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HISTORIANS AND ARCHIVISTS IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR[1]

A PRESIDENT who has been so honored by his constituents as to make it incumbent upon him to prepare two presidential addresses finds himself confronted by the necessity of making a difficult choice. Shall he display his versatility, if any, and make the second address brilliantly different, in subject and treatment, from the first, or shall he continue the theme of the earlier performance, perhaps with variations? My own choice has been to follow the latter course.

A year ago, when we were enjoying the cordial hospitality of Montgomery, I endeavored to express some ideas respecting "The Archivist in Times of Emergency."[2] Some of the suggestions that I ventured to offer on that occasion have been followed up by the Society, in the form of committee activities and of carefully prepared reports on the protection of archives, on record administration and the emergency program of the government, on the history and organization of government emergency activities, and on the collection and preservation of material for the history of the emergency. The national emergency has, as was to be foreseen, become more acute during the year, and, today, as the Society meets in this historic city of Hartford and in the New England state of Connecticut, to which our profession owes so much for inspiration and example, we find ourselves actively engaged in preparations to cope with a situation that from day to day becomes more ominous. Instead, however, of trying to peer through the gathering gloom into the uncertain future, I suggest that,

[1] Presidential address delivered before the fifth annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists, at Hartford, Connecticut, October 6, 1941.

The sources of information chiefly drawn upon are the personal recollections of the writer; the compilation edited by Newton D. Mereness, "American Historical Activities During the World War," American Historical Association, *Annual Report*, 1919, I, 137-293; Leland and Mereness, *Introduction to the American Official Sources for the Economic and Social History of the World War* (New Haven, 1926); J. T. Shotwell, *At the Paris Conference* (New York, 1937).

[2] THE AMERICAN ARCHIVIST, IV (January, 1941), 1-12.

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for a brief moment, we should turn our attention to the past, that we should recall the situation that we faced a quarter of a century ago, and that we should review some of the ways in which we endeavored to deal with it.

The wars of the United States, from that of independence to the war with Spain, were chiefly military and economic efforts. There was no such mobilization of intellectual and spiritual forces as marked the conflict that commenced in 1914, although the creation of the National Academy of Sciences during the Civil War was a significant suggestion of the total mobilization that we now take for granted. Military action was carried on in well defined areas, and noncombatants, far from those areas, were in no danger of attack. Means of communication were limited and uncertain, and only through print or in public assemblages could large numbers of people be reached. No reliable means of ascertaining public opinion had been developed—a statement that does not necessarily imply that such means have now been discovered, even in polls and sampling—and the conception of public morale as positive force, of military value, hardly existed. Until the first World War, the function of the archivist and historian was to record and interpret after the event. No doubt notable exceptions will readily occur to our minds—Thucydides and Matthew B. Brady, for example, but the latter would have been surprised and doubtless indignant if any one had called him an historian or even an archivist.

The importance of the historian as an agent of causation came slowly to be recognized as the influence of the nineteenth-century German historians and of the work of Admiral Mahan upon national policies became clear. The realization of this influence was, as I vividly remember, a source of much concern to Mahan during the last months of his life after the outbreak of the war in 1914. Morse Stephens, in his presidential address before the American Historical Association in 1915, took it upon himself to make a sort of public confession on behalf of historians generally of their share of responsibility for the disaster that had overtaken the world.

It was not strange, therefore, that when in 1917 the United States became a belligerent in the world conflict, the historians of the country should give serious thought to the services that they might render and to their own part in the phenomenon, new and strange to America, of a general mobilization. They conceived of themselves as having obligations to the common cause, that should be met collectively, and

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they set themselves at once to considering the nature of these obligations and the most appropriate ways of satisfying them. In this they were joined by the archivists—indeed, it is hard to distinguish between historian and archivist, for while it is not true that all historians are archivists, it is very nearly exact to say that in 1917 most archivists were historians. As we shall see, the archivists had a large part in the professional mobilization for the first World War.

