Before I launch into my theme this evening, I would like to express one brief regret, and one apology. My regret is that I provided a subtitle for my address this evening, for if I had not done so, I could have kept you all guessing who these "other historians" might be: perhaps economic or social historians, conservative or radical historians, or left-handed historians, cross-eyed historians, or even, God forbid, non-Pennsylvania historians. My favorite, hearsay definition of the phrase, however, was given in the 1960s by an eminent historian of the American South who, perhaps in skeptical response to the various "new" historical fields then clamoring for attention, said he recognized only two kinds of historians: American and "other."

My apology arises out of what my subtitle, and my address, do not contain: a consideration of the full range of historians who are not teaching in the classroom or writing widely reviewed monographs, including public historians, museum curator historians, and amateur historians of every stripe. All of these "other historians" are important, and for many of the same reasons that make the work of archivists, editors, and collective biographers so valuable. Sheer necessity, however, has dictated limits to the number of "others" whom I could consider, and my own state of ignorance has dictated which "others" I could begin to discuss. David Hackett Fisher once observed that every historian, faced with the temptation to write "everything about everything," "everything about something," or "something about everything," will soon conclude that it is all he or she can do to say "something about something." I will only hope that you, in listening to my appreciation of certain varieties of "other historians," will think of yet other varieties whom you would honor.

My basic thesis this evening is a simple one: History, at its most intense, productive level, leading to knowledge that all men and women can both profit from and enjoy, is carried on by many people who neither write surveys, monographs, articles, or even book reviews, nor teach in any organized lecture, seminar, or individual instruction environment.

Because these other historians neither write history nor teach it in the conventional sense, they are often thought of as merely preparing materials for the writing and teaching historians to use. This view, which I myself shared in the
early 1970s, when my own historical activities were entirely devoted to writing and teaching, was well expressed by a teaching colleague of mine when I later urged him to consider the field of historical editing. His succinct response: "Why should I work to make it easier for others to do history?"

Now archivists, editors, and collective biographers are indeed largely engaged in preparing materials for other historians to use, and they would be most distressed if they thought their efforts would not contribute to further historical work done by others. But their work as preparers is powerfully shaped by their own identity as historians. In order to perform their tasks well enough to be useful to teaching and publishing historians, they must meet the challenge that is basic to any historian: they must ask one or more questions about past human life that other human beings, present and future, will care about; and they must answer those questions in ways that are plausible, and at the same time leave open, and ideally suggest, other answers, and other questions.

Were we, or any other group of historians, relaxing after dinner over our brandy and cigars a century ago, this would all be perfectly obvious, because in the nineteenth century "historian" was still largely an intellectual concept, where in our age of specialization it has become an occupational one. Until at least the 1920s, many of the most prominent historians were gentlemen scholars, best selling historical writers, and public figures for whom history was one vital aspect of a life that often included public service. The early roster of presidents of the American Historical Association tells this story: George Bancroft and Justin Winsor in the 1880s; Henry Adams and James Ford Rhodes in the 1890s; Charles Francis Adams, Jr., Alfred Thayer Mahan, and J. Franklin Jameson in the opening decade of this century; Teddy Roosevelt in 1912, Worthington C. Ford in 1917, and Woodrow Wilson in 1924; and finally, Charles A. Beard in 1933.

These citizen historians included public servants and political reformers, famous authors and architects of national policy, celebrated cultural critics and celebrated curmudgeons, and the two most literate American Presidents of the twentieth century. Their historical endeavors embraced pioneering work as librarians, archivists, editors, and popular as well as scholarly authors. Most members of the young Association and of the rapidly developing profession were either teachers or scholarly writers, and many were both, but like their leaders, they did not define themselves as historians by either their teaching or any particular kind of writing—it was their dedication to historical inquiry, in any form, that gave them their identity.

The first two of my three varieties of "other" historians—archivists and editors—arose directly out of this unspecialized era. The first prominent practitioners in these fields were either full-time jack-of-all-trades historians, of which such archivist-librarian-editors as Worthington C. Ford and J. Franklin Jameson were models, or they were avid amateurs who were, at least nominally, pursuing other occupations or callings. Prominent examples of the latter type.
extend from the American Revolution to the dawn of the twentieth century. In Massachusetts, my current home, one thinks of the Rev. Jeremy Belknap and both Charles Francis Adamses (the senior a gentleman and diplomat; the junior a gentleman, public servant, and businessman). In Pennsylvania, the manuscript collectors Col. Frank Etting and Ferdinand Dreer played similar roles. The institutions which such men either founded, developed, or enriched by their collections—most notably the Massachusetts, New-York, and Pennsylvania historical societies, the Library of Congress, and eventually the National Archives—were soon creating the massive archives upon which any detailed knowledge of American history, both national and regional, is based. These same institutions and leaders were soon issuing scores and then hundreds of volumes of collections, proceedings, and transactions that presented a staggering assortment of documents to the public, as well as thematically or biographically organized multi-volume editions, all varying widely in scope and sophistication.

