

Narrative Description

Substance and Context:

On the night of November 8, 1800, fire devastated the War Office, consuming the papers, records, and books stored there. Two weeks later, Secretary of War Samuel Dexter lamented in a letter that “All the papers in my office [have] been destroyed.” For the past two centuries, the official records of the War Department effectively began with Dexter’s letter. The Papers of the War Department 1784-1800, an innovative digital editorial project, will change that by making some 55,000 documents of the early War Department—many long thought irretrievable but now reconstructed through a painstaking, multi-year research effort—available online to scholars, students, and the general public.

These Papers record far more than the era’s military history. Between 1784 and 1800, the War Department was responsible for Indian affairs, veteran affairs, naval affairs (until 1798), as well as militia and army matters. During the 1790s, the Secretary of War spent seven of every ten dollars of the federal budget (debt service excepted). The War Office did business with commercial firms and merchants all across the nation; it was the nation’s largest single consumer of fabric, clothing, shoes, food, medicine, building materials, and weapons of all kinds. “Follow the money,” it is said, if you want to learn what really happened, and in the early days of the Republic that money trail usually led to the War Office. For example, the War Department operated the nation’s only federal social welfare program, providing veterans’ benefits (including payments to widows and orphans) to more than 4,000 persons. It

also provided internal security, governance, and diplomacy on the vast frontier, and it was the instrument that shaped relations with Native Americans. In many respects, the records lost in the War Office fire of 1800 constituted the “national archives” of their time.

The Papers of the War Department 1784-1800 will present this collection of more than 55,000 documents in a free, online format with extensive and searchable metadata linked to digitized images of each document—thereby becoming one of the first scholarly papers project embracing online publication and insuring free access for a wide range of users. Scholars will find new evidence on many subjects in the history of the Early Republic, from the handling of Indian affairs, pensions, and procurement, to the nature of the first American citizens’ relationship with their new Federal government through the response to events like the Whiskey Rebellion and the Quasi-War with France. The Papers of the War Department 1784-1800 offer a window into a time when there was no law beyond the Constitution and when the administration first worked out its understanding and interpretation of that new document.

For more than two hundred years these important papers have been lost to scholars, and their absence is one of the key reasons why so little serious military history has been written about this period. The completion of the Papers of the War Department 1784-1800 will finally make the record of this wide-reaching government activity available to a wide audience of academics, bringing together a set of documents that remained scattered for nearly two centuries and stimulating new scholarship on all aspects of the Early Republic, not just its military history. As the recent growth of the Society for Historians of the Early American Republic (SHEAR) and its publication, *Journal of the Early Republic*, demonstrates, this is an area of growing interest among scholars. SHEAR has always had a

special commitment to political and military history and often features this scholarship in the journal, another indication of the large and growing scholarly community that will mine this collection.

Our online and open access model of publication will bring these fascinating primary sources to non-scholarly audiences as well. Military history enjoys a wide audience, and those amateurs, enthusiasts, interested citizens, and, of course, active and retired members of the military will also seek out this remarkable collection. In addition, we intend to facilitate the incorporation of these sources into high school and college courses in U.S. history. Here, too, we will exploit the possibilities of the electronic medium to make available digital packets of documents along with teaching suggestions. Because the Web puts “the novice in the archive” (in Randy Bass’s nice phrase), we are conscious that students and other non-scholarly users need support for analyzing the Papers of the War Department in critical and sophisticated ways. We will provide that, in part, through careful contextual essays, biographical directories, and timelines. But we will also offer multimedia lessons on how professional historians read the kind of documents available in this collection, such as letter books, reports of Indian agents, pension applications, and procurement records.

Our overall ambition, in sum, is to use the best technology of the early twenty-first century to recover and make widely available this vital record of American history that was seemingly lost at the dawn of the nineteenth century.

History and Duration:

The idea for this project formed two decades ago when Ted Crackel, the project's founder, began researching in hundreds of late-eighteenth and early nineteenth-century document collections for his subsequent book *Mr. Jefferson's Army*. Although archivists at the National Archives told Crackel that no War Department papers for the period had survived the 1800 fire, he observed that many collections outside the Archives contained copies of War Department documents. In 1989, Crackel wrote an article for the National Archives journal *Prologue*, suggesting a virtual reconstitution of the scattered documents through a detailed index and finding aid. And four years later, he decided to undertake the project himself with East Stroudsburg University in Pennsylvania as the sponsor.

