

## II. THE NEXT STAGE?

BY JULIAN P. BOYD

MY task is to explore the problematical future of the scholar-editor in the United States and I face it fully aware of the fact that prophecy is no part of the duty of a student of the past. The work of the early laborers in the vineyard has been described with the competence we have come to expect from the preceding speaker. The current harvest seems abundant, but this may be deceptive. In the past decade a flowering of seed planted by Jameson and others has dazzled us by its color, size, luxuriance, proliferation, and cost. Universities have provided sheltering hot-houses, foundations have furnished rich soil, scholarly presses have assumed responsibilities of production and distribution of unprecedented dimensions, learned societies and libraries have discovered old treasures and received new ones in the plowing and harrowing of manuscript collections by the busy editorial gardeners, and cross-fertilizing air currents have been stirred by the revitalized National Historical Publications Commission of which Jameson and others dreamed. Competitions, exhibits, and friendly rivalries have helped to speed on a growth in which there appears at once a healthy variety and a disconcerting pattern of similarity. This decade of flowering has been conspicuous, but, like the initial stages of planning, organizing, and launching a new documentary project, it may also seem deceptively easy. The hardest years are undoubtedly ahead, and if we like the first flowering it will be prudent of us to examine the roots. Their healthy preservation should be a matter of concern to the historical profession, to universities, to philanthropic foundations, and to government.

We have been told that the study of history is irrelevant in an age of such violent change and that ours is a dead or

dying profession because the past has no certainties to offer, no lessons of possible applicability in such a future as we are likely to have. This view comes from neighboring disciplines and it has been most effectively rebutted by one who is, according to all of the professional tests, an amateur student of history. Under the impact of such an age as ours, George Kennan has said, man "needs to be reminded of the nature of the species he belongs to, of the limitations that rest on him, of the essential elements, both tragic and hopeful, of his own condition. It is these reminders that history, and history alone, can give." What the diplomat-historian is saying is that history has become the most relevant of studies in a time of revolution because it is concerned with the nature of man and the wellsprings of his actions. In our preoccupation with groups, interests, and trends; in our eagerness to apply the method of the statistician or the sociologist to the problems of the past; in our belief that a mechanical analysis of styles in *The Federalist* gets us farther along the road because a machine confirms what the mind has discovered; in our almost desperate search for new techniques for gaining insights that old methods have failed to provide; in our yielding to the seductive appeal latent in all historical activity of wishing to influence public policy; and perhaps most of all in our neglect of the individual human being who should be at the center of our concern, we have obscured the very matters that give our discipline relevance and, in consequence, we have drifted further and further from the audience it is our first duty to reach.

A British editor of historical documents made the point half a century ago in a somewhat acidulous comment. In his introduction to the Camden Society's publication of documents concerning the foreign policy of William Pitt, Oscar Browning said that the importance of such documents could easily be exaggerated, since the key to Pitt's political action

was his character. This was begging the question, since documents provide the only approach to a dead statesman's motives, but Browning added: "When the political historian becomes weary of the mass of written evidence with which he is encumbered, and despairs of cutting his way through a tangled wilderness of assertion and denial, he will recognize with relief that his difficulties will disappear if he can clearly comprehend the character of the man whose actions he is endeavoring to narrate. When this is done, everything falls into order. To say that it is difficult to do this is to assert that only a few people are competent to be historians." The truth of Browning's observation and the bedrock assumption on which the work of the scholar-editor rests its justification was demonstrated with brilliant clarity last year in a single sentence by another and abler editor of documents. The four volumes of *The Diary and Autobiography of John Adams* have already become a landmark in American historiography and will remain so. Yet the information in the diary, its editor remarked, "is secondary to its picture of a remarkable human being—self-important, impetuous, pugnacious, tormented by self-doubts and yet stubborn almost to the point of mulishness, vain, jealous, and suspicious almost to the point of paranoia; and yet at the same time affectionate and warm-hearted, 'as sociable as any Marblehead man,' irrepressibly humorous, passionately devoted all his life to the welfare of his country, and as courageous a statesman and diplomat as his country has ever had." This, in the opinion of a critic noted for his learning as well as for the sparsity of his superlatives, sums up in one sentence "the first rounded, realistic, and lifelike character of our second President" as presented in these volumes. Many able men have probed that character, but the sentence was fashioned by one who lived with his subject day in and day out, who sought to reveal him with the utmost fidelity that the written record

would permit, who used old and honest tools to make that record intelligible, and who, most important of all, stood aside so that others might see the self-portrait for themselves.

