periods

Feature Stories

The feature is one of the most wide-ranging categories of journalism. There are several categories of feature, including fly-on-the-wall, interview, profile, analysis, and review. This section provides feature stories on White House Pool reporters, both past and present, as well as others related to the University and the White House Correspondents' Association.




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Content: News

NEWS

Merrill Gift Makes WHCA Pool Reports Collection Public

May 10, 2020



The White House Correspondents' Association (WHCA) has a long-established press corps, in which a smaller group of reporters follows the U.S. President— from the Oval Office, to the White House, to his motorcade—and disseminates their written pool reports to the rest of the press corps.

These reports can't survive front-page news, but plenty of what's documented news gets national coverage. Still, the reports are a valuable view into the day-to-day workings of the White House and a fascinating repository of historical record.

In 2018, the University of Maryland Libraries—in partnership with WHCA's Philip Merrill College of Journalism, the College of Information Sciences, the Museum Institute, and the WHCA—embarked on a new vision: a permanent and ongoing digital, searchable archive of these presidential pool reports available for journalists, scholars, and the public at large.

This first-of-its-kind repository not only supports the university's mission of advancing knowledge in areas of importance to the State, the nation, and the world, but of the greater ideal of a free press and democratic society.

This project is an ambitious undertaking. The reports themselves comprise tens of thousands of text documents that need to be sorted and classified to allow the public to find what they need through searching or browsing by date, topic, or reporter.

The Libraries get to work developing custom digital tools to reformat the reports, generate metadata, and extract

The category of News is pulled from Libraries' Press Releases that are related to the WHCA Project which will display on the splash page in chronological order.

The News page on the Pool reports website aggregates all categories of articles posting on the site, e.g., Updates, Features, Profiles

<https://whpool.lib.umd.edu/news>

Content: Profiles

Profiles

Personal profiles are a unique approach to news writing. Unlike hard news stories, they aim to humanize events and individuals by profiling them in a narrative rather than journalistic style. This section provides profiles on reporters and others related to the University and the White House Correspondents' Association.

Congratulations! Class of '23 Graduate: Erin Harper

May 19, 2023

Name: Erin Harper

Year in school: Senior

Major: Multiplatform Journalism

Hometown: Washington, D.C.



Erin is a member of the National Association of Black Journalists. She writes short articles, some of which have been published in small media outlets. She has worked for national and international news organizations, including PBS as a special projects intern, CNN as...

Categories: [Profiles](#)

Robert (Rob) Crilly

May 19, 2023

Robert Crilly is a British-Irish journalist currently based in the United States. Crilly was educated at Downing College in Cambridge, England, before beginning his career as a reporter. He eventually assumed the role of Edinburgh Bureau Chief for The Telegraph before departing to work as a correspondent in East Africa for The Times and then for The Telegraph.



CONTENT

Recipients of the WHCA/Merrill College Scholar

Members of the WHCA Pool with significant contributions, e.g., Rob Crilly is the highest contributing journalist within in the pool reports collection

Search Filters

Reporter

Rob Crilly (239)

Mining the Pool Reports for Content

Search Pool Reports

FULLTEXT SEARCH

SORT BY

ORDER

Search by keywords...

Relevance

Desc

APPLY

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

NEXT →

In-town pool report#7: Details on Walter Reed visit

Jul 10, 2020

Brett Samuels

Travel pool report #15 - Greeters

Jul 09, 2020

Jerome CARTILLIER

Discoverability and access to reports for historians and librarians

Enhances the context of WHCA Pool Reporting

Resource for UMD courses that cover the history of journalism and/or the US presidential history

Serves as a template for similar digital collections



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Digital Tools: What is needed?

Unique characteristics of this collection:

- Continuous additions
- Public website viewing
- Need to redact PII



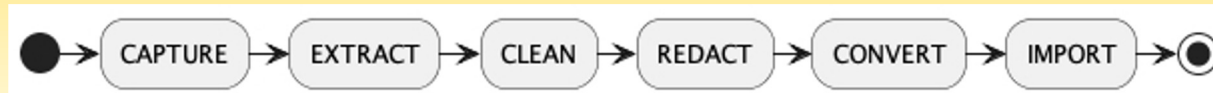
Research on What is Available

Types of tools developed by other institutions:

- Reading room viewer
 - DArcMail
- Message processing and classification
 - ePadd
 - TOMES
 - RATOM
- Message preservation
 - Mailbagit



Development of Email Editing Tool and Automation



- **Capture:** automatically collect messages and download them in an archive format.
- **Extract:** collect linked resources and prep messages for processing.
- **Clean:** unify the HTML structure to aid the redaction.
- **Redact:** identify and automatically redact personal identification information (PII) such as reporter contact information. Overall, the script is effective, however, because accuracy remains low for PII type: Address, manual review is necessary.
- **Convert:** prepare messages for import to the digital repository.
- **Import:** adds messages to the website.



Digital Tools: Accuracy & Challenges

Auto-redaction Accuracy by PII Type

Author Phone Number	97.21%
Author Email Address	90.91%
Author Physical Address	23.03%

Challenges

People are creative in formatting contact info

Non-Uniform



What's Next for the Project

- August 2023: First 100 Days of the Biden Administration
- Continue to enhance website
- Develop closer collaboration with WHCA
- Develop and plan for accessing and digitizing pool reports at Presidential Libraries
- Hold Governing Board Fall 2023 Meeting for strategic planning
- Present and disseminate knowledge of the collection



Plans for the Future: Look to the Past

Though currently concentrating on pool reports distributed as email, the project will also include as many pool reports from the days of paper distribution as possible.

NARA and its Presidential Libraries are one source for these pool reports.

Preliminary research has been encouraging, but many records remain unprocessed the amount of such material held at each repository is yet to be verified onsite.

WHCA members are another source, working with their staff, project personnel plan to explore collection development of former pool reporters' collections.

Working closely with faculty at the Merrill College of Journalism, the project will engage students in both using the digital collection for research and potentially contributing to the expanding number of reporter profiles as course work.

This entry from the
White House Press
Office Finding Aid at
the Reagan Library
looks promising!

SERIES IV: Pool Reports and Assignments

OA 17905

OPEN

Pool Reports [01/20/1981-01/26/1981]

OPEN

Pool Reports [01/27/1981-02/18/1981]

OPEN

Pool Reports [02/19/1981-03/19/1981]



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What's Next for Website Content Development

More Feature Articles based upon additional batches: e.g., WHCA reports and the Insurrection

Additional Profiles of high contributors to pool reports collection



What's Next for R & D

Continual improvements

- Refine auto-redaction
- Streamline message review



Thanks!

<https://whpool.lib.umd.edu>