He soon realized, however, that the index would be too large to print, and that publication on the then-emerging medium of CD-ROM better suited the project. Moreover, such an electronic publication could include page images of the documents themselves. Crackel, thus, decided to put the directory and digitized document images on a CD-ROM, and to include in the database keywords and phrases from the documents—the persons, places, things, ideas, and issues mentioned. Such a format would allow near-full-text searching, a great advantage over traditional microfilm. At this time, of course, the idea of serving these documents through the Internet would have been far-fetched; few had even heard of the World Wide Web.

By late fall of 1993, Crackel and his colleagues had developed the basic format for the project: digital images of the documents linked to searchable text describing them and accessed by a search engine with display capability and a polished user interface. All that was needed was funding, and in June 1994 the National Historical Publications and Records

Commission (NHPRC) awarded the Papers of the War Department 1784-1800 a grant of up to \$34,000.

During the next two years, 1994 to 1996, Crackel and his team visited hundreds of depositories and contacted hundreds more by mail, obtaining copies of thousands of War Department documents. They also raised nearly \$671,000 from the Department of Defense Legacy Project, NHPRC, ESU, and private contributors. At the same time, they realized they had dramatically underestimated the project's scope. Although the National Archives steadily maintained that it had few War Department documents from the era, the project soon learned that the Archives actually held a huge cache of relevant material that few researchers had ever seen—especially the papers of the Accountant of the War Office (papers which had been saved at the time of the fire) and the papers of the Purveyor of Military Stores (who, with his papers, had remained in Philadelphia when the War Department moved to Washington). This discovery more than doubled the number of documents the project would deliver. Processing such a large number of documents in Washington meant increasing the staff there and at ESU, extending the term of the project, and, most problematic, enlarging the budget.

Between 1996 and 2002, the project team made considerable progress: they completed the document searches and scanning at the National Archives as well as much of the copying, scanning, and image processing of other documents; in addition, they entered basic metadata for many of the documents (what they called “Data Entry I”). At this point, however, the project encountered some serious funding obstacles. It received barely half of the funding it requested from the NEH and the NHPRC, its major funding agencies, for years eight and nine of the project (2002-2004). Funding was so tight in year eight that Crackel accepted a one-year Visiting Professorship in history at West Point, which further slowed progress on the

project. An additional problem emerged in September 2003, when the ESU team discovered a large cache of War Department documents that project staff had found and logged at the National Archives, but had not reported to the project office at ESU. This cache added some 10,000 documents to the Papers and extended the work of the project substantially yet again.

Just as the project was facing both serious funding problems and an unanticipated increase in the workload, it lost its central and founding leader, Ted Crackel, who accepted a position in August 2004 as editor of the George Washington Papers. Changes in the ESU administration meant the project lacked the support and professional leadership to continue the project there. There was a real danger that the project would be orphaned, and the huge investment of both time and money (including sizable grants from NHPRC and NEH) to make these records available would be lost.

In an effort to save the project, NHPRC issued a public request for proposals in the summer of 2005, inviting applications from universities or other groups interested in adopting the Papers of the War Department. Crackel particularly encouraged the Center for History and New Media (CHNM) at George Mason University to apply to take over the project. Crackel thought that three factors particularly recommended CHNM and Mason. First, CHNM's national reputation as an innovative center doing work in digital history was a natural fit for a project that had been intended from the start as an electronic-only publication, a departure from the approach in most scholarly editing projects. Second, Mason had just made a major commitment to U.S. military history by hiring two new military historians, including Christopher Hamner, who had a background in early American military history and had studied with Richard Kohn, a long-time member of the project's advisory board. Third, Mason's sizable history Masters program (the largest in the United States) and its new

doctoral program included many students with interests in military history (and digital history) who could provide a ready pool of skilled research and editorial assistants.

NHPRC and its external reviewers agreed with Crackel's assessment, and in the fall of 2005 it awarded the project to CHNM. In February of 2006, CHNM received the first of two grants totaling \$130,000 from NHPRC, and began planning to transfer the project to a new home at Mason. In April 2006, staff from Mason traveled to East Stroudsburg and moved the project's files, documents, and computers to Mason's Fairfax campus. Further direct work on the hard copies of the files, however, was delayed while awaiting the completion of the project's offices in the university's new research building.

