

The National Register of Archives

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THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF ARCHIVES, housed in the Public Record Office, London, although a branch of the Historical Manuscripts Commission, had its inception in 1945 less as the result of legislative action than inaction. Several forces had been at work to prompt its origin at that time. For instance, after Dunkirk, the Civil Defense Commissioners needed to know about the important collections of archives within each region in order to take steps toward their preservation. The places of storage of important materials were listed publicly by the British Empire Development and the United Nations Commission, and the lists were included with the War Relocation Authority. These lists were available in various countries, thereby making it possible for anyone to find out where important or rare material was to be found. The state of knowledge that government had toward the whereabouts of many records was a rather old story for example, the Royal Records Office of the British Museum working in 1944 to find the British Public Record Office.

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Տնօրեն Հարությունը պատկերավորապես խոսքովով իմա լուսավորությունը այժմ արտաբերում է ինչպես մեծերը՝ ԲՈՒՄԱՅԵՐԻ ԺԱՆՈՒՆԻՔԻ ՄԻՈՒՆԻՏԵՐԻՆԵՐԻ ՎԻՃԱԿԻՆԵՐԸ, իսկ երիտասարդները՝ ինչպես մեծերը՝ ԻՄԱՆՈՒՆԻՏԵՐԻ ՎԻՃԱԿԻՆԵՐԸ։

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¹⁴ Է.Է.Պետրոսյան, Մ. Պետրոսյան, «Պրոբլեմներ և լուծումներ ընդհանուր հարկման հարցում», հոկտեմբեր-դեկտեմբեր, 2009 թ. համար, 10-11 էջեր։

¹⁰ *International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry, Nomenclature of Organic Chemistry, 1974, IUPAC, 1974, p. 100; Chemical Abstracts, 70:125000i (1974).*

pare existing records with those reported on in the nineteenth century.³ Historians, for instance, had tried to refer to the records mentioned by George Ormerod in 1819 when he wrote his *History of Cheshire*, and had found that many of them had migrated or were nowhere to be found.⁴ Another force prompting the establishment of the National Register of Archives was the evident destruction of records. A change in the law concerning the keeping of manorial records had threatened widespread destruction of ancient charters and deeds. The quantity of modern documents in itself had called for weeding out on a large scale. Paper salvage drives, inspired by wartime zeal, had also taken their toll.⁵

The Council of the British Records Association stepped into this breach, and, with the Historical Manuscripts Commission as a more-than-willing coworker, caused the formation of the Master of the Rolls Archives Committee in 1943. This Committee sought to determine "the best organization for the administration of archives, and their protection from dispersal" and the best means of implementing such an organization. Its members were Hilary Jenkinson (later Sir Hilary); A. J. Collins (vice H. I. Bell, retired); L. Edgar Stephens and Irene Churchill, representing the British Records Association; and Lord Sackville, E. F. Jacob, and R. L. Atkinson, representing the Historical Manuscripts Commission. The Deputy Keeper of the Public Records served as chairman. To this projected organization the Master of the Rolls Archives Committee assigned the burden of compiling a register of archives on a nationwide basis and the added duty of inspecting both local and private archives.⁶

Since it was believed that a nationwide registration of archives was really an extension of the work with which the Historical Manuscripts Commission had been charged previously, the Commission sought and received from the Treasury funds to undertake the preparation of the register under its surveillance. In this way the experience of the Commission since its inception in 1869 could be capitalized on. The original grant was limited to a period of two and a half years; and the staff consisted of Lt. Col. G. E. G. Malet, O. B. E., registrar; and Kathleen Edwards, assistant registrar. The Public Record Office provided typing services from its own

³ Sir Raymond Evershed, "The National Register of Archives," in the *Times*, Oct. 31, 1955, p. 9, col. f.

⁴ National Register of Archives, *Bulletin* no. 2, p. 46 (London, H. M. Stationery Office, Nov. 1949).

⁵ Historical Manuscripts Commission, *The National Register of Archives*, p. 4 (London, H. M. Stationery Office, 1945; 3d ed., 1949).

⁶ Institute of Historical Research, *Bulletin*, 20:39 (1943-45; issued 1947).

staff.⁷ Thus, in 1945, began the National Register of Archives, a project jointly of the British Records Association, a private organization, and two governmental agencies, the Historical Manuscripts Commission and the Public Record Office, over which presides the Master of the Rolls.