Leadership in this professional and voluntary mobilization came from the Department of Historical Research of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, where were located the editorial offices of the *American Historical Review* and the secretariat of the American Historical Association, and whose director, J. Franklin Jameson, had long enjoyed a moral and scientific authority among his professional colleagues that was as freely acknowledged by them as it was modestly exercised by himself.

Early in April, 1917, after consultation with a number of scholars, Jameson issued an invitation to a conference in Washington for a discussion of such measures as it might be appropriate for historians to adopt in order to make their services available to the nation. The principal paragraphs of that invitation are worth repeating, for they reflect the spirit that prevailed at that time. "The problem," so the invitation read, "is one which has no doubt presented itself to the mind of every history man in the country. Many of them would doubtless be glad to spend a good deal of time in public service in war time, and most of all in service appropriate to their special acquirements, but are not in the way of hearing of useful tasks that they could undertake.

"Our thought is that if the questions involved could be immediately considered in a preliminary way, by an informal conference of a dozen members of the profession representing different regions of the country and different aspects of history—American, European, economic, diplomatic—an organization might be devised by which all this store of competence and patriotic good will, instead of running to waste or lying untouched, might be systematically drawn upon to meet actual needs, felt or unfelt, of the Government or the public."[3]

Nineteen persons attended the conference,[4] and sat for two days

[3] American Historical Association, *Annual Report*, 1919, I, 161.

[4] J. F. Jameson, who acted as chairman; W. G. Leland, who acted as secretary; Guy S. Ford, Frederic L. Paxson, Andrew C. McLaughlin, Henry E. Bourne, Frederick J. Turner, George M. Dutcher, Charles D. Hazen, Charles H. Hull, James T. Shotwell, Albert E. McKinley, Gaillard Hunt, John C. Fitzpatrick, H. Barrett Learned, Edmund C. Burnett, Victor Clark, Thomas W. Page, and Edward G. Lowry.

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discussing among themselves and with the representatives of numerous agencies of the government the requirements and opportunities of the situation. Their final decision was to establish in Washington a National Board for Historical Service, whose purposes were defined as follows:

> *a*) To facilitate the coordination and development of historical activities in the United States in such a way as to aid the Federal and the State Governments through direct personal service or through affiliation with their various branches.
>
> *b*) To aid in supplying the public with trustworthy information of historical or similar character through the various agencies of publication, through the preparation of reading lists and bibliographies, through the collection of historical material, and through the giving of lectures and of systematic instruction, and in other ways.
>
> *c*) To aid, encourage, and organize State, regional, and local committees, as well as special committees for the furtherance of the above ends, and to cooperate with other agencies and organizations, especially in the general field of social studies.[5]

The organization of the National Board for Historical Service was at once announced in a letter sent to a large number of scholars in all parts of the country, in which the board was described as "a voluntary and unofficial organization of individuals spontaneously formed in the hope that through it the store of competence and patriotic good will possessed by the history men of the country, instead of running in part to waste, or even lying untouched, may eventually be drawn upon to meet the needs of the public or of the Government."[6]

The letter then appealed for the co-operation of those to whom it was addressed, and asked for their views as to public opinion and as to methods and media of informing it, and requested information and suggestions respecting such activities as research, teaching, lecturing, the preparation of articles, the collection of historical materials, etc. The responses to this letter indicated general approval of the purposes of the board, conveyed offers of active co-operation, and contained useful information.

I do not propose to weary you with a detailed account of the operations of the National Board for Historical Service from its organization on April 29, 1917, to its dissolution on December 30, 1919. Such an account you can read, if you choose, in the *Annual Report* of the American Historical Association for 1919, as indeed I

[5] Am. Hist. Assoc., *An. Rept.*, 1919, I, 164.
[6] *Ibid.*, 165.

