

# Reviews of Books

HENRY P. BEERS, *Editor*

*National Archives*

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*Fifty Years of Collecting Americana for the Library of the American Antiquarian Society, 1908-1958*, by Clarence S. Brigham. (Worcester, Mass., 1958. 185 p. For presentation only to the friends of the Society.)

Clarence Saunders Brigham, a native of Providence and a graduate of Brown, transferred from the librarianship of the Rhode Island Historical Society to that of the American Antiquarian Society in 1908, when he was 31 and the Society was 96 years old. The new position of director was created for him in 1930, permitting the librarianship to be held by able lieutenants, R. W. G. Vail to 1939 and Clifford K. Shipton since then. In the present attractively produced and extremely informative volume Dr. Brigham modestly reports on his half-century of custodianship, an era of magnificent accomplishment. In 1908 the A. A. S. had a quite miscellaneous library of 99,000 volumes, with important collections of early American newspapers and imprints and fair ones of schoolbooks and psalmody; the first three had all been special interests of the society's founder and first president, Isaiah Thomas (1749-1831). In 1908 the Salisbury bequest of \$200,000 enabled the society to construct a new building, occupied early in 1911, which has proved ideally satisfactory for a research library and has required only the duplication of its original stack space in 1924 and again in 1950. The year before Dr. Brigham's arrival Waldo Lincoln, a retired Worcester paint manufacturer turned genealogist, had entered on his 20-year term as president; he gave complete support to the new librarian's policies and raised the funds required. These policies show what can be done, with comparatively modest resources—for there have been no great fortunes or foundations and no tax-money behind the A. A. S.—by intelligent concentration on limited, coherent, and well-chosen objectives.

Dr. Brigham took the society's name seriously and has made its library a first-class repository of every variety of early Americana proper to library custody—especially North Americana, and more especially United States Americana, if the term may be allowed. This he has done, on the one hand by adding strength to strength, and on the other by preventing all diversion of effort. He has avoided the space problems that baffle many libraries by drawing chronological lines, say at 1820 or 1865 or 1870, to escape the torrent of later printing with its items of decreasing intrinsic interest. The society had already taken some steps to get out of the museum business in 1885 and 1895; in 1909-10 Dr. Brigham took it out entirely, transferring its Yucatan and Indian relics to the Peabody Museum at Cambridge or the Worcester Historical Society. The preceding regime had gone in rather heavily for Central and South American materials. Dr. Brigham was not in a position to compete with the major

collectors, and he has let the field remain more or less fallow for 30 years past, obtaining the conversion of a fund earmarked for it to general library purposes. In recent years Librarian Shipton has weeded from the shelves thousands of volumes of no American relevance. In the sphere of manuscripts the society has avoided purchase but has accepted gifts of national, New England, Massachusetts, or Worcester importance so long as they do not clearly belong somewhere else. The resulting collection occupies 1,320 feet of shelving, and is partly indexed.

The Brigham policies are well illustrated in the collections of newspapers and imprints. Fifty years of intensive collecting have increased the 1908 newspaper holdings from 6,000 to 22,000 volumes, plus nearly a million separate issues. In the course of the 1920's the A. A. S. progressively abandoned its efforts to keep newspaper files current; it now binds files of only a few newspapers. In 1913 Dr. Brigham embarked upon his monumental bibliography of American newspapers from 1690 to 1820, for the first version of which, published serially in the society's *Proceedings*, he visited 400 cities and towns. On its completion in 1927 it was redone in order to record in detail all scattered or incomplete files. The two massive volumes published in 1947 contain 1,508 pages and list 2,120 newspapers, of which the society has 1,496; its nearest competitor, the Library of Congress, has only 936. The collection of American imprints to 1820 numbered 5,000 volumes in 1908; it has now reached 50,000, nearly half the number known to have been published. Here the society's knowledge is compiled not in a publication but in its card catalog of 322 trays and over 50,000 cards, with alphabetical (author, subject, title, and running title), chronological, geographical, and printer-publisher sections.

