

Reviews of Books

RICHARD G. WOOD, *Editor*

National Archives

Unpublished Bibliographical Tools in Certain Archives and Libraries of Europe; a Partial List, compiled by Lester K. Born. (Washington, D. C., Library of Congress, 1952. Pp. vi, 25. Processed. 25c.)

This list contributes toward filling a serious gap in the postwar tools of scholarship, as there has been no effective way of knowing what European archivists and librarians are doing to guide researchers to their holdings. At the same time it shows the false economy of budgetary cuts that necessitate stopping partially completed cultural programs. The work could have been even more useful had Dr. Born been able to visit all the countries on his agenda. His foreword suggests that the program be carried on by the holding institutions' microfilming of their finding aids. This list may stimulate such activity.

The list presents a representative sampling, in diverse subject fields, of unpublished guides, catalogs, indexes, and other bibliographical tools. The entries, arranged by country, identify the finding aids as to type; tell the quantity of registers, cards, or other units; and present cryptic comments on the completeness or usefulness of most. There are more than 300 entries representing 100 archives and libraries. Most of these institutions were visited by Dr. Born while he was in Europe as special assistant on the microfilm program for the Library of Congress. The Library may be thanked for making available such information as has been compiled.

PHILIP C. BROOKS

Federal Records Center
San Francisco, California

Guide to the Western Historical Manuscripts Collection. Western Historical Manuscripts Collection Bulletin No. 6. University of Missouri Bulletin. Library Series No. 22. (Columbia, Missouri, 1952. Pp. 125.)

This guide to the Western Historical Manuscripts Collection at the University of Missouri is a revised and amplified edition of a publication which appeared in July 1949 and was reviewed in the *American Archivist* for January 1950. Since the appearance of the first *Guide*, numerous important collections have been acquired and the work of processing these and other papers has advanced; the present descriptive listing thus represents considerably more than an editorial revision. Entries have been rewritten, standardized for style, and in some cases considerably expanded. The appearance of the *Guide*, now printed as a University of Missouri *Bulletin*, is attractive.

The previous alphabetical listing is continued but each entry is numbered. Each group of papers is described as to source, quantity, inclusive dates, and

the persons, places, and subjects covered. Some entries include biographical sketches of considerable length; this material is very helpful to researchers, and I regret only that dates of birth and death are omitted — they were consistently included in the preliminary *Guide* and are too useful to abandon.

A good index has been added; perhaps since it lists "governors" and "poets, papers of," it might have included also "Senators" and "Representatives."

Missouri's men in public life are very well represented in the Western Historical Manuscripts Collection; it includes the papers of members of three constitutional conventions, nine governors, and several United States Senators and Representatives. Acquired since 1949 are the "Harry S. Truman Senatorial and Vice Presidential Papers, 1935-45. 36 boxes." These are on deposit and are not yet cataloged or open to researchers.

MARGUERITE J. PEASE

University of Illinois

The John Gray Blount Papers, Volume I, 1764-1789, edited by Alice Barnwell Keith (Raleigh, State Department of Archives and History, 1952. Pp. xlv, 572.)

In the reviewer's opinion publication is a most important part of an archival agency's program. It is his further opinion that, once essential finding aids have been issued, documentary publication should be emphasized. Orchids, therefore, to the North Carolina State Department of Archives and History, which through the years has made available to historical scholarship so many printed volumes of source material.

The latest volume to appear is one reproducing 520 selections, the greater part of which is from the approximately 10,000 documents in the John Gray Blount collection on permanent deposit in the department. Only 34 of the selections antedate 1783; the rest are well apportioned among the remaining years of the decade. A 3-page "Foreword" describes the collection, editorial practices, and assistance received. A 19-page essay on "Jacob Blount's Family" is supported by 159 footnotes. A "Chronological List of Papers" covers 13 pages. The selections are spread over 563 well-printed pages. Sixteen illustrations include 5 maps, most of which are on scales too small to be useful. The 8-page index is inadequate, even for personal and place names.

