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Microform Editions of Documentary Collections: Where Do We Stand? And Where Do We Go From Here?

THOMAS E. JEFFREY*

In recent years documentary editors, plagued by soaring publication costs and diminishing sources of funding, have been moving away from the "complete works" concept of editing. Critics have pointed out that comprehensive multi-volume book editions have proven to be both expensive and time-consuming. Several large-scale projects that have already been in progress for over three decades are now expected to continue publishing well into the twenty-first century. Critics have also complained that the "indiscriminate inclusion of routine documents not only delays completion of projects but buries significant material beneath a deluge of documents of only marginal interest."

In response to this criticism the National Historical Publications and Records Commission and other grant-making agencies have been encouraging editors to publish highly selective book editions accompanied by more complete microform editions. Over the last two decades the NHPRC has endorsed more than 150 microform editing projects, has provided financial support to many of them, and has developed a set of guidelines and technical standards to guarantee the production and dissemination of durable, high-quality microforms.

The following essay is intended to serve as a brief introduction to the world of scholarly micropublishing. It will begin with a discussion of commercial micropublishers and the contributions they can make towards the publication of a high-quality microform edition. It will also allude to some recent developments in the micropublication of documentary collections, such as comprehensive microfiche editions and microfiche supplements to printed books, computer-generated microfiche, and selective (rather than comprehensive) microform editions. The essay will not include a technical discussion of microforms or a step-by-step description of how to prepare a collection of documents for filming. Information about these topics can be found in the works cited in the appended bibliography.

Fortunately for those editors who may be inexperienced in the esoterica of microforms, the advent of micrographics has spawned a new breed of scholarly publisher—the commercial micropublisher. Although these publishers tended initially to concentrate on the reproduction of previously published material such as newspapers, periodicals, and out-of-print monographs, many have lately been expanding their publication lists to include collections of manuscripts and other primary material. The NHPRC has encouraged this development by advising potential grant applicants to investigate publication and distribution contracts with commercial micropublishers before applying for NHPRC funding.

Micropublishers are not the only commercial companies engaged in the business of filming manuscript material. An archivist whose primary goal is the preparation of a few microform copies for internal use will usually contract with a microform "service company" to film his collection for a flat fee. On the other hand, an editor aspiring to disseminate the fruits of his labor to as wide an audience as possible, would do well to consider the unique advantage of contracting with a commercial micropublisher.

Unlike the average service company, a microform publisher possesses the ability to market as well as film the collection. Indeed, several large repositories with their own in-house microfilming facilities have recently negotiated contracts with commercial micropublishers to sell these internally-generated films, because of the superior publicity and sales networks that these micropublishers can offer. A microform publisher can provide an editorial project with many other services as well. Most important, if he is convinced of the salability of the collection, a micropublisher will generally agree to pay some or all the production costs of the microform edition and the printed guide, in return for whatever profits may result from the sale of the edition to research libraries and other purchasers. Most micropublishers will also agree to pay royalties after the sale of a certain number of copies and some may offer advances against royalties to help underwrite editorial expenses. In addition, an experienced micropublisher can offer the project editor valuable counsel about the preparation and arrangement of the collection, the format and contents of the printed guide, and the manner in which the index and other finding aids should be prepared.

For a microform edition to be of use to scholars, the filmed documents must, of course, be legible. Unfortunately, most documentary editors do not have the luxury of dealing with the high-contrast materials that microfil-

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meters call "clear copy." Instead, their documents are likely to be old, faded, discolored, and in varying stages of deterioration. Editors who deal with materials collected from other repositories must also confront the problem of poor-quality photocopies. In most cases, an experienced micropublisher should be able to produce a filmed image at least as readable as the original. Indeed, advanced camera techniques can sometimes result in the production of a microimage even more legible than the original.

An editor should not simply assume, however, that a particular micropublisher has the technical ability to generate a high-quality product. Although some microform publishers possess in-house filming capability, many others subcontract the actual filming to a service company. And occasionally even an experienced and reputable micropublisher manages to associate himself with an inexperienced or technically incompetent service company. For example, one microform edition recently issued by an established and respected micropublisher has been severely criticized for "the lack of care in applying the reproduction process to poor [quality] originals." Much of the filmed material was found to be illegible and, even worse, some of the documents were filmed in the wrong order, several of the microforms were reproduced backwards and inside out, and many of the frames were marred by blobs, splotches, and squiggles that probably resulted from dust spots and hairs on the camera lens.

Before making a final decision about a micropublisher, the editor would do well to request a small number of serious contenders to generate a test film from a selection of documents posing a range of possible legibility problems. Besides providing the editor with a clearer idea of the technical competence of the various micropublishers (or their service companies), the test film can also provide each publisher with a better idea of the technical problems that he may expect to encounter in filming the editor's collection.

Second only to the ability of the micropublisher to produce a readable product is his ability to advertise and sell the microform edition to research libraries and other purchasers. The suitability of a micropublisher's publicity and sales network will depend on what the editor considers to be the potential market for his collection. If, for example, he envisages the market as international, he might not want to contract with a publisher who sells mainly to libraries on the East Coast.

