

Sent to Bob Merriam in Chicago following personal discussion.
He died not long afterwards.

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COLLECTION, PROCESSING, AND GENERAL DISTRIBUTION
OF THE ARCHIVES OF THE EXPONENTS OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO SCHOOL OF
POLITICAL SCIENCE AND SOCIOLOGY

A Project Proposal, draft of 25 November 1987

Social movements are many, successful social movements few; scientific movements are many, successful ones few. The history of socio-scientific movements is rarely supplied with a full documentation. The new paradigm often seems to come out of nowhere and to disappear into the ruling consensus, whereupon its origins, as often as not, are buried and misunderstood.

When an occasion arises to organize the historical materials of a scientific movement, and especially when the method of their organization itself imparts a new thrust to science, it is appropriate to alert the concerned public to the opportunity.

Such is the case here, the movement of concern being the rise, development and expansion nationally and worldwide of the new political science (and associated sociology), rising in and extending from the University of Chicago in the approximate period 1910 to 1942. What occurred there and then was a revamping of the theory and method of entering into, analyzing, demonstrating and stating the vast materials of history and public affairs. The rarity and importance of this set of events was highlighted because it proceeded alongside educational innovations in general that were of large significance, a worldwide economic depression, and three world revolutions: the communist, the fascist and the anti-colonialist.

The author of this proposal, Alfred de Grazia, under special circumstances at the end of World War II, was enabled to take his doctorate under the aegis of emeritus Professor Charles E. Merriam, and was his last student therefore. Merriam is renowned as the Founder of the Chicago School of Political Science, with its strong connections to Sociology (its characteristic psychology being not essentially tied to the then Psychology Department of the University). A decade ago, while consultant to the National Endowment for the Arts, under Nancy Hanks and Carl Stover, De Grazia proposed extensive systems to process the archives of the creative people of America. He claimed that a rich national resource was being routinely wasted. He estimated the recoverable cultural resource, translated into pecuniary terms, would have a dollar value in excess of one billion, annually. Leaders in the archival field supported the theory, among them Dr. Charles Lee, who had studied at the University of

Chicago and had been President of the Association of American Archivists; still the proposal made little progress. As he recently came to be concerned with his own archive, he became also aware of what was happening to the archives of other members of the Chicago school, "The Chief" himself, Harold D. Lasswell, and Ithiel de Sola Pool, to name only three of them. In the course of discussions, there occurred the idea of entering the vast field of archival processing by undertaking to develop the collective archive of the Chicago School. Perhaps some fifty major archives and some hundred of minor ones would be encompassed. Roughly three million pieces of paper would be addressed.

The job would seem impractical under ordinary circumstances and even more so considering the drying up of funds occurring as a result of economic disruptions and changes in the political climate. However, technological advances have been encouraging. They were already so ten years ago when the author prepared his first memorandum; he could point to improved techniques of handling materials in microform and of distributing them. Today, these progressive techniques are already in desuetude, and the rapid advances in computer disk and video-tape technology that occur annually promise that we can handle neatly the extremely large task that has been posited here. The situation, if we were to launch this project now, can be put in an extreme but true form, putting aside all the explanations and options that will be presented in the paragraphs below and in the discussions that are to be foreseen: The six billion characters that might constitute the total archive of the Chicago School can be entered upon and contained in a computer disk the size of a tea-cup, placed on-line, with appropriate access programs, and retrieved in all or part and in thousands of parameters by a personal computer almost anywhere in the world. This would be the basic "Nut" and, although the project would not be accomplished in this way, one can say that ultimately this would be the universe sought and achieved. And if one feels disenchanted by the seeming infinity of the compression of the massive work of all of these earnest and even in some cases brilliant men and women, let one remember that modern astronomy has invented black holes to turn material even into its inverse and the total universe into an explosion from an indefinitely more compressed "Nut". Further, that the most microscopic of living forms is infinitely complicated. One should rather feel enchanted at the prospect of delving deeply and surveying widely the enormous material inside the "Nut".

However, the Total Archive Disk is the beginning or the end of a larger process that includes the processing of the archive for a variety of purposes and for all that it is worth. The ambition of the Total Archivist resembles what a Chicago pork-packer said once upon a time: "We make use of everything in the pig except the whistle." In the beginning, the archive would be inventoried and analyzed. Then, upon expert appraisal and advice,

the archive would be programmed: the basic total reproduction; commercial contracting wherever appropriate; monograph publication along the gamut of formats currently available from university press to desk-top publishing, even beyond to special order fulfillment by xeroxing. Lecture notes, outlines and bibliographies would be announced as available for cost distribution in professional journals for students and professors working in particular areas. Special collections would be published for former students, followers, admirers, whether notes, letters, or copies in a number of attractive formats selected by whosoever would have come upon desired portions in the master disk and video-tape. For example, taking up the archive left by Charles E. Merriam, insofar as it is made totally available (restrictions could be imposed), former students might wish to buy a Total Disk, or some course notes that would have been their very own course under the Professor, and even photographs from the video-tape collection. How many former students of so many professors would be most pleased to have on their shelves the truly complete works of their own Professor Chips, so that they themselves could rethink and reminisce and debate the old issues, and could show the material to their children, and friends?

An example of basic expenses of a large archive, about the size of that of Professor Charles Merriam, can be offered:

Given some 10,000 pages, 3,000,000 words, 15,000,000 bytes, 15 megabytes —

\$3000	Organization of archive
2000	Optical scanning entry at 20 cents
3000	Clarification and editing
2000	Entry by word-processing
1000	Indexing program modifications
2000	Putting on videotape material unsuited to computer
2000	Consulting
2000	Supervision and write-up of the experiment
3000	Space rental for first year
1000	Supplies and utilities
1500	Answering service
500	Laser print and publication of 200 copies of report
800	Mail, phone
2800	PC lease with modem
1000	2 file copies of master Total Disk

\$27,600 Total

Sales of 100 copies of disk plus videotape to major research libraries at \$280 each (postage, handling, insurance extra) would bring in a total of \$28,000. This would amount to 10,000 pages being made accessible to generally available inquiry at 2.8 cents per page. Additional income would come from the other

products and sources of sale mentioned above.

A GENERAL NATIONAL ARCHIVAL PRODUCTION SYSTEM

The prospect of the collection, development and distribution of archives of the University of Chicago School of Political Science and Sociology, as described here, should not cut back the vision of a general American archive system that would begin to do for the archives of creative people of every field -- the humanities, sciences, music composers and performers, artists, publicists, civic and business leaders what has here been proposed for a single group. It may be well, therefore, to preface a drive to accomplish the more special, even if large task, with an expression of intent in respect to the whole. The machinery, the personnel, the goals, the "markets" and the results would be the same throughout. The differences would be largely in scale. A million dollar project would become a billion dollar one. Perhaps this eventuality might be foreseen in the initial organization of the Chicago project. That is, the project could be given an appropriate statement and charter for the total task, and would be set up and organized to become an on-going institution whose work would not end with the completion of the Chicago project. Its experiments, procedures, and experience would form the basis for an expeditious progress for the recovery, processing and utilization of the archival heritage of the country, even for the world insofar as any boundary to the idea of Total Archive Utilization would be a matter of expedience alone. It is suggested therefor that the planning of the Chicago archival effort be within and consonant with a larger plan, which would then unfold naturally. Such an undertaking would also be quite within the scope and experience of the University of Chicago, which has rarely sought to avoid a great challenge.