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# Mellon Foundation Makes Large Editing Grant

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation of New York City has granted \$425,000 to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission in support of historical editing projects of five Founding Fathers: John Adams (and his family), Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and George Washington. The grant is intended to give the editors and sponsoring institutions a three-year period in which to develop other bases of financial support, as funds from federal grant-making agencies, such as the NHPRC are not expected to keep pace with rising editorial and production costs. The NHPRC will administer the Mellon Foundation award, making separate annual grants to each of the five projects.

A major purpose of the Mellon Foundation grant is to enable these projects to take advantage of new technology, particularly word-processing equipment and computer indexing programs in order to accelerate production and reduce overall costs. The grant provides funds specifically for "retooling" the projects with new equipment and editorial aids. Other editorial projects, notably the *Papers of Henry Laurens* at the University of South Carolina and the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series at the United States Department of State, have demonstrated the advantages of these modern aids in reducing time-consuming proofreading and nearly eliminating the marathon indexing sessions common to most large editorial enterprises.

The grant also includes \$25,000 to enable the NHPRC to study alternative methods and procedures that may shorten production time and reduce costs of documentary editions. The NHPRC plans a comprehensive review of current editorial practices in selection, transcription, and annotation, and of technological innovations in editing, as well as a study of the utility of comprehensive book editions. A study director, with an advisory panel to suggest specific questions and goals and to review the final report, will be hired to prepare a draft report by fall 1980.

The projects to which the Mellon grant will be applied are:

*The Adams Papers.* Begun in 1952 at the Massachusetts Historical Society, the project has published a 608-reel microfilm edition and 24 of projected 130 volumes. The several series include the collected papers of Presidents John and John Quincy Adams, and diaries and family correspondence of descendants. The present editor-in-chief is Robert J. Taylor, formerly a professor of history at Tufts University.

*The Papers of Thomas Jefferson.* Long considered one of the premier works of American historical scholarship, Princeton University's Jefferson series first appeared in 1950, and has progressed through 19 volumes of a projected 60. Julian P. Boyd and Charles T. Cullen are the editors.

*The Papers of James Madison.* One of two Founding Fathers editions housed at the University of Virginia, the Madison project is headed by Robert A. Rutland. The edition has reached volume 12 of a projected 60. In the near future the editors will add a new series — the presidential papers — to be published simultaneously with the chronological series already well underway.

*The Papers of Benjamin Franklin.* One of the most prolific of Founding Fathers, Franklin left behind an immense body of correspondence that the Yale University editorial team, now headed by William B. Willcox, has gathered from all over the world. With 21 volumes of a projected 62 in print, the editors still face Franklin's extraordinarily busy years representing American diplomatic interests in France. The American Philosophical Society, founded by Franklin, contributes to the support of the project.

*The Papers of George Washington.* Directed by W. W. Abbot at the University of Virginia, the Washington project is the youngest of the five Founding Fathers projects. To date, the editors have published Washington's diaries in six volumes and begun work on a correspondence series estimated to require an additional 70 volumes. The project receives substantial support from the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union, which owns and maintains Washington's home.

## Exemplary Citations

- "Archive Packs for Schools: Some Practical Suggestions," by M. Palmer, in *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 6, no. 3 (April 1979):145-153.
- E. James Ferguson, review of the *Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, vol. 21, in *Journal of American History* 66 (1980):919-920.
- "Between the Italian Renaissance and the French Enlightenment: Gabriel Naudé as an Editor," by Paul Oskar Kristeller, in *Renaissance Quarterly* 32, no. 1 (spring 1979):41-72.

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