

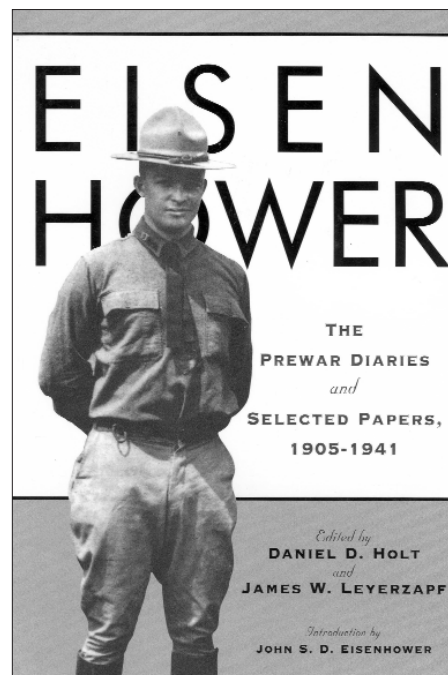
## Forty Years of Publishing

Forty years ago in the fall of 1964, the National Historical Publications Commission awarded its first grants for projects to further public understanding of American history, democracy, and culture. In September of that year, the Ford Foundation made a \$2 million award to the Commission to support the five original Founding Fathers projects—papers of The Adams Family, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison.

On November 6, 1964, the Commission awarded its first grant through funds appropriated by Congress at the beginning of the fiscal year. The State Historical Society of Wisconsin received \$52,000 for *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*. Over the course of a generation, the Commission has gone on to support other Founding Era projects including the papers of George Washington and documentary histories of the First Federal Congress and the early Supreme Court. Virtually every aspect of the American Story—great leaders, historical eras, social movements—has been funded as well. From the impassioned letters of Martin Luther King, Jr. to the diaries of American explorer John C. Frémont, from the papers of Chief John Ross to the laboratory sketches of Thomas Edison, the NHPRC has provided seed money to scores of projects that have printed hundreds of volumes and thousands of reels of microfilm that create an image of an age.

### J. Franklin Jameson and the American Historical Association

The story of Federal support for publishing the documentary history of the United States dates back to the early days of the Republic, stemming from the need expressed among the states and later through historians for adequate and authentic documentation of our national history. In 1887 Congress appointed a commission composed of the Secretary of State, the Librarian of Congress, and the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution to report on historical manuscripts of the Federal Government and the policy to be pursued in their publication. But the real



*Historical documentary editions, such as The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, which cover the years 1941-1961, are often complemented by special editions such as Eisenhower: The Prewar Diaries and Selected Papers, 1905-1941.*

push began through the work of J. Franklin Jameson and the American Historical Association, early advocates of documentary history. In the 1891 annual report of the American Historical Association (AHA), Jameson published a paper on Federal Government expenditures in behalf of U.S. history that called for a commission with “power to edit and publish not only materials in possession of the Government, but also those which are in private existence.”

Four years later, as a result of his study of European archives, Jameson submitted a program to the AHA for the systematic collection and selective publication of American historical source materials. The AHA established a Historical Manuscripts Commission and appointed Jameson as its chair, and in 1899, the Public Archives Commission was established to illuminate the difference between private papers and public archives.

*(continued on page 4)*

# Annotation

*Annotation* is the quarterly newsletter of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), a Federal agency within the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, DC. Recipients are encouraged to republish, with appropriate credit, any materials appearing in *Annotation*. Inquiries about receiving *Annotation*, submitting material for it, or anything else related to it may be directed to the Editor, *Annotation*, NHPRC, National Archives and Records Administration, 700 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Room 111, Washington, DC 20408-0001; 202-501-5610 (voice); 202-501-5601 (fax); [nhprc@nara.gov](mailto:nhprc@nara.gov) (e-mail); [www.archives.gov/grants/](http://www.archives.gov/grants/) (World Wide Web).

Material accepted for publication will be edited to conform to style and space limitations of *Annotation*, but authors will be consulted should substantive questions arise. The editor is final arbiter in matters regarding length and grammar. Published material does not necessarily represent the views of the Commission or of the National Archives and Records Administration; indeed, some material may challenge policies and practices of those institutions.

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## FROM THE EDITOR

This fall, the National Historical Publications and Records Commission marks its 40th anniversary of awarding grants. This issue of *Annotation* is devoted to our support for publishing historical documentary editions and includes a special section on some of the publications we have supported over the years. The Winter issue of *Annotation* will feature a brief history of our support for records and archival projects. On October 30, President Bush signed legislation reauthorizing the Commission for the next 4 years.

We also welcome Timothy Slavin to the Commission, applaud Michael Meier on this new role as Director of Technology Initiatives, and salute Laurette O'Connor who retired from the staff in July 2004.

### ***NHPRC Application Deadlines***

THE COMMISSION'S MEETINGS FOLLOW THE FISCAL YEAR OF OCTOBER 1 TO SEPTEMBER 30. CONSEQUENTLY, THE FIRST MEETING OF THE FISCAL YEAR IS IN NOVEMBER AND THE SECOND IS IN MAY.

#### **June 1 (for the November meeting)**

Proposals addressing the following top priorities:

- The NHPRC will provide the American public with widespread access to the papers of the founders of our democratic republic and its institutions by ensuring the timely completion of eight projects now in progress to publish the papers of George Washington, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and papers that document the Ratification of the Constitution, the First Federal Congress, and the early Supreme Court.

#### **OCTOBER 1 (for the May meeting)**

Proposals not addressing the above priorities, but focusing on an activity authorized in the NHPRC statute as follows:

- collecting, describing, preserving, compiling, and publishing (including microfilming and other forms of reproduction) of documentary sources significant to the history of the United States
- conducting institutes, training and educational courses, and fellowships related to the activities of the Commission
- disseminating information about documentary sources through guides, directories, and other technical publications
- or, more specifically, documentary editing and publishing; archival preservation and processing of records for access; developing or updating descriptive systems; creation and development of archival and records management programs; development of standards, tools, and techniques to advance the work of archivists, records managers, and documentary editors; and promotion of the use of records by teachers, students, and the public.

APPLICATION GUIDELINES AND FORMS MAY BE REQUESTED FROM NHPRC, NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION, 700 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE NW, ROOM 111, WASHINGTON, DC 20408-0001, 202-501-5610 (VOICE), 202-501-5601 (FAX), [nhprc@nara.gov](mailto:nhprc@nara.gov) (E-MAIL), OR BY ACCESSING OUR WEB SITE AT [www.archives.gov/grants](http://www.archives.gov/grants)

*Of making many books there is no end ...*  
(Eccl. 12:12)

The Preacher was prophetic. The making of many books today is a major industry, employing authors, editors, publishers, typographers, printers, binders, distributors, and retailers serving an audience whose appetite for the printed word seems insatiable.

The NHPRC too is in the trade: "Publications" is our middle name. Since 1934 when the National Historical Publications Commission was established by Congress, we began to encourage publishing of historical documents and "guides, inventory lists, catalogs, and other instruments facilitating the use of the collections."

After 1964, the Commission began to make grants to support scholarly publications. Historical editors have collected, carefully transcribed and annotated, and published hard copy editions of some of the most important documents in American history. Scores of NHPRC-sponsored projects, documenting many American historical themes and institutions, have produced nearly 1,000 volumes (see selected list, pp. 7-12).

Publication, understandably, is often confused in the popular mind with printing. Since the invention of movable type in the 15th century, the mass dissemination of knowledge has been achieved by manufacturing and distributing books. But publication is possible, as it was pre-Gutenberg, by other means. One "publishes" by sending a crier throughout the town, nailing a thesis to the church door, or reading a declaration from the courthouse steps. Publishing is simply making public.

In that sense, the 20th century revolutionized publishing through the media. Newspapers, magazines, books, radio, television, and film function, in different ways, as distribution systems for ideas. Today, we can publish just by posting content on the Internet. To paraphrase Carl Becker, "Everyman his own publisher."

The editors and publishers of documentary editions are committed to using the best tools for publishing and getting their goods in as many hands as possible. The Model Editions Project developed coding standards for publishing both print and electronically, making possible a much wider dissemination of these most important works. The Lincoln Legal Project provides a DVD edition that holds a mountain of paper on three disks. The History Cooperative published an online edition of the *Booker T. Washington Papers*. Academic presses are looking to publish these works online.

These are important steps in the right direction. Ultimately, in addition to web sites with individual projects, we must commit a na-



Max J. Evans

tional program to preserving the electronic editions of these works, making them freely available online to the American people, and assuring that they are authoritative. I emphasize this last point. When anyone can easily publish whatever, how can one discern the authentic? A trusted repository is necessary; trusted to not go out of business, and trusted to maintain the accurate. This, and converting existing type to electronic text, will be among the challenges of the future.

Scholarly editions are costly, but clearly justified by the importance of the historical material. More important than the cost is the benefit, the opportunity to increase use by making electronic editions.

We can further increase the benefit by publishing other records in other forms.

Microfilm was first used to preserve and disseminate historical records soon after the NHPC was established. The Commission supports both microfilm editions and printed editions. Microfilm differs in important ways, however, from printed, scholarly editions. For example, microfilm reproduces images of the original documents, not transcribed text or annotations. Microfilming has long been an important part of the NHPRC publication program. Indeed, many of historical documentary editions also produce microfilm editions of the rest of the documents not included in selected editions. Some, in addition, produce digital editions of the images.

All are publications. We may define "publications" as it applies to historical documents, as works designed to make documents usable by a number of people outside the repository. This definition excludes preservation microfilm and copies made for individuals. Thinking of publications in these terms opens the door to new action.

The Commission's new strategic plan anticipates proposals from archivists and editors for cost-effective publishing projects to help increase the use of America's documentary heritage. We would like to see many more projects that publish digital editions, modeled in some ways on microfilm editions. The options—microfilm, digital image, and hard copy; annotated and unannotated—and their combinations create opportunities for archivists and editors to create innovative and exciting products appropriate to the research value and expected use of the material.

