

# Research, Anyone? A Look at the Federal Records Centers

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**T**HIRTEEN Federal Records Centers, located in or close to major cities across the country, offer tempting opportunities to American historians.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless those eager to take advantage of the opportunities must approach the Centers with some caution. Only frustration will result if historians have illusory hopes that the materials available at the Federal Records Centers will immediately illuminate areas of study now perceived in the half-light of generalization and plausible guess.

To understand the hazards of expecting too much too soon, historians need only observe Richard S. Kirkendall's optimism in October 1962, at the prospects for scholars' using the Presidential Libraries and his disappointment, in July 1966, with the work turned out in the intervening period.<sup>2</sup> But Kirkendall's disenchantment appears to have resulted from a combination of circumstances. The unfavorable comparison he draws when contrasting the work of Hyde Park scholars (Freidel, Bellush, Fufeld, Burns, and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.) with the output of those who labored at Independence seems a little unfair although Kirkendall does take into account the fact that the papers in the Roosevelt Library have been available for research much longer than those in the Truman Library.<sup>3</sup> In pointing out how a recent study suffered because the author failed to use the Truman Library, Kirkendall himself has suggested one reason for the problem—Hyde Park's accessibility to a greater number of scholars.<sup>4</sup> Kirkendall also inveighs against

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<sup>1</sup> This article is an expansion of an informal talk to historians during a meeting at the Federal Records Center in Kansas City, Mo., on Oct. 29, 1966. Its publication was suggested to the author by Del Bishop and Don White, Center Managers at Denver and Kansas City, respectively.

<sup>2</sup> "Presidential Libraries—One Researcher's Point of View," in *American Archivist*, 25:441-448 (Oct. 1962), and "A Second Look at Presidential Libraries," *ibid.*, 29:371-386 (July 1966).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 29:371-374.

<sup>4</sup> Kirkendall concedes that Donald H. Riddle did use "the most important sources for his subject." See *The Truman Committee: A Study in Congressional Responsibility* (New Brunswick, 1964) and *American Archivist*, 29:378, note 25. For his views about the concentration of scholars on the East Coast, see *ibid.*, 25:444-445.

that bane of all scholars working in recent American history, "restrictions on use of sources," although conceding that this presents greater difficulties for research in foreign affairs (subject to the characteristic caution of State Department bureaucrats) than in domestic affairs.<sup>5</sup>

Whatever the peculiar problems of scholars working at the Presidential Libraries, these libraries must be regarded as extensions of the traditional manuscript collecting institution and thus as institutions subject to the caprice of those who participated in the Presidential administrations concerned. Presidents come and go, and they do not always provide the leadership expected of them.<sup>6</sup> Other men in high executive positions have then assumed more responsibility, and *their* papers, because of the importance of the men, have not *and probably will not* find their way to the Presidential Libraries.

To approach history through the lives and thoughts of those who made it is the traditional but certainly not the only way. Local and regional studies have generated much interest in and understanding of events too long considered only on the national level. Recent studies have brought sophistication to areas once the meeting place of contending dogmatists. But such advances take time. The research involved is sometimes staggering and, even when the study is completed and prepared for publication, it may do no more than shake the established views.<sup>7</sup> In general this sort of research differs in one important aspect from that which centers on an individual. *The difference is one between the scholar who uses the manuscript collection approach and the scholar who uses the archival approach.*

To oversimplify, the primary difference between manuscript collections and archival holdings is the latter's enormously greater physical volume. Anyone comparing inventories of holdings in manuscript collections with similar inventories in archives will notice the emphasis on "pieces," "items," "manuscripts," and "papers" in the former and upon "cubic feet" in the latter. How great is the difference? According to yardsticks adopted by the General Services Administration for application to Federal records, one cubic foot of records is equal to 3,000 letter-size sheets of

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 29:375-377. For another discussion of the same problem, see Herbert Feis, "The Shackled Historian," in *Foreign Affairs*, 45:332-343 (Jan. 1967).

<sup>6</sup> This is reason enough to justify their study.