Meanwhile, the project's technical coordinator, James Safley, began the even more complicated and time-consuming process of transferring the existing digital files to a new database. For the past several years, the project had used a Microsoft Access database that was not suitable for making the PWD available online (as the new CHNM team intended). In addition, data had not always been entered consistently at ESU. Safley and other CHNM staff began to develop an entirely new data architecture for the project that would make use of open-source and standards-compliant databases and programming and to migrate the data from the Access database to the new MySQL database. This painstaking process required significant manual checking and correction to ensure that the data transfer occurred without error, in addition to some digital archeology and considerable work on image processing (especially to present multi-page documents online). This work continues at a good pace, and will be completed before the end of the current grant from NHPRC on July 1, 2007.

With the move of the project into its new quarters in August 2006, the CHNM editorial team, led by Hamner and including an advanced doctoral candidate and Assistant

Editor, Ben Huggins, and another doctoral student, Richard Harless, began to work on gaining intellectual and physical control over the massive collection. The CHNM group needed to both understand and evaluate the editorial procedures that had been established at ESU. In this effort, Hamner, Huggins, and Harless were assisted by Jane Turner Censer, a professor in Mason's History department who worked for ten years as the editor of a scholarly publishing project (The Frederick Olmsted Papers) and who serves as Consulting Editor for the Papers of the War Department. In addition, Crackel, drawing on his experience as a documentary editor and with this particular project, continues to provide invaluable advice and assistance to the project and has agreed to serve as the project's "Editorial Consultant" and chair of its Advisory Board.

Although much more work remains to be done in evaluating the state of the project (especially assessing the quality of editorial work performed, often by undergraduates, at ESU), Assistant Editors Huggins and Harless (under Hamner's supervision) have begun the time-consuming work of what the project calls "Data Entry II." Working with one document at a time, the Assistant Editors read over the document, extracting the names, places, things, and ideas mentioned in each. Assistant Editors enter each into specific fields in the document's data page. The editors then formulate a "gist"—a brief summary of the document's main topics. Data Entry II requires digesting documents that are often lengthy (as well as scrutinizing eighteenth-century handwriting, deciphering antique abbreviations, and negotiating blemishes on the historic documents themselves). This has proven to be a labor-intensive process, but one that is crucial to the larger goal of providing searchable access to documents that will be presented online as page images.

Ultimately, the Papers of the War Department 1784-1800 project plans to present all 55,000 documents together with extensive metadata that will allow searchable access. Completing the digital collection involves four separate tasks: (1) locating (in period newspapers and archival collections) and digitizing approximately 7,000 documents that have not yet been added to the collection; (2) digitizing the approximately 5,000 documents left over from ESU's earlier efforts; (3) keying basic metadata on the approximately 12,000 outstanding documents also left over from ESU's time with the project; and (4) entering the more elaborate, fully searchable data (Data Entry II) for some 49,000 documents. Over the course of this three-year grant (and assuming concurrent funding from NHPRC and the completion of work already underway), the project will complete the digitizing of the 5,000 undigitized documents in hand and enter basic metadata entry on those documents; in addition, by the end of the grant in 2010, CHNM staff will complete detailed content data entry on 16,000 additional documents, allowing us to present online nearly half of the full collection (since ESU had already fully processed 6,000 documents and CHNM will have processed more than 3,000 more under current funding from NHPRC). We will also present some of the necessary contextualizing materials as detailed below. (This assumes, as explained below, that the project receives concurrent funding from NHPRC.)

We estimate that making the full collection of 55,000 documents available online and completing all other portions of the project will take an additional five years after the completion of this grant period.

Methods and Overview of Work to be Completed Under this Grant:

The project has proceeded in three overlapping stages: *collection*, *digitization*, and *preparation for web-based access*.

