

Reviews of Books

RICHARD G. WOOD, Editor

The National Archives
Washington 25, D.C.

Annual Report of the Public Archives Commission, State of Delaware, by the State Archivist, for the fiscal year July 1, 1945 to June 30, 1946. (Dover, Delaware. Hall of Records, 1946. Pp. 56. Illustrations and appendix.)

The reports of the state archivist of Delaware, Leon deValinger, have always been informative and attractively presented. This report is no exception.

The work of the year is characterized as one of "readjustment and procurement of equipment." The end of the second World War brought to Delaware, as elsewhere, the problem of staff reconstitution. Resignations and terminations of employment of temporary members have made necessary the assumption of larger obligations by those who have remained; new members have been added and are being trained. A photographic section has been created, and two of its members, both veterans, are receiving in-service instruction given by the archivist under the provisions of the Veterans Administration program. But there is another kind of readjustment which is also receiving attention: the necessary advance in salary scales that is dictated by the rising cost of living and by consideration of the relative return due to the unorganized but skilled and experienced technician who performs vital but inadequately appreciated services. This problem is being placed before the state legislature, which assembled in biennial session in January.

By way of equipment, the principal acquisitions include the purchase of a portable Recordak microfilm camera, a truck adapted to the moving of records or filming and sound recording apparatus, sound recorders of both the disc and tape types, and reproducers for the sound-records of both types. In addition, the archivist anticipates the purchase of still and motion picture cameras to enable his staff to take a more active role in documenting Delaware history with photography. There has been little delay in using these new tools. By June, approximately a half-million pieces from a seven-ton mass of state treasurer's records were microcopied, and, as a measure promoting security, vital statistics from the records of the State Board of Health and back files of selected newspapers were also copied.

The work with more conventional record media included an extensive program of document repair by lamination. Much of this activity was of an emergency character. In matters touching the transfer and disposal of state records, the archivist reports that state officers have accepted with confidence the services of the Hall of Records staff. Financial records, some of which

reached to 1944, bulked largest in the year's accessions; a wide range of records, both state and municipal, were inspected and marked for destruction. The testing of papers and inks is being continued with the co-operation of the state Highway Department. A revised "Approved List of Papers and Inks" forms an appendix to the report.

Finally, the diminution of activity in the field of war records collection may be noted. The work of acquisition is largely completed, and certificates of appreciation signed by the governor, the secretary of state, the president of the Public Archives Commission, and the state archivist are being awarded as a manifestation of the state's appreciation of the services given by citizens who voluntarily aided the collection of the record. A copy of one of these certificates of recognition forms one of the illustrations in the report. Staff members of the Hall of Records are now collecting and verifying data for a memorial volume which will be published in commemoration of the men and women of Delaware who lost their lives in the war.

The report illustrates the successful execution of a broad, yet balanced, program of archival activity in small state. It illustrates no less effectively that the work of the Delaware Hall of Records has established its foundations deep in the life of the state. The records also suggests that the Hall of Records has advanced to a stage of maturity for which many if not most of our state archival agencies are still striving. Thus in all probability it is a wise course to look to the successes and failures of the archival institutions in our smaller states—where programs can be carried to completion more rapidly than in larger states—for that synthesis of functions which is to distinguish the fully developed archival institution. The report of the Delaware Hall of Records offers such an opportunity to look ahead.

CHARLES W. PAAPE

Carnegie Institute of Technology

The Historical Department. Twenty-eighth Biennial Report of the Iowa State Department of History and Archives for the Period Ended June 30, 1946. (Des Moines, Iowa, 1946. Pp. 76.)

This *Biennial Report* is interesting because it coincides with two events closely associated with the Department. First, it is the final report to be issued by Ora Williams, who has retired as Curator. Secondly, 1946 marked the centennial anniversary of Iowa's statehood. Mr. Williams has taken this opportunity to recount the development of the Department, a task for which he is ably fitted as he has been closely associated with its activities since the first steps were taken to establish it more than fifty years ago. He also discusses the role of the Department during Iowa's second century in opening up "new horizons of usefulness and greater possibilities of advancement in cultural as well as material things."

Mr. Williams made great strides in preserving, cataloging, and making available for use, the governmental records of Iowa. Iowa, like other states, has many archival problems yet. The primary need is an adequate, modern

building to handle existing records and to allow for expansion. Presently, Iowa archives are located in a building which is not fireproof and houses a chemical laboratory! How many states may have followed this course of saving records from one type of possible destruction (dampness, vermin and other hazards in out-of-the-way places) while taking greater chances in another form? As Mr. Williams states, "Little more need be said." It is up to the General Assembly to remedy the situation.

In common with the Federal Government and other States, Iowa has these other problems to be met: a greater volume of records due to the War; the disposal of records that have no permanent value, but destruction has not been authorized by existing legislation; and the lack of trained personnel in governmental offices to determine what records should be saved for transfer to the archives.