<sup>7</sup> Probably the best known example of such a study is Forrest McDonald, *We the People: The Economic Origins of the Constitution* (Chicago, 1958).

paper or to two-thirds of a full standard-size file drawer or to half of a full legal-size drawer.<sup>8</sup>

Wayne C. Grover, Archivist of the United States from 1948 to 1965, in a recent discussion of the National Archives microfilm publication program, noted that 67,000 rolls of microfilm had been published, "representing nearly 67 million pages of manuscript material."<sup>9</sup> This leads to a rough rule-of-thumb: one roll of microfilm equals 1,000 pages of manuscript. The Library of Congress is now engaged in microfilming its Presidential papers.<sup>10</sup> The largest of the collections now available and indexed are the papers of Cleveland, Grant, Benjamin Harrison, Andrew Johnson, Lincoln, McKinley, and Washington. Altogether they comprise some 412,000-odd "manuscripts," "papers," "pieces," and "items" on 727 rolls of microfilm.<sup>11</sup> Thus each roll reproduces 570-odd "manuscripts," "papers," "pieces," or "items." Is it now possible to reach another rule-of-thumb: one "manuscript," "paper," "piece," or "item" is equal to two pages of manuscript? To be on the safe side, let us make it equivalent to three pages of manuscript. Using this one-to-three ratio and the General Services Administration yardstick that one cubic foot of records is equal to 3,000 letter-size sheets of paper, it is possible to reach still another rule-of-thumb: 1,000 "manuscripts," "papers," "pieces," or "items" are equal to one cubic foot.<sup>12</sup>

It is now possible to make some comparisons. Although Hamer's compilation covers materials at the beginning of 1960, it offers the most convenient means to this end.<sup>13</sup> According to Hamer, the National Archives in 1960 had some 800,000 cubic feet of records.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>8</sup> General Services Administration, *Federal Records Centers*, p. 8, 16.

<sup>9</sup> Grover, "Toward Equal Opportunity for Scholarship," in *Journal of American History*, 52:718 (Mar. 1966).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 719-720.

<sup>11</sup> These totals are additions from the Library of Congress *Indexes* to the following Presidential papers: Cleveland (p. vi, x), Grant (p. vi), Benjamin Harrison (p. vi), Johnson (p. viii), Lincoln (p. v, viii-ix), McKinley (p. v, vi), and Washington (p. xvii, xxx).

<sup>12</sup> This rule quite neatly fits the NUCMC description of the Library of Congress Lincoln collection, which indicates some 41 ft. for about 40,000 items that are included in 97 rolls of microfilm; see *The National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections: 1959-1961*, p. 20 (Ann Arbor, 1962). It should be noted that the Library of Congress *Index to the Abraham Lincoln Papers* (p. 5) shows the Lincoln collection to be made up of 14,724 "pieces." It appears that the figure should have been 41,724. The difference will not affect the rules-of-thumb arrived at in the text.

<sup>13</sup> Philip M. Hamer, ed., *A Guide to Archives and Manuscripts in the United States*, p. xviii (New Haven, 1961).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126.

By comparison the Bancroft Library at Berkeley and the Huntington Library at San Marino had holdings of 3,500,000 "items" and 1,500,000 "pieces" respectively.<sup>15</sup> Using the last of the rules-of-thumb, these collections then contained 3,500 and 1,500 cu. ft., respectively. Of course the volume of holdings does not necessarily indicate their significance.

Because of their training and inclinations, scholars using the National Archives really have not begun to exploit its potential; with few exceptions they remain content to follow the pioneers who marked out paths to the diplomatic, Indian, public land, and Civil War records.<sup>16</sup> These records and the subjects they concern are important, but the impression is that, despite the increasing amount of scholarly work produced, historians—because of inherent conservatism or timidity or indifference—do not engage in the fearless sifting and winnowing that might result in real advances in our knowledge of the past.

If the unimaginative use of materials in the National Archives is disappointing, the failure to use materials in the regional Federal Records Centers is downright shameful. At a time when graduate students (many of whom have great potential that needs only stimulation) are being increasingly squeezed between the rising costs of education and the vocational opportunities offered them before they attain their degrees, too many are driven into dull, pedestrian topics because of the apparent lack of local source materials or the lack of funds to make trips to where the really significant materials supposedly are. The irony of the situation is that throughout the country there *are* exciting materials that open up tremendous opportunities for scholars. These materials are at the Federal Records Centers. To make clear the opportunities available and the ways to exploit them, subsequent discussion will be focused

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10, 28. The Houghton Library at Harvard would have been included in the comparison, but its description noted holdings that occupy "300 stack sections" (*ibid.*, p. 251), a statement too imprecise to be useful. The Baker Library, unrivaled as a business history collection, had 41,000 volumes (ledgers?), 4,000 boxes, and 200 crates (*ibid.*, p. 232). At the Houghton Library, "the standard storage box . . . contains an average of 150 pieces" (*ibid.*, p. 251). If the "boxes" in the Baker Library are similar to those in the Houghton Library, it is possible under the three-to-one ratio to say that each box contains 450 pages of manuscript; 4,000 boxes then would equal 1,800,000 pages or about 600 cu. ft. If the crates are approximately 3' × 3' × 3' (thus weighing perhaps 400 pounds), their contents total 5,400 cu. ft. If the "volumes" can be assumed to run three to the cubic foot, then the 41,000 "volumes" amount to somewhat less than 14,000 cu. ft. Therefore the total holdings of the Baker Library may be estimated at 20,000 cu. ft. or possibly at 25,000 cu. ft.