Besides these basic collections, Dr. Brigham reports on the progress and flourishing estate of 34 special collections, from almanacs to western narratives, and of 16 minor (but quite unusual and interesting) collections, from advertising cards to watermarks. In some of these, such as songsters and railroad and canal literature, the American Antiquarian Society has made its holdings outstanding as recently as the 1950's.

DONALD H. MUGRIDGE

### *Library of Congress*

*Studies of Historical Documents in the Library of the American Philosophical Society.* (American Philosophical Society, *Library Bulletin*, 1958; Philadelphia, 1958. 547-620, xi p.)

In 1943 the American Philosophical Society reprinted the part of its *Yearbook* dealing with its library as the *Library Bulletin*. Since 1948 the *Library Bulletin* has consisted of a reprint of a number of the society's *Proceedings* in addition to an extract from the annual report relating to the library. The present title (originally *Reports and Historical Documents*) is confusing; for some articles in this issue do not relate to documents in the conventional sense or, if they do, refer to documents in other institutions.

Gilbert Chinard, for example, has an excellent article on Rétif de la Bre-

tonne's *L'École des Pères*, 1776, a copy of which was recently acquired by the library. Professor Chinard shows Rétif to be a precursor of Malthus and of thinkers on the French Right such as Mauras. "The Enlightenment in Spanish America," by Arthur P. Whitaker, surveys the literature and reviews the state of our knowledge on that subject. The first study of a historical document is Helmut de Terra's edition of Alexander von Humboldt's abstract of his American travels, to which is appended a study of Humboldt portraits and sculptures in the United States. Anyone who has attempted to unravel the provenance of old manuscripts will relish Charles Boewe, "The Manuscripts of C. S. Rafinesque (1783-1840)." Rafinesque, an early American natural scientist, had a picturesque career, and his manuscripts are widely scattered. Graduate students could profitably study this and similar articles to see how primary sources are run down. The most original contribution, in my opinion, is George Green Shackelford's "William Short: Diplomat in Revolutionary France, 1785-1793," based in part on the correspondence between Short and the Duchesse de la Rochefoucauld in the American Philosophical Society. This is a well documented study of early American diplomacy and of the moderates during the Revolution. The last article, by George S. Snyderman, discusses the Philadelphia Friends manuscripts pertaining to the American Indian. The annual report has a list of selected accessions, including books, manuscripts, pictorial material (28 Charles Wilson Peale watercolor sketches are listed under Americana manuscripts), and sound recordings. A committee of the American Philosophical Society, the report notes, is now considering the wisdom of the dual publication of the articles.

If the contents of the *Bulletin* are not all, strictly speaking, studies of historical documents in the society's library, what are they? Perhaps they are best described as writings to make known the contents of the library and its activities. The library acquires materials and furthers research on the careers of its prominent past members. Therefore, we have an article on Rétif (since Franklin on the basis of some of his writings may be considered a precursor of Malthus) and an article on Short. Since 1957 the society has supported a study of the exchange of scientific and cultural ideas between the United States and Latin America in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (in which its members played a major role). Probably its chief acquisitions are in the history of science. The society has an excellent collection on Darwin and evolution, including a notable body of Darwin-Lyell correspondence. Recently the society added to its history of science agenda projects to acquire materials of von Humboldt and Rafinesque. The society also has extensive collections dealing with American Indian tribes. Snyderman's article is one example of its support of the study of American Indian linguistics, archeology, and history.

The contents of the *Library Bulletin* since its inception have been of very high caliber. But two kinds of articles in it detract from its overall merit. First, there are the skilful, pleasant accounts of one or a few documents, often of minor importance. Second, there are the necessarily cramped articles in which authors try to combine descriptions of a complex body of records with historical analysis.

