

# Historical Economic Information



Beyond the Numbers  
September 30, 2014

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*The views presented are my own, and do not necessarily represent  
the Federal Reserve System or the St. Louis Fed*



# Learning Objectives



After this session you should:

- ✧ have an understanding of types of resources for investigating economic history.
- ✧ be more familiar with the tools to find these resources.
- ✧ be confident in your ability to guide students and patrons in doing economic history research.



# Agenda



- ❧ A classroom activity you can use
- ❧ Sources of economic information & how to find them
  - ❧ Contemporaneous Accounts
  - ❧ Archives
  - ❧ Guides & Bibliographies
  - ❧ Government Publications & Data





# What do You Know? Expect?



- ❧ Quick go-round on what experience you have with historic economic information
- ❧ What do you expect from the workshop? What's the one thing that would delight you?

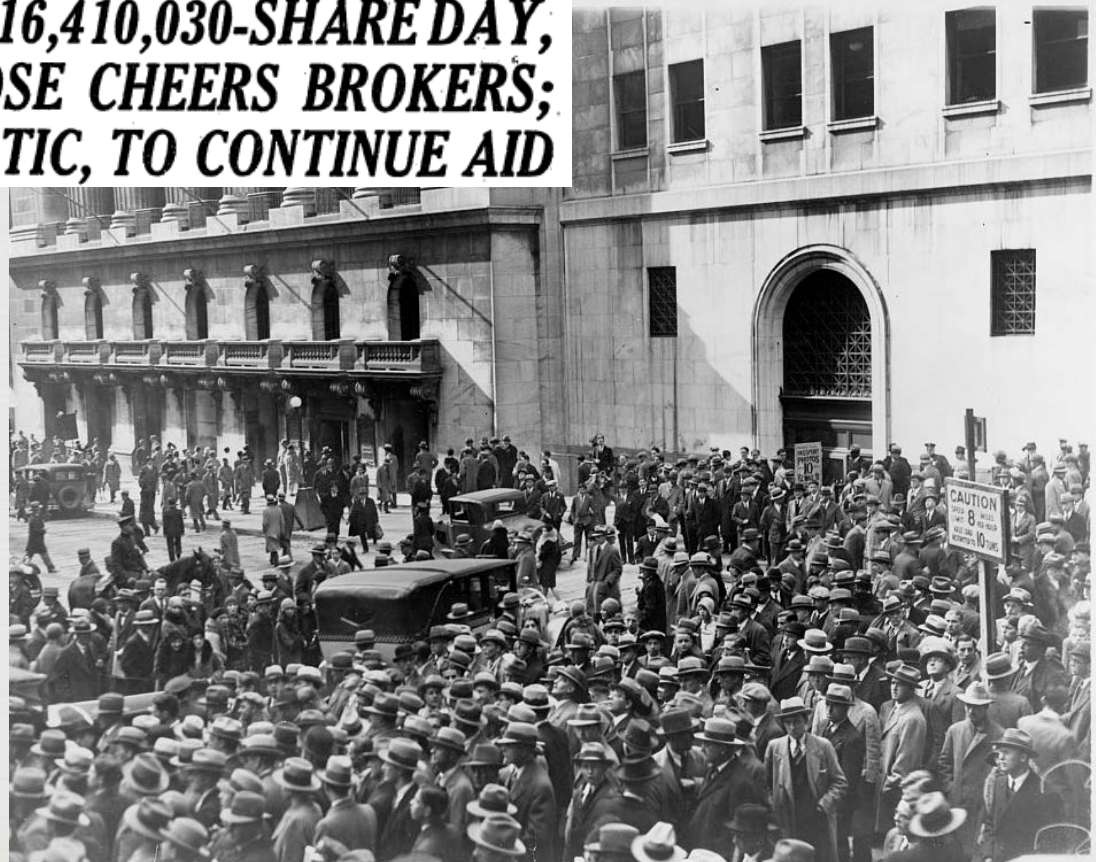
# Hands-on Economic History



**STOCKS COLLAPSE IN 16,410,030-SHARE DAY,  
BUT RALLY AT CLOSE CHEERS BROKERS;  
BANKERS OPTIMISTIC, TO CONTINUE AID**

New York Times headline,  
October 30, 1929.

Crowds of people gather  
outside the New York  
Stock Exchange following  
the Crash of 1929.  
(Library of Congress)





Does the evidence in your packet support the idea that the stock market crash was inevitable?

