

## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

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*Observations Concerning the Conservation of Monuments in Europe and America.* Dr. Hans Huth, collaborator. (Washington. The National Park Service, 1940. Pp. 64. Mimeographed.)

*Air Raid Precautions in Museums, Picture Galleries and Libraries.* (Printed by order of the Trustees, the British Museum, 1939. Pp. 59.)

With wars and rumors of wars everywhere one turns, with ruthless destruction of lives and property regardless of their military significance, and with no town or city knowing when it may be the next to be struck, the problem of protecting property takes on a new significance. The archivist in particular begins to think of the protection of records against the hazards of war, and to him the publications listed above are very pertinent.

The archivist is immediately confronted with many problems in this connection: First, he does not know when the air will be thick with moving objects that will cause death and destruction unbelievable until today. Second, he does not know whether to pack his belongings and run or to stay where he is. If he decides to leave, he is immediately faced with the problem of where to go, because the enemy strikes many places at once. He has the further problem of selecting what should be taken and what should be left behind. Obviously, he cannot take everything. If he decides to stay where he is, he is faced with the third problem of protecting the records and the depositories with every means now known to architects and engineers. This last problem is very interestingly but briefly discussed in Chapter III of Dr. Hans Huth's study. By "monuments," Dr. Huth means both works of art and museums. He states that there are two groups of objects to be considered, movable (collections) and immovable (buildings, monuments, and the like). In regard to movable objects, he points out that there is a tremendous problem involved in the selection, transportation, and safe-keeping of such objects in new depositories, but he seems to think that while a few precious objects could be moved, by and large the best procedure is to protect the objects in their present location.

With regard to immovable objects, Dr. Huth discusses at some length the relative merits of sandbags, scaffolding, and shelters. He also goes into detail regarding the different kinds of bombs and methods of protection against them. In this publication an additional report has been added to the original study, probably after observations made from actual experience during wartime, most of which deals with the various kinds of bombs and the methods of coping with incendiary and gas bombs.

There is not a great deal that the archivist can learn directly from Dr. Huth's study that will aid him specifically in solving his many problems, because the discussion is for the most part general and consideration is given primarily to art and museum objects and museum buildings. From the study one can get some idea, however, of the broad scope of the problems involved in protecting historical objects.

In 1939 the trustees of the British Museum ordered printed a booklet outlining air-raid precautions in museums, picture galleries, and libraries. This booklet is based on the experience and research of experts at that time, that is, before the British Isles had experienced the ruthless destruction from the air to which they have since been subjected. The archivist will find in this booklet more that concerns his immediate problem of dealing with records than in the study by Dr. Huth.

The booklet begins by considering the safety and protection of the staff in museums, picture galleries, and libraries. It sets forth suggestions for organizing an emergency staff to combat fires and to do salvage and rescue work. The second chapter deals with the safety and protection of the buildings themselves and describes the three types of bombs, incendiary, gas, and explosive, to which buildings are subjected. It is pointed out that it is practically impossible to protect the ordinary building against a direct hit by high explosive bombs, but some protection can be obtained against blasts and splinters from bombs bursting nearby and from incendiary and gas bombs. One must bear in mind that good protection today may not be good protection tomorrow.

The most pertinent part of the booklet for archivists is the third chapter, which deals with the protection of materials in the various museums and libraries. Three methods of protection are considered: protection in place, transfer to safer storage on the premises, and removal to depositories elsewhere.

In discussing protection of material in place, sandbagging and other methods are mentioned. Consideration is given to the protection of sealed and unsealed cases, sculpture, pictures, showcases, books, and manuscripts. Books that cannot be removed to safe storage should be packed closely on their shelves to eliminate air spaces, and empty spaces should be filled with asbestos, bricks, or similar material. Wrappings of transparent foil (cellophane) or waxed paper are suggested for the protection of pictures, books, or packages of documents from gas and water.

In the discussion of storage on the premises special emphasis is placed on the fact that attention must be given to matters of humidity, temperature, and ventilation. Storage in damp areas should particularly be avoided.