The holdings of the library and the historical activities of the society are too little known by the historical profession, even by specialists who should be familiar with them. More frequent publication might cure this ignorance. But more important, if the *Bulletin* stood on its own feet as a scholarly publication, the library could publish systematic, detailed descriptions of its holdings as well as more full-scale historical articles. The society's activities have grown to the point where it could legitimately add a historical journal to its three great series of *Proceedings*, *Transactions*, and *Memoirs*.

NATHAN REINGOLD

*Library of Congress*

*A Survey of American Church Records for the Period Before the Civil War, East of the Mississippi River. Vol. 1, Major Denominations*, by E. Kay Kirkham (Salt Lake City, Kay Publishing Co., 1958. 176 p. \$2.50.)

This paperbound handbook provides a reference tool for genealogists and religious historians in the rich but difficult area of American church archives. It relies heavily on information derived from the great microfilm collection of vital records of non-Mormon churches in the Genealogical Society of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, at Salt Lake City, and on correspondence by the author with 135 religious archives. It also cites archival references in the publications of some of the great genealogical societies such as those of New York and New England.

State by State, county by county, denomination by denomination, and city by city, the survey covers the areas east of the Mississippi — some, such as New York and Pennsylvania, in great detail; others very briefly. The section for Maine, for instance, except for a bibliography of references on church history and archives such as accompanies the listings for all the States, contains only a single direct entry to one specific set of church records. The book is therefore, and quite understandably, a guide only to the materials which are included in it, not to those archives for which information could not be obtained. But the author has tried to give suggestions for further investigation in the various States and denominations so that his work may serve as an encouraging signpost where it fails to provide specific information.

Where detailed information is available, the book gives the types of records and their inclusive dates, as well as the exact location of the collections. On the other hand, where the archives are too voluminous for easy treatment, a general reference to their location or to published guides is made to suffice. Readers unfamiliar with church history and archival practices will find an introductory outline and bibliography for 10 leading denominations, as well as a general bibliography on religions in America.

In a work as broad yet as detailed as this, errors, inconsistencies, and omissions inevitably occur. In the introduction to the North Carolina section, for example, the statement appears that one of the four important Presbyterian archives in the United States is the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia, but no such information is provided in the Pennsylvania section.

Some large Quaker archives are not mentioned, such as those in Baltimore and Richmond (Indiana); but in general the Quaker coverage is good. Here, as elsewhere, however, the user of the volume must treat it as a helpful rather than infallible or exhaustive guide. For genealogists it should be most valuable, and for religious historians it can serve as a useful tool.

THOMAS E. DRAKE

*The Quaker Collection*  
*Haverford College Library*

*History for All the People; Twenty-Seventh Biennial Report of the North Carolina Department of Archives and History, July 1, 1956, to June 30, 1958.* (Raleigh, 1958. 125 p., illus., appendixes.)

This is an able report of a progressive and energetic State department of archives and history, which has undertaken to render a variety of services to all of the people of North Carolina and to carry its services to all parts of the State. The cover title of the report, "History for All the People," is well justified; and the report is a worthy successor to the one of 1954-56, "Expansion and Progress."

The program of the North Carolina Department of Archives and History is comprehensive and dynamic in the fields of archives and manuscripts, record administration, publications, museums, historic sites, and other historical interests and activities of the State. Accomplishments, plans, and hopes are brought out in the excellent narrative reports of division heads. These are supplemented by appendixes giving data on appropriations and expenditures, accessions, research and reference service, lamination and preservation, publications, and administrative and other matters. During the biennium, despite handicaps of insufficient personnel and storage space, progress and significant accomplishments were made in dealing with the most chronic and pressing of archival problems: the arrangement, description, disposition, and preservation of records. Major emphasis was placed on processing the backlog of records, reducing the bulk on hand by a disposition program, and placing retained material under inventory controls.

Of especial interest to the reviewer was the report on the historic site program. Tremendous strides have been made since the Department took over this function in 1955. In addition to carrying out its own site program the Department cooperates with other projects in the State by giving them financial and technical aid. Such assistance is the shot in the arm that many worthy local projects need.

A number of excellent illustrations add to the interest and value of the report.

