

# Reviews of Books

RICHARD G. WOOD, *Editor*

*National Archives*

National Archives. *List of National Archives Microfilm Publications, 1953.* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1953. Pp. vi, 98.)

This booklet, with a frontispiece of a letter of Aaron Burr, an informative introduction, and an index contains a complete and indispensable list of the microfilm publications of the records of the United States Government that have been made available to the public from the beginning of the program in 1940 through June 30, 1953. It supersedes the *List of File Microcopies of the National Archives, 1950.*

The list of publications is arranged under the following heads: Congress (Territorial Papers, 1789-1873); Judiciary (Records of the U. S. Supreme Court: Revolutionary War Prize Cases, 1776-87); Departments of State, Treasury, War, Justice, Navy, Interior, Agriculture, and Commerce; Other United States Government Agencies (Records of the Veterans' Administration, of predecessors of the War Production Board, and Office of Price Administration); Miscellaneous (Records of Former Russian Agencies: Russian-American Company, 1802-67; War Department Collection of Confederate Records; and General Records of the United States Government: the Federal Register, 1936-52). The records of each of the eight main executive departments are divided into numbered record-groups, the "general records" of a department always listed first, followed by those of special categories. Each record group and subdivision thereof is preceded by a brief statement pertaining to the sources, and each roll of microfilm is numbered and given a title, together with the dates of the period covered and the cost of the roll.

More than 4,600 rolls of microfilm, containing more than 3,000,000 pages of documents, have been published; and the program continues actively. Of this total publication the Department of State claims approximately 1,900 rolls; Navy, 900; Interior, 750; Treasury, War, and Commerce, between 200 and 300 rolls each; and Agriculture and Justice, 16 and 17 rolls respectively. The valuable sources already published will serve as a basis for research in American, European, Far Eastern, and Latin American history, and in economics, public administration, political science, law, and ethnology. Almost complete coverage is also given to relations between the United States and Japan, China, Korea, Russia, Turkey, Italy, Argentina, and Brazil from the late eighteenth century to 1906. In selecting the records for publication the National Archives has attempted to provide reasonably complete documentation by including groups of records that are directly related to one another.

The booklet contains about everything that can be expected in a guide of

this type. It would have been helpful to include in the introduction a glossary of the abbreviations and a list of the guides to materials in the National Archives.

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*Records Disposition by the Office of Plant and Operations, U. S. Department of Agriculture.* (Washington, the Department, 1953. Pp. iii, 51; vari-ously paginated; appendix. Processed.)

This is an exemplary manual in several respects. It is primarily a restatement of policies and principles to guide bureaus and offices of the Agriculture Department in their records disposition activities, expressed within the context of the regulations of the General Services Administration. But more important for immediate application is the inclusion in this manual of the general records schedules. These schedules (16 have now been issued by GSA) set retention standards for a wide variety of records common to several or all agencies. Wherever possible the schedule item descriptions are couched in fairly general terms, usually based on the function performed by the records rather than the component individual pieces of paper. The method of schedule promulgation is the responsibility of the individual agency.

The Agriculture Department has promulgated the general records schedules here in ideal fashion. Little change has been made in the text of the schedules themselves. Excellent cross indexes have been provided, consisting of lists of Agriculture Department forms, standard Government forms, and subject-matter file titles, all indicating which item in the schedules covers each form or file. In this way the schedules may be conveniently applied by bureau records officers on a form-by-form basis if necessary, although the items themselves are described otherwise.

Data on the content and procedures of the Department's records disposition programs provide current information as to the objectives of a typical agency program within the framework of existing legislation and the more recent thinking in the records management field. The standards set forth are expected to effect the most profitable programs at the least expenditure of time, money, and effort. Consonant with this policy, the manual prescribes maximum use of the Federal Records Centers. Altogether, this manual of an agency that was one of the records management pioneers of the Federal Government deserves emulation.

ISADORE PERLMAN

*National Archives and Records Service*

*Annual Report of the Librarian of Congress for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 1953.* (Washington, Library of Congress, 1954. Pp. 193.)

