

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

EMMETT J. LEAHY, Editor

Box 6154, Washington, D.C.

Guide to the Material in the National Archives, the National Archives, Publication No. 14. (Washington. United States Government Printing Office, 1940. Pp. xviii, 303. \$.40 in paper, \$.70 in cloth.)

This *Guide* contains concise descriptions of the records that have been transferred to the National Archives to December 31, 1939, arranged by *fonds*, under the governmental agencies (Congress, executive departments, independent agencies, judiciary) in which they had their origins. At the end of the *Guide* are printed lists of the moving picture films (1898—) and of the sound recordings (1908—) that have been received as gifts. There is also a general index.

The descriptive paragraphs for each *fonds* are carefully written and are of scrupulous accuracy. They include brief accounts of the creation, history, organization, and functions of the agencies by which the *fonds* have been produced (information indispensable for any understanding of the records themselves), as well as descriptions of the records, the character of their contents, their limiting dates, and their estimated bulk in terms of linear feet, the total of which is given as more than sixty miles.

The *Guide* will be recognized at once as an invaluable first aid to the scholar who wishes to undertake any investigation in the National Archives; its information, necessarily summary, is supplemented for many *fonds* by special indexes, inventories, registers, finding lists, etc., originating in the offices from which the records have come, or compiled by members of the staff of the National Archives. The descriptive paragraphs furthermore include exceedingly useful bibliographical references to published accounts of the records in question, to histories of the agencies, and to other sources of information. One cannot fail to be impressed by the vast amount of thoughtfully directed labor that has gone into the preparation of this apparently simple *Guide*.

The carefully written introduction explains the scope of the *Guide*, the manner of its compilation, and especially presents an interesting and informing picture of the treatment accorded to "new" material as it is received in the National Archives. It is not only interesting but stimulating to be able thus to observe the processes of "becoming" of what is already a great national institution, destined to be one of the greatest institutions of its kind in the world. Those of us who were privileged to work with the late John Franklin Jameson for the creation of the National Archives may well feel that the great vision which he had, and which he shared with us, is at last realized.

As clearly stated in the introduction, the *Guide* deals only with records transferred to the National Archives, and does not include any information relating to records still remaining in the offices of the federal government. These are dealt with, as they are transferred, in quarterly supplements to the *Guide*, entitled *National Archives Accessions*, the first issue of which described the accessions of January-March, 1940.

It is interesting to compare the *Guide* with the second edition of Van Tyne and Leland, *Guide to the Archives of the Government of the United States in Washington* (Carnegie Institution, 1907), for such a comparison reveals a vast number of changes in the agencies of government and of their functions, especially the creation of many independent agencies.

The comparison also reveals additional information respecting records inadequately described in the earlier work. For example, Van Tyne and Leland devotes a single page (p. 230) to the records of the Department of Agriculture, whereas the *Guide* contains fourteen pages (pp. 145-158) relating to them. Similarly, the *Guide* contains a description of the important records of United States diplomatic and consular posts in foreign countries from 1793 to 1937, on which Van Tyne and Leland has nothing, for the excellent reason that those records had not been transferred to Washington when their work was being compiled. On the other hand, Van Tyne and Leland devotes fourteen pages (pp. 58-72) to the records of the secretary's office, Treasury Department, whereas the *Guide* contains only a few short paragraphs relating to those records, most of which have not yet been transferred to the National Archives. Again, the thirty-five pages (pp. 102-136) that Van Tyne and Leland was able to devote to the records of the War Department, thereby incurring the wrath of the redoubtable General Ainsworth, contain considerably more information than is to be found in pages 78-80 and 265-267 of the *Guide*, but the *Guide* also contains information not in Van Tyne and Leland; so the latter work has not yet been entirely superseded, somewhat to the surprise of the surviving compiler, although it is rapidly, and happily, becoming obsolete and will ere long have only the honorable status of an historical document.