V. L. BEDSOLE

*Louisiana State University*

*The Business of a Trial Court; 100 Years of Cases; a Census of the Actions and Special Proceedings in the Circuit Court of Chippewa County, Wisconsin, 1855-1954*, by Francis W. Laurent (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1959. xxxiv, 314 p., tables, map. \$6.)

This study, comprising five chapters of narrative and an appendix of more than 200 tables, presents a picture of the type and volume of business done by the circuit court for Chippewa County, Wisconsin (a trial court of general jurisdiction) over the century beginning in 1855 and ending in 1954. To document fully the different kinds of actions and proceedings within the purview of the circuit court, the study necessarily embraces some activities of the county court of Chippewa County for the years from 1921 to 1954, when the county court exercised concurrent jurisdiction with the circuit court in certain classes of cases.

The study, aided by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation to the University of Wisconsin for work in legal-economic history under the direction of Prof. James Willard Hurst, rests mainly on an examination of the archives of the circuit court and the county court — case files, record books, minute books, dockets, and other records.

Mr. Laurent, a research associate at the University of Wisconsin, has prepared in readable style and lucid order an excellent descriptive and tabular report on the manifold activities of the circuit court of Chippewa County in exercising its criminal and civil jurisdiction, and he has thereby mirrored many phases of the changing society in that county during the span of a century.

The introduction to the book is a commentary by Professor Hurst on the data compiled by Mr. Laurent. In chapter 1 the author describes the milieu in which both courts functioned. The flow of criminal cases within the cognizance of the circuit court and the county court is the subject of inquiry in chapter 2. Chapter 3 reconstructs the pattern of the civil actions. The next chapter canvasses the tenor of the "proceedings other than actions," which are defined by Wisconsin statutes, through a process of exclusion, as the exercise of eminent domain, removal of public officers, discharge of record mortgages on realty, and the like.

Mr. Laurent has reserved the last chapter for a "Summary and Conclusion." At the outset he finds from the data that "conflicts of economic interests" provided the main business of both courts. Then he shifts to a brief description of the influences ("economic factors," "governmental activities," and "motor vehicles") that determined to a great extent the pattern of judicial business in Chippewa County. Treating first the economic influences, Mr. Laurent says that during the nineteenth century the logging industry dominated the economy of the county. With the decline of that industry, however, agriculture and secondary manufacturing made substantial progress, accompanied by developments in transportation, communications, trade, and finance. Acting in conjunction with these two long-term economic influences were short-term ones: the Civil War; the business depressions of 1857, 1873, 1893, and 1930; World War I; World War II; and the business boom following the latter conflict. Federal and State governmental activities during the latter half of the nineteenth century were limited;

government was predominantly of a local character. But the twentieth century has witnessed a steady expansion of Federal and the State activities, stemming from increasing intervention in the affairs of private persons and organizations through new patterns of legislation and administrative law. Also affecting the character of the work of both courts were the vast social and other changes resulting from the mass production of automobiles. Illustrative of these changes is the fact that, at the end of 1954, issues involving motor vehicle transportation constituted the major part of the work of the courts in Chippewa County. In concluding chapter 5 the author offers some findings on the stability of the family unit and the economic status of the individual in the county.

The rest of the book, apart from the preface, notes, and index, consists of 206 tables embodying the data derived from the study, on which, in great measure, its narrative parts depend.

Because criminal and civil court actions reveal many aspects of the society in which they occur, Mr. Laurent's book recommends itself to the economist, the historian, the political scientist, and the sociologist, as well as the student of law. To the archivist the book is further proof of the versatile research value of court archives.

GEORGE P. PERROS

#### *National Archives*

*Subject Collections; a Guide to Special Book Collections and Subject Emphases as Reported by University, College, Public and Special Libraries in the United States, the Territories, and Canada*, comp. by Lee Ash. (New York, R. R. Bowker Co., 1958. xiv, 476 p. \$15.)

