A Library within A Library
The Henry Charles Lea Library is an outstanding collection of works on the subjects of the Inquisition, church history, canon law, and other medieval and early renaissance areas. The majority of its 400 manuscripts and 17,000 volumes were assembled by Lea, a businessman and medieval historian, in the tradition of the amateur and scholar, who used to walk to the University Library every night from his home at Twentieth and Walnut Streets. The collection, formerly installed in the Furness Building (1925), is now on the top floor of the Van Pelt Library, housed in the room of black walnut paneling and cabinetry which was originally part of the Lea house. The centerpiece here is a portrait of lawyer-historian Joseph George Rosengarten (A.B. 1852, L.L.D. 1906), trustee and benefactor.

Like prominent figures elsewhere, those associated with the University of Pennsylvania have not merely left their mark on their own time but have continued to influence the world of learning and the professions. While molding the future from his vantage point in the present in this way, the historical scholar provides an additional temporal dimension since his own work and interests are directed towards the past. Roy F. Nichols, one of the most respected students of American history of the twentieth century, continually brought his historical perspective to issues of scholarship, education, and life. A historian of international reputation, Nichols nonetheless underscored the importance of local history, and after he joined the Pennsylvania faculty at the age of twenty-nine, much of his attention was directed to the history of his new city and state. In his last years, Nichols continued the work of Edward Potts Cheyney as historian to the University of Pennsylvania.

The period of American history which Nichols studied and wrote of most comprehensively in the course of practically half a century at the University is that of the 1850s, the decade which culminated in the Civil War. In his doctoral dissertation, published as The Democratic Machine, 1850–1854, he wrote of the structure and function of the political party at a moment in American history when its organization had failed to prevent differences from being settled by war instead of through deliberation. According to his fellow historian Professor David M. Potter of Yale University, “During the succeeding forty-four years, Nichols produced a series of volumes which ranged forward and backward over his context, in a progression that moved through the tensions of the fifties, to the Civil War and into the Reconstruction period, and then turned back to examine political origins from the time of Alfred the Great, through English political history and the history of the colonies, to the study of the political organizations of Federalists, Jeffersonians, Jacksonians, and Whigs which preceded the party organizations of the eighteen fifties.”

In his autobiography Roy Nichols describes how in 1925, two years after he and Jeannette Paddock Nichols had received their Ph.D. degrees from Columbia University, “a call from the University of Pennsylvania
brought us to live in Philadelphia, at the other end of the Pennsylvania Railroad. Here the Nicholses were to remain. Though other universities were eager to have Nichols on their faculty, the history department "obstructed three pre-depression efforts to get him to move his base of operations." He swiftly became identified with the department, and it was to Nichols that Ezra Pound addressed himself from Italy to express regret at the death of historian Herman Ames. For Pound's former teacher was thus deprived of "the minor entertainment of knowing that his paitences [sic] and indulgences of 30 years ago hadn't been wholly wasted on one of his most cantankerous pupils."

During his years at the University of Pennsylvania, which he entered at the age of fifteen, Pound struck up a friendship which would last a lifetime with medical student William Carlos Williams, who after graduation devoted his energies to "the art of medicine and the medicine of art." After receiving an A.M. in Romanic languages, Pound had enrolled in all the courses offered by the English department and he writes: "In 1907 I achieved the distinction of being the only student flunked in J[osiah] P[enniman]'s course in the history of literary criticism."

At the time Pound was studying with the dean who later became provost, he considered himself to be the only student with the slightest interest in literary criticism; indeed, his purpose on entering the University had been to study the comparative values of literature "unbeknown to the faculty." He had accomplished much in this area by the time he wrote, in a letter addressed to "Doc. Nichols," of the "Time Lag, between real culture and that TAUGHT."

