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ADE NEWSLETTER

News of the Association for Documentary Editing

Volume 1, Number 3

October 1979

PRINCETON CONVENTION EXPECTED TO ATTRACT 150 MEMBERS

Early reservations for the November 8-10 ADE convention in Princeton, N.J., indicate that as many as 150 scholars and guests will attend the initial conference for historical and literary editors, Secretary-Treasurer Charlene N. Bickford reports. Anticipating an overflow from the 60 rooms reserved at the Nassau Inn (where all sessions and the Friday dinner will be held), Ms. Bickford said rooms will also be available at the nearby Treadway Inn in Princeton (telephone 609-452-2500). Be sure to mention the ADE meeting.

President-elect Lester J. Cappon also noted that the announcement for the first session on November 8 (in the preliminary program) was in error. Barbara B. Oberg's paper will be on "Editorial Judgment on Selection and Annotation" (and has nothing to do with "Appraisals").

President Arthur Link has been in charge of preliminary arrangements and reports that a football game in Princeton the same weekend may cause some crowding in the town's hosteleries, so that reservations should be sent immediately to avoid disappointment.

The Nassau Inn is a historic oasis with a number of modern additions which have enlarged the original tavern. The downstairs bar has an original Norman Rockwell mural which brings tongue-in-cheek comments as well as kudos. Most of the campus attractions (library, Nassau Hall) are within walking distance. Although there is some slight congestion in the town, after one visit it is easy to understand why some members of the Continental Congress favored the academic village of 1780 as the national capital site.

SIMON HEADS SLATE FOR 1980 OFFICERS

John Y. Simon, editor of the U. S. Grant Papers at Southern Illinois University, has been recommended by the ADE nominating committee for the post of president-elect. Other 1980 officers nominated by the committee, which was headed by JoAnn Boydston, are Raymond W. Smock for secretary-treasurer and Jon Kukla for director of publications.

DUQUESNE PLANS M.A. PROGRAM IN ARCHIVAL & EDITING STUDIES

A combined one-year program leading to the master's degree in archival, museum, and historical editing studies is being developed at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh. Professor John Opie, History Department, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15219, is soliciting suggestions and comments from colleagues.

NHPRC FELLOWSHIP COMPETITION ANNOUNCED

The 1979-1980 competition for National Historical Publications and Records Commission fellowships in historical editing is under way. Participating projects are The Adams Papers (Massachusetts Historical Society), Documentary Relations of the Southwest (Arizona State Museum, University of Arizona), the Frederick Douglass Papers (Yale University), and the Documentary History of the First Federal Congress (George Washington University). Competence in Spanish is required for the Southwest fellowship. Fellows receive a stipend of \$13,000 and spend a year in training at one of the projects. Candidates should hold a Ph.D. in an appropriate field of history or should have completed all requirements for the doctorate except the dissertation. Applications are available from the NHPRC, National Archives, Washington, D.C. 20408. Application deadline: March 1, 1980.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

July 17, 1979

In looking over the NHPRC's recent Report to the President, some of us here were struck by the choice of Commission members from the two large historical associations. The individual historians are distinguished enough, but they have no particular commitment to documentary editing, and, indeed, may know little about it. Yet almost by definition representatives from the Society of American Archivists would have an archivist's point of view, and certainly the representatives from the American Association for State and Local History would be inclined to look with favor on projects of purely local interest.

Without being too parochial about it, might not ADE suggest to both the AHA and the OAH that at least one of their two representatives be an editor or a historian sympathetic to documentary publication and with some firsthand knowledge about it (Jack Greene, of course, falls into this category)? Such persons could better evaluate applications for grants and put documentary editing in proper perspective in relation to the broad range of historical interests. I believe the projects and the profession would both be gainers.

Robert J. Taylor
Editor in Chief, Adams Papers

EDITORS AND THEIR WORK

FAY KIDD, the indefatigable, cheerful secretary in the NHPRC office since 1962, recently retired and insisted that no farewell party mar her last day at work. Her colleagues and friends insist that they will not allow her to drop from sight so easily, however, and are taking contributions for a suitable gift. . . . MERRILL JENSEN, editor of the Ratification of the Constitution project, and JULIAN P. BOYD, editor of the Jefferson Papers, are both recovering from recent surgery. . . . G. THOMAS TANSELLE of the Guggenheim Foundation has been nominated for a councillor's post at the American Antiquarian Society. . . . THOMAS A. MASON has been appointed associate editor of the Madison Papers at the University of Virginia. . . . BERNARD MAYO, editor of the three-volume Instructions to the British Ministers to the U.S., 1791-1812, died recently in Charlottesville, Va. He was 78.

