

Reviews of Books

RICHARD G. WOOD, *Editor*

National Archives

Erhvervshistorisk Årbog. Meddelelser fra Erhvervsarkivet. Vol. 5. (Aarhus, Denmark, Rosenkilde og Bagger, 1953. Pp. 116.)

This volume follows the pattern set in the yearbooks previously published by the Danish Erhvervsarkivet or Business Archives of Aarhus, Denmark. It consists of five well-documented articles, together with a brief account of archival activities for the year ending March 31, 1953. The authors demonstrate that the trader and the businessman know no national barriers. The first article treats of the lucrative Danish trade with the Isle de France (Mauritius) during the troubled period 1793-1807. The next article is a lively excerpt from the memoirs of Hans P. Hanssen (1828-1912), relating his experiences in Hong Kong, Canton, and Shanghai, beginning in the early 1850's, when foreign merchants were still confined to a few ports. In China he laid the foundation for a highly successful mercantile career. Although obviously a person of rectitude, Hanssen saw nothing immoral in the trade in opium, which he considered less harmful to the Chinese than was alcohol to the Europeans.

Two other articles deal respectively with the economic problems involved in the reunion of North Schleswig with Denmark after World War I and with the Danish and Norwegian businessmen whose letters appear in the archives of Joachim D. Wahrendorff (1726-1803), who was prominent in the commercial, shipping, and industrial circles of Stockholm. The longest and for many readers perhaps also the most significant article is Andreas Jørgensen's excellent study of the plantation company, "Dansk Vestindien," based on its archives preserved at Aarhus. An experiment in Danish imperialism, this stock company was organized in 1902, with the avowed purpose of reviving the Danish West Indies through private enterprise. Ignoring the prevailing economic decline, the company bought various run-down estates in the islands. However, its attempts to produce cotton, sugar cane, sisal, and tropical fruits were unsuccessful. Only the cultivation of lime and bay trees proved promising. The company's efforts made clear that the arid northern and eastern portions of St. Croix were suitable solely for the raising of cattle. Plagued by labor troubles and saddled with deficits, the company sold its holdings and went into liquidation after the United States purchased the Danish West Indies.

During the past year Erhvervsarkivet received a total of 4,790 volumes and packages of records. The largest single accession came from Fyens Disconto Kasse, Denmark's first private bank dating from 1846. Of this material, only the older items will be made immediately available to researchers.

Private concerns provided the bulk of the newer papers. Arrangement of the archives progressed and cataloging was completed for the approximately 10,000 volumes in the library. As in other years, this institution drew upon both public and private funds for support.

HAROLD LARSON

Air University Historical Liaison Office

An Introduction to Ecclesiastical Records, by J. S. Purvis. (London, St. Anthony's Press, 1953. Pp. viii, 96.)

The Medieval Registers of Canterbury and York: Some Points of Comparison, by E. F. Jacob. [St. Anthony's Hall Publication No. 4.] (London, St. Anthony's Press, Pp. 16. 2s. 6d.)

Both these volumes are concerned with ecclesiastical records. Professor Jacob's small pamphlet describes very briefly the medieval archiepiscopal registers of the provinces of Canterbury and York. After a short account of registers in general, the type of documents they contain, and the differences in the organization of the two provinces, he enumerates the archbishop's powers that have left traces in the surviving registers. He also lists the extant registers for both provinces, printed and in manuscript, from the earliest, that of Archbishop Walter de Gray of York (1215-55), to those for the end of the medieval period (c. 1530). He discusses separately the contents of the two sets of registers, describing the kind of material in each and showing wherein the registers of the two provinces are similar and different in content and form. The pamphlet does not pretend to do more than give a brief introduction to the subject of medieval archiepiscopal registers, and this it accomplishes.

Mr. Purvis' volume is more detailed and more ambitious. As its title suggests it is offered as the equivalent of an elementary course in the diplomatic of ecclesiastical records. Because of poor organization, inconsistent arrangement of material, and inadequate explanations, however, it falls far short of this goal. The student making his first acquaintance with ecclesiastical records is likely to be more confused than enlightened by reading this volume. Mr. Purvis discusses three classes of ecclesiastical records, archiepiscopal registers, the documents of episcopal visitations, and ecclesiastical court records. His plan is in each case the same. After giving some general background material he illustrates the various points he has made with documents that seem to be from the archives of the archbishopric of York. He only infrequently gives sources for these documents and nowhere explains what his few references mean. Thus anyone interested in placing one of these illustrations in its original setting can do so only with considerable labor. Furthermore, since the book is intended for students learning to use documents, the omission of references sets them a poor example. Neither does Mr. Purvis use any system of cross references from the explanations of types of documents to the documents themselves or vice versa, except by means of general subject headings. Thus the reader who wishes to find an example of a particular type of

document must hunt for it. Since the order of the documents does not always follow the order of the topics in the explanation, this process may take considerable time. In the explanations themselves spacing and headings are so used that the sequence of ideas is not always logical and the relation between topics not always clear. Occasionally additional explanatory material is introduced among the documents. Careful editing would have made the volume more usable.

