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Ross W. Beales Jr. College of the Holy Cross, rbeales@holycross.edu

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Documentary Editing: A Bibliography

ROSS W. BEALES, JR.*

Documentary editing has achieved unprecedented importance in American historical scholarship since the publication in 1950 of the first volume of Julian P. Boyd's edition of *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*. Thanks to the support of state and federal government, foundations, and universities and to the labors of a generation of editors, scores of letterpress and microfilm editions have been completed or are in progress.¹ These editions are noteworthy for their comprehensiveness and high standards of scholarship as well as for their cost.

The rapid expansion of documentary editing has been accompanied by the appearance of an extensive literature on all phases of editing, including its history and current state, practitioners, methods, funding, objectives, priorities, and role within the profession. The following bibliography provides a comprehensive listing of this literature but excludes three kinds of material. First, such items as mimeographed guidelines and progress reports from editorial projects, although sometimes available at libraries associated with individual projects, are generally difficult to locate and hence have not been included.² Second, many letterpress editions contain useful in-

- Adams, C. F., Jr. "The Printing of Old Manuscripts," Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society 20 (1882-1883): 175-182.
- Adams, Thomas Boylston, et al. Proceedings of a ceremony held at the Massachusetts Historical Society, September 22, 1961, commemorating the publication of the Diary and Autobiography of John Adams. Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society 73 (1961): 119-150.
- American Historical Association, Historical Manuscripts Commission. "Suggestions for the Printing of
- 1. See the *Publications Catalog 1976* of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (Washington, D.C., 1976).
- 2. Some of this literature is listed in Oliver W. Holmes, "Recent Writings Relevant to Documentary Publication Programs," and

*Ross W. Beales, Jr., is a member of the history department of the College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, Massachusetts. This bibliography is reprinted (with minor alterations) from the *Maryland Historian* 10, no. 2 (1979): 27-37, by permission of the editors. troductions, but these are so much a part of such editions that they can be safely omitted. Third, book reviews have been excluded.³

The literature on documentary editing is scattered widely, and some excellent articles should be more broadly known-for example, the debate between William S. McFeely and John Y. Simon on the role of editorial projects as derivative archives. The Association for Documentary Editing, founded in 1978, can greatly facilitate the spread of such knowledge through the timely publication of bibliographical information in its Newsletter. What is needed, in addition, is the reprinting of important articles on documentary editing. A moderately-priced paperback collection would greatly assist both in the dissemination of information about editing within the historical profession and in editorial training, whether on the job or in the increasing numbers of graduate and undergraduate courses on documentary editing. It is hoped that the following bibliography will serve as a guide to the compilation and publication of such a collection of essays.

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Frank B. Evans, "Publication Programs and Historical Editing." Both of these earlier bibliographies have been invaluable in the compilation of the present bibliography.

3. Among the reviews which raise important questions about the priorities and quality of various letterpress editions are Frederick B. Tolles's review of the George Mercer Papers in the Penn-sylvania Magazine of History and Biography 79 (1955): 113-114; Leonard W. Levy's review of the Papers of James Madison, vols. 4-7, in the Journal of American History 59 (1972): 115-117; Brooke Hindle's reviews of the Papers of Benjamin Franklin, vols. 16-17 and 18-19, in the Journal of American History 60 (1974): 1071-1073 and 63 (1977): 974-975: and Charles T. Cullen's review of the Papers of James Iredell, vols. 1-2, in the Journal of American History 65 (1978): 412-413.

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