I am always reimpressed each time I read the annual accounting of the affairs at the Library of Congress by the complexity and the far-flung operations of this great cultural and scholarly institution. The organization chart of the Library, which appears opposite page 94 in the volume under review,

while representing a large operation, is concise, logical, and readily grasped. Not so, however, if we infuse this chart with the blood, brain, and sinew of the some 2,400 people who work in the Library and the \$12,000,000 required annually for its increase and operation. When we view, or attempt to view the Library in all its widely varied detail, the hundreds of miles of shelves, the batteries of filing cases and cabinets, the international ramifications of its work and planning, the numerous projects, active and in planning stage, in support of scholarly work, the extensive services to Congress, the scholarly production of the Library and its accompanying publication, the continuing struggle to organize and house the tremendous annual inflow of some 4,000,000 pieces of material written in most of the languages of the world, then the managerial aspects of keeping the whole operation in balance and functioning smoothly become, not clean and clear, like the organization chart, but tremendously complex, and for this reviewer, breath-taking.

Of all the components essential to the operation of the Library, brains are, and must be, uppermost. It takes intelligence and mental capacity of a high order — and some courage — to manage, understand, develop, and make readily available for use this great assemblage of the human cultural heritage. The Library necessarily stands or falls with the caliber of the people at the controls and on the pumps. It is the good fortune of the United States, and of the Western World, that the entire institution has been and is so well manned.

It is appropriate that this report, which coincides almost exactly, in its closing date, with the termination of Luther Evans' 8-year period as Librarian, should review the contributions of this third Librarian of the present century. The record is clear and good. It reveals an imaginative, forward-looking, indefatigable, and dedicated administration of the Library. It shows awareness, both by act and implication, of the fundamental oneness of the scholarly world, in an international no less than a national sense, and demonstrates the leadership essential to giving that oneness effective reality. It is understandable that this brief summary of the 8 years, prepared by those who worked with Mr. Evans, should assign almost too much personal credit to him.

In more than doubling appropriations, during his term of service, in clarifying the function and scope of the Library, in projecting it and its services into the cultural affairs of the entire world, in increasing its cultural stature, in democratizing its operations, in these and other ways Luther Evans served brilliantly and well. However, such sentences as, in regard to budgeting adjustment, "Dr. Evans necessarily cut many corners . . ." and, in reference to acquisitions, that the deluge "obviously created problems for Dr. Evans," seem to ascribe too much too directly to one man. The cutting of corners permeated, of course, throughout the organization and could be done effectively only in proportion to the ability and ingenuity of the persons living directly and immediately with the problems and results of that cutting. Similarly the problems created by the deluge of materials were undoubtedly more real and urgent to the people on the firing line than to Mr. Evans; and their solution, in considerable part at least, must have come up from below, not

down from above. It is inevitable from Mr. Evans' democratic administration of the Library, including such things as the Librarian's conference, the staff advisory committee, the staff discussion groups, the staff forums, the staff luncheons, and the *Information Bulletin*, that this should have been so. Mr. Evans would be the first to admit that the vision, as well as the problems, were not his alone. It is because of wise and democratic administration that the Library has operated so well, with such high morale, and, for the year under review, with an amazing complete absence of staff grievance appeals.

It is pleasant to note the evidences of efficient management this report records. Within the year a reduction of 35% in letters dictated in the acquisition program, a decrease of 62% in individual purchase orders for a continuing volume of purchases, a reduction of the time required for marking catalog cards for linotype operators from one and one-half hours per day to a half hour; the institution of Keysort first letter alphabetizing of cards (thereby increasing this alphabetizing from the 800 cards per hour by manual methods to 12,000 per hour) — these are things that every administrator must admire and applaud. They are things too which undoubtedly have their genesis in the pressures of the tremendous organizational problems facing the Library.

In the final analysis it is the use of the Library and its scholarly and research activities that count and in these areas too the 8 years of Mr. Evans' administration, including more specifically the one immediately under review, reflect outstanding achievement. The Legislative Reference Division, which now handles well over 50,000 inquiries per year, reached a high, in March 1953, of 6,550 inquiries — as many as would have constituted an entire year's work in the immediate prewar period. It also, to this reviewer's considerable surprise, prepared drafts or outlines of from 50 to 60 speeches per month.

