

## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

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*Annual Report of the Public Archives Commission, State of Delaware, by the State Archivist for the fiscal year July 1, 1942 to June 30, 1943.* (Dover, Delaware. Hall of Records, 1943. Pp. 31.)

*Biographical Sketches of Caesar Rodney (the Signer), Thomas Rodney, and Caesar A. Rodney*, by George H. Ryden. (Dover, Delaware. Public Archives Commission, 1943. Pp. 23.)

For some years the state of Delaware has been notable for the excellence of the legislative foundations upon which its archives system is based. Professor Newsome, in *THE AMERICAN ARCHIVIST* for January, 1939, expressed his opinion that Delaware's public records law was one of the six best in the country. It is gratifying now to note, in Mr. DeValinger's annual report, that two new laws have been enacted to improve still further the statutory basis for the work of the Public Archives Commission. One of these provides authorization for the disposal of records that have been photographed or microphotographed in accordance with standards set up by the Public Archives Commission, and provides that the photographs or certified copies of the photographs shall have the same force and effect as the originals. The second, which permits the testing of papers and inks by "a reliable testing agency" instead of by the state chemist as before, makes it possible to enforce an important part of the record control system.

The archivist's annual report discloses that his office, like most other archives establishments, has felt the impact of war conditions in various ways. Numerous staff changes made it necessary for the archivist to devote proportionately more of his time to administration and training of personnel and proportionately less to the important work of surveying and appraising state, county, and municipal records. Nevertheless, the report indicates considerable activity along the latter lines; surveys of several state and city offices were completed, and letters were issued authorizing the destruction of what seems to be a relatively large quantity of files. Accessions of records from government agencies were evidently few and small in quantity, but the archivist has greatly increased the value of his agency as a repository of materials on Delaware history by purchasing or accepting as gifts numerous manuscripts, books, pamphlets, and other items, and by securing, through purchase or exchange, microfilm copies or photocopies of population census schedules for Delaware, 1830-1880, and some of the journals of the Delaware Senate and House of Assembly, 1782-1836. Besides completing the classification of a large manu-

script collection, the staff has found time to continue the indexing of marriage records and to prepare summary index slips on the valuable but fragile files of original proprietary land warrants and surveys for the three Delaware counties, 1680-1776.

As is the case in many other states, the archivist has taken the lead in collecting information about Delaware's participation in the war. He has the active assistance of the governor and other interested citizens in gathering pamphlets, newspaper clippings, publications, and other materials pertaining to military and war-related civilian activities of the state and its people. Since publication of this report an archivist has been assigned to assist and record the functioning of a newly established veterans' clearing center in Wilmington.

The pamphlet of biographical sketches is a reprint of introductory material to *Letters to and from Caesar Rodney, 1756-1784* (Historical Society of Delaware, 1933) by Dr. George H. Ryden, archivist of Delaware from 1930 to his death in 1941. Caesar Rodney (1728-1784) was a leader in the movement for independence both before and after the adoption of the Declaration of Independence, serving as speaker of the last Delaware colonial assembly, as president of the Delaware state, and as a representative in the Stamp Act Congress and the First and Second Continental Congresses. His brother Thomas Rodney (1744-1811) and the latter's son, Caesar Augustus Rodney (1772-1824), are less well-known but still significant figures in American history. Thomas Rodney was a member of the Confederation Congress and later became United States judge for Mississippi Territory, while his son served as a member of Congress, attorney-general of the United States, and minister plenipotentiary to the Argentine republic. The pamphlet also contains a note on Caesar Rodney's genealogy.

ROBERT CLAUS

#### The National Archives

*The North Texas Regional Libraries, An Inquiry into the Feasibility and Desirability of Developing Them as a Cooperative Enterprise*, by A. F. Kuhlman, director, Joint University Libraries, Nashville, Tennessee. (Nashville, Tennessee. Peabody Press, 1943. Pp. viii, 85. Mimeographed. \$1.50.)

The concept of regionalism has been applied to matters as diverse as industry, wholesale and retail trade, population, wealth, occupations, education, natural resources, governmental functions, and baseball schedules.