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suggested in my address of a year ago. I should, however, like to review briefly and in a general way its principal categories of activities, in order to show what such an organization found to do.

The first of these categories may be described as activities of research. The board did not endeavor to plan a general program of investigations, but it laid before the directors of graduate work in American universities suggestions which are as pertinent today as they were then, and which now, fortunately, are less likely to be misunderstood. May I read a few extracts from the letter in which these suggestions were conveyed?

> European historians [the board wrote on May 11, 1917] have long had the quickening, though at times dangerous, consciousness that their modern historical problems were instinct with life; that their topics for research involved sensitive international relations, were live wires connecting with stores of dynamite, were liable at any moment to pass from history into present action.
>
> Are not American historians learning that some of the important facts in our democratic development are more intimately connected with present urgent choices of domestic policy and foreign relations than had been commonly appreciated?
>
> Is it not possible that in research work during the present summer and winter, at least, we ought to make fuller use of our realization that out of history there are issues of life to-day?
>
> Can we not give greater zest to our research work, both in seminary and as individuals by dealing with phases which are directly or indirectly connected with present problems? Shall we not feel better justified in following the scholar's calling if by our investigations we furnish material useful to Americans in determining their decisions in the great issues which now confront them and which will, in changing forms, confront them for a considerable future?
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> . . . . . .
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> In the first place it is important to be able to furnish a background for news items. . . .
>
> In the second place there are certain aspects of history with which the public should be familiar, but the significance of which is apparent only to one with a long perspective. In such cases the historians of the country should take the initiative, not waiting for the press.
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> . . . . . .
>
> The third function of research is one in connection with which the board can do little, but the leaders of research in the country by correspondence and intercourse may do much. It is obvious that the problem of world reconstruction will not cease to be vital to the next generation. Not in detail, but in general, it is possible to foresee the kind of questions which it will ask of its historians. Ought not a good proportion of the

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young scholars in our seminaries be directed to interest themselves, whatever their fields, along lines which may contribute to the wise solution of these problems which will be the pivot of politics and legislation during their lives? . . .[7]

This letter had certain repercussions, not all of which were favorable. There were some who felt that the historian was being directed to a new and strange land, full of pitfalls and dangers to himself and to his science, and yet I venture to think that today the spirit of the letter would find general acceptance. The lists of projects of research and of doctoral dissertations, as well as the bibliographies of the last two decades, indicate that the historian has more and more the objective of serving his own and future generations by relating his investigations to present or anticipated problems and needs.

The research aided or set on foot by the Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societies, the activities of committees on research of the national associations of scholars, and the active interest of those associations in the education of public opinion, all testify to the existence, on the part of historians and their colleagues in related disciplines, of a lively sense of their obligations to the world in which they live and of a desire to have their appropriate share in its guidance and direction.

The direct contributions of the National Board for Historical Service consisted chiefly in useful bibliographies and compilations of information, and in the preparation of some of the pamphlets published by the Committee on Public Information, such as the *War Encyclopedia*, *American Interest in Popular Government Abroad*, by Evarts B. Greene, *Conquest and Kultur*, by Wallace Notestein, and *German War Practices*, by Dana C. Munro. One of the most ambitious projects, undertaken at the request of and published by the Department of State, was the *Handbook of the Diplomatic History of Europe, Asia, and Africa, 1870-1914*, compiled by Frank M. Anderson and Amos S. Hershey.

A second category of activities of the board was that of publication. The board did not maintain its own series of publications, but endeavored rather to procure and place useful articles. It must be confessed that, so far as the major periodicals were concerned, the board did not enjoy great success as a literary agent, nor did it succeed in producing much newspaper copy, although it had dreams,

[7] *Ibid.*, 167-168.