In order to discuss properly the aims of the National Register of Archives, it seems best at this point to define the limits within which the Public Record Office operates:

This office is the main repository for the national archives emanating from the Courts of Law and Departments of State, including the records of special, local, and abolished jurisdictions such as the Star Chamber, and the County Palatine. The forty million documents in the office extend over a period of more than 800 years.⁸

Custody of the *national* archives had been established by legislative acts of 1838 and 1857.

In its infancy the Register stated its aims publicly in a negative fashion. The government, through the Register, was not trying to pry into private archives, nor did it intend to confiscate them. Again, the Register was not an irresponsible government agency seeking to force hordes of private researchers upon owners of archives (however willing these owners might be). On the positive side, the Register's primary aim was to discover the location and extent of all local archival collections in England. According to Sir Raymond Evershed, Master of the Rolls, the phrase "local and private archives" included

records of all kinds of local authorities, county councils, urban and rural district councils, and parishes; diocesan and other ecclesiastical records of all kinds; records of semi-public institutions, universities, colleges, schools, hospitals, and endowed charities; records of public utility, business and professional undertakings and the muniments, many of them of great antiquity and immense historical value, of private individuals.⁹

As byproducts of this survey of local archives there were to be produced one central or national register and various indexes to the kinds of archives noted above.

To guide the Register in its early work the Historical Manuscripts Commission assigned a directorate with personnel strangely reminiscent of the Master of the Rolls Archives Committee. Members of this directorate were the Deputy Keeper of the Public

⁷ G. E. G. Malet, "Aims and Methods of the National Register of Archives," in John Rylands Library, *Bulletin*, 30: 178-183 (Oct. 1946).

⁸ Theodore Besterman, ed., *British Sources of Reference and Information*, p. 44 (London, British Council of ASLIB, 1947).

⁹ Evershed, in the *Times*, Oct. 31, 1955, p. 9, col. f.

Records; R. L. Atkinson, secretary of the Historical Manuscripts Commission; Mr. Jenkinson and Dr. Churchill, of the British Records Association; and E. F. Jacob.¹⁰ Personnel changes in the staff of the Register came in 1946, when W. Doris Coates became Assistant Registrar, and again in 1952, when Miss Coates became Registrar after the death of Lt. Col. Malet. The original complement of 2 employed on the Register's staff grew with the passing of the years to 11, but this increase was not constant.

A word or two here concerning the difference in scope between the Register and the Historical Manuscripts Commission. The first duty of the Commission was to ascertain the places in which collections of general public interest—papers belonging both to institutions and to private families—were deposited. Thus the work of the Register was like that of the Commission, with, however, exceptions. In 1869 business establishments were not considered to be "institutions." Also, the Commission worked under a self-imposed time limitation (a line drawn at the early nineteenth century), and its reports tended to become more and more highly selective. Then, too, the Commission was not greatly interested in archival accumulations in relation to other similar archival groups. Whether or not a detailed report was to be made for a group of papers depended upon the limitations of time and selectivity. In contrast it was hoped the Register would not assign importance by selection but would survey accumulations as entireties.¹¹

With no time limit as to date of local and private archive accumulation, the Register through its representative Lt. Col. Malet in 1946 could look forward in the next two and a half years to a goal of a million manuscript group registration cards, typed and filed in various indexes. White "master cards" were used for brief outlines of the records of each owner of an archival accumulation, pink cards for detailed itemization of records, and yellow cards for cross-references. Filing these cards under names of ancient parishes or boroughs (according to the location of each archival accumulation) produced a topographical index; another file was arranged under the names of owners of archives. Thus all material recorded by the Register could be found either by location or by owner's name. As a necessary part of the project of registration, Lt. Col. Malet set up a system of classifying the archives into

¹⁰ Institute of Historical Research, *Bulletin*, 20: 39.

