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## Jimmy Carter and the Presidential Library System

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### Abstract

Ralph Waldo Emerson felt that the study of history was significant to the individual for what it revealed about his own life. The monuments of other ages should be studied until the student "lives along the whole line of temples and sphinxes and catacombs, passes through them all with satisfaction, and they live again to the mind, or are *now*." The interest with which he might have viewed his own nation's monuments in the form of presidential libraries can only be surmised. He might have been appalled that the simple democratic nation he knew in the 1840s had come to erect imposing memorials to its presidents. On the other hand, it is difficult to imagine him finding fault with the efforts to preserve and make available to its citizens the written record of the country's chief executives. Certainly, it is much easier to make the "There and Then" of history, the "Here and Now" of knowledge, if the full documentary record of a time is preserved.

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