John Gray, Thomas, and William Blount were brothers whose closely intertwined economic activities made them outstanding in the 1780's. At Washington, N. C., was located their chief store; others were located in the vicinity. So extensive was their carriage of produce to northern and West Indian ports that they owned and operated a number of vessels. During 1785-88 Thomas was abroad, largely in the endeavor to open English markets to their produce. Trading was not their only avenue to wealth. As land speculators they operated on a grand scale, particularly in the Tennessee country. As manufacturers they set up a sawmill, tannery, and nailery. Their energies spilled over into politics. Outstanding in this regard was William, who served variously in the State legislature, the Continental Congress, and the Constitu-

tional Convention at Philadelphia in 1787. The brothers' activities were not always of acquisitive character; they gave freely of time and money, for example, to the cause of education.

On all of the activities mentioned the published papers shed considerable light. They will be of interest, likewise, to students of such assorted topics as slavery, postal service, finance, funeral customs, transportation, Indian affairs, gambling, agriculture, and disease. Volume 1 is indeed so rich in content that it is to be hoped that other volumes, presently unannounced, are soon to appear.

W. NEIL FRANKLIN

The National Archives

Washington's Official Map of Yorktown. (National Archives, *Facsimiles*, No. 21. Washington, D. C., United States Government Printing Office, 1952. Pp. 5. Map. 75 cents.)

Washington's Inaugural Address of 1789. (National Archives, *Facsimiles*, No. 22. Washington, D. C., United States Government Printing Office, 1952. Pp. 14. 75 cents.)

Though primarily tourist keepsakes, and handsome ones, the National Archives facsimiles are not without value to the archivist. Of the two most recent, the Washington first inaugural is reproduced in good facsimile from the reading copy in the Senate archives, which was used by Fitzpatrick in the bicentennial edition of Washington's writings. It thus offers an opportunity for the curious to make a sample appraisal of the bicentennial transcription. The anonymous editor of the facsimile calls attention to the existence of a draft copy of the same inaugural, which, judging from his notes and Fitzpatrick's silence, remains uncollated with this reading copy.

The Yorktown map is of somewhat more interest to the archivist in that it offers a nice object lesson in the principle of *respect pour les fonds*. The map is neither the earliest, the most complete, nor the prettiest of the contemporary manuscript maps of the siege of Yorktown. The French, being somewhat older at the archives business than their American cousins, can produce a score of such maps. The National Archives of the United States, a teen-ager, now produces one that has been lost for a century and a half. Its importance hinges on its identification as the map once enclosed in a Washington letter. The brief presented for this identification is convincing, but by no means as airtight as a casual reading of the commentary might lead one to suppose. And, if the identification is in fact correct, as we suppose it to be, then the importance of the map is only sentimental, since Washington's enclosure was apparently an incompleting copy, with a translated legend, of one of the French maps in the Archives des Cartes of the French Ministère de la Guerre, a fact not brought out by the commentator, though he probably suspected it from his examination of the Rochambeau maps in the Library of Congress.

In neither of these facsimiles is there any report on the watermarks or wire and chain lines of the paper, a serious defect to the scholar, though it will certainly not be noticed by the average purchaser of these beautiful folders,

which are a credit to the skill and taste of both the National Archives and the Government Printing Office.

JOHN COOK WYLLIE

University of Virginia

Records Management for the State of California, Second Partial Report of Assembly Interim Committee on Governmental Reorganization, H. R. 203 — 1951. ([Sacramento, The Committee?], 1952. Pp. 24.)

This report, one of several on proposed reorganization of the State government of California, represents a significant step forward in the field of records management and one that will undoubtedly be followed by other States. The subcommittee responsible for submission of the report accepted the recommendations of its advisory group, which included records experts from private industry and the Federal Government as well as representatives of the State government. The report reviews briefly and in factual style the records situation in the State and points out how the growth of government has resulted in a continuously increasing volume of records with attendant problems of maintenance, servicing, and disposition of records. The committee's conclusions are summarized by the statement that "too many records are being created, too many records are being kept, too many records are housed expensively, and too many records are kept inefficiently."

