

Reviews of Books

RICHARD G. WOOD, Editor

The National Archives

Archives, the Journal of the British Records Association, Vol. I, No. 1. (London. Lady Day, 1949. Pp. 61.)

Founded in 1932 to conserve and promote the archival resources of Great Britain, the British Records Association newly sponsors a magazine, *Archives*, which will appear twice yearly, at Lady Day and Michaelmas. The subscription rate per year to members is seven shillings sixpence; to non-members, ten shillings, which since the devaluation of the pound is \$1.91. The address of the Honorary Editor is Roger Ellis, Esq., 64 Seymour Street, London W1, but subscriptions may be remitted to the Honorary Treasurer of the Association, care of Hoare's Bank, 37 Fleet Street, London, EC4.

An editorial in the first issue outlines what is proposed: (1) to report the convocations of the Association; (2) to note its Council and Committee activities; (3) to record or condense significant conclusions; and (4) hereafter to set out or summarize publications which have hitherto only irregularly appeared. The Right Honorable the Master of the Rolls in a foreword expresses the belief that the new medium will aid British archives and British archival science to gain wider recognition.

In the lead article, Hilary Jenkinson of the Public Record Office recounts, with generous compliments to several individual Americans, the background of the International Council on Archives, an ideal of cooperation to which the distinguished Mr. Jenkinson has himself shown a longtime attachment. First in a series of articles promised on the treasureful local archives of Great Britain is an evaluation by Joyce Godber of the County Record Office at Bedford, an institution truly the lengthened shadow of one man, the late industrious and beloved George Herbert Fowler who, after retirement as a scientist in 1906, devoted to the records of Bedfordshire three full decades of fruitful interest. W. E. Tate has an article on the use of archives in education, delightfully observing that a teacher might not be straining the term too outrageously to regard the face of the countryside "not merely as an Archive but as a fascinating palimpsest, the unravelling of whose story involves the whole history of rural life in England for two thousand years and more."

John Dodd has an article on the archives of hospital contributory schemes, evidently voluntary health insurance systems, some of which tend to survive even in an environment of state medicine. In discussing briefly the subject of records and the National Coal Board, A. E. Horton conveys the impression that nationalization of the coal industry has outstripped any degree of certainty as to what documents worthy of preservation have come into the Board's keeping. In commenting on the publication of modern records, R. B. Pugh

mentions the relative — he did not say salutary — reluctance of British record-publishing societies to publish nineteenth century volumes, but concedes that the indiscriminate printing of all archives — some might prefer the term records — of that prolific century would leave everybody worse off than now or nearly so.

Eleven pages describe the Sixteenth Annual Meeting and Conference of the British Records Association, held last November at Stationers Hall in London. Another five and a half pages bring news of the National Register of Archives, the Institute of Historical Research, the School of Librarianship and Archives of University College, London, the Society of Local Archivists, the York Summer School of Archives and Historical Research, the Standing Conference on Local History, and Copying of Documents by Microfilm. Besides a book review of a single title, *Central African Archives in Retrospect and Prospect*, there is a two page section of brief notices of books and publications in Great Britain and elsewhere, mostly outside the United States.

This little magazine looks more like a magazine of poetry than a journal of scholarly thought and experience. With a page size of but $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ inches, a type face both graceful and clean, and a dash of carmine titling on its light grey cover, *Archives* steps forth in a cadence both dignified and alert. If oversocialization, a possible hazard, does not weigh down the pace, here travels a quality journal, reasoned, discriminating, and chivalrous.

To conclude, who knows how far a choice candle will throw its beams!

H. B. FANT

National Archives

A Guide to the Archives of the Central Record Office, N.W.-F. Province, by S. M. Jaffar. (Peshawar. Manager Government Printing and Stationery, North-West Frontier Province, 1948. Pp. viii, 50. Rs. 2-8-0.)

