The Scholar's One World

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IN 1879 Henry Adams and his wife, a charming and articulate lady, were traveling in Spain. Adams had recently given up teaching history at Harvard and was gathering material for his *History of the United States of America During the Administration of Thomas Jefferson.* In Seville he planned to consult Spanish diplomatic correspondence relating to the retrocession of Louisiana by Spain to France in the Archivo General de Indias. But a royal wedding interfered by closing the Archivo for 4 days. The Adamses had a well-placed friend, and, as Mrs. Adams tells the story, "I mustered all my diplomacy and Spanish; said how disappointed we were," and that appointments in Madrid made a longer stay for the Adamses in Seville impossible.

Was it by any chance possible to give a present to some sub-official who might let us in for the sake of a new gown for his señora? Don Prudencio said he would see what could be done and come again later. Came back at dusk; had got a friend, who knew the head archivist, to work on him, and the angel agreed to let us in at eleven today.

Our good friend took us there in a coach; left us for three hours while he went to an official reception. The old man, who was archivist for sixty-five years here, was most kind. Among millions of bundles Henry found what he was in search of, and while I talked to the old man he went through them, and found that negatively they were all we wanted. . . . It's no joke to talk for three hours to an old man whose speech is paralysed . . . , but the interest I took in his son's house in the country, his granddaughter's progress on the piano, and the treatment he pursued when he became paralysed, was under the circumstances genuine. . . . [I]n short I feel as if I had personally ploughed an acre of land. But anyhow we've carried our point.

Some weeks later Adams found that in Paris (of all places) a woman's wiles were of no help, and unfortunately the "international reader's card" proposed by Secretary Kecskeméti had not yet been invented. So he found himself obliged to enter into a

The author, a Fellow of the Society of American Archivists, is well known to our readers as editor in chief of *The Adams Papers.* In slightly abridged form, this paper was read before the International Council on Archives as the principal address of the inaugural session of the Extraordinary Congress, held in Washington, D.C., May 9–13, 1966. We are indebted to M. Charles Kecskeméti, Secretary of the ICA, for permission to publish this paper.

lengthy diplomatic negotiation to consult and excerpt records at the Quai d'Orsay pertaining to Louisiana and related subjects. The archivist would arrange for a copyist, but the ministry required a guarantee of reciprocity on the part of the United States. Adams searched the records, earmarked and compiled a list of the materials he wanted, and brought in a supply of paper and gave it to the searchroom attendant for the use of the copyist while the negotiation over reciprocity proceeded with the United States Legation in Paris. He then left for London. After some weeks he was informed by Henry Vignaud of the legation that an agreement had been reached but the list of documents to be copied could not be found, nor any paper for the copyist to use. Adams replied that the list had been marked for the attention of the chief archivist, the "three large packages of copying-paper" had his own name on them, and the volumes themselves had slips inserted at the pertinent places—"unless they have been removed." He then tried to reconstruct his list of desiderata from memory, for, fatally, he had made no copy of *that*. A further letter from Vignaud reporting negative results prompted the following mild but surely justified protest:

> My dear M. Vignaud
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> We learn much as we advance in years. Do you suppose the venerable Faugère feeds on ruled writing paper? How *can* a huge mass, a cubic foot of English paper, made to my order from an American pattern, and weighing so much that it is too heavy to carry;—how *can* such a thing vanish in a well-regulated French bureau, in passing through two hands? Of course I can make no complaint, and must take what they give me. . . .
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> I expect to pay a very heavy bill, but if I am the worse for it, some poor clerk will be the better and doubtless needs the money more than I do. History is a stern mistress and more costly than an actress of the Variétés.

One is tempted to attribute to such experiences the disillusionment that Henry Adams, to our common loss, eventually felt, or at least professed, toward all historical scholarship. To speak more seriously, such incidents suggest the extent of the revolution in archives administration, in historical scholarship, and in the relations between archivists and historians that has occurred well within the century just past. We all know that there are still scholars who expect to be shown, in 3 hours, everything that they need "among millions of bundles" of diplomatic records. And there may perhaps survive in some dusty and neglected corners of the archival world a few relics of that former age when, in the

language of Dr. W. Kaye Lamb, the keeping of archives was a "peaceful" and "passive" antiquarian pursuit.

If there are such survivors, none of them are here. For the very act of organizing the International Council on Archives was a commitment of the profession to a very different and far loftier concept of its obligations. The title of my talk today consciously echoes that of the late Solon J. Buck's address as president of the Society of American Archivists in this city in 1946. Under the title of "The Archivist's 'One World' " and in the wake of the formation of the United Nations and its cultural arm, Unesco, Dr. Buck pointed out that there is a valid and important sense in which archives, so long and so closely identified with particular nations, belong to no nation exclusively. "Should we not, therefore," he asked, "think of all the archives of all the nations of the world . . . as constituting the archives of mankind, the official record of human experience in organized living?" And he then drew the bold but clear implication that thoughtful men have long recognized in such fields, for example, as archeology, the fine arts, literature, and the sciences but that, so far as I know, had been only dimly sensed, if at all, in respect to archival records.