Although evacuation is suggested only as a last resort in both of these studies, it is probable that, in the light of recent experiences, it will be found that maximum protection can only be achieved through evacuation. The British Museum pamphlet points out that depositories for evacuated material should not be near a military objective and should be free from dampness.

They must have ventilation, be easy to guard, and either have fire-fighting facilities or easy access to such facilities. In other words, they must be safer depositories than the ones being evacuated. When giving consideration to evacuation, the means and possibilities of safe transportation must be thought out well in advance. Various types of packing cases are discussed and attention is given to protection of various types of material. Ideal packing cases, it is said, could be made of plywood in such standard sizes that two men, or possibly one, could carry one of them filled. The size suggested for libraries is 25 by 19 by 12 inches, which when filled would weigh approximately eighty pounds.

Neither publication mentions the matter, but consideration should be given to the problem of providing safe storage space for the large quantity of records that are created during an emergency and to the problem of storing current active records that must be moved from their present location in order to release space for the rapid expansion of activities.

COLLAS G. HARRIS

#### The National Archives

*The Art and Technique of Administration in German Ministries*, by Arnold Brecht and Comstock Glaser. (Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press, 1940. Pp. xiv, 191. \$2.00.)

In his search for materials the junior author of this unique volume came upon the Code of Administrative Procedure for all the German national ministries. Happily, the senior author, who, in 1926, as head of the Division for Constitution, Administration and Civil Service in the Reich Ministry of the Interior, had been responsible for the passage of the code, was in the United States and was approached by his present co-author. Together they decided to "edit a joint translation for use in English-speaking countries."

Beset by difficulties of terminology, the authors found it necessary to undertake "an extensive study of basic administrative processes and facilities," and "to examine the similarities and differences between German and American administrative organization." As a result of their labors, we have here presented for the first time in English, a clear exposition of the organization and procedure of the German ministries in enough detail to make it particularly useful to American administrators and students.

Throughout the work, every effort has been made to make clear to American readers the difference between the German and the American organization and procedure. For instance, there is included as Part Five, an excellent "Glossary of German Administrative Words and Phrases"; the translation of the "General Code of Administrative Procedure" together with its "Appendix A, Filing Room Code" and "Appendix B, Copying Office Code," included as Parts Two, Three, and Four, are all well annotated; while a painstaking and informative account of the findings and comments of the authors comprise Part One.

The picture here presented confirms all we have heard about German orderliness, efficiency, and genius for organization. A policy of decentralization and co-ordination—the Reich ministries are small staff and control agencies, the operating bureaus being separate from but reporting to the ministries; a drive for simplification—the function of executive planning is provided for in each ministry, while “crystallization of technique” is avoided through a permanent “Committee for Questions of Simplification” for all the ministries, embodied in which is the “machinery for change”; the establishment of standards of usage as set forth in the Code of Administrative Procedure; all these and more indications of modern scientific management are present.

Of special interest to archivists is the record and filing system, the reform of which received the particular attention of the framers of the code. An “antiquated eighteenth-century system” gave way before the radical reforms provided for in the code, the basic principles of which were (1) a functional classification with a four-digit code; (2) “the separation of records kept on the receipt of letters from those kept on their circulation,” as “the reasons for keeping track of the circulation of letters are completely different from those for recording their receipt”; (3) the abandonment of the clerical control of the “normal” circulation of incoming letters within the division, making unnecessary the sending of “papers back to the filing room for clearance at every move”; and (4) the use of loose-leaf binders “which are stacked like books on shelves and carry the four-digit file numbers, indicating their place and contents.”

The files were housed in a central file room for each division, the major unit of organization in a ministry. The code “initiated the abolition or restriction of central Filing Rooms,” providing that, as far as possible, the files be placed in the custody of the clerical assistants of the *Principal* (an official in charge of a particular field of work within a division, who is the chief technical advisor and aide of the minister and the division director, within his field of work), “who, in keeping the files themselves, avoid several moves which otherwise were necessary.” All files were not to be moved immediately, as that would cause too much confusion, but were to be “transferred piece-meal to clerks having jurisdiction over particular subject matters.”