¹¹ R. L. Atkinson, in National Register of Archives, *Bulletin*, no. 7, p. 1 (1955); W. Branch Johnson, "The National Register of Archives," in *Amateur Historian*, 1: 127-129 (Feb.-Mar. 1953); Evershed, in the *Times*, Oct. 31, 1955, p. 9, col. f; and Whitaker's *Almanac*, p. 426 (London, 1958).

types similar to those already mentioned by Sir Raymond Evershed, Master of the Rolls. These were subdivided into types of groups such as "Lord Lieutenancies, Sheriffs, Coroners, Quarter Sessions, County Councils, Boroughs, Districts, Statutory Authorities, etc; and again into Subject divisions and Classes, such as Registers, Minute-books, Correspondence, Court Rolls, and Deeds."¹² A rapid sorting of material wanted by class and locality could be obtained by using coded perforations.

In the early stages of the Register, the reports upon which these typed cards were based were submitted with startling lack of uniformity. The reasons for this were obvious: the Register's lack of power to require uniformity and its notable willingness to get the business at hand started by receiving all reports, whatever their style. Gradually a simple form was evolved to ensure that future reports would contain the type of information wanted. This form covered the following points:

1. Name and address of owner or custodian.
2. Category and classes of documents, with covering dates of each.
3. Names of all places covered by the documents, down to manors, hamlets, and benefices.
4. Names of important persons mentioned, for which purpose the *Dictionary of National Biography* might be used as a rough guide (but local persons of importance were to be included, as well as families mentioned in long series of documents).
5. A very brief description of the content, especially in the case of letters and diaries.¹³

From the simple form put forth as a guide to report writing it might be inferred that all the reports were alike both in form and in content. On the contrary, in the early years of the Register, three types or stages of reports have been considered standard procedure. As Registrar Malet pointed out in his Manchester address of October 1946:

The First Stage form states only the existence of an accumulation, its ownership, and address, and its bare outlines; the Second Stage gives accurate details by Classes; while the Third—a very long term policy—is a simple list of the documents which has the great advantage of enabling any Owner to check any losses.¹⁴

It was evident, too, that the third-stage report could help scholars

¹² Malet, in John Rylands Library, *Bulletin*, 30: 178-183.

¹³ Lillian Redstone, ed., *Local Records, Their Nature and Care*, p. 223-227 (London, G. Bell & Sons, 1953).

¹⁴ Malet, in John Rylands Library, *Bulletin*, 30: 178-183.

greatly by indicating the location of the desired documents before they asked the owners for access to the records.¹⁵

By the time the Register had completed its framework (a statement of office procedures and policies) it was already well involved in the problem of how best to accomplish its avowed purpose—the registration of all archives in every class (other than those covered by the Record Office and Probate Acts). Previous registration of documents had taken the form of printed catalogs; and these would later be used for the Register's reports. The more urgent concern of the Register was to seek out neglected or unlisted collections. The printed catalogs could be made a second choice of means for attaining the Register's goal since these published works were always available for consultation, and while incomplete in themselves, they did list known documents already housed in institutions. If the Historical Manuscripts Commission and its branch, the National Register of Archives, had been equipped with mandatory power, a proclamation accompanied by admonishments would have brought a flow of reports from owners from the very beginning. But owners could not be compelled to reveal their archives—let alone report them to a governmental agency. The Register was ready and willing to cooperate with the owners, but a long campaign of education lay ahead before the owners, in appreciable numbers, would cooperate with the Register.¹⁶

In the various shires of England the local historical and archaeological societies, some of them of very long standing and with an enviable publication record, constituted a means of bridging the gap between the Register and the owners of archival collections. To these societies the Register turned for assistance in its program. Local record offices, too, were approached with a request to provide the Register with lists of documents on loan to them or otherwise in their safekeeping. It is true that some of the older local record offices regarded the Register as an invader of their special domain. Some archivists and historians expressed the opinion that the Register's program was a mere duplication of effort and was therefore unwanted. From their attitude it was apparent that not only owners but also archivists, historians, and librarians needed persuasion to cooperate.¹⁷

The Register went to the people also, at the grassroots level. The Historical Manuscripts Commission, in 1945 and again in 1949, published a seven-page pamphlet to broadcast its appeal for

¹⁵ Historical Manuscripts Commission, *The National Register*, p. 7 (3d ed.).

¹⁶ Johnson, in *Amateur Historian*, 1: 127-129 (Feb.-Mar. 1953).