During his first years at the University, Nichols was engaged in research on Franklin Pierce, publishing his study of this president in 1931. Intent on the "reconstruction" of the state capital of former times in order "to place Pierce in his habitat," he spent time studying government records not only in Washington but also in Concord, New Hampshire. This technique of steeping himself in the physical environment in which his subjects had lived was one which Nichols applied constantly in order to visualize that life to the fullest possible extent. Nichols' understanding of the nuances of the Civil War period resulted from this familiarity with all aspects of its milieu as well as the fact that he knew "the hangers-on and the back-benchers as well as the leading actors in the drama." During a year as Pitt professor at Cambridge, he commented on his personal experience of the influence of environment. In the opening words of his inaugural lecture there, he evoked the "American historian passing through the Great Gate of Trinity or walking in the courts of Emmanuel" and observed: "These Cambridge surroundings recall to him the fact that the University was the birthplace of much of significance in American culture."

The place of biography in the teaching of history was a question much
debated at the time. In the face of evident shortcomings in traditional teaching, Nichols took the position that, so long as biography is not allowed to disintegrate into gossip and anecdote, it serves a major function by drawing attention to one of the fundamental intellectual problems of analyzing history: the complexities of human motivation. The subjects for a biographical approach to history need not be limited to great men even though there is a tendency for political biography to concentrate on the leaders at the expense of the led. Although his book was the biography of a president, Pierce was an example of “the historical outcast or scapegoat [who] seems as necessary to teachers and writers of history as does the hero.” In order to point up the historical significance of even obscure members of the human race, Nichols proposed that students should be encouraged to study the lives of their own relatives or of other people close to them as an antidote to the purely formal tendencies of historical study: “In other words,” he notes, “history without biography is like faith without works; it is dead.”

Nichols was deeply interested in the process involved in studying and writing history as well as in actual events and personalities. Much later, in an article entitled “The Genealogy of Historical Generalizations,” he analyzed the way historical “truth” evolves. The point of departure is provided by eyewitness accounts, unabashedly tinged with emotion, favorable or otherwise. Nichols takes as his example the progress of Civil War historiography with a vivid sample of the earliest stage of generalization from a contemporary account which declared: “Never since the revolt of Lucifer has there been a more causeless rebellion against a justly constituted and beneficent government.” A countervailing position written by Alexander H. Stephens, the vice-president of the Confederacy, and entitled A Constitutional View of the Late War between the States, reflected Nichols’ point that, in the primary phase, the slant from which the generalization is to be made often appears in the title.

Only then, according to Nichols, do more precise evaluations start to appear. These, though depending on the historian’s particular point of view, pave the way for “definitive” accounts. At this stage, “some sacred cows are slaughtered and what is known as ‘debunking’ appears.” Last of all, concepts borrowed from the social sciences and psychiatry contribute to produce a new body of generalizations and provide a theoretical framework for the events. In the case of the Civil War, additional insights are gained through reference to similar wars fought in widely different areas, and a more universal interpretation is reached. This “progress” in historical thinking which Nichols illustrates from his own period of interest does not follow a simple linear direction. It is therefore incumbent on each successive generation of historians not only to reinterpret the events but also to reevaluate the conclusions of earlier scholars, according to what Nichols describes as “rigorous ‘genealogical’ thinking.”
For his own analysis of the events and circumstances which led to the Civil War, Nichols won the Pulitzer prize for history in 1949, the year that Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* also received an award. Looking over this work, *The Disruption of American Democracy*, Nichols later remarked: "I can now discover a model which emerged and can describe it 'after the fact.'" Among the most important factors resulting from his copious researches which ranged over 117 manuscript collections from 48 depositories in 26 different states, he pointed to the destabilizing effect of the almost constant elections conducted on the state level. At the same time, the national parties were "but loose federations of state machines" whose differing interests could be variously exploited. Even as he described the insecure political federation among the states, Nichols also dealt with what he terms "'cultural' federalism" or the association of people and communities exhibiting various contrasting attitudes which make it necessary for political leaders to find "ways and means to hold citizens dominated by a variety of attitudes in one body politic."16