WALDO G. LELAND

American Council of Learned Societies

Ship Registers of the District of Barnstable, Massachusetts, 1814-1913. (Boston. Works Progress Administration, National Archives Project, J. W. McElroy, supervisor, 1938. Pp. 163. Mimeographed. Included is the index of owners and masters which is also published separately in a thirty-eight page pamphlet.)

Ship Registers of Dighton-Fall River, Massachusetts, 1789-1938. (Boston. Work Projects Administration, National Archives Project, J. W. McElroy, supervisor, 1939. Pp. 178. Mimeographed.)

Ship Registers of the District of New Bedford, Massachusetts, 1796-1850. (Boston. Work Projects Administration, National Archives Project, J. W. McElroy, supervisor, 1939. Pp. 336. Mimeographed.)

Ship Registers of the District of Newburyport, Massachusetts, 1789-1908, with an introduction by Stephen Willard Phillips. (Salem. The Essex Institute, 1937. Pp. 279.)

Ship Registers of the District of Plymouth, Massachusetts, 1789-1908. (Boston. Works Progress Administration, National Archives Project, J. W. McElroy, supervisor, 1939. Pp. 209. Mimeographed.)

Instructions for the Compilation of Ship Registers and Enrollments, by Dr. Philip M. Hamer of the National Archives for use by the editors of compilations of ship registers and enrollments. (Washington. 1940. Pp. 23. Typed.)

When the Survey of Federal Archives¹ was nearing completion in a number of states, and when there was a sufficient number of customs records in various ports to warrant the undertaking, the compilation of ship registers found among records of custom houses was begun. The first volume of these compilations appeared in 1938 and up to November 1, 1940, volumes have been issued for the customs districts and ports of Dighton-Fall River, Plymouth, Barnstable, Newbury, and New Bedford.

Earlier volumes had been compiled for the Essex Institute, but the full resources of the National Archives were not available. Statutory limitations on nonfederal projects authorized for a particular state prevented such WPA projects from operating outside the boundaries of that state. As a consequence both earlier and later compilations are marred by incompleteness. The fault, however, can be remedied by a reference to the "surrendered" copies now in the National Archives. From 1793 at least, both registers and enrollments were issued in triplicate. One copy was given to the master for use on board the vessel, the second was kept by the collector of customs and the third was sent to the register of the treasury for preservation.² When the master surrendered his copy for any reason, he turned it in to the collector of customs at the nearest port. That official sent a "margin" or abstract to the collector at the port of issue and sent to the register of the treasury all surrendered copies together with all "record" copies issued at his port each day. The register preserved both copies and pasted them into a separate series of books by ports of issue. Occasionally the master's copy was never surrendered because it was lost at sea, mislaid, or stolen. In these cases, however, the record copies on file in the office

¹ State branches of the Survey of Federal Archives in the New England States became known as the National Archives Projects after the survey was discontinued on a federal basis.

² This "record" copy was not sealed and often not properly countersigned. It also was not endorsed with the reason for surrender.

of the register could be used. The register also made a "master abstract" for all ports for each year in which information was given about each register issued.³

The register of the treasury was custodian of the surrendered and record copies of registers and the master abstracts until 1884 when the Bureau of Navigation was established in the Treasury Department. Officials of the new bureau paid more attention to obtaining all of the surrendered copies of ships' registers, so that the surrendered as well as the record file would be complete. The book system of filing was abandoned after 1872 and the records were vertically filed by port and year thereunder rather than by official number⁴ until 1919. Most of the record copies were destroyed during the period, 1890-1910, in spite of the fact that some of them were unique. After their destruction only two copies remained, the collector's copy preserved at the port of issue and the surrendered copy preserved at Washington. The commissioner of navigation could always obtain a copy of any document the collector had; the rub was that in many cases the collector's copy also had been destroyed. The surrendered copies which had been kept in books, 1815-1872, were very badly damaged in a fire in the former commerce department building in 1921, and for a long while the bureau believed that most of them were lost. The remnants were preserved, however, and deputy examiners for the National Archives found them in a storeroom of the new commerce building and had them transferred to the National Archives together with registers for ships built in the period, 1873-1917, and the master abstracts, 1815-1912. From a comparison of the references in the abstracts with the actual documents, an estimate has been made that about one per cent of the more than 475,000 registers and enrollments issued in the period, 1815-1872, has been totally destroyed. Thus some 4,750 documents are missing because they were destroyed by fire; another 9,500 master's copies were never received by the register of the treasury. From the other 460,750 however, it is possible to obtain information similar to that given in the volumes listed at the beginning of this article.