From our present perspective, many of America's nineteenth-century historians may appear to have been rather short on sophisticated interpretation, but they more than made up for this by their often heroic collecting, preserving, and publishing of historical data in the face of daunting technical and financial obstacles. Moreover, they had one important thing in their favor: their work was deeply appreciated by virtually all historians, whether professional or amateur, perhaps because the narrative and interpretive work that has come to take an increasingly larger place in the activities of our profession could not even begin without their efforts.

By the dawn of the present century, however, two developments had begun to separate historical archivists and editors from teaching and writing historians. First, as higher education grew rapidly in both absolute and relative terms, a larger share of talented historians were drawn into college teaching as a full time profession. And as their profession grew, they aspired to achieve the analytical sophistication of the leading historical centers of the Old World: Great Britain, France, and especially, Germany.

This process actually began early in the nineteenth century in several academic fields. In the decade after 1815 the literary scholars George Ticknor and Edward Everett, and the historian George Bancroft studied at Göttingen and Berlin to prepare themselves for teaching at Harvard and for their careers as publishing scholars. And even that early pilgrimage was an extension of the belief held by colonial educators that the best minds in fields of the most interest to them were in the Old World—witness Princeton's enthusiasm in acquiring the Rev. John Witherspoon of Scotland as its president and principal instructor in theology in 1768. But it was only after the Civil War that European and particularly German education began to exert a strong pull upon the American historical profession, as well as upon several other disciplines.
At the same time, the libraries and archives established in the major cities, at the older colleges (then beginning to call themselves universities), and in Washington, libraries which had long been fairly small, grew to such a size that they could not easily be managed by amateur, gentleman, or part-time historians. They now required full-time librarians and archivists. And because their directors and patrons wanted to publish substantial amounts of material from their holdings in ways that met the needs of increasingly critical readers, these institutions needed full-time editors as well.

The solution, in history as in virtually every other academic discipline, was obvious: specialization. The costs were less obvious at first, but were finally inescapable: the end of the historian-public servant, and indeed of the historian-public figure; and the end of the historian who would be an archivist and editor, as well as a teacher and writer. There came a point where few men or women could summon the energy to remain active in history and in another field, or even in two or more subfields within history. More tragically, there came a point when no one who attempted to do so would be taken seriously in each field, or perhaps in any.

Two cases may serve to illustrate this development. By 1901, Charles Austin Beard, after early academic training as a political scientist and historian in America and at Oxford, had become so active in Oxford's new Ruskin Hall movement, a forerunner of the British Labour Party, that he was urged by his colleagues to become a British citizen and a leader of Britain's working classes. After some hesitation, Beard declined, concluding that his work was in America, and in academic history and political science. He believed that he could most effectively work for progressive political and economic reform through his research, writing, and teaching.

Upon his return to America, Charles Beard became a passionate advocate of several of the causes espoused by the new Progressive movement, but he did not enter public life. Rather, he followed the "new" historical path: earning an M.A. and then a Ph.D. degree at Columbia University; accepting two teaching positions at Columbia, first in history, then in political science; and beginning years of British- and German-inspired empirical research and analytical writing about his own nation's political establishment, most notably in *An Economic Interpretation of the United States Constitution*. Only Beard's principled defense of academic freedom of speech in 1917 derailed him from what has now become the "normal" academic career track. When Columbia's President Nicholas Murray Butler and the school's trustees fired several untenured faculty members for criticizing America's entry into the war in Europe, Beard resigned in protest. Perhaps it was this incident that led to the story that President Butler, upon being asked if he had read Beard's last book, said: "I certainly hope so!"

This turn of events was no setback for the resourceful Beard. For the next thirty years he advised American and foreign political leaders, defended aca-
ademic freedom, pursued dairy farming (so successfully that he actually made money at it), and wrote ever more popular works that made him the most widely read historian of his generation. Nor were academic honors lacking. In fitting recognition of his revolutionary impact upon two academic disciplines, Beard was chosen president of the American Political Science Association in 1926, and of the American Historical Association in 1933. But it is probably fair to say that Charles Beard was virtually the last president of the latter organization to be both a historian and a public figure.