In answer to the criticism that Nichols placed insufficient emphasis on the question of slavery, traditionally regarded as the largest obstacle to peaceful settlement, he underlined the political nature of his model: "One anomaly of the slavery issue is that, while the two sections disagreed deeply about slavery, the two political parties disagreed only marginally in what they were prepared to do about slavery—they had different proposals for the territories, where the issue was perhaps fictitious, but they were both pledged to leave slavery unmolested in the states, where the issue was real." More important than the degree of perfection of the model which Nichols was developing—without being aware of it at the time—was the effect his writing was to have on political history. According to Potter: "When he left it, it had been revitalized by the recognition that political history must be analyzed as a process involving fundamental interactions between various factors in the society, and that, as the medium for the functional use of power, politics is as crucial as any process in the society."17

Towards the end of Nichols' four-decade tenure at the University of Pennsylvania, a radical challenge began to be mounted to the methods of traditional American historiography. Rejecting what has been described as the doctrine of "implicit importance," the so-called new historians turned from a study of prominent figures and great public events to focus upon neglected groups in the general population—the poor, women, and children—for what the basic conditions of their lives could reveal about underlying processes of economic, social, political, and cultural change. That Nichols applauded these developments is suggested by remarks he made just after World War II. Employing a timely analogy, the Pennsylvania historian wrote: "Just as the natural scientists turned from galaxies to atoms, so should historians turn from their nationalistic macrocosms to
Although Williams (M.D. 1906, Litt.D. 1952) thought of himself as a physician first and a poet second, he gained widespread literary recognition with his poetic saga *Paterson* and *Make Light of It*, a collection of short stories. Works by Williams and memorabilia were presented to the library by his wife in 1965.

After World War I he lived in France in the circle of expatriates which included Gertrude Stein and James Joyce. Among his close friends at college was H.D. (Hilda Doolittle, College Course for Teachers 1908-9), the daughter of the director of the Flower Astronomical Observatory at the University. A lifelong friend was Ezra Pound (a member of the College class of 1905, A.M. 1906), a leading force in modern literature in the twentieth century whom Carl Sandburg hailed as “the greatest single influence on American poetry.”

The microcosms of community behavior. For the community can be dubbed the historical atom; in villages, towns, cities, counties and the like are found the basic units of human behavior.”18 In just such locales, in fact, a younger generation of historians was to search out census data and parish registers, eschewing the memories of the famous for these humbler sources of information which lent themselves to quantification and had previously been ignored or underutilized.

Roy Nichols seems to have anticipated the new history which was only beginning to appear in print towards the end of his life. The “atomic” or local history he proposed was, however, very different from nationalism reduced to mere *Lokalpatriotismus*—“those glorifications of the unique virtue of various towns and cities inspired by chambers of commerce and publicity writers on the occasion of centennials and the like.”19 The important contribution which could be made by improving research into
the history of urban communities had been recognized by Nichols long before, on the occasion of just such an anniversary celebration. Newly arrived in Philadelphia at the time of the Sesquicentennial of the Declaration of Independence in 1926, he had been surprised to find no historical society representing the Commonwealth as a whole. Whatever their names might seem to indicate, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and that of Western Pennsylvania were closely linked with the urban centers of Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. Soon after he made the move to Philadelphia, Nichols read a paper before the American Historical Association detailing suggestions for the study of local and state history. He was promptly invited by the president of the Pennsylvania Federation of Historical Societies which met annually in Harrisburg to chair a committee whose purpose was to investigate further these suggestions. As a result, a few years later, in 1932, the Pennsylvania Historical Association was inaugurated with Nichols the first vice-president and the second president.