In the Essex Institute volume and in those of the WPA use is made of the customhouse copies for the period, 1789-1801, which were called into Washington by the former Division of Bookkeeping and Warrants of the Treasury Department during 1885-1887, and which are now in the National Archives, but full use is not made of the relatively unbroken series of registers from 1815 to 1917 also in the National Archives. Fortunately, arrangements have now been made with the District of Columbia Historical Records Survey

³ Usually port number, date, name of ship, rig, name of managing owner and master, cause of issue, place and date of previous document, tonnage, and place and date and cause of surrender.

⁴ Official numbers were issued to each American vessel, five tons burden or over, pursuant to the act of July 28, 1866. A vessel kept the same number throughout its history, and numbers were not reissued.

to furnish workers to abstract information from such documents in the National Archives. This information is sent to the individual state projects for incorporation in their volumes. The manual of instructions listed above indicates that the national director of these projects has now given specific, detailed, and complete directions for the compilation of these calendars of ship registers. The new volumes will include not only registers but also enrollments, since for purposes of local history, genealogy, and the history of shipbuilding, such information is of as much value as that gained from registers.

The publications under review, particularly the later volumes prepared by the Massachusetts National Archives Project, include useful lists and tables showing years of building, home ports, collectors of customs, and an index of masters' and owners' names. The shipbuilding table, for instance, shows at a glance information which has seldom been put in so concise a fashion.

The volumes compiled by the WPA compare favorably with that compiled by the Essex Institute and are valuable for local history, genealogy, the history of shipbuilding, and other types of maritime history. Publications compiled by "whitecollar workers," many of whom have not had scholarly training, stand or fall on the quality of their editorship. If the editor knows his business, the material in the volumes tends to be good; otherwise not. These volumes and those being compiled from Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Louisiana, California, Oregon (in progress), and Alabama (to be begun soon) have value to scholars and others if the adage "let the user beware" is kept in mind. This warning, however, holds for all types of historical sources.

FORREST R. HOLDCAMPER

The National Archives

The Preservation of Business Records, prepared by the Business Historical Society. (Boston. 1940. Pp. 56.)

This pamphlet was originally issued as a *Bulletin* of the Business Historical Society in October, 1937. Generally speaking there have been few changes in the content of this edition although larger type was used thus expanding the text some ten pages. Its reissue was made possible by a grant from the Joint Committee on Materials for Research of the Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societies. The original study was prepared by Dr. Ralph M. Hower and Mr. Ralph Ells. The latter did the field work that formed the basis of the specific cases described in the appendix.

Reasons, designed to appeal to the business man, are set forth in short paragraphs arranged typographically to catch the eye and afford a grasp of the arguments even by a cursory turning of the pages. Practical admonitions are judiciously put in the text, one of which is: "If properly handled, the regular retention of useful material, together with systematic destruction of the re-

maining records, will not increase office expense materially and in many cases will really save money, in addition to making essential records accessible for reference." Under a heading, *The Public Demands the Facts*, the authors indicate that popular interest in business has been sharpened by the depression and doubts have been cast upon the usefulness of our entire system of private business enterprise and profit motive. If business feels that much of the adverse criticism arises from ignorance or prejudice, the only remedy for this situation is education. Business must produce its record to defend its system. People cannot dig out the facts themselves and must rely upon the investigations of historians and economists. The responsibility for making the facts of business history known ultimately lies with the business firms themselves for they control the primary source materials.