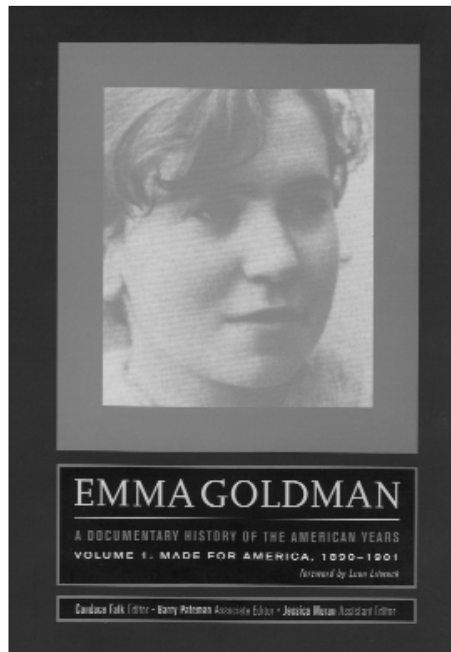
This smorgasbord of new kinds of publications can extend the reach of primary sources into more places—libraries, classrooms, and researcher's offices—improving, in the end, historical scholarship, teaching, and understanding.

### The Keep Commission

As part of the progressive tendency for government reform, President Theodore Roosevelt established the Commission on Department Methods in 1905, headed by Charles Keep, to consider, among its interdepartmental concerns, the care of Federal agency records and the publication of historical materials. Jameson wrote to the Keep Commission about European models for historical publications, including the Netherlands "Commission of Advice for National Historical Publications," which had issued a report in 1904 recommending a systematic survey of the whole field of Dutch history and a program of documentary publication. "It is an accepted function of governments, and needs no defense." By 1907, nearly every European country had formed such a commission and Canada had just established such a body.

The Commission on Department Methods issued its report to the President in 1909, including a draft bill for a Commission on Historical Publications. The authors concluded: "[W]e are by no means disposed to recommend that it confine its historical publications to materials which are in its own possession. That would be an unscientific course, substituting, for such standards as make for rational completeness, criteria dependent on the accidents of deposit or ownership." The report recommended a Commission of eight or nine members, chosen from the American Historical Association, with an annual appropriation of \$100,000 for at least 10 octavo volumes.

Congress took up the matter in December of that year when Representative Samuel McCall of Massachusetts introduced a bill to create a Commission on National Historical Publications. The Commission was to have nine members with authority "to defray, out of such appropriations as Congress may from time to time make . . . the cost of preparing and printing at the Government Printing Office



*The NHPRC's support of a microfilm edition of The Papers of Emma Goldman laid the foundation for an annotated documentary edition, commencing with the first of four volumes, Made for America, 1890-1901.*

such volumes of material for American history as it may deem most useful." In January 1910, The Committee on the Library of the House debated the McCall bill. H. T. Colenbrander testified on the experience of the Dutch Commission. Charles F. Adams suggested a salaried secretary of the Commission. Herbert Putnam, Librarian of Congress, suggested that the Commission might be located in the Library of Congress building. He also remarked that the Commission "would consider not merely the material in possession of the Government, but material in private hands . . ." Later that spring, the House bill was reported with amendments as H.R. 1000. It called for a secretary at \$2,000 per year and expenses for Commission members not to exceed \$10,000. The Commission was to have nine members appointed by the President to four-year terms. "The common experience of civilized governments has perfectly well proved that all this is best done by intrusting the general supervision of a government's historical publications to a small and relatively permanent commission of experts, men whose lives are occupied in universities or elsewhere with historical pursuits, and to whom it is

a vital matter that their tasks should be wisely chosen and rightly performed." The bill went nowhere. In the following year, Senator Elihu Root of New York introduced similar legislation in the Senate, but Congress took no further action on the bill.

### The National Archives and the NHPC

Not until June 19, 1934, when Congress passed and the President signed "An Act to establish a National Archives of the United States Government," did the Commission spring to life. The act also provided for a National Historical Publications Commission to "make plans, estimates, and recommendations for such historical works and collections of sources as seems appropriate for publication and/or otherwise recording at the public expense." The Commission was made up of seven members—the Archivist of the United States as chairman, and one representative from the War Department, the Library of Congress, the Navy Department, the State Department, and two from the American Historical Association.

On January 29, 1935, the Commission met for the first time. Its members were R.D.W. Connor, Archivist of the United States, Chairman; Hunter Miller, State; W. D. Smith, War; Dudley Knox, Navy; J. Franklin Jameson, Library of Congress; and St. George L. Sioussat and Dumas Malone, AHA. The Commission adopted a resolution calling for a publication on the origins of the U.S. Constitution, and the following year the Commission sent a report to Congress recommending a plan of publication of such a documentary edition. Documents for this project would be gathered from institutions around the world. A bill introduced two years later in Congress to authorize spending for the project died without action. While the Commission continued to meet intermittently, it was hamstrung by a lack of funding.

### The Jefferson Papers and Harry Truman

President Harry Truman became the next champion for the Commission. At a

ceremony at the Library of Congress on May 17, 1950, Princeton University's Julian Boyd presented the first volume of *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* to the President. (See "Out of the Archives," p. 17) Impressed with the quality and importance of the documentary edition, Truman proposed a comprehensive program for the publication of the public and private writings of persons who have con-

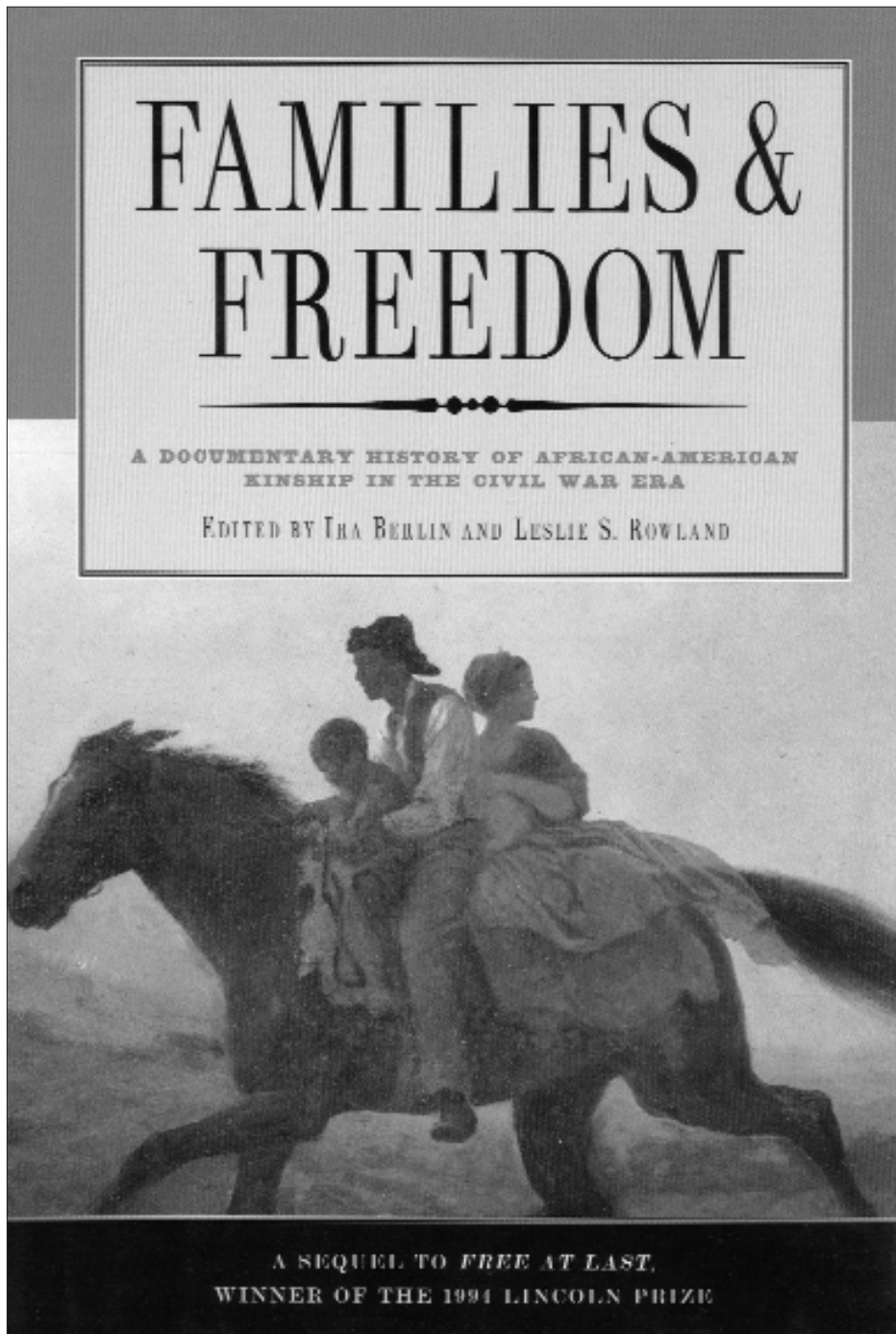
tributed greatly to the development of the United States. The Commission began a survey of scholarly opinion on such a broad publications program. Later that year, Congress passed the Federal Records Act, which increased the Commission's membership from 7 to 11 members, and charged it to "cooperate with and encourage appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies and nongovernmental in-

stitutions, societies, and individuals in collecting and preserving and, when it deems such action to be desirable, in editing and publishing the papers of outstanding citizens of the United States and such other documents as may be important for an understanding and appreciation of the history of the United States."