The committee's recommendations center around the establishment of a records management organization much like that of the Federal Government to develop, coordinate, and supervise all of the State's records activities. Attached to the report is a proposed California records act which is patterned after the Federal Disposal Act of 1943 and the Federal Records Act of 1950. The position of Archivist is placed by the proposed act under the director of general services. The director, with the assistance of a State Records Council, is made responsible for the administration of the archives of the State and the records management program of the State agencies, with authority similar to that of the Administrator of General Services over records of Federal agencies. Disposal of records, which in the Federal Government cannot be effected without Congressional authority, is permitted upon the approval of the director of general services, the head of the agency concerned, the attorney general, and the director of finance. Disposal of county and city records cannot be made without the consent of the director of general services.

In its findings and recommendations the committee recognizes the real need for improved control of records from their creation, with particular reference to the elimination of unnecessary duplication and the simplification of methods of handling and filing papers. It proposes, however, that first attention be given to the areas where the largest immediate savings can be made, i.e., those of records retirement, storage, and disposition. It makes specific suggestions for the inventorying and scheduling of records, the removal of inactive records to records centers, and the disposal of those of no further value. The committee leaves to its proposed Department of General Services the task of studying the problems of record making and record keeping and making recommen-

datations for improvements in correspondence management, forms and reports control, paper-work procedures, and mail and file operations. Until such studies are made no records management plan can be considered effective or lasting.

It is to be hoped that one recommendation will receive careful consideration. This is that current records be filed in such a way as to facilitate the disposing of those of temporary value when their usefulness is at an end without having to weed them laboriously from the more valuable papers. This is one of the real deficiencies in modern records; research in them is greatly hampered by the inclusion in large subject or decimal files of all sorts of trivia and many duplicates, among which are buried the much smaller number of significant papers.

ELIZABETH B. DREWRY

*Records Management Division
National Archives and Records Service*

Catalogue of the Library of Thomas Jefferson, Vol. I, compiled by E. Millicent Sowerby. (Washington, Library of Congress, Government Printing Office, 1952. Pp. xv, 562. Illustrations. \$5.00.)

This is the first of five volumes publishing the catalog of the library of Thomas Jefferson, which was purchased by an act of Congress in 1815 and became the nucleus of the present Library of Congress. The work is based on the catalog prepared by George Watterson, the Librarian of Congress, in 1815, and on Jefferson's own catalog of his library. In cataloging his books, Jefferson used the Baconian system of classification, listing them under the broad headings of history, philosophy, and fine arts, according to the three faculties of the mind required for their study — memory, reason, and imagination.

By opening the door to Jefferson's library the present compilation provides a unique and thoroughly objective approach to the fascinating problem of Jefferson's intellectual interests and attitudes. The inclusion of judiciously selected passages from Jefferson's writings indirectly gives an interpretative turn to the work and adds to its interest and value. Jefferson was generally so clear and consistent in his views that comment on them is really superfluous. His essentially practical outlook, for instance, is quite apparent in the following statements concerning scientific effort. "Medecine has never before produced any single improvement of such utility," Jefferson wrote to Dr. Jenner in 1806. "Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood was a beautiful addition to our knowledge of the animal economy. but on a review of the practice of medecine before & since that epoch, I do not see any great amelioration which has been derived from that discovery." (pp. 432-33.) To Professor Emmet, Jefferson wrote 20 years later: "To learn . . . the ordinary arrangement of the different strata of minerals in the earth, to know from their habitual collocations and proximities, where we find one mineral, whether another . . . may be expected to be in it's neighborhood, is useful. but the dreams about the modes of creation, enquiries whether our globe has been

formed by the agency of fire or water . . . is too idle to be worth a single hour of any man's life." (p. 496.)

Although Jefferson's library reveals remarkable catholicity on the part of its collector, as a critic Jefferson had his limitations. He considered Tacitus "the first writer in the world without single exception" and Ossian "the greatest poet that has ever existed." Although Jefferson expected objectivity from the historian and criticized Hume and Marshall for lacking this quality, as a reader he was not free from partisanship.