Another important consideration is filming location. In order to minimize production costs and maximize quality control, micropublishers prefer to film in their own laboratory — or in the lab of their service company, if they subcontract the filming. Projects which work primarily with photocopies will normally be able to send their documents to the publisher's laboratory for filming. However, editors who deal primarily with original documents may find it impractical or undesirable to bring their materials to the publisher. In such cases, the publisher must be willing to set up his cameras and other equipment in the archive or repository where the documents are housed. He should also agree, in writing, to film retakes of defective images at the archive or repository.

A common denominator to many of the above criteria is the previous experience of the micropublisher in filming and distributing documentary collections. The ideal micropublisher, in short, is one whose publication list already includes several NHPRC-sponsored documentary editing projects, whose publications have been well received by reviewers, and who is respected by the project editors with whom he has previously worked.

One of the most important decisions confronting the editor of a microform edition is whether reel microfilm or four-by-six inch microfiche cards should be chosen as the publishing medium. Until the mid-1970s, conventional wisdom dictated that microfiche was totally unsuitable for the reproduction of manuscript collections. However, the publication of The Microfiche Edition of the Papers of Benjamin Henry Latrobe in 1976 demonstrated that the microfiche format could be successfully adapted to accommodate a substantial and heterogeneous collection of manuscript material. Since the successful completion of their pioneering project, three other NHPRC-sponsored projects have published microfiche editions of their collections—The Isabella Beecher Hooker Papers (1979), The Correspondence of Lydia Maria Child (1980), and The Collected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family (1980). The reviews have, by and large, been favorable. One critic, for example, has characterized the Child edition as "a model of microfiche production," while an even more ecstatic reviewer has described the Peale Family edition as "almost flawless in scope, format, and design."

Despite the critical success of these fiche editions, documentary editors have not been rushing out to put their collections on microfiche. While microfiche has been rapidly supplanting traditional microfilm in the business, scientific, and technical worlds, 35 mm roll film remains the dominant medium in documentary editing. I should quickly add, however, that this is not merely a case of editors being slow to keep abreast of trends in the field of micrographics. Although the microfiche format possesses some very real advantages over reel microfilm, there are also countervailing disadvantages that make microfiche unsuitable for the publication of many documentary collections.

The main advantage of microfiche is the ease of access that the fiche format provides the researcher. With its eye-legible headers and its convenient grid format of rows and columns, microfiche allows the reader to move easily and quickly from an index entry to the frame where the filmed document is located, and spares him the frust-
ration of continually cranking through yards of microfilm. Librarians also find microfiche more convenient to store than bulky roll film. For the most part, however, the advantages of fiche accrue to the reader of the microform edition—not to the editor and the publisher who share the responsibility of producing it.

From the editor's standpoint, a microfiche edition is much more expensive and time-consuming to produce than a comparable microfilm edition. This is partly because each frame of the microfiche must be “pre-programmed”—that is, mapped out in advance on “program sheets” prior to the actual filming. The task of refilming defective frames also becomes more complicated and costly, since normally an entire row (7-14 images) must be refilmed, even if only one of the images in that row is unacceptable.6

Microfiche is also a less flexible medium for documentary collections than reel microfilm. The fiche format is ideal for uniform-sized documents that measure less than 8½ by 11 inches and possess good contrast (e.g. black ink on white paper). This is one reason why fiche is so popular in the reproduction of modern business, technical, and scientific records. Unfortunately, not many editors have uniform-sized, high-contrast documents. Although the fiche format can accommodate a collection with a modest number of oversized and poor-quality documents (as exemplified by the successful publication of the Latrobe Papers and other fiche editions), editors should be aware that producing a microfiche edition is a far more risky and demanding venture than working with more conventional reel microfilm.

The NHPRC wisely recommends that “in general, any collection containing a significant number of items that exceed 8½ by 11 inches in size (especially in the vertical dimension) might best be preserved on 35mm reel microfilm, not microfiche.... Similarly, a collection containing numerous faint originals, negative prints, or poor-quality photocopies would benefit from the lower reduction ratios of 35mm reel microfilm. Because there are exceptions to even these simple rules of thumb, project directors should seek expert technical advice during early planning.”7

Although it seems unlikely that microfiche will ever supplant microfilm as the principal medium for the micropublication of documentary collections, the fiche medium does offer some promising possibilities as a supplement to printed book editions. Lest readers be confused by terminology, I have been talking so far about microform editions—collections of documents on film or fiche that are published independently of whatever printed editions the project may be issuing. Microfiche supplements, on the other hand, form an integral part of the printed book edition and are generally distributed with and included in the purchase price of the book edition.

One editorial project that has pioneered in the innovative use of microfiche supplements is The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution. Volume two of the Ratification Papers contains a fiche supplement of approximately 2800 pages, while volume three contains supplementary fiche providing more than 1200 additional pages of documentation. The majority of the items reproduced in the fiche supplements are unannotated transcriptions of documents that were not selected for inclusion in the printed volumes. By means of an elaborate and extensive system of cross references, the reader is able to move easily from the printed documents to related material on the microfiche. The use of the fiche supplements has enabled the editors to publish a significantly larger number of documents than would have been possible had they stuck solely to conventional book publication. According to one of the editors, it has also substantially cut down the amount of editorial time spent in wrangling about whether or not a particular document should be selected for the printed volume, since the existence of the supplement guarantees that each document will appear somewhere in the edition.