Problems of an Archivist, by S. M. Jaffar. (Peshawar. Manager Government Printing and Stationery, North-West Frontier Province, 1948. Pp. viii, 64. Rs. 2-8-0.)

Archives: Meaning, Scope and Importance, by S. M. Jaffar. (Peshawar. Manager Printing and Stationery, North-West Frontier Province, 1949. Pp. ii, 16.)

The Central Record Office of the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan was established in July, 1947 with the transfer of extant provincial records from New Delhi to Peshawar. During the first two years of its existence, Mr. Jaffar, Keeper of Government Records and Director of Historical Research, has prepared these three publications for the enlightenment of scholars and archival students. *A Guide to the Archives* is a narrative account of the provincial government records from 1849 to 1900, the period during which the Province was a part of the Division of Punjab. It is intended to serve only as a preliminary guide to the holdings of the Record Office, a more extensive work being promised for the future. Even this generalized account gives the impression of a wealth of untapped research materials relating to

Afgan and tribal affairs, Indian political and military history, and a wide variety of economic and sociological topics. Arranged by governmental unit, events or records of especial importance are noted at length. Little indication of volume of records from a given office or pertaining to a given subject is made. The guide does include a chart to show the range of time for each group of records.

Problems of an Archivist was prepared to serve as a textbook for trainees in archival science at the Central Record Office. Noting the novelty of the science of archives in the East, Mr. Jaffar has drawn upon Western experience in preparing his book, which apparently is the first of its nature to be published in Pakistan. Two problems are discussed, namely, preservation and organization. Under preservation he describes means and methods of cleaning, fumigation, repairing, accommodation, arrangement, and protection from "human pests." Under organization, stress is placed on listing, calendaring, and indexing of individual documents rather than the description of larger groups of records. Detailed instructions with ample illustrations are given, particularly in regards to indexing, including the listing of Moslem names for which no rules seem to apply in all cases.

In *Archives: Meaning, Scope and Importance*, Mr. Jaffar defines archives, indicating their scope and assessing their importance in order to show students of the social sciences the need to possess a good knowledge of them for the proper exposition and appreciation of history and related subjects.

HOMER L. CALKIN

National Archives

Newspapers on Microfilm: A Union Check List, compiled under the direction of George A. Schwegmann, Jr., by the Library of Congress National Union Catalog Division. (Philadelphia. Association of Research Libraries, 1949 [?]. Pp. iv, 176. \$2.00.)

This checklist, the preface states, "includes all entries of newspapers on microfilm which were reported to the National Union Catalog by libraries and other producers of microfilm." It thus fulfills part of the plan of the Committee on Library Cooperation (formerly known as the Committee on Interlibrary Cooperation in Microfilming Extensive Runs of Library Materials), which was created as a result of a memorandum addressed to the Executive Secretary of the Association of Research Libraries by the Librarian of Congress. This list is divided into three unequal sections: "Newspapers on Microfilm" (143 pages), which is devoted to papers published in the United States; "Foreign Newspapers on Microfilm" (32 pages), which contains entries concerning papers published outside the continental limits of the United States (American Samoa and Hawaii are included); and "Miscellaneous" (1 page). In the first section, the entries are grouped alphabetically by states; under each state, they are classified by town or city, and, under the place name, by title of the paper. In the second section, the arrangement is generally similar, the name of the country providing the basis of the breakdown. Australia,

Canada, England, and other members of the British Empire and Commonwealth of Nations are not grouped together, but each occupies its proper alphabetical place in the list of countries. So numerous are the entries under Canada that they are grouped by provinces. Many of the Canadian microfilms were made by and are in the custody of the Canadian Library Association and other Canadian organizations; these appear to be the only foreign-held microfilms listed. The entries under "Miscellaneous" are but ten in number. Four of the ten deal with the four serials covering debates in Congress since 1789 (of which only the *Congressional Record* had actually been microfilmed when the list was published), four concern editions of the *Stars and Stripes* published in different parts of the globe, one concerns Records of the City of Boston, Massachusetts, 1629-1914, and the tenth is headed "St. Petersburg, Vilna."