<sup>16</sup> Meyer H. Fishbein, "Archival Training for Historians," in *AHA Newsletter*, vol. 5, no. 2:5 (Dec. 1966).

first upon the Federal Records Center at Kansas City, Missouri, and then upon one particular part of its holdings.

The Kansas City Center is the depository for Region 6, which includes Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, the Dakotas, Nebraska, and Kansas.<sup>17</sup> Its holdings amount to some 400,000 cu. ft.<sup>18</sup> The records are classified by National Archives record group number and office of origin. Some have no restrictions; some may be used only with the permission of the originating agency or the head of the agency in Washington; and some are not available to scholars. The last category includes records of the Veterans Administration (about a third of the Center's holdings), the General Accounting Office, and the Bureau of Prisons.<sup>19</sup> Among the records that may be used if permission is obtained are those originating with several agriculturally oriented agencies, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, the Small Business Administration, the Federal Communications Commission, the Bureau of Mines, and the National Park Service. The unrestricted records amount to roughly a tenth of the total holdings at Kansas City, or only (!) 40,000 cu. ft.<sup>20</sup> Agencies whose records fall within this class include several agricultural bureaus and the Interstate Commerce Commission. Also unrestricted are records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, some 5,000 cu. ft., and records of United States courts in the seven States.<sup>21</sup> These court records make up more than half (22,000 cu. ft.) of the unrestricted records. They include a very small amount of material (apparently duplicates) from the Court of Appeals in St. Louis and records of territorial, circuit, and district courts.<sup>22</sup>

It is a curious fact that historians and social scientists have provided a constant stream of studies about how Congress makes a

<sup>17</sup> General Services Administration, *Guide to the Records in the Federal Records Center, 2306 East Bannister Road, Kansas City, Missouri*, comp. by Harry L. Weingart, p. 1 (June 1966; processed). This guide is a general description of the Center's holdings. The Center is also producing more detailed guides to some groups of records.

<sup>18</sup> Based upon a total of the holdings listed *ibid.*, p. 3-46.

<sup>19</sup> Because of the disposal of large amounts of VA records, they now comprise one-fifth of the total holdings at Kansas City, which currently (Jan. 1967) amount to some 400,000 cu. ft.

<sup>20</sup> Compare this with the estimated holdings of the Bancroft Library and the Huntington Library, above; and the holdings of the Baker Library, note 15, above.

<sup>21</sup> Might not the Indian records, particularly those dealing with the reservation schools, give some historical insight into the methods and problems of dealing with the culturally deprived and perhaps shed some light on practices now being used in the poverty programs?

<sup>22</sup> General Services Administration, *Guide to the Records . . . in Kansas City*, p. 3-7. Although court records are unrestricted in Region 6, this is not the case in all regions.

law or the President makes a decision in response to geographical, economic, and ideological pressures but that when dealing with the judicial branch of the Government they have given their students a glimpse of a Supreme Court that is either right or wrong (usually "liberal" or "conservative"). But if it can be assumed that the cases that reach the highest court are just those most closely tied to political issues, then the interpreters of the law, in the judicial sense, historically have been the Federal judges in the district courts, circuit courts, and courts of appeal. They are the men who have had, in the first instance, to concern themselves with finding solutions to the knotty problems arising from ambiguous, vague, and even contradictory legislation.