In recent years the library world has seen the practical application of regionalism to the Tennessee Valley Authority library system, and to numerous combinations of counties for public library service. On a different plane, there are such regional library organizations as the Rocky Mountain Bibliographical Center for Research at Denver and the Pacific Northwest Bibliographical Center at Seattle. In practically all instances the motivating force impelling

joint action has been the relative scarcity of library facilities in the area, making advantageous close co-operation among existing agencies.

This is essentially the situation found by Dr. Kuhlman in North Texas, and his report is a far-sighted proposal to combine a group of six institutions there into a regional system for co-operative purposes. These six libraries are North Texas State Teachers College and Texas State College for Women, in Denton; Southern Methodist University, Dallas; Texas Christian University, Fort Worth; and the public libraries of Dallas and Fort Worth. No one of these libraries has a collection adequate for instruction above the undergraduate level, and none has made more than a beginning toward building up resources for graduate study. The four colleges had a total enrollment of over ten thousand students in 1940-1941, however, and are under pressure to offer advanced degrees. All are now giving masters' degrees in a number of fields.

To strengthen library facilities, the surveyor presents a detailed program for co-operation. He proposes a regional organization, headed by a director of libraries, responsible to executive and advisory committees representing the several institutions. A comprehensive plan for attacking the problem of serial publications is suggested. Preparation of a union catalogue is also advised, on condition that the catalogue will be used as a genuine tool to forward co-operation.

Of particular concern to historians and archivists is Dr. Kuhlman's recommendation for co-operative regional library effort in dealing with sources for the history of the Southwest. He points out that much wasteful duplication and competition exists in this field. The three cities of Dallas, Denton, and Fort Worth, for example, contain at least seven special library collections relating to southwestern history and civilization. In the period following the 1936 Texas centennial, particularly, the interest in such material has been keen among Texas libraries, even to the extent of institutions bidding against each other for collectors' items.

The surveyor recognized that each of the six libraries would want and should have a good working collection of secondary materials dealing with the Southwest. Beyond this, however, he warns against competition for primary sources, such as manuscripts. Instead, it is recommended that there be established a North Texas Historical Society, closely integrated with the regional co-operative library plan. The chief aim of this organization, it is suggested, should be to bring together primary sources pertaining to Southwestern history, and especially to the area within a radius of 150 miles of Dallas, Denton, and Fort Worth. A concentration of resources in such a manner, with definite limitations on the area to be covered and scope sufficiently restricted, should lead to the growth of an important depository for archives and manuscripts, relatively complete in its field.

Some additional types of regional library co-operation are recommended by the author. One is in government publications, where none of the libraries is strong. Foreign documents are almost entirely lacking, and there are few American state or municipal publications. Careful selection of documentary material is advised for several branches of the physical, biological, and social sciences. Another large field in which the holdings are weak is newspapers. Here Dr. Kuhlman stresses the desirability of a co-operative program to acquire and preserve the outstanding papers of the Southwest, at least one important newspaper from every important large region in the United States, and some of the leading foreign papers. Microphotographic work is still another activity with possibilities for co-operation. A central microphotographic laboratory, serving all libraries in the group, is recommended.

In whatever plans are adopted, Dr. Kuhlman rightly urges continuous co-ordination with the University of Texas Library, with its large book collection, government document and newspaper files, and valuable manuscript holdings. He might also have added several other Texas libraries interested in these materials.

The present reviewer has a few reservations on Dr. Kuhlman's findings and recommendations. For example, the development of graduate schools in each of the four colleges is a program of doubtful wisdom. It might be questioned, too, whether collections of archives and manuscripts would not be more useful and convenient for the research worker if concentrated in one or two depositories for the whole state of Texas, instead of being scattered among numerous local institutions.

Nevertheless, and on the whole, Dr. Kuhlman has taken a realistic view of conditions as he found them, and has offered some highly constructive proposals. Here and elsewhere his contribution to the cause of library co-operation has been noteworthy, a leader in a movement of increasing importance to the scholar and research worker.

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