

# Reviews of Books

HENRY P. BEERS, *Editor*

*National Archives*

*Texas Treasury Papers; Letters Received in the Treasury Department of the Republic of Texas, 1836-1846.* Vols. 1-3, edited by Seymour V. Connor, assisted by Howard Lackman and Margaret K. Howard; vol. 4, edited by Virginia H. Taylor, assisted by Bertha Brandt. (Austin, Texas State Library, 1955-56. x, 402, 403-836, 837-1246; 160 [11] 161-270 [8] p. Processed.)

My knowledge of the history of the Republic of Texas is probably too meager to enable me to offer a proper assessment of the historical significance of the papers embodied in the four volumes of this work. With minor exceptions, the documents in question, recently found in their original wrappers in and around the State Capitol in Austin, have not heretofore been published or used. Although they relate largely to fiscal matters, many of them also touch on other interesting facets of early Texas history. I believe that even a casual examination will convince any reader of the intrinsic value of the collection. The tribulations of assessors and sheriffs in levying and collecting taxes, the sale of land in default of tax payments, defalcations, counterfeiting of notes, the location of custom houses (most of the papers relating to customs revenues remain to be published), the raising of funds for support of a navy, and the issuance of land scrip are a few of the many subjects on which the documents throw light. The collection is also a veritable goldmine for genealogists.

The papers illustrate something more than merely local financial matters, important as such matters usually are. Especially revealing is the correspondence of the two principal agents of the Texas Government (Burnley and Hamilton) in seeking loans in the United States, England, France, and Belgium to support the sagging credit of the Republic. But a five million dollar loan was difficult to negotiate during the eighteen thirties, in the face of the unsettled money markets of the United States and Europe. In addition, the opposition of abolition societies in the United States and England to loaning funds to a slave republic was regularly encountered by the agents. Although a small loan was finally obtained from the United States Bank, no funds were forthcoming from England or France. In the end, the negotiators contracted with Belgium for the full five million dollar loan; but the contract was never implemented by the Texas Congress.

My critical comments are directed solely to the editorial practices followed in the work. Although the multilith process of reproducing the documents may well have been justified as a measure of economy and although it is as durable as type, it does not help the appearance of the volumes. The rather poor exhibition of the papers is compounded, moreover, by the employment of editorial devices which, though not necessarily wrong, are antiquated and irrelevant. I

refer, in the first instance, to the repeated use, in brackets, of the word *sic*, which appears on practically every page. One document of 20 lines is loaded with 22 *sics*. The editor's preface states that each document is "transcribed exactly as it appears in the original." Such a statement is sufficient. Every user of the work will see it. Why, therefore, remind the reader again and again and thus present an ugly page?

Another blemish of the same variety is the frequent expression "deleted from the original," following canceled type. Instead of the above quoted phrase, a single prefatory explanation that all canceled type represents deletions in the original would not only have saved space but also have improved the general appearance of the pages.

With rare exceptions, there are no identifications of persons. Cross-references are virtually nonexistent. Endorsements are rarely included. Footnotes are placed at the end of each document, which means that often a footnote will be found at the top of the following page — an incongruous placement. I believe that an editor of documents should be as much concerned with questions of artistic appearance and convenience as with scholarly accuracy.

CLARENCE E. CARTER

*National Archives*

*The Appraisal of Modern Public Records*, by T. R. Schellenberg. (National Archives Bulletin No. 8; Washington, 1956. 45 p. 20¢.)

Mass paperwork in modern times has put new emphasis on the need for bringing up to date archival criteria and techniques for evaluation. The problem is not only to select and preserve a record of the past but also to encourage proper documentation of policy and management thinking. The need for standards of selection is evident. The application of tested standards of judgment is far more reliable than unreasoned, Olympian decisions.

In this short text Dr. Schellenberg has come to grips with the challenging problem of archival appraisal of public records. He has done an excellent job of analyzing the general problem and setting forth some specific guides.

He begins by distinguishing two classes of value in records. The first class, which he calls "evidential value," is the value that some records have as evidence of organization and function. In discussing this value, he considers the views of archivists both in Europe and in the Federal service of the United States. This comparative approach is particularly effective in explaining the historical background as well as present thinking on the subject. Among the types of records particularly noted as having evidential value are records on origins and records on substantive programs. Under the head of records on substantive programs, Dr. Schellenberg deals with the various kinds of summary narrative accounts, policy documents, publications, publicity materials, and internal management records.