> No part [of "the archives of mankind"] can be lost or neglected without affecting other parts and the group [or mass] as a whole. No one of us who has the custody of certain parts of a larger whole can or should try to stand alone. The administration of archives is a cooperative enterprise—cooperative at every level. Archivists at all levels in all nations . . . should give attention not only to the records within their jurisdictions but also to the protection and effective utilization of man's total archival heritage.

In this elevated context Dr. Buck in 1947 addressed his now famous circular letter and its attachments to 120 archivists throughout the world. The seeds fell on fertile ground, and in the following year this Council was organized in Paris under the sponsorship of Unesco.

The Council's history, plans, and accomplishments have been better told elsewhere and will be reported this week more authoritatively than I can report them. But as one who has hitherto looked on, approvingly to be sure but from a distance, and who has only recently examined the record of the Council's deliberations and labors in any detail, let me say, with all the emphasis that I can bring to bear, that I am profoundly impressed by the intelligence, the constructiveness, and I will add, Mr. President, the humanity of that record. The more I have learned, to take

just one example, of its efforts toward constructing, or reconstructing, the archives of nations deprived of them, the more gratitude I feel toward such an organization both as a working scholar and as a member of the family of mankind.

At the same time I must immediately add that, as my head began to swim from reading the records of earlier congresses, together with the reports on what is to be considered at this one, which arrived at intervals while I was trying to put together these remarks, I felt an ever-diminishing confidence in my ability to contribute in any substantial way to the deliberations of so learned and dedicated a body—in a word, to tell you anything you do not already know and have not thoroughly discussed. Having by now read all the reports, I am quite stripped of what I once imagined might be fresh ideas. My poor comfort must be that ideas, if they are important and valid in the first place, bear reiteration.

Perhaps I can take some comfort also in the circumstance that I have no pretensions to professional status as an archivist. You are gatherers and purveyors of records, and I am simply one of your customers, trying to piece out the personal documentation in my charge from the public records in your charge. Over a span of three centuries the Adams family of Massachusetts accumulated and preserved an assemblage of papers probably unmatched in quantity (half a million pages, more or less) and in quality as historical sources elsewhere in this country, for after a slow beginning on the rocky coastal soil of Massachusetts Bay the family furnished a continuous succession of statesmen, men of letters, and leaders in academic and business affairs through four successive generations. What is more, some of them married unusually able and articulate women who contributed brilliantly to the recorded annals of the family. As time passed, this mounting accumulation imposed increasing burdens on the Adams sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons. They complained that they had not shelves, chests, cupboards, or rooms in which to store such a mass of volumes and loose papers, nor time or hands to arrange them. As for the periodic question of what should be put into print to document Father's or Grandfather's career, successive Adamses with literary inclinations faced it manfully but with varying success. Soon after 1900, having first safely deposited the papers in the new building of the Massachusetts Historical Society, the family more or less threw up its collective hands, closed off access to the papers, and deferred the decision of their ultimate disposition for half a century.

In the 1950's a new generation of Adamses made a series of new and statesmanlike decisions. The first and most momentous was that the family records should be placed in the service of scholarship. The means was to publish them on microfilm. This was accomplished by the Massachusetts Historical Society in a copyrighted edition running to 608 reels for the period 1639–1889, and it has inevitably, and on the whole very favorably, affected every following action taken with respect to the papers. The point needs to be emphasized, for filming had been only well begun when the numerous and diverse components needed to launch a scholarly edition in letterpress fell almost suddenly into place, and preparations for editing were begun. That was in 1954; the last and largest installment of the microfilm edition was distributed in 1959; meanwhile, in 1956, the family representatives had made a final and magnificently generous decision by giving the entire collection, including all literary rights and income from publication, to the Massachusetts Historical Society.

As editor in chief, I have never found the prior publication on film of the main corpus of the materials I am using to be a handicap. On the contrary it has helped my work in substantial ways. Although we shall print the entire texts of the great diaries of the Adams statesmen "without a word expunged" (as the family has requested), we do not propose to perpetuate in print every scrap of writing that survives from the hand of every Adams. The presence on the film of *all* the scraps, together with everything else preserved in the family archives, makes our task of selection easier by allowing us to exclude trifling, routine, and duplicative matter with a clear conscience. A second advantage we derive from the Adams Papers' being fully accessible to scholars in libraries across the country (and, we would like to be able to say, around the world) is that their investigations precede ours in many parts of the documentation, and we have the benefit of the findings they publish. There are of course possibilities of conflict between other users' wishes and our requirements, but to our knowledge few actual instances have arisen because our only concern in granting permission to quote from the films is to prevent documentary publication in advance of our own volumes.