The remainder of the *Report* consists of accounts of the continuing activities of the Department. One may add that the *Report*, in general, outlines the problems to be handled by the next curator in continuing the work of the Department which was accomplished during Iowa's first century.

HOMER L. CALKIN

National Archives

Tenth Annual Report of the Archivist of the Hall of Records, State of Maryland, for the Fiscal Year July 1, 1944 through June 30, 1945. (Annapolis, 1945. Pp. 46.)

Eleventh Annual Report of the Archivist of the Hall of Records, State of Maryland, for the Fiscal Year July 1, 1945 through June 30, 1946. (Annapolis, 1946. Pp. 40.)

For almost twelve years now Maryland has held a position of exemplary leadership among the states in working out progressive policies and practices for the care of public archives. The Maryland Hall of Records is one of the model archival agencies in the country which is visited each year by records administrators from other states, and from foreign countries as well. For those who are not so fortunate as to be able to see this interesting archives for themselves, Dr. Radoff's annual reports provide excellent comprehensive statements of the progress and direction of his program. In them appear useful information concerning the structure and functions of the agency, its staff and its budget, new accessions and finding aids, and general discussions of archival policy. The tenth report, for example, outlines the considerations underlying the Maryland policy of concentrating county records in a central depository, a question about which there has been considerable debate. The file of these reports is valuable reference material for anyone who is interested in broad problems of records administration at the state and local levels.

Dr. Radoff's experience should give comfort and guidance to the growing number of archivists who are laboring to improve conditions in places where the systematic care of public records is something new. There is little of the flavor of quick and easy achievement in his reports, though he has been in some ways conspicuously successful. He has been content to lay sure foundations and to progress one step at a time on a long-range program, holding

himself to limited objectives in his immediate operations, while thinking ahead always to the wider responsibilities of the future. He has had his unsolved problems and no one could be more frank in acknowledging them. But there is in all he says a sustained note of statesmanship, sound policy, and careful practice that will quicken the purpose of those who share such problems, whether in his system or in their own.

The Maryland archivist reports on the points of accessioning, processing, and servicing records, and in the preparation of reference aids and publications. The transfer of state and local "historical" records (i.e., for the period preceding the adoption of the Federal constitution) to the Hall of Records is stated to be nearly finished, the process having been hastened by mandatory legislation enacted in 1945. Photocopy and repair rooms attained in their eleventh year new production levels the highest in the history of the agency. Several guides and indexes have been printed for general distribution. These are accomplishments which the archivist is entitled to report with satisfaction.

In other matters too there is assurance of continuing effort. Training sessions have been arranged in cooperation with the American University and the National Archives. Negotiations have been carried on with the Maryland Historical Society looking toward an agreement delimiting the activities of the two agencies. Reference and other services to government offices have been increased, although it appears that the records are still consulted more frequently for genealogical investigations than for administrative purposes or for historical research.

As the task of assembling and making available the archives of the colonial and early national period is now nearing completion, the archivist is devoting more of his energies to problems having to do with the care or disposal of "Modern Non-current Records." Since 1941 government officials wishing to destroy non-current files have been required to offer them first to the Hall of Records. Already it is becoming clear that if the agency is to be charged with the broader responsibility of participating in the administration of public records generally, a considerable expansion of staff and facilities will be necessary. The present reports review several instances in which the archivist has recommended that certain files be preserved, but has been forced to refuse them himself owing to a lack of space. There is indicated also an alarming turnover in staff, due to grossly inadequate wage and salary levels, which must necessarily lower the standards of operation at the very time when expanded service is called for. If Maryland is to maintain its position of leadership in records management, there must be a recognition on the part of the State that the physical plant of the Hall of Records needs to be enlarged very soon, and that its staff members who are in a number of cases skilled technicians or professional specialists, should be paid accordingly.

CHARLES M. GATES

University of Washington

Twelfth Annual Report of the Archivist of the United States for the Year Ending June 30, 1946. (Washington, United States Printing Office. 1947. Pp. iv, 99.)

Had the National Archives foundered during the War no one would have blamed Dr. Buck and his associates. Hardly had they learned to navigate their vessel, which was none too substantial for the services of peace, than they were swept into a storm of war which threw up no less than ten million cubic feet of records. Nor had they any experienced pilots, for never before had archivists faced such problems. By careful planning they handled in a satisfactory way the torrent of records from demobilized departments. True, the War is not yet over for the National Archives because the bulk of the ten million feet of war records is still in the hands of the permanent departments, although since the outbreak of the War the National Archives has tripled its holdings.

Never before has the archivist been faced with such problems of selection and destruction. Dr. Buck reports that the most difficult decisions and the most imperative need of destruction comes in the field of what he calls "operating records"—the routine records of such agencies as the Selective Service and the OPA. It must have been difficult to make the decision that such material as the registrants' Selective Service folders "probably will not be retained indefinitely," but in view of the fact that the National Archives could not now house the ten or twenty per cent of the War records which will eventually be kept, it is plain that much that the historians would like to see preserved must go.