The second class of value, called informational value, is related to the information contained in records on matters with which the originating agency deals rather than information about the agency itself. Again, the author gives

us tests to apply in appraising records for this type of value. He believes that judgment should be based on three considerations: uniqueness, form, and importance. Each of these considerations is explained in some detail as it applies to archival evaluation. The test of informational value is then applied to records classed severally as relating to persons, things, and phenomena.

Any advice on the appraisal of records runs the risk of falling into the pit of generality. Dr. Schellenberg successfully avoids this risk by giving concrete examples of how the problem can be handled. The bulletin, though limited to a discussion of Federal records, can also serve as a basic guide for practically any record appraisal. It is, indeed, a useful and informative addition to the National Archives publications.

ALAN G. NEGUS

*National Records Management Council*

*Records of the United States Shipping Board*, by Forrest R. Holdcamper. (National Archives Preliminary Inventory No. 97; Washington, 1956. vii, 165 p. Free.)

Most readers of this journal must by now be familiar with the excellent series of preliminary inventories, of which this is no. 97, issued by the National Archives. The basic idea of such inventories is not new, but this series has developed the idea and embodied it in a most useful form. Each inventory is normally devoted to a separate record group and follows a uniform pattern. As one who tried his hand at preparing such an inventory during practice work at the National Archives some years ago, this reviewer is well aware of the work involved.

An idea of the size of Record Group 32, Records of the United States Shipping Board, may be obtained from the statement that its volume is 9,150 cubic feet. The significance of the collection to the historian is well expressed by a note on page 6: "For the period they cover, the records in this series can be used as the starting point for almost any research in the maritime field." Not the maritime field alone, however; for the records of the Fir Production Board are listed here, to mention one example. Many well-known names are represented: Edwin F. Gay (incidentally, his first name is wrongly given), Charles M. Schwab, and Edward N. Hurley.

The inventory begins, as is customary, with an introductory statement on the organizational history of the Shipping Board; its agent, the Emergency Fleet Corporation; and its successor, the Shipping Board Bureau in the Department of Commerce. Each series is described separately, and the series are grouped in logical order. Cross-references are abundant, not only to other series within the record group, but to other record groups, and even on occasion to materials outside the National Archives. Existing indexes are described in full; and four appendixes provide further leads to special segments of the records.

It is interesting to note that some records were lost before transfer and that a systematic weeding has been carried out. Thus, parts of the district records

have not been kept, as the information contained in them would be available in the main files. Since the records were received in some confusion (note on p. 48), the author is all the more to be congratulated for his orderly presentation.

In the absence of a statement to the contrary, one supposes that the records are open to all users. Although an index is, perhaps properly, not a common feature of the preliminary inventories, a listing of persons whose files are to be found in this record group would be useful. Historians of World War I or of the subsequent period to 1936, who have occasion to consult these records, will find this an indispensable tool. The Emergency Fleet Corporation was a tremendous enterprise in itself; but within the records of the United States Shipping Board are parts of the records of many other firms and of innumerable persons.

ROBERT W. LOVETT

*Baker Library*  
*Harvard Business School*

Department of the Army, The Adjutant General's Office, Departmental Records Branch. *Standing Operating Procedures*. (Washington, 1956.)

The *Standing Operating Procedures*, separately issued in 12 sections totaling about 700 pages, govern the operating practice of the Departmental Records Branch, a Department of the Army record center in Alexandria, Va. An Army procedural manual at first glance might appear to have little of value to archivists in general. Indeed, the sections dealing with administrative practices, forms, organization, supply, security, and the like are limited in their interest, except for those who are especially concerned with management practices. But such sections as Section 5 on reference procedure, Section 8 on rules for subject cataloging, and Section 9 on the preparation of finding aids should be of wide interest as evidence of exceptional zeal in promoting and encouraging the serious, scholarly use of recent records. These sections outline principles and describe procedures that combine competence and enthusiasm with ample administrative support to effect a thorough finding-aid and reference program. Although such a finding-aid program will be beyond the means of many record custodians, certain of the methods prescribed can be applied where detailed finding aids are undertaken.