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in its earliest days, of furnishing whole pages of informative "boiler plate" to the Sunday press. Its chief effort was to incite the historians to act upon their individual initiatives, and in a letter of May 13, 1917, it pointed out to over two hundred scholars and teachers the opportunity and obligation that confronted them:

> There has never been a period in American history [the board wrote] when public opinion has needed such a broad foundation of unfamiliar fact. The crisis in which we are now was brought upon the Nation by outside forces rather than by internal movements. The solution of the present situation, moreover, requires on the part of the people a large amount of fact with which they are unaccustomed to deal.
>
> The historian knows that in determining the public opinion of the moment as well as that of tomorrow, which means so much for the future, the resources of human experience are bound to be drawn upon to a very great degree. He knows also how important it is that the facts furnished to the people shall be genuine and the interpretation of them made by experts rather than by quacks.
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> At no time in our history has the historian been so obviously called to the immediate service of the Nation. . . .
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> It seems clear to us that the local press affords an important medium through which the historian may render a most useful service. By making the acquaintance of editors and reporters, by watching the columns of the local newspapers for statements that in the interest of truth should be controverted, by offering editorial material, by writing communications or special articles of historical character pertinent to immediate questions, and by furnishing the correct historical background for many items of current news, the historian may exercise a salutary influence in his community.
>
> It seems to us that this is a time when all the accumulated resouces of reputation, information, and judgment belong to the Nation and should be put at the disposal of the public.[8]

A third category of activities had to do with the organization of lecture programs. In this it was aided by the New England Group for Historical Service, and universities and colleges. Illustrated lectures were given in the major training camps, on such subjects as "The Growth of Germany and of German Ambitions," "How the War Came About," "American Democracy and the War," etc. A lecture tour among British universities, by Professor Andrew C. McLaughlin, was one of the more ambitious undertakings of the board, and contributed to the better understanding of the American position in the conflict, as lectures by George M. Wrong of the University of

[8] *Ibid.*, 171-172.

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Toronto, in a large number of university summer schools in the United States, contributed to a better understanding of the situation of Canada.

A fourth and very important category of the board's activities had to do with education. Circular letters of information and suggestions, prepared by or for the board, were sent to school and educational authorities in all parts of the country through the United States Bureau of Education, as was a pamphlet entitled *Opportunities for History Teachers: the Lessons of the Great War in the Classroom.* The *History Teacher's Magazine* (later the *Historical Outlook*), which made itself in a way the educational organ of the board, carried in each issue suggestions, information, and articles compiled or prepared by the board. A book of readings on the war was edited and published for school use, as was also a short history of the war for the upper elementary school grades. A prize essay contest on the subject "Why the United States is at War" was opened to the school teachers of fifteen states. Finally, upon the request of the National Education Association, the board appointed a committee to make a new study of the program of historical instruction in the schools. This became a joint committee of the board and of the American Historical Association, and did most of its work after the close of the war.

A fifth category of activities had to do with service to the government. The assistance rendered to the Committee on Public Information has been noted, as have also the board's services to the Department of State and to the Bureau of Education. The most important undertaking of the board was an Enemy-Press Intelligence Service. Through the information services of the allied governments, over thirty German and Austrian daily papers and fifty periodicals were received; these were read and abstracted, and summaries were furnished to the Department of State, the Military Intelligence section of the General Staff, the Food Administration, the Federal Reserve Board, and other governmental agencies. Perhaps the most striking circumstance of this important service was that it was performed by a private agency, rather than by a branch of the government.

A sixth and final category of activities had to do with the collection and preservation of war records. A year ago I referred to this aspect of the board's work and cited the letter of May 10, 1917, addressed by a subcommittee to a great number of state historical agencies. I shall have more to say of activities of collection later in this review,

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for the principal function of the board was to stimulate them, not to carry them on itself.