Although the Federal courts today present a fairly logical structure of three levels (Supreme Court, courts of appeal, and district courts), this development did not really come until 1912, when the old circuit courts were abolished. Previously the circuit courts had a particularly sensitive position in the Federal judiciary. From their inception in 1789 until 1891, when the courts of appeal were established, the circuit courts had appellate jurisdiction over the district courts. Equally important, "the mass of civil litigation between private individuals and corporations tried in the Federal courts, either because of subject matter or diversity of citizenship, was heard in the circuit courts," while "the district courts were principally criminal, admiralty, and bankruptcy courts, possessing also authority to hear various actions brought by the United States."<sup>23</sup>

If historians are content with but a passing nod in the direction of the judiciary, then no change need be made in research emphasis.<sup>24</sup> But if they wish to understand the significance of the law as an institution, then they must turn their attention to the lower courts of record.<sup>25</sup> In those courts of record, which are also courts of original general jurisdiction (in either equity or law), the case files will probably be more complete, with more briefs,

<sup>23</sup> National Archives, *Preliminary Inventory of the Records of the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York*, comp. by Henry T. Ulasek and Marion Johnson, p. 2 (Washington, 1959). This is probably the best single introduction to the composition of the Federal court system below the Supreme Court and to the records of that system. See also Albert Branson Maris, "The Federal Judicial System," 12 *Modern Federal Practice Digest*, 815-824.

<sup>24</sup> Paul L. Murphy, "Time to Reclaim: The Current Challenge of American Constitutional History," in *American Historical Review*, 69:64-79 (Oct. 1963).

<sup>25</sup> James Willard Hurst, of the University of Wisconsin Law School, and scholars inspired by him are producing significant work on this subject from the records of the Wisconsin State courts. The evidence in criminal cases, both in Federal and State courts, might be most revealing to social historians.

exhibits, and testimony, than the case files in an appellate court.<sup>26</sup> It is true that the historian interested in the development of the law may not use such records (indeed, it would seem probable that his end could be achieved by resort to the various published reports), but other historians, including those working on local or regional studies and particularly those interested in economic or business history, would probably find, in the absence of the particular sources they desire, that these original court records are their richest source.<sup>27</sup>

The use of court records can provide substance for local and regional studies and alternatives for economic and business historians, who are often stymied in their search for sources. If it be conceded that State histories are the form of local or regional study that has the widest readership (even among scholars), most commentators would also admit that these works use inordinate space in discussing early developments and partisan politics. Since most State histories tend to be an amalgam of available published works and the theses of graduate students, this is not directly the fault of the authors.<sup>28</sup> But lengthy treatments of exploration, party politics, and stereotyped "social and cultural developments" must drive more than a few readers up the walls because they are so meaningless. Politics involves more than periodic contests for office, and every intelligent person knows it, although he might not infer it from the text used in his high school or college course in State history. Vital interests are indeed involved in the outcome of political contests because of the power that goes to the victors, but State history is now moribund because of inattention to, or ignorance of, the issues underlying the campaigns.<sup>29</sup>

The economic and business historians also have problems. After years of painstaking effort to establish their disciplines, they find themselves on the defensive before a pretentious group of scholars

<sup>26</sup> "In the absence of constitutional or statutory provisions to the contrary, appellate courts ordinarily cannot review questions of fact determined below in the trial of an action at law." They are thus "in general limited to the correction of errors of law." 5A C.J.S. *Appeal and Error* § 1642 (1955). In equity cases appellate courts may review the facts.

<sup>27</sup> This was certainly the case for this writer's doctoral dissertation, abstracted in *Dissertation Abstracts*, vol. 27, entry 1020-A (Oct. 1966).

<sup>28</sup> But it is the fault of the authors, if, in the direction of graduate students, they continue to push the cultivation of the same old unproductive fields of study.

<sup>29</sup> As an illustration, from this region, of the type of State history just described, see Theodore C. Blegen, *Minnesota: a History of the State* (St. Paul, 1963). The disappointment in Blegen's work is much easier to understand if one looks at the great effort by his predecessor, William W. Folwell, in his 4-volume *History of Minnesota* (St. Paul, 1921-30).



who are determined to set the record straight (even if they have to manufacture the record).<sup>30</sup> Perhaps after the passage of time both the old and the new economic historians will learn something from one another. When that happens, they will get back to the task that counts—finding out what, why, and how things happened. In this task, court records may provide invaluable assistance. They afford a wide range of sources for the historian interested in land policies, rate regulation, marketing and distribution, labor, and the availability of credit. For the business historian they can ameliorate frustration by companies that either deny access to all scholars or limit access to a chosen few. To give examples from the seven-State region, the Union Pacific has long held to the former position and the Weyerhaeuser lumber interests have practiced the latter policy.<sup>31</sup>