One of Nichols' papers on Pennsylvania history dealt with a local occurrence in 1866, the year that the Union party failed to be founded at a convention at Twentieth Street and Girard Avenue in Philadelphia. As a result, no bronze tablet was needed to mark the spot where a great party was almost born. In contrast, those events which actually came about within the state's boundaries came to be publicized in the 1940s with "blue and gold aluminum markers... set up literally by the hundreds along the highway." An important aim which Nichols had expressed in his paper on state and community history before the American Historical Association was "the use of local history as a convenient and efficient way to get historians who were not in a position to work on a larger scale to do much-needed research in local history from sources nearby." The suggestion was put into effect through work carried out under his aegis at the University of Pennsylvania, where an extensive study was made of Pennsylvania politics from 1740 to 1877 through a series of doctoral dissertations completed during several decades.

When he spoke of local history in terms of atoms, Nichols was reflecting the influence that work in the natural sciences was having on other branches of thought. As a result of general interest in changing theories and knowledge about the structure of the natural world, attempts were being made to apply the principles concerned with the indestructibility of matter, indeterminacy, and relativity to social questions. By applying the second law of thermodynamics to human behavior and thought, Henry Adams had come to the pessimistic view that the world necessarily had to be running down. Nichols, in turn, was intrigued by the implications of relativity, an idea which he used for striking effect in one of his addresses in 1933. Disposing of analogies based on Newtonian physical law as too simple to guide historians any longer, he described an "intellectual crisis"
resulting from new scientific perceptions. For example, "time is no longer a sequence of events, it is the fourth dimension which is necessary in physics because of the fact of relativity."\(^{24}\)

Much of Nichols' stimulation for thinking along these lines came from discussions with colleagues at the University of Pennsylvania, particularly with Detlev Bronk, the biophysicist, who was himself concerned with applying the principles of dynamics in physics to the life sciences.\(^{25}\) Whether or not Nichols saw the implications for history as very profound, he made the most of an opportunity to question Albert Einstein on the value of such extrapolations from the natural sciences. In their discussion, he recalls, "Dr. Einstein disposed very quickly of the second law of thermodynamics," and, expressing disapproval of the way precise scientific terms came to be loosely applied by philosophers, he convinced Nichols that historians might do well to restrict their use of them to analogies. They should certainly stop short of seeking to apply laws which could only be valid for a closed system to philosophical constructs, since these rules were not applicable to human behavior.\(^{26}\)

Nichols often made use of these analogies from the natural and, in particular, the physical sciences. In his 1933 address dealing with the "intellectual crisis," he surveys briefly the social developments which have accompanied man's changing conception of himself as a result of past scientific discoveries. When he arrives at the present, Nichols writes: "We must break up the atoms of facts in each epoch and chase the electrons to find these data which are not the height, breadth, width and weight of the electron but the direction of its motion—the force which the fact represents and the speed and general direction. This we might call the historical fourth dimension." When he describes the curricular changes which must accompany the new material of history, Nichols develops the analogy: "This new synthesis will in great measure make use of a principle roughly akin to relativity. It will have as its core a theory of relative values—the complexity of life can be resolved only by sorting out some of the threads and analyzing and comparing them."\(^{27}\)

With his historian's fascination with time, Nichols envisions many changes which might result from a move away from defining the past through a chronological succession of dates and periods. In one instance, he speculates on the possibility of teaching history backwards. In addition, he foresees a new regard for the discipline itself, with historians no longer considered, as he once put it, as "reasonably satisfactory handmaidens worthy of Thursday afternoons and alternate Sundays on which to do what they really wish," but leaders in a field which will be respected as the linchpin of a curriculum for the future which might, Nichols suggests, be called "Society, past, present and improved."\(^{28}\) Here, as well as in his choice of title for his autobiography—A Historian's Progress—Nichols shows himself "unblushingly 'progressive'" in his vision of history and the objects of its study.\(^{30}\)
The most important influence on Nichols' thought from outside history itself undoubtedly came from the behavioral sciences. The formation of two interdisciplinary groups in the twenties—the Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societies—had led the American Historical Association, which was represented in each, to conduct an investigation of new areas and approaches to historical research. In Nichols' account, the report of a conference arranged for the purpose of discussing the findings of the investigation had "a decidedly 'behavioral' flavor." Among the approaches recommended because they revealed social and behavioral trends was one on which he had already reflected intensively: that of biography. Nichols contributed to this report and was afterwards chosen as a delegate of the American Historical Association to the Social Science Research Council in 1934, along with Guy Stanton Ford and the elder Arthur M. Schlesinger.31