In spite of loss of personnel the National Archives has done a fine job on the peace-time records. It now has in its custody most of the records of enduring importance for the period up to the 1920's and, like the rest of us, it is getting more and more recent records. In spite of this, the National Archives last year check-listed more records than it received. However, it may seem that Dr. Buck is being unduly optimistic when, from the fact that destructions now exceed accessions, he concludes that "the seemingly endless pyramiding of Government records . . . has come to a stop." When you stop to think of it, this means only that half of the greatly increased accumulation of records is being destroyed. The Federal Government to-day is turning out non-disposable records at far a higher rate than before the War.

Equally serious is the fact that the records in the custody of the National Archives are deteriorating much faster than the present staff can repair them. This is particularly true of the films which Dr. Buck thinks should be inspected once a year and damaged ones duplicated. The fact that good paper is far more durable than any film yet made is one that even the National Archives ought to take into consideration.

It would no doubt pay archives to hire publicity agents to explain that they are not repositories of dead matter but active service institutions which commonly pay their costs several times over. This is particularly true in the Federal Government in which the crowded departments would, if left to themselves, destroy documents which would later, as in claims suits, be worth millions to the Government. More, also, should be made of the fact that more than half of the nearly 238,000 services performed by the National Archives last year were to the Federal agencies. Few of these could have been performed so well by the agencies themselves; many thousands of them could not have

been performed at all had there been no National Archives.

No mere review can do justice to Dr. Buck's report. Every professional archivist will read it in full and find in it much that relates to his own problems.

CLIFFORD K. SHIPTON

Harvard University Archives

Seventh Annual Report of the Archivist of the United States as to the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library. 1945-46. (Washington, U. S. Government Printing Office, 1946. Pp. ii, 14.)

In the first year following the death of its founder and chief donor, the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library began to set the pattern we may expect to see followed in years to come: on April 12, 1946, the Roosevelt home was dedicated as a National Historic Site; on May 1 the inevitable coalition between the Library and the Home was inaugurated; on the same day the research room of the Library was opened and serious use of the manuscript material for research purposes began, ten times as many visitors flocked to the Home and Library as in previous years and there was every indication that the shrine "would soon stand with Mount Vernon and Monticello as a place of pilgrimage for the American people."

Problems that had been presaged in previous years were more clearly obvious as the pattern solidified. The inadequacy of the staff of nine to deal with the vast crowds, to answer countless inquiries, to arrange and rotate interesting exhibits and at the same time to process library material was obvious. The inadequacy of space became acute and the Archivist of the United States proposed that consideration be given the construction of an addition. The necessity for guides and selections from the late President's papers was recognized by a further proposal that a fund, to be administered by the American Historical Association, be established to foster research and to disseminate information on the history of the United States from 1910 to 1945.

As was inevitable, President Roosevelt's death brought a slackening in the material deposited with the Library, a slackening more acute in 1946 than it might be for several subsequent years because so much of the late President's paper was in the hands of his executors. During the year only 60 cubic feet of manuscript material was received (bringing the total holdings in this category to 2,738 cubic feet), half of this from the Roosevelt estate, consisting largely of Mr. Roosevelt's papers as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 1913-1920, and the bulk of the remainder from Mrs. Roosevelt, including material relative to the inaugural ceremonies of 1933, 1941 and 1945, White House social functions and White House household accounts. Particularly interesting items given by Mrs. Roosevelt were a small notebook and eighteen exercise books from the President's boyhood. Other donors included Miss Francis Perkins, who gave the Library 125 items relating to her administration of the Labor Department, and the Democratic National Committee, presenting correspondence for the period from July 1932 to May 1933.

Enlarged space, increased staff are clearly the needs if this most interesting

archival experiment of a great president is to attain its full possibilities of service to the people he served.

MARY E. CUNNINGHAM

New York State Historical Association

Dominion of Canada. *Report of the Department of Public Archives for the Year 1946*. (Ottawa. Edmond Cloutier, King's Printer and Controller of Stationery, 1947. Pp. xxxix, 262.)

This report contains a variety of materials: the report proper of the Public Archives for 1946 (three pages), a list of accessions of the Manuscript Division for the year (seven pages); a section of "Historical Documents" (nineteen pages); and an appendix, a calendar of Nova Scotia official correspondence, 1802-1820 (262 pages).

The report of the Public Archives is a very brief resume of activities during the year. As was the case with archival establishments all over the world, the Department sought to reorganize its program on a peace time basis. Several former members of the staff returned from the armed forces, the Paris office reopened its doors, and the London office added to its force. Acquisitions were made by the Manuscript Division, the Map Division, and the Print Division. A serious loss was suffered in the death of Dr. James F. Kenney, who had been on the staff since 1912. During the year the Archives held two exhibits of pictures, and the War Museum, which continued to add to its collections, was visited by some 70,000 persons.