Information & data that supports the idea goes **above** the line

Information & data that refutes the idea goes **below** the line



# Contemporaneous Accounts



✧ Newspapers

✧ Data publications

✧ Speeches, testimony, commentary

✧ Archival materials



# Archives



- ❧ Finding aids
- ❧ Archivist=friend
- ❧ Organization of information is not like libraries
- ❧ See resources for list of likely locations of economic archival material



# Roosevelt Library

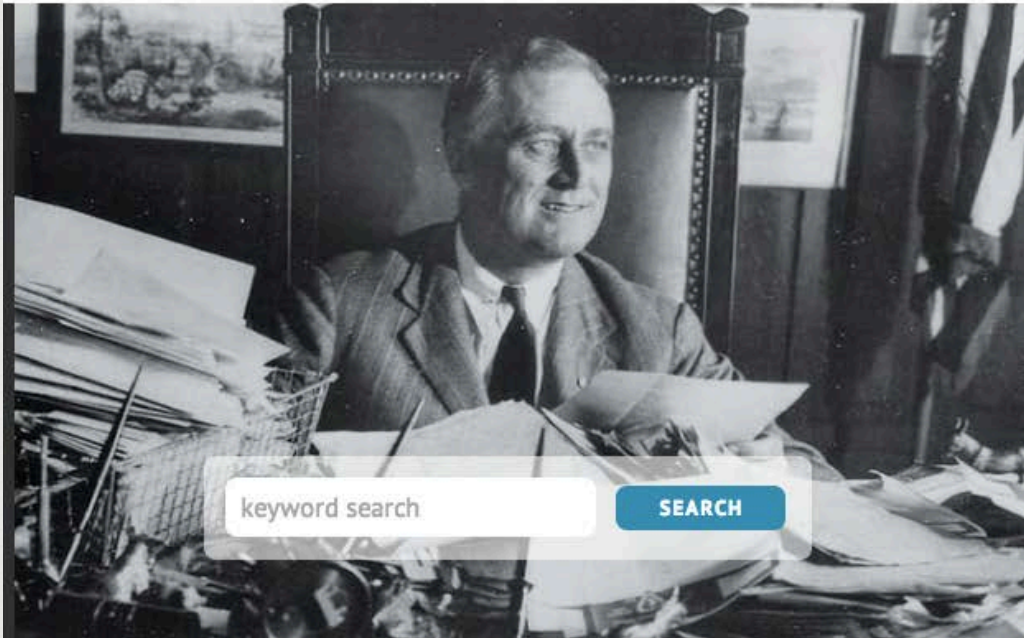
**FRANKLON**  
Access to the FDR Library's Digital Collections

Home

Document Collections

Photographs

CONTACT THE ARCHIVES  
VISIT THE FDR LIBRARY WEBSITE



keyword search

SEARCH

## Fully Digitized Collections or Series

- FDR's Map Room Papers
- FDR's President's Secretary's File (PSF)
- Executive Orders and Presidential Proclamations
- Presidential Press Conferences
- Eleanor Roosevelt Selected Correspondence: 1933-45
- Eleanor Roosevelt Selected Correspondence: 1945-47
- Selected Documents on the Holocaust and Refugees
- The FDR Library Significant Documents Collection
- The Grace Tully Collection



LIBRARY



COLLECTION



BOX



FOLDER



DOCUMENT



## Finding Aids - Descriptions of Non-Digitized Collections -> Roosevelt Era Collections

Katherine C. Blackburn Papers, 1933-1946

Wilbur J. Cohen Papers, 1941-1980

[+ Results Found Within Box List](#)

Gerhard Colm Papers, 1937-1947

[+ Results Found Within Box List](#)

Frances Perkins Papers, 1932-1944

John Gilbert Winant Papers, 1916-1947

[+ Results Found Within Box List](#)

Series 2: Governorship: Second Term, 1931-1932 -> Box 67 -> Folder 1: Unemployment Cases, 1932

Series 2: Governorship: Second Term, 1931-1932 -> Box 67 -> Folder 2: Unemployment - General (1)

Series 2: Governorship: Second Term, 1931-1932 -> Box 67 -> Folder 3: Unemployment - General (2)

Series 2: Governorship: Second Term, 1931-1932 -> Box 67 -> Folder 4: Unemployment - Massachusetts

Series 2: Governorship: Second Term, 1931-1932 -> Box 67 -> Folder 5: Unemployment - New Hampshire

Series 2: Governorship: Second Term, 1931-1932 -> Box 67 -> Folder 6: Unemployment - Rhode Island

Series 2: Governorship: Second Term, 1931-1932 -> Box 67 -> Folder 7: Unemployment - Trained Social Workers

Series 2: Governorship: Second Term, 1931-1932 -> Box 68 -> Folder 1: Unemployment - Miscellaneous (1)

Series 2: Governorship: Second Term, 1931-1932 -> Box 68 -> Folder 2: Unemployment - Miscellaneous (2)

Series 3: Governorship: Third Term, 1933-1934 -> Box 84 -> Folder 3: **Employment** Service - State of New Hampshire (Hon. W. Frank Persons), 1934

Series 3: Governorship: Third Term, 1933-1934 -> Box 84 -> Folder 4: Employment: Re-**Employment** Service

Series 3: Governorship: Third Term, 1933-1934 -> Box 84 -> Folder 5: **Employment**: Richard Hall, 1934

Series 3: Governorship: Third Term, 1933-1934 -> Box 103 -> Folder 8: Legislation: Unemployment Relief in New Hampshire

Series 3: Governorship: Third Term, 1933-1934 -> Box 112 -> Folder 4: Minimum Wage: Unemployment Reserves (insurance)

# UCSB Presidency Project



## The Papers of the Presidents

The American Presidency Project is the only online resource that has consolidated, coded,

and organized into a single searchable database:

- The Messages and Papers of the Presidents: *Washington - Taft (1789-1913)*
- The Public Papers of the Presidents: *Hoover to G.W. Bush (1929-2007) & Obama (2010-Book I)*
- The Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents: *Carter - G.W. Bush (1977-2009)*
- The Daily Compilation of Presidential Documents: *Obama (2009-2012)*

• Our archives also contain thousands of other documents such as party platforms, candidates' remarks, Statements of Administration Policy, documents released by the Office of the Press Secretary, and election debates:



[search our archives](#)

WELCOME TO THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY PROJECT AT UC SANTA BARBARA

The **American Presidency Project** ([americanpresidency.org](http://americanpresidency.org)), was established in 1999 as a collaboration between John T. Woolley & Gerhard Peters at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Our archives contain 107,646 documents related to the study of the Presidency.

Your donation in support of The American Presidency Project is **tax-deductible**

**Make a Gift**



## American Presidency Project State of the Union Data

- State of the Union Index Page with research notes
- Length of State of the Union Messages and Addresses in Words
- Length of State of the Union Addresses in Minutes (from 1966)
- List of Acknowledged Guests Sitting in House Gallery
- List of Opposition Responses

## Words used to address the nation

U.S. presidents have used official and unofficial State of the Union addresses to outline proposals for the country with as few as 1,089 words and as many as 33,667.







# Historical Economic Policy Documents



## ❧ Presidential documents

- ❧ UCSB & Presidential libraries
- ❧ CFR Title 3

## ❧ Federal Reserve materials

- ❧ FRASER
  - ❧ Meeting minutes
  - ❧ Speeches
- ❧ Historical gateway

## ❧ Congressional documents

- ❧ American Memory/FDsys
- ❧ CIS Indexes/ProQuest Congressional

## ❧ Agency materials

- ❧ FOIA reading rooms
- ❧ Federal Register (1936-)

# Understanding the Sources



## Tracing Agency Change

- ❧ *Guide to U.S. Government Publications* (aka Andriot)
- ❧ *U.S. Government Manual*

## Who Produces the Information

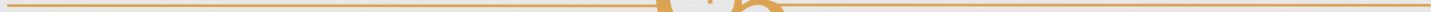
- ❧ *Historical Statistics of the United States* (online & in print)
- ❧ *Statistical Abstracts & Almanacs*
- ❧ *International Historical Statistics, 1750-2010.*

## Old-School Government Information Textbooks

- ❧ *United States Government Publications*, Boyd & Rips



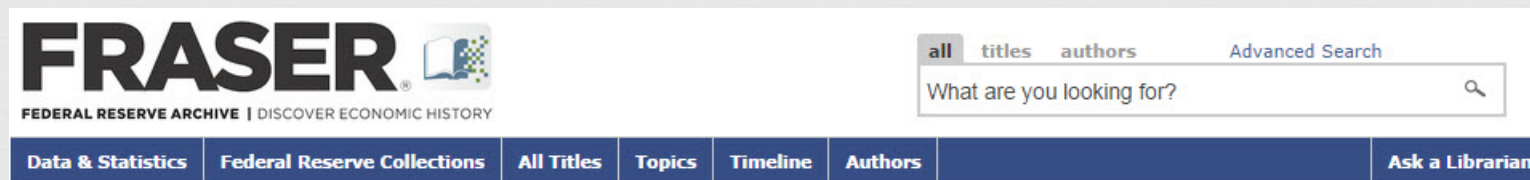
# Activity?





# Finding Historical Economic Publications

FRASER (<https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/>)



Grey lit (policy docs, speeches)

Data & statistical publications including every important US  
banking data publication revisions to data pre-ALFRED

# Finding Historical Economic Publications

HathiTrust (<http://www.hathitrust.org>)



Search HathiTrust's digital library

FULL-TEXT

CATALOG

Search words about the items

All Fields

Search

[Advanced catalog search](#) | [Search tips](#)

☒ Full view only

[? Should I search catalog or full-text?](#)

Library catalog of full-text digitized material

Public domain, government produced works can be downloaded by anyone

# Additional Sources



NBER (<http://nber.org>)

- Early institution for economic research; digitized; high quality

*the* NATIONAL BUREAU *of* ECONOMIC RESEARCH



Internet Archive (<https://archive.org/>)

- Unorganized; serials difficult to find
- Includes random publications not available elsewhere
- Any user can upload digitized, public domain materials





# Finding the Data



- ❧ ALFRED – vintage data
  - ❧ <http://alfred.stlouisfed.org/>
- ❧ FRED's NBER data (3000 series)
  - ❧ <https://research.stlouisfed.org/fred2/categories/33061>
- ❧ Measuring Worth <http://measuringworth.com/index.php>
  - ❧ Historical data comparisons, US & UK
- ❧ Groningen Growth and Development Centre
  - ❧ <http://www.rug.nl/research/ggdc/databases>
- ❧ EH.net collected datasets
  - ❧ <http://eh.net/databases/>



Questions?  
Comments?  
Ideas?