

**Guide to the Dr. David Derge Collection  
(1967-1972)**

**Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum**

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## Descriptive Summary

**Title:** Dr. David Collection

**Creator:** David Richard Derge (1928-1996)

**Repository:** Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum  
18001 Yorba Linda Boulevard  
Yorba Linda, California 92886

**Abstract:** This collection comprises materials documenting the development and use of polling data by the Republican Party and the Nixon White House between 1967 and 1972. The bulk of the collection consists of surveys commissioned between mid-1968 and mid-1971 by Derge in his capacity as consultant to the Republican Party and from 1970 to the Executive Office of the President. The materials include final and draft reports, executive summaries, computer printouts, survey forms, and, in many cases, work papers, including timelines, fee schedules, correspondence, newspaper clippings, and articles from periodical literature. The collection also includes a number of memoranda and subject files, documenting in particular Derge's role in the development and implementation by the Republican Party and the Administration of regular polling to continuously monitor and evaluate the attitude of the public to the Administration and its policies (PRIM, or Presidential Ratings studies).

## Administrative Information

**Access:** Open.

**Publication Rights:** Copyright held by the Richard Nixon Library and Birthplace Foundation

**Preferred Citation:** Folder title. Box #. Dr. David Derge Collection. Richard Nixon Library and Birthplace Foundation, Yorba Linda, CA.

**Acquisition Information:** Gift of Patti Derge-Simon.

**Processing History:** Collection processed by Richard Nixon Library and Birthplace archive staff.

## **Biography**

David Richard Derge, political science professor, college administrator and Republican pollster, was born in Kansas City, Missouri, on October 10, 1928. He received his AB from the University of Missouri in 1950 and his AM and Ph.D. from Northwestern University in 1951 and 1955, respectively. He joined the faculty of Indiana University in 1956, becoming professor of Political Science in 1965 and dean of administration and executive vice president in 1968. He became President of Southern Illinois University at Carbondale in 1972, but his administration was controversial, and in 1974 he resigned the presidency and returned to the classroom as professor of Political Science, a position he held until his death on December 26, 1996.

In addition to his academic activities, Derge was a leading Republican pollster. In 1968, he founded Behavioral Research Associates of which he was president until his death. The date of his earliest polling activity for the Republican National Committee is unknown, but he was heavily involved in polling for the 1968 national election, and as consultant to the Executive Office of the President, he was the Republican party's principal pollster from 1970 until 1972, when he resigned to take up the presidency of Southern Illinois University. During this period, Derge was instrumental in developing and implementing the concept of on-going periodic polling, in particular Presidential Ratings polls (PRIM).

## **Polling Practices**

The majority of the surveys in this collection were carried out by Chilton Research Services, of Philadelphia, PA, and Opinion Research Corp., of Princeton, NJ. While most surveys carried out by each service are unique, there are some overlaps in 1970. The Survey Detailed Statistics (Series 1, Subseries 1) indicate that Derge considered Chilton Research Services the primary research service in 1970, and Opinion Research Corp in 1971; the change being effected at the time of the State of the Union Address in late January 1971. Although most surveys were taken over a single period of between one and seven days, more important surveys were taken in "waves"; the 1968 Presidential Election poll (Series 1, Subseries 2) was taken in four separate waves, each of several days' duration, between July and October 1968. The Republican National Committee considered the surveys conducted by national polling services such as the Gallup organization to be not only inaccurate gauges of public opinion but also slow in indicating changes in public opinion. After analyzing the shortcomings of the Gallup poll (Series 3, "Gallup Presidential Ratings" subject file) Derge and others developed a system of "continuous attitude evaluation" of the Administration and

its policies (PRIM, or Presidential Ratings studies); records of the first five of these PRIM studies, issued between May 1969 and July 1970, are in Series 1, Subseries 2.

## **Scope and Content Summary:**

The collection comprises materials documenting the development and use of polling by the Republican Party and the Nixon White House between 1967 and 1972.