1. Collection. Planning for the project's extensive collection effort began by defining a "War Department document" as all communications to or from the War Department, as well as other categories of documents that were likely to have been among the War Department's papers at the time of the fire. The latter group included documents that originated in other executive offices (including the President's) and the Congress and touched on subjects under the purview of the War Office, even when they were not addressed to the Secretary of War. War Department officials likely to be involved in such correspondence included the Secretary of War and any assistants, the clerks of the War Office, the Accountant and his clerks, and the Superintendent of Military Stores and his clerks. All correspondence related to activities of the War Department written to or by these persons were considered part of the collection. In addition, letters written by certain Army and Navy officers counted as War Department correspondence when those officials wrote from the seat of government (or from the location of the Secretary of War) *and* wrote at the behest of the Secretary of War. This rule applied to the army's adjutant or inspector (or adjutant general and inspector general) and to the several commanding generals, quartermasters or quartermaster generals, commandants of the Corps of Artillerists and Engineers, paymasters, and judge-advocates.

The ESU team began assembling a list of collections of interest by reviewing the secondary literature, noting where other scholars had worked. They then expanded the list by consulting NUCMC, RLIN, and OCLC, looking for papers of the various Secretaries of War and their subordinates, of all army and navy officers of the period, of the superintendents of

Indian affairs and Indian commissioners, and of the Governors of the states and territories and their county lieutenants. They also reviewed the records of Congress, the papers of key members of Congress, the *Directory of Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the United States*, and the *Directory of Historical Agencies in North America* for possible material. In the process, ESU staff visited more than 200 repositories and consulted more than 3,000 collections in the United States, Canada, England, France, and Scotland. Members of the staff also searched more than 160 different series in the National Archives—roughly 4,000 boxes and 170 volumes.

The collection process is now approximately 90 percent complete. The most time-consuming work remaining involves a systematic search of era newspapers, which often published War Department documents, especially letters. Additional documents (some requested but never delivered; others more recently learned about) need to be gathered and scanned from the Massachusetts State Archives, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Harrington Library in Pittsburgh, and the Clements Library at the University of Michigan. In addition, the Continental Congress Papers need to be systematically searched for relevant War Department records. We estimate that these searches will add 7,000 additional documents to the collection. We are not requesting funds under this grant, however, to complete the remaining searches because we believe that processing and making available the documents already gathered is a higher, more immediate priority.

2. Digitization involves the preparation of both the images and the text tags that allow those images (documents) to be identified by a search. This is made possible by scanning, image processing, and data entry.

a. *Scanning*. Copies of documents came to the project for scanning in four forms—originals (scanned on site), xerographic copies, microfilm copies, and digital image files. At the few repositories unable to provide copies, the project filmed the documents using a 35mm camera and high contrast black and white film or scanned the documents with a Fujitsu M3096GX flatbed scanner. ESU or an outside contractor scanned microfilm (and 35mm film shot by the project staff) using a Canon Microfilm Scanner 100 or a high-speed Sunrise scanner. Starting in 1998, ESU began scanning directly at the National Archives. In all, about 25 percent of the documents came from electrostatic (hard) copies; about 40 percent from microfilm (much done specifically for the project); and the balance (about 35 percent) was scanned from originals. The project saved the resulting scanned files as TIFF (Tagged Information Format Files) images that were burned onto CDs.

b. *Image Processing*. Using Adobe Photoshop, ESU staff cropped and cleaned up the images. For example, they digitally removed bleed-through from the backside of a page and other stains that partially obscure text. The staff processed the bitonal images produced by the microfilm scanner separately. In addition, they removed small clusters of black pixels (noise) from some images by using ScanFix. Staff checked all image files to insure good quality, and then applied a small strip of text to the edge of the image identifying the project and the image file name; page numbers are also printed on all files over ten pages in length.

Faced with the need to offer as many as 150,000 separate images to users, the project sought to reduce file size to a minimum. Here, converting grayscale files to bitonal files greatly reduced the images' file size. In addition, CHNM is turning multi-page TIFFs into individual JPEGs for each page to serve the documents more efficiently online. The search engine will link directly to the image page on which a requested document begins. Individual

pages of longer documents (like letter books) are stored as discrete images, with links in the database allowing users to quickly flip forwards and backwards through the pages of the document.