Following the general pattern developed at the National Archives, the Departmental Records Branch provides for record group summaries with general descriptions of the structure and content of record groups, inventories with more or less itemization of series or their components, and special reference aids giving factual statements on the availability of materials pertaining to subjects of major research interest. A program of such scope is a major undertaking in itself, but the Branch offers additional finding aids through its development of subject cataloging. Explained as "describable item cataloging" by Sherrod East, Chief of the Branch, in the *American Archivist* of October 1953, the system combines standard library indexing methods with archival techniques. Cataloging (i. e., indexing) discrete items by originator, by function, and by

such special categories as geographical area, personal name, and military operation can achieve pretty complete intellectual control over the subject content of records. Its minuteness, however, makes it a special-purpose system suitable only for records of very great interest rather than for all records.

Although reference service is of major concern to the Branch, other aspects of the work of a record depository are not slighted. The basic responsibilities of the Branch in accessioning and disposal are outlined (Section 4), and pertinent parts of the discussion on record values are wisely abstracted from the National Archives publication *Disposition of Federal Records*.

The *Standing Operating Procedures* are a real implementation of the policy expressed in 1947 by the then Chief of Staff, Dwight D. Eisenhower, in the following words: "The historical record of the Army's operations as well as the manner in which these were accomplished are public property, and except where the security of the Nation may be jeopardized, the right of the citizen to the full story is unquestioned."

Investigators have not fully realized the extent to which the orderly character of the Government's record programs makes studies of recent events possible through the collaboration of archival and record center services provided by the General Services Administration and other agencies. The *Standing Operating Procedures* of the Departmental Records Branch are evidence of the real service that is given in making records of the recent past meet the needs of today.

LEWIS J. DARTER, JR.

*Department of the Navy*

*The Historical Foundation and Its Treasures*, by Thomas Hugh Spence, Jr. (Montreat, N. C., 1956. xii, 174 p., illus., appendix, bibliog.)

This volume was issued to commemorate the opening, in 1954, at Montreat, N. C., of the Historical Foundation's new building combining an archives depository, a library, and an historical museum. Probably it is the most complete and scholarly description of such a denominational institution yet published in this country. It is solidly based upon vast research in manuscript and published records.

Although he pays tribute to many men and women whose labor and devotion have undergirded the foundation, Dr. Spence makes it clear that this institution really is "the lengthened shadow of a man." That man, who was aided by his wife, was the Rev. Samuel Mills Tenney. His inspiration sprang from his discovery in 1902, in a Houston bookstore, of notes taken by Prof. Robert Lewis Dabney when he was a divinity student in 1845. The incident led Dr. Tenney to found the Historical Society of the Synod of Texas, and then patiently for a quarter of a century to collect records at his own expense and combat the general indifference to their preservation.

Sustained by church leaders whom he had already won to his cause, in 1926-27 Tenney persuaded the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (Southern) officially to establish, support, and direct the

Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches. With facilities offered by the Mountain Retreat Association at Montreat, he served as curator until his death in 1939. Since that time the foundation has striven to realize his plan for gathering all available books, documents, and significant relics of Presbyterian and Reformed Church history. That plan has particularly guided Dr. Spence, who became director of the foundation in 1947.

During the last 30 years the foundation has become widely known through the host of American and foreign scholars who have used its resources in writing their books.

Other denominations might well emulate the detailed, readable, and sometimes humorous review presented here, of the foundation's acquisition policy, of its publications (including the excellently edited *Historical Foundation News*), and of its facilities for research, its museum, and its large holdings. These holdings include official archives of church courts from local session to synod, records of Presbyterian schools, old and current Presbyterian periodicals, the priceless Parham Bible collection, a hymnological collection, pictorial archives, collections of letters of Presbyterian clergymen and laymen, and a library of over 30,000 volumes.

One of the most impressive aspects of the foundation's work is the immense and widely operative labor of its Woman's Auxiliary during the last 25 years in the compiling, under centralized direction, of local church histories, which are deposited in the foundation's collections. So far as this reviewer is aware, no other denomination has achieved so efficient an organization to compile and preserve church history at every level.