Acquisitions of the Manuscript Division include a diversity of materials, from a facsimile of the warrant for the execution of Charles I of England, 1648, to a set of departmental organizational charts of the Civil Service Commission, 1922; from a photocopy of a land grant, 1743, to a program of a concert, 1900; and from a facsimile of Magna Carta to extracts from a diary at Hong Kong, 1941. A few of the items are the official records of the Canadian Government, but most of them are heterogeneous assortments of other materials.

The "Historical Documents" are likewise varied. They comprise a portrayal of the Government of Canada under the French in the 1750's; a description of Halifax in 1793; the reminiscences of a member of an American loyalist family that settled in Canada in the 1780's; a letter from an artillery officer who made a magnetic survey of the Canadian Northwest in 1843-1844; and a group of brief documents regarding a proposed exhibition of heating equipment in London in 1881.

The calendar of the Nova Scotia official correspondence, 1802-1920, covers a homogeneous body of material that will be of particular interest to American historians, since it contains a good deal of information on the relations between the United States and Great Britain during the years of increasing tension which reached a climax in the War of 1812. The value of a mere calendar of documents, however, is being increasingly questioned, and the present one, containing only sketchy summaries of many items, does not

strengthen the case for the calendar.

The present reviewer's chief reactions are three: (1) In spite of the title, the volume is not in reality a report of the Canadian Department of Public Archives, for in only three pages there can be no adequate treatment of the activities and accomplishments, program and problems, of such an agency. A full and thorough report for the Department would have been useful and worth while. (2) Why include such a diversified assortment of materials in one publication? Would it not have been better to break these materials down into their component units and to issue each unit separately? (3) A volume of this size and scope ought not to be published without an index and there is none.

CHRISTOPHER CRITTENDEN

*North Carolina State Department
of Archives and History*

First Report of the Saskatchewan Archives. 1945-1946. (Regina. The Bureau of Publications, 1946. Pp. 27. Illustrations.)

The late Dr. Arthur S. Morton left a two-fold heritage to scholarship. *A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71* is a monument to his creative genius; the archives program of Saskatchewan is his legacy to his protégés in regional history. Archives received technical legal status in 1879, but it was not until the first World War that there were any tangible results. An "archives branch" of the Legislative Library was created, and under the direction of Mr. William Trant, valuable materials, but not official documents, were placed in its custody. In 1920, *The Preservation of Public Documents Act* prescribed the conditions under which non-current records could be destroyed and under which public documents could be transferred to the provincial archives. It did not, however, take due cognizance of the potential historical value of records, nor did it provide them with a repository. About 1937, Dr. Morton induced the Board of Governors of the provincial university to establish the Historical Public Records Office. Very appropriately, the progenitor of the program was made Archivist. Initial success in facilitating significant transfers under the Act of 1920 merely made the limitations of the law more apparent. In 1945, two months after Dr. Morton's death, the present law was passed.¹ It provides for an Archives Board of five; two are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, two by the University authorities; and the other member is the Legislative Librarian. This Board appoints the Archivist and prescribes the rules for administration. According to the law, no official document may be destroyed without the consent of the archives authorities, but the transfer or destruction of official papers requires an order in council. Acceptance of materials other than official documents is the exclusive prerogative of the Archivist. The University of Saskatchewan is the custodian of the Archives.

The report contains an excellent popular exposition on the nature of

¹ Text printed in *AMERICAN ARCHIVIST*, April 1947, Vol. 10, p. 216-217.

archives and lists the accessions to date. A modest but sound program has had an auspicious beginning.

HERMAN J. DEUTSCH

State College of Washington

Report of the American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in War Areas. United States Government Historical Reports on War Administration. (Washington. U. S. Government Printing Office, 1946. Pp. v, 238. List of Personnel and Consultants, Bibliography, 59 Illustrations, Index. \$1.50.)

On June 30, 1946, the Honorable Owen J. Roberts, as chairman of the American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in War Areas submitted to the President, Harry S. Truman, a report which henceforth may well represent a unique archival document in the history of warfare. For it is for the first time that the protection of cultural monuments has been made to constitute an important part of the complex machinery of modern war. The first realization of such a protection seems to have come from the private initiative of Lt. Col. J. B. Ward Perkins, an officer of the British Eighth Army in Tripolitania. In view of the collapse of the enemy administration in occupied areas, the staff of the British Chief Civil Affairs Officer in Tripolitania took over the responsibility of protecting the monuments of art. Thus a certain pattern was established for the protective work to be done by a group of the army in the field: a small beginning of what finally came to be the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives Section of Civil Affairs Division in the United States Army.