In this brief manner I have tried to give you some idea of the way in which a national voluntary organization of historians and archivists set about organizing and making available to the nation the services of their profession. The record is one of which there is no reason to be ashamed. Much that might have been done was left undone, and many opportunities that would now seem obvious were not realized. But the professional record of the board is clear, and the highest ideals of conscientious scholarship were maintained throughout an honest effort to be of service to the country. A few years after the war, in the cynical reaction that followed and that has had such disastrous results, a bright member of the intelligentsia produced an article that bore the engaging title of "The Historians Cut Loose." In this article he treated the labors of the National Board for Historical Service with a cynicism that was characteristic of his time and group. His performance amused but also saddened those whom he held up to ridicule, but I do not recall that any of them thought it worthy of a reply. They seem now, however, in 1941, to be in the advantageous position of those who laugh last.

The National Board for Historical Service, although the most central, was but one of a vast number of organizations devoted to similar activities, of which only a few can be noted in this rapid survey. The General War-Time Commission of the Churches, established by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, compiled a directory and handbook, *War-Time Agencies of the Churches*, which contains a record of the work of thirty-nine organizations, whose work, however, was not primarily historical. The National Catholic War Council set up a Committee on Historical Records, which organized a central depot of Catholic archives relating to war service of all sorts and entered upon the task of preparing a comprehensive history of American Catholic activities during the World War. A joint committee of various Jewish organizations established an Office of War Records.

Many of the universities also organized special committees or units or groups for educational activities, in which historical work had a major part. These co-operated with the National Board for Historical Service and, in their respective localities, gave effect to its suggestions. Their members wrote articles, prepared materials for the use of teachers, made historical compilations, gave public

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lectures and, within their own institutions, offered special courses. Many of their members also produced books which had their part in the education and formation of public opinion. At the risk of giving a bibliographical tone to these observations, I should like to recall to your memory the titles of a few of these publications. Professors Norman Foerster and W. W. Pierson, of the University of North Carolina, compiled an anthology, *American Ideals*, while their colleagues, Professors Edwin Greenlaw and J. H. Hanford, prepared another anthology, under the title *The Great Tradition*, of notable expressions of national ideals by English-speaking peoples from early times to the present. Professor Theodore Collier, of Brown University, published a series of studies of the issues of the war, bearing the title *A New World in the Making*, intended especially for use by the soldiers of the expeditionary forces in France. Professor Andrew C. McLaughlin, returning from his lecture tour of the British Isles, published *Britain and America*; and Professor Charles Downer Hazen, of Columbia University, brought out a widely read book, *Alsace-Lorraine under German Rule*. A book published on the eve of the outbreak of the World War, by Professor Roland G. Usher of Washington University, on *Pan-Germanism*, while not properly belonging in this account of war activities, was probably one of the most widely circulated historical books of the period, and undoubtedly exercised a considerable influence.

The most wide-spread historical activity of the World War was one in which the archivists took the lead, and to which I have already referred—the collection of materials on the basis of which the history of the period in all its aspects might be written. Certainly never before in the United States had there been so general an effort of this sort, on so comprehensive a scale. I have spoken of the circular letter of the National Board for Historical Service, addressed to state historical commissions, historical societies, librarians, and others, urging upon them to undertake at once "the systematic and inclusive collection and preservation of all kinds of materials serving to record and illustrate present events."

The result of this circular was to emphasize the importance of activities that had already been entered upon by a considerable number of organizations, and to bring about the creation of new organizations devoted entirely to such work. The Connecticut State Library, for example, was among the pioneers in the collection of war

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records. In some cases, collections of records were made for the definite purpose of using them in the compilation of a history of the war activities of a state or of a community. More often, the program of the collecting agency did not go beyond the gathering of material.