Close to 90 percent of the documents already obtained have been scanned and image processed. Under current funding from NHPRC, we will finish digitally scanning and processing images for another approximately 1,500 documents. Under this proposed grant (and assuming concurrent funding from NHPRC), we will do the same for the remaining 3,500 undigitized documents, which includes many of the previously unreported documents from the National Archives and a miscellaneous group of documents for which scanning and data entry was postponed for a variety of reasons. For example, ESU waited before digitizing materials from the Henry Knox Papers in the hope that a better quality microfilm would become available, or that the project would receive permission to scan the originals. Completing the document collection requires digitizing these outstanding documents. Throughout this proposal, we request NEH funding for approximately one-half of the deliverables; we have requested the rest will through a parallel grant through NHPRC. Both grants are approximately equal in size and cover the same time period, and we plan to split the work proposed evenly between them. (*See Appendix D for Budget Notes.*)

c. *Data Entry.* Information about each document is being entered into the database (which CHNM is migrating from Microsoft Access 97 to MySQL) in a two-phase operation. During Data Entry I, the editors create a record for each document, enter basic data (such as date, author and recipient), and link the page image to the database and a certain amount of project management information. By July 2007, we will have completed about 90 percent of Data Entry I for the documents in hand, and intend to complete the remaining 10 percent

under this grant. We intend to complete this Data Entry I under the terms of this three-year grant and the parallel grant from NHPRC for which we have applied.

Data Entry Phase II adds information about the *content* of each document. The editors prepare a very brief abstract of the document (which we refer to as the “gist”) and select keywords with which to index the documents, including all persons and groups mentioned in the document, all places mentioned, and all events, ideas, issues, or items mentioned. Our editorial policy is to enter keywords exactly as they appear in the document, without further elaboration. The “gist,” however, offers more latitude, and we employ a glossary of approved terms to describe events mentioned or even alluded to in the text.

For example, the gist of a letter describing the uprising in Western Pennsylvania in 1794 would employ the term “Whiskey Rebellion,” even though contemporary descriptions would not use that term. These gists enable researchers to learn about the nature of a document quickly, far more than they would learn by glancing at a list of names, places, and things mentioned. For example, the general meaning of a document whose keywords included “Nathaniel Greene,” “troops,” “army,” “meritorious exertions,” and “complaints” is difficult to interpret. The two-sentence gist, which explains that it is a letter recognizing the gallant exertions made by General Greene’s troops and apologizing for their poor treatment, allows the researcher to decide quickly whether the document warrants more careful examination. (*See Appendix C for sample document.*)

The bibliographical and content data in these document records, thus, produces searchable text records linked to each of the image files. The searchable text, in turn, vastly increases the value of the online page images. Researchers can use the search engine to quickly find all of the War Department documents written by a particular individual, in a

particular year (or years), or that mentioned a specific person, place, event, issue, or item (or some combination thereof). At the same time, the provision of the image files greatly enhances the value of the summaries—researchers can turn to the originals to get more extensive information and precise quotations.

Data Entry II also provides an additional quality control step. At ESU, much of the work on Data Entry I was carried out by undergraduate students. We plan to check carefully the basic metadata entered by those students, although we are still evaluating how much correction is required. We are also implementing quality control for the Data Entry II work already completed and for the new work that we will undertake under this grant. The project's Editor or Assistant Editors will review these entries to insure consistency and clarity. But one cost advantage of our electronic edition over standard printed volumes is that we do not need to spend substantial time on proofreading because we are not presenting transcripts; because we are also offering page images of every document, researchers will extract quotes from the documents themselves.

Data Entry Phase II (content data entry) will be the major focus of the project's effort under this grant. Because the length of the documents fluctuates greatly (from single page to dozen pages or more), the time required to enter this content data varies as well. Given the four dedicated Assistant Editors provided for in this budget (and the one proposed to NHPRC) over the three-year grant period, we estimate (based on our work so far on the documents in past few months) that we will be able to complete Data Entry Phase II on approximately 16,000 documents—nearly a third of the outstanding documents that remain to be processed. At the end of the grant period, we will present 25,000 documents online, 45 percent of the full collection, primarily covering the years from 1784 to 1790. We will then publish the first of

an envisioned three-part series, this one covering the years 1784-1790. (Naturally, we will also process some of the documents from later time periods where it makes sense for an efficient work flow.)