¹⁷ Redstone, *Local Records*, p. 223-227.

assistance. (Sagely enough, the Register is *not* mentioned in the first five pages, and but briefly on the sixth.) This appeal was directed to owners and custodians of documents and to persons with specialized knowledge, of subjects or of neighborhoods, upon which the Register might draw. "By answering a very few questions of simple fact in regard to the existence, nature and location of the Archives in their own or their friends' possession," the pamphlet enjoins at the end, "they will, *without prejudicing in any way the rights of ownership*, be making a valued contribution to their Country's History both National and Local."¹⁸ The Commission believed that certain persons already trained in making friendly contacts with people, such as the village doctor or the parish priest, could visit any home or institution, secure the necessary information, and report back to the Register. But voluntary helpers of all classes and callings were needed, and their efforts were welcomed both by the Commission and the Register.

The voluntary helper organization was usually organized by shires, with a county secretary as the nominal chairman. Invitations to inaugural county meetings ranged in number from 1,000 for a small county to 3,000 for a large one. Similarly, the size of the county committees varied. In 1948, Buckinghamshire had a 21-member committee and the committees of Bedfordshire and Essex had 45 and 57 members respectively. No stereotyped pattern of organization was followed, each county chose the framework best suited to its interests, and there might be area as well as county secretaries. For a large county there might be committees for the hundred, the rural district, or the rural deanery, with an executive committee acting under the county secretary.

many of whom, possessing no special knowledge, relied on tact, common sense, and familiarity with the region in doing their assigned work. By designating areas to each worker, the county committee was ensured against duplication of effort and against failure to cover the entire area under its jurisdiction. Several duties of the county committees were concerned, naturally, with the reports made on local archival collections. A salient duty of the committees was to provide suitable housing for these reports while they were being gathered in preparation for the Register.²⁰

In order to encourage voluntary workers and to stimulate them to greater endeavors, exhibitions of documents already reported on were held and both local and national conferences took place. Typical of these conferences was the sixth, an account of which, quoted from a publication of the British Records Association, follows:

The Sixth Conference of the National Register of Archives was held at Vinters' Hall (London) on Thursday 22 March 1956. The morning was arranged as a time for informal meeting and discussion; against a background of refreshments and an impressive Exhibition showing the progress of the Register's work. This included besides photocopies of documents from notable archives whose rescue or deposit the Commission had arranged, specimens of lists and inventories reproduced by the Register's photoprinting apparatus for distribution to record offices, libraries and other places of research. The more formal meeting took place in the afternoon, with Sir Hilary Jenkinson in the chair. Mr. S. D. Freer, the Assistant Registrar, spoke on the Newcastle papers, formerly at Clumber, and now through the agency of the Register deposited at Nottingham University. Miss Alison Reeve spoke on the records of the Foundling Hospital; and Mr. H. M. Colvin spoke of the National Register as seen by an historian and user of documents. The Conference was concluded by a visit and speech from the Master of the Rolls.²¹

As regards the Register's relationship with owners of archival collections, within the London area in particular owners have invited the Register to make an inspection of their papers. This inspection service, started on a very small scale, has grown rapidly. If owners were unprepared to preserve their collections and to permit scholars to have access to them, the Register was ready to suggest places for permanent deposit or long-term loan. Sir Raymond Evershed has pointed out that such action of the Register was the chief factor in preventing valuable collections of archives from being dispersed or entirely lost.²² The Newcastle papers, mentioned as a subject of discussion at the sixth conference, are an example of a discovery made during an inspection. For many years

²⁰ Malet, in John Rylands Library, *Bulletin*, 30: 178-183.

²¹ *Archives*, 2: 438 (1956).

²² Evershed, in the *Times*, Nov. 1, 1955, p. 9, col. f.

historians had searched fruitlessly for these papers. As a result of the Register's services the owner was relieved of the burden of caring for the collection, and historians gained access to it at Nottingham University. Miss Coates has emphasized the historical importance in this collection, of the "correspondence between the first Duke and his brother Henry Pelham, when Prime Minister; correspondence of the second Duke with Lord Bute, the elder Pitt and Sir Henry Clinton, who was Commander-in-Chief during the American War of Independence."²³

Deposits of collections are arranged with great care, and the negotiations for several deposits may occupy the staff of the Register at one and the same time. Because the owners of important and interesting archival groups must respect both the rights and the wishes of their heirs, the Register has usually recommended that the material be deposited locally in a record office, a public library, or a college or university library, under a long-term loan.