Purposes and methods of collection were discussed in the Archives Conference of the annual meeting of the American Historical Association in 1917. In September, 1919, Dr. James Sullivan, state historian of New York, invited the various state organizations engaged in the gathering of materials for the history of the war to meet in Washington for the purpose of discussing the most effective ways of carrying on their work, and especially to consider how the vast stores of war records of the federal government might be exploited co-operatively. The result of the conference called by Dr. Sullivan was the formation of the National Association of State War History Organizations, which, the following December, met with the American Historical Association in a joint session with its Conference of Historical Societies. The National Association of State War History Organizations had a brief existence and faded out of the picture in two or three years, as the collecting zeal of the states, or the zeal of the state legislatures for the financing of the collection of records and the writing of histories, diminished. Thus the return to "normalcy" took its toll among archivists and historians and of their hopes and plans. But the association exerted an important influence during its lifetime, especially through its encouragement of co-operation and collaboration among its constituents. An example of this was the survey of materials in the archives of the federal government that were of interest to the various state organizations. The association may be regarded also as the prototype of the American Association for State and Local History, whose members we welcome among us at this meeting, and whose first annual sessions are to follow immediately upon our own.

In some states the organization for the collection of war records was elaborate and extensive, extending into the counties and municipalities. In several it was a branch of the state council of defense; in others it was the permanent historical agency of the state.

One of the most active of the state organizations was the Pennsylvania War History Commission, whose work was directed by Professor Albert E. McKinley of the University of Pennsylvania, which arranged its collections in twenty-four classes which I ask your

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permission to enumerate as an example of the broad interpretation that most of these organizations gave to the term "war history." The twenty-four classes were as follows:

1. Pre-war conditions
2. Preparations for participation
3. United States in war times
4. United States administration in Pennsylvania
5. Pennsylvania State Government in war times
6. County and local governments in war times
7. Military and naval participation
8. Industries during the war
9. Agriculture and food production
10. Financing the war
11. Transportation and communication in war times
12. Commercial readjustments
13. Social welfare and relief organizations
14. Education as affected by the war
15. Work of religious bodies during the war
16. Labor and the crisis
17. War work of the professions
18. Public health under the conditions of war
19. Women in the war
20. Public sentiment before, during, and after the war
21. Americanization
22. Honor rolls, memorials, and parades
23. Negroes in the war
24. Reconstruction problems[9]

This list of classes, which served as a guide for collecting and filing, will illustrate a conception of history that had been gaining adherents for more than a generation.

In the Conference of State War History Organizations of December, 1919, Arthur Kyle Davis, of the Virginia War History Commission, described the situation with his accustomed eloquence. "There is," he declared, "a new world of history, in which we have no guide, no blazed trail, no chart, and no compass. It is a new world of history because it is the history of a world in a new kind of war—a war of embittered nations with every nerve and fibre of the national life, even every filament of civilian life, alive and tingling with the vital currents of war activity."[10]

These words reveal, I think, what was in the minds of many historians and archivists as they lived through the period of the war,

[9] Am. Hist. Assoc., *An. Rept.*, 1919, I, 129.
[10] *Ibid.*, 131.

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and as they adjusted themselves to new conditions and worked out new philosophies. They felt that they were pioneers, venturing into a new country of unknown but vast resources, that would demand of them unaccustomed tasks, greater than any they had yet attempted.

I do not propose to present even a summary of the historical and archival activities of the various agencies of the federal government. The creation of an historical branch within the General Staff early in 1918 assured a general oversight, at least, of the historical activities of all the divisions of the military establishment. Similarly, the creation of an historical section in the Navy Department, and of an historical division in the Marine Corps, provided for a corresponding direction of historical work in those services. In the Department of State, Gaillard Hunt was appointed a special officer and assigned to the task of preparing a work to be called "The History of the World War as Shown by the Records of the Department of State." In some of the emergency establishments, such as the Food Administration, and also in the Shipping Board, historians, under one designation or another, were appointed to gather material for the history of the operations of those agencies.