Under the direction of Philip K. Hamer, the NHPC sent President Truman a preliminary report in 1951 on the publication of the papers of American leaders. Over the next several years, the Commission, with support of the National Archives and the Smithsonian Institution, assisted in research for non-Federal efforts to publish the papers of Benjamin Franklin, John and John Quincy Adams, James Madison, and Alexander Hamilton. The Commission also helped make provisions for microfilming the papers of John C. Calhoun and Henry Clay. On April 15, 1954, the NHPC sent a report titled "A National Program for the Publication of Historical Documents" to the President that recommended funding for the Commission to act in a cooperative program to publish historical documents; announced plans for publication of the papers of historically significant Americans, documentary histories of the ratification of the Constitution and Bill of Rights, and the work of the First Federal Congress; and urged compilation of a national register of archival and manuscript groups. The report also included a list of 361 persons whose papers were deemed worthy of publication. Three years later, a subcommittee of the Committee on House Administration took up H.J. Resolution 233, which encouraged cooperation among the NHPC, private, and state historical commissions and agencies and appropriate libraries, historical societies, universities, corporations, foundations, and civic organizations in forwarding a national publications program.

### President Kennedy and Appropriations

Spurred by the Kennedy Administration's support for similar cultural policy efforts, the NHPC transmitted another report to the President in 1963 containing



*The Freedman and Southern Society Project is undertaking Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-67. Families & Freedom tells the story of the remaking of the black family during the tumultuous years of the Civil War era.*

a proposal to authorize and provide funding for a grants-in-aid program. The report cited an essay by Professor Bernard Bailyn on the significance of such modern documentary editions as *The Adams Papers*, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, and the papers of other notable Americans. "These projects have common characteristics that distinguish them from any other series of documentary publications in our history. They are, of necessity, heavily subsidized: by the news publishing industry . . . private foundations . . . and university presses." The report argued that the Federal Government should take responsibility for ensuring their successful completion.

President John F. Kennedy agreed: "If the Commission is to plan a balanced national program of editing and publication . . . it must have resources on which it can depend. Compared with the funds required for other programs for the national good, those requested by this Commission are modest indeed." On July 28, 1964, Congress passed Public Law 88-383, which launched the NHPC grant program, authorizing it to receive Federal funding, and appropriated \$350,000 for grants to documentary editing projects.

### An Image of An Age

Almost immediately, the Commission began to consider how best to leverage funds for the maximum benefit. In its first year of grantmaking, it made 23 awards for both microfilm and letterpress publications projects, increasing access to America's documentary heritage. The Commission awarded grants to the Founding Era projects and to projects editing the papers of Henry Clay, John C. Calhoun, Andrew Johnson, James K. Polk, Ulysses S. Grant, Jefferson Davis, Daniel Webster, and others.

Microfilming collections proved to be a popular and cost-effective method of publishing documents. In Fiscal Year 1966, for example, half of the grants went to projects preparing microfilm editions of the papers of Albert Gallatin, the Bexar Archives of the colonial history of Texas, and the Nebraska Farmers' Alliance Papers,

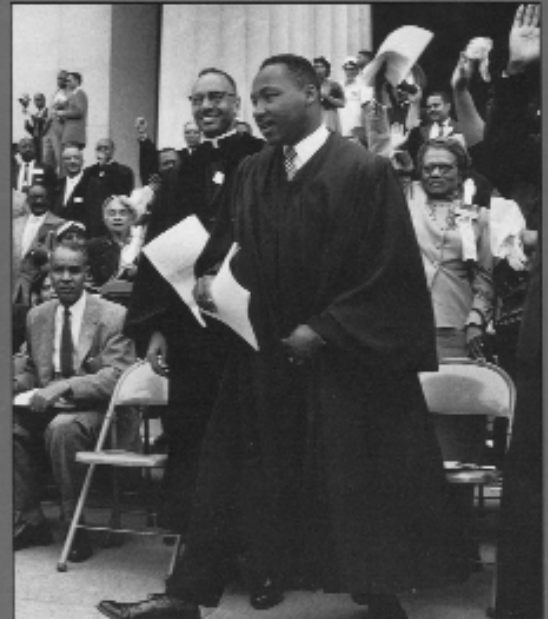
which chronicle agrarian protests. Over the years, comprehensive microfilm editions occasionally became the foundations for book editions that included transcribed and annotated versions of the most important documents. Some long-term projects, such as the Papers of Thomas Edison, the Samuel Gompers Papers, and the Race, Slavery, and Free Blacks petitions project continue to publish comprehensive image editions on microfilm.

Multivolume editions, produced by teams of editors, are meticulously detailed, richly annotated, and carefully indexed models of editorial craftsmanship. A few editions stretch into the scores of volumes. The *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, for example, are contained in 69 volumes. Other documentary editions take a more selective approach. The papers of suffragists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony will be available both as a microfilm edition of some 14,000 documents on 45 reels and as a selective book edition to be completed in a projected six volumes. Over the past decade, editing projects have employed new technologies that stretch the definition of publishing documentary editions through use of the Web, CDs, and DVDs.

Since the inception of the grants program for publishing projects 40 years ago, the NHPRC has supported works that make a vast array of original historical materials more widely accessible, helping researchers, enriching scholarship, and providing essential information to all Americans. As President Truman said, "History can be fairly written only when all the facts are on record." The publishing program helps put those facts on the record, and new histories are honing our understanding of our cultural heritage.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the publishing program, however, is its ul-

THE PAPERS OF  
**MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.**  
 VOLUME IV:  
 SYMBOL OF  
 THE MOVEMENT  
 January 1957–December 1968  
 Clayborne Carson, Senior Editor



*The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project at Stanford University has published four volumes of his papers, a collection of landmark speeches, a collection of sermons, and an edited autobiography.*

timate aim of creating a true portrait of America. In 1986, President Ronald Reagan echoed the importance of America's documentary heritage: "I have great hope for the children of America, that they too will read the works of Madison and Monroe and Washington and Jefferson and Adams and Hamilton. For in their letters to each other and in their essays, in their arguments and in their opinions, all so passionately stated, the image of an age can be discerned." ♦

# SELECTED PUBLISHING PROJECTS

THE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PUBLICATIONS AND RECORDS COMMISSION HAS SUPPORTED HUNDREDS OF PROJECTS SINCE IT BEGAN FUNDING HISTORICAL DOCUMENTARY EDITIONS IN 1964. FOR A COMPLETE LIST, GO TO THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES WEB SITE AT [http://www.archives.gov/grants/funded\\_endorsed\\_projects/funded\\_endorsed\\_projects.html](http://www.archives.gov/grants/funded_endorsed_projects/funded_endorsed_projects.html). THE FOLLOWING LIST INCLUDES THE PUBLISHER OF THE PROJECT, WHOM YOU MAY CONTACT FOR PURCHASING INFORMATION.

## FOUNDING ERA

### *The Adams Papers*

HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS

A comprehensive edition of the diaries, correspondence, and other papers of the Adams family from 1753 to 1889.

### *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WISCONSIN

A comprehensive edition of correspondence and other documents pertaining to the ratification of the Constitution and Bill of Rights.

### *The Emerging Nation: A Documentary History of the Foreign Relations of the United States under the Articles of Confederation, 1780–1789*

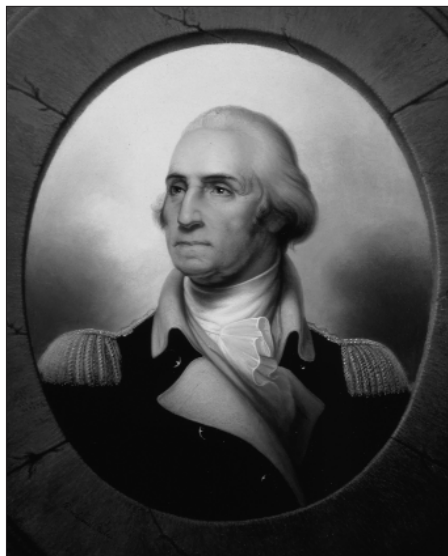
U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

This three-volume documentary collection traces the diplomatic battles of John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, John Jay, Thomas Jefferson, and other early American leaders to establish a credible international presence for the United States as a new nation. Documents include diplomatic despatches, treaties, and private letters from manuscript repositories and historical societies. The collection also includes many new foreign language translations, particularly documents from France's Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères.

### *The Documentary History of the First Federal Congress*

THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY PRESS

A comprehensive edition of all known of-



*George Washington (1732–1799), oil on canvas by Rembrandt Peale, 1853. Collection of the New-York Historical Society; bequest of Miss Caroline Phelps Stokes.*

ficial and unofficial documents pertaining to the First Federal Congress, from March 4, 1789, to March 3, 1791.

### *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*

YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS

A comprehensive edition of the papers and correspondence of the scientist and statesman.

### *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS

A comprehensive edition of the correspondence of the Revolutionary War patriot and first Secretary of the Treasury.

### *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS

A comprehensive edition of the papers and correspondence of the third President of the United States.

### *The Papers of James Madison*

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS (CONGRESSIONAL SERIES, VOLS. 1–10); THE UNIVERSITY PRESS OF VIRGINIA (CONGRESSIONAL SERIES, VOLS. 11–15; PRESIDENTIAL SERIES; SECRETARY OF STATE SERIES)

A comprehensive edition of the personal and state papers of the fourth President of the United States, including letters to him and selected letters of Dolley P. Madison.

### *Documentary History of the Supreme Court of the United States, 1789–1800*

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS

A selective edition of the documentary record of the first years of the Court that includes documents relating to the appointment of the first 12 justices, the minutes, the docket book, original jurisdiction case files, appellate case files, attorney rolls, and records of the clerk's office.

### *The Papers of George Washington*

THE UNIVERSITY PRESS OF VIRGINIA

A comprehensive edition of the papers written by or to the Revolutionary War general and first President of the United States.

## CIVIL RIGHTS AND SOCIAL REFORMERS

### *The Jane Addams Papers*

INDIANA UNIVERSITY PRESS

A comprehensive edition of the papers of this Progressive Era reform leader and winner of the 1931 Nobel Peace Prize.

### *The Black Abolitionist Papers*

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA PRESS

A selective edition of papers of black abolitionists documenting their involvement in an international reform movement that spanned 35 years in the United States, the British Isles, and Canada.

### ***The Frederick Douglass Papers***

YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS

A selective edition of the speeches, autobiographical writings, and correspondence of the 19th-century black reformer, orator, and abolitionist.