The provision to abolish central file rooms, it seems to this reviewer, is the one weak spot in an otherwise excellent plan. That it has not been enthusiastically endorsed, is evidenced by the remarks of Dr. Ernst Posner, formerly archivist in the Prussian Privy State Archives, before the Federal Records Conference in Washington, D.C., on January 29, 1941. Referring to this provision of the code, he said that the administration had not taken advantage of their opportunity to effect this reform, as the divisional filing room had, in general, survived. The archivists, too, Dr. Posner pointed out, frowned upon this innovation, believing that “a break-up of the registry into uncontrollable

smaller units bodes ill for the continuance of sound filing practices." He referred to the loss inherent in a disintegration of "a storehouse of information" and "a guarantor of tradition and consistent administrative action." He reminded us that Michalski, in a paper read before the First International Congress on the Administrative Sciences, held in Brussels in 1910, had pointed out the disadvantage of assigning the record-keeping functions to clerks "who were chiefly interested in and trained for their own tasks," and who "would not possess the necessary experience in registry work," and would, therefore, treat such duties as "an irksome burden." Dr. Posner concluded that "while, undoubtedly, the new administrative code contains excellent provisions with regard to procedure in general, the idea of improving the registry work by abolishing the registries is like burning down the house to get rid of the mice."

In this respect, the framers of the code have followed the tendency of most all procedure analysts to regard records merely as cogs in the procedural flow of work, disregarding the fact that, of all the elements involved, they are the most permanent, and that their proper handling is a profession in itself. The tendency may probably be explained by the fact that record administration as a science has not yet attained that stage in its development where its potentialities as an important administrative tool and research facility have been fully recognized. In these days, however, it is encouraging to note the awakening interest in this field in the United States.

The use of a general code of procedure as a device for controlling the minutiae of which administrative procedure is composed, together with the machinery for change needed to make it flexible enough not to strangle an evolving organism, is a notable advance in the science of administration which is today found only in Germany. The knowledge of German practices brought us in this excellent little volume must indeed be regarded by both archivists and administrators as a welcome contribution.

HELEN L. CHATFIELD

United States Treasury Department

*Guide to Library Facilities for National Defense.* Preliminary Edition. Edited by Carl L. Cannon for the Joint Committee on Library Research Facilities for National Emergency. (Chicago. American Library Association, 1940. Pp. 235.)

This publication is not a bibliography or a union list of materials on national defense. It is an alphabetical list of subjects and subject subdivisions relating to national defense, with brief paragraphs thereunder giving a general description of the holdings of various individual libraries in those subject fields. A very convenient feature of the book is the grouping of libraries by geographical regions under the subjects, making the resources of a specific section of the country readily apparent.

The subject approach taken by the compilers of the *Guide* is based upon

the concept of modern warfare, with full recognition of the relation of every phase of national life and activity to national defense. The subjects chosen are wisely not restricted to the combat factor of defense, but draw in many headings from the sciences, from economics, and from all the social sciences. Examples of these headings are "Commodities," "Finance," "Labor and Laboring Classes," "Laws," "Manufactures," "Physics," "Scientific Instruments," "Technology and Science," and "Transportation."

As evidence of the alertness of librarians to national needs and as a demonstration of their alacrity in action, the *Guide* is highly commendable; as at least a partial indication of library resources on national defense, it is valuable. The chief weaknesses of the *Guide* are its incompleteness in the inclusion of libraries, its unevenness in the descriptions of the collections of those libraries which are included, and the omission of archival facilities. These flaws are the results of understandable and perhaps inescapable causes, but they result nevertheless in a serious handicap to the accomplishment of the purpose of the publication. Not all the libraries to which the joint committee's questionnaires were sent responded. Consequently some large and some special libraries which have material on national defense do not appear in the *Guide*. The responses from some of the libraries appear to have covered only a part of their collections, as in the case of the University of Illinois, which is represented only by its College of Law.

The unevenness of the descriptions of the holdings of those libraries which did report is seen in the extreme variableness in amount and type of information given in the descriptions, which vary from a meager sentence to a detailed paragraph.