In services to scholarship the Library has carried on or envisioned such seminal activities, in the 8 years, as publication of the Public Catalog, including within the present year sending off one and one-half tons of copy for the 24-volume quinquennial cumulation. Plans have also been considered for making this catalog a national catalog through showing holdings of other libraries. The great national Union Catalog has been maintained and its usefulness increased, an American imprints inventory has been carried forward, a microfilm clearinghouse has been operated, a Cyrillic subject union catalog has been further developed, and a plan for precataloging new books to permit printing of the L.C. card number in each book has been placed in operation. Numerous other similar projects and enterprises have been carried out. Important in the scholarly achievement of the Library has been its extensive publication of bibliographies and other works. Among its contributions of this kind have been the *Handbook of Latin American Studies* and the series in American civilization. One publication, the *Catalogue of the Library of Thomas Jefferson* by E. Millicent Sowerby, has been characterized by a reviewer as "a monument to the thoroughness and insight of American scholarship."

In areas of particular interest to archivists the Library has made long and

eminently satisfactory forward strides. It "quite unabashedly asks for bodies of personal papers and other collections" as opportunity offers. It is partly as a result of this aggressive receptiveness that the Library has in recent years acquired the papers and letters of Owen Wister, Cordell Hull, Frederick Law Olmstead, Josephus Daniels, Harvey W. Wiley, Gutzon Borglum, Harold L. Ickes, Gen. John J. Pershing, Calvin Coolidge, Charles Evans Hughes, and William Howard Taft. Important primary records of the evolution of aeronautics from uncertain infant to world-dominating giant have also been acquired. Many of the facts of this phenomenal growth are documented in the papers of Octave Chanute, Orville and Wilbur Wright, Carl Spaatz, the controversial "Billy" Mitchell, Frank Andrews, Hugh Knerr, and "Hap" Arnold, all of which are in the Library. Within the year there has been added to these holdings the papers of Ira C. Eaker, covering his rich and productive 30-year career in the United States Air Force. Manuscript letters and first editions of Hans Christian Andersen have been presented by Mr. and Mrs. Jean Hersholt. The music manuscripts of George Gershwin, Deems Taylor, and John Philip Sousa have also been acquired.

A far-seeing program of microfilming manuscripts owned elsewhere, some inaccessible for ages, has been advanced. Documents of the early Christian era now in the St. Catherine's Monastery on Mt. Sinai and of the Greek Orthodox and the Armenian Patriarchate Libraries of Jerusalem have been filmed.

The entire manuscript program has taken on added impetus through improved managerial processes. All archivists will applaud the achievements of the Manuscript Division which, during the year under review, was able to organize 857,000 manuscript items, or twice as many as it received. In direct service the Division supplied 51,082 units to 869 readers, approximately 65% of whom were engaged in research on some historical period. How these improvements came about has been told in part in Katherine Brand's article, "Developments in the Handling of Recent Manuscripts in the Library of Congress," published in the April 1953 issue of the *American Archivist*.

For this reviewer Luther Evans' relatively brief tenure as Librarian of Congress will always be characterized by his cultural statesmanship. He has spoken boldly and with dignity on freedom of the human mind and spirit. He has been quick to see and ready to grasp, when and as funds have permitted, all opportunities to make the great resources of the Library greater and more useful. This he has done whether the opportunities were found in our own country or elsewhere in the world. Through readiness to assume both responsibility and leadership, as exemplified by the Evans administration, the Library of Congress has grown, in stature and services, to one of the greatest cultural and scholarly institutions of the world. To this growth Mr. Evans has imparted the human touch of all great statesmanship. The return of the Columbus letter of December 28, 1504, to the Real Academia de la Historia in Madrid and the presentation of Lewis Carroll's manuscript of *Alice in Wonderland* to the British Museum are actions in which all Americans of good will take satisfaction.