With regard to the protection and salvation of works of art, private activities had been started by the Committee on the Protection of Cultural Treasures in War Areas of the American Council of Learned Societies and the American Defense—Harvard Group. These two groups continued their own work. But from August 1943, when the Commission was officially appointed, there was finally the principal agent needed to distribute the results of all the activities to the proper Governmental departments. This distribution involved primarily descriptions of the treasures, handbooks, and maps, all to be used directly by the army in the field. In the preparation of such files, extraordinary work was done by the Committee on Collection of Maps, Information, and Description of Art Objects, under the chairmanship of Mr. William B. Dinsmoor and Mr. Paul J. Sachs, with Mr. Charles R. Morey, Mr. Sumner McK. Crosby and Mr. William L. M. Burke as advisers. Since these files comprise all available information concerning the extent of damage, losses total or partial, the first restorations, the looting and restitution of art works, they will remain historical documents of unique importance.

The preparation of the protection of archival material was started relatively late. Although finally data on 1700 archival repositories were accumulated, the final report read by Mr. Oliver W. Holmes at the annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists at Indianapolis on November 6, 1945, frankly admitted that "the National Archives looks back upon its record with mingled feelings of both success and failure."

Divided into two large sections, the *Report* gives a full account first of the history of the Commission and all its activities, preparatory, as it were, and secondly of the actual "field operations." The first section clearly indicates the extraordinary complications and difficulties the Commission had to cope with in view of the numerous aspects of all the problems involved. The work implied relations with the Department of State, with its Division of Economic Security Controls, with the Division of Cultural Cooperation, with the War Department and especially with the Civil Affairs Division, with the Treasury Department and its Bureau of Customs as well, with the Foreign Economic Administration, and with Agencies abroad. In Part III of the report a detailed account of the "Preparation of the Commission's Archives" is given.

Naturally, the most interesting is the second section on the "Field Operations of Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives Officers" (Part IV). Each campaign is described separately. All the reports make "fascinating" reading in that they unfold a drama of the most unusual kind. The surveys made of the damage suffered, the investigations carried out on the spot, the immediate beginning of restorations, often extensive, even when temporary only, restitution of art works and archival material to the original owners, all this done with less than the minimum of personnel, stands out as a great achievement. The *Report* is all the more valuable as apparently all deficiencies or failures are frankly mentioned. One reason that obviously accounts for most of the deficiencies recurs again and again in the *Report*: the unwillingness of the War Department to appoint specialists from civilian ranks to be officers of such rank as to secure authority in the field. That, nevertheless, a handful of men succeeded in carrying out the most comprehensive work for which no precedent existed, is a remarkable feat that the *Report* clearly demonstrates to the reader.

LEO SCHRADER

Yale University

British Records Association, Technical Section. *Bulletin 16*. ([British Records Association] London, 1946. Pp. 47.)

The introductory note to this *Bulletin* explains that the articles it contains have been selected for re-issue from *Bulletins* 1-15. The basis of selection was not merely interest, but usefulness and value to the archivist as well. Among the topics discussed are muniment rooms, showcases, maps, infra-red photography, protection of records against bookworms, treatment for library bindings, and war conditions and record work. The articles vary in length from a paragraph or two to several pages and were written by such noted archivists as Hilary Jenkinson and G. Herbert Fowler.

Numerous bits of archival information are scattered throughout the *Bulletin* and almost every archivist who reads it will find one item or another which will attract his attention, whether it be a recipe for flour paste, tips on the cleaning, repair and storage of maps, the recipe for the "British Museum mixture" for dressing leather bindings or a discussion on the use of chemicals

for bringing out faded writing. It is hardly likely however that any American archivist will find it necessary to heed the advice found in the article on strongroom construction when the writer deplors the use of gas for artificial light and chooses electricity instead.

The article on the application of microphotography to archives provides a penetrating analysis of the problem of using microfilm to serve the needs of individual students of archives in a way comparable to the manner in which it has served students of printed books. Aside from the technical difficulties of filming archives, the greatest problem for the archivist is to list and describe his records in such a manner that the student may select the materials he wants copied without a personal visit to the agency. At present this is seldom possible. It is also noted that the bulk of archives is so great and the needs of students so varied that, except for a few important series, it is not practical to prepare master film copies in anticipation of such needs. However, the idea of publishing films instead of volumes is not altogether abandoned.

The *Bulletin* concludes with a number of items dealing with the effect of war conditions upon records. In one case, the building surrounding a strong-room was destroyed by fire. After a lapse of several days the vault was opened. It had retained the heat to such an extent that some of the records packed near the roof "were seen after the opening of the door to be in a dull glow and then to burst into flame."

GUST SKORDAS

Maryland Hall of Records

Handlist of Manuscripts in the National Library of Wales. The National Library of Wales Journal Supplements, Series II, Numbers 1-9. (Printed at the private press of the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1940-1946. Pp. xxiii, 188. 2s. 6d. each, plus postage.)

The work of the Keeper of Manuscripts and Records of the National Library of Wales and of his assistants, this *Handlist* describes briefly manuscripts which are in volume form and of which no catalogs have been prepared. Realizing the long period that must elapse before its wealth of materials can be completely cataloged, the library has issued the *Handlist* as supplements to its *Journal* in order to acquaint readers briefly with the nature of its holdings.