We call him an editor but have lately made the appellation a bit more elegant by referring to him as a scholar-editor, thereby confessing that his special endeavor is one that must be distinguished from that of the youngest novitiate in the profession. The Belknaps, the Sparks, the Hazards, and the Drapers would have made no such mistake. They might have called him a chronicler, an annalist, or an antiquary, but they would not have underestimated his difficulties or his achievement. Two things they would have understood well, perhaps because they were less encumbered than we with vast archives, complex bibliographical controls, and the rigid conventions of a profession. They would have taken for granted, first of all, that the effort to re-create the past was essentially indivisible in nature. They could not leave to specialists the tasks of accumulation, control, and presentation of the sources for use by other specialists of interpretation and analysis, because there were no such specialists. They knew what it was to cope with the whole scholar's duty from grubbing among the detritus of dark attics to the lonely effort to probe the meaning of what they found and to present their findings to the public. "I went . . . in search of papers," wrote one such a century ago, "and . . . ransacked the old house from garret to cellar. Out of old chests and boxes, and drawers and barrels, I was a whole week hauling forth the horrid family offal—old shoes, old clothes, old dominoes, pocket handkerchiefs unwashed, bits of harness and harness mountings verdigrised and green moulded, greasy packs of cards, troopers' uniforms and brassy trappings, frowzy lint and yellow sick rags, articles of cast off shooting tackle . . . strewings of scattered shot,

bullets, buttons, pins, gunpowder . . . tobacco, jockey-drugs, and—*worse*.” But there were also the things that gave purpose to the search—journals, ledgers, diaries, receipts, and mountainous bundles of letters and piles of letterbooks.

That generation was not without its faults. It made some bad guesses about the value of what was found in attics, it culled from the mass such evidence as it deemed creditable, it destroyed much that seemed to cast a shade on family escutcheons, and it committed a number of other sins, including the unforgivable one of tampering with the text. But in its grubblings and siftings for documentary evidence, it could scarcely be allowed to forget that its endeavor was concerned with human beings. As the modern scholar sits in his specialists' paradise of an air-conditioned library, pores over manuscripts that have been cleaned, classified, and fumigated, receives from custodial hands the reproductions of texts whose originals are thousands of miles away, locates and orders facsimiles of others relevant to his purpose from a guide describing thousands of collections across the land, and spends a major part of his time communing under such circumstances with others who have rarely had any experience different from his own, he finds it difficult to grasp the second point that was forced upon an earlier generation of scholars—that is, that one who looks at a document is looking at a human being. He sees a reflection of hopes, fears, and other attributes of man. New techniques and elaborate facilities are necessary, but there is no substitute for the mastery of the old tools and for a knowledge of their uses. It does not matter whether we call him editor, chronicler, or antiquary, but it matters profoundly whether the profession understands that the single incisive sentence that probed so much further into the mind and heart of John Adams was fashioned, and could only have been fashioned, by an historian. It was wrought by an historian employing

with consummate skill one of the oldest and most exacting forms of historical inquiry—the identification, ordering, and scholarly presentation of the sources.

Since everything the historian writes is conditioned by the documentary foundation on which all phases of his responsibilities rest, it is at his peril that he leaves the control and presentation of this foundation to specialists not bound by his commitment or trained in his discipline. Unless the profession extends to this form of historical scholarship the same concern, the same incentives, and the same disciplinary requirements that it bestows upon other and more conventional forms of activity, it can be said with confidence that the root and flower of the current growth will die away just as surely as the great enterprise of Peter Force was brought to an end by an unimaginative Secretary of State. That a mastery of the techniques and uses of scholarly editing is not now regarded as part of the indispensable equipment of the academic historian and as being a recognizable aspect of his duty is beyond question. In *History as a Career*, a pamphlet addressed to undergraduates setting forth the obligations and opportunities they might expect on entering the profession, the American Historical Association quite properly placed its first and highest emphasis on teaching, its next on research and writing. It indicated that seven out of eight professional historians become teachers, and it described the opportunities available to the eighth as including “archival and manuscript work . . . historical societies, libraries, archives, governmental offices, large magazines, or even movie studios.” But there is no mention at all of the flowering that has seemed to many here and abroad as the most conspicuous development within the profession during the past decade. Perhaps those who prepared this counsel preferred not to frighten potential historians from entering the guild.