For publicity the Register has used several media. Posters have been distributed, broadcast talks given, and conferences held. The chief reliance, however, has been on the printing and distribution of bulletins, averaging 44 pages. These bulletins were issued at first as part of a training program to guide county committees in their work and to inform them of what other county committees were doing with equivalent manpower but with differing points of view. It was possible in these bulletins to reaffirm the goals of the Register and to point out by comparison with actual conditions certain areas more deserving of the local committees' attentions. The emphasis later changed to providing research workers with information suitable to their needs. As for the current manner of distributing the *Bulletin*, Miss Coates states:

Both Bulletins and LIST OF ACCESSIONS have been distributed *gratis* to the larger libraries and Institutions in the United States as well as in the British Isles, the Commonwealth and a few European countries. This year, however, at the direction of the Commissioners, the LIST OF ACCESSIONS TO REPOSITORIES is being sold by H. M. Stationery Office and included in their list of publications.²⁴

The National Register of Archives, published first in 1945, with a third edition in 1949, is not to be confused with the publications of the Register, the full catalog entry of which is as follows:

Great Brit. Historical manuscripts commission. National register of archives. Bulletin, no. 1. London, H. M. Stationery Office, Nov. 1948. 24 p.

²³ "Inspections by the Register's Staff," in National Register of Archives, *Bulletin* no. 7, p. 4 (Winter 1955).

²⁴ W. D. Coates to L. W. Van Kersen, Feb. 3, 1959.

- Bulletin, no. 2. London, H. M. Stationery Office, Nov. 1949. 54 p.
- Bulletin, no. 3. London, H. M. Stationery Office, Nov. 1951. 56 p.
- Bulletin, no. 4. London, H. M. Stationery Office, 1953. 47 p.
- Bulletin, no. 5. London, H. M. Stationery Office, 1954. 37 p.
- Bulletin, no. 6. List of accessions to repositories. London, H. M. Stationery Office, Summer 1955. 52 p.
- Bulletin, no. 7. London, H. M. Stationery Office, Winter 1955. 30 p.
- [Bulletin, no. 8.] List of accessions to repositories [in 1956]. London, H. M. Stationery Office, 1957. 49 p.
- Bulletin, no. 9. London, H. M. Stationery Office, 1957. 29 leaves, *photoprinted*.
- Copyrighted in 1958, but not in the Bulletin series: List of accessions to repositories in 1957. London, H. M. Stationery Office, c1958. 40 p.
- These bulletins (others than nos. 6 and 8) are available in the following form:

1952. Secretary Atkinson's foreword was a tribute to Lt. Col. Malet, and he referred to the Register's original aim as "a brief directory of archives to be primarily compiled from printed sources," with local publishing societies called upon to verify the information thus obtained. Miss Coates noted that the staff had been decreased because of a national economy move; that the index of personal names was not detailed but selective and that school, business, and professional records were not getting sufficient attention from the county committees. Among county activities, the publication of the *Guide to the Berkshire Record Office*, with the assistance of the Register's voluntary helpers, seemed worthy of note. No less than 58 owners or titles of archival collections were mentioned in the "notes on some reports," 46 names appeared in the "List of County Honorary Secretaries," and 1,268 reports had been received from July 1, 1952, to May 31, 1953.

In *Bulletin* no. 5, 1954, the foreword mentioned briefly Sir Hilary Jenkinson's retirement after 40 years of service. Mr. Atkinson could not be too severe about the apparent hoarding of archival collections in banks, solicitors' offices, and furniture repositories. The Registrar's notes again referred to areas in which more activity on the part of county committees could be expected, deplored the acute shortage of voluntary helpers with time and knowledge to make detailed reports, and reminded readers that reports already sent in must be kept up to date by informing the Register of any changes either in ownership or location. Proceedings of the fifth conference, mentioned earlier in this article, were reported in this bulletin. Reports received from June 1, 1953, to May 31, 1954, numbered 1,203. The "selected reports" summarized the collections of 86 owners. These were prefaced with the note:

It is particularly requested that no approach should be made to the owners of the documents, except through the Historical Manuscripts Commission; since, owing to shortage of staff, many owners have difficulty in dealing with such enquiries. This does not apply to deposited documents; in such cases application should be made to the custodians.

