Extent

1 folder, approximately 80 pages

Summary

This collection consists of material concerning correspondence between historian Stephen Ambrose and President Clinton regarding the National Park Service's decision to reject George Washington University Professor James Starr's request to exhume the body of Meriwether Lewis to determine Lewis' cause of death. The files contain correspondence between President Clinton, Stephen Ambrose, and documentary film maker Dayton Duncan on this matter.

Scope and Content Note

The materials in FOIA 2009-0789-F are a selective, not necessarily all-inclusive, body of documents responsive to the topic of the FOIA. Researchers should consult the archivist about related materials. FOIA request 2009-0789-F contains material related to correspondence between historian Stephen Ambrose and President Clinton regarding the body of American explorer Meriwether Lewis. In 1996, George Washington University Professor James E. Starrs led an effort to have the body of Lewis exhumed. He planned to use forensic science to determine the cause of the explorer's October 1809 death. The historical community had generally accepted the argument that Lewis had taken his own life; Starrs hypothesized that he had been murdered instead. He petitioned the National Park Service, on whose land Lewis is buried, to exhume the body. The Park Service denied his request. Stephen Ambrose and documentary writer Dayton Duncan both wrote to President Clinton in 1998 to support the Park Service's decision. The White House Office of Records Management (WHORM) Subject file contains responsive documents, including correspondence between President Clinton and historian Stephen Ambrose concerning the exhumation of the remains of Meriwether Lewis for examination. In addition, the file contains correspondence between President Clinton and filmmaker Dayton Duncan

on this same issue.

Record Type

Textual

System of Arrangement

Records that are responsive to this FOIA request were found in one collection area—Clinton Presidential Records: WHORM Subject File. WHORM Subject Files are processed at the document level. The WHORM Subject file was compiled by the White House Office of Records Management and is a series of categories designated by a letter/number combination. A complete listing of the categories with detailed descriptions is available in our research room and website.

Access

Collection is open to all researchers. Access to Clinton Presidential Records is governed by the Presidential Records Act (PRA) (44 USC 2201) and the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 USC 552, as amended) and therefore may be restricted in whole or in part in accordance with legal exemptions.

Copyright

Documents in this collection that were prepared by officials of the United States government as part of their official duties are in the public domain. Researchers are advised to consult the copyright law of the United States (17 USC 101), which governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material.

Provenance

Official records of William Jefferson Clinton’s presidency are housed at at the Clinton Presidential Library and administered by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) under the provisions of the Presidential Records Act (PRA).

Person Names

Lewis, Meriwether, 1774-1809
Ambrose, Stephen E.

Organization Names

United States. National Park Service

Topical Subjects

Exhumation

Processed by

Staff Archivist, December 2009. Previously restricted materials are added as they are released.

Last Modified Date

2012-07-27

Container List

The following is a list of documents and folders processed in response to FOIA 2009-0789-F:

Clinton Presidential Records: WHORM Subject File
Category Case Number
PA001 Scanned: 253393 [OA/ID 14088]