The bulk of the collection consists of surveys commissioned between mid-1968 and mid-1971 by Derge in his capacity as consultant to the Republican Party and from 1970 to the Executive Office of the President, from Chilton Research Services, of Philadelphia, PA, and from Opinion Research Corp., of Princeton, NJ. The polling materials include final and draft reports, executive summaries, computer printouts, survey forms, and, in many cases, work papers, including timelines, fee schedules, and correspondence. The collection also includes a number of memoranda and subject files, documenting in particular Derge's role in the development and implementation by the Republican Party and the Administration of regular polling to continuously monitor and evaluate the attitude of the public to the Administration and its policies (PRIM, or Presidential Ratings studies).

These files include correspondence between Derge, members of the Republican National Committee, and officers of Chilton Research Services and Opinion Research; copies of items from periodical literature on the nature and science of polling; and extensive newspaper clippings documenting public opinion on a wide variety of subjects, in particular the image of the President himself. The collection also includes an Information Binder, dated June 1968, prepared for the Presidential election campaign, as well as a four-volume Political Databank, compiled during his presidency and continuously updated, detailing, respectively, candidate and President Nixon's positions on various topics.

### Series 1: Surveys

Subseries 1: Survey Detailed Statistics

Subseries 2: Opinion Research Corp. Surveys

Subseries 3: Chilton Research Services

Subseries 4: Other Surveys (1968 Presidential Election)

### Series 2: Memoranda and Subject Files

### Series 3: Handbooks

### Series 4: Publications and Teaching

## **Related Collections:**

Campaign 1960 Collection

Campaign 1968 Collection

## Container List

**General Note:** Derge frequently made use of materials from earlier projects in later work, with the result that materials that might logically be expected to be in one folder will be found in another (see, in particular, Series 2: Memoranda and Subject Files, and Series 4: Publications and Teaching).

### Series 1: Surveys.

Series 1 comprises records of surveys commissioned by Derge for the Republican National Committee and the Administration between 1967 and mid-1971. The series is arranged in the following subseries:

#### Subseries 1: Survey Detailed Statistics

Date: 1970-1971

Extent:

The subseries consists of two binders, one each for 1970 and 1971. These contain detailed computer statistics from each of the major surveys carried out that year, and serve as summary guides to the full surveys. (Note, however, that full surveys do not survive for all surveys included in the Survey Detailed Statistics, in particular the volume for 1971.) Each binder is arranged in reverse chronological order; the 1970 binder also includes detailed statistics for President Nixon's European-Asian trip of August 1969, mistakenly filed as though the date were August 1970.

	<b>Box:File</b>
Survey Detailed Statistics, 1970	
1) President Nixon's European-Asian Trip. August 7-9, 1969.	1:6
2) Attitudes of People Towards Compulsory School Busing and the Chicago "7" trial. February 1970.	1:13
3) Chilton #9437. Presidential Image Study. March 7, 1970.	1:12
4) Chilton #6478. Issues & Personalities Study. April 10-12, 1970.	1:11
5) Chilton #9437. Presidential Image Trend Study, Wave IV. April 22-24, 1970.	1:10
6) Chilton #9448. Public Opinions Regarding President Nixon's 4-30-70 Announcement of His Decision on American Involvement in Cambodia. April 30, 1970.	1:9 1:8
7) Chilton #9457. Public Issues Study. May 18-19, 1970.	1:7
8) Chilton #9488. Attitudinal Study. July 10-12, 1970.	1:6
9) Chilton #9520. Student Demonstration Study. September 19-20, 1970.	1:5
10) Chilton #9533. National Study, October 8-9, 1970.	1:4
11) Chilton #9552. Post Election Study, November 9-10, 1970.	1:3

	<b>Box:File</b>
12) Chilton #9567. Rescue Mission Study. December 1-3, 1970.	1:2
13) Chilton #9575. 91 <sup>st</sup> Congress Study. December 28-30, 1970.	1:1

Survey Detailed Statistics, 1971

1) Chilton #9582. Television Appearance of January 4, 1971	1:26
2) State of the Union. January 26-28, 1971.	1:25
3) ORC #69002. National Study, March 1-3, 1971.	1:24
4) ORC #69006. National Study, March 6-7, 1971.	1:23
5) ORC #69007. National Study, April 1, 1971.	1:22
6) ORC #69008. National Study, April 7, 1971.	1:21
7) ORC #69009. National Study, April 8, 1971.	1:20
8) ORC #69010. National Study, April 12-13, 1971.	1:18-19
9) ORC #69012. National Survey, April 22, 1971.	1:17
10) ORC #69015. National Survey, April 28-30, 1971.	1:16
11) ORC #69016. National Survey, May 1-2, 1971.	1:15
12) ORC #69017. National Survey, May 6-7, 1971.	1:14