PHILIP MAZZEI STUDY CENTER ESTABLISHED IN NEW JERSEY

Sister Margherita Marchione of Fairleigh Dickinson University, Morristown, N.J., has single-handedly amassed the papers of the Italian patriot and American horticulturist-turned-revolutionary under the auspices of the NHPRC. Last summer she toured Europe and discovered new materials that Sister Margherita predicts will give historians cause to reevaluate Mazzei's contribution to the American Revolution. A comprehensive microfilm edition of Mazzei's papers is being published by KTO Press, consisting of over 2,500 documents. A three-volume letterpress edition of selected Mazzei papers is also being edited by Sister Margherita, who edited and translated Philip Mazzei: Jefferson's 'Zealous Whig' (American Institute of Italian Studies, 1975).

1980 EDITING INSTITUTE SCHEDULED FOR MADISON

The ninth annual Institute for Historical Editing will take place June 22 to July 3, 1980, in Madison, Wisconsin. Jointly sponsored by the NHPRC, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, the institute will provide detailed theoretical and practical instruction in documentary editing. Applicants should hold a master's degree in history or American civilization. Both full and partial study grants are available. For information and application forms, write to NHPRC, National Archives, Washington, D.C. 20408. Application deadline: March 1, 1980

RECENT BOOKS OF NOTE

Let the Oppressed Go Free, 1861-1867, Volume V of The Letters of William Lloyd Garrison. Edited by Walter M. Merrill. Harvard. \$37.50.

Professor Merrill of the English Department at Drexel University worked with the late Louis Ruchames, and in their original scheme this volume was one of three assigned to editor Merrill. A final volume for the period 1868-1879 is planned.

Selected Studies in Bibliography, by G. Thomas Tanselle. University Press of Virginia, Box 3608, Univ. Station, Charlottesville, Va. 22903. \$15. 506 pp.

This work includes Tanselle's incisive essay on "Editing of Historical Documents," "Some Principles of Editorial Apparatus," and other writings which have provoked much new thinking within the editing profession. A sample:

Scholarly editors may disagree about many things, but they are in general agreement that their goal is to discover exactly what an author wrote and to determine what form of his work he wished the public to have. There may be some difference of opinion about the best way of achieving that goal; but if the edition is to be a work of scholarship -- a historical reconstruction -- the goal itself must involve the author's "intention." The centrality of that concept to scholarly editing can be illustrated by W. W. Greg's "The Rationale of Copy-Text," which, in the quarter century since it first appeared, has established itself as the most influential document in modern editorial theory.* . . . Although Greg did not address himself to the question of a precise definition of "author's intention," it is clear from such a summary that he considered the goal of an edition -- and he was speaking of an "old-spelling critical edition" -- to be the reconstruction of a text representing the author's final wishes about the version of his work to be presented to the public. . . .

(*Greg's essay appeared in Studies in Bibliography, III, 19-36).

Published by the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia.

AN EDITORIAL

The Lost Art of Reviewing,
and Other Matters

During this first year the ADE Newsletter has been, like all first efforts, a bit untidy. We have probably paid too little attention to some important aspects of documentary editing. It seems to me that our rapid growth as an organization proved that the regular journals are not meeting our demands, but it may be too ambitious to aspire to publication of a regular journal. Perhaps subsidies for books dealing with the editorial process would be a better way to spend our funds.

One problem we ought to face directly is the indifferent quality of the reviews for edited works. Many journals tend to ignore a documentary project once it is fully launched, while others allow years (sometimes decades) to lapse before they get around to printing an insipid review, oftentimes by a scholar whose qualifications are in a wholly different field of study (but chronologically right). Thus we discern a singsong quality about most reviews, either full of clichés about "meeting the usual high standards," or carping criticisms, or quick brushoffs. Meanwhile the New York Times Sunday book section goes on its way, treating most editorial projects as the work of a few, for the few, and by the few.

What is the result? One, I fear, is that we have fallen into some deep ruts. We need some shaking. Intelligent reviews, sharply critical essays, and the full attention of our peers would do wonders for the field of documentary editing. We need to ask more questions about our audiences, and less about our subsidies. We ought to be more worried about the sales figures, and less concerned about writing great proposals. Some of us are being smothered by red tape. If the reviews of our work had a proper place in the scholarly professions, perhaps we would not need to worry about where our next grant was coming from -- and that would be a sign of genuine progress.

R. A. Rutland

NHPRC RESEARCH STAFF INTERN PROGRAM AVAILABLE

The intern program of the Research Staff of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission has been designed for senior level undergraduate and graduate students in American history, American studies, and archives administration. The program provides a multi-faceted experience for the participant. Interns do not receive any financial assistance. They do receive a unique education in historical research using original manuscript materials. Academic arrangements, i.e., receiving credit toward a degree, must be made by the student with his or her department and/or university. For further information write Mary A. Giunta, Supervisor, Research Staff, NHPRC, National Archives, Washington, D.C. 20408.