The number of books given or dedicated to Jefferson by their authors or translators attest his wide reputation as a versatile scholar and bibliophile. Not only did he encourage writing and publication, but he also circulated his own books freely among his friends. Most of his library was of European imprint and purchase, with the exception of the extensive files of American newspapers.

Unfortunately, only about a third of what once was the finest library in America remains. Recently, however, painstaking search and happy accident have located a few of the missing volumes, which have now joined the others in the Jefferson collection gathered in the Rare Books Division of the Library of Congress.

ELIZABETH COMETTI

Marshall College

A Catalogue of the Manuscript Holdings at the Oneida Historical Society at Utica, New York, by Glenn E. Thompson, Curator of Historical Collections and Francis W. Cunningham, Assistant Curator of Historical Collections, Volume 1, Number 1, June 1, 1952. Prepared under the sponsorship of the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute at Utica, New York. (Utica, N. Y., Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, 1952. Pp. iii, 63. Processed.)

This catalog describes 152 collections varying in size from the Alfred Conkling papers of 4 pieces to the Uticana collections of 2,701 pieces and 20 volumes. Each collection is dated and described in general terms. Principal names, dates, geographical references, and topics covered in the holdings are noted and indexed. Inevitably, the collections are of uneven quality and the great majority are of local interest. This catalog is valuable because of the scattered nature of the holdings and will be useful to scholars working in larger manuscript depositories, who may find a few additional items by consulting it. Generally speaking the holdings of the society are of the nineteenth century, but some documents date from the eighteenth.

Two illustrations of collections of wider interest are: "California History Sketches. 4 vol., 285 pp. 1846-1869" and "James Watson Papers. 1,475 pieces. 2 vol., 885 pp. 1750-1886." The entry for the latter states: "Most of these papers deal with James Watson's commission merchant activities in New York City, 1780-1806 and some deal with Federalist politics in New York State."

A dozen of the collections will be of particular use to the scholar interested

in land division, grants, and sales in colonial New York and in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century New York State.

Sources on the history of communications are to be found in the Erie Canal collection, the Northern Plank Road Company papers, and the material described as New York State newspapers-publishers' correspondence, which bears on "the formation of the Associated Press for Telegraphic Dispatches in 1846 and letters to Alexander Seward of Utica relative to the free delivery of newspapers outside of the mails in 1847."

For the local historian of Utica the two Uticana collections must be the most valuable described. Indeed, they would well justify a more extensive catalog than the two pages given to them in this work. The Oneida Historical Society is to be congratulated on its decision to draw attention to the wider values of its collections first.

Altogether the publication is a distinct credit to the society which has brought it out. The contribution becomes all the more noteworthy when it is realized that the Oneida Historical Society is privately owned and operated. It has a membership of about 300 persons and an operating budget of about \$12,500.

JAMES J. TALMAN

University of Western Ontario, Canada

Privatarkiver fra Tidsrummet 1660-1800 i Rigsarkivet, by Henny Glarbo.

Vejledende Arkivregistraturer IX, Udgivet af Rigsarkivet. (Copenhagen. Ejnar Munksgaards Forlag, 1952. Pp. x, 209.)

This is the third in a series of guides to private archival papers in the Danish State Archives. It covers the period from about 1660 to 1800, beginning with the establishment of the absolute monarchy in Denmark. It records papers of both the prominent and the not-so-prominent figures of these years.

The entries are arranged alphabetically by name for each of the persons whose collections of private papers are treated. There is a methodical listing of the letters and other items in each collection, including names, dates, and occasionally a brief indication of the subject matter. The guide ends with an elaborate index (pp. 131-209), which carries each name noted under each entry in the text. A strong Germanic flavor among the names bears witness to the considerable immigration into Denmark from the North German principalities, which characterized this period. A few names relate to the former Danish West Indies, notably that of Ulrich Wilhelm Roepstorff, who was governor-general when Alexander Hamilton's celebrated hurricane lashed the island of St. Croix.