### ***Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois***

UNIVERSITY MICROFILM INTERNATIONAL

The papers of the black scholar and leader, includes documents relating to his early sociological investigations of the American philosophy of black accommodation.

### ***Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861–1867***

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

A highly selective edition of documents pertaining to black life in the years between the beginning of the Civil War and the advent of Radical Reconstruction, taken from records of Federal and Confederate agencies in the National Archives. Volumes document slave reactions to the war, fugitive slave experiences, emerging patterns of race relations, the efforts of freedom to acquire capital and land, violence in white-black contacts, the enforcement of justice in the courts, laws that subverted black rights, and black social institutions and conditions including the family, church, and school.

### ***The Emma Goldman Papers***

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS

A selective edition of the papers of the renowned anarchist and major figure in the history of American radicalism and feminism.

### ***The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers***

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS

A selective edition of the documentary record of the movement, based on the papers of the U.N.I.A.—Central Division and documents in foreign archives and in United States government archives, among them the files of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

### ***The Samuel Gompers Papers***

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS PRESS

A selective edition of the papers of the



*Frederick Douglass argues against John Brown's plan to attack the arsenal at Harpers Ferry in this painting by Jacob Lawrence.*

American labor leader and first president of the American Federation of Labor.

### ***The Papers of Mother Jones***

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH PRESS (CORRESPONDENCE AND SPEECHES); UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY PRESS (COURT-MARTIAL)

An edition of the papers of Mary Harris Jones, the labor agitator closely identified with the struggles of coal miners, who directed popular and governmental attention to the workers' cause.

### ***The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.***

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS

An edition of the papers of the renowned 20th-century civil rights leader and one of the most visible advocates of nonviolence and direct action as methods of social change.

### ***Race, Slavery, and Free Blacks***

UNIVERSITY PUBLICATIONS OF AMERICA

A microfilm edition of Petitions to Southern Legislatures, 1777–1867, scattered in state archives throughout the South. The collections include virtually all extant legislative and county court petitions on the subject of race and slavery. The documents were written by a broad range of persons, including blacks and whites, males and females, slaveholders and non-slaveholders.

### ***The Selected Papers of Margaret Sanger***

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS PRESS

A four-volume edition of the papers of the noted birth control pioneer drawn from the two-series microfilm edition.

### ***The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony***

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

A selective edition of documents concerning the lives and accomplishments of two of America's most important social and political reformers. Their names were synonymous with woman suffrage in the United States and around the world.

### ***Eleanor Roosevelt & Human Rights***

A project dedicated to bringing Eleanor Roosevelt's writings (and radio and television appearances) on democracy and human rights before an audience as diverse as the ones she addressed by creating scholarly, annotated, and multimedia editions, *The Selected Papers of Eleanor Roosevelt: The Human Rights Years*, to be published by Charles Scribner's Sons in both print and electronic format beginning in 2006.

### ***Papers of Howard Thurman***

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA PRESS

A selective edition of the writings and



correspondence of the noted theologian who sought to infuse the philosophy of Gandhi into contemporary Christian thought and the civil rights movement. The first volume, *A Strange Freedom*, was published by Beacon Press in 1998.

## PRESIDENTS AND STATESMEN

*The Papers of Louis D. Brandeis*  
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK PRESS (MAIN

SERIES); UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA PRESS (BRANDEIS-FRANKFURTER LETTERS)

A selective edition of the letters of the controversial lawyer and Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

### *James Buchanan Papers*

UNIVERSITY MICROFILMS INTERNATIONAL

The papers of the 15th President of the United States, approximately 20,000 items, including incoming and outgoing correspondence, speeches, notes, memorandums, manuscript books by Buchanan and his biographers, and business and legal papers.

### *The Papers of John C. Calhoun*

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA PRESS

A comprehensive edition of letters, speeches, and other writings by and to Calhoun as congressman, cabinet officer, and vice president.

### *Charles Carroll of Carrollton Family Papers*

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA PRESS

A selective edition of the papers published under the title of *Dear Papa, Dear Charley: The Peregrinations of a Revolutionary Aristocrat, as told by Charles Carroll of Carrollton and His Father; Charles Carroll of Annapolis, with Sundry Observations on Bastardy, Child-rearing, Romance, Matrimony, Commerce, Tobacco, Slavery, and the Politics of Revolutionary America.*

### *The Papers of Henry Laurens*

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA PRESS

A selective edition of the personal and official correspondence and records of the South Carolina merchant-planter who served as president of the First Continental Congress.

### *The Salmon P. Chase Papers*

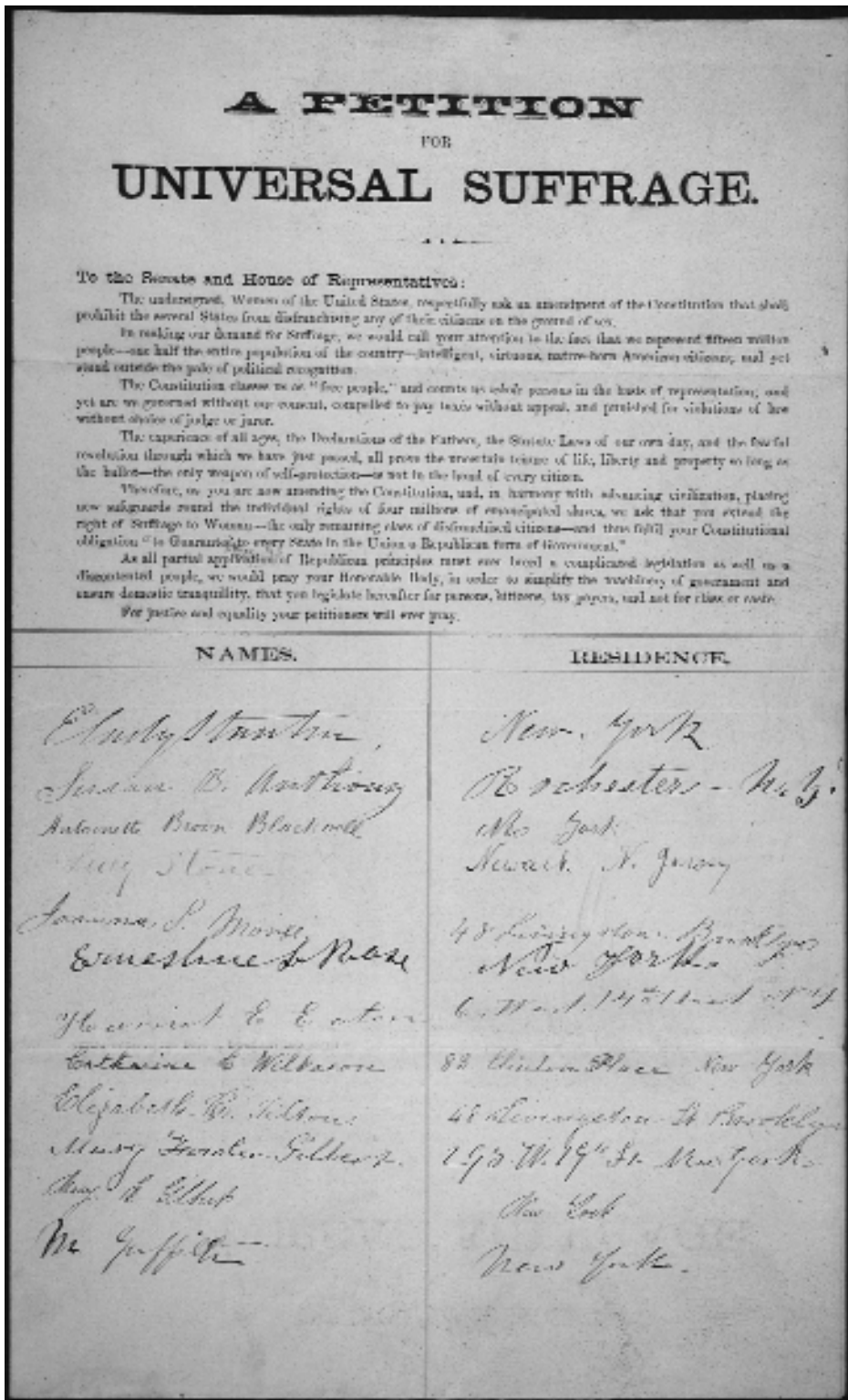
THE KENT STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS

A significant collection of papers with observation and commentary on American political and cultural history from the presidency of John Quincy Adams to that of Ulysses S. Grant.

### *The Papers of Henry Clay*

THE UNIVERSITY PRESS OF KENTUCKY

A comprehensive edition of the papers



Petition of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone, and others asking for "an amendment of the Constitution that shall prohibit the several States from disenfranchising any of their citizens on the ground of sex," ca. 1865.

and correspondence of Clay as statesman, Presidential candidate, and Secretary of State.

### ***The Papers of Jefferson Davis***

LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS

A selective edition of the papers of the president of the Confederacy, who earlier served in both houses of Congress, as commander of the First Mississippi Regiment in the Mexican War, and as Secretary of War in the administration of President Franklin Pierce.

### ***The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower***

THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY PRESS

A selective edition of the papers of the commander of the Allied forces in North Africa, the Mediterranean, and Europe during World War II and the President of the United States from 1953 to 1961.

### ***Milliard Fillmore Papers***

(Microfilm Edition)

BUFFALO AND ERIE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A comprehensive publication of the letters and documents of the New York State assemblyman, comptroller of the State of New York, Congressman, Vice President, and 13th President of the United States. Included by special arrangement are copies of Fillmore documents held by the State University of New York at Oswego.

### ***The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant***

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY PRESS

A comprehensive edition of the correspondence of the Civil War general and 18th President of the United States.

### ***The Papers of General Nathanael Greene***

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA PRESS

A selective edition of the papers of the Revolutionary War general.

### ***Warren G. Harding Papers***

(Microfilm Edition)

SCHOLARLY RESOURCES, INC.