3. Preparation for Web-Based Access. This phase includes the final quality control of text and image data and final design of the web-based database. CHNM will complete the administrative back-end of the database—the interface that allows project editors to access, add, and verify data—under the current funding from NHPRC. With the proposed new funding, we will complete the front-end. That includes the actual design of the website as well as the development of the user tools, especially search and browse functions. CHNM has extensive experience in creating easy-to-use and attractive websites. (See <http://chnm.gmu.edu> and the numerous projects linked there.) With the completion of the web-based browser and search engine, the Papers of the War Department 1784-1800 will be ready for scholars.

These resources, however, also offer countless treasures for teachers and students at the college and high school levels, such as a detailed, firsthand account of the young government's attempts to marshal an interstate military force to put down the Whiskey Rebellion, one of the first major tests of the new federal machinery. The website will be user friendly and will make it easy for teachers and students to quickly locate records relevant to a host of topics. Research on classroom use of primary sources, however, has shown that accessing primary sources is only the first step. Learning how to read them carefully, how to analyze those sources as official documents created for a specific purpose, however, is more complicated. The Papers website will offer a three sets of auxiliary materials to extend the collection's utility for scholarly, student, and general audiences.

First, we will develop resources to *contextualize* the Papers of the War Department for both scholarly and non-scholarly audiences, including an introduction to the War Department in this period, a biographical directory of key figures mentioned in the Papers, and a timeline of key events relevant to the history of the War Department and the period covered, all written by Hamner. Second, we will offer packets of pre-selected documents from the Papers directed at high school and college classrooms that address topics generally taught in U.S. history survey courses, such as federal Indian policy in the early Republic. CHNM has substantial experience in developing similar classroom materials in such projects as *Women and World History* <<http://chnm.gmu.edu/wwh/modules.php>> and *Historical Thinking Matters* <<http://historicalthinkingmatters.org>>.

Finally, we will provide assistance to both students and non-scholarly general readers on how to “make sense” of the sometimes puzzling primary sources that are in this collection. Non-scholars are often unfamiliar with the protocols and methods that professional historians use to analyze historical documents—for example, sourcing, contextualization, close reading, and corroboration. These “intermediate processes of cognition” (in the words of psychologist Sam Wineburg) are often invisible and mysterious, especially to students. We believe that we can use the electronic medium to make the thinking of historians visible to non-scholars. In fact, CHNM already has extensive experience in doing exactly that in its *History Matters*, *World History Matters*, and *Historical Thinking Matters* projects. On those websites, we provide multimedia case studies of historians “thinking aloud” to illustrate how they read historical evidence. For example, Gerald Danzer discusses the Mercator map projection, focusing on its history, how it represents the world, and how teachers can use it in the classroom. We will produce multimedia “Analyzing War Department Documents” case

studies of this sort using editor Christopher Hamner or one of the members of our Advisory Board. These will focus on the four key categories of documents encountered in this collection—letter books, pension applications, procurement records, and reports of Indian agents.

We see these case studies and the other auxiliary materials as part of our larger commitment to free, open access. It is a mistake to define “access” narrowly as the ability to find the collection online; “access” also encompasses the ability to use historical sources in sophisticated and critical ways. We seek to use the electronic medium to foster both kinds of access for the widest possible audiences. Because we are only going to provide a portion of the collection online under this grant (and associated funds from NHPRC), we cannot provide all of these auxiliary materials at this time. During the course of this grant, we will produce a detailed introduction to the War Department and a timeline of key events relevant to the history of the War Department during this period. In addition, we will create two teaching document packets (one on the War for Independence and its legacy, and a second on the Whiskey Rebellion and the effort to mobilize a inter-state military force and on) and two multimedia case studies of analyzing two key genres of war department evidence (letter books and pension applications) with initial funding, and will seek additional funding to expand this portion of the website to include at least five teaching packets and four case studies.