**Subseries 2: Opinion Research Corp. (ORC) Surveys**

Date: April 1967-May 1971

Extent:

The largest number of surveys in this subseries date from the first half of 1971; however, the bulk of the materials consists of the records of the 1968 Presidential Election survey. The materials also include five PRIM (Presidential ratings) surveys, published in May, August, and December 1969, and in May and July 1970. Surveys prior to January 1971 have a 3-digit number, usually followed by one or more letters; those from January 1971 have a 5-digit number, beginning in "6". The surveys are arranged chronologically. The records for each survey are arranged as follows: full report, executive summary, draft report(s), survey forms, and work papers; oversize computer printouts are filed separately. The records for the 1968 Presidential Election survey are arranged as follows: statistical analysis, survey forms, work papers. The computer printouts for this survey are arranged as follows: general (multi-state) statistics, by wave; individual waves, by state; flash runs, by date; flash runs, by survey question number.

	<b>Box:File</b>
Public Appraises Potential Presidential Candidates, April 1967 [NB: carried out March 13-30, 1967]	2:1
Voters in Seven States Appraise Key Issues, February 1968 [NB: carried out January 14-29, 1968]	2:2-3
ORC #798: Presidential Election. 1968 [NB: carried out July- October 1968] Analysis	



	<b>Box:File</b>
Statistical Analysis	2:4-6
Special Analysis, Waves I-IV, with particular reference to the effect of the George Wallace candidacy	2:7-10
Special Analysis with particular reference to Nixon v. Humphrey	3:1-4
Work Papers	
9 State Voters, Flash Runs, September 15-19, 1968	11:1
9 State Voters, Questions 1-21, October 14-28, 1968	11:2
8 and 4 State Voters, Question 59, July 1968	11:3
4 State Voters, Question 4, Wave 3	11:4
Leaners and Uncommitted, Flash Runs, August 30, 1968	11:5
Leaners and Uncommitted, September 3, 1968	11:6
Semantic Differential	3:5-8
Statistical Analysis, Illinois	3:9
Survey Forms	3:10
Switchers Analysis, Wave 2	3:11
Wallace Voters	3:12
Computer Statistics	
Compiled	
Wave 1 (July 1968) [ORC #798-W]	
8 State and 3 State Telephone Survey [ORC #798-X]	11:7
8 State – Coded Questions [2 copies]	11:8-9
8 State Means and 4 State Means	12:1
8 State Voters	12:2
4 State – Coded Questions	12:3
“Extras” [1 file]	12:4
Wave 2 (September 1968) [ORC #798-Y]	
9 State	12:5
4 State	12:6
Switchers	13:1
Wave 3 (September 1968) [ORC #798-Y]	
9 State Political	13:2
Individual States	
Wave 1 (July 1968) [ORC #798-W]	
Michigan	13:3
Missouri [ <b>bold</b> ]	27:1
New Jersey	14:1
[799-C on cover]: New York State Political	14:2
[799-C on cover]: New York State Political – Codes	14:3
New York State – Means	14:4
North and South Carolina	15:1
Ohio	15:2
Pennsylvania	16:1
Texas Voters [ <b>bold</b> ]	27:2

	<b>Box:File</b>
Texas Means <b>[mold]</b>	27:3
Texas – Coded Questions [2 copies] <b>[mold]</b>	27:4-5
Wisconsin	16:2
Wave 2 (September 1968) [ORC #798-Y]	
Illinois	17:1
Michigan	17:2
Missouri <b>[mold]</b>	28:1
New Jersey	17:3
New York State	17:4
N/S Carolina	17:5
Ohio	17:6
Pennsylvania <b>[mold]</b>	28:2
Texas	18:1
Wisconsin	18:2
Wave 3 (September 1968) [ORC #798-Y]	
Illinois	18:3
Michigan	18:4
Missouri <b>[mold]</b>	28:3
New Jersey	18:5
New York State	18:6
N/S Carolina	19:1
Ohio	19:2
Pennsylvania <b>[mold]</b>	28:4
Texas Political	19:3
Wisconsin	19:4
Wave 4 (October 1968) [ORC #798-Y]	
Michigan	19:5
New Jersey	19:6
New York State	20:1
Ohio	20:2
Pennsylvania	20:3
Texas	20:4