Remarkably, but also fittingly, Beard also inaugurated the third "other" variety of history in my title. In the view of Lawrence Stone, a seasoned veteran of the techniques of collective biography, Charles A. Beard, preceded only by a few late nineteenth-century German models, was the first historian writing in the English language to use this methodology, in his most famous work, An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution. Nearly two decades were to pass before Sir Ronald Syme, in Roman Revolution, and Sir Lewis Namier, in The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III, were to take up this approach in Britain. By the 1980s, of course, it has been practiced, on both grand and modest scales, by hundreds if not thousands of historians in many nations, including, I am sure, several in this room, and your present speaker. It is, moreover, the only one of the three varieties of "other" historical endeavors which I have chosen to discuss that is still commonly done both part-time, by teaching historians within their scholarly monographs, and full-time, by teams that compile historical dictionaries.

But if the young Beard marked the beginning of at least one historiographical era, the mature president of the AHA marked the end of another: that of the citizen-historian. In the last fifty years, only one of his successors, Samuel Eliot Morison (AHA president in 1950), has enjoyed anything like Beard's popularity as an author, and the similarity ends there. A Harvard professor for virtually his entire career, Morison had a powerful impact upon the way that Americans viewed their past, but he never had more than a fraction of Beard's impact upon the way that Americans viewed their present.

In the last half-century, the barrier between those historians who collect, protect, prepare, and publish historical documents and other at least partially raw data, and those who study and manipulate that data and then disseminate it, in the classroom and in published narrative and analytical form, has seldom been breached. At least one incident of such a breach, however, is instructive.

Julian Boyd, born in 1903, followed a career path more familiar to nineteenth-century American historians. After receiving his bachelor's and master's degrees at Duke University, this South Carolinian pursued his career entirely in the Mid-Atlantic States, serving as an editor at the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society in Wilkes-Barre, then as director of the New York State Historical Association, and from 1935 to 1940, as librarian of the
Historical Society of Pennsylvania. In Wilkes-Barre, Boyd also began to edit the papers of Connecticut’s Susquehanna Company, documents that detailed the Company’s attempt to take over Pennsylvania’s Wyoming Valley before and during the American Revolution. (Incidentally, this edition, interrupted in 1932, after the appearance of four volumes, by the Depression, was resumed in the 1960s under the editorship of my immediate predecessor at the Adams Papers, Robert J. Taylor.)

In 1940, however, when Boyd became librarian at Princeton, he turned to a new editorial interest. Launching the massive *Papers of Thomas Jefferson* project in 1943, Julian Boyd, with a few colleagues, notably my first predecessor at the Adams Papers, Lyman Butterfield, produced nearly twenty volumes of superbly edited letters before his death in 1980. In the course of doing so, he transformed an old art, historical editing, into a modern one, and produced a staggering amount of learned commentary on the documents that he presented.

For this achievement Boyd was elected president of the AHA in 1964. He was not the last prominent editor to occupy that chair—one thinks immediately of Arthur Link, editor of the *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, in 1984, and of Louis Harlan, editor of the *Papers of Booker T. Washington*, this year (1989). Boyd was, however, the last holder of that position who had neither been a teaching professor nor an author of major historical monographs, narratives, or biographies. That is to say, he was the last president of the AHA who was honored purely for his editorial work.

In the last quarter century, the divergence between teaching-writing historians, the commonly perceived center of the profession, and historical archivists, editors, and collective biographers, usually regarded as being on the periphery, has been nearly complete, with results that are both predictable and lamentable on both sides of the divide. First, every imaginable variety of historical endeavor has its own organization, or perhaps several organizations, each with its own journal, annual convention, and distinct modes of thought and behavior. Among the teaching and writing historians themselves, specialization has now proceeded to the point that the career of a Charles Beard, who wrote college texts, popular surveys, and monographs, in both history and political science, covering the grand events from the 1780s to the 1920s, and involving both the United States and Great Britain, seems not merely astonishing but literally incredible.

But today’s archivists and editors are hardly less resourceful in dividing their own naturally expansive worlds into several finely distinguished little neighborhoods, with associations of archivists and of records managers, structured both nationally and regionally, with yet other organizations devoted to manuscripts, to editing, and to texts. Nor are these organizations too small to have distinct and sometimes competing wings. Two with which I am somewhat familiar are the “literary” and the “historical” branches of the five hundred member Association for Documentary Editing. This is a case of colleagues...
coming together to discuss a clearly defined common activity—editing—and finding that they are simultaneously kept somewhat apart by contrasting intellectual disciplines.

The distinctions, the barriers, the contrasts, then, are all around us, and sometimes within us, whatever our historical field or activity, as we all try to determine what makes us historians, what kind of historians we are, and what kind of historians we want to associate with.

There is probably very little that either you or I can do about this state of affairs. One thing that we can do, however, from whatever our vantage point may be within the profession, is to look around us and over the next fence to see what other historians are doing. I would like to conclude my remarks by mentioning a few historians I have known personally who have been working within the last two decades as archivists, editors, and collective biographers, and simply point out what they do. I will focus my observations upon Pennsylvania.