The chapter on archiepiscopal registers is prefaced by a series of definitions of terms which have to do with the appointment of clergy to benefices. Some of these are terms which should already be familiar to any student intending to work with ecclesiastical documents. The remainder of the explanatory material treats of the documents pertaining to clerical appointments and similar matters. Examples of such documents follow. In the second section Mr. Purvis explains briefly the three stages in the process of episcopal visitation and the type of records produced by a visitation. The illustrative documents are not arranged according to the steps outlined in the explanation, nor are all the documents pertaining to the same step placed together. The third section, on the documents of ecclesiastical courts, is, like the others, difficult to follow because the terminology used is sometimes confusing. Two classes of records, act books and cause papers, are mentioned; only act books are explained, though examples from both are given. The details of the progress of a suit in an ecclesiastical court and the form of a court record are explained. Both are illustrated by documents.

The volume has no index so that the explanation of any given process or term can be found only by reading the appropriate chapter. This lack is not remedied by the table of contents, which gives page references for the illustrative documents but not for the discussions they illustrate. An adequate handbook of the diplomatic of ecclesiastical documents would be of great assistance to students working in this field. Unfortunately Mr. Purvis' volume will not provide this assistance.

ELISABETH G. KIMBALL

Princeton, New Jersey

Philadelphia Department of Records. *Annual Report for the year 1953*. (Philadelphia, 1954. Pp. iii, 20, charts, illus.)

In 1950 Thomas Amelia, assistant director of the Philadelphia committee of the Pennsylvania Economy League, wrote a report to the Philadelphia Charter Commission on the condition of public records in his city. This report, published in the *American Archivist* in January 1951 under the title "Philadelphia Records and a Program for Administration," described a situation all too familiar to anyone who has worked with American municipal records—crowded and unsuitable storage areas, deterioration and loss of records because of lack of proper care, haphazard control of access to records, and absence of of planning in the creation and revision of forms, reports, and other documents. Philadelphia's public records, like those of many younger and smaller cities, like Topsy, "just grewed."

After the adoption of Philadelphia's new city charter the public records problem received some long overdue attention. A department of public records was established with ample powers and a suitable organization to deal with the situation. The department has control over all steps in the record process, from the establishment of standards and specifications for record materials and the creation and revision of forms to the disposition of noncurrent and useless records and the preservation of records of permanent value.

The report under review indicates that the Philadelphia Department of Records has made progress in eliminating many of the evils complained of in Mr. Amelia's report. The forms control division has surveyed over a thousand forms used in city agencies and has revised them when necessary to reduce duplication and excessive paper work. Surveys have been made of the records in nearly all of the offices in the city government; and the inventoried records have been classified for retention, disposition, or archival preservation in the city's records center. Nearly 40,000 cubic feet of useless records and non-record material have been recommended for destruction. A number of important but bulky records series have been microfilmed. Many valuable city records that had been lost for years were found and made available for consultation.

These operations have resulted in the saving of considerable sums of money for the city, an achievement which the report duly emphasizes. The destruction of useless records and the transfer of records of enduring value to the cheaper facilities of the records center have released valuable City Hall storage space for the increasing accumulation of current records. Speedy reference service is furnished by the records center to those who need to consult the city archives.

In addition to its records management and archival functions, the department has also been granted the powers and duties of the former office of recorder of deeds. This function has been exercised only since October 1953. This is a new sort of responsibility for an archival agency, and its development will be worth observing.

The 1953 report of Philadelphia's Department of Records should be of interest to all city records administrators as well as to archivists concerned with municipal records problems. It is a clear and readable account of how one of America's oldest large cities is attempting to meet a problem which confronts all units of government — that of the ever-increasing mass of records produced by today's governmental activities.

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

HOWARD A. MERRITT, JR.

And All the King's Men, by R. R. Donnelley & Sons. (Chicago, Lakeside Press, n. d. Pp. 42, illus.)

Well written and profusely illustrated, this booklet presents in concise terms most of the restoration and preservation problems faced by owners and collectors of old and valued books and documents. Roughly divided into three

parts, it presents the principal causes of deterioration, methods of restoration, and recommendations as to proper care.