Bulletin no. 6, *List of Accessions to Repositories*, marked a departure from the usual contents of the bulletins but was a continuation of material formerly published by the Institute of Historical Research in its own bulletin. That publication had listed, in two parts, migrations of historical manuscripts: first, from booksellers' and auctioneers' catalogs, information about manuscripts for sale; and second, from the annual reports of national and local

repositories, information about manuscripts received through purchase, gift, or deposit. The Register undertook to publish the second feature only; the other has continued to be published in the Institute of Historical Research *Bulletin*. The Register's first list of accessions gave brief reports from 86 national or local repositories, but without an index. Space limitations prevented including the names of all depositors, but complete information could be obtained from the Register's central office files. As for omitting an index, it was decided that the appearance of an index in each list of accessions would result in an awkward and cumbersome reference tool. It was necessary, however, to remind students and historians, as well as other users of the list, that card indexes for the material recorded were available at the Register's headquarters in London.

National repositories are the Public Record Office, the Scottish Record Office, and the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. (For Scotland, a full summary of records transmitted to the Register House in Edinburgh appears in the unpublished "Annual Report of the Keeper of the Records of Scotland," and a list of the principal accessions is published each October in the *Scottish Historical Review*.) Next in importance to the national repositories are the five copyright libraries: the British Museum, the Bodleian Library, the Cambridge University Library, the National Library of Scotland, and the National Library of Wales. The bulletin devoted 3 pages to the reports of these important libraries, 23 to accessions of county record offices, and 17 to "Other Institutions." Since the arrangement of institutions within groups is alphabetical under place name, an alphabetical list of repositories is provided at the end.²⁵

Bulletin no. 7, Winter 1955, appearing soon after the list of accessions, celebrated the Register's decennial year. In his foreword Secretary Atkinson engaged in a retrospective survey:

The main innovations of the Register as originally envisaged were the absence of any limitations of date and the emphasis on the importance of regarding an archive group as an organic whole. . . .

It was not of course supposed that the Register could go into as much detail as the printed [Commission] Reports, but it was hoped that it might give some idea of the whole range of an accumulation rather than pick out the most important documents. At first indeed what was contemplated was something in the nature of a directory summarizing in a few lines the general

²⁵ A full summary and detailed analysis of archival groups in the list of accessions is reserved for *Bulletin* no. 10, 1958.

nature and extent of each archive accumulation with covering dates; but it soon became clear that such a summary to be at all accurate or useful must be based on and reduced from much fuller and more detailed information.

Secretary Atkinson was convinced that the Register had not followed the example of the Historical Manuscripts Commission of giving undue importance to family documents; he stated, to prove his point, that a comparison of the different types of records reported up to October 1955 had shown 43.2% parish as against 41.5% family papers. While this left but 15.3% for all other kinds of records, it could be demonstrated that family papers, particularly of the manorial period, contained source material for the study of local government and sometimes included references to institutions as well.

Miss Coates contributed to *Bulletin* no. 7 a summary, "The National Register of Archives, 1945-1955." The general inference of this ten-year report was that the Register had grown to be a national institution, changing both its form and scope. Indicative of this trend was the fact that the original index—which recorded only actual location of the manuscripts, not the places to which their contents related—had developed into several voluminous indexes (one of place-names, another of persons, and still another of subjects). This bulletin revealed also the result of inspections made by the staff of the Register upon invitation of the owners of archival collections. Several important groups of papers were turned up, including those of Spencer Perceval, the Prime Minister, and those of the first Viscount Hardinge as Governor-General of India, 1844-48. The Register pointed with pride to the first large deposit, that of the Fitzwilliam manuscripts from Wentworth Woodhouse. These papers had been received by the Sheffield Central Library on a long-term loan arranged through the Register. In the report of county activities, tribute was paid to local archivists and librarians, who were supplying most of the accession reports. Local record offices had profited from this work in that a local repository often obtained on deposit the very documents upon which it had reported. In "reporting activities" of county organizations, the county record office of London headed the list with a survey of parish records for nearly half of London south of the Thames. In Northumberland, while the librarian was on the trail of some missing minute books of the guild of barber-surgeons (which he did not find), he discovered a set of records that had