Archivists. Here two Pennsylvania figures come to mind. The first, a tireless worker at the statewide level for many years in the 1970s and early 1980s, is Roland Baumann, a fine historian of Pennsylvania politics of the 1790s who used his skill to organize and disseminate the rich holdings of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. The good work done by historians working at both state and federal libraries, archives, and museums, I believe, often suffers a particular neglect by other historians because these scholars can be viewed as government bureaucrats. Such a label quite misses what they do, and what they are. People like Roland, dedicated scholars in their own right, and dedicated disseminators of historical materials to others, show how mistaken such a view is.

My second case is Linda Stanley, the vastly knowledgeable curator of manuscripts at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Many a scholar, seasoned in archival work, has come to the HSP and, confronted with an unusually massive collection that has suffered from decades of insufficient support for cataloguing, has had only one sure way of finding many valuable nuggets that would otherwise remain hidden: Linda's astonishing memory.

Editors. Here, speaking close to my own heart, my difficulty is to choose among so many fine projects. Let me focus my attention on the achievement of those persons whom I know best in Pennsylvania editing, Richard and Mary Dunn, and their colleagues Jean Soderlund, Scott Wildes, and Marianne Wok Eck. Their work, with which I had the honor to be associated from 1979 to 1983, transformed two major subjects—the remarkable life of William Penn, and the founding of Pennsylvania—from the largely amateurish, haphazard fields of study that they had been into coherently organized historical topics, with a known and publicly disseminated body of original materials, an established bibliography, and a wealth of aids to further study. I do not think it a gross exaggeration to say that before the work of the Dunns and their colleagues,
William Penn was rather like the planet Jupiter before the great space probes of the late 1970s—large, visible, and important, but still largely unknown.

Not every editorial project can have the impact of the *Penn Papers*, particularly in a mere half dozen volumes produced within a single decade. But to those historians who say that editors should avoid annotation and get the
documents out more quickly—a group that includes my own graduate school teacher and virtually all of my friends who teach history—I have a rather simple reply. The documents that editors present in letter-press volumes do not simply speak for themselves, and those who edit them full time are in a better position to explain their most basic, least controversial or subjective meanings, than any scholars who must devote their energies to teaching and to writing monographs, surveys, and biographies. It is not the intention of any good editor of historical documents to say the last word about them. But it is the effective editor's conviction that he or she is uniquely qualified to say the first word about them.

Collective Biographers. This term, unlike "archivists," or "editors," may need some explanation. By collective biographers today I do not mean the brilliant or mundane scholars—from Charles Beard to the present day—who have incorporated the study of a historical group within a monograph to achieve a particular thematic objective. Nor do I have in mind primarily of works like the Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress, which give bare dates, and the positions held by their subjects. Nor am I even thinking primarily of works like the Dictionary of American Biography, which supply a wealth of detail, but are not studies of any coherent group more tightly defined than "Americans." Rather, I have in mind the full-time collection of the basic facts and the construction of the narrative lives of a group of historical characters who are united by some important endeavor.

In the last two decades, we have had some splendid examples of this in the dictionaries of early American legislators at the provincial and state levels. This work has been completed for Maryland and South Carolina, and plans are underway to produce such a dictionary for New Jersey. The most ambitious of these projects, however, is the Biographical Dictionary of Early Pennsylvania Legislators. It is now underway at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania under the direction of Marianne Wokeck and Craig Horle, both veterans of the Papers of William Penn, with support from both Harrisburg and Washington.

I regard the Pennsylvania project as the most ambitious of the province-state legislative collective biographies because its editors, in addition to supplying a wealth of detail about virtually every aspect of these often obscure legislators' lives, have been constructing concise, detailed narratives of their political careers which bring the reader into the legislative world of the past. In doing so, they are following in the sure footsteps of the splendid three-volume study of the members of the House of Commons, 1754-1790, by Sir Lewis Namier and John Brooke. I will not be surprised if some historian, somewhere, feels compelled to carp that such narratives are treading on the turf of the monographic and narrative historian. As with the work of documentary editors, however, I would respond that what modern collective biographers seek to do is to say the first words about their subjects, words that they, being able to survey the entire group in detail, are uniquely capable of saying.
In conclusion, I would say to all those whose primary historical efforts are in teaching and in writing: there is no need for you either to panic or to feel resentful about any loss of turf to archivists, editors, or collective biographers; and there is every reason to be appreciative of their work. Their first words about their subjects will allow you to add many more words, more effectively, and to achieve a more satisfactory synthesis and analysis of any topic to which they have turned their attention.