

# Reviews of Books

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*A Report to the President Containing a Proposal by the National Historical Publications Commission To Meet Existing and Anticipated Needs Over the Next Ten Years Under a National Program for the Collection, Preservation, and Publication, or Dissemination by Other Means, of the Documentary Sources of American History.* (Washington, 1963. vii, 61 p.)

This *Report* by the National Historical Publications Commission, with its proposal "to meet existing and anticipated needs over the next ten years," should be read by every archivist and historian. It is heartening to the former and educational for the latter. As a public document addressed to the reading public on the matter of the documentary sources of American history, it puts the proposition of their collection, preservation, and publication in the framework of "History as an enduring human need"—not the trite "lessons" that history is said to teach, but the profound importance of history "because it enriches life" and provides man with "the means of transcending space and time." This is the philosophy behind the Commission's program to cooperate with public and private agencies and institutions in preserving the papers of outstanding citizens and, under favorable circumstances, in editing and publishing them. Since 1950 it has given encouragement and support to 20 documentary projects. Published volumes of the papers of Adams, Hamilton, Madison, and others, appearing year after year, have been received with acclaim for their scholarship. It is generally agreed that the abundant source material becoming available in print is opening a new era in historical research and writing.

So far so good; but the major purpose of the present *Report* is to point out the issues and opportunities presented by "this new kind of scholarship." Most of these projects are faced with voluminous records for careful selection and editing. Therefore they require long-range planning and assurance of adequate funds for extended operation. Private philanthropy and foundations have provided some financial support, public appropriations much less; but the total has been infinitesimal in comparison with the billions spent for research in the natural sciences. Besides the need for funds there is a grave shortage of historical editors. Graduate schools have been remiss about providing training in the evaluation of manuscripts and in the techniques and art of historical editing. Indeed, the historical profession has shown an attitude of indifference toward the inception of these editorial projects although professional reviews acknowledge their inestimable value for further research. Uncertainty of future support for continuing them and for launching others is, of course, no encouragement to young historians. Financial needs must be met realistically on a

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long-term basis commensurate with the significance of this editing and publishing program to the American people and their history.

Therefore the Commission has projected a 10-year program of \$1,000,000 per annum, to be obtained equally from public funds and private sources and administered by the Commission in support of projects already underway and at its discretion of new ones. The proposed authorizing legislation (appendix A) specifies an appropriation of half a million dollars a year to the General Services Administration for this purpose. This proposal, embodied in the Commission's *Report*, received enthusiastic endorsement by the President of the United States, and a bill (H.R. 6237) to this end was passed by the House of Representatives by a narrow margin on October 15. A detailed "Progress Report" of the Commission's programs and projects (appendix B) affords a handy survey of their present status.

Whether or not the public funds are secured and are matched by support from foundations, the present *Report*, in its review of the Commission's establishment and program, its survey of notable accomplishment in historical editing during recent years, and its projection of what this effort will mean to the cultural advancement of the Nation, becomes a milestone of archival and historical scholarship. If the Commission's proposal meets with success, the "new era" of historical research and writing will have a bright future.

LESTER J. CAPPON

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*Guide to Microforms in Print, 1962 and 1963*, ed. by Albert James Diaz. (Washington, Microcard Editions, Inc., 1962; 1963. ix, 81 p.; 90 p. Each edition, \$4.)

*Subject Guide to Microforms in Print, 1962-63*, ed. by Albert James Diaz. (Washington, Microcard Editions, Inc., 1963. ix, 69 p. \$4.)

The *American Archivist* reviewed the first edition of this *Guide* in its October 1961 issue (24: 466). Mr. Diaz has since gone on to produce two further compilations for 1962 and 1963, and a particularly noteworthy *Subject Guide* for 1962-63 that will make his materials much more usable by subject specialists of every kind, including the archival. The 42 publishers of 1961 have increased to 50: Florida, Tulane, and Yale have joined the universities, and there are organizations with such nonspecific names as Academic Services Corporation and Consultants Bureau Enterprises. A new form has been added to the original six—the microfiche, which, one can learn from the advertisement section, is "a translucent film in sheet form with all the advantages of film combined with the index card concept." As yet, so far as I can discover, nothing is available on microfiche except the *Journal de Chirurgie* for 1954-58, and the vast majority of entries continue to be either on microfilm or on microcards of the Microcard Corporation.