Dissemination and Sustainability of Final Product: This project was initially planned for distribution on CD-ROM, but the spread of ubiquitous Internet access makes the World Wide Web the logical distribution medium for the Papers. The low cost of bandwidth and storage, in addition to CHNM’s existing infrastructure, means, moreover, that we will be able to offer

the Papers of the War Department 1784-1800 free of charge to anyone with Internet access. We believe that this is the future of documentary editions, and we see this project as blazing a trail toward free public access to the nation's documentary heritage. Cost considerations make it impossible to offer fully transcribed versions of the documents, but keywords and phrases drawn from the text along with the brief summaries will allow a near-full-text search of the documents with accompanying digital images of the actual documents. Researchers will be able to establish complex search criteria; one might, for example, ask to find all documents written in June 1797 by Secretary of War James McHenry to General James Wilkinson that mention either horses or rations or both horses and rations. To ensure future orderly migration of the project files (image and text) to new storage mediums, to new platforms, and even to new applications, we will employ widely accepted, non-proprietary file formats: TIFF and JPEG for images and ASCII for text. (One key standard for scholarly editions—TEI—is not relevant here because we are not offering full transcriptions.) The database architecture for the project will similarly use open standards and open source software—in particular, MySQL and PHP—and will present images online as in the standard format of JPEGs, which load much more quickly than TIFFs.

We believe that the long-term costs of maintaining the project online for free will be manageable. CHNM's ability to sustain this project online is demonstrated by more than a dozen years of work in the field of digital history. Since 1994, CHNM has used digital media and computer technology to present and preserve the past, and it currently hosts more than two dozen online history projects, among them several large, highly regarded and highly visited digital archives such as the *September 11 Digital Archive* and the *Hurricane Digital Memory Bank*. These also include major history projects—such as the award-winning

DoHistory—that have been given to CHNM because their creators believed they would find a more permanent home in CHNM’s stable of leading digital history projects.

CHNM’s stability stems from several sources. With the help of an NEH Challenge Grant, CHNM has raised a \$2 million endowment, which provides for its long-term viability as a unit of the George Mason University Department of History and Art History. Mason also has a strong institutional commitment to CHNM, which has a \$1.5 million annual budget and a staff of more than thirty-five. The History Department has made “new media” a central focus of its new PhD program, which insures a steady stream of students (at least seven of whom work as Graduate Assistants at CHNM) interested in sustaining existing projects and creating new ones. Sun Microsystems has recently given CHNM an Academic Excellence Equipment Award for a new server. Housed in George Mason University’s secure data facility, this state-of-the-art configuration will help meet CHNM’s server technology needs for years to come. Taken together, its substantial endowment, demonstrated fundraising success, strong institutional support, and solid technology allows CHNM to guarantee that the Papers of the War Department will be a permanent resource for researchers, students, and the general public.

Work Plan

July 2007 - December 2007

- work on front end of search engine
- digitize and image-process 5,000 documents already in the project collection
- complete detailed finding data (DEII) on 2,700 documents
- begin work on auxiliary material: draft multimedia tutorial on reading War Department letter books

January 2008 - June 2008

- continue work on front end of search engine
- complete basic metadata entry (DEI) on 1,250 documents
- complete detailed finding data (DEII) on 2,700 documents
- continue work on auxiliary material: revise tutorial on reading War Department letter books
- convene Project Advisory for feedback on historical and technical issues

July 2008 - December 2008

- continue work on front end of search engine
- complete basic metadata entry (DEI) on additional 1,250 documents
- complete detailed finding data (DEII) on additional 2,700 documents
- continue work on auxiliary material: draft first digital teaching packet on the War for Independence and its legacy in early America; draft multimedia tutorial on how to read pension records; write introduction to War Department during this period

January 2009- June 2009

- beta-test search engine
- complete basic metadata entry (DEI) on additional 1,250 documents
- complete detailed finding data (DEII) on additional 2,700 documents
- continue work on auxiliary material: draft second digital document packet on using the collection to study the War Department's response to the Whiskey Rebellion; revised tutorial on reading pension records

Fifth six months: July 2009-December 2009

- review and revise search engine based on test results
- complete basic metadata entry (DEI) on additional 1,250 documents
- complete detailed finding data (DEII) on additional 2,700 documents
- continue work on auxiliary material: design and test of interactive web interface for digital document packets; create timeline of significant events relevant to War Department during the 1784-1800 period
- convene project advisory board for feedback on historical issues and interface design

Sixth six months: January 2010-July 2010

- publish revised search engine to the web
- complete detailed finding data (DEII) on additional 3,600 documents
- publish auxiliary material to the web: digital documents packets and web tutorials

Project Team and Staff:

The Center for History and New Media and George Mason University are well positioned to complete this project. Indeed, perhaps uniquely among U.S. institutions, Mason combines the scholarly, technical, and institutional qualities (including substantial staff with credentials in military history, the history of the early republic, historical editing, and especially digital history) necessary to complete the project in a professional and timely manner. (*For more on CHNM, see Appendix B.*)

Roy Rosenzweig (Principal Investigator) will be responsible for overall supervision of the editorial and technical aspects of the project, will serve as the liaison to university administration, and will be in charge of fund-raising efforts. Rosenzweig is Mark and Barbara Fried Professor of History and New Media at Mason, where he also heads CHNM. He is the author, co-author, and co-editor of numerous books including *The Park and the People: A History of Central Park*; *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in*

American Life; Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920; History Museums in the United States: A Critical Assessment Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public, and Digital History: A Guide to Gathering, Presenting, and Preserving the Past on the Web. He was co-creator of the CD-ROM, *Who Built America?*, which won James Harvey Robinson Prize of American Historical Association for its “outstanding contribution to the teaching and learning of history,” as well as the website *History Matters*, which won the same prize. He recently served as Research Vice-President of the American Historical Association and, in 2003, won the Richard W. Lyman Award (awarded by the National Humanities Center and the Rockefeller Foundation) for “outstanding achievement in the use of information technology to advance scholarship and teaching in the humanities.”

Christopher Hamner (Editor-in-Chief) will be responsible for overall editorial content and intellectual direction of the project, supervising the Assistant Editors, and overseeing the day-to-day editorial work of the project. Hamner earned his PhD in American military history from the University of North Carolina. He has been a dissertation fellow at Harvard’s John M. Olin Center for Strategic Studies and the Center for Military History. An honors graduate of Dartmouth College, he focuses on the interplay between technological innovation and the factors that drive soldiers to perform in combat in different wars, including the American Revolution. He is completing a book that examines the ways that American infantry soldiers responded to the traumas of combat in the wars of two centuries, beginning with the War for Independence. He is a member of the Association for Documentary Editing.

Jane Turner Censer (Consulting Editor) will work with the Editor and Assistant Editors to insure that the project follows the highest standards of historical editing. Censer

received her Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University in 1980; during her decade as a historical editor at the Frederick Law Olmsted Papers at American University, she oversaw the publication of volumes four and six, *Defending the Union: The Civil War and the U.S. Sanitary Commission, 1861-1863* and *The Years of Olmsted, Vaux & Company, 1865-1874*. She is also the author of *North Carolina Planters and their Children, 1800-1860*, and *The Reconstruction of White Southern Womanhood, 1865-1895*.

James Safley (Technical/Archival Coordinator) will be responsible for building the database infrastructure and programming the site to allow direct data entry by the editors and to allow public delivery of the documents. Safley received his undergraduate degree in history at Mason and began his archiving career in 1999 at the National Archives and Records Administration. Subsequently, Jim worked as records manager at Phi Beta Kappa national headquarters and archivist assistant at Mason's Special Collections and Archives. Coming to CHNM in 2002, Safley applied his traditional archiving experience to his work in digital archiving, web programming, and database administration.

Dick Harless and **Ben Huggins** (Assistant Editors) will work under the close supervision of Hamner and Censer. They will take daily responsibility for Data Entry I and II. Harless holds a B.A. in history from Vanderbilt University and an M.A. in political science from George Washington University. A second-year doctoral student, Harless focuses upon the Early Republic period. He has already done extensive research on Indian policy in the Washington administration, one of the key topics illuminated by the Papers of the War Department. Huggins graduated from The Citadel with a degree in computer science. He received his M.A. in U.S. history from Mason. He entered the Mason doctoral program in

2003 and is currently completing dissertation research on the political ideology of the Old Republicans and Whigs in antebellum North Carolina.

Project Advisory Board. Ted Crackel (University of Virginia) will chair the advisory board, which will provide regular and substantive feedback on the quality and progress of the project. The other members are: Richard H. Kohn (Department of History, University of North Carolina); Rosemarie Zagarri (Mason); Fred Anderson (University of Colorado); Jane Turner Censer (Mason); Daniel Cohen (Mason); Meredith Lair (Mason); and Randolph Scully (Mason). Because the Advisory Board members (with the exception of Kohn and Anderson) live within driving distance of Mason, we will be able to meet with only minimal travel costs. (*See Appendix A for CVs.*)