The authors have set up general principles for the selection of materials for preservation and the suggestions contained in this booklet are detailed and specific enough to be of real value. They apply to all departments of a modern corporation. For example, in the accounting department they would preserve in original form all materials such as day-books, journals, balance sheets, statements, tax returns, records of cost, fixtures, and equipment. They recommend the preservation of samples of accounting forms bearing brief notations of date and method of use. Records of limited historical value such as sales checks, invoices, receipts, time tickets, purchase orders, and the like may safely be destroyed after they have ceased to be of current use. The general administrative and managerial policies are usually the most interesting and important aspects of a firm's history to the historian. All correspondence and memoranda of executives should be preserved permanently, in addition to such obviously permanent records as the charter, articles of incorporation, deeds, title papers, etc.

The business man's attention is called to the desirability of keeping a firm diary and of beginning with the proper materials for permanent records such as rag paper and good ink. That valuable records now being destroyed because of their bulk may be preserved on film occupying but two per cent of the storage space required by the originals, is an argument that appeals to the practical man and will go a long way toward the solution of one of the biggest problems in the preservation of business records.

The appendix constitutes about one-half of the study and comprises discussions of the actual practice of firms in selected industries. Custodians of business records or those in position to advise business men should have copies of this pamphlet at hand so as to be able to place them where they will do the most good. Inquiries should be directed to the executive secretary of the Business Historical Society, Soldiers Field, Boston.

WILLIAM D. OVERMAN

Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society

El Arte de Organizar Bibliotecas, Archivos y Reparticiones en General, by Eduardo Mujica Farias. (Buenos Aires. Bernabé y Cía, 1937. Pp. 414. \$6.30.)

The author of this volume has been active for many years in archives and library work. In 1914 his *Obra del Bibliotecario* appeared and was followed in 1917 by his *El Archivo Moderno*. Since those years several other writings have come from his pen. The volume under review is intended to be a manual of instruction in organizing, classifying, and filing books and documents. Throughout its sixty-five chapters, however, the author continually advocates the applicability of his system known as *Unico Argentino*. This plan the author perfected in his capacity as organizer of the general archives of the Bank of the Argentine Nation.

The many chapters of the book are grouped in thirteen parts. The first is an historical summary concerning some of the principal libraries and archives of the world and of Argentina. It is one of the weakest parts of the volume, and contains some astonishing information. For illustration: in listing, by order of their size, libraries containing 338,000 items and over, only the Library of Congress appears among such institutions in the United States. Another type of error is made when we are asked to judge the development of libraries by comparing the thousands of so-called volumes of the ancient library of Alexandria with those of the present. In relating the historical development of libraries and archives in Argentina, the author is in a better position. The account concerning archival evolution is very much shorter than that on libraries, and credence is given to the patriotic claim that the national institution in Argentina was founded in 1821 by Rivadavia. Rivadavia, however, was at the time a minister of the province of Buenos Aires, not of the nation, and the archival institution which he established was not a national one until 1884.

In a chapter of nearly seventy pages, which, in size, contrasts strangely with some of the one- and two-page chapters, the author considers the arrangement and classification of books, and the organization of libraries. His discussion is based upon a sevenfold division of library items: complete works, incomplete works, periodicals, duplicate copies, official publications, antiquarian items, and manuscripts. He treats at some length the method of shelving, and the mode of entry in a catalogue. The organization of libraries depends upon the size and character of the institutions. Such matters as bibliography, translation, exchange of books, circulation, and manuscripts should be cared for by separate sections.

The chapters pertaining to archives are predominantly discussions of filing methods. The author has a very decided preference for the vertical system. He is a zealous exponent of the loose-leaf and card methods of keeping records and he vigorously elaborates on the disadvantages of the bound book in office work. For an "historical archives," a subject method of classification is advo-

cated, and card finding media are preferred. Space should be provided for documents not yet accessioned. The author has developed and put into use in the Bank of the Argentine Nation a type of equipment which may best be described as a basket-like contrivance placed in a drawer of a cabinet. Its chief advantage is its provision of support for the papers without the expensive compressors.