In his acceptance of responsibility, within or even beyond established capacity, and in his broad international outlook, Luther Evans has been one of the hardest working librarians of our generation. Certainly, in logging up, on numerous missions, national and international, what must have been well over 100,000 miles, he has become the most travelled librarian of all time. The following lines of Robert Frost, quoted in the report only as an illustration of the program of voice recording poetry, point up for Mr. Evans, in a personal sense, his eight years:

For I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.

WILLIAM H. CARLSON

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*Classified Finding List of the Collections of the Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society.* (Detroit, Wayne University Press, 1952. Pp. 265. Processed.)

This guide to the 40 volumes of the *Michigan Historical Collections*, 1877-1929, has been compiled because, as stated in its preface, "It is difficult or at least tedious . . . to find a list of a man's personal papers, official documents on particular subjects, or reminiscences of a certain period" by using the index volumes of that set. The work was begun in 1939 as a WPA project, with Wayne University as sponsor. Lack of funds caused a delay in the work, and in 1940 the project was transferred to the Michigan Historical Records Survey. Publication has now been made possible by the concerted efforts of the Wayne University Press, the Historical Society of Michigan, the Detroit Historical Society, and Mr. Leonard Simons of Detroit.

The finding list has been divided into three chronological parts: 1600-1796, 1796-1861, and 1861-1926. Each chronological division has been further subdivided into topical sections as follows: official papers; personal papers; reminiscences; special studies; maps, portraits, illustrations and miscellaneous; and biographical sketches and genealogies. At the end is one final section titled Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society.

In the sections on official papers the indexing is done for rather broad subjects such as American colonies, census, Indians, military affairs, and the like, and the volume and page numbers cited are explained briefly by a word or phrase. In the sections on personal papers the entries under the personal names are grouped under "letters from" and "letters to."

The actual use of the finding list is rendered definitely difficult by the multiplicity of divisions and subdivisions. It is annoying to find a 265-page index divided into 19 short parts, even though in theory the divisions are obviously logical. By eliminating the three period divisions, the number of sections could have been reduced to six, with one added for the Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society. Choices of entry within the chronological divisions are sometimes puzzling. John Monteith is listed in the 1600-1796 "Biographical Sketches and Genealogies" but also in the 1796-1861 "Personal Papers," and

again in "Reminiscences" for the later period. Since the 19 sections have been used, the absence of running titles is a serious omission.

This is one of that vast number of publications which came out of the WPA project and doubtless would not have been undertaken without that initiative. All of them have their value, their limitations, and their deficiencies, and to waive the usual standards in judging them is not to damn them. They were all produced over long periods of time under adverse circumstances. That this one should be made available is unquestioned, for it gives us helpful information which should not be lost. It has been reproduced cheaply, sensibly, even handsomely, from clear, legible typescript. The specialist in local history can fully appreciate this type of indexing which is based on several points of view and arranged by form of material rather than subject matter, and it is for the local history specialist that this work was done. He will use it profitably, but only as a supplement to the existing indexes, as was intended.

DOROTHY KING

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*Teki Archiwalne I*, edited by Adam Stebelski. (Warszawa, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1953. Pp. 147.)

This is the first of a series of small publications designed to make available to Polish scholars archival documentary sources "which may adequately meet the needs of the new historiography of the people's state." Originating with the first congress of Polish scholars held after the Second World War, the idea was put into effect in 1951 by the Supreme Board of State Archives with the collaboration of various archivists and historians.

*The Archival Portfolio*, as the publication is titled, reproduces some 20 selections which come from the Main Archives of Old Documents in Warsaw (AGAD). Three of the selections belong to the seventeenth century, the earliest dating from 1635, while the remainder fall into the eighteenth century between the years 1727 and 1778. All are presented as "source materials for the socio-economic history of Poland, and particularly the history of its peasant village."

The unsigned introduction of less than four pages states the purpose and origin of the booklet, calls attention to the character and significance of the selections, partially identifies the seven contributors, and explains the publication's editorial technique, for part of which acknowledgment is given to the Soviet Academy of Sciences.

The five chapters comprising the booklet cover various types of documentary sources: descriptive, normative, and dispositive inventories, registers, administrative instructions, and decrees. Each chapter begins with a brief preface describing the historical background, nature, location, and condition of the sources, and the auxiliary tools used in their interpretation. One set of footnotes, calling attention to interpolations in or deletions from the manuscript, accompanies the text, while another, supplying explanatory glossological, geographical, and biographical data, is appended to each group of selections.