In the first section, "Vandals Within Your Walls," most of the agencies of destruction and deterioration are listed. Among these sunlight, gases, chemicals, mildew, insects, and improper mending materials are all discussed.

The second section, "The Good Offices of the Hand Binder," attempts to answer the often puzzling question as to when a valuable book or document should be repaired, restored, or rebound. It describes methods and materials used in good practice and warns of things that should not be done without expert guidance. This section contains a chapter on restoring original bindings and documents. Of particular interest is the part dealing with the restoration of disintegrated paper, the filling out of incomplete leaves, the preservation of paper, and the like. The various methods of restoring and preserving old papers, such as silking, laminating, inlaying, and splitting, are all described in general terms.

The final chapters deal with the care of books and their bindings. There are many valuable tips concerning the proper precautions to be taken in housing, cleaning, and storing valuable books and documents. In addition to giving some good advice on proper care these chapters also point out some of the things that should not be done and materials that should not be used if one values good books.

The little book is presented as "a manual of first-aid for private owners who wish to preserve family records and documents . . ." as well as for professionals. It is a well written nontechnical manual of great interest and value to all who are interested in the proper care of their valued books and documents.

Arcadia, California

ALBERT H. SCHNEIDER

Paper Work Management in the Navy. (Washington, Department of the Navy [?], 1954. Pp. 31, illus. Processed. Free.)

During the past 10 or 12 years, the Navy Department has been doing a fore and aft overhaul of its "paper work" system. With what seems, to this reviewer, to be pardonable pride, the Department has issued this booklet highlighting progress achieved to date. Savings effected have been substantial. While no single argument for a method or the method itself is new, the combination of techniques is thought-provoking. To the archivist and records control manager it offers many "liftable" ideas. It points up the economies of a well organized control system and the beneficial effect upon those records that eventually reach archives establishments.

After a simple, understandable explanation of records and their usefulness, a list of such records (some peculiar to the Navy) is given along with their methods of handling. Orders, directives, vouchers, requisitions, personnel actions, and correspondence are covered. Procurement (with emphasis on "birth control" of new records) and the distribution of forms are well treated. Methods of transmitting messages, filing, microfilming, and orderly disposal are made quite clear.

The primary purpose of this book and its 12-page multigraphed supplement, apparently is to serve as a guide to a Navy lecturer conducting training classes or to be given to trainees after a lecture. By photoreproduction, 16 large charts, such as are used for an illustrated lecture, are shown. The method of teaching seems excellent, well up to Navy standards. One interesting section details the very successful operation of persuading all Navy personnel to get on the team. Mechanization of physical (not mental) handling of paper work is extensively used, explained, and recommended.

To repeat, this booklet's usefulness to the archivist or records control manager lies in the wealth of ideas that can be *adapted* to one's own problems. It shows how the Navy does it. You still must roll your own.

Aluminum Company of America

CHESTER C. CONNER

Maintenance of Current Records. [Air Force Manual No. 181-4.] (Washington, Department of the Air Force, Sept. 1, 1953. Pp. vi, 90.)

In a manual designed to "constitute the sole and complete source of permanent basic Air Force policies, procedures, methods and standards governing the maintenance of current Air Force records," an effort has been made at the same time to provide a textbook of principles underlying the arrangement of records with the intent of dignifying filing as the important and thoughtful occupation that it is.

The loose-leaf manual is confined to the operation of current files. Except for brief explanations of the relationship to records disposition practices and the use of cutoff dates, records management is relegated to a separate volume. The first two chapters explain basic concepts, the roles of the user, custodian, and records control officers, the form and use of records, and the need for systematic arrangement. Chapters 3 and 4 go into methods and techniques, with explanations of the various types of arrangement: subjective, numerical, alphabetical, chronological, and case files, of classification and coding techniques, indexing and finding media, and use of supplies and equipment. Finally, there is the Air Force subjective classification system, with its related index.

Incidentally, "subjective" is a particularly irksome word to this reviewer, "subject" seeming a more precise term and less connotative of the pitfalls into which "subjective" thinking can lead. Also, it is disappointing that there is no discussion of card indexing (except for names) as an alternative or supplement to cross-reference sheets.

The classification scheme deserves special mention, because it offers a worthy substitute in the trend away from the decimal system, which has complicated so many large files in the effort to fit a sprawling mass into neat systems of tens, and hidden so many documents in small files. The Air Force alphabetical-numerical system, embodying a mnemonic alphabetical code followed by single digits separated by dashes in logical sequence, is simple and flexible. It is practical of application in that additional subdivisions are presented without the accompanying numbers, allowing the classifier to judge their utility before assigning them specific numbers, while at the same time demonstrating the

pattern for still further expansion or allowing the classifier to disregard the uncoded subdivisions entirely if they are deemed inappropriate or unessential. Thus, it discourages the temptation either to overclassify or underclassify.