The dimension of the Adams editorial enterprise that is at once most fascinating and challenging is its international spread. Although they were invincible New Englanders and were therefore inclined to question the disinterestedness of all the rest of mankind and occasionally even their own, three successive genera-

tions of Adamses nevertheless served their country with great distinction in the highest diplomatic posts during times of national peril: John Adams in France, the Netherlands, and England; John Quincy Adams in the Netherlands under French hegemony, in Prussia, in Russia, at the peace negotiations in Ghent in 1814, and thereafter in London; and Charles Francis Adams as Lincoln's minister in London throughout our Civil War and afterward at the Geneva Tribunal to arbitrate the *Alabama* claims. It was their habit, in those days of hazardous Atlantic crossings, to divide their families. The diplomats' wives commonly accompanied their husbands, but sometimes they were obliged to stay and tend to affairs at home. The children were usually divided, some going to Europe for the benefit of their education and the others staying behind in proper American schools but having *their* education reinforced by the discipline of transatlantic correspondence. Whatever the distribution of the family might be at any moment in the combined diplomatic careers of the Adams statesmen, the results as accumulated in the Adams Papers form a wonderfully thick-textured fabric of commentary on world affairs, or, to change the figure, a continuous and delightful *obligato* to the instructions, dispatches, and notes to and from the minister himself.

In our effort to fill out the record of the Adamses' correspondence, both private and official (for we are giving equal attention to both), we have, of course, looked overseas. The task calls for great resourcefulness as well as time, money, and patience, and we are far from finished. Our own files of letters received and the long runs of bound letterbooks furnish the names of European correspondents; and the Adamses' dispatches and enclosures in the diplomatic correspondence in our National Archives confirm and amplify them. For further clues and printed texts we have combed the memoirs of contemporaries and the calendars and compilations of documents, both officially and unofficially issued, for roughly the half-century the mid-point of which is 1800. In tracking down the manuscript originals we have had the invaluable help of the great series of "Carnegie Guides" prepared under the general supervision of J. Franklin Jameson, and also of the massive files of foreign reproductions gathered by the Library of Congress.

Where such guidance is available, it has been possible to obtain much of what was wanted from foreign libraries and archives by furnishing them with precise lists and locations, or by copying, with their permission, from negative microfilms held by the Library of Congress. But correspondence, however economical and effi-

cient, is not a good substitute for direct searches when following clues as elusive as many are bound to be in historical editing. Nor is it any sort of substitute for traversing the streets and viewing the buildings and rooms in which the diplomats whose careers you are trying to document actually did their work, fretted while awaiting new instructions, or took their leisure.

So far, the editor of the Adams Papers has found time and means for three missions, all brief but all rewarding, to the capitals of powers at which Adamses represented their country at various times in the 18th and 19th centuries. By correspondence and by visitations, we have by now acquired reproductions of about 450 Adams documents from 25 foreign repositories. Except for fugitive items that may elude us indefinitely, we have obtained copies of the essential Adams documents in France, the Netherlands, and, for the period up to C. F. Adams' mission of 1861–68, in England. The long run of notes exchanged between J. Q. Adams and the Imperial Russian Chancellor, Rumyantsev, and his deputies has been found in the Archives of the Foreign Policy of Russia in Moscow, and microfilm copies have been received. Adams' mission to St. Petersburg, 1809–14, initiated diplomatic relations between Russia and the United States and had important cultural byproducts. Further searches should be made in the archives and libraries of the Soviet Union, not only for relevant earlier and later official materials but also for Adams' personal correspondence with scientists and scholars. It is my ardent hope that a way may be found to do so.

Still other pertinent materials have been traced and copied in Ghent, Stockholm, and Geneva. We have yet to deal in a systematic way with German archives, which should prove fruitful for us because J. Q. Adams traveled in and wrote about Germany extensively from 1797 to 1801 and was the earliest American to interpret German culture for his countrymen. And we have deliberately deferred inquiries and investigations among our hemispheric neighbors, Canada and the Latin-American nations. These are large and specialized tasks, which should, of course, begin with intensive study of our own files for all possible information and leads. If in an operation as extensive as the Adams Papers some things are necessarily postponed, this does not mean that they are forgotten. In a way, time itself works for us. As volumes are published, reviewed, and used, known and unknown friends of the enterprise tell us about outlying documents that might otherwise elude our best efforts in detection.