In entitling the publication *Guide to Library Facilities for National Defense* the compilers obviously intended to limit their attention to conventional library material. But if the purpose of the book is—as assuredly it is—to serve as an efficient and reliable guide to researchers in national defense, it is extremely regrettable that the accident and technicality of mere form should have eliminated from its pages any mention, except for a few apparently inadvertent inclusions, of the resources of archival establishments. Except for the descriptions of certain documents held by the Hoover library at Stanford University and by the New York State Library, and a few hints of archival materials in the descriptions of the libraries of governmental agencies, no archives, either state or federal, are included. As a result the *Guide* does not point the way to what is probably the most fertile field for research in national defense.

In the National Archives, in addition to the records of the executive departments, including those of the Departments of War and Navy, there are available to the research student the records of the various emergency agencies which carried on our national defense activities in the European War of 1914-1918: the archives of the Council of National Defense and its Advisory Commission, of the Shipping Board Emergency Fleet Corporation, the

War Industries Board, the Committee on Public Information, the Food Administration, the Fuel Administration, and others. These records, created by the government in the actual and very real conduct of our national defense, are fundamental sources for any study of national defense. They are the stuff from which books are made.

The joint committee, acting in haste to meet an emergency, did not wait timidly upon perfection in producing the *Guide*. And though it bears the marks of that haste, the *Guide* should be gratefully received. Its users will doubtless be comforted by the hope of a greater degree of completeness in the revised edition which is promised in the introduction to the present edition.

BESS GLENN

#### The National Archives

*Protection of Documents with Cellulose Acetate Sheeting*, by B. W. Scribner. (Washington. United States Government Printing Office, 1941. Pp. 11. \$.05.)

The Paper Section of the National Bureau of Standards has been interested for a number of years in methods of preserving and restoring records. This study considers the advantages of the lamination process over that of covering documents with crepeline or Japanese tissue, and presents test data indicating the permanency of both the sheeting used in the lamination process and the various papers after the sheeting had been applied. The study is limited to tests on cellulose acetate sheeting alone since previous studies had indicated that sheetings composed of regenerated cellulose such as cellophane or cellulose nitrate were highly unstable.

Advantages of restoration by lamination with cellulose acetate foil are given as follows: The sheeting is highly transparent and does not obscure the record; it is easily cleaned with water; it is resistant to the passage of deteriorative gases; it is transparent to ultra-violet and infra-red light; and it permits photographic reproduction without loss of detail. Disadvantages of the crepeline process such as that of the susceptibility of the starch adhesive used in its application to attack by insects and fungi are mentioned. Further the process is speedy and the thinness of the sheeting minimizes the increase in thickness of the document.

Tests were made on foils applied to documents with heat and pressure alone, and likewise those applied with an adhesive under pressure with and without heat. These tests undertook the determination of thickness, weight, folding endurance, tensile breaking strength, expansivity, general stability, etc., of the foils, and the resulting data indicated that they were highly satisfactory in these respects.

Tests made on several types of paper before and after lamination by the different methods produced satisfactory findings, and it was concluded that plain sheetings as well as those using an adhesive had a sufficiently high degree



of stability to be suitable for use with permanent records, but that the plain sheeting was on the whole superior. This superiority was shown by tendencies of foils containing adhesives to wrinkle or separate from the paper and to stick one to another at the edges.

Test data of this kind should be of considerable interest to those engaged in the repair and restoration of records and if possible should be carried further. A similar study relating to the stability of crepeline and Japanese tissue would give important comparative data, and research on the effects of various impurities in deteriorated papers and their chemical reaction on protective coverings would be highly significant.

W. J. BARROW

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*Meddelanden från Svenska Riksarkivet för År 1939.* (Stockholm. Kungl. Boktryckeriet, P. A. Norstedt & Söner, 1940. Pp. 158.)

With war at the very threshold of Sweden it is not surprising that the initial paragraph of the annual report for 1939 of the Swedish State Archives treats of that pressing problem, how best to protect the records of the nation from the hazards of modern warfare. Since September, 1938, the Swedish archival administration has given much thought to this subject. Various surveys have been made and the shifting and the storing of more valuable items have apparently been contemplated. The needed plans, though not detailed in this report, have evidently been laid by the archivists Waern and Hedar, who have given special attention to this entire matter. Discussions and correspondence have also been carried on with both military and civil authorities. It is, of course, total war which confronts the Europe of today, and archival institutions are as likely a target as any for bombers. It is, therefore, encouraging to read that the proper protective measures are being taken in Sweden not only to preserve the archives in the event of war but also to provide adequate safeguards for the personnel.