He remained on the board for twenty-two years, and the influence of the developing behavioral sciences is visible in his works, particularly in his emphasis on recurring patterns of behavior. As a result of his familiarity with the leading social scientists of his day, he applied their general outlook, rather than their particular concepts, to history.32 Under his influence, the Social Science Research Council produced two bulletins entitled *Theory and Practice in Historical Study* (1946) and *Social Sciences in Historical Study* (1954).

Among the problems encountered by the contemporary historian is one to which Nichols frequently returns. "Historians suffer from one of the most distressing of the mental ills of this complex life of ours," he remarks; "they are not sure of their identity or of their functions." Allegiance to past affiliations is in conflict with the company which the historian now finds himself keeping: "Once the historian had been confident of his place as a humanist. Now he was referred to as a social scientist. What was he?"33 The historian's link with the humanities has to do both with man's position in regard to time and also the recurring question of the uses of time. "From the study of literature and history, from a keen sense of the process and development which comes from science and history, can be gained a sense of the long and slow growth of anything worthwhile. We are creatures of the moment in the universal sense of time.

Time goes, you say? Ah no
Alas! Time stays, we go."34

While examining the role of this dimension in the study of history, Nichols also envisaged the possibility that future reductions in labor requirements might result in a thirty-hour week with the consequent need for instructing people on how to use their leisure. This necessity would strike a blow for the liberal arts, continually under pressure from
considerations of "practical" education: "Knowledge of art and letters, their history and achievements, will become a very definite part of the systems we are to construct."\(^\text{35}\)

Continued support for the humanities appeared to Nichols to involve more than the preservation of disciplines which have in the past been regarded as valuable: their perpetuation is, additionally, "a demonstration . . . of faith in history, in the need for a realistic and comprehensive understanding of the past. The whole corpus of history, if adequately studied and interpreted, would yield much of past experience by which this day might profit." It is because of what has been done to compress the sense of time in the modern world that a historical perspective takes on added importance. The fundamental processes of the mind change slowly and do not keep up with the tempo of modern life; deeply rooted concerns are therefore set aside in favor of more immediate, practical considerations, and the mind loses its freedom to probe the basic nature of problems.\(^\text{36}\)

This freedom is itself the etymological source of the branch of learning comprising the "liberal" arts; its preservation depends on man's sense of history.

In his discussion of "the social uses and functions of written history"
Henry Hope Reed (1808–1854)

Attributed to Thomas Sully
Assistant professor of English literature and moral philosophy, later professor of English literature and rhetoric (1831–1854) and vice-provost (1845). Born in Philadelphia of a family with many connections with the University, he studied for the bar, practicing law for a few years after graduation (A.B. 1825). Reed brought out the first complete American edition of Wordsworth’s poetical works (1837) and published articles on the poet by himself and by Christopher Wordsworth. Returning from a visit to England which had included a stay at Wordsworth’s home, Rydal Mount, Reed was lost at sea in a major steamship disaster. His lectures were published after his death by his brother, William B. Reed, and his manuscripts and memorabilia were presented to the library in 1913.

and the “practical” aspects of knowledge as contrasted with the materials of traditional humanistic study, Nichols looks ahead to the much-touted question of “relevance.” The subject is in a direct line of descent from the educational principles propounded by Benjamin Franklin at a time when the classics dominated higher learning. It was a result of Franklin’s influence, seconded by the inclination of the first provost and vice-provost of the college, that “in a day of classical absorption these two Scots, with Franklin behind them, set up a curriculum, forty per cent of which was devoted to science.” With this tradition reinforced by the strength of the medical school, the scientific bias has sometimes overshadowed the considerable contribution of able professors in the arts at the University of Pennsylvania. In the mid-nineteenth century, while Alexander Dallas Bache was professor of natural sciences, Henry Vethake, a professor of mathematics, was introducing political economy as a separate course of study at the University. An example rare at the time of a teacher who shared with his students the results of his own investigations, Vethake published his widely read Principles of Political Economy based on his courses, a book which became a standard work.