For their times, the Adamses, despite the stubborn provincialism of their temperaments, were remarkably cosmopolitan. For a whole century they were not only in close touch with world affairs but had a hand in shaping them while holding posts of high public trust in Philadelphia, Paris, The Hague and Amsterdam, London, New York, Washington, Berlin, St. Petersburg, Ghent, and Geneva. The obligation this imposes on the editors of their papers is a heavy one. The editors must not only seek out and present the documentation that will make the Adamses' roles clear, but, in order to present the documents fully and intelligibly, must seek to understand all those persons with whom the Adamses collaborated and contested, as well as the general and particular historical causes that resulted in the decisions taken. And yet, as I consider all that this implies and the long road ahead, I am struck at the same time by the narrow confines of the Adams statesmen's world as compared with the statesman's—and the archivist's—world today. While in their time it took longer to get between the great centers where policy was made, those centers were few, all the lines of power ran between them, and to this day they house, on the whole in excellent order and gratifying completeness, the records required by such enterprises as mine. There is comfort for me in these circumstances, and I can only wonderingly admire fellow historians who deal with a world in which they can get around much faster but must go to so many more places! It is to their needs and the needs of their successors that the International Council on Archives is very properly directing its main attention and effort. Nothing less than our hopes for an adequate history of the world of our time, with all its perils, confusion, and promise, hangs upon the Council's success.

I have said much more than I intended about my own work, and although the Adams Papers editorial enterprise illustrates certain general points that seem to me worth making before this audience, I am aware that no one else can be quite so interested in it as I am. Before coming to several specific suggestions and recommendations that, as a working scholar rather than as a professional archivist, I shall diffidently lay before you, I want to make a few further observations about the relations of scholarship and archival activity, and about public attitudes toward them both, in the United States.

In the 1830's Tocqueville remarked, in a passage often quoted since, that Americans were so indifferent toward their historical records "that in fifty years it will be more difficult to collect authen-

tic documents" to tell the story of life in America "than it is to find remains of the administration of France during the Middle Ages." Later, in the significant year 1876, Charles Francis Adams lamented that the American habit of mobility made it "idle to expect permanency" for any great body of historical sources in this country.

Tocqueville and Adams were deceived by appearances. The sources existed in great abundance, but they were out of sight and in disorder. Americans have always made and kept voluminous public and private records, but they have had an ambivalent attitude toward them. In 17th-century New England the Puritans kept diaries for the good of their souls, and their sons and grandsons did so from force of example and habit. Tenacious of both their property and political rights, and much interested in the conduct of their neighbors, they created and preserved excellent town, parish, judicial, probate, and legislative records—however bad the clerks' handwriting and orthography often were. At the point when it first recognized itself as a national assembly, rather than a gathering of envoys from the several colonies, the Continental Congress provided for the publication of its proceedings. The motive for opening the record is briefly and admirably stated in a resolution of the Congress dated March 31, 1779, which begins, "Whereas it is essential to the interests and security of every free state, that the conduct of the public servants should be known to their constituents," and goes on to require that the journal of Congress be printed and distributed to the States every week. Informing the "constituents" promptly and fully has been standing policy ever since, although there have been lapses in practice.

The result, as Oliver W. Holmes points out in his report now in your hands, is that our Government has always published more documentation than other national Governments—so much, in fact, that with the addition of State publications (for the States have followed suit) we are inundated with print and a subdivision of specialists in the library profession has grown up to tend to government documents. But librarians are paid to promote the advancement of knowledge, and what this policy has done for historical scholarship, both at home and abroad, is well illustrated by the longest continuous publication program of the United States Government, the *Foreign Relations of the United States*, a monumental enterprise conducted by the Department of State, whose hospitality we are enjoying at this meeting. We must freely concede that Secretary of State Seward had mixed motives in launching the

Foreign Relations 105 years and some 220 volumes ago, and that it upset some American and foreign diplomats to see portions of their correspondence in print almost before the ink had dried on the originals. But the boon to public enlightenment and, as the series has lengthened and improved in editorial method, to historians and political scientists has been immeasurable. The great point established by the 1920's, when the volumes and supplements on the United States in the First World War began to appear, was that it was not only essential in a democratic state to make the record of our foreign policy available, but to make it available as fully and as promptly as possible. We have learned that to publish too soon is actually not to enlighten but to leave the work to be done over again, and that, on the other hand, suppression and deferment springing from counsels of timidity create more misunderstanding and worse controversy than faithful exposure of the record. Such valuable lessons could not, of course, have been learned without long and sometimes painful experience.