They could have done so quite easily, for here and there perceptive historians have shown that their grasp of the problems of the editor is as clear as their appreciation of his work. In his critique of Butterfield's *Adams*, Edmund S. Morgan has gone to the heart of the matter:

Historians who undertake these large editorial projects must leave the main channel of academic life. They do not teach; they do not write their own books; they do not enjoy long vacations for rumination, reflection, and research on whatever topics interest them at the moment. Instead they must live in unremitting daily pursuit of an individual whose company, whatever his genius, may ultimately begin to pall. . . . The [editor], having decided to forego a regular academic career, must entice other scholars to help him; and with the present demand for college teachers, this is no easy task. An assistant is no sooner trained than he goes off to teach and write history in the orthodox manner at a university.

There are profound satisfactions, of course. The editor, being engaged in establishing the canon, knows that his work will stand. Farrand's *Records of the Federal Convention* has served two generations of scholars and will serve many others, while monographs on the subject pile up and often mold away like autumn leaves. The editor knows that his method and the size of his canvas enable him to present the texture and the reality of the past in all of its confused disorder in a way that the writer of history "in the orthodox manner at a university" cannot. But in examining roots one is concerned with signs of decay, not with satisfactions, and such signs are too numerous and too obvious not to be noticed. Two unfortunate misconceptions of the role of the editor are symptomatic.

At one extreme is an attitude born of specialization that is guaranteed to accentuate its dangers. This view regards the editorial presentation of documents as being almost mechanical in nature, the mere fashioning of a tool to be handed to the historian in the cheapest and most efficient manner possible. It equates the editor with the microfilm camera and

the cost of letterpress publication with reproduction on film. Prof. Gerald Gunther in the July, 1962, issue of the *Harvard Law Review* has set forth the most carefully reasoned exposition of this view. He is genuinely concerned about the need for making documentary sources more readily available, and he is shocked by the wealth of indexes and controls accessible to the lawyer and the relative poverty of those furnished the historian. While urging that indexes, guides, and microform texts be multiplied—implements that editors have probably done more than any other single group of historical scholars to promote and use—he ignores or underestimates the function of the scholar-editor. In general he reflects the concern of Binkley and others of a quarter of a century ago in their redefining of strategic objectives of archival policy under the first intoxicating impact of new modes of reproducing historical sources.

At the other extreme lies an equally unsophisticated view. It also misconceives the role of the editor but does so by overemphasis, by conformity to current patterns, and by emulating the forms of editorial scholarship without proper regard for its substantive requirements. Institutional prides and competitive ambitions have not been absent in the planning of large-scale projects, though both universities and foundations have been understandably concerned by the multiplication of such ventures. In most cases these enterprises have been concerned with the papers of an individual, particularly those of an individual connected with the sponsoring institution. This in itself is proper, but is not the route toward the balanced program for which Jameson labored. Emulation of a single pattern now enjoying priority cannot remedy the threat of decay at the roots.

This has been recognized by the National Historical Publications Commission, whose policies have been concerned with the whole range of problems from the discovery and



accessibility of records up to their final use. Its reorganization under the Presidential directive of 1950 necessarily caused it to place emphasis on the papers of individuals. But the Commission remembered tasks that the profession had almost forgotten. Despite the fact that historians, jurists, political scientists, and others had used Farrand's *Records* for so long, no emphatic demand arose within the profession for a documentary history of the next stage in this epochal drama of the American people. The fragmentary and undependable edition of Elliot's *Debates* ought long since to have been declared obsolete, but no voice in the universities or in the foundation world was heard to make the declaration. When the Commission reaffirmed the Jameson proposal for such a documentary record of the ratification of the Constitution—surely one of the proudest and most important episodes of modern history—not a single scholar in law, history, or politics came forward to conduct the great enterprise. A heated controversy raged among historians as to the nature of this episode, showering sparks all about, but none of the participants volunteered for a task that could undoubtedly accomplish more for all scholars and have a greater impact on public policy than the ablest historian could expect to achieve through his own interpretation or his refutation of others' interpretations. A special committee of the Commission canvassed historians, legal scholars, and political scientists long and earnestly before finally it found a distinguished scholar in retirement who accepted the challenging opportunity. This solved the immediate problem, but the inference it allows for the future health of the roots is ominous. Meanwhile, the most illuminating comment on the spirit of the nation and its feeling of exultation over the feat of altering its form of government by peaceable means—a comment wholly absent in the battle of monographs—was supplied by a scholarly editor, Whitfield Bell,