ORC #799-U. Public Appraises the Nixon Administration and Key Issues, May 1969 [NB = PRIM I; carried out April 25-May 2, 1969]

- |                        |      |
|------------------------|------|
| 1) final report;       | 4:1  |
| 2) computer statistics | 20:5 |

ORC #790-AA. Vermont Public Appraises the Nixon Administration and the ABM Issue, June 1969 [NB: carried out May 29-June 1, 1969]

- |                        |      |
|------------------------|------|
| 1) report              | 4:2  |
| 2) computer statistics | 20:6 |

	<b>Box:File</b>
ORC #794-B. Public Appraises the Nixon Administration and Key Issues (with Particular Emphasis on Vietnam), August 1969 [NB: = PRIM II; carried out July 28-August 4, 1969]	
1) final report;	4:3
2) computer statistics;	20:7
3) draft questionnaire; work papers.	4:4-5
 [Combines ORC surveys #'s 799-U and 794-B.] Public Appraises the Nixon Administration and Key Issues. May, August 1969.	 4:6-7
 ORC #790-AF. Public Appraises the Nixon Administration and Key Issues (November/December 1969). December 1969 [NB: = PRIM III; carried out November 27-December 8, 1969]	
1) final report (copy 4 of 5);	4:8-9
2) draft report (copy 6 of 7);	4:10
3) computer statistics	20:8
4) survey form, draft 2	4:11
 ORC #790-AP. Public Appraises the Nixon Administration and Key Issues (March/April 1970). May 1970 [NB: = PRIM IV; carried out March 28-April 21, 1970]	
1) report	5:1-2
2) summary report	5:3
3) computer statistics	20:9
4) PRIM IV requests	5:4
 ORC #791-AA. Public Appraises the Nixon Administration; with special emphasis on the Asian war; inflation and the economy; student unrest (June 1970). July 1970 [NB: = PRIM IV; carried out June 17-23, 1970].	
1) report (revised)	5:5-6
2) report	5:7
3) summary report	5:8
4) computer statistics, all political parties	21:1
5) computer statistics, Democrats	21:2
6) computer statistics, Independents	21:3
7) computer statistics, Republicans	21:4
8) PRIM V working papers I	5:9
9) PRIM V working papers II	5:10
 Binder: "State of the Union Survey. January [28] 1971", containing	 21:5
1) ORC #69002. January 1971.	
2) ORC #69005. March 1971.	
3) ORC #69006. March 1971.	

	<b>Box:File</b>
ORC #69002. State of the Union Address, 1971. January 26-28, 1971. Computer statistics.	21:6
ORC #69005. National Study, March 1-3, 1971. Computer statistics.	21:7
ORC #69006. National Study, March 6-7, 1971. Computer statistics.	21:8
ORC #69007. National Study, April 1, 1971. Computer statistics.	21:9
ORC #69008. National Study, April 7, 1971. Computer statistics.	21:10
ORC #69001. Public Opinion on Key Domestic Issues; A Nationwide Survey, May 1971.	5:11-12
ORC #69003. Public Appraises President Nixon and His Administration; with Special Emphasis on the Public's Perception of President Nixon; His Performance as President; the Nixon Administration; Trends on Specific Issues. May 1971.	
1) report (2 vols.)	6:1-5
2) RMN Image 1971	6:6-7
3) semantic differential	6:8

### **Subseries 3: Chilton Research Services.**

Date: June 1969-February 1971

Extent:

The bulk of this subseries is comprised of computer printouts for state studies for the 1970 mid-term election. Surveys have a four-digit number beginning in "9". The surveys are arranged chronologically; oversize computer printouts are filed separately.