Considerable space is devoted to schools and study courses in library and archival economy. That part which concerns countries foreign to Argentina leaves a good deal to be desired. For his own country, the author urges that courses be given dealing with cataloguing, classification, bibliography, specialized libraries, and archives history and problems.

Although the Library of Congress classification system is "capricious," and the Dewey and Cutter systems defective, the author heaps praise upon American manufactured calculating machines. Various types and models of European and American machines are compared. Here the author is in his element and speaks as an authority. As a whole the volume may serve the Argentinian as a manual not of library or archives procedure but of current office practices. This is not to detract, however, from its value as a source of information on Argentine library and archival conditions.

ALMON R. WRIGHT

The National Archives

Meddelanden från Svenska Riksarkivet för År 1938. (Stockholm. Kungl. Boktryckeriet, P. A. Norstedt & Soner, 1939. Pp. 181.)

Among the archival establishments of the Scandinavian North, the Swedish State Archives alone has so far escaped the scourge of war. Since that dismal day in April last when the Nazis took over Denmark, the Danish State Archives like all else in that unhappy land has rested under the shadow of brute force. Norway likewise has fallen victim to the Nazis and the chief of the Norwegian archival system, Dr. Asgaut Steinnes, who in May, 1939, visited the United States (see *THE AMERICAN ARCHIVIST*, II, October, 1939, pp. 272-275) in furtherance of his plans for a new archives building in Oslo, has had of course to abandon all such efforts. Both the Norwegian and Danish archivists may be expected to carry on as best they can and as they always have despite slender budgets and limited personnel. But their publications, never very extensive, are likely to cease entirely until their countries are again free. Under these circumstances a special interest attaches to the *Meddelanden* or *Communications* of the Sweden State Archives. The *Meddelanden* of 1938 follow the familiar pattern of this series, beginning with an annual report for the year, continuing with a discussion of the archival system's tasks such as inspections and recommendations for disposal of records, and concluding with scholarly studies of specific archival *fonds*.

There is within the Swedish State Archives a considerable body of medieval

material, which necessarily has no counterpart in our public archives. In Sweden as in Norway the preserving, collating, editing, and eventual publication of primary sources for the medieval and early modern period have been a major archival accomplishment. Thus, in 1938 the Swedish State Archives prepared for publication documents from the period 1349-1643. Turning to the contemporary problems likely to be of greater interest to American readers, one notes in Sweden as elsewhere the inevitable routine of sorting, arranging, labeling, and indexing records. Modern aids for reproduction have been put into use, such as Leica cameras; and the bookbindery not only binds books but also repairs and preserves fragile and damaged documents. There is even a WPA project, although to be sure it is not so called, whereby, under proper supervision, unemployed clerical workers do labeling, indexing, and typing of lists and cards. During the year 1938 a total of 16,919 searchers visited the Swedish State Archives in Stockholm, of whom only ninety were foreigners. These searchers consulted all told no fewer than 45,717 volumes. That the most of the inquiries were handled in person rather than by correspondence is clearly evident from the fact that the letters sent numbered only 965.

The work of the several provincial archives outside of Stockholm is also treated in detail. Regular inspections were made of records in various government offices, and one gathers that nothing was overlooked. Thus, on April 29, 1938, an inspection was made of the "archives" of the State Potato Flour Committee, which it is said had at its disposal "one desk and a wooden cupboard with glass doors." However, the inspections, which appear to have been thorough, serve as the bases for definite recommendations as to the preservation and ultimate disposition of the records in question. Appended statistical summaries indicate in detail the accessions received during the current year.

In common with Norway and Denmark, Sweden for some time has promoted systematic research in the Vatican Archives, where much valuable data has been unearthed relative to Scandinavia. This project was continued by the Swedish State Archives during 1938. Members of the staff made archival studies in Holland, England, and Germany; and Dr. Herman Brulin attended the International Historical Congress at Zurich, Switzerland, where he gave a lecture on the manuscript material for Voltaire's *Histoire de Charles XII*. Finally, the Swedish State Archives co-operated in the celebration of the New Sweden Tercentenary at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Wilmington, Delaware. Altogether, this volume of *Meddelanden* leaves with one the impression of a well-established organization working steadily upon its own peculiar problems but also keeping abreast of developments in the archival field.