The personal and official papers (1888-1923) of the Ohio Senator and 29th President of the United States, including business letters, personal and political correspondence, office files, speeches, clippings, unpublished biographical ma-



*President John Kennedy meets with former President Dwight Eisenhower at Camp David, MD, April 1961. The Presidential Recordings Project is publishing transcripts of White House recordings made by Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon.*

terial, and other papers. This publication also includes the related papers of Cyril C. Clemens, Hoke Donithen, Charles E. Jard, Ray B. Harris, Malcolm Jennings, Charles E. Sawyer, and Frank E. Scobey.

### ***Papers of Rutherford Birchard Hayes***

(Microfilm Edition)

SCHOLARLY RESOURCES, INC.

The papers of the 19th President of the United States. The papers include those in the custody of the Hayes Presidential Center, augmented by those in more than 130 libraries and other institutions in the United States.

### ***The Papers of Andrew Jackson***

UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE PRESS

A selective edition of the papers of the seventh President of the United States.

### ***The Papers of John Jay***

HARPER-COLLINS

An edition of the previously unpublished papers of John Jay, the President of the Con-

tinental Congress, Minister Plenipotentiary to Spain and Peace Commissioner at Paris, Secretary for Foreign Affairs, first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and negotiator of Jay's Treaty.

### ***The Papers of Andrew Johnson***

UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE PRESS

An edition of the correspondence, speeches, miscellaneous interviews, and documents of Johnson as Congressman, Governor, Senator, military governor of Tennessee, President, and politician seeking vindication.

### ***The Papers of Henry Laurens***

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA PRESS

A selective edition of the personal and official correspondence and records of the South Carolina merchant-planter who served as president of the First Continental Congress.

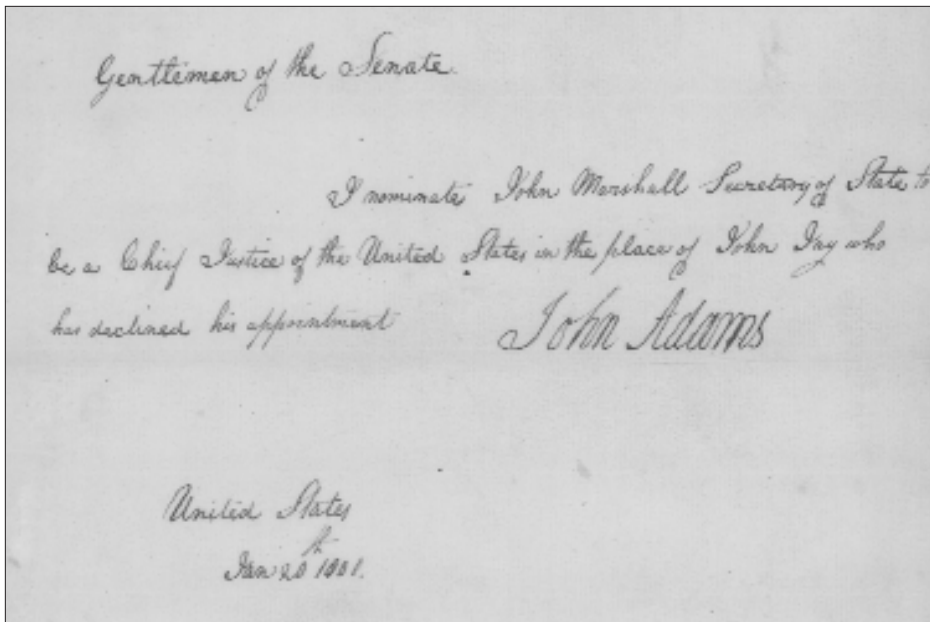
### ***The Lincoln Legal Papers***

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS PRESS

A three-volume DVD-ROM edition of more than 5,600 cases and legal matters, nearly 100,000 documents with nearly 250,000 pages, and a comprehensive reference section of the cases and legal



*As he was dying, Ulysses S. Grant finished his remarkable Memoirs. A comprehensive edition of The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant, the Civil War general and 18th President of the United States, is ongoing at the Southern Illinois University Press. Library of Congress.*



Message of President John Adams nominating John Marshall to be Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, January 20, 1801.

actions in which Abraham Lincoln participated.

***The Papers of George Catlett Marshall***

THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY PRESS

A highly selective edition of the papers of the World War II Chief of Staff, later Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense.

***The Papers of John Marshall***

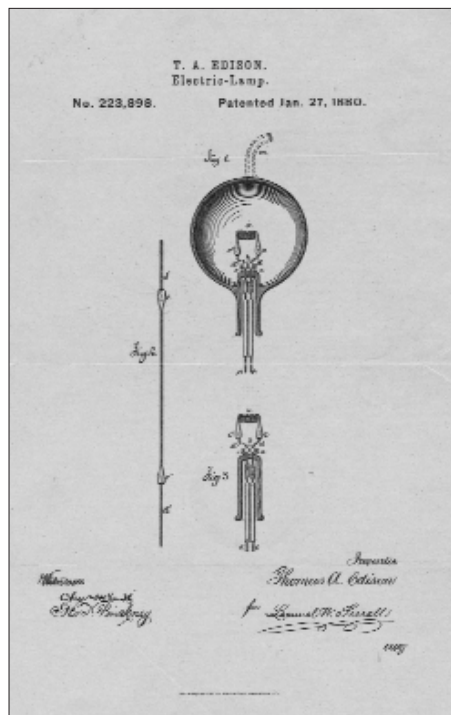
THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA PRESS; UNIVERSITY PRESS OF VIRGINIA (PORTRAIT VOLUME)

An edition of the correspondence, journals, autobiographical writings, court decisions and other state papers of the celebrated Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court. The portrait volume is an account of the origin and provenance of all known portraits of the Chief Justice and of the significant reproductions.

***The Correspondence of James K. Polk***

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY PRESS

A comprehensive edition of all known significant letters to and from the statesman and 11th President of the United States.



Thomas Edison's Electric Lamp Patent Drawing and Claim [Incandescent Light Bulb], January 27, 1880. The Papers of Thomas Edison are being published by The Johns Hopkins University Press.

***Presidential Recordings***

W. W. NORTON

The Presidential Recordings Program aims to transcribe, edit, annotate, and publish the secret White House recordings of Presidents Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon. The

Miller Center's Presidential Recordings Program is publishing authoritative transcripts of the presidential recordings through W.W. Norton.

***The Papers of Robert A. Taft***

THE KENT STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS

A selective edition of the papers of the U.S. Senator from Ohio, co-author of the Taft-Hartley Act (1947), leader of the Republican Party, and three-time candidate for President.

***The Papers of Martin Van Buren***

(Microfilm Edition)

CHADWYCK-HEALEY, INC.

The general correspondence and miscellaneous documents of the Governor, Senator, Secretary of State, Vice President, and eighth President of the United States shed useful light on the evolution of the American political system and the operation of government at various levels during the antebellum period.

***The Booker T. Washington Papers***

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS PRESS

A selective edition of the writings, addresses, and correspondence of the black educator and leader.

***The Papers of Daniel Webster***

UNIVERSITY PRESS OF NEW ENGLAND

A selective edition of the prominent 19th-century lawyer, statesman, and advocate of American nationalism.

***The Papers of Woodrow Wilson***

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS

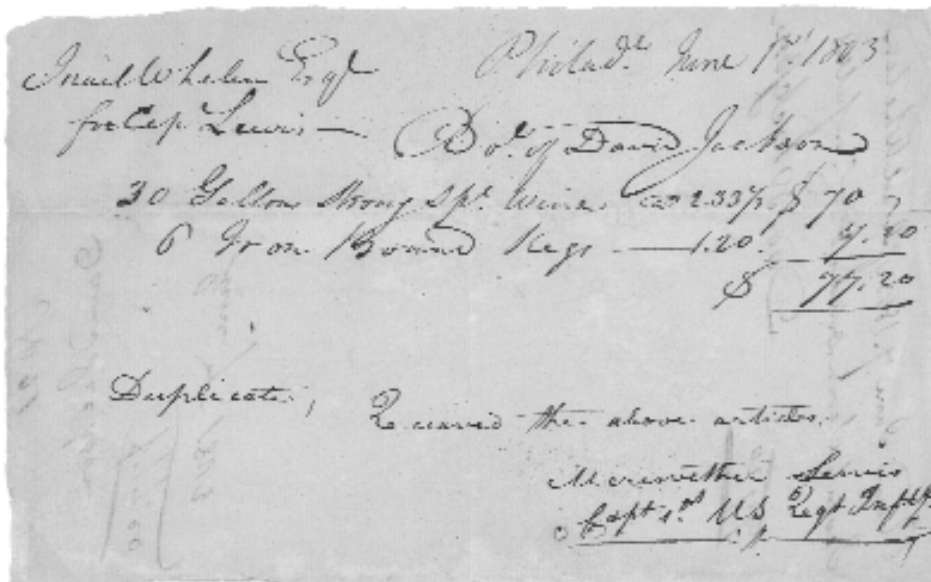
A comprehensive edition of the papers and correspondence of the 28th President of the United States.

**SCIENTISTS, HUMANISTS, AND EXPLORERS**

***The Papers of Thomas A. Edison***

THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY PRESS

A highly selective edition of technical, business, legal, and personal papers (1847-1931) of the American inventor who was responsible for major developments in the telegraph, telephone, phonograph, electric light and power systems, and motion pictures, to name the most notable.



Receipt for Wine and Kegs Purchased by Meriwether Lewis for the Expedition to the West, dated June 1, 1803. The definitive edition of *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* was recently completed by Gary E. Moulton of the University of Nebraska.

Includes annotations to textual records, laboratory sketches, and technical artifacts.

***The Papers of Joseph Henry***

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION PRESS

A selective edition of the personal and official correspondence and records of the pioneer experimental physicist who was the first Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution.

***John Franklin Jameson and the Development of Humanistic Scholarship in America***

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA PRESS

A selective edition of the papers of the American historian who made highly significant contributions to the development of history as an academic profession in the United States—contributions that included a leading role in the creation of the National Archives and the National Historical Publications Commission, the American Historical Association, the American Council of Learned Societies, and the Dictionary of American Biography.