	<b>Box:File</b>
Survey Related to President Nixon's June 19 [1969] Press Conference.	6:9
CRS #9269. Opinion Study. President Nixon's European-Asian Trip. For Republican National Committee. August 12, 1969.	
1) Questionnaire	6:10
2) Computer statistics	22:1
CRS #9301. Special Massachusetts Congressional Election Study.	22:2

	<b>Box:File</b>
For Republican National Committee. October 6-8, 1969. Computer statistics.	
Special New Jersey Gubernatorial Election Study. For Republican National Committee. October 11-12, 1969. Computer statistics.	22:3
CRS #9331. Haynsworth Nomination Study. November 1969.	6:11
CRS #9345. Maryland Political Attitude. November 1969.	
1) Methodology	6:12
2) Computer statistics.	22:4
CRS #9399. Alabama Governorship Study. March 1970.	
1) report	6:13
2) computer statistics	22:5
Postal Workers Study. March 1970.	6:14
CRS #9437. Presidential Image, April 1970.	
1) Summary Reports	6:15
2) Computer Statistics, Waves I-III	22:6
3) Computer Statistics, Wave IV	22:7
CRS #9448. Public Opinion Regarding President Nixon's April 30 <sup>th</sup> Announcement of his Decision on American Involvement in Cambodia. May 1970.	
1) Report	6:16
2) Computer Statistics	22:8
CRS #9457. Study of Public Opinion Regarding Student Protests and Other Public Issues. May 1970.	
1) Report	6:17
2) Computer Statistics	22:9
New York State Study. August 1970. Computer statistics.	29:1
CRS #9523. Maryland Study. September 1970.	
1) Report	6:18
2) Computer Statistics (2 copies)	23:1-2
CRS #9524. New Jersey Study. September 1970.	
1) Report	6:19
2) Computer Statistics	23:3
CRS #9526. Nevada Study. September 1970.	

	<b>Box:File</b>
1) Report	6:20
2) Computer Statistics ( 2 copies; binder/stapled)	23:4-5
 CRS #9531. Montana Study. October 1970.	
1) Report	6:21
2) Computer Statistics	23:6
 CRS #9532. New York State Study. October 1970.	
1) Report	7:1
2) Computer Statistics (2 copies; binder/stapled)	23:7-8
3) Handwritten notes by Derge	7:2
 CRS #9533. National Issues Study. October 8-9, 1970. Computer Statistics.	
	24:1
 CRS #9534. Connecticut Study. October 1970.	
1) Report	7:3
2) Computer Statistics (2 copies; binder/stapled)	24:2-3
 CRS #9535. Texas Study. October 1970.	
1) Report	7:4
2) Computer Statistics (2 copies; binder/stapled)	24:4-5
 CRS #9536. Wisconsin Study. October 1970.	
1) Report	7:5
2) Computer Statistics (2 copies; binder/stapled)	24:6-7
 CRS #9537. New Mexico Study. October 1970.	
1) Report	7:6
2) Computer Statistics (2 copies; binder/stapled)	25:1-2
 CRS #9542. Connecticut State Study II (Repeat). October 14, 1970. Computer Statistics (2 copies; binder/stapled)	
	25:3-4
 CRS #9544. New Jersey Study II. October 1970. Computer Statistics	
1) Copy 1	25:5
2) Copy 2	29:2
 CRS #9552. Post Election Study. November 9-10, 1970. Computer Statistics.	
	29:3
 CRS #9567. Rescue Mission Study. December 1970. Computer Statistics	
	25:6

CRS #9575. 91 <sup>st</sup> Congress Study. December 1970. Computer Statistics. Working copy.	<b>Box:File</b> 26:1
CRS #9582. January 4 Television Appearance Study. January 1971.	
1) Comparison to Gallup Poll	7:6
2) Computer Statistics	26:2
CRS #9592. State of the Union Speech. January 28, 1971.	
1) Report	7:7
2) Computer Statistics [ <b>bold</b> ]	28:5
CRS #9633. Philadelphia Study. February 1971. Computer Statistics.	26:3

**Subseries 4: Other Surveys.**

Date: 1968

Extent:

Three surveys concerning the 1968 Presidential election, compiled by other research services. Arranged chronologically, by date of compilation or publication.