I have said that as a Nation we suffer from an ambivalent attitude toward our historical records. If we can take pride in such ventures as the *Foreign Relations* series, we displayed throughout the 19th century, always allowing for exceptions, a sadly underdeveloped archival sense. No people except possibly those of the Soviet Union (whose revolution occurred within their own immediate memory) revere their Revolutionary forefathers with such conscious piety as Americans do. Foreign observers have remarked that we tend to refer to them as if they were in the next room or at least available by telephone. Thus we esteem enormously a paper in the handwriting of Washington or Franklin, regarding it as an almost holy relic. But for much too long a time we did not take good care of their papers *as a whole*. Autograph hunters were on the ground before archivists, and a collecting rather than a scientific spirit pervaded our numerous documentary publications before 1900. Men like Jared Sparks (whose great and versatile labors for history were directly inspired by the gift of a Washington autograph lifted from the files at Mount Vernon), the tireless compiler Peter Force, and Lyman C. Draper, who went about gathering old manuscripts in a knapsack, saved much that would otherwise have perhaps been lost, but they left a dreadful disarray behind them.

That such things could happen was owing, of course, to the indifference, or what may be called the archival immaturity, of the public at large, including too many custodians of public records.

How deep-rooted this was is indicated by the fact that the United States had no true Federal archives establishment until 160 years after independence. The resourcefulness and energy of two generations of American historians were required to bring about that establishment, and some of the honored veterans of the campaign are happily still with us, a few probably present at this Congress.

Once in being, the National Archives of the United States took giant strides and in a surprisingly short time moved to a position of full equality with its peers throughout the world. This is not the place to tell how it has done so. But along with many other grateful beneficiaries of its services I have been deeply disturbed by "a turn in the road" it involuntarily took in 1949. Under the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of that year the National Archives lost its status as an independent agency and became a bureau of the newly established General Services Administration.[1] The step had certain specious merits, but its net effect has been to hobble the National Archives' scholarly activities as distinct from its merely housekeeping or paper-pushing functions. It is especially ironical that this has occurred when the American public, Congress, and the Executive have at long last come to agree that learning and leadership are natural partners rather than antipathies and that the support of scholarship is a truly national obligation.

The correction of this mistake, by restoring the National Archives to its former dignity and independence as one of the great Federal cultural agencies, is essential to the health both of the archival profession and of historical studies in the United States. And if we accept Dr. Buck's bold reasoning that the archives of mankind are in principle indivisible, then such a restoration is vital to the advancement of archival and historical work everywhere.

Others have pointed out one particularly striking parallel between the archival history of the United States and that of the currently emergent nations. In the sense that we have had to reconstruct large segments of our history from the archives of "metropolitan" nations that governed and populated the North American continent, we are still an "emergent" nation, for we are still copying overseas. The pioneer, in this as in so much else, was

[1] See Oliver W. Holmes, "The National Archives at a Turn in the Road," in *American Archivist,* 12:339–354 (Oct. 1949). This authoritative and prophetic article is required reading for everyone interested in the history of the National Archives and in its past and future role in American scholarship.

Jared Sparks. His contests with and small triumphs over reluctant European custodians and their ministerial superiors are related in Sparks' still largely unpublished journals and correspondence in the Houghton Library at Harvard. The methods employed by the procession of copyists that he headed and that includes the great names of Bancroft and Parkman are illustrated, not well perhaps, but amusingly, by the letters of Henry Adams and his wife that I have already quoted. One remarkable figure toward the end of that era deserves more than a word, because he became a lifelong exponent and passionate advocate of archival transcription and raised it virtually to a profession.

This was Benjamin Franklin Stevens (1833–1902), originally from Vermont, who established himself as an antiquarian book dealer in London in 1864. By executing copying commissions he became familiar with the Public Record Office and conceived the idea, as the centennial of the Peace of 1783 approached, of making a systematic catalog or index "of all documents . . . bearing upon American affairs" from the beginning to the end of the Revolutionary era. Before long he extended his activities to the Continent, and ultimately his "Catalogue Index" filled 180 volumes and listed 161,000 documents. Of some thousands of the documents he took copies, constituting the long series of French Alliance, Peace, and Loyalist Transcripts now in the Library of Congress and the New York Public Library. Failing at the time to persuade the United States Government to purchase the results of his labors, he conceived a new scheme. This was nothing less than to photograph and publish in facsimile a copious selection of important unpublished manuscripts in the archives of the European powers engaged in the American War of Independence. This project he carried through with remarkable dispatch and success in his 25 volumes of *Facsimiles* (1889–98), containing reproductions of over 2,100 documents in British, French, Spanish, and Dutch repositories. How he persuaded the officials concerned to permit the work to be done is a story apparently never to be told although Stevens himself states that he was allowed "to erect a studio in the garden of the Ministère des Affaires Etrangères in which to carry out [his] work."

Stevens knew exactly what he was doing and explained exactly why he was doing it.