Research in court records may, because of conditions inherent in the legal process, involve some pitfalls for the unwary. There is a long road between the institution of an action at law and the judicial resolution of the matter. At any time a matter may be dismissed by the court, by the plaintiff, or by agreement of the parties to the suit.<sup>32</sup> Even if a case is dismissed, however, the record is still available, and the record is usually more important to the economic or business historian than any decision that was or might have been reached. (The importance of the record as contrasted to the decision is most obvious in bankruptcy proceedings.) We should not forget that our legal system is designed to protect the innocent even if it means that occasionally the guilty may go free. A person or a corporation may act in an antisocial manner and not be guilty of any crime. But to escape conviction on a specific criminal charge (or any number of such charges) because of dropped charges does not necessarily mean that the defendant is a paragon of virtue. In many proceedings it appears that the critical problem was the determination of the facts. Once this was done the court's action could follow long established precedent and the law was not changed. If the law was not altered, then the decision had no effect in terms of modifying the law. Consequently the case would be of no importance to the transmit-

<sup>30</sup> For a statement by one of the new group, see Robert W. Fogel, "The Reunification of Economic History With Economic Theory," in *American Economic Review*, 55:92-98 (May 1965). For a reply, see Fritz Redlich, "'New' and Traditional Approaches to Economic History and Their Interdependence," in *Journal of Economic History*, 25: 480-495 (Dec. 1965).

<sup>31</sup> The Union Pacific now has a privileged scholar, Robert G. Athearn of the University of Colorado. The Weyerhaeuser history is by Ralph W. Hidy, Frank Ernest Hill, and Allan Nevins: *Timber and Men: the Weyerhaeuser Story* (New York, 1963).

<sup>32</sup> 27 C.J.S. *Dismissal and Nonsuit* § 1-86 (1955).



ters of the law—the compilers of the published law reports. Thus the scholar, even in the most complete law library, would never know that such an action had taken place.<sup>33</sup> For this reason, therefore, the published law reports are of limited value to the scholar interested in a particular person or corporation.

The only certain sources of information about litigation are the indexes compiled by the courts themselves. Since these volumes are chronologically arranged (though alphabetically within each volume), it is often necessary for the business historian to examine many of them in order to find enough cases to get a good picture of entrepreneurial attitudes and corporate activity. Such a list should cover a period that extends well beyond that which interests the historian because exhibits and testimony will often deal with events 10 or 20 years before the suit was brought.<sup>34</sup> Although there is no consistent policy, the clerks of the district courts usually retain the indexes in their offices. Thus it is necessary, in Kansas for example, for researchers to identify their cases in Topeka and use the records in Kansas City. If the district court clerk's office has also retained the dockets (volumes that give the numbers, titles, and dates of cases and a listing of the actions in them), these can be consulted to get some idea of the amount of material in any case. But the prospective researcher must be cautioned that volume is no reliable guide to the possible significance of a case. In compiling a list of cases to be examined, the researcher should have a title, the court and type of case (bankruptcy, equity, criminal, or law, for example), and, most important, the case number. Since the Federal Records Center's shelf lists (finding aids) are usually arranged first by court of origin, then by type of action, and finally by case number, the researcher should make sure that he has this number.<sup>35</sup> With it, he will get prompt access to the case

<sup>33</sup> "By no means all cases heard, even in appellate courts, are reported. The attempt generally is to print reports of decisions which make new law or are of general interest to the public, and to exclude those which lack these qualities and are merely routine." Miles O. Price and Harry Bitner, *Effective Legal Research: A Practical Manual of Law Books and Their Use*, p. 94 (New York, 1953). This once was true in the Federal courts, but not now. All cases heard are reported, and reporting is apparently increasing in the State courts as well.

<sup>34</sup> On the basis of research at the Records Centers in Kansas City and Denver during the summer of 1966 (after his dissertation was completed), this writer can regretfully attest to the truth of this statement.

<sup>35</sup> Prospective researchers should note that the originating agency (in the situation under discussion, the district court) has copies of the shelf lists, and researchers should become familiar with them. Because of the possibility of a lost record or one recalled by the court of origin, the prospective researcher should write to the Records Center before his first visit.

records; without it, he will waste his own time and that of the personnel at the Federal Records Center.