The annual report of 1939, though somewhat shorter than that of the previous year, follows the same general outline in its subject matter. First are noted the broader aspects of the archival system, and next is considered the question of the disposition of several groups of useless papers. Then come excerpts from inspection reports of archival depositories, and a closing scholarly contribution, drawn in this instance from the medieval period. Increasing emphasis has been laid upon the weeding out of surplus or useless material, in part because of the demand from representatives of the Swedish parliament for more effective measures of this type, and in part, no doubt, because of lack of space. During the year, in fact, a number of archival transfers from public offices to the Swedish State Archives had to be refused because space was not available. Despite the unsettled times the regular work of the institution appears not to have been interrupted, and services rendered have been on the in-



crease. Indicative of the close cultural ties between the Swedes and the Finns is the statement that of ninety-four foreign researchers, fifty were from Finland. Continued research in the Vatican archives has disclosed among other things unexpected documents bearing upon the history of the celebrated patroness of art and learning, Queen Christina of Sweden. In May, 1939, "a distinguished foreign archivist," Dr. Ernst Posner, visited Stockholm and gave a series of lectures at the Swedish State Archives, which were attended by a considerable number of archivists and other interested persons. Dr. Posner's lectures, which included a discussion of the American archival system, were later published. In August, 1939, a Scandinavian archival meeting was held in Copenhagen under the guiding hand of Dr. Axel Linvald, the chief of the Danish State Archives. Here the heads of the Swedish, Finnish, and Norwegian archival establishments discussed, respectively, the principle of provenance, the training of archivists, and archival structures.

HAROLD LARSON

#### The National Archives

*Archives and Libraries*, edited by A. F. Kuhlman. (Chicago. American Library Association, 1940. Pp. 136. \$2.00.)

A caustic critic of the New Deal once wrote that nothing it had done could not have been more efficiently and cheaply accomplished by a good earthquake. A good half of *Archives and Libraries* for 1940 deals matter-of-factly but still stirringly with the Historical Records Survey. No earthquake could have been that good. Archivists, librarians, and administrators of institutions of learning will profit in many ways from reading the papers by Miss Margaret Eliot and Messrs. Child, McMurtrie, and Kellar. They will be put in touch with a mass of newly-available research materials. They will learn much about the organization and administration of record surveys. They will be inspired to prepare, for future crises, further public works projects of a type now proven to be unexceptionably meritorious.

Papers on European experiences in the field of local archives (by Dr. Posner) and on the function of local historical societies with respect to manuscripts (by Dr. Boyd) could profitably be read in connection with the section on the HRS.

In a pair of papers, Dr. Hill of the National Archives and Miss Margaret Norton of the Illinois State Library discuss the problem of classification. Both assume that there is such a thing as classification in archival establishments, even in archives, adhering rigidly to the twin principles of provenance and *respect pour les fonds*. Both, however, treat classification as a congeries of functions of which the chief components are historical and functional description, the assignment of call numbers, and rational shelving. It has always seemed questionable to this reviewer, from the point of view of clearness, to borrow a well-defined library term and twist it, for archival purposes, to

cover not merely one but several archival operations none of which are closely analogous to the term's original meaning.

Although Dr. Hill's paper includes specific examples of "classification," and Miss Norton's formulates and implies some general principles, Dr. Hill's is in the main an essay in theory, while Miss Norton's is primarily an account of work planned and done. Dr. Hill concludes with ten principles; Miss Norton with a paragraph of warning against system-mongering.

A third topic dealt with in this volume is the training of archivists. Dr. Buck of the National Archives makes a careful distinction between archival and library work which should be valuable to administrators harassed by uncomprehending job seekers and civil service officials. In addition to a reasoned general statement of the nature of a desirable archival education, Dr. Buck outlines an already utilized basic course which cannot fail to interest schools contemplating archives training work and administrators desirous of instituting in-service training.

PAUL LEWINSON

The National Archives