As suggested earlier, the fiche medium is ideal for the reproduction of uniform-sized, high-contrast material—such as editorial transcriptions. Moreover, when the editor is working with transcriptions rather than original documents, he can avail himself of more advanced and less expensive technology than when he is dealing with a collection of fragile, odd-sized, marginal-quality manuscripts. The Ratification project, for example, was able to feed its transcriptions automatically into a “rotary” camera and thus generate the microfiche master in only a fraction of the time and expense that would have been required on a traditional “planetary” camera. An even more ambitious application of advanced microform technology is being contemplated by the editors of The Henry Laurens Papers, who are planning to use computer output microfiche (COM). Simply put, the documents will be transcribed on a word processor and electronically transferred onto a computer tape. The tape will drive a COM recorder, which will produce the microfiche master directly from the data stored on the tape, eliminating the traditional paper print entirely.8

One obvious disadvantage of the combined book/fiche editions is that few individual purchasers own a microfiche reader with which to view the supplementary fiche. Moreover, most libraries deem it necessary to remove the fiches from the printed volumes and file them separately in their microform reading rooms. Thus it is not always easy for readers to take advantage of the cross references that the editors have so assiduously implanted into the printed volumes. Another drawback to the microfiche supplement is that not every editorial project can afford to prepare transcriptions of all its documents.

The Thomas A. Edison Papers is one such project that
A few critics have recently taken editors to task for including so many marginal documents in their microform editions. They claim that, given the relatively high cost of microforms, the purchaser deserves something better than a collection full of shipping orders and bills of lading. For example, one reviewer has criticized the editor of The Letters and Papers of Richard Rush for deciding to film a comprehensive 29-reel microfilm edition. In the opinion of the reviewer, “the editor’s decision to include everything to which Rush touched pen and ink clearly deflates the over-all worth of the product . . . since much [of the material] is pedestrian in the extreme . . . In this case as in the case of many large manuscript and archival collections, more unfortunately, is less . . . One must question whether the finished product is worth the price of admission.”

The editors of the Edison Papers are very concerned that our microfilm edition be “worth the price of admission.” We would prefer to publish a highly selective edition that will be distributed widely than to issue a comprehensive edition that nobody can afford to buy. Moreover, the sheer size and complexity of the Edison collection has, in the past, made it difficult for scholars to take full advantage of the documentary resources. One researcher has aptly characterized the Edison Archive as “a scientific King Tut’s tomb.” So far, however, researchers have merely skimmed the surface of this vast archive, and part of our task as editors will be to examine every document systematically and to identify what we consider to be the most valuable of these scientific “treasures.”

We would be the first to agree, however, that the editor of a selective edition—whether it be on microform or in a printed volume—is obliged to make his criteria for selection as clear as possible to the reader. Nor are we so presumptuous as to assume that research interests will never change or that future editors and archivists may not want to film material that we have left out of our microfilm edition. We are, therefore, reorganizing the collection so that previously filmed material can be easily identified and new materials eventually added to the film edition. We are also endeavoring, through hundreds of cross references and explanatory “targets,” to give the reader a clear idea of the kind and amount of material that has not been filmed. The microfilm edition of the Edison Papers will thus be more than a collection of filmed documents. It will also serve as an elaborate introduction to and finding aid for the documents in the larger archive.

Although predictions are always risky to make, it may be that the next decade will witness a movement away from the “complete works” concept of microform editions, just as the last decade has seen a trend towards more selective printed editions. Some projects have already rejected comprehensive microform editions in favor of microfiche supplements to their printed volumes, while
others are planning to publish selective rather than comprehensive microform editions. As publishing costs continue to rise and library budgets diminish, we can be sure that documentary editors will continue to explore new ways of meeting the changing demands of the times.

Notes

4. See, for example, Albert H. Leisinger, Jr., *Microphotography for Archives* (Washington, 1968), pp. 4-6.

Additional Readings


Exemplary Citations

David H. Herschler and William Z. Slany, "The 'Paperless Office': A Case Study of the State Department's Foreign Affairs Information System," *American Archivist* 45 (spring 1982):142-154. The authors describe a mixed-media system which handles an increase of 800,000 documents a year and consists of microfilm facsimiles, computer output microfilm, and machine-readable files and indexes. In the future, "Department historians will be able to use the computerized FAIS to select, annotate, and edit Foreign Relations on-line at a very early date."


Review


The recent appearance from Princeton University Press of the first volume (1837-1844) of Thoreau’s massive Journal is a signal event for scholars of American literature, and any who doubt the fact need only read the editors’ “General Introduction” (intended as a prefatory statement to the entire publication project) to learn why. The tale told therein of Thoreau’s friends’ and previous editors’ conscious and unconscious alterations of his text recalls the ill treatment afforded another classic American writer at the hands of her friends and editors. Mabel Loomis Todd, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, and Martha Dickinson Bianchi perhaps did Emily Dickinson’s readers a greater disservice because apart from their transcriptions of her poetry the public knew no other of her work, but H. G. O. Blake, Francis H. Allen, and Bradford Torrey committed a comparable injustice by not allowing admirers of Walden and A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers a view of what a “complete” text of the journal vividly reveals: a writer in his work, struggling to order and make beauty from his raw materials.