when he quietly and authoritatively described the Federal processions of 1788.

Thus, in reviving and carrying forward this great project, the National Historical Publications Commission echoed the voice of Jameson in the past, not that of the contemporary profession. The policies of the Commission in this and other respects have been broader and more balanced than some have assumed, for it has sponsored the editing of documents on a great theme as well as those of a great man; it has promoted the publication of documentary sources by microfilm as well as by letterpress; it has continued to bring out *Writings on American History* under the exacting bibliographical eye of James R. Masterson; and it has sponsored and published Philip M. Hamer's *Guide to Archives and Manuscripts in the United States* that lists over eight thousand collections of manuscripts of individuals and institutions—"a Roman road for the historian," Lawrence W. Towner has called it, ". . . whose foundations are so solid and whose instinct for the right direction is so sure that they remain ever after useful while becoming immediately indispensable." But as a national agency having responsibility for the entire range of problems involved in the preservation, control, and presentation of documentary sources, its task is not to create a pattern or policy for the public or for the profession most concerned with its endeavors. On the contrary, it should reflect the highest concerns of that profession, and I feel certain that this is and has been its hope and aim. What I have had to say, therefore, should not be interpreted as being a defense of the Commission. Rather it must be taken as a reluctant indictment of the profession to which we belong—an indictment that must be extended inferentially both to the universities and to the foundations for attitudes which largely coincide with those of the profession. The indictment goes to the neglect of the roots.

This is a grave charge and I do not make it lightly. There are circumstances that could cause me to soften or even to withdraw the indictment, but I see no contemporary sign that these are upon us. When departments of history stipulate requirements for admission to the professional degree that equate an exacting editorial task with the writing of a monograph; when the profession offers opportunities for advancement to the young scholar that place commensurate values upon creative scholarship and the preparation of a textbook; when universities put as much emphasis upon the standards of editorial performance and upon the utilization of large-scale editorial projects for imparting to graduate students habits of precision in using the sources as they do on terminating the responsibilities of sponsorship as early as possible; when scholars tell foundation officials candidly that they should give no funds to such enterprises unless their grant proceeds from a conviction that the study of history is both important and urgently relevant, that it deserves generous and continuing support all along the indivisible spectrum of historical inquiry, and that the guarding of the sources on which all such study rests is indispensable; when foundation officials bluntly ask those seeking funds for documentary projects: "Why should philanthropy encourage such efforts when both universities and profession give scholarly editing an inferior status and when both seem indifferent to the future well-being of that form of inquiry?"; when the historical profession emphatically rejects sources that are obsolete and unreliable—for example, the *Annals of Congress*—and makes a concerted effort to supplant these with scholarly texts on the ground that the documents in such a case are utilized by all in the profession from graduate student to senior historian and that no other known form of historical effort or technological device can possibly meet their needs, to say nothing of the needs of jurists, journalists,

and others; when the historical profession not only abandons its reliance on unworthy texts but also concerns itself with the fashioning of new enterprises that need to be undertaken—for example, a comprehensive bibliography and microform publication of all of the reports, documents, and official papers printed under authority of the federal government at least through the first fourteen congresses—and again does this on the broad ground of professional and public utility, or, as seventeenth-century publishers sometimes phrased it, “For the General Satisfaction”; when the jury of our most distinguished literary award hangs its head and acknowledges its error in being unable to find any biography or autobiography worthy of its prize in the year that witnessed the appearance of “the first rounded, realistic, and lifelike character of our second President”, while other juries granted recognition to other works that will be replaced or forgotten while this landmark continues to stand—when these and other improbabilities occur, then I, too, will gladly admit my error and withdraw the indictment.