> The study of history, as well as the manner of writing it [he observed in the final volume], has entirely changed during the second half of the present century. Up to a certain time historians felt it their duty laboriously to con-

sult all the works of their predecessors in the same line, and to treat their statements and arguments as though they were so many original authorities. There was little study of the original sources except so far as concerned ancient history, and even there such study was confined to the classical historians. . . . The spirit of modern research, on the other hand, demands not only the opportunity of consulting the original records but the most perfect texts of all historical documents, giving the preference always to a veritable facsimile. . . .

Photolithographic texts are in every sense equal to the originals for working purposes, with the additional advantage that the student who possesses them, or has easy access to them, is not obliged to make long and expensive journeys, or to wait for permissions which perhaps may be good for only two or three hours in a day, in order to find what he is in quest of. He can study at his leisure and at his own time, and can compare the documents drawn from the archives of one country with those coming from another source. There can be no question of accuracy in copying or proof-reading, and he has the advantage of seeing the exact handwriting, erasures, interlineations, and signatures.

Here, from a bookseller (in whom we can excuse a little commercial exaggeration), is a good part of the rationale of modern scholarly practice. So far as I know, Stevens was the first man who thoroughly understood and applied correct archival and diplomatic principles to specifically *modern* manuscripts. His predecessors and most of his contemporaries, even those trained in universities, were satisfied with any text, whether original or copy, at hand; were indifferent to provenance, cancellations, and textual variations; and seldom bothered to study or record addresses, docketings, peculiarities of handwriting, and other small but sometimes critically important indicia. By the use of microphotography (which it is surprising he did not investigate for documentary work), we have at length surpassed Stevens, for microfilm enables us to achieve what he could never hope to—the multiplication of complete files, series, and *fonds*, rather than merely illustrative or subjectively chosen selections.

But if the advances in our own century have sprung in good part from microphotography and its accompaniments, it would be the most serious sort of mistake to overlook non-technological contributions of just as great importance.

At the head of these I place the creative thinking of a succession of scholar-statesmen, of whom, to obviate embarrassment, I will name only one. In his very first report as director of the Department of Historical Research of the Carnegie Institution of Washington in 1905, J. Franklin Jameson cited (or, as Dr. Waldo G.

Leland suggests, may even have invented) the Latin precept, "*Melius est petere fontes quam sectari rivulos,*" a free translation of which would be: "It is better to go straight to the sources than to bother with secondary works." Jameson devoted his life to this quest and trained and inspired a whole generation of scholars, archivists, and editors to carry out enterprises that he envisioned. The objectives he tirelessly advocated were the professionalization of both archival and editorial work, eventually achieved with the founding of the National Archives and the National Historical Publications Commission; and systematic and cooperative effort in locating, describing, and disseminating historical sources, exemplified in the long series of Carnegie Guides and successive amplifications of the Library of Congress program for copying American sources abroad. If we add to these—not a further objective but a notable talent that Jameson possessed—the ability to find funds to support undertakings for the advancement of historical knowledge, we have the chief elements in the present archival-historical scene in the United States.

Dr. Jameson did not live to see the beginnings of the National Archives' microfilm publication program in 1940, but he would have applauded both the motives behind it and its amazing expansion and success as so fully reported for us by Albert H. Leisinger. The basic thought animating it is, of course, that entire series of records of high research value should be copied once and for all, making them readily and unrestrictedly accessible to scholars anywhere in the world while at the same time protecting the contents of the originals from loss and the originals themselves from damaging wear. The same thinking applies to the microfilm publication of the Presidential Papers in the Library of Congress, begun in 1958 and having, as an added feature, separately printed name indexes to the contents.

Within the past few months have appeared the first finished results of another undertaking, so large in scope and possibilities as to take one's breath away, although for some time it has been a perfectly obvious part of our national scholarly agenda. This is the program sponsored by the National Historical Publications Commission to publish on microfilm historical sources of national significance up to about 1920, *wherever they may be and in whatever quantity they exist.* In the March 1966 issue of the *Journal of American History* Dr. Wayne C. Grover has reported on the background and aims of the undertaking—which owes its existence primarily to him—under the suggestive title "Toward Equal Op-

portunities for Scholarship." One may venture to differ with Dr. Grover on his estimates of the ground to be covered and the pace at which it can be covered, but one can only admiringly approve the equal boldness and good sense of his reasoning and his insistence that the claims of mere proprietorship must yield to the needs of the scholarly community.

By means of these three programs and their extensions that will inevitably follow, the United States will eventually place in the public domain—that is to say in the domain of world scholarship—all of its most valuable archival and manuscript resources for historical studies. We shall then be able to say that we have achieved the measure of accessibility that the archival profession indubitably believes in, although sometimes and in some places, including of course the United States and this very city, it has regrettably felt obliged to settle for less.