Another eminent nineteenth century professor in the department of arts who, like Vethake and Nichols, had also served as vice-provost was Henry Hope Reed. As both assistant professor of moral philosophy and professor of belles-lettres, Reed found no difficulty in reconciling these two disciplines for he believed in literature as a means of bringing men together. “We live too much in ignorance of the hidden feelings which connect us together,” he wrote. “Whatever awakens the common principles of human nature or creates a fellowship among men, adds to the stock of moral power.” He befriended Wordsworth, both editing his works and guiding his financial investments, and, at Reed’s suggestion, the poet wrote sonnets on American subjects. It was on his return from a visit to the poet’s widow in 1854 that Reed went down in the sinking of the Arctic. Professor Reed’s brother, the lawyer William Bradford Reed, encouraged the reestablishment of the law school and was also responsible, according to Nichols, for stimulating interest in history at the University. Reed gave an address on the subject to the Philomathean Society in 1839, and eleven years later he gave the first lectures in American history at the University. In Nichols’ opinion, Philomathean, the oldest undergraduate literary society in the United States, had initially provided a parallel road to the goals of “self-discovery, self-identification, and finally, self-realization,” which must be the aim of all teachers of “the arts and sciences as humanities,” in their search to promote “the humane way of life.”

Nichols’ interest in education as well as the liberal arts led him to accept the deanship of the graduate school of arts and sciences in 1952. The tremendous boost given to science had served to unbalance universities in the postwar period, and Nichols used his position to mediate between
the growing sciences and the needs of the humanities. Graduate education was also in a period of rapid expansion, and Nichols became vice-provost for graduate affairs in 1953, holding the post concurrently with that of dean. With rapid growth of the graduate student body in the fifties, Nichols set about providing the graduate school with more effective and more diversified services. The needs of individual students were supplied through the creation of new graduate groups, often interdisciplinary, as well as the introduction of the “Independent Study and Research” course which permitted any part of the requirements for an advanced degree to be satisfied by informal reading and study. At the same time, the semester credit system was abandoned in favor of the course unit and the foreign language requirement was relaxed to allow each graduate group to set its own requirements for the tools most necessary to a given discipline.

With the Educational Survey of the University conducted over several years by Joseph H. Willits, alumnus, former dean of the Wharton School, and longtime director of the social science branch of the Rockefeller Foundation, Nichols was in large part responsible for facilitating the external examination of the graduate school of arts and sciences. Nichols himself became president of the Association of Graduate Schools in 1964 and chairman of the Council of Graduate Schools of the United States the following year. In expressing his admiration and gratitude for Nichols' service as dean and vice-provost, former Provost Jonathan Rhoads remarked: “It is no small achievement to preside successfully over a citizenry of intellectual aristocrats and this Roy F. Nichols did superbly and I believe in so sympathetic a way that he was appreciated by everybody concerned.”

In the view of Rhoads and many others, the Pennsylvania historian was a superlative speaker as well as a great presiding officer. Certainly, he will be remembered by thousands for his humor and his histrionic talents which appeared so often, whether he was addressing a gathering of alumni, a learned society, or a class in history. In his early days at the University of Pennsylvania, Nichols had lectured before very large classes. His forte was the dramatic presentation of certain events from the history of the Civil War, and it became a custom for his “Webster’s Reply to Hayne” presentation to be greeted at the climax of the debate with “The Stars and Stripes Forever” played on a trumpet from the back row.