The Introduction to the work contains a brief history of the Hengwrt-Peniarth Collection, the major collection of the Library containing probably the most valuable group of Welsh manuscripts in existence, as well as others in English, Latin, French, German, and Cornish. The assembling of this collection was begun by Robert Vaughan in the seventeenth century; it was acquired by the National Library in 1909. The *Handlist* itself is arranged by collection, thereunder numerically beginning with the first of the uncataloged items. Appended to the numbers for most of the volumes are letters signifying their size: A, for example, signifies that the volume is under 181 millimeters in height; B, that it is from 181 to 228 millimeters in height. The brief titles

of the volumes are followed by excellent digests of the contents occupying in most cases only three or four lines. Beautifully printed, the *Handlist* is arranged for the reader's convenience with titles in bold type and entries well spaced. As is the case in most lists of manuscripts there is little or no subject arrangement so that it is necessary to examine all entries for a collection in order to determine its value for particular research subjects.

ELIZABETH B. DREWRY

National Archives

An Introduction to the Papers of the New York Prize Court, 1861-1865, by Madeline Russell Robinton. Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law, No. 515. (New York, Columbia University Press, 1945. Pp. 203. \$2.55.)

The title of this book is too modest. It is not only an "introduction to the papers" of one of the Federal prize courts during the Civil War, but also an introduction to the court itself. It is, in other words, both a finding aid to a body of judicial records and a contribution to legal and administrative history. As such it provides one more illustration of the close interrelationship that exists between archival analysis and historical research, and an interesting example of a Ph.D. dissertation on an archival topic.

The papers described are the case records of the Prize Court of the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York, 1861-1865, and the logbooks and other ships' papers that were captured along with a given prize and deposited with the court. These records were "discovered" in New York City in 1936 by the Survey of Federal Archives (see National Archives Project, Work Projects Administration, *Inventory of Federal Records in the States; series II, The Federal Courts; no. 31, New York*, 1939, pp. 88-89). At some time between 1936 and 1945 the records were analyzed and arranged by Mrs. Robinton and microfilmed by the Columbia University Library, and subsequently, they were transferred to the National Archives along with many other noncurrent records of the district court (see "*National Archives Accessions*" No. 22. March 1-June 30, 1945, p. 1). The bulk of the records microfilmed is not indicated. It may have been anywhere between 28 linear feet (the holdings of the National Archives) and 50 feet (the figure given in the above SFA inventory).

As a historical study this volume covers in detail the organization, legal procedure, and administrative practices of the court, 1861-1865; the supervisory and investigative activities of the Solicitor of the Treasury and the Navy Department, especially in 1863; and the case histories of most of the 190-some ships that were brought into New York as prizes. On all these matters the author explored not only the records of the court itself but also certain Navy Department records and many Government and other publications. The research technique of using Federal records at more than one level or echelon of administration is noteworthy, and might have been extended a step or two farther to include the records of the Solicitor of the Treasury and those of the Attorney General (both in the National Archives for the

Civil War period). Among these records are a hundred letters or more on New York prize matters that passed between Edward Bates, Delafield Smith, William Evarts, Daniel Lord, Edward Jordan, and Navy Secretary Gideon Welles, including one by Welles (June 9, 1862) in which he cites President Abraham Lincoln's concern about the delay in distributing prize money to captors. Aside from these omissions, Mrs. Robinton's product is, nevertheless, a scholarly and critical contribution to the history of Federal justice.

As a type of finding aid for a body of Federal records, this study reflects some of the conventional and unconventional practices of the archivist. Thus, the study contains the previously mentioned administrative history of the court, without some of which—most archivists agree—the user of the records would be seriously handicapped; it describes (in great detail) the typical papers relating to a given case or ship (pp. 14-26); it lists the individual ships and their case numbers in the index, which thereby becomes an index both to the study and to the microfilm of the records; and it mentions some of the unusual, non-legal research uses to which the records might be put. All of these devices are carefully executed. Some of the conclusions and observations, on the other hand, are questionable. The definition that rearrangement of records according to provenance is a "reconstruction of the original order [of the papers] based on the procedure of the prize court" (pp. 13, 90, 190) is debatable and at variance with another statement (p. 11) that "the papers [on a case] were originally filed in chronological order, for they bear the endorsement of the date of filing." On the research values of the records, Mrs. Robinton is more enthusiastic in Chapter 1 than later (pp. 185, 172), where she states that the data on profits are "fragmentary" and that the data on blockade running do "little more than confirm a story already well known."

The appended bibliography (pp. 189-195) is somewhat weak chiefly because it is largely uncritical and unannotated. Thus, several series of Navy Department records are listed and briefly described on page 189, and several Navy publications are listed elsewhere, some in the bibliography (p. 189) and others in the text (pp. 51, 99). All of these items seem to be closely interrelated and both the archivist and the historian would like to have some critical appraisal, expressed in convenient form, as to what types of prize materials have already been reproduced in print and what kinds, remaining unpublished, constitute unique materials for further exploration. Likewise, in respect to the several New York City newspapers that are entered simply by title, one wonders, from a hint in the text (p. 75), whether many newspapers did not contemporaneously reproduce some if not many of the court's papers, including the auctioneer catalogs. Other entries (such as those on the Union Defense Committee and the New York Chamber of Commerce on p. 193) need some comment, especially since the index does not lead one to any relevant discussion in the text.