We now have, then, only a partial portrait of Thoreau, and due to the almost religious scrupulosity of the present editors at the Thoreau Textual Center at Princeton, we will have to live with our present knowledge until the whole Journal is published, a fact that makes us wish that somehow their work could be expedited to match Torrey and Allen’s remarkable achievement of transcribing and annotating in a little over three years what in the Walden edition of Thoreau’s Writings (1906) became no fewer than fourteen volumes of journal entries! Torrey and Allen obviously were heroically committed to their task, as was Thoreau’s earlier editor, his friend H. G. O. Blake, to whom Thoreau’s sister Sophia bequeathed the forty-seven manuscript notebooks and who in the 1880s and ’90s published four volumes of excerpts from them; and as the new editors make apparent, these individuals intended Thoreau’s reputation no intentional harm by their many excisions, emendations, and alterations. Rather, it was they who succeeded in raising the value of Thoreau’s literary stock at a time when he very well might have remained as obscure a man of letters as the unfortunate Herman Melville, whose installation in America’s literary pantheon did not take place until the 1920s. Thus, though we cannot deny that Thoreau’s previous editors perpetuated the stereotype of Thoreau the quaint naturalist, they at least succeeded in presenting to the general reader a man whose prose easily eclipsed the work of other nature writers like John Burroughs and John Muir, whose spiritual paternity was laid at his door. Blake, and Torrey and Allen only did what they thought right to bring to public attention an American Gilbert White of Selborne. If publishing pressures, financial or other, inhibited them from, for example, duplicating passages in their editions of the journal that appeared in other of his published works, we must recall that they did not have the support of any National Endowment nor of scholars enough interested in such tasks to form a Center for Editions of American Authors to oversee their task.

What, then, does the Princeton edition present to us? Quite simply, “Thoreau’s original stage of composition—the Journal as unmediated by any later intentions,” with later revisions “selectively” reported in the “Editorial Appendix.” As one might expect, though, to establish the earliest stage of composition of a document of over six million words, a work that not only was heavily revised and rewritten during the author’s lifetime but that also inevitably suffered in the hands of those who inherited and used it for their own purposes, is no mean task. The present editors, particularly William L. Howarth, author of The Literary Manuscripts of Henry David Thoreau (1974), have assiduously tracked down different segments of Thoreau’s journal in the various repositories in which they reside and have collated them as accurately as possible: one simply must believe that (barring some such unexpected miracle like the recent discovery of one of Hawthorne’s lost notebooks on Hawthorne Street in Boulder, Colorado) when the complete Princeton Journal is published the editors will have examined every relevant fragment for the light it sheds on Thoreau’s composition. And even with all such rigor to establish the primary text, we never will have a complete record of Thoreau’s first intentions, for sometime in 1841 the author transcribed the contents of his first two volumes of notebooks (for the period from 1837 to 1841), no significant parts of which survive, save for their indexes. Thus, part of the Journal just published consists of a “redaction of the original, selected and edited to an unknown degree by Thoreau,” at present clearly the “earliest surviving state of his intentions,” but not the ubr-document all Thoreauvians would love to have.

For this edition the editors have prepared a “Textual Introduction” that is a model of clarity, and, mercifully, they have chosen to place all textual matter at the back of the volume. Here we find the “Textual Notes” that report “significant features of the manuscripts and sources for editorial emendations,” a “Table of Emendations” that lists “all changes made from copy-text other than the normalized features” described earlier in the “Introduction,” a “Table of Alterations” that reports Thoreau’s “substantive current” changes in the text, and “Selected Later Re-
visions" made by the author of passages that do not appear in altered form in other of his printed works. In short, enough grist for any bibliographer's mill and, again I stress, all appended to the volume in as unobtrusive a way as possible, leaving the first five hundred pages of the book for the pleasure of the general reader. When one compares the sheer economy and readability of this, volume to the ponderous and distracting editorial apparatus that overwhelms the Harvard-Belknap Press edition of Emerson's Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks, one wishes that Thoreau's alma mater had heeded his advice to "simplify" matters as much as one can. Thoreau's friend Waldo has not fared well at the hands of his twentieth-century admirers, but Princeton's Journal is a book as Henry would have wanted it: sturdy and designed for its primary purpose, to be read.

And what, finally, does this new edition of the early years of Thoreau's journal tell us of its author? In his "Historical Introduction" to this book Robert Sattelmeyer summarizes the most important lesson brought to us from this portion of Thoreau's life. "From 1837 to 1844," Sattelmeyer writes, the journal "changed (in its surviving form) most dramatically, from a kind of display case for his reading, his poetry, and his original thoughts and aphorisms to a writer's workbook, fragmentary and almost irrecoverable because so many pages were excised for his compositions." The earliest journal entries, even in their redacted form, are best treated as a choice repository of words and thoughts stocked by a young Harvard College graduate, and except for a more-than-usual frequency of felicitously turned phrases, it might be the commonplace book of any one of his classmates who continued into maturity the habit of writing he had acquired during his undergraduate days. Between 1837 and 1842, in particular, as Sattelmeyer notes, the journal is "a record of the results of Thoreau's intellectual and literary labors, not his efforts to compose."