of two pottery firms were reported on: Watson's Pottery of Wattisfield, Suffolk (title deeds from 1735); and Josiah Wedgwood & Sons, Ltd., Staffordshire (chemical experiment books of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Staffordshire deeds from the thirteenth century, and pattern books of the nineteenth century). Another interesting report was that of the Nightingale Training School for nurses, London, listing correspondence of

in the Bishopric Estates and the Dean & Chapter Estates. Letters from Welsh emigrants to America, 1795-1878, are in the possession of the University College of North Wales, at Bangor. The Berkshire Record Office lists (among other things) minute books of the Vale of the White Horse Monthly Meeting, Society of Friends, 1676-1789. Most of the accessions to the Lincolnshire Archives Office were family and estate records. This is not unusual in county record offices; of the 38 such offices that listed their accessions, only 4 do not mention family and estate records. Under Class V, "Other Institutions," are city libraries, museums, and special trusts, such as the Shakespeare's Birthplace Trust, at Stratford-upon-Avon. The last, by the way, does not mention having accessioned any Shakespeare manuscripts currently, but it has received, apart from the usual family and estate records, 18 plans, 1847-1902, of the Stratford workhouse.

Bulletin no. 9 lacked the usual foreword by Secretary Atkinson; an obituary notice paid tribute to his wise guidance of the accounts and affairs of the Register from its founding. (In his stead, R. H. Ellis was appointed Secretary on Mar. 1, 1957.) The Registrar noted an increased demand for information about private archives (almost too much for the small staff to handle); progress on the various indexes; the manner of distributing the "lists of accessions"; the tracing of dispersed collections and their reassembly in the Hampshire Record Office; inspections made and deposits arranged; and the considerable number of private papers which had been turned up by publicity in the *Times* and *Daily Telegraph* and in the Home and French Services of the B. B. C. The Spring-Rice papers, about 300 letters, appeared in this group. The sixth conference of the National Register of Archives, held March 22, 1956, was again reported, but this time from the viewpoint of the Register rather than that of the British Records Association. Under the heading of county activities, the decreasing importance of the local voluntary helper organization was indicated; for, with the decline in the number of voluntary workers and the rapid increase in the number of local record offices, the Register had turned to the latter both for local representation and for gathering information on local archives. In this bulletin, 53 reports were summarized, with several counties submitting more than one report. Buckinghamshire reported a long series of title documents, covering the years 1325-1856, and concerning Gayhurst, the home of Sir Everard Digby, associate of Guy Fawkes in the famous Gunpowder Plot of 1605. One instance of damage by fire due to enemy action was given in the report on the parish registers of St. Paul's Church, Devonport.

Perhaps because of the Registrar's urging, more business archives seem to have been reported upon than in previous issues—for instance, archives of predecessors to Lloyds Bank, 1797-1895, and minute books of the London Lead Company, 1692-1860, in the possession of the North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers. Of interest to students of Canadian history are the Seaton manuscripts, reported on by Devon as "Official and private letters and papers, 1806-63, of Field-Marshal Sir John Colborne, 1st Baron Seaton, (eight boxes), covering his military service and his periods of office in Guernsey, Canada, the Ionian Islands, and Ireland, including many papers on the Canadian Rebellion of 1837-1838." After an interval of almost 80 years, during which the papers were thought to be lost, the school records of the King Edward VI Grammar School at Stourbridge, Worcestershire, had been restored. These records date from 1573 and could not have been replaced. In its work of inspection the Register's staff had been called upon to view the archives of Mr. Malet de Carteret on the Island of Jersey and by so doing had established a precedent. The list of county honorary secretaries at the end of this bulletin still numbered 49.

The *List of Accessions to Repositories in 1957*, published in 1958, was included in the Stationery Office's list of publications and was being sold through its branches in the United Kingdom and through booksellers. Repositories are still listed in five groups, in more or less descending order, but their number has grown to 105, of which 78 can supply copies of documents to research workers.