***The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition***

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA PRESS

The journals of the two captains and four enlisted men, an atlas of maps produced by the expedition, and a volume of natu-

ral history notes and other non-journal material.

***Papers of John Peabody Harrington in the Smithsonian Institution, 1907–1957***

(Microfilm Edition)

KRAUS INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATIONS

A comprehensive edition of more than 750,000 documents—the largest collection of anthropological field notes ever seen at the Smithsonian—of the ethnologist and linguist who dedicated his life to recording the lives and languages of the Native American tribes whose cultures faded as their numbers dwindled. The papers include extensive information on tribal boundaries, local geography, folklore, ceremonies, music, ethnobiology, and material culture.

***Records of the Johns Hopkins University Seminary of History and Politics***

GARLAND PUBLISHING COMPANY

A facsimile edition of records of an institution that was a significant force in the development of American historiography in the late 19th century. It was at the Seminary that American historians Herbert Baxter Adams, Frederick Jackson Turner, Charles Andrews, Woodrow Wilson, and others presented ideas and papers on history, philosophy, and political topics. The

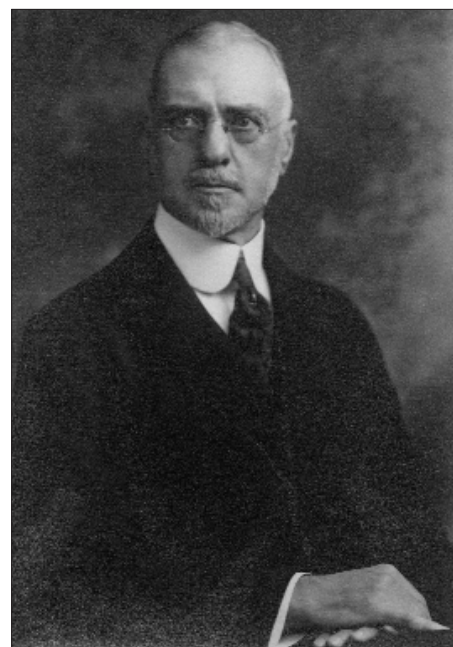
Seminary produced a record of its proceedings filled with synopses of the papers presented and the argument and debate of those present.

***John Muir Papers, 1856–1942***

(MICROFILM EDITION)

CHADWYCK-HEALEY INC.

Correspondence, journals, manuscripts, notes, drawings, and photographs of and by the conservationist, an intellectual precursor of the modern ecology movement who was the founder of the Sierra Club and a proponent of the expansion of the national park system. The papers include nearly 10,000 items from forty repositories throughout the United States. ♦



The force behind the creation of the National Archives and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission—John Franklin Jameson. Photo courtesy Ferdinand Hamburger Archives of The Johns Hopkins University.

# Re-discovering Alexander Hamilton

**A**t the end of his biography *Alexander Hamilton*, Ron Chernow describes the funeral on July 14, 1804, at Trinity Church in the heart of New York City:

At the close, troops gathered around his grave, formed a neat square, and fired three volleys at intervals into the air. Hamilton was laid to rest with full honors in a martial style that would have gratified the most florid fantasies of the adolescent clerk on St. Croix who had once prayed for a war to prove his valor. "This scene was enough to melt a monument of marble," said Hamilton's *New-York Evening Post*. Thus ended the most dramatic and improbable life among the founding fathers. (p. 713)

That melting scene—and a brief epilogue on the 50-year widowhood of Hamilton's wife Eliza—ends what David McCullough calls "grand-scale biography at its best." Drawing extensively on the 27-volume edition of *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, edited by the late Harold C. Syrett and published by Columbia University Press, Chernow has written the definitive story of one of the least known and understood figures of our early history as a nation. Alexander Hamilton, a principal designer of the Federal Government, is finally given a biography equal to his stature as architect of financial and political policies that have shaped America as a nation.

The research began with Chernow plowing through the documentary edition. "The Columbia University Press edition was completed in 1987," he said, "and nobody had been disciplined enough to read through the papers from one end to another. For me to have duplicated what Columbia University Press did would have taken a lifetime. My one regret was that I was afraid it would deprive me of the thrill of discovery."

The Syrett edition was "amazingly complete" and "meticulously preserved all of the documentary materials" by contacting every historical society in the United States for records related to Hamilton. But as Chernow soon discovered, one of the challenges of Hamilton scholarship is that so little is known about a full one-third of his early life in the Caribbean. To track down that part of the story, Chernow went to St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, where he discovered in the historical society's archives the *Royal Danish American Gazette*, which included previously undiscovered materials, including stories on the "local boy made good," and Hamilton's reports for the newspa-



*Provincial Company, New York Artillery. Captain Alexander Hamilton 1776. Watercolor by D.W.C. Falls, 1923.*

per, written over the byline a "Gentleman from New-York." By matching up references from Hamilton's letters with the newspaper stories—including sentences reprinted verbatim, Chernow was able to add to the documentary history.

"Our picture," says Chernow, "is increasingly influenced by Hamilton's early hardships in Nevis and St. Croix." As the first scholar to research the Danish archives, he feels he has a much fuller picture of Hamilton, finding in his early life the roots for Hamilton's pessimistic and skeptical view of human nature and his "compulsive itch" to record through his writing the philosophies that gave birth to federalism.

And it is Hamilton's federalist views that transcend his age. Chernow contends that both major modern political parties are Hamiltonian "in believing in a rigorous Federal government but with different priorities."

It is an auspicious time to reexamine the life of Hamilton, who was the prophet of the capitalist revolution in America. If Jefferson enunciated the more ample view of political

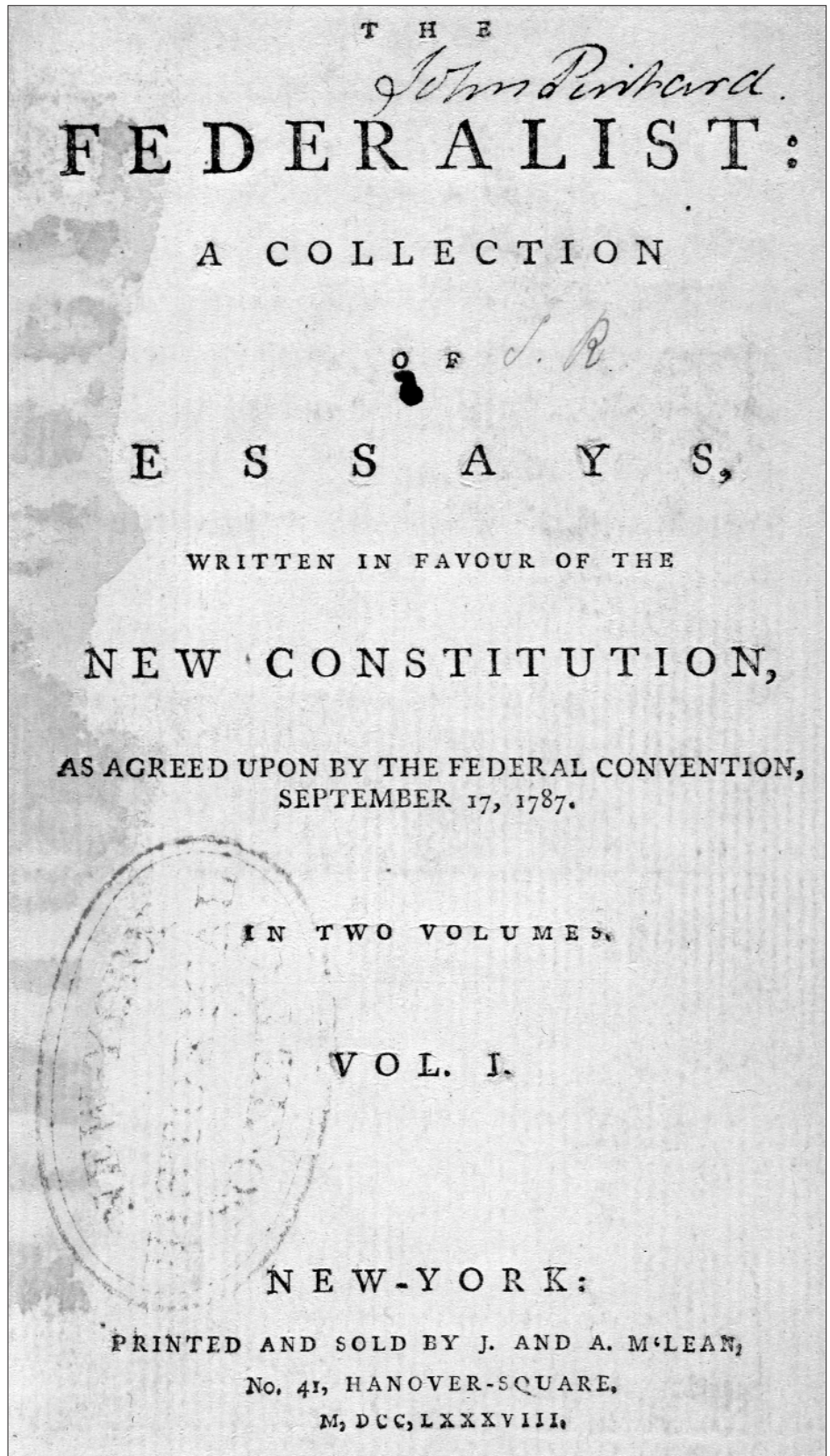
democracy, Hamilton had the finer sense of economic opportunity. He was the messenger from a future that we now inhabit. . . . He has also emerged as the uncontested visionary in anticipating the shape and powers of the Federal government. . . . Today, we are indisputably the heirs to Hamilton's America, and to repudiate his legacy is, in many ways, to repudiate the modern world. (p. 6)

The specter of the Jeffersonian vision is a leitmotif of Chernow's book, and it begins and ends with Hamilton's widow's attempts to repudiate those who sought to bind Hamilton's personal life with his politics. The in-fighting among the leading political figures of the day comes alive in Chernow's narrative of the feuds with Jefferson, John Adams, and the deadly duel with Aaron Burr. That we remain "Hamiltonian in spirit and Jeffersonian in rhetoric" is perhaps a historical inevitability.