But here, too, we find the first notices of more important composition, portions, for example, of the essays on "Friendship" and "Sound and Silence" that found their way into his first book, A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers (1849) and, more importantly, the record of the two-week boating and hiking trip taken with his brother John in September 1839, the seminal event around which he would organize A Week. Here, too, are his tantalizing references to his affection for Ellen Sewall, who later rejected his proposal of marriage and who, in most Thoreau scholars' opinions, represented the apex of his interest in the opposite sex. As romantically tinged as such passages are, however, they show little evidence of the emotional man who later would declare all nature his bride and prove his fidelity to her by inspiredly rendering in impeccable (and chaste) prose, her every nook and curvature.

By 1842 Thoreau's heightened interest in literary composition is evident. In that year Emerson succeeded Margaret Fuller as editor of The Dial, and Thoreau both served as his assistant and began to prepare essays and reviews for inclusion in that transcendental periodical. Now he turned to his journal entries to prepare what became "The Natural History of Massachusetts," published in July 1842, and he also began to draft "A Winter Walk" and "A Walk to Wachusetts," two of his finest occasional pieces. As might be expected, given Thoreau's habit of literally exciting entire passages from his notebooks for use in the preparation of his manuscripts, only a small portion of the total journal for these years is extant; but we do have some record of his sojourn at Staten Island, where he lived with William Emerson as he attempted to impress New York's literary lions, and his extensive commentary on the English poets, which served him so well in the preparation of his first two books. By 1844 it was clear that Thoreau, even as he devoted more time to work in his father's pencil factory, had plans for the literary life, and within a year he would make his most serious attempt to date to realize that aspiration, at a hut near Walden Pond. This volume of the Journal, then, is Thoreau's, and our, prelude to the Walden years and as such sharpens our understanding of the literary and philosophical baggage he took with him to the Pond.

The excitement this volume engenders, then, is most akin to anticipation. Not that we fail to delight in his prose and ideas for their own sake, for one of the pleasures of this text is how graciously it invites us for either a brief visit or a prolonged stay with its author, and here we already have the kinds of sentences that in A Week Thoreau would praise in other writers—"verdurous and blooming as evergreen and flowers, because they are rooted in fact and experience." But here, too, we know that still we are with the young Thoreau, partially under Emerson's sway, yet every day gaining confidence in his powers of observation and expression. If, as I have suggested, some of the earliest entries herein could have been written by any of his college classmates, by the end of this volume we are assured that something had transformed a promising youth into an articulate and ambitious young writer. How much of this is attributable to his close relationship to Emerson or to such formative events as his brother's death by lockjaw or his rejection by Miss Sewall, we never will know; but from this edition we do learn as much as we probably ever will.

The textual editing that produces such books and that begins to answer such questions is painstaking and, to some, seemingly dull work, but its completion is a joy to us all. We should rejoice, then, in the labors of Blake's and Torrey and Allen's successors and wish them godspeed as they continue to piece together the life and work of one of our more unique American authors. Indeed, if this first volume of the Journal is any indication,
we shall not be disappointed when the whole work is be-
before us, the record of a man's splendidly honest and re-
markably diligent conversation with himself and his age.
To know, as precisely as possible, what Thoreau said and
when he said it cannot but improve the thought of a gen-
eration whose imprecision and inarticulateness border on
the tragi-comic.

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Letters to the Editor

In the May 1982 Newsletter, p. 9, I was happy to see
Joel Myerson's notice of my system for transcribing
manuscripts (Studies in Bibliography 29 [1976]: 212-264).
I should like to add a few comments on what I take to
be the peculiar virtues of this system as against the so-
called genetic-text system using various symbols, not all
of which are agreed upon by editors and which strain a
lay reader's memory if my own difficulty in reading such
texts is any guide.

First, if the ideal of an editor of a text is to present the
author's final intentions as represented by the last cor-
rected and revised state of the manuscript, it seems to me
important for the reader to have this final text readily
available as the major one, with an alterations account
subsidiary to it. This is the method I advocate, whereas
the genetic-text form of transcription has no choice but
to present the original uncorrected and unrevised text as
the major transcription, so that the final authorial inten-
tion can be read, not connectedly (skipping bracketed
material) but only by penetrating to the end of the thicket
of symbols that can accumulate. Thus to dig out the final
text can involve a considerable amount of hard work and
concentration, and any attempt at "reading" such a text
really calls for the user to make his own clear-text trans-
script or be provided by the editor with an additional
clear-text version.

Second, the genetic method is inflexible in that it can
accommodate only one form of the text; that is, one with
the alterations presented within the transcript. On the
other hand, any transcription that will appeal to a reader
interested mainly in the content (in its final form) and
only occasionally for specialist reasons in the alterations
that produced this content from an earlier state, must be
presented in a clear text. The editor then has his choice
of adding the list of alterations, keyed to the line num-
bers, as footnotes, or as a separate comprehensive appen-
dix list only for those who require the information and
are prepared to make some effort to secure it. They will
always be a minority of the readers.