The most spectacular services of historians were performed, however, for the Committee on Public Information and for the so-called "Inquiry," which carried on the fundamental research required by the United States delegation to the peace conference. I have already referred to the co-operation of the National Board for Historical Service with the Committee on Public Information. Guy Stanton Ford was placed in charge of the preparation of the various series of pamphlets and booklets that were published and distributed in enormous quantities and that constituted one of the most important sections of the government's propaganda. This work was chiefly historical in character, as is evidenced by the titles of the pamphlets: *How the War came to America; The Great War, from Spectator to Participant; American and Allied Ideals; German Treatment of Conquered Territory; The German Government of Germany*, etc.

The authors of the booklets were instructed to produce nothing that they would be ashamed of twenty years later, and I think that their work has successfully met that test. The list of historians whose collaboration as authors, compilers, or contributors of one sort or another Ford was able to secure is a long one, and we may well have a feeling of pride in reviewing it, for there we find such names as James T. Shotwell, Evarts B. Greene, Archibald C. Coolidge,

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Charles Hull, Dana C. Munro, Frederick J. Turner, Frederic L. Paxson, William E. Lingelbach, Carl Russell Fish, Robert D. W. Connor, William E. Dodd, Samuel B. Harding, Carl Becker, W. M. West, George C. Sellery, James W. Garner, A. C. Krey, Wallace Notestein, J. Franklin Jameson. I submit that this is a goodly company, that would be considered a strong department of history in any university.

The Inquiry was more or less shrouded in mystery during its early days, in the autumn of 1917. It was organized by President Mezes of the College of the City of New York for Colonel House, at the behest of President Wilson. It had a rather vague connection with the Department of State, and experienced the difficulties that grow out of trying to serve two masters. Isaiah Bowman became its executive officer, and after a brief secretive existence in the New York Public Library, the Inquiry moved to the building of the American Geographical Society at 159th Street, far from the madding crowd. For a brief and interesting account of the inception, progress, and results of this undertaking, I commend to you the first chapter of Professor Shotwell's book, *At the Paris Peace Conference*. The purpose of the Inquiry was, of course, to lay the foundations for participation of the United States in the eventual peace conference.

The organization of most of the work was on a territorial basis: thus Charles H. Haskins dealt with the eastern frontier problems of France, particularly those of Alsace-Lorraine; Robert H. Lord dealt with Polish problems; Charles Seymour, with those of Austria-Hungary; Clive Day, with those of the Balkans; Archibald C. Coolidge, with matters relating to Eastern Europe; Dana C. Munro and W. L. Westermann studied the problems of Turkey and the Near East; William E. Lunt, the Italian boundary claims; Stanley K. Hornbeck dealt with Japanese-Chinese relations; Frank M. Anderson and Shotwell had diplomatic history as their province; Allyn Young specialized on labor problems; and Douglas Johnson, a geologist, on those of the Atlantic; James Brown Scott and David Hunter Miller were the experts of the Inquiry on international law; and George L. Beer worked on the difficult problems of colonies.

Probably no group of American scholars, not even our specialists on tariffs, social security, taxation, and administration, ever exercised so far-reaching an influence upon the destinies of the nation and of the world. Their studies determined many of the most important

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decisions of the peace conference. It must also be remembered that equally important decisions were not in accord with the findings or recommendations of the Inquiry. The disaster that has descended upon the world since the Treaty of Versailles is due to causes for the most part external to that treaty, and one of the chief of these causes was the refusal of the United States, after having invested its blood and treasure in the war, to invest its political resources in the peace.

The picture that I have sketched for you is far from complete. I find that I have not even mentioned such a notable enterprise as the creation of the Hoover War Library, for which the historians Frank Golder and E. D. Adams labored so successfully in all the countries of Europe; nor have I described the monumental *Economic and Social History of the World War,* in which Shotwell, with the support of the Carnegie Endowment, endeavored to capture and record, while recollections were fresh and sources of information still intact, the facts that would measure what he described as the social displacement of war. All future historians will realize in increasing measure their incalculable debt to this Herculean labor.