Despite a phalanx of names that almost overwhelms the reader, these tightly-packed pages should have a solid appeal and be of real value to the historian, the genealogist, and the archivist. This guide certainly will be of much help to all researchers who wish to tap the resources of these papers. The industry of the compiler, Miss Henny Glarbo, is amazing; for the listing and verification of names and dates must have been an almost endless task. Although one can have only the greatest admiration for this painstaking work, it may be

doubted if other archivists, particularly in the larger organizations, can spare the time or the energy for such an ambitious project.

HAROLD LARSON

Historical Liaison Office, Air University

Archives générales du Royaume, *Inventaire des archives de la jointe des terres contestées*, par E. Hélin. (Bruxelles. Archives generales du Royaume, 1952. Pp. xiv, 66.)

In 1740, the Archduchess Maria Elisabeth of Hapsburg, governor of the Austrian Netherlands, established a commission to handle territorial disputes. This commission consisted at first of three members of the Privy Council, but others were added from time to time. It continued to function during the reigns of the Empress Maria Theresa and her son Joseph II. In 1794 the functions seem to have been taken over by the Imperial Government in Vienna.

The commission dealt with a great variety of land disputes, from minor feudal quarrels to the enormously complicated cessions which resulted from treaties. In the archives of the commission are to be found the rules and pronouncements governing the procedure and activities of the commission, both in general and in its consideration of specific cases, and the papers collected as exhibits or for study of the disputes brought before the commission.

Several inventories were made during the eighteenth century, none of them adequate. It is fortunate, however, that they have survived, for otherwise there would be no record of the complete collection of the early period, which has suffered from migrations. In 1794 the documents were moved to Vienna; in 1809 they were taken to Paris; in 1815 the Austrian Government ceded them to the "Government of the Low Countries"; in 1820, a fire in the house next to the *Chambre des Comptes* in the Hague, where they were housed, frightened their custodians into throwing them out of the window, and some were scorched and some lost. Between 1867 and 1871 they finally came under the control of the Belgian Government, which succeeded also in getting by exchange from Vienna a few items of the collection that for some reason had not previously been sent on.

In the early nineteenth century another attempt was made to inventory and classify the collection, but it was based only on the early inventories and not on the documents themselves. Its principal value lay in the fact that it tabulated losses.

The present volume is the work of three *archivistes-stagiaires* in the Belgian National Archives. It began as a series of exercises under the direction of the Archivist Joseph Lefèvre. The compilers have done an excellent job of classification and analysis, and the book should be very easy to use. It will be helpful to the student of diplomatic history, to the local historian who has dealings with regions falling into this category, and to those working in some aspects of legal or economic history. The table of contents makes the

classifications obvious at a glance, and the excellent index of proper names includes geographical data which greatly assist the searcher.

DOROTHY MACKAY QUINN

Frederick, Maryland

Report on the Progress of Work Done at the Punjab Government Record Office, During the Year 1950. (Simla, Punjab, Controller of Printing and Stationery, 1952. Pp. ii, 10. Rs 160.)

This report summarizes the work of the Punjab Record Office for the year 1950. Information is furnished under such headings as administration, acquisition of historical material, reference library, historical museum, archivist treatment of materials, work of research and publication, and survey and publicity work. A resumé of action taken on the recommendations of the Indian Historical Records Commission and Research and Publication Committee and an appendix presenting much of the information in statistical form are also included.

Of special interest is the addition of two posts of *munshies* or scribes to the general staff for deciphering and copying newly discovered manuscripts; the acquisition of rare and valuable record materials pertaining to the Punjab and northern India from both public and private sources; the repair of several series of records such as the Khalsa Durbar; the examination and preliminary analysis of over 21,000 vernacular case files relating to Panipat, Thanesar, Gurgaon, and Simla districts; and the preparation of brief descriptive catalogs of about 200 Persian, Arabic, and Urdu manuscripts.

Despite this general progress, the Keeper of Records expresses the need for an increase in appropriations, for an increase in personnel, and for more space.

ROLAND C. McCONNELL

*Morgan State College
Baltimore, Maryland*