As an editor of widely varied materials, I have found
it convenient to have the option whether to account for
alterations within the transcript or else separately. For
example, in an edition of so-and-so's letters it seems to
me unwise to make every reader run the obstacle course
of a genetic text when most users will come to the edition
for the reading text itself, whereas in a commentary note
quoting from some letter it would be most convenient to
include the alterations within the transcribed text. I recall
that many years ago when the University of Chicago
Press was contemplating the publication of the Hayford
and Seals Billy Budd mentioned by Mr. Myerson, my
advice was requested. The whole transcription had been
completed according to the genetic method. My first im-
pulse was to recommend that it be thrown out as unreada-
able and a more practical text be substituted, else precious
few copies would be sold. But the advanced state of the
negotiations would have complicated such a proposal,
and so I suggested as a means of salvaging the situation
that the genetic text be accompanied by a reading text in
its final form, a proposal that was accepted. This was an
expensive and unnecessary duplication, of course, a du-
plication that could have been avoided from the start had
the clear final text been presented (with an appendix list-
ing of the alterations in their various stages) for the be-

In my view we come, then, to the conclusion that any
system of manuscript transcription that contains the alt-
erations inserted within the transcript of the text is useful
chiefly for limited and specialist purposes and is thus not
suitable for all occasions and certainly not for general
scholarly editions. In the William James edition, as in
Some Problems of Philosophy for example, we use a clear
text for manuscripts printed as part of the regular text,
with an appendix list of alterations keyed to page-line
numbers; but in appendices that transcribe independent
early drafts of the material we usually transcribe the alter-
ations within the text since specialists will be the chief
readers here.

In these days of programmed word processors it is
perhaps of small account that the genetic system requires
a specially keyed typewriter (or a lot of painful drawing-
in of symbols by hand) whereas the system I prefer can
be managed with any typewriter equipped with square
brackets. (The necessary inferior brackets can be indi-
cated to the printer by a check mark above the regular
typewriter bracket.)

It is perhaps niggling of me to suggest that Mr. Myer-
son's transcript of the Emerson passage (p. 9) does not, in fact, correspond quite exactly to my system, as implied. According to Mr. Myerson, Emerson's final form was, "But he, at least, is content." In the manuscript, Mr. Myerson states, Emerson wrote 'But lie there the'; deleted 'lie there the'; interlined 'he can'; wiped out 'can'; continued interlining 'at [over where 'can' was] least, is content.'; and added a comma after 'he'. Mr. Myerson's formulaic rendition is: 'But [*lie there the* del.] *he, **at [over wiped out 'can'] least, is content.* intrl.; comma after *he* added.' The difficulty here is that I prefer to use the term deleted isolated within brackets only when there is no substitution by interlineation, as in such an example as: "I was [*going to* del.] coming to that." Here 'going to' was deleted before 'coming to' was written, continuing the text on the same line. I describe interlined substitutes as above deleted, and words written over others, with or without wiping out, as over. Thus there is a crucial distinction between above and over. An example would be: "I *am [ab. del. 'have been'] not at all *certain [ov. 'positive'] that I agree." In Mr. Myerson's transcript, thus, I should not understand immediately that the interlineation 'he, at least, is content.' was written above deleted 'lie there the' but instead was, somehow, an independent interlineation following in space after the deletion. I am not sure, also, that I like the account of the added comma after 'he' being inserted at the end without brackets instead of in its proper place after the 'he,' itself, although I understand that Mr. Myerson is attempting to give the chronological order of alteration, insofar as that is ascertainable with certainty, something not always practicable. Thereupon it would be much clearer to distinguish the internal brackets '[over wiped out 'can']' from the main brackets for the interlined entry by putting them into inferior type, as for clarification I do with all brackets within brackets. Thus my own preferred version of the transcription according to my SB article would read: "But *he, [comma insrt.] **at [ov. 'can'] least, is content. [ab. del. 'lie there the']." I suggest, however, that in this particular case the doubled asterisk may be omitted before 'at' since there can be no ambiguity as to what word the following bracketed information refers. Moreover, it may be a matter of choice whether it is essential to note that 'at' was written over wiped-out or over undeleted 'can' since the act of writing one word over another must imply revision. The one virtue of specifying wiped out would be to distinguish the alteration as made during the course of initial inscription, but in fact the context requires this interpretation.

If this were a clear-text transcript, the text would read 'But he, at least, is content.' and a footnote would take the form of:

00 he... content.] ab. del. 'lie there the'; comma insrtd. aft. 'he'; 'at' ov. 'can'

I am, of course, partial to my own baby but I cannot help remarking that the above seems to me to be both simple and accurate. And easy on the reader.

FREDSON BOWERS
Charlottesville, Virginia

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**Election of Officers**

The Nominating Committee, chaired by Michael Richman, has announced the following slate for the election of officers and a nominating committee for 1982-1983:

President-Elect: Raymond W. Smock
Secretary-Treasurer: John P. Kaminski
Director of Publications: Joel Myerson
Nominating Committee: Roger Bruns
Mary-Jo Kline
Robert Leitz
James Perry
Elizabeth Witherell (chair)

Results of the election, which is being conducted by mail, will be announced at the business meeting during the annual meeting in Columbia.

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**Job Placement**

The ADE is offering job placement assistance on an experimental basis. If you know of positions in which ADE members might be interested, please contact:

David W. Hirst
The Papers of Woodrow Wilson
Firestone Library
Princeton University
Princeton, New Jersey, 08544
Telephone (609) 452-3212

Members who wish to use this service should send 10 copies of a résumé (not to exceed 3 pages) and include a covering letter with additional information for the placement officer.
Editors and Their Work

Princeton University Press has just published volume 20 of The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, the last edited by the late Julian P. Boyd. A computer-assisted index to the first twenty volumes in the series is scheduled to appear later this year.