One way in which the foundation strikes the democratic note in American religion has been to make the mass of church people aware of its ideals and work. Their gifts, in return, have provided the building and now support its service in preserving "the heritage passed down from the fathers of the flesh and of the faith." A wide circulation of this volume should inspire some other churches to shake off indifference and follow the foundation's example.

NELSON R. BURR

*Library of Congress*

South Carolina Archives Department. *Journals of the South Carolina Executive Councils of 1861 and 1862*, edited by J. E. Cauthen. (Columbia, 1956. 336 p., illus.)

This volume is evidence of the continued effective publication program of the South Carolina Archives Department. It is part of a series, *The State Records of South Carolina*, that is being issued by the Department. Presented here are the almost day-to-day minutes of the two Executive Councils, of 1861 and 1862. The journal of the 1861 council covers the period Jan. 3-Mar. 31, 1861, and that of the 1862 council the period Jan. 31-Nov. 10, 1862. These journals are good source materials for an important period in the political history of South Carolina and for the history of certain phases of the Civil War and of the Confederacy.

The series preface by J. H. Easterby, director of the Archives Department, and the volume preface by the editor, J. E. Cauthen of Wofford College, place the two councils in their historical and governmental frames.

South Carolina, having seceded from the Union, considered herself an independent nation, at least until she should be joined by other States in secession and in the formation of a new nation. To provide during this interval for the powers once delegated to but withdrawn from the Federal Government by secession, the State felt the need to enlarge the authority of the governor to include presidential powers, and to add to the administrative responsibilities of the departments of the State government. Accordingly, the Executive Council of 1861 was authorized by the Secession Convention on December 27, 1860, its membership to consist of the lieutenant governor and four persons to be nominated by the governor and confirmed by the convention. With the four members selected by the governor placed in charge of various administrative departments, this first council served as a "presidential" cabinet. It was advisory and subordinate to the governor, to whom the convention had reserved the power of final decision, and Governor Pickens relied on it extensively.

But after Confederate authorities had assumed control over negotiations with the United States and over military operations in South Carolina and after the State had ratified the constitution of the Confederate States, the need for this council was greatly lessened and its discontinuance was authorized by the Secession Convention during its second session.

The second Executive Council, that of 1862, established during the third session of the convention, contrasted strongly with the first council in its relations with the governor and in its greater executive powers. This second council was established under the critical conditions of late 1861 and early 1862, when a prolonged conflict seemed inevitable, when coastal areas were enemy-occupied and Charleston was imperiled, and when there was a general lack of confidence in the governor's ability to meet the emergency. The convention's ordinance of January 7, 1862, which authorized the second council, provided that it should consist of the governor, the lieutenant governor, and three members elected by the convention. Almost unlimited executive powers were lodged in this council. With each of its five members having an equal vote and no power of final decision reserved to the governor, the council superseded the governor in the control of the State government. Governor Pickens had opposed the creation of the council on such terms. After it was in operation he considered its proceedings unconstitutional, frequently absented himself from its meetings, and sought its abolition. Discord between the council and the governor increased and finally came into full public notice through newspaper publication of angry correspondence between Governor Pickens and Isaac W. Hayne, council member who had been made chief of the Department of Justice and Police. Although the council had conducted the business of the State wisely and effectively, this discord with the governor, together with a growing demand for a return to "normal constitutional government," led to the discontinuance of the council by the State legislature after the expiration of the Secession Convention on December 17, 1862.

These journals record the considerations, decisions, and struggles of the two



councils during an exceedingly difficult period of mobilizing for and prosecuting war and administering the affairs of the State. The original manuscript journals have suffered some mutilation and loss, particularly of their first and last pages. Some of the missing content, taken from contemporary newspaper notices, has been inserted by the editor within brackets in the text or included in the appendix.

The index, as is usually the case with indexes, is not perfect. Particularly regrettable and surprising is the incompleteness of citations under the index entry "Records," which supplies only one citation, omitting reference to at least one other pertinent place in the text (p. 99). Despite this slight error, the index is useful, particularly for names of persons, places, and business or governmental organizations.

BESS GLENN

*National Archives*

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