Editorially this study might have been improved by shortening some of the long quotations (e.g., pp. 91-110 *passim*); shortening the long statutory citations when they appear in the text; avoiding wordy phrases such as "the recrudescence of the primacy of the New York court" (p. 51); adding dates

to the titles of House and Senate documents (pp. 189-193); and expanding the index to include headings for the Supreme Court, the Attorney General, the Key West and New Orleans prize courts, and the names of two legal documents (Admiralty Docket, and Interrogatory) that have been carefully analyzed in the text. Except for these criticisms and quibbles, the study seems to be a sound piece of scholarship both from the archival and historical points of view.

MARTIN P. CLAUSSEN

National Archives

The Metropolitan Life: A Study in Business Growth, by Marquis James. (New York. Viking Press, 1947. Pp. viii, 480. Illustrations, notes, and bibliography. \$5.00.)

This formidable but readable business biography is of interest to archivists chiefly because of its extensive citation of manuscript sources, it will be judged elsewhere on its substance. Mr. James says he was given a free hand to write the story, for pay, and complete access to what must be a major collection of business records. "Connected with the Metropolitan Library," says an acknowledgement, "are what are called the archives, under the direction of Amy O. Bassford. They contain a fairly extensive and very useful assemblage of records, lithographs, photographs, and odds and ends." As in Mr. James' earlier works the notes are unusually numerous and detailed, and the manifold citations to the archives should interest anyone considering what to save among the files of a business firm. They include directors' and committee minutes, letters and memoranda, personnel files, ledgers, cash books, actuarial statements, sample and actual policies, and other items from both the central and division files, some of them going back to the company's first year, 1868. Use of varied and recent materials extends even to citation of the much-debated diaries of Henry Morgenthau, Jr.

PHILIP C. BROOKS

National Archives

The Parish Chest: A Study of the Records of Parochial Administration in England, by W. E. Tate. (Cambridge, England. Cambridge University Press, 1946. Pp. x, 346. Illustrations, notes, glossary, appendices, bibliography, index. \$4.75.)

Students of 16th and 17th English history and sociology will find this book indispensable. And, since a knowledge of how to use English parish records is a necessary part of the equipment of all historians of early colonial America, it will be scarcely less of a *vade mecum* for them as well. For the chief value of a parish register lies in the fact that it recounts the short and simple annals of a homogeneous folk within a well-defined locality; and a history, if it is to be accurate, must be based on just such local records. Generalizations about the history and sociology of Tudor and Stuart days will not stand up unless based ultimately upon local statistics, and it is quite safe to say that all the English colonists of early colonial America stemmed from some English parish.

There is some slight difference of opinion about the date of the origin of

the parochial system; Mr. Tate is inclined to believe that it "developed in its essentials before the Norman Conquest." Suffice it to say that a century after the Conquest, the parish had been delimited pretty much within the very bounds that circumscribe it today, and that the machinery that we find clanking away in Tudor times—tithes, the ecclesiastical incumbent, the vestry and its appointees chosen from its membership, the churchwardens, church rates—was either functioning or just about to function.

The parish register came into general use with the Tudors whose social and political aims necessitated a close and precise knowledge of the smaller subdivisions of each country in England. Indeed, one can attribute the emergence of the register and its importance to Tudor administrators to Henry VIII's break with Rome. In the autumn of 1538, immediately after two risings in favor of the ancient church, Thomas Cromwell issued the mandate that every parson, vicar or curate was to enter in a book every wedding, christening, or burial in his parish with the names of the parties; and that every parish was to provide a "sure coffer [the "parish chest," whence Mr. Tate's title] with two locks, the parson having custody of one, the wardens that of the other." Entries were to be made "each Sunday after service, in the presence of one of the wardens." This order was enforced under a penalty of 3s. 4d. for repair of the church. Parish records, therefore, appear in the form we know them after the promulgation of Cromwell's mandate.

Mr. Tate, quite rightly, has divided his book into two sections, the first dealing with parish records that are ecclesiastical, the second with those mainly civil. Under ecclesiastical records are to be found sections that deal with the parish register itself, the accounts of the churchwardens, and certain parish charities, briefs (royal mandates towards some deserving object), glebe terriers (*i.e.*, "land books"), tithe records, records of such miscellaneous activities of a parish church that naturally would turn up in a parish chest, such as the annual [?] visit of the bishop, lists of strange (*i.e.*, visiting) preachers, notices as to prospective enclosures of land, royal proclamations, "faculties" for the alteration of the church fabric, licenses from the bishop to eat flesh in Lent, or those issued to sufferers who sought to go to London to be touched by the King for scrofula. Detailed annotation upon sections I and II is to be found at the rear of the volume. By relegating there the numerous and necessary footnotes, Mr. Tate has freed the lower margins of his text from a litter of documentation that would discourage prospective samplers.