To readers of this journal the most interesting development will be the *Subject Index*, for which Mr. Diaz has devised a homemade system of classification by applying numbers from 20 to 1440 to the *Outline of the Library of*

*Congress Classification*; Archives and Diplomatics, *CD* in the Library's classification, is 190 in Mr. Diaz' scheme. Nearly four whole columns, or two whole pages, appear under this heading, but unfortunately it does not bring together all the material of archival or manuscript interest. The Adams papers, which I noticed last time, and the Henry Knox papers, which I might have noticed but, not having the advantage of a *Subject Guide*, succeeded in overlooking, are entered under 450, United States History to the Civil War. The microfilms of the 55 volumes of Knox papers are offered by the Massachusetts Historical Society for \$375. The Mexican diplomatic notes and Panama archives have been entered under 500, Latin America. Under 270, Great Britain, are the Reports of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, 1870-1946, available from Microcard Editions for \$850—the first appearance of material of archival interest on these cards, if I am not mistaken. These and a few others ought to have duplicate entries under class 190 in future issues of the *Subject Guide*.

Within that section, new entries include the eight groups of records of Tobago, 1802-82, and the governor's despatches from Trinidad, 1814-45, the price of which the University of Florida is willing to disclose on request. Otherwise, the new material comes from the steady progress of the National Archives in putting masses of its records on microfilm. Fourteen series of the State Department's records (Record Group 59) concerning political relations with and the internal affairs of several nations, including China, Germany, and Russia, 1910-29, may be had for \$4,267. The Navy Department's abstracts of officers' service records, 1798-1893, and miscellaneous letters received and sent by the Secretary (Record Groups 24 and 45—the Secretary's correspondence with commanders of squadrons, captains, and lesser officers has long since been available on film) cost \$3,460. From the Treasury Department, the Customs Bureau's indexes to passenger lists of vessels arriving at Baltimore, 1820-97, and other ports (Record Group 36) are priced at \$1,568; the lists themselves had been filmed in earlier years. All three of the Diaz *Guides* are well produced, but there are a few scrambled entries: on page 27 of the *Subject Guide* a line from the War Department's Collection of Confederate records has landed under the certificates of the ratification of the Constitution, and on page 83 of the 1963 *Guide* the publications of the Department of Justice and the Joint Publications Research Service have become strangely interfused.

DONALD H. MUGRIDGE

### *Library of Congress*

*Film Cataloguing Rules*, comp. by the Cataloguing Committee of the Aslib Film Production Librarians Group. (London, Aslib [3 Belgrave Square, SW 1], 1963. 71 p. 18 s.)

With David Grenfell as chairman, this Aslib-Cataloguing Committee was commissioned to discover what standardization might be possible in film cataloging procedures and film technical terms and abbreviations. Film libraries were found to be concerned in varying degree with film distribution, docu-

mentary and feature film production, government film activities and research, archival preservation, and preservation of show copies, stock material, sound effects, and music. The committee members saw clearly that efficient cooperation among film libraries of all types requires that their holdings be recorded in conformity with definite principles or rules. Hence they undertook to compile a descriptive cataloging code for film.

From existing codes the committee adopted many rules either in whole or in part. For newsfilms and picture and sound material they formulated rules. The result of their efforts is the most complete film cataloging guide yet available. It differs from previous film codes principally in that it omits filmstrips and that it provides for sound and picture materials. From the text I assume that "picture material" refers to incomplete films that are preserved for their historic or scientific value or for use in the production of new films.

The manual is arranged in the following divisions: complete films; newsfilms; picture material; sound material: sound effects; sound material: dubbing tracks; added entries; capitals, punctuation, and figures; definitions; specimen entries; and index.

Definitions constitute an important supplement to any code of cataloging rules. In a special field they have particular significance for the novice cataloger. Those in this manual's list appear to be generally adequate but sometimes brief. "Picture material" is defined as comprising "Films on which the visual image or likeness of an object has been photographically recorded," a purely generic definition. But this is a small matter in a work that has brought organization to an area of much complexity. The manual's format and typography are attractive, and the subject matter is well organized. Standardization in the format of entries, however, proved an elusive goal. But while this lack might prove an inconvenience to a new cataloger in a new film library, it should give the cataloger with experience little difficulty. The committee is to be congratulated on having achieved its major goal, the distillation of principles from a considerable body of film cataloging practice into a practical system of rules.

DOROTHY ARBAUGH

*Copyright Office*  
*Library of Congress*

*Guide to the Manuscript Collections in the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia*, comp. by Venia T. Phillips and Maurice T. Phillips. (Philadelphia, Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, 1963. xxvi, 553 p. \$7.50.)

Since its founding in 1812, the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia has accumulated about 185,000 manuscript items. Besides the papers of many natural historians, the collections include the archives of the academy, part of the archives of the American Entomological Society, and papers of many organizations in and near Philadelphia. After the usual introductory matter, the *Guide* consists of a list of the collections in alphabetical order by name; the entries for the collections in the order of the numbers assigned to each; a subject index; and an author index to the some 15,500 signers of letters and docu-

ments in most of the collections. The "informal discussion" of each collection in the entries is often quite useful for biographic and bibliographic details. Because of the value of the academy's holdings this is a most welcome addition to scientific bibliography.