This reference book is based on Sears' *List of Subject Headings* and will therefore be received with some reservations by those who have found Sears inadequate to the needs of all but small libraries. It should be used only in connection with the *American Library Directory* or with other library tools. It will, however, be gratefully received by librarians, for it presents a handy subject listing of the resources of many large and small collections having books, manuscripts, portraits, prints, maps, broadsides, clippings, vertical files, periodicals, photographs, phonorecords, pamphlets, posters, postage stamps, seals, lantern slides, miniatures, and autographs.

The introduction by Mr. Ash explains the lack of attention shown to government holdings, both Federal and State; but this lack remains a definite weakness in the book as a reference tool for scholars. The introduction also explains the method followed in accumulating the information. As with all questionnaire methods, the results are something less than ideal, being full of irregularities and inconsistencies. Yet, on the whole, the method in this case has brought together an amount of information on subject collections that should justify a future edition.

Whether or not Sears should be the pattern for a reference tool of this sort is debatable, since the headings are far too general to serve the needs of most users of special collections. This is particularly true in the day of annual



machine-indexing of technical literature by the most specific subject approach. But for small libraries and for general reference work the book will be a quick and handy tool for reference to subject collections in many little-known special libraries and to many subjects, hitherto unsuspected, among the holdings of the larger libraries.

JOSEPHINE COBB

*National Archives*

*Microfilm; a History, 1839-1900*, by Frederic Luther. (Annapolis, National Microfilm Association, [P. O. Box 386], 1959. 195 p., illus. \$7.50; \$4.50 to members.)

In writing this, the first book on the history of microfilm, the author searched through libraries, museums, and private collections for his information. He also corresponded with individuals in foreign countries, gathering bits of information to fit together, as it were, in a jigsaw puzzle. Not all the pieces were found, but a clear guidebook for future research was the product. This printed edition is limited to 500 copies, but microfilm and microprint copies of it will be available. The volume was published under the auspices of the National Microfilm Association and was released at its April 1959 annual meeting in Washington, D. C.

The book starts by discussing the two men who dominated the early days of microfilming, J. B. Dancer, an Englishman, and René Dagron, a Frenchman. These two were followed by innumerable others in Europe and America.

The author proceeds from "The Advent of Microfilm" to "The Appearance of Micro-Archives," pointing out that the whole archives of a nation may be packed away in very small compass to avoid the possibility of destruction by fire, theft, vermin, or deterioration.

Stories of France, with its balloons and exciting events during the siege of Paris, are dramatic enough to be fiction instead of history. Equally well portrayed is the corrupt dealing of the French military. The French Government of this period was a blight upon France; and the microfilm pioneer, Dagron, suffered at its hands.

The "Treatise on Microscopic Photography" by Dagron is factual and basic. The group of attractive illustrations adds much interest to the book; and I particularly enjoyed the prints made of one of Dancer's microfilms, dating from about 1860, and the world's first microfilm patent.

One chapter summarizes microfilm developments in chronological order and thus helps the reader to relate them to world events. Biographical notes serve to acquaint the reader with the leaders in the history of this great and growing profession. "Microfilm Processes" are listed and explained in another chapter. Two others offer a wealth of reference material that should be of great interest and value to others attempting research in the field. The last chapter, written by Vernon D. Tate, tells of the organization, purposes, publications, and work of the National Microfilm Association. Membership and participation in this association can be useful to anyone in microfilm work.



This entertaining and comprehensive history will be valued by all who work with microfilm. Since it takes us only to the beginning of the twentieth century, however, the need remains for a history of microfilm from 1900 on, which I understand Mr. Luther is planning to write.

DOROTHY K. TAYLOR

*Microfilm Division*

*Wyoming State Archives and Historical Department*

*Guide to Microreproduction Equipment*, ed. by Hubbard W. Ballou. (Annapolis, National Microfilm Association, 1959. 438 p., illus. Processed. \$4.)

Compiled and published with assistance from the Council on Library Resources, Inc., this compact volume is in reality a catalog of the microproduction equipment currently available and is an invaluable reference tool for archivists and record administrators who direct microfilm operations or who use microfilm for preserving archives and records. Not less is its value to librarians who use and service materials in microform.