The hybrid character of the manual-textbook is the source of its weaknesses as well as its strength. The sometimes involved explanations of procedures and particularly the too-frequent pages containing solid blocks of type in double columns often combine to raise reader resistance. A manual is a ready reference tool; it should be easy on the eye, arranged in short sentences and paragraphs, with frequent variations of type and space highlighting each idea presented, and with copious illustrations. The ample text, without doubt, enhances the substance and broadens the application of this manual beyond the limits of the Air Force; yet its primary use will be as a manual rather than a training-course textbook, and visual improvements would be helpful.

These minor defects, however, do not overshadow the fact that this Air Force manual is a sound accomplishment and will serve as a standard reference work in its field.

International Monetary Fund

MARIE CHARLOTTE STARK

Calendar of Plea and Memoranda Rolls Preserved Among the Archives of the Corporation of the City of London at the Guild Hall, A.D. 1437-1457, edited by Philip E. Jones. (Cambridge University Press, 1954. Pp. xxviii, 229, appendix. \$4.50.)

This is the fifth volume in the series. The preceding four volumes, covering the period 1323-1437, with occasional gaps, were edited by A. H. Thomas, who at the time of his retirement in 1945 was Deputy Keeper of the City Records. As these four volumes have not been reviewed in this journal, comment upon them is in order. The introduction to volume one offers an explanation of the necessity for these particular rolls. The editor points out that the mayor's and sheriffs' courts preserved their proceedings in continuous rolls; but, as the original rolls were regarded as the private property of the law officers, they took them away on retiring from office in case of future need of them as evidence of their impartiality. Hence the compilers of the plea and memoranda rolls took excerpts of pleadings that the future law officers of the corporation might have precedents to guide them. Although the mayor and aldermen were judges in the husting, the mayor's court, and the court of aldermen, they frequently dealt with matters at any time they arose. In the plea and memoranda rolls therefore were kept actions pleaded out of season. Furthermore, many of the pleas were public prosecutions, which entailed a fine to the King as well as damages to the plaintiffs. As the power of the Crown was extended, the offences became statutory. The city officers became the King's justices. Hence a special series of rolls was needed as distinguished from those concerned with purely personal actions.

The main interest of the rolls themselves is legal, civic, and economic. The first four volumes hold introductions with illuminating discussions of the commission of the peace, writs, city ordinances, the enforcement of the statute

of labourers, incorporation and citizenship, apprenticeship, the law merchant, the language of the records, goods and chattels, and the wards. All volumes, including the fifth, provide a list of less usual words in the text, an index of subjects and an index of names and places.

Now let us turn to the fifth volume, 1437-57 but lacking the rolls for 1442-43, 1450-51, and 1455-56. The text for Rolls A65 to A76 was compiled by A. H. Thomas, but the volume has been edited by the present Deputy Keeper of the City Records. The purpose of the rolls in this volume is more circumscribed. The types of cases and documents have narrowed. Many writs and returns, complaints and intrusions, bonds, gifts of goods and chattels, quitclaims, and leases are listed. Of special interest to the social and economic historian are the detailed valuations of household goods, wines, textiles, furs, silverware, jewelry, and implements. The frequent use of arbitration is apparent. There are a number of reports in regard to property disputes. In the introduction the editor discusses fully the title of the London Corporation to the common soil of the streets and watercourses. The editor has plans for a sixth and final volume for the period 1457-84.

Barrington, Rhode Island

DOROTHY BRUCE WESKE

Report for 1953, by M. F. Bond, Clerk of the Records. [House of Lords Record Office Pamphlet No. 10.] (Westminster, 1953. Processed.)

In the year marked in Britain by the coronation of Elizabeth II, the staff of the House of Lords Record Office numbered about 7 archivists and assistants, reinforced with 7 technicians and a summertime auxiliary of boxers and packers. Searchers at the repository in the Victoria Tower at Westminster numbered 392. This 13-page mimeographed pamphlet tells of the current work on the modern records of Parliament and mentions a few dramatic facts. A test reconnaissance of the main papers of 1818 has revealed that "a certain amount of original unprinted material" is present, but that many original petitions are missing. Through the generosity of the Pilgrim Trust, 43 volumes of draft journals and minutes, 1621-90, containing hitherto overlooked speeches by Charles I and other seventeenth-century figures, have been acquired by purchase. Only the barest mention is given to publication of the tenth volume, and progress in preparing an eleventh volume, in the New Series of the *Manuscripts of the House of Lords*.