The value of this list to those desiring access to newspapers for research or seeking to accumulate research facilities is self-evident, and this value will increase if the list is frequently supplemented and occasionally revised throughout. Future editions should contain an extended preface or introduction so that users may learn without prolonged study exactly what they have in hand. There should be, for example, (1) a statement that, although the overwhelming majority of the entries concern newspapers, a considerable number of non-newspaper entries appear, *e. g.* the Records of the City of Boston, the *Congressional Record*, and a number of monthly magazines; (2) a statement that the list contains entries for some *proposed* microfilm projects; (3) an explanation of variations in fullness of entries; (4) a statement that there are no entries in the list concerning projects reported to the National Union Catalog after a specified date; and (5) a definition of the word "incomplete" as used in many of the entries, for this word has several meanings appropriate to its use in the list. The excellent "Key to Symbols" should be expanded to include explanations of the symbols (d), (w), (s-w), (tri-w), and (m), for the benefit of foreign users of the list. It may be asked in this connection, why some daily newspapers are marked (d) while others are left unmarked. Perhaps it would be well in the future to insert in each entry a line identifying the file or files of a newspaper from which the listed microcopy was made. As a finding medium for the list, an arrangement of entry titles (with places of publication shown) by accepted chronological periods would be welcomed by users. Not many outright errors have been detected in the list, although *Charles* is given as the capital city of West Virginia (p. 110a) and the time of publication is rendered obscure by the appearance of 1948 on the title page, whereas the preface is dated January 10, 1949.

The preceding suggestions concerning future editions should not conceal the essential fact that the present edition is generally well conceived and well executed. As a research tool the list is sure to justify itself; this reviewer has acquaintances who have already used his copy to good advantage. Certainly the publication of the list should, as Mr. Schwegmann says in his preface, "prove an incentive to all holders of newspapers on microfilm . . . to report the full record to the National Union Catalog." It would also be fortunate

if the appearance of this list should stimulate the compilation and publication, perhaps by the Society of American Archivists, of a similar union checklist of archival materials on microfilm.

PRESTON W. EDSALL

North Carolina State College

Archives Générales du Royaume. Inventaire des Archives de la Liquidation de l'ancienne Dette constituée et de l'arriéré des Pays-Bas, by Lucienne Van Meerbeeck, Archiviste-paléographe. (Bruxelles, Imprimerie George Mielie, Liege, 1948. Pp. 5-40.)

This brief inventory covers records of the Belgian public debt from the conquest of the former Austrian province by France to the end of the Dutch regime (1798-1830). The Netherlands turned the records over to Belgium in 1843; and in the 1850s they were deposited in the General Archives of the Kingdom for permanent preservation. As records of this type probably occupy in the minds of archivists a position similar to that of financial history in the minds of men in general, it seems in order to quote a passage from the late Professor Hazen regarding the importance of such history. He wrote:

Of all the kinds of history which are written in this world it is probable that the least interesting to the mass of men is financial history. It is complicated, it is often obscure, it is generally very dry. Nevertheless, in the long and varied annals of mankind it has frequently proved to be the very quintessence of the matter, the history that does the most to illuminate and explain a period. And this is so because, however indifferent or oblivious the average man may be to this plain, unvarnished truth, the ineluctable fact is that between the finances of the individuals who compose that state, between the financial policies of a country and the conditions of existence of the citizens of that country the interrelations are constant, varied, intimate, and decisive, however hidden from the superficial gaze.¹

Another plain, unvarnished truth is that financial history must be based on records, and the records accordingly merit serious attention.