Although, as a rule, the indexes and the case files are divided between the clerks' offices and the Records Center, respectively, historical scholarship would probably not benefit so much as it would suffer by having the indexes at the Records Center. In the seven States of Region 6, most clerks' offices are near institutions that offer graduate work in history. To remove the indexes would deprive students of an important source for local and regional studies, the very sort of thing they can best do. What is even more important, the district courts can, if they wish, recall records from the Records Center. Thus researchers need go no farther than the nearest district court clerk's office to obtain rich source materials.<sup>36</sup>

What about scholars from outside the region or those working upon subjects not treated in the courts where they reside? For them the Records Center would be the best place to work. To facilitate their work and cut down unnecessary expense, copies of all pertinent indexes should be at the Records Center. These indexes should be correlated with the proper shelf lists and offered for distribution to interested institutions. A photocopying process would appear to offer the most convenient, cheap, and rapid way to reproduce this material. A neater but more time-consuming process would be mimeographing. Regional institutions offering graduate work at any level—and *all* institutions that offer the Ph. D. degree—should be willing to pay a reasonable amount for such guides to a region's court records. In any case a trial compilation for one region could serve as a test for a subsequent national program of this sort.

The scholar interested in court records will find that the staff members at Federal Records Centers are extremely able and willing to assist him. He should remember, however, that they have other tasks to do and that patience and tact will bring much more return for his effort than arrogant demands. The historian must also display tact and patience when he makes his initial journey to the offices of district court clerks. The staffs of these offices have been trained to do the usual work associated with those offices; historical research is not a normal part of their business.

And now a word with respect to the schools and colleges fortunately situated in the same communities with Federal Records

<sup>36</sup> This might create serious problems for clerks' offices situated in large cities or near major universities (Minneapolis is a good example). In such cases it would probably be necessary to deny this privilege. Scholars so situated, however, have other advantages that compensate for the inconvenience.

Centers. Every such college or university should have an archival historian (not archivist-historian) who is familiar with the materials available and with the problems that may arise in their use and who has general knowledge of the history of the region served by the Center.<sup>37</sup> This person should be a party to an arrangement, formal or informal, between the local institution and the Records Center, by which it is agreed that he will assist those researchers who come to do research at the Records Center.<sup>38</sup> Until more scholars become familiar with these records, the chances are that graduate students will be the chief users of materials at the Records Center. Steered into such a course by a professor trained in the manuscript collections approach to history, the graduate student may falter before what seems to be an intricately complex and virtually insurmountable problem. One should not, however, misconceive the role of the archival historian. He is not to assume responsibility for directing the student's research, but by helping him to find ways of using the Federal Records Center's holdings he will assist the student in attacking his particular problem.

In conclusion, a fillip to lead historians into at least one area of study that might utilize the Federal Records Center at Kansas City. There is little doubt that for the first third of the present century the economy of the area comprising Region 6 (the "Plains" or "West North Central" Region) lagged in economic growth behind any other section of the country. A great farming area, its weakness seems to have been its inability to build up significant manufacturing.<sup>39</sup> Although industry marched steadily westward from the New England and Middle Atlantic States, when it reached the Mississippi it vaulted over the Plains (and Mountain Region) to the Far West. While it would be silly to suggest that industry should have continued a steady westward march (markets do become more limited), the eastern tier of States in the region certainly had greater potential than was realized. Is the region's relative backwardness to be attributed to its concentration on agriculture? The Great Lakes States, once agricultural, did develop

<sup>37</sup> For a somewhat different approach to the same question, see Fishbein, in *AHA Newsletter*, p. 5-8.

<sup>38</sup> This should not involve *any* form of released time, but should be in lieu of other professional activity. Should his involvement in this activity become so heavy as to occupy all his time, then the National Archives and Records Service might consider establishing a position at the Records Centers to serve this purpose. National Archives and Records Service officials and the Judicial Conference of the United States should consider this matter jointly.

<sup>39</sup> Harvey S. Perloff, Edgar S. Dunn, Jr., Eric Lampard, and Richard F. Muth, *Regions, Resources, and Economic Growth*, p. 268-270 (Baltimore, 1965).

industry, but the trans-Mississippi States did not. Why not? A very casual examination of court records shows that in the early 1920's many investment companies and savings and loan institutions in Minnesota and Nebraska failed. The failures occurred, of course, immediately after the great crash in farm prices, and the records indicate that these firms held large numbers of farm mortgages. Could this circumstance perhaps have resulted in the drying-up of local sources of capital, thus forcing young entrepreneurs with ideas to go elsewhere to develop them? If so, the event proved catastrophic for a region destined to begin to take its fair share of the Nation's industry. Beyond that, it may have marked the beginning of that talent drain (now also discernible in the Great Lakes region and known as the "brain drain"), which has helped contribute to the growth of other areas.

Research, anyone?

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**Joint Luncheon**



CLIFFORD K. SHIPTON, presiding

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DOMINION ARCHIVIST OF CANADA

Speaker

12:30 p.m., Thursday  
December 28, 1967

Manitoba Room, Royal York Hotel  
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