The New-York Historical Society, on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of Hamilton's death, has mounted the exhibition "Alexander Hamilton: The Man Who Made Modern America." As with the Chernow biography, the exhibition explores Hamilton's early life, his illegitimate birth and early orphaning in St. Croix, and his emigration at age 15. Just five years later, Hamilton emerged as George Washington's trusted aide, and by age 32, he was our nation's first Secretary of the Treasury.

The exhibition looks at the in-fighting, character assassination, sex scandals, and the propaganda campaigns among Hamilton and his contemporaries, and it illuminates Hamilton's role as a force behind the ratification of the Constitution, founder of the Bank of the United States, abolitionist, newspaper publisher, and more. More than 150 original documents, letters, paintings, and artifacts—including the pistols from his duel with Vice President Aaron Burr—are on display. Other documents include a copy of the Declaration of Independence printed in Boston in 1775, The Federalist Papers, letters from Hamilton and Burr, and Hamilton's handwritten drafts of sections for Washington's Farewell Address.

"Alexander Hamilton: The Man Who Made Modern America" can be viewed at the New-York Historical Society at 170 Central Park West in New York City through February 28, 2005, and a virtual tour is



The Federalist: A Collection of Essays Written in favour of the new Constitution as agreed upon by the Federal Convention, September 16, 1787. Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay were the authors. Courtesy New-York Historical Society, Gift of John Pintard.

online at <http://www.alexanderhamiltonexhibition.org/about/index.html>. ♦

# The Shameful Admissions of an Insatiable, Impenitent, Incurable Research Addict

BY RON CHERNOW

To set the therapeutic record straight, I can date the onset of the incurable addiction that has addled my brain and proven so tormenting to my family and friends. On a balmy spring day in Cambridge 17 years ago, I sat in the Baker Library of the Harvard Business School and sifted through the labyrinthine papers of Thomas W. Lamont. As senior partner of the J.P. Morgan bank in the 1920s, Lamont—elegant, urbane, with insinuating charm—ruled as an unquestioned potentate of Wall Street as he decreed which sovereign states could raise money. And here I was reviewing a cache of 100,000 documents that would either be incriminating or exculpatory. By day's end, I had perused Lamont's correspondence with Nancy Astor, Charles Lindbergh, and Franklin Roosevelt.

This was the first time I had ever dipped into primary documents, better known in the trade as "manuscript collections." As a self-styled historian, an old English major with a queasy sense of being a highbrow fraud with a first book contract, I felt that I had touched history—the real, perishable stuff. That night, still agog, I telephoned my wife from Boston and confessed to something deeper than a mere thrill. After years working as a journalist, hazarding educated guesses about the dumb show of business and politics, I had the odd sensation of having burgled Lamont's office, rifled his papers, violated his privacy and unmasked his secrets. To be sure, I had duly submitted call slips, sat at my appointed chair as boxes were retrieved and handled documents as gingerly as I would saintly relics. Yet I experienced the delicious, illicit *frisson* of being a second-story man, a literary thief, a scholarly voyeur. There was something furtive, lawless, and absolutely irresistible about the whole enterprise.

When I told skeptics at parties that I was writing a saga about a banking empire, they studied me with undisguised pity and intimated that bankers must make very dull subjects. But the Mor-

gan partners were never boring and feigned dullness only as a shield to deter prying eyes. Their papers bulged with shocking secrets: propaganda work for the Japanese militarists, racy affairs with society ladies, sub rosa contacts with the White House and State Department. Like some crazed, feverish gambler in a Dostoyevsky tale, I could rattle off my favorite finds: Lamont to President Hoover five days before the 1929 crash: "The future looks brilliant!" Or Lamont advising Benito Mussolini to liken his invasion of Ethiopia to the heart-warming settlement of the American West.

Even the Morgan partners' most intimate possessions were neatly filed away. One day, at the University of Virginia, I was riffling through the papers of partner Edward Stettinius when I noticed a silk swatch poking from an envelope. I tugged at the fabric until I was holding aloft—to the merriment of other readers in the library—a handsome pair of sky-blue underwear, custom-made by a Chicago firm. In his private, orderly life, Stettinius maintained a separate underwear file, which he kept in tip-top order. Luckily for historians, the urge to preserve artifacts can be as compulsive as the corresponding urge to ferret them out.

As my friends can testify, my research disease only worsened with my second book, *The Warburgs*, an epic account of a German-Jewish banking dynasty that rose to power in Imperial Germany and was hounded into exile by Herr Hitler. Unlike the pristine bond paper of Morgan bankers, preserved in air-conditioned vaults, the Warburg documents in Hamburg looked like sad, haunted survivors, tattered, yellowing and blackened with soot. How they escaped the talons of the Nazis, who had "Aryanized" the Warburg bank in 1938, and how they had survived the fire-bombing of Hamburg, remain a mystery. I learned German and soldiered on with a dictionary and grammar book at my side. With my self-taught, book-



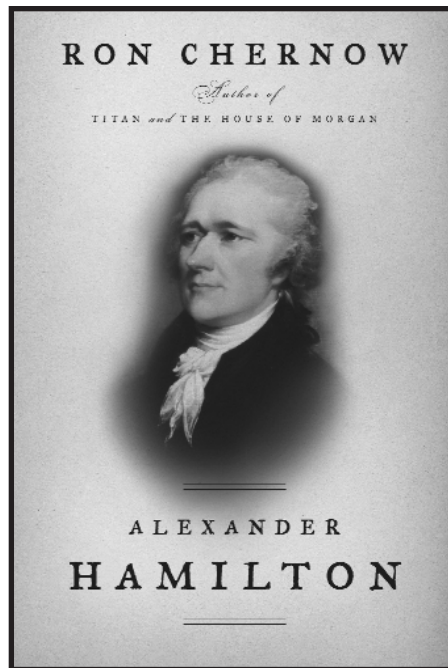
ABOVE: Drawn on his birthday, probably a gift from a friend, this miniature shows a teenaged Alexander Hamilton shortly before leaving St. Croix. Artist unknown, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

ish German, I couldn't even ask my way to the bathroom, but I somehow waded through documents in outmoded scripts and Gothic lettering. What sustained this madness was an urgent conviction that I was thrusting my hand into a fire and rescuing charred remnants from ruin. That's also part of the research pathology: a psychological need to arrest the inexorable decay that afflicts all human records.

Some archival finds can be easy, embarrassingly so. To expose the Morgan hugga-mugga with Mussolini, I simply looked up M for Mussolini in the beautifully organized catalogue in the Baker Library. Still, as T.S. Eliot reminded us, history has many cunning passages, and the truth is usually elusive. Initially, I balked at the prospect of reconstructing a life of John D. Rockefeller, persuaded that this famous sphinx had a mind hermetically sealed from inquiry. But the Rockefeller Archive Center had made available hundreds of thousands of letters and I imagined—with sweaty palms, a racing pulse, a budding fever of anticipation—that what had been opaque would now be transparent.

Rockefeller, it turned out, was as secretive in his office as in public. His enigmatic letters followed a common pattern. Seldom more than two or three lines long, they discussed vague, unspecified events in an artfully indirect manner. A typical missive: "Received your letter of the 26th. Would recommend that you proceed with all due caution. John D. Rockefeller." I began to see that Rockefeller, a master puppeteer jerking the strings of his vast oil empire, wrote letters as if they might someday fall into the hands of a prosecuting attorney. Houdini-like, he vanished inside his own prose. You pulled away one veil, then another, and you still couldn't catch him. Fortunately, Rockefeller's underlings were gabby and indiscreet, and when I found the letters that had elicited his terse directives, a vast panorama of corporate genius, machinations, and mischief unfolded.

The first rule of biographical research is to scrub the slate clean and scrape away accumulated lore. As William Hazlitt said, most books are made of other books, chopped up and reconstituted. Some fictions are regurgitated so often as to assume the status of unchallengeable fact. One such myth was the notion that Rockefeller's father, William Avery Rocke-



Ron Chernow's best-selling biography *Alexander Hamilton* drew upon the Papers of Alexander Hamilton (Columbia University Press), one of the Founding Era documentary editions funded by the NHPRC. Jacket courtesy Penguin Press.

efeller—a colorful bigamist also known as Dr. William Livingston—was buried in an unmarked grave in Freeport, Ill. I accepted this as an article of faith until I stumbled upon the name of an old Freeport cemetery. On impulse, I telephoned the graveyard, got a sleepy attendant and told him he had a chance to make history. He mentioned that a Rockefeller grave had once been pointed out to him. Because it was a slow day, devoid of burials, he agreed to snoop around. Twenty minutes later, he telephoned back and said nonchalantly that he had found the grave of John D. Rockefeller's father, thus ending a mystery that had lingered for a century.

I've just published a biography of Alexander Hamilton. At first, I was disappointed that his abundant papers, 22,000 pages worth, had been collected and annotated by crack teams of scholars. This threatened to deprive me of some illicit joy, making the whole business too proper and legitimate. But there were enough compensating pleasures to gratify my guilty addiction. The illegitimate Hamilton was born on Nevis in the Caribbean and spent his adolescence on St. Croix. On Nevis, I pored over the brown, brittle minutes of colonial assemblies held 250 years ago. Before turning

pages, I learned to sandwich them between two fresh sheets of white paper, lest they crumble into dust. Far more troublesome were parchment sheets perforated with hundreds of minute holes, signifying insect infestation and an irremediable loss to history.

Every biographer has serendipitous finds, the result of some unquantifiable mix of persistence, ingenuity, and plain luck. While on St. Croix, Hamilton, then a frustrated young clerk, had written articles and poems for the *Royal Danish American Gazette*. Five years later, by a miraculous sequence of events, he was adjutant to George Washington. I wondered: Had the local paper ever covered the wunderkind's ascent? As I scrolled through the paper's microfilmed issues, starting with Hamilton's departure from St. Croix in 1773, I couldn't locate a single reference to him. Yet I noticed that a certain "Gentleman from New York" kept mailing dispatches to the paper—dispatches that tallied perfectly with letters Hamilton was then writing to friends on the identical subjects. *Voilà*: Alexander Hamilton had been a stringer for the *Royal Danish American Gazette*, a discovery that filled critical lacunae in his story.