It is significant and symptomatic that the incumbent president of the Society of American Archivists recently paid tribute to archivists for having established the basic doctrine and method of their profession within a single generation, but at the same time warned them against the complacent assumption that this was the sum of their professional concern. There was more to the archival profession than this, Dr. Robert H. Bahmer declared, and it was the study of history that gave promise of lifting it above the routinized custody and care of documents. This, coming from a scholar and administrator of recognized stature, is to be applauded. But the fact that it echoes the view expressed from the same platform by the present Archivist of the United States a few years ago should cause some sober reflections among historians, who should know intuitively

that when warnings are issued a danger is likely to exist. An outsider looking at the archival profession and seeing the growing figures of the records manager and the systems analyst loom over the horizon can be grateful for administrators who have the wisdom to cling to the old tenets on which archives first rested. It is well for the leaders of the archival profession to take such a stand, but where in the historical profession—which in the day of Jameson regarded archival activity as being a part of its concern—is there a comparable insistence? Where in the historical profession has there been a demand that historians concern themselves with archives as a duty and not just as an opportunity that remains available, like the glossy magazine or the movie studio, after seven of the eight chances of making the grade as teacher have been missed? Instead of such a demand, one hears the argument that the custody of archives should be left to the specialists, an argument familiar also with respect to the related activities of editing and publishing the documentary sources. The warnings of the archivists are therefore significant, but they are not encouraging. They voice a concern in the archival profession that apparently is not even felt in the historical profession, where the dissertation and the monograph still represent the summit of the young scholar's purpose and duty. They tell us much about our own neglect of the roots.

Let me conclude this gloomy inspection with one glowing hope, though it too admonishes us. Three decades ago at the annual meeting of a professional learned society, a young man arose to describe the work he proposed to do. He was thirty-seven, about the age when the professional scholar has finished revising his dissertation and has reached the second rung of the ladder leading to tenure and to recognition. But this young man had never darkened the doors of a graduate school. He was an amateur in the old and noble sense of

the word, and he was about his task because he loved it, because he believed it important, and because he refused to accept a slovenly and inadequate substitute—even one that probably ranked higher than Elliot's *Debates*. He had talked with the authorities of his own university because he believed that a university, with its library collections and its community of scholars, offered the best climate for conducting such a work. He asked no funds, no professional status, no assumption of liabilities. Even so, his proposal did not seem to fit into the established channels of the university program. He had violated the law set forth in Professor Cornford's *Microcosmographia Academica* which states that no one should ever propose anything for the first time in an academic environment. He therefore had obtained a place on the program of the learned society, hoping to gain academic endorsement and with this to obtain university sponsorship. The paper that he read incorporated an idea that was entirely his own. It called for a new and scholarly edition of a famous literary figure of the 18th century; it argued that the edition most depended upon by professional scholars was incomplete, superficial, and marked by editorial suppressions; and it maintained that the replacement of that edition was a task that should be carried out in a university and with no compromise whatever of scholarly standards, regardless of cost in time and effort. The proposal was listened to, as he recalls the episode three decades later, "with amused unbelief." One question was asked during the discussion period. "Will you not," asked one scholar, "read us some of the suppressed passages?" An academic titter—one of the most withering forms of dismissal—ran through the audience. This ended the session but not the enterprise. It began, like the present flowering of editorial undertakings in American history, outside the profession.

Today Wilmarth Lewis and his great Walpole edition stand in no need of academic approbation, though both have

received it in full measure. Last June the Orator of the University of Cambridge hailed him as one who "from his youth up has handseled this task . . . of scholarship of a scale and quality hardly surpassed in this century." This, after thirty-one volumes, is only the latest in a chorus of superlatives that began with the cautious observation of a critic in the *Times Literary Supplement* that Lewis' *Walpole* might well "eclipse the Variorum Shakespeare as the greatest achievement of editorial scholarship in the United States." One of the most generous and accurate appraisals came from academic ranks, gratefully acknowledging that the solid underpinning of the editing had made the letters of Horace Walpole "for the first time intelligible." The case has been overwhelmingly proved. But the important fact for us to note is that it was an amateur who proved it. It would be both ungenerous and inaccurate to say that this happened because the originator of the plan possessed the means of carrying it into effect. What is of far greater consequence is that he possessed an idea and was moved by a deep concern—a concern not then present in the academic environment. These qualities of creative imagination and of an abiding concern for excellence are the indispensable ingredients. It is their apparent lack that makes the prognosis for the next stage of editorial scholarship in the historical world so gloomily certain.