Miss Van Meerbeeck has given these public debt records serious attention. Her introduction, a model of clarity and precision, supplies only those facts necessary for utilizing the inventory, which is divided into four parts as follows: (1) records of the perfects concerning liquidation, 1798-1808, (2) transactions of the General Liquidation Commissariat with France, 1816-1818, (3) records of the Liquidation Commission, created by the royal decree of March 17, 1816, 1816-1818, and (4) records of the General Liquidation Commission of The Hague, created by the royal decree of March 3, 1818, 1818-1830. The entries run consecutively throughout, from 1 to 683. Several appendixes listing miscellaneous groups of records carry the entries from 684 to 708.

Criticism of the inventory may be made. The number of entries is unnecessarily extended. For example, the entry "215-221" (figures in bold-faced type) on page 27 lists the correspondence of the Commission from November 28,

¹ Charles Downer Hazen, *The French Revolution* (New York, 1932), Vol. I, p. 106.

1825 to September 9, 1830. Entry 215 (figure in light-faced type) below lists correspondence from November 28, 1825 to December 19, 1826. Entry 216 lists correspondence from January (no day given) 1827 to May 8, 1827, and so on through Entry 221. As no additional information is given in the separate entries such as the number of dossiers involved or the amount of the records, it is difficult to see why the whole correspondence could not have been listed once and for all under one entry. The searcher who uses the inventory might well have preferred citations of particularly significant documents in the space devoted to the duplicate listing of chronological sections of the correspondence. Just above there is an even more striking illustration of duplicate listing. Here we find more than a page taken up with Entries 159 to 214, each of which merely lists "Dossiers" of reports and minutes for a certain period, although one entry would have sufficed. How many dossiers? how thick? Attention is called also to Miss Meerbeeck's use of dates in the abominable French Revolutionary calendar without giving at the same time the Gregorian equivalents that we all know or recognize. And she employs the abbreviation S. M. T. Ch. without ever spelling it out. The European is supposed to know, of course, that His Very Christian Majesty (Sa Majesté Très Chrétienne) is meant, just as we are expected to know our "alphabetical agencies." Yet we are also expected to write out the title of an agency in full when first referring to it.

Such strictures should not be construed as an effort to disparage the value of this excellent inventory. Students of Belgian financial and other history (not to mention Austrian, French, and Dutch history) in a period of great upheaval will certainly find it useful, and so will genealogists. Miss Van Meerbeeck points out in fact that the claims dossiers in the records of the Commission of The Hague constitute a mine of information on individuals. It is heartening to see this and so many other finding aids coming out of Belgium recently.

CARL L. LOKKE

The National Archives

Western Historical Manuscripts Collection Bulletin No. 5. (Columbia, Missouri, 1949. Pp. unpagged. Processed.)

This descriptive list of materials of the Western Historical Manuscripts Collection of the University of Missouri Library should provide an admirable tool for students of Western Americana and Missouri in particular. The list is alphabetically arranged and includes subjects, places and persons. Each entry consists of a brief description of the papers, letters or volumes, date or dates the material covers, its quantity and status, that is, original or copy. The compilers were obviously very painstaking in listing the number of folders and items in each group. I think, however, that some repetition could have been avoided by grouping the separate entries for books, papers and pictures of one collection under one heading. This is not done in the entry for "Had-

ley, Herbert Spencer (1872-1927)" nor in others involving large and varied collections.

The collection includes a number of Civil War letters and diaries; letters of settlers and pioneers; the records of many small businesses; papers of some prominent Missouri politicians, eight of them governors, according to the preface, and papers of several delegates to the Missouri Constitutional Convention of 1944; as well as those of "lawyers, politicians, public officials, ministers, farmers, educators, physicians and business men."

This type of publication is extremely useful to researchers when it is as carefully done as this one, which is a very reliable piece of work. Perhaps as their collection grows the University of Missouri will find means to print and bind its library bulletins, since mimeographed, paper-backed lists do not stand wear and tear well.

JEAN R. McNIECE

New York Public Library

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