The Confederate Memorial Literary Society recently announced the recipient of its 1981 Founders Award, given for excellence in the editing of primary source materials, to be the second volume of The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, subtitled Slavery and the South, 1852-1857, edited by Charles C. McLaughlin and Charles E. Beveridge, and published by the Johns Hopkins University Press in Baltimore.

Claire Badaracco's edition of Sophia Peabody Hawthorne's "Cuba Journal, 1833-35" will be published in 1983 by the Essex Institute of Salem, Massachusetts, in their Historical Collections. Sarah Blank, formerly with the Peale Papers, has joined the Documentary History of the Supreme Court as an assistant editor.

Mary-Jo Kline's contention that Aaron Burr did not write the 1806 "cipher letter" that led to his indictment for treason was the subject of a New York Times story in July. According to Kline, handwriting analysis points to Jonathan Dayton, indicted as Burr's co-conspirator, as the author.

The Papers of John Marshall, sponsored by the College of William and Mary and the Institute of Early American History and Culture, has received two grants totalling $45,000 to match a challenge grant in that amount from the Robert G. III and Maude Morgan Cabell Foundation of Richmond. Charles F. Hobson, editor, says that a grant of $15,000 from the William Nelson Cromwell Foundation of New York City and one for $30,000 from the Richard Gwathmey and Caroline T. Gwathmey Memorial Trust enables the project to meet the Cabell Foundation challenge grant. The Cromwell Foundation has a special interest in promoting scholarship in legal history and has previously supported the publication of the legal papers of John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, and Daniel Webster.

Editing Conferences

The Eighteenth Annual Conference on Editorial Problems will be held at the University of Toronto on Friday and Saturday, 5-6 November 1982. It will be devoted to the topic of Editing Polymaths: Erasmus to Russell. For further information and registration forms, please write to the Treasurer, Dr. Sharon Butler, 14285 Robarts Library, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S 1A5.

The Massachusetts Historical Society, an equal opportunity employer, is seeking a mature scholar as editor in chief of the Adams Papers to replace Robert J. Taylor, who will retire on 31 May 1983. Candidates should have a doctorate in history or American Civilization, preferably with emphasis on American political history for the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Ability to write readily, clearly, and succinctly and significant experience in editing historical documents and scholarly writing are essential. Some typing ability, evidence of administrative skills, and a reading knowledge of French are highly desirable. Although an editor in chief is expected to make independent contributions to scholarship, the position is a full-time one and one that requires working cooperatively with the staff to bring out the printed volumes on a set schedule. Salary will be at the full-professor level with generous fringe benefits and four weeks vacation per year. Please apply by 15 November to the Adams Papers Search Committee, Massachusetts Historical Society, 1154 Boylston St., Boston MA 02215, submitting a one-page statement briefly describing qualifications and experience. The committee will invite submission of resumes and letters of reference when appropriate.

The Edison Papers has reopened its search for an editorial associate or assistant editor. Advanced study in history is required. A Ph.D. and background in the history of technology or science is preferred. Experience in historical editing is desirable. Applicants should send a cover letter, resume, and names of three references to the Thomas A. Edison Papers, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, New Brunswick NJ 08903 by 27 September.

The second meeting of the Society for Textual Scholarship will be in April 1983. Instead of holding conferences annually as originally planned, the society will meet biennially. Special meetings in conjunction with the conventions of various professional organizations may be scheduled during the off years.
ADE to Meet in Columbia

The Association’s fourth annual meeting will be held at The Town House in Columbia, South Carolina, from 7-9 October 1982. The program committee, chaired by Charles Cullen, has planned sessions around the general theme of “The Variety of Editing.”

By this time members should have received a packet of convention materials with details on transportation and rooms. If you need information, call Ray Smock (301-552-3907). Room reservations should be made directly with The Town House, Box 2763 or 1615 Gervais Street, Columbia SC 29202 (803-771-8711).

Please note that there will be a registration fee of $5. Tickets for the Friday night banquet (at approximately $14 each) will be available at registration. If you have any questions about local arrangements, call David Chesnutt (803-777-6525).

In a departure from tradition, the program committee has planned a series of concurrent workshops on Friday afternoon. Following these workshops, participants may choose to attend an open house at the Laurens Papers on computer-assisted indexing or take a tour of the South Carolina Archives. Details of the program appear below.

Thursday, 7 October

2:00-6:00PM Convention Registration

8:30PM EDITING ORAL DOCUMENTS
Presiding & Commenting: David W. Hirst, Papers of Woodrow Wilson
The Sermons of Jonathan Edwards
John F. Wilson, Princeton University
Wilson Kimnach, University of Bridgeport
The Speeches of Frederick Douglass
John Blassingame, Yale University

Friday, 8 October

8:30-10:30AM THE FRANKLIN AUTOBIOGRAPHY: TWO APPROACHES
The Literary Model
Leo Lemay, University of Delaware
The Historical Model
Claude-Anne Lopez, Yale University
Commenting: Peter Shaw, State University of New York at Stony Brook

11:00-12:30 Business Meeting

Lunch Individually Arranged

Friday (continued)

2:30-4:30PM WORKSHOPS
These concurrent sessions are intended to present informal discussion of the topics indicated. Although each will begin with comments from the speakers, audience participation is sought for both questions and answers, and individuals should feel free to move from group to group.