But here, too, Wilmarth Lewis, that irrepressible amateur, has set an example for the profession, for universities, and for foundations. He has insured the future of the sort of scholarship that he believes should have a future. Understanding so clearly that his volumes would become an encyclopedia of the history, art, politics, and society of the 18th century; that its problems would require the training, breeding, and coordination of specialists; and that this could best be done in a university environment, he has taken care of the roots by endowing this enterprise liberally and in perpetuity as a center for studies of English letters and

society in the eighteenth century. Walpole is the doorway through which this area of learning will be approached and the great edition will be the cornerstone, but the structure will accommodate itself to changing needs and opportunities in the long future. This is an institutionalization in one area of scholarship of the idea toward which Jameson was moving and which was partially and momentarily realized in the long-abandoned program of the Carnegie Institution of Washington. It is an example, however, that we have not yet begun to emulate. None of the great projects in American history that have demonstrated their worth in a similar manner can look forward to such an assured future. Few, indeed, can say with certainty that their continuity to the end of the immediate task is safely protected. All have both their task and their costs multiplied by the constant effort to find and train competent editorial personnel. No editor as editor enjoys the security of tenure and other protections which the academic scholar has, though these may belong to him by virtue of some other form of professional status. There are exceptions, but the general pattern is clear. We have not protected the roots.

There is danger, of course, in the institutionalization of an idea. Professional conservatism, proprietary attitudes, and academic fads and fashions may gain the ascendancy. But the existence of a danger is not in itself justification for avoiding those measures required for protecting an area of scholarship about which we profess to be serious. For, in the first place that danger is one common to the entire world of learning, and in the second place one may always look forward with confidence to the ultimate appearance of an amateur so concerned, so free of convention, so right, and so undaunted that no amount of academic chill can cool his ardor. There is also, in addition to these factors and the normal corrective features of academic institutions, that most useful protection furnished by the law—the doctrine of *cy pres*.



There are signs that the National Historical Publications Commission may call for the emulation of this example set by an amateur. For some months the Commission has been studying its responsibilities in the light of realities faced by most of the editorial projects and in the light of its total duty with respect to the ordering and presentation of documentary sources. It is now considering the draft of a statement of policy entitled "A Report to the President containing A Proposal by the National Historical Publications Commission to Meet Existing and Anticipated Needs over the Next Ten Years under a National Program for the Collection, Preservation, and Publication, or Dissemination by other Means, of the Documentary Sources of American History." If adopted—and in advance of formal action by the Commission no one can presume to say whether this report will be adopted<sup>1</sup>—this statement of policy will call upon historians and others to advise it in the formulation of priorities of need. It will call for support to a conclusion of those projects given a priority status in its 1951 and 1954 reports—the Adams Papers, the Franklin Papers, the Hamilton Papers, the Jefferson Papers, the Madison Papers, and the papers dealing with the ratification of the Constitution. It will call for similar support for a number of other projects that have had the recommendation and encouragement of the Commission. It will call for a shift of emphasis to lesser projects which do not require such long spans of time or such sizable budgets and which, in consequence, may be undertaken by single individuals with moderate financing—for example, the papers of George Mason. It will reaffirm its long established concern for the use of microfilm and other forms of reproduction in making available to historians and others large collections of documents for which full-scale editing and printing are inappropriate. It will reaffirm

<sup>1</sup> The statement of policy was adopted at a meeting of the Commission on November 28, 1962.

also a recognition of its responsibility for encouraging on a national scale a program for the collection, preservation, and increased accessibility of manuscript collections, and for making these sources of our history more readily available to scholars and others by the development of union catalogues, guides, indexes, and other tools.