Binder containing the following:	<b>Box:File</b> 7:8
1) "Important Problems" (Open End)	
2) "Areas of Concern" (Structured List)	
3) Reasons For & Against Candidates.	
Compiled from ORC Baseline Study by Market Information Department, Fuller & Smith & Ross. August 1968.	
County Priority Analysis (CPA). Los Angeles: Datamatics, September 4, 1968	7:9-23
Electoral Vote Analysis, October 1968 [in ORC binder]	7:24

**Series 2: Memoranda and Subject Files.**

Date: 1968-1974 (bulk 1969-1970).

Extent:

This series comprises a series memoranda and subject folders relating to the nature and science of polling and the development and implementation of polling

practices by the Republican National Committee and the Administration. The materials include:

1. A memorandum by Derge, dated May 3, 1971, and addressed to John Whittaker on environmental issues.
2. The "Surveys" subject file contains fragmentary correspondence from 1967 on the costs of surveys; copies of items from periodical literature on the nature and science of polling; sample survey forms; and several sample surveys.
3. The "Gallup Presidential Ratings" subject file documents the development and implementation by the Republican Party in 1969 and 1970 of a polling system more suited to its needs than the Gallup polls. The papers include a PRIM schedule for 1969-1972, and schedules of costs for PRIM III-VI. (For additional records of PRIM I-V, see Series 1). The file also includes newspaper clippings from March-May 1970 relating to President Nixon's approval ratings, as well as compiled lists of Presidential Events, Principal News Events, Consumer Price Index, and Popularity Trend Summary for January 1969-February/April 1970. The file also includes analyses of responses to several survey questions, taken from surveys included in Series 1.
4. The "Political Current" subject file contains material from 1969-1970, and appears to have been originally intended as a "holding" file for materials of immediate interest to Derge. The materials include an undated draft memorandum concerning information gathering systems, and an undated proposal by Derge detailing a proposed Institute for Attitude Research at Indiana University. The file includes correspondence between Derge, members of the Republican National Committee, and officers of Chilton Research Services and Opinion Research. The file also includes copies of a number of articles from periodical literature relating to polling, in particular with relationship to the 1968 Presidential election, and a list of proposed state studies for the 1970 mid-term election (for records of these studies, see Series 1, Subseries 3). Derge's typed and handwritten notes include lists and descriptions individuals willing to work on survey data. The file also contains brochures and project proposals from several research firms.

	<b>Box:File</b>
Environment memorandum, Derge to John Whittaker, May 3, 1971.	7:25
Surveys	7:26-27
Gallup Presidential Ratings	8:1
Political Current	8:2-3



**Series 3: Handbooks.**

Dates: 1968-1971

Extent:

This series comprises two items, a Nixon Information Binder, dated June 21, 1968, prepared for the Presidential election campaign, and a Political Databank, formerly in four loose-leaf binders, compiled during his presidency and continuously updated. Both detail, respectively, candidate and President Nixon's positions on various topics, and include appropriate quotes from newspaper and magazine articles, speeches, and interviews.

Nixon Information Binder. June 21, 1968.	<b>Box:File</b> 8:4-8
Political Databank. 4 volumes.	
1) Vol. 1	9:1-4
2) Vol. 2	9:5-9
3) Vol. 3	10:1-4
4) Vol. 4	10:5-7

**Series 4: Publications and Teaching.**

Dates: 1969, 1974

Extent:

This series includes correspondence and other materials concerning a proposed article for POQ [Public Opinion Quarterly] on the 1968 election. The materials appear to be taken from other folders (see General Note to Series Descriptions above), include a copy of a letter, dated July 6, 1968, formalizing the terms for the 1968 Presidential Election survey (Opinion Research Corp. survey 798); a copy of survey form 798-Y, Wave 3; switches in voting preference between mid-July and early September 1968; a final electoral vote projection, dated November 4, 1968; and a handwritten outline by Derge. The series also includes notes of an administrative nature concerning a class session Derge took over from a colleague at Southern Illinois University in 1974.

Publications and Teaching	<b>Box:File</b> 10:8
<b>Transfer Sheets</b>	10:9