Hamilton, a human essay machine, was the quintessential man of ideas, and so I especially treasured discoveries that concerned the small change of everyday life. Two of his sons had written hagiographic volumes about their father. Trawling through their papers, I found fugitive scraps discarded as too trivial for inclusion in the *Life of a Great Man*. James A. Hamilton had recorded a charming scene of his father with the French barber who came to his office each morning. More poignantly, John Church Hamilton described how the night before the duel, his father, himself an orphan, prayed and then shared a bed with a young orphan boy staying in their house. For me, such vignettes erased the distance of two centuries and brought Hamilton to life. In the end, I discovered plenty of new material about Hamilton, managed to get my hands good and dirty, fed my filthy habit and guaranteed that the research craving would come back to haunt me again and again. ♦

THIS ESSAY FIRST APPEARED IN *THE WASHINGTON POST*. REPRINT COURTESY THE AUTHOR.



*Editor's Note: In celebration of the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission and the 40th anniversary of its grant-making program, we are selecting relevant documents and records that illustrate facets of the history of Federal support for our documentary heritage. The following are remarks from President Harry Truman at the Library of Congress on May 17, 1950. His speech led to the revitalization of the Commission, and following additional reports to the President on the state of historical documentary editions, the creation of the grantmaking program in 1964. Special thanks to George M. Elsey, a member of President Truman's staff and an appointee to the Commission, for sharing his copy of the speech.*

# Out of the Archives

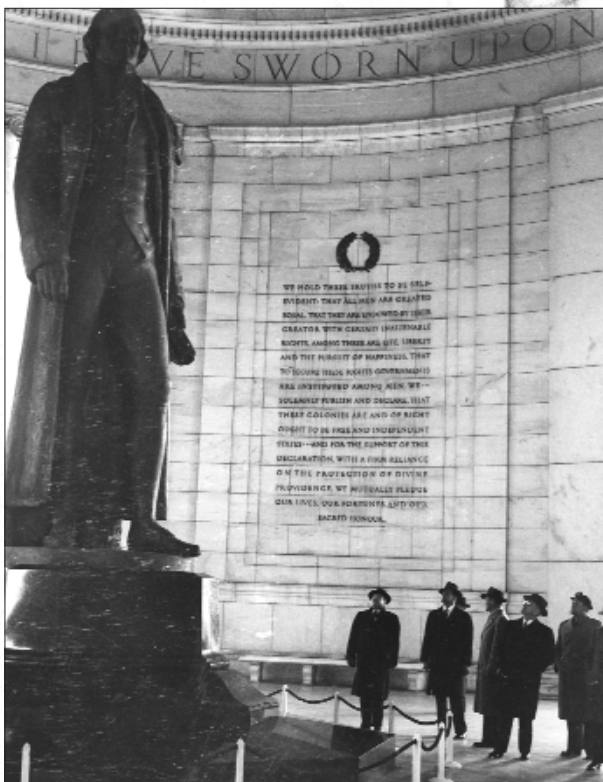
**P**RESIDENT TRUMAN DELIVERED THE FOLLOWING SPEECH AT 3:30 P.M., E.D.T., ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 1950, AT THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS:

I accept with great pleasure the first copy of Volume One of *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*. On behalf of the people of the United States, I congratulate Princeton University and the Princeton University Press on undertaking to edit and publish the great series which this volume begins.

I should like to add a personal word of appreciation and encouragement to the editors for the years of hard work that are still ahead of them. I am very well acquainted with what many people call "paper work," and I appreciate the immense amount of painstaking effort which each of these volumes requires.

We should also be grateful to *The New York Times* for the financial assistance with which that newspaper has given to help compile this complete edition of the writings of one of the greatest Americans. This edition will be of lasting value to our Nation for generations to come.

As many of you know, I returned to Washington yesterday from a visit to



LEFT: President Truman with Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes and others standing inside the Jefferson Memorial looking up at a statue of Thomas Jefferson, January 14, 1946. Photo, Abbie Rowe, National Park Service, courtesy Harry S. Truman Library.

the Pacific Northwest. Traveling at what is today a very leisurely rate, in nine days I went nearly 7,000 miles through 16 states. In 1803, President Jefferson sent out two young pioneers to explore the same area I have just been through. Jefferson wanted to find out what was in the great new territory he had just bought from Napoleon. Meriwether Lewis and William Clark took 28 months to make the round trip from the banks of the Mississippi to the mouth of the Columbia River on the Pacific Coast. Where they found only Indian villages, herds of buffalo, and trackless wilderness and sagebrush, I saw great cities, immense structures like the Grand Coulee Dam, and rich farmland. These sharp contrasts are only a few of many that point up the dramatic changes that have occurred in our country since Jefferson's day. Since the United States today scarcely resembles the United States when Jefferson knew it, why should the publication of his letters be so important to us?

The answer should be obvious, as we turn the pages of this first volume. Throughout his life, Jefferson waged an uncompromising fight against tyranny. The search for human liberty was a goal which he pursued with burning zeal. The spirit of democracy shines through everything he wrote.

Today, when democracy is facing the greatest challenge in its history, the spirit which Jefferson expressed in his battle against tyranny, and in his speech for human liberty, stands out as a beacon of inspiration for free peoples throughout the world.

Jefferson lived in a time of great struggle, when this Nation was trying to establish itself as a democracy of free men. We today, in a different time and under different conditions, are in a great struggle to preserve and expand human freedom.

Our stage is larger—our struggle must be waged over the whole world, not merely in our own country. But the essential nature of the struggle is the same; to prove, by hard work and practical demonstration, that free men can create for themselves a good society, in which they live together at peace, and advance their common welfare.

When freedom is at stake, we need to draw upon every source of strength we can. Jefferson thought deeply about how to make liberty a living part of our society, and he proved the rightness of his thinking by practical demonstration. That is why I think it is particularly important that we are re-asserting Jefferson's ideals by publishing these volumes.

History can be fairly written only when all the facts are on record. Jefferson has suffered at the hands of unscrupulous biographers and biased partisans ever since his death. The publication of his papers should correct the mistakes that have been made about him and should help prevent misinterpretations in the future.

There are others like Jefferson whose lives have enriched our history, but about whom we know too little. Many of them have been victims of unfair treatment at the hands of historians; others have been neglected because the record of their work is scattered about in remote places.

I hope that this edition of the writings of Thomas Jefferson will inspire educational institutions, learned societies, and civic-minded groups to plan the publication of works of other great national figures. In far too many cases, there are incomplete and inaccurate editions of the writings of the great men and women of our country. In some distressing instances, we have only fragmentary records of men whose ideas and actions have helped shape our history.

I am convinced that we need to collect and publish the writings of the men and women who have made major contributions to the development of our democracy.

I am, therefore, requesting the National Historical Publications Commission, under the chairmanship of the Archivist of the United States, to look into this matter and to report to me. I am sure this Commission will wish to consult with scholars in all fields of American history, and to report what can be done—and should be done—to make available to our people the public and private writings of men whose contributions to our history are now inadequately represented by published works.

I am interested not just in political figures, but in the writings of industrialists and labor leaders, chemists and engineers, painters and lawyers, of great figures of all the arts and sciences who have made major contributions to our democracy.

Obviously, we cannot hope to collect, edit, and publish all the writings of all such leaders, but we can and should select works of those who have been too long neglected and who need to be better known if we are to understand our heritage. This is a big undertaking. It will take a long time. It should be done as far as possible by private groups and not by the Federal Government, although the Federal Government can and will be of assistance whenever possible. The editions should be in every instance completely objective and should maintain the same high editorial standards that are evident in this first volume of *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*. They should aim to place the facts beyond debate and distortion.

At a time when democracy is meeting the greatest challenge in its history, we need to turn to the sources of our own democratic faith for new inspiration and new strength. These volumes of Thomas Jefferson will be a great reservoir of hope and faith during the critical years ahead. I sincerely hope that similar editions of the writings of other great men and women who have made our Nation what it is today can be placed with them.

I shall give my full support to this endeavor.

Thank you very much. ♦

## ***Timothy Slavin Joins Commission***

The National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators has announced that Timothy Slavin has been named as its new representative on the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. He succeeds Roy Turnbaugh in that capacity.



Tim Slavin is currently the director of the Delaware Public Archives, a position he has held since 2000. Slavin has served in Delaware state government for the past nine years, including an appointment as a strategic consultant with the (former) Office of Information Services. He was project director for a two-year Federally funded project on electronic records conducted by the State of Delaware and presented findings from this project to the European Commission in Brussels.

Slavin holds a B.A. from Providence College and an M.A. from the University of Notre Dame, and is the author of two recent books of photographic history: *Images of America: Dover and Delaware in World War II*.

In May 2004, Slavin was elected to his first term on Dover's City Council.

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## ***Michael Meier New Director of Technology Initiatives***

Dr. Michael Meier has been appointed as Director of Technology Initiatives. He is responsible for the NHPRC's grants for projects that support institutions that acquire, preserve, and promote ready use of electronic records, especially those that promise to be sustainable and that are built upon collaboration and open systems; and for technology initiatives designed to create new systems for the preservation and access of documents and other records. With the National Archives since 1984, Dr. Meier has served as Accessioning Archivist for the Center for Electronic Records, Reference Archivist for the Military Reference Branch, Research Archivist for the NHPRC, and for the last several years as Program Officer.

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*The pistols used by Hamilton and Burr in their 1804 duel at Weebauken, New Jersey, belonged to John Church, Hamilton's brother-in-law. Though elegant, these .544 caliber weapons were lethal. Manufactured by Wogdon gunsmiths, London, England, c. 1797. Courtesy of J.P. Morgan Chase and Co.*