Section II, entitled "Records Mainly Civil," deals with those documents that emanate from the vestry acting as an ultimate unit of the local administration, *i.e.*, in its civil capacity. For as time passed, the Tudor government cast many duties upon the parish; constables, waywardens, and overseers of the poor gradually ceased to be officials of a manorial lord, and gradually grew to be officials of the parish. Hence their accounts and reports were eventually buried also within the parish chest. Consequently under "Records Mainly Civil" will be found sections treating of vestry minutes, agreements, petty constables' accounts, records of poor law administration, records of

highway maintenance, of open-field agriculture, of enclosures, and miscellaneous records such as census lists, counsels' opinions, and Acts of Parliament. As in Part I, Mr. Tate's annotation upon each section is relevant and precise.

And as if what he had already done was not enough, Mr. Tate has added a glossary of those terms that one meets in parish records. This word-list is well worth the making. Examination of only two letters, "B" and "C" has yielded the following matter for the lexicographer: *Badgers*, "licensed beggars, later also pedlars or chapmen," first meaning not given by either the *Oxford Dictionary* or *English Dialect Dictionary*; *Catchpole acre*, "an acre or strip on a parish boundary, the tithe of which belonged to the first incumbent who arrived at the spot to collect it," not given in *O.D.* or *E.D.D.*; *Crock*, "(processional) cross," not given in *E.D.D.* given *O.D.* under *Croche*, sb. Further examination of the glossary might yield other examples of words unrecorded in *O.D.* or in dialectal word lists.

It would, perhaps, enable us better to evaluate Mr. Tate's labors, if we outlined his treatment of one particular class of records. Let us take (entirely at random) Section V of the first portion of the book, "Church Courts." The section opens with a brief and reasonably precise description of the powers of an ecclesiastical court, be it archepiscopal (provincial), episcopal (consistory), or the lowest court of all, that of the archdeacon; its cognizance of such matters as failure to pay tithe, incest or marriage within the prohibited degrees, non-observance of holy days or excommunication. And let it be noted that these lapses from grace are all "exemplified" by instances drawn from particular parish registers. It can be seen that Mr. Tate has covered much ground.

His travels over parochial documents, however, have not dimmed his spirits; nor crabbed penmanship and dust deadened his sense of humor. I must not steal his thunder, but the following should whet the appetite of a prospective reader. One is uncertain whether to believe that the parish clerk who wrote down after the burial entry of Richard Cosen, churchwarden, "a Foole" (p. 65), or he who labelled deceased John Potter as "the egnorant" (p. 65), was malevolent or strictly truthful. One can sympathise with rector of Keston, Kent, who thus chronicled the advent of the parliamentarians into the village: "1643 on the 23 of Aprill our church was defaced our font thrown down and new formes of prayer appointed." To a devout Anglican destruction of the Church fabric is less important than any alteration in the form of prayer.

It is saddening to know that in these days when English county and municipal records have begun to receive a good deal of overdue attention, "the parish itself . . . the ultimate unit of local government . . . and the one which has been for many centuries most intimately connected with the social and economic development of the country, often neither knows nor cares what records it possesses, and naturally enough, therefore, at any time . . . may cease to possess them."

These are melancholy words, and far from true of our own country, where tradition counts for less, and the absence of a state church does not make for regular supervision and uniformity of entry of baptisms, marriages, and

burials. Moreover, traditional and legal disparities were not the only differences between English and American churches; there were natural differences as well. The early stages of Christian activity, in the Middle West at least, were based upon the itinerant preacher whose congregation was as itinerant as their pastor. The "parish"—where a "parish" could be said to exist—was no static organization, but here today and gone tomorrow. And both in the Middle West and the East fire was a constant enemy of church records, for the American church was of wood where the English is of stone.

Yet, whatever the lacunae there may be in American archives, or whatever the shortcomings of their keepers, there is much that we archivists can and must do to preserve those that remain. Our Society has sanctioned and blessed the effort to preserve church archives, and thereby given us a standing that will assure attention when we speak disinterestedly and *pro bono publico*.

But we can and must do more than speak. Each one of us must constitute him or herself a committee of one to see to it that the particular church of which he is a member, and other churches of his community, take adequate care of their records. In such a crusade tact and courtesy will, of course, be necessary, but it should not be a hard task to persuade pastors and their flocks that their doings are important to historians.

If there be any doubt as to the importance of church registers, one instance will remove it. Today we are dependent upon the baptismal, marriage, and burial registers of Stratford for our knowledge of the year of William Shakespeare's birth and death, for the year of the marriage of his eldest daughter, and for the death years of his infant son, his father, mother, and two of his brothers.

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