But, in spite of its incompleteness, I hope that I have been able to communicate some notion of the process, to convey some idea of how historians and archivists conceived of their appropriate functions and how they set about to perform them. For many, this performance carried them far beyond any expectations they might have had when they first asked themselves how, amid the clash of arms and the roar of industry, their own skills, developed in the library and in the archives, might serve the public need. Probably they did not foresee that the results of their researches would help to mould the opinion of the nation, or to decide the boundaries of Europe, or to determine the fortunes of millions of human beings.

It would be interesting to inquire into the effect of those experiences of the war years upon our professional outlook and objectives. This is a fruitful subject of speculation and I commend it to the attention of my successor. I cannot, however, refrain from offering a few speculations of my own, and if, perchance, they should for the first time in the history of American learned societies provoke a discussion of a presidential address, so much the better.

First of all, it is clear that our situation as regards materials for investigation and their accessability is far better than ever before. We have, for example, the National Archives, and although we had

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labored in season and out of season for many years before the first World War to achieve that goal, I am convinced that the doubling of the volume of papers that took place between 1914 and 1920 provided the final demonstration that the increasing disorder and confusion of the public records could no longer be tolerated. Another way in which we are better off is in our possession of more perfect means of utilizing large masses of material: analysis by means of mechanical selection makes possible statistical operations that could hardly have been imagined before the invention of the Hollerith machine; cheap and almost instantaneous reproduction by microphotography has revolutionized our methods of note taking and enormously increased our ability to handle rapidly great numbers of documents.

Methods of rapid cataloguing have been perfected, and we have discovered, thanks to the Historical Records Survey, that satisfactory inventories can be produced in series by large numbers of intelligent but untrained workers, under expert supervision. As a result of these advances we know, today, infinitely more about our sources of information, and have far better control of them than ever before.

Of course I do not claim that all these advances are due to our experience in the World War, but it seems clear that they follow logically in the directions indicated by those experiences.

More important, however, than improvements of a material nature are the changes that have happened to ourselves. Post-war scholarship has made more progress than perhaps we realize, and this is due in no small measure to influences set in motion or intensified by the war. Our outlook upon the world has changed; our scholars have grown beyond parochialism as they have grown beyond pedantry. The Inquiry found it difficult to discover, among American historians, experts in some of the fields that turned out to be of greatest importance. Today we are doing excellent work in all fields of historical investigation. We are even learning the difficult languages, such as Chinese, Japanese, Turkish, Polish, Russian, Hungarian, Finnish, or Arabic, to say nothing of the easy languages, such as Spanish and Portuguese, which we must control if we are to do original or significant work in fields in which those languages prevail. We have a rapidly growing body of young scholars in Oriental studies, and we have made promising beginnings in Slavic and Near Eastern studies, while the wave of interest in Latin-American subjects is with difficulty restrained by obstacles of language and of

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higher standards. And so, now that a new "Inquiry" has been inaugurated, under the stream-lined title of "Co-ordination of Information"—directed, of course, by historians, James Baxter, William Langer, *et alii*, it is not impossible to find specialists to deal with nearly every problem that arises. I understand that, for the moment, the problems are less plentiful than the experts.

These developments imply, and indeed demonstrate, as I have already suggested, a changed outlook. Our horizon is no longer bounded by the two oceans and the Panama Canal. We look out upon a world that at last we realize is spherical, and while this enlargement of vision had its beginnings long before the World War, the broadening process was tremendously accelerated by our experiences of those years.

We have also, I think, undergone a marked change in our attitude toward our own work and its objectives. We realize, as the letter of the national board, already quoted, pointed out, that "out of history there are issues of life today," and those issues now thrust themselves upon us as matters of supreme importance—of vital consequence to ourselves and to the generations that shall come after us. The conviction that our work is necessary—that it is indispensable to the education of public opinion—that it must influence momentous decisions that are endlessly to be made—and that through it we have a real, even a great, part in the shaping of destiny—this conviction is at once our inspiration and our support.

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