This summary of recent developments in the United States bringing archives more fully into the service of scholarship is not presented in any self-congratulatory spirit. That we still have miles to go and grave problems to solve in the United States, I mean to show in the suggestions and recommendations that follow.

The first of these recommendations I have already stated. *The restoration of the National Archives of the United States to its pre-1949 name, dignity, and independent status as an "establishlishment" in the Executive Branch, responsible directly to the President, is a measure imperative to the well-being of both our archival patrimony and the scholarship dependent on it.* The handicaps imposed by the Archives' subordination to an administrative agency whose interests are largely alien to the Archives' highest functions have not yet become as publicly apparent as they are bound to. This is because the successive Archivists have heroically clung to the scholarly ideals that inspired the founding of the Archives under President Franklin D. Roosevelt. But the generation of archivists so trained up is now retiring from the field of action, and the problems of recruitment and adequate budgetary support for the ever-increasing demands of such programs as those of the National Historical Publications Commission, the Federal Records Centers, and the Presidential Libraries, are ever more acute.

The phenomenal growth of the Presidential Libraries system, embodying as it does such vast educational and cultural potentials, has imposed a very special problem of its own. This happy but in its origins almost accidental idea has ended for good the perils

that many earlier Presidents' papers were exposed to and suffered from. But they may become exposed to a different sort of peril—exploitation for political and sensational purposes by the demagogues and irresponsible journalists who are always with us. A wise and strongly based Archivist, close to the Chief Executive (who is bound to be concerned with what happens to his predecessor's papers since it may later happen to his own), is therefore essential.

This is not an argument for long periods of restriction on Presidents' papers. In the current American controversy over what has been called "instant history," both the risks and merits of virtually immediate access and publication have been well canvassed. The history of President Kennedy's brief administration, I think it will be granted, is a very special case. While violations of good taste (if any have occurred) are always distressing, we are undoubtedly better off for having had the full revelations we have been given. Professor Samuel Eliot Morison, comparing his experience in writing the *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II* with writing the life of Columbus, has said that it is always easier to write about dead admirals "because they can't answer back." The outpouring of Kennedy literature—good, bad, and indifferent—offers everyone concerned a chance to "answer back" and will thus help the rest of us to arrive at the truth. Nothing quite comparable is available for Lincoln's presidency, for the diarists discreetly waited before publishing, and in the case of President Harding, unfortunately, there were no gifted diarists on hand.

Turning to a very different kind of problem, *I should like to recommend, second, that archivists, librarians, and all others concerned, at all levels, give still more intensive thought to better bibliographical control over the ever-mounting accumulations of photoduplicated material, chiefly, of course, microfilm and its progeny.* The present condition of near chaos springs in large part from the piecemeal, unplanned, selective copying that has gone on for decades. Someone once wondered where all the discarded paper clips of the world's offices finally went to, and imagined that the surface of the earth would eventually be so coated with them as to cut off all vegetation. Old strips and reels of microfilms—poorly labeled, uncataloged, without identifying targets—may sooner or later strangle curators and scholars as effectively as the river serpents did Laocoön and his sons outside Troy.

Constructive efforts are being made in the United States—and I do not doubt elsewhere—to bring order into this confusion, by

the central registering of microform masters, by improving cataloging methods, and by entering microfilm texts in the *National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections*. These are at least palliatives.

Unquestionably all *international* copying, exchanges, and purchases of any substantial or systematic sort should from this point on be reported to a central clearinghouse, and the clearinghouse should distribute cumulative lists of such projects and acquisitions to national centers (such as that in the Library of Congress for the United States), as well as to all others who can, or at least should, make use of them to prevent further wasteful duplication and to aid scholars who are either working at home or undertaking foreign missions. At present, scholars planning research abroad are so heavily handicapped by gaps in information of this kind and by overlapping reference guides and finding aids that they are inclined to throw up their hands, take off, and demand of archivists that they do over again what they may have just done for one or another of the visiting scholar's compatriots. To me it seems reasonable that travelers should do their homework before they start. But until they can do so with reasonable convenience and efficiency they will continue to be unreasonable in their demands.

Third, *it would appear that all of us alike—custodians, editors, and publishers of historical documents—are shamefully timid about experimenting with new and perfectly available ways to disseminate the materials needed to increase knowledge among men. We should be a great deal more courageous and experimental in this field than we have been hitherto.* The advantages of photographic reproduction have been recognized since B. F. Stevens' time, and increasingly well recognized ever since. For ancient texts, as Dr. Holmes reminds us in his report, there is no adequate substitute for facsimile presentation. This may be quite as true for some kinds of modern texts. The manuscript of Thomas Jefferson's Farm Book, for example, could not possibly have been as faithfully rendered in type as the Betts edition produced at Meriden and Princeton in 1953 rendered it by collotype facsimile, supplemented by other relevant textual matter and a full editorial apparatus printed in letterpress.