National Archives

H. B. FANT

Inventaire-Sommaire des archives départementales antérieures à 1790; Marne, archives ecclésiastiques, série G, clergé séculier, fonds déposés à Reims, vol. 2, by Gaston Robert. (Reims, France, 1940. Pp. 372.)

Répertoire numérique des archives départementales antérieures à 1790: Côte-d'Or, archives ecclésiastiques, série H, clergé régulier, by L. Delessard. (Dijon, France, 1953. Pp. 48.)

Archives départementales de la Vendée postérieures à 1800; répertoire

numérique de la série O, affaires communales et service vicinal, by M. Joubert and L. Morauzeau. (La Roche-sur-Yon, France, 1953. Pp. 204.)

Inventaire des Affiches conservées aux Archives de la Marne, vol. 1, *Politique (1716-1951)*, by René Gandilhon. (Chalons-sur-Marne, France, 1953. Pp. xiv, 434, index. 800 fr.)

Répertoire critique des anciens inventaires des archives du département de la Drôme avec une notice sur la formation et l'histoire de ces archives, by Jacques de Font-Réaulx. (Valence, France, 1952. Pp. xxxi, 203, index.)

These volumes are welcome additions to the magnificent collection of inventories of the French provincial archives, published under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. This set is not well known in America, and it is not easy to consult in those American libraries which possess it. Each volume is prepared by the archivist of the department concerned and is published and printed somewhere within the department. As the archivists change from time to time, it may happen that several different volumes of one inventory appear under different authors, and no list of completed volumes is available. This reviewer has frequently been unable to discover what has been done and what has not, and she has never seen these volumes on open shelves in an American library. The whole set, for all departments, is shelved together, so no problem exists for the fortunate possessor of a stack permit. Nevertheless few people in this country have formed the habit of using these valuable research tools. Those who have done so have sometimes made surprising discoveries, by means of a slow process of browsing.

The inventories follow a standard system of classification, and in addition to the code numbers, there is often information as to the contents of a box, a collection, or an individual volume. Interesting or important material is occasionally quoted at length, and some volumes contain bibliographical information and references in the case of documents which have been published elsewhere. The value of the set is greatly increased by the fact that each author, in his capacity as local archivist, knows the documents, works with them, and has them constantly at hand. He also knows the background, and frequently contributes useful facts or suggestions.

The first of the five volumes reviewed here was published as long ago as 1940; it is the second volume, second part, of a group of documents dealing with ecclesiastical matters in the diocese of Reims. The descriptions of the various *liasses* (boxes) are very well done, and contain a great many proper names. The small volume on the ecclesiastical archives of the Côte-d'Or lists all the documents in each box, sometimes by title, but there are no summaries of contents in this volume. The same is true for a larger volume from the Archives of the Vendée, which covers local affairs of the communes in the department and the roads that serve them. This book deals only with documents dated since 1800, unlike the other four.

Probably the most interesting of our group comes from René Gandilhon, archivist of the department of the Marne. It is the first section of the catalog of the remarkable poster collection at Reims — 6,271 posters on political sub-

jects making up this first volume. The listing is by subject, but there are several good indexes giving place names, and one which lists artists and printers. These posters, and in their absence, the inventory, supply a very vivid picture of thousands of historical events that at one time or another were attacked or defended on posters.

Finally we have the attractive and scholarly work of Jacques de Font-Reaulx, archivist of the Drôme. This is a list of the old inventories in the archives of the Drôme, in some cases with summaries of the contents of the inventories. This book has an excellent index; and, alone of the group, it contains a comprehensive 30-page historical account of the collection. By it we are reminded of how little has been done since the days of Léopold Delisle to present the history of manuscript collections, their migrations and occasional disappearances — a type of work that is of infinite value to scholars in widely divergent fields.

All five books are well done, but the last two excel in both interest and scholarship. One difficulty confronts all who use them, and this is the lack of adequate indexes; for no index, however good, can be depended upon for manuscript collections of this kind. Problems of handwriting and spelling add to the difficulty of the Herculean task of listing names. Until some satisfactory solution to this is invented, there is no substitute for the long, slow process of reading through page after page of these inventories. There is consolation in the high score of rewards, and in the fact that even the lists provide a picture of the past and occasionally a taste of the amusement that original documents bring to those who like to work with them.

Frederick, Maryland

DOROTHY MACKAY QUINN

EDITOR'S NOTE: Through inadvertence it was stated in a review of the 1953 *National Archives Microfilm Publications List* in the July issue (p. 272), that the frontispiece was "a letter of Aaron Burr," whereas the letter is actually one of Benedict Arnold's.