Fundraising, with Peter Ripley (Black Abolitionist Papers, Florida State University) and John Borden (Columbia University Development Office; consultant to Founding Fathers Papers, Inc.)

Computers, with David R. Chesnutt (Papers of Henry Laurens, University of South Carolina), Peter Shillingsburg (Thackeray Papers, Mississippi State University) and Scott M. Wilds, (Papers of William Penn, Historical Society of Pennsylvania)

Copyright, with Matthew J. Bruccoli (University of South Carolina)

4:30-6:00PM OPEN HOUSE or TOUR
Laurens Papers Open House: Computer Indexing. The package of programs developed at the Laurens project will be explained by David Chesnutt, editor, and Jean Mustain, programmer.

Tour of the South Carolina Archives with Dr. Charles H. Lesser, Assistant Director of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History

6:30PM Cash Bar

7:30PM Banquet
Speaker: Professor C. Vann Woodward

Saturday, 9 October

9:00-11:00AM EDITING TRANSLATIONS
Presiding: Robert J. Schulmann, The Papers of Albert Einstein, Institute for Advanced Study
Colonial New York Dutch Records
Charles Gehring, New York State Library
The Von Steuben Papers
Edith von Zemensky, University of Pennsylvania
Commenting: William S. Coker, Papers of Panton, Leslie, and Co., University of West Florida

11:00AM Conference Adjourns
"Thank you all..."

As I look over the program that Charles Cullen has arranged for the ADE meeting in Columbia I realize how fortunate the membership is. Not only will you be entertained and edified by a series of expert editor/scholars, but you will also be able to enjoy your dinner on Friday evening without the threat of my oracular musings hanging over your heads. Only I am the loser by my absence. As Ray Smock announced in the registration packet, I have been invited to teach next year at the University of Kent in Canterbury, England, and the Michaelmas Term (sounds like a daisy) begins on 6 October. Given the current performance of the pound, I may have traded the brief but intense pleasure of your company for a long regimen of shepherd’s pie. But the deed is done and I am happy to be able to leave the remaining duties of my office in the capable hands of Charles Cullen. He and Ray Smock, Kathy Waldenfels, and John Simon have not only supported me, but have urged and guided me through the year, and as the program and the reports at the business meeting will show, their guidance and initiative have been fruitful. I am extremely grateful to them and confident that their leadership will continue to be as shrewd and vigorous as it has been.

I also want to thank the committee members who have labored faithfully in their various vineyards. We have an excellent slate of officers for next year; plans for our 1983 meeting are well advanced; you have seen some of the results of our Federal Policy Committee through the Coalition to Save our Documentary Heritage; and our Education Committee has been exploring the possibility of applying for grants to fund fellowships in editing. Details of these and other developments will be revealed at the business meeting in Columbia. I think you will be pleased and impressed with the progress of your organization, as I have been with the individuals I’ve relied upon this year.

Professor C. Vann Woodward deserves my special thanks in advance for his willingness to speak to us this year. I tried last year to secure his appearance on our program, but other commitments prevented his meeting with us. He has agreed to speak after the banquet this year, but only on the condition that his presentation not be billed as a substitute for the "presidential address." That is a very appropriate condition, for what he will offer us will, I feel sure, be substantive rather than ceremonial. As we all know, the publication and reception of Mary Chesnut’s Civilization raised fascinating questions about the nature of diaries, journals, autobiographies, and personal histories; about the effect of authorial revision on the documentary value of such personal writings; and about the proper editorial strategy (s) for presenting such materials. These are some of the issues to which Professor Woodward has given serious thought and his remarks will be of special interest in conjunction with the session on the editing of Franklin’s Autobiography.

And finally let me thank you all for the honor you have done me in allowing me to serve as president of ADE. The organization is turning out even better than I had hoped at its inception. We are growing (slowly) in numbers but rather rapidly, I think, in definition of purpose and vigor of activity. Certainly in our sense of professional collegiality. The research travel of Mary-Jo Kline has itself done much to stimulate mutual awareness and exchange of information, and the report of the committee on the ADE handbook will be one more proof of the serious professional commitment of the organization and of the splendid results that cooperative effort, focused through a congenial and discriminating author can achieve.

At the beginning of Michaelmas I’ll be wishing I were in Columbia and looking forward to seeing you in Baltimore in 1983.

—DON L. COOK

Sustaining Members

Ray Smock, secretary-treasurer, announces the following additions to the sustaining members list:

| Kenneth R. Bowling | John L. Kessell |
| Joan R. Challinor | Pierre A. MacKay |
| Louis R. Harlan | George L. Vogt |
| David W. Hirst | |

Due to space limitations in this issue, a summary of the final session of the 1982 annual meeting entitled "The Role of the Professional Staff" will be printed separately. Copies will be available at the meeting in Columbia, or send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Kathleen Waldenfels, Joseph Henry Papers, SI-149, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560.