The book gives an objective and methodical presentation of all standard equipment of the many companies discussed. The data sheets and illustrations for each machine should enable the archivist, librarian, or other user to study and compare the features of various items and so to evaluate and prepare specifications for purchases. The method of grouping and indexing the classes of equipment is especially useful.

The volume, to be used successfully, presupposes a considerable knowledge of all phases of microreproduction. The novice would be overwhelmed by the display of so many machines, without critical evaluation.

As a practicing archivist much concerned with the problems of microfilming and related activities, the reviewer considers this book an essential reference tool, and regrets only the limitation of the edition. It was distributed to members at the 1959 annual meeting of the National Microfilm Association. A very limited number of additional copies are available through the office of Vernon D. Tate, Secretary, N. M. A., P. O. Box 386, Annapolis, Md.

DOLORES C. RENZE

*Division of State Archives and Public Records*  
*Denver, Colorado*

*Royal Fort Frontenac*, tr. and ed. by Richard A. Preston and Leopold Lamontagne. (Champlain Society Publications, Ontario Series 2; University of Toronto Press, 1958. xxx, 503 p., appendixes. \$5.)

One cannot overstate the value of the work undertaken by the Champlain Society for the government of Ontario in the field of publishing historical documents. The second volume of its series, under the title *Royal Fort Frontenac*, concerns not only a great Canadian province but also the general history of Canada and its relations with the New England colonies. From this point of view one should not underestimate the important role played by Fort Frontenac in the conflicts between France and England in North America.

The documents assembled by Professors Preston and Lamontagne testify to the strategic value of the fort during the Iroquois wars and the conflicts that put an end to French rule in Canada. Viewed thus the documents here published reflect the militaristic structure of New France and its consequences. They also show the importance of military investments in the destiny of a sparsely settled colony extending from the Gulf of the St. Lawrence to the Gulf of Mexico.

These texts, above all, permit us to see the commercial rivalry that determined the founding and the history of Fort Frontenac, which was essential to the expansion of the fur trade in the West. The general terms of the rivalry are suggested by two questions. Why did New France not perceive the disadvantage of engaging all its economic activity in a single field? Why was there no understanding of the enormous advantage of the English colonies, which were able to support themselves in their struggle for mastery of the fur trade by a more dynamic and more diversified economy? It is interesting to find again in these texts the crucial problem of the costs of transportation, which increased for the French in step with their territorial expansion. The freezing over of the St. Lawrence during 6 months of the year was a permanent handicap. The disparity in the cost of trade goods and furs between the competitors was overwhelmingly in favor of the English colonies. On the French side administrative costs continued to rise and the margin of commercial profits to recede.

The difficulties inherent in the economy of New France explain the weakness of its traders, who lacked either the ability or the knowledge to establish a more rational system for developing the fur trade in the face of foreign competition. It is interesting that the traders and their backers were almost always the advocates of an unlimited expansion of trade. On the other hand the theory of the French metropolitan authorities appeared to favor placing a sounder value on the resources of New France. To exploit those resources effectively, however, the Government would have had to abandon, at least partially, its policy of rigid mercantilism. Yet it is true that the efforts of France in the *Compagnie des Habitants* and the *Compagnie de la Colonie* were attended with unfortunate results.

Finally, the value of the documents for religious history should be mentioned. The repulse of the Sulpicians at their mission of Kenté, the political role assumed by the Jesuits among the Indians, and the resistance of the Indians to the appeal of the missionaries illuminate the politico-religious problems of the era.

*Royal Fort Frontenac* takes its place beside Fernand Grenier's solid edition of the *Contrecoeur Papers* published in 1952. We hope that similar works will be undertaken for Forts Detroit and Niagara. Our knowledge of the economy underlying the French regime would thereby be considerably enriched.

FERNAND OUELLET

*Archives of the Province of Quebec*