The Commission, of course, cannot pursue these goals without informed assistance. It therefore will call upon government, private philanthropy, universities, and, of course, the historical profession to re-examine their attitudes. The Commission's draft report recognizes that its recommendations with respect to the projects to which it has accorded high priority represent a radical departure from the principles that have hitherto governed the allocation of funds to the various projects. In particular, the draft reads in part: Most of [these six] projects are connected with universities but are not integrated with normal academic programs. This is a disadvantage in two fundamental ways. It loses the technical training that these projects might afford to young scholars and it handicaps the editors in the recruitment of personnel. Financing these projects by grants that are expendable over given periods of time, with resultant uncertainty as to continuity and tenure, has placed them under a serious handicap. The Commission therefore proposes that these disadvantages, uncertainties, and handicaps be removed by the adoption of an alternative method of financing that will not only insure completion of the tasks, but will in addition release many unforeseeable benefits at no probable increase in the total amount expended.

The Commission has no figures available for calculating the costs of doing this, but it is aware that two of the largest and most important of the projects—those dealing with the Jefferson and the Adams papers—operate on annual budgets that could be capitalized at less than a million dollars each. Capital funds of this order, made available at the universities, historical societies, and other institutions that have sponsored the projects might be designated as funds for education and research in the humanities, the income of which could be devoted to the particular editorial project until completion. After the conclusion of the editorial project that was given first claim upon the resources of the fund, its in-

come might be devoted to such research and publication projects in the area of American studies or the humanities in general as the appropriate authorities might determine.

A million dollars established as a capital fund at the Massachusetts Historical Society, for example, would insure the completion of *The Adams Papers*, just as the Sibley Endowment Fund at the same institution has insured the continuation of one of the finest works of scholarship now going on in this country—the Sibley-Shipton biographical dictionary of Harvard graduates, a notable addition to American history and literature that probably would never have been continued if an endowed fund and a devoted scholar had not been brought together. After the completion of *The Adams Papers*, the income of a capital fund established to insure that object could be devoted to the compilation of guides to the unrivalled manuscript holdings of the Society, to the microfilming of large masses of documents, to the publication of edited papers, or to other specific undertakings . . . that would support all phases of American historical activity.

Comparable funds attached to the universities that have sponsored such projects as the Franklin Papers, Hamilton Papers, Jefferson Papers, and Madison Papers could be expected to achieve comparable results. The Commission does not have the information at present to predict what such capital funds would amount to in the aggregate nor can it presume to speak for these institutions. It has only been considering their present and potential interests in this important area. It feels assured that a total sum in the neighbourhood of five millions would accomplish the object in view. Considering the manner in which the national interest is affected by these projects, considering that the income would continue available indefinitely for successive projects to follow those now in progress, and considering the relatively insignificant costs of those undertakings as compared with research in the field of science, the Commission considers that the benefits to be derived by the people of the United States would justify such support even if the costs were double or treble the amount anticipated.

Treble the costs estimated for such capital funds of a permanent nature and the total would still be less than the eighteen million dollars expended in an instant in the failure of a satellite missile caused by the omission of a hyphen in the data being fed into the controlling mechanism. Editorial scholars are disciplined to recognize the importance of hy-

phens and both computer operators and aspiring historians ought to be. Costs of managing missiles and editing documents cannot be compared, of course, but the way in which we tax ourselves for one or the other tells us a great deal about our estimates of value. An observant French emissary in America in 1790 commented to his government on the President's message urging the importance of encouraging education and concluded: "The most educated people on the continent is that of Massachusetts. It is also the one in which the laws are better observed, the government has the most vigor, and the taxes are proportionately the highest." Taxes, as a great jurist from Massachusetts once remarked, are a badge of civilization when they symbolize such purposes. All learning requires time, effort, and money. The scholarly enterprises which we have been considering are no exception.

The significant point about the draft report of the National Historical Publications Commission is its call to duty. It cannot, as the draft report states, presume to speak for the universities. But let it be noted that hitherto universities, philanthropic foundations, and the historical profession have not spoken of these scholarly undertakings in such a voice as we now hear. The Commission's call is addressed to government as well as to philanthropy and if in both areas it falls upon sympathetic ears, universities and historical societies will be receptive. But it should not be forgotten that the example was set by an amateur who had a conviction and a concern lacking in the academic fold. Most important of all, it should not be thought that the guaranteeing of financial support in itself can protect the roots from the elements. These are still exposed. They will remain so until the most essential elements of the amateur's example are embraced with passion—his conviction that this form of scholarly inquiry is important, and his concern for its preservation.

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