Microphotography cannot achieve so elegant a finished product as collotype printing. But it is far less costly and will yield inexpensive and fairly satisfactory prints, of full size and in any quantity wanted, by electrostatic transfer from film to paper. At present the common method of producing editions by electrostatic printing is to reproduce the images on only one side of the paper, making the prints when assembled in book form bulky, awkward, and

bibliographically distorted. But master plates can be made for printing on two sides, the pages can be assembled as in conventional books, front matter and editorial commentary and notes (prepared originally in typescript form) can be inserted before, within, and after the facsimile texts, an index can be added, and the whole can be bound and labeled for use and shelving like any other book.

Something like this method, or combination of methods, is being successfully applied by the Boston firm of G. K. Hall & Co. to the production in book form of unpublished library catalogs and specialized indexes existing in unique copies in American and European institutions. It should be more widely used in producing archival inventories and finding aids. As printing costs continue to rise, it is bound to be used before long for scholarly editions of texts. It is ideally suited to the preparation and distribution of a single document, such as a traveler's or a soldier's diary, or a group of documents, such as an exchange of correspondence (whether drawn from one or several repositories), of definite research value but intended for a limited audience. Eventually these technological innovations may prove adaptable to large-scale editorial undertakings, such as the Albert Gallatin Papers and the Daniel Webster Papers now in the planning stage at New York University and Dartmouth College, respectively, under the sponsorship of the National Historical Publications Commission. Their obvious value is that they offer a way out of the dilemma so often posed—and too simply posed—whether a given publication should take the form of costly volumes in letterpress or inexpensive but otherwise distasteful microfilm. I have had occasion to point out elsewhere that they have a very substantial further value. Documentary works produced in facsimile form will oblige every reader to become his own paleographer and, one may hope, will teach him some of the rigors and rewards of working with "original" texts.

Fourth, and for the moment finally, *the arguments in favor of copying entire series and* fonds *in all international transactions seem to me so overwhelming that I find it difficult to be patient with objections I am surprised to hear still raised.* Of course there are sometimes practical difficulties, of a financial or legal kind, in the way of large-scale photocopying; but no theoretical arguments against it seem to me valid, and everyone knows that there are very practical arguments in its favor.

If the experience of the 19th century, the age of the roving, selective transcriber, teaches us anything, it is that until whole *fonds* are copied they will be subjected to repeated forays, injurious

to the originals, time-consuming for the custodian, and expensive to the scholar, whose results will be of comparatively little use to his successors. Selective microfilming has all of these disadvantages. Worst of all, perhaps, as Antal Szedö has pointed out in his report, it interferes with the archivist's getting on with more basic tasks, such as systematically copying his most valuable *fonds* for security purposes, which will *en passant* enable him to furnish positive copies by sale or exchange to responsible institutions at home and abroad. It is hard to imagine any more prestigious and beneficial commerce that could be conducted than a free traffic in the historical records of nations wanted for study in other nations. All petty considerations of mere ownership and control shrink in comparison with the good it will do by throwing down artificial barriers to increasing knowledge and understanding among men.

I have other suggestions to make, but I should not abuse a captive audience, and you have a laborious week ahead of you.

In concluding these rambling observations, let me say, first, that I feel immensely privileged to have been permitted to make them before so distinguished an audience; and, second, that I admire profoundly the way in which this Council is facing up to its hard problems. They will not be solved in a week, a year, or a decade. But I sense here a spirit of resolution that brings to mind an anecdote the late President Kennedy was fond of telling. It concerned a French marshal, General Lyautey, who had arranged with his gardener to have some trees planted. The gardener saw no reason to hurry, because, as he said, the trees would take from 50 to 100 years to mature. "In that case," replied the marshal, "we have no time to lose. Plant them this afternoon."

Bearers and Preservers

Let me make it clear: I do not believe that the humanities must be justified on the grounds of any immediate and practical consequences.

In the most fundamental sense, they are good in themselves simply because they are the bearers and the preservers of what we call civilization. The historian who brings order out of the tangled record of the past; the critic who casts new light on the works of literature, painting or music; the philosopher who questions and clarifies our most basic assumptions—all of these serve to enrich our lives and to expand our vision. And together they constitute one of our most precious national resources.

—Vice President HUBERT H. HUMPHREY, in an address delivered at the annual dinner of the American Council of Learned Societies, in Washington, D.C., Jan. 20, 1966, as printed in the *ACLS Newsletter,* vol. 17, nos. 1 & 2, p. 7–8 (Jan.-Feb. 1966).