His “performances” enlivened the graduate courses which he continued to give after becoming dean. Despite the many claims on his time which caused the Nicholses to move nearer to the University, he did not cease his prolific writing, and he went on to complete four more scholarly books before his retirement. Some of his articles now had to do with the problems of universities and graduate education, in the same way as his publications had formerly included reflections on the philosophy and the teaching of
history along with books and articles on scholarly questions pertaining to the Civil War. After his retirement from the University in 1966, Nichols served as president of the American Historical Association, and he proceeded to carry out important work as chairman of the joint Administrative Board of the Benjamin Franklin Papers Project for the American Philosophical Society. In 1969 he was also made Honorary Consultant in American History to the Library of Congress. His ability to do all this and much more is explained by a remark of his to the effect that academic work was not only a duty but a hobby and a recreation.48

In 1962, while speaking on the subject, "What a Century Has Done to the Civil War," Nichols remarked: "Birthdays and other anniversaries present many opportunities. One of these is the opportunity to assess the results of growth, to discover whether there has been an increase in wisdom accompanying intervening experience."49 Occasions for humanistic observations of this kind were abundantly associated with Nichols' period of scholarly interest, and Potter describes him as one of the few professional historians who took spontaneous pleasure in the four long years of the Civil War Centennial.44 Referring to the part he played in the national observances, Nichols remarked: "There have been times when I have felt that I had commemorated almost every engagement in the conflict," an illusion which he hastened to ascribe to "battle fatigue."45 Nichols further noted the way history, politics, and the human yen for cyclical celebration are all united in that most American of perennial pursuits—the election of a president: "Every four years, in leap year by strange chance, the American people enjoy, and I literally mean enjoy a spectacular contest for the presidency."46

Perhaps a key to Nichols' achievements is to be found in the way his own various interests and activities seem to have been coordinated throughout a life from which history was never absent. The hill on which his Newark, New Jersey, family home stood overlooked the Essex Country Courthouse, and from it he could sometimes see the cogs of the notorious local Democratic machine which did not omit "the temple of justice" from its sphere of influence and was a reality to him from an early age.47 Moreover, by the time he left high school he apparently knew more of the facts of American history than the average doctoral candidate.48 This achievement only seems to have convinced him, however, of the need to improve on the instruction in history, which traditionally involved "a long, an interminably long, series of dates and petty chronicles with no suggestion of great forces of destiny or of vital relationships of phenomena in cause and effect sequence."49 But perhaps the most important catalyst in the developing interests of the young historian came between the years of 1909–15, in the shape of the centennial of Lincoln's birth and the semicentennial of the Civil War. Celebrated by the Lincoln penny and journalistic accounts which could be cut out and assembled in binders,
these momentous events encouraged a youthful commitment to history and the Civil War period which was to last Roy Nichols a lifetime.\textsuperscript{50}

It is human nature to wish to celebrate birthdays and a no less human historical instinct to enjoy surveying neatly divided periods—such as centuries—of time past. Nichols himself could never resist alluding to the neatly rounded historical perspective which allowed him, on one occasion, in the context of a historian’s report on social science, to recall that the essay in social analysis, \textit{Leviathan}, had been published exactly three hundred years earlier—an essay in which Hobbes used the biblical image to which Nichols also alluded in the title of his last historical work.\textsuperscript{51}

Another reference encompassing two distant centuries, appears in the opening paragraph of a paper on the Civil War published about the same time: “On March 4, 1461, Edward IV assumed power as King of England. On March 4, 1861, Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated President of the United States.”\textsuperscript{52}

The two hundredth birthday of the nation—a leap year, and time once more for a presidential election—would also have been the eightieth birthday of Roy F. Nichols, who died in 1973. He had looked forward to the nation’s celebration of 1976 with mixed feelings, on one occasion remarking that he trusted Philadelphia’s observance would have greater dignity and pertinence than a world’s fair.\textsuperscript{53} It is to be hoped that Roy Nichols, historian, teacher, and erstwhile expert in anniversaries of all kinds, would have approved of being made a party to this set of essays, reflecting the intellectual perspectives of the University of Pennsylvania, generated by the atmosphere surrounding the American Bicentennial.