Unfortunately, the volume cannot be recommended as a model for other learned and professional organizations planning to describe their manuscripts. Many of the standards and procedures used are not in keeping with the best practices of American libraries and archives.

Although the collections are numbered from 1 to 970, there are actually only 700-odd entries, with no explanation given for the gaps. This numerical arrangement is, consequently, of even less use to the reader than the numerical order of the National Archives *Guide*. Preferable would be an arrangement of the entries in the alphabetical order of the first list; even better would be a separation of the archival records (there are 85 "collections" for the academy alone) from the personal papers. When one carefully examines the entries in light of the description of method given by the compilers, it is clear that many of the collections are "lots," *i.e.*, batches of documents accessioned together. Some of the lots presumably vanished in the course of processing—hence the missing numbers; but for obscure reasons some lots comprising true collections were never combined. In the processing the compilers created many artificial collections described as "archived from many sources." Even worse are some arbitrary splits. At one end of the scale is a "collection" (no. 499), the Papers of the Phrenological Society of Philadelphia, which consists of one 1839 letter "Archived from the Academy's files, February 28, 1960." At the other extreme is the fragmentation of the papers of the naturalist Witmer Stone (1866-1939), who was associated with the academy for over 50 years. Although 4 collections bear his name, at least 22 others consist exclusively or largely of letters written to Stone but removed from his papers. The T. S. Palmer collection (no. 680), for example, consists of 751 letters of Palmer to Stone. Such fragmentation of the Stone papers does not help the reader since the indexes do not explicitly connect these other "collections" to Stone, who is neither a subject nor a signer.

It is certainly useful, if a bit redundant, to have 15,500 personal names appear both in the entries and in the name index. Yet such detail seems excessive in a work of this nature. Why not have the corporate authors also? Better still, why not confine this information to the academy's card file in its library? All this devotion to the signers of letters (*i.e.*, incoming letters) is at the expense of information about the other side of the correspondence. Sometimes the entries are not clear on the presence of outgoing letters. For one collection (no. 150) the reader is told that "a large number of carbon answers and manuscript transcriptions of replies have been included but not counted." The reverence for autograph items is often stressed at the expense of information about the contents of the collections. Perhaps the most extreme example is the "ANSP. Correspondence (Analyzed, 'Official') 1812-1920. 18,850 items" (call no. 567), where 41 pages are required to list signers but no information is given as to contents.

I must congratulate the compilers on their successes in running down the

background of many odd collections and single items. A particularly happy feature of the *Guide* is the treatment of natural history in a manner useful to both specialists and laymen.

NATHAN REINGOLD

*Library of Congress*

Denmark. Rigsarkivet. *Ministeriet for Offentlige Arbejder. De Danske Statsbaner. Personalakter*. (Copenhagen, 1963. 558 p. Processed.)

This preliminary inventory lists the names of about 10,000 former employees of the Danish State Railways whose personnel records have been transferred to the Danish National Archives and made available to qualified researchers. The entries are arranged alphabetically, and each gives the full name of the employee, the last position held, the date of birth, and the date of retirement or death. The period covered ends with the year 1931 both for the retirees and for those who died while still in service. A brief preface and an introduction (in English) are both useful and informative.

Of interest certainly to genealogists and perhaps also to railway fans, this sort of massive compilation—with all the attendant research, typing, checking, and proofreading—would presumably be impracticable for most American archival agencies, State or Federal. One shudders to contemplate a similar publication to cover employees of the U.S. Post Office Department or even those of the much smaller TVA, if one thinks only of the entries for the names Jones and Smith. Among its personnel during this period the Danish State Railways had no Jones and only one Smith; but it had many Hansens and Jensens, each of these two names accounting for some 41 pages of entries.

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### **Microfilm Defects**

Earl E. Olson, Librarian-Archivist of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, reported in early January that so far examination of their microfilm and the Genealogical Society's has failed to reveal any spots. If any other readers have carried on similar studies, they are invited to bring them to the attention of the Technical Notes Editor. Those concerned with this problem will want to obtain a copy of National Bureau of Standards *Handbook 96, Inspection of Processed Photographic Record Films for Aging Blemishes*, by C. S. McCamy. The *Handbook*, issued on January 24, 1964, is for sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 20402, at 25¢ a copy. "This publication contains a description of the blemishes, illustrated with photomicrographs in color. It also describes methods used to inspect, sample, and report on the blemishes. It is felt that early publication of this information will serve to unify methods and terminology and thus aid in coordinating the various independent studies of the problem. This handbook should also provide the guidance needed for large-scale inspections of Government records."