CONCLUSIONS

The National Register and local record offices

At first there was some inevitable duplication of effort in the registration of local archives; and some archivists, librarians, and historians felt strongly that the National Register was usurping their functions. As time went on, however, and the ties between the Register and the local record offices became better established, this antipathy diminished; and still later the views of the opposing camps were reconciled. Those helpers at the local or regional level who provided the Register with most of the registration reports had due recognition; and the local record offices found that they gained from this cooperation by receiving, through deposit or long-term loan, many documents that they had reported to the National Register.

The National Register and other archival agencies

It has been intimated that the National Register was the child of the British Records Association. Although this statement is not strictly accurate, the influence of the Association was important in bringing the National Register into being. A most cordial relationship has existed between the two. The Pilgrim Trust, which in 1950-51 sponsored the survey of ecclesiastical archives, received indirect assistance from the National Register. Accordingly, when the project was completed, the unpublished results of the survey were deposited at the central office of the Register, where they could easily be consulted. Another archival agency with which the Register maintains amicable relations is the Business Archives Council. While this body has been less active within its field than the British Records Association, there is some evidence to suggest that the renewed interest of the council is due to the Register's progress in the registration of business archives.

The National Register and "registerable" documents

It is not surprising that some owners of documents held by families for centuries with little if any regulation by the civil government should consider them relatively unimportant and certainly not worth recording by the local archivist or registering by the National Register. Invitations to such owners met with no response. At one time Secretary Atkinson had occasion to deplore the "hoarding" of documents in banks, solicitors' offices, and even furniture warehouses, where access to these sizable collections was not freely granted even to the owners and where availability to others was an impossibility. Much stalwart local effort, assisted by the inspection staff of the Register, was needed to overcome this great impediment to the registration program.

Limitations of the registration system

Although it is true that the exact place of deposit of a particular collection can be obtained from the files at the National Register's central office, this assurance applies only to deposited collections, not to the registration reports as a whole. Secretary Atkinson, in *Bulletin* no. 3, stated clearly the Historical Manuscripts Commission's need for information concerning actual or expected changes of ownership and location; and the Registrar's notes in *Bulletin* no. 5 contained a reminder that changes of ownership or location must be reported to the Register. The Register's information thus seems to be in a state of flux. Better recognition of the services performed by the Register, a widespread appeal to clipping bureaus,

and a new direction to the Register's publicity program might achieve the goal of up-to-date information.

Publicity for the National Register

Examples of good publicity for the National Register of Archives are: Sir Raymond Evershed's articles in the *Times*, the "Notes" in the *Institute of Historical Research Bulletin*, the special pamphlet on the National Register prepared and published by the Historical Manuscripts Commission, the article by Registrar Malet in the *John Rylands Library Bulletin* (see footnote 20), and, of course, the bulletins of the National Register itself.

Of doubtful value was the comment by the editor of the *Amateur Historian* depicting the National Register as a "new organization" when in reality it was then (February 1953) already almost ten years old. Likewise, the comment by Lord Leconfield that the requirements of the National Register were "slightly totalitarian" required a vigorous rebuttal from Miss Coates.

Another indication of the need for more publicity in the right places is a prominent advertisement in *Notes and Queries for Somerset & Dorset* (vol. 27, no. 267, Mar. 1958), as follows:

The British Association for American studies is engaged in a 2-3 year project of listing and briefly describing all sources of manuscript material in the United Kingdom that are relevant in any way to American history. We are particularly anxious to tap local knowledge and sources of information, and we are most grateful for any clues about where such material may be found. Possible sources are the archives of firms who may have traded with the United States; the archives of friendly societies, trade unions, or philanthropic bodies who may perhaps have sponsored migration schemes to the United States in the 19th century; and of course letters in the hands of private individuals.

It does not appear that the National Register was consulted before this advertisement was placed.

Parliament and the National Register

Parliament has been a niggardly godfather to the National Register of Archives. The Register began operations in the most parsimonious way, and whatever growth it has experienced has been due less to legislative guidance than to the wise counsel and devoted fostering of Secretary Atkinson. Perhaps for the National Register to come to its full maturity, there is need for another Lord Greene, whose Committee with the sanction of the Treasury first brought about the establishment of the National Register of Archives.