Unpretentious in format, the publication has no maps or illustrations and only a partial index. The whole seems a competent piece of work from the archival viewpoint, but its historical utility remains to be tested by impartial scholars working in the period.

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Madras Record Office. *Catalogue of Danish Records*. (Madras, Government Press, 1952. Pp. 8.)

Madras Record Office. *Supplementary Catalogue of Dutch Records*. (Madras, Government Press, 1952. Pp. 3.)

Government of West Bengal, Home [Records] Department. *Annual Report for the Year 1950*. (Alipore, West Bengal Government Press, 1951. Pp. 7.)

Ceylon, Department of Archives. *Administration Report of the Government Archivist for 1947-50*, by J. H. O. Paulusz. (Colombo, Ceylon Government Press, 1951. Pp. 19. 40c; postage 10c.)

The first two items cited above are catalogs of the list type, simply stating the kind of record and the date. The Danish records were transferred by the collector at Tanjore in 1891 and were arranged and cataloged by the Rev. Heiberg of the Danish mission in 1925. The Dutch records were transferred in 1931 by the governments of Bombay and Bengal. They were cataloged by the Rev. J. Fruytier of St. Thomas Mount.

The 1950 report of S. N. Dutt, Keeper of Records of the Government of West Bengal, shows that the partition of the province continues to handicap the work of the Record Office. Special difficulty was caused by the mutual exchange of records between the Governments of East and West Bengal. The work of accessioning, cataloging, labeling, calendaring, and indexing records proceeded; but the publication of historical documents had to be suspended owing to shortage of staff. The work of preserving in typed copies old fragile records, which had been suspended, was resumed in the latter half of the year. Progress was made in repairing old records; and the fight against insects, which must be eternally waged in tropical countries, was vigorously pursued. The general public, government officials, and scholars continued to request and get information from the records. Some progress was made in weeding out records for disposal.

The report of J. H. O. Paulusz, Government Archivist of Ceylon, not only covers the work done from 1947 to 1950 but also gives a brief account of the development of the Archives. The Office of Government Archivist was created in 1902 as a part of the Chief Secretary's Office. In 1947 it was made a separate department in the Ministry of Education. When Japan entered the war in 1941, the records were moved from Colombo to Nuwara Eliya. This proved more satisfactory because of better atmospheric conditions at the provincial seat of government; and the records will remain here until a suitable air-conditioned building can be provided in Colombo.



The department has in its custody records of historical value covering nearly three centuries of Dutch and British rule. No records of the Portuguese era have survived. The Dutch records cover the period 1640-1746 and number approximately 7,000 volumes, the most valuable of these being family and land tombus and the parish registers. The British period extends from 1796 to 1897 and is represented by about 35,000 volumes. Under the new Constitution (October 1947), the control of the Record Office in Colombo (which contains records still used by the various ministries and therefore not open to public inspection) was entrusted to the Government Archivist. Good progress is being made in creating disposal schedules, but all over the island large accumulations of old records must be evaluated and weeded before transfer to the Archives Department for permanent preservation.

The department has started a 6-week training course for record keepers and binders working in all government departments in methods of record keeping and the preservation and repair of records.

The department plans to organize a central microfilm library of all documents of historical interest to Ceylon, whether located abroad or in inaccessible parts of the island. The department has photostat equipment and hopes to acquire soon a microfilm camera and microfilm reading apparatus.

Since 1947 the Archivist has acted as registrar of books and newspapers, and since 1951 he has had control over the printing presses of the island. A draft archives law has been prepared and will be presented to the legislature. This law will define "archives" and make statutory provision for their control and maintenance. One section of the law will prescribe disposal procedures.

GENEVA H. PENLEY

#### *National Archives*

NOTE: The editor has been requested to call attention to the fact that *Local Records, Their Nature and Care*, by Redstone and Steer, reviewed in the April issue, can be obtained from the British Book Centre, Inc., 122 E. 55th St., New York 22.