HAROLD LARSON

The National Archives

Rapport de l'Archiviste de la Province de Québec pour 1937-1938. (Quebec. Rédempti Paradis. 1938. Pp. 383.)

Archives de la Province de Québec. Inventaire des Papiers de Léry conservés aux Archives de la Province de Québec, par Pierre-Georges Roy. (Two volumes. Quebec. 1939. Pp. 291, 291.)

These two publications are the most recent additions to the two principal series issued by the Archives of the Province of Quebec. They are published under the direction of Pierre-Georges Roy, who has been archivist of the province since the founding of the archives in 1920, and whose excellent work is well known to all students of the history of Canada, especially of the French period.

The report of the archivist for 1937-1938 is the eighteenth of that series and, like all publications of the Quebec archives, is written in French. It follows the usual model of Canadian archival reports in being principally devoted to selections from the historical archives of the province, while the administrative report, if any, is embodied in a brief letter of transmittal from the archivist to the provincial secretary. In the American sense, there is no detailed report of the work done. The letter of transmittal in the present volume contains no administrative report. M. Roy comments briefly on the selections included and their editors, and says that he "hopes that the menu of this fat volume will be as appetizing as those which have preceded it."

The first selection is "Relation de la Siègne de Québec," which was written by the Sieur de Ramezay when he was on duty in that city during its siege and capture in 1759. This document is edited by M. Aegidius Fauteux. The next contribution is a continuation of the inventory of the papers of Monsignor Joseph Signay, archbishop of Quebec, from 1833 to 1836, by the Abbé Ivanhoë Caron. The third selection is the concluding portion of the letters and memoirs of the Abbé de l'Isle Dieu, Vicar-general of the Colonies of New France in Canada from 1755 to 1774. Last, and in some respects most important, is an historical bibliography of the parishes of the province, compiled by M. Antoine Roy. This list of works is arranged by author and also by place. Appended to the bibliography is a list of parishes arranged by diocese and also by county. At the end of the volume are indexes to both persons and places mentioned in the whole report.

The other work under consideration is the most recent publication in the second long series put out by the archives of Quebec, called "Les Archives de la Province de Québec." The Léry papers, which are here published, under the editorship of M. Pierre-Georges Roy, as Volumes XLVI and XLVII of the series, were given to the archives of the province by the Léry family. They comprise letters from and to Gaspard Chaussegros de Léry, who came to New France in 1716 as a military engineer, married a Canadian, and resided there permanently, though he revisited France from time to time. He was engineer-

in-chief of New France until his death. There are also letters from and to his son, who became an engineering officer in the army in New France, and letters of other members of the family as well. As military engineer of New France, the elder Léry came in contact with many persons of note. There are letters from Vaudreuil, La Galissonnière, La Jonquière, Duquesne, Montcalm, and others prominent in the administration of New France; and from Marshal d'Estrées, Count Maurepas, and others principally concerned with the colonial administration at Versailles. The papers deal for the most part with military engineering operations, chiefly the building of fortifications in New France for defense against the English and the Indians. A few papers of the younger Léry deal with garrison duty on the Canadian frontier and with campaigns against the Chickasaw. The papers throw light on military affairs in both New France and Louisiana, especially during the period of King George's War and the French and Indian War. The Lérays, father and son, were among those lesser officers who worked behind the scenes and whose names become known only upon the publication of works such as the present one, but whose faithful and unostentatious performance of duty was the backbone of the French colonial administration. The main body of the papers is arranged in chronological order from 1716 to 1766. Following these is a series of orders and letters from the governors of New France from 1735 to 1759. In conclusion, there are thirty-eight pages of "Lettres Diverses," ranging from 1769 to 1815. Unfortunately there is no index to the Léry papers.

EDWARD F. ROWSE

The National Archives