

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

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The National Archives, Washington 25, D.C.

Local History: How to Gather It, Write It, and Publish It, by Donald Dean Parker, Head of the Department of History and Political Science, South Dakota State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts. Revised and edited by Bertha E. Josephson for the Committee on Guide for Study of Local History of the Social Science Research Council. (New York. Social Science Research Council, 1944. Pp. xiv, 186).

The social historian, who must depend on the effort of the local historian to guard him against too easy generalization, as well as the user for whom it is primarily intended—"the serious-minded graduate of high school or college" who has had no graduate training in history—will feel himself indebted to the Social Science Research Council for the preparation of this manual. As a matter of fact, in attacking this problem the council had the interests of a somewhat larger group in mind, believing the effective study of local history to be basic to the social sciences in general. But it is in the extent to which the manual succeeds in suggesting to the local historian "both general ideas and specific aids," perhaps particularly the latter, that its immediate usefulness is to be judged.

The manual is the product of distinguished co-operation involving Dr. Parker (who supplied an already prepared manuscript on the subject), the Committee on the Guide for Study of Local History (Messrs. Crittenden, Eggan, Heaton, Merk, Schlesinger, Shryock, White, Wirth, Nichols), and several other consultants and contributors of data or of separate chapters or appendices (Mesdames Green, Josephson, who also edited the entire volume, Messrs. Cappon, Loehr, Shalloo, Still, Young).

Part I, "Gathering Material for Local History," outlines the sources of information and indicates where they are to be found. Separate chapters deal with "library and general sources," private sources in private hands, newspapers and periodicals, public records (national, state, and local), business records, and church records and cemetery inscriptions. Part II, "Writing Local History," deals with the technique of bibliography, note-gathering, outlining of materials, and composition, including a model outline for a local history and a chapter on "Bibliography, Addenda and Index." Part III, "Publishing Local History," presents a clear exposition of relative merits and relative costs of the various means of publishing local history—printing, lithographing and planographing, mimeographing, and hectographing—together with some practical hints on promotion. The volume closes with an appendix, "Writing the War History of Communities," and a bibliography.

Inevitably there are a few errors or instances where the latest information available has not been made use of, but the reviewer would not emphasize them unduly. Although it is true that few of the early censuses after 1790 have been printed (p. 48), the National Archives has reproduced some of them in its file microcopy program and hopes to make more of them available in this manner following the war. Again, pension records of soldiers of the Revolutionary and later wars are now in the custody of the archivist of the United States and not in the Veterans' Administration (p. 67). It might also be pointed out, with respect to the public records of the states, that the legislative journals of the states for the early period are now available, through the co-operative efforts of the Library of Congress and the University of North Carolina, in the form of microcopies from the Library of Congress. Inasmuch as the bibliography may be used as a general guide as well as a list of the works used in the compilation of this volume, it is unfortunate that the latest edition of certain titles has not been selected. Such sins of omission and commission, however, will not operate seriously to impair the manual's real usefulness in making explicit to the novice the step-by-step process by which history is written.

LESTER W. SMITH

The National Archives

Disposition of Official Records, issued by U. S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Plant and Operations. O.P.O. Publication No. 1 (Rev.). (Washington, D.C. September, 1944. Pp. 41.)

This publication, a revision of an earlier manual, describes the regulations and procedures for disposition of executive documents under Public Law No. 115 (Seventy-eighth Congress). The most significant sections of the manual are those concerning the definition of records and instructions on the preparation of disposal schedules. The elimination from the files of a large bulk of ephemeral material as non-record material is of benefit to the archivist and historian as well as to the administrator. No criticism can be made in the elimination of the material lists in the manual as non-record material. The section on the preparation of schedules encourages the units of the department to formulate systematic plans for the preservation of worthwhile material, and the elimination of temporary and subsidiary records. This method of controlled disposition, now recognized by Public Law No. 115, has been practiced in the Department of Agriculture since 1918.

The section titled, "Administrative Review and Appraisal," contains the core of the whole disposal problem. It attempts to put into writing guides to be followed in evaluating records for disposition. The suggestions given in this section will be a valuable guide to the administrator or records officer,

until archivists and historians agree among themselves as to the type of records to be preserved.

LEWIS J. DARTER, JR.

Navy Department

Organización y Objetivos del Archivo Gráfico de la Nación, by Sergio Chiáppori, subdirector of the archivo. (Buenos Aires, Talleres S. A. Peuser Ltda., 1944. Pp. 27. Reprint.)

No great amount of interest is likely to have greeted this article in the United States. It first made its appearance in this country tucked away snugly between the paper covers of an issue of the *Boletín* of the Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas of Buenos Aires, and more recently it appeared as a reprint. Both issues were in Spanish. This fact, coupled with the obscurity of the article and its slender size, are substantial reasons for its reaching only those few readers who are most persistent in their search of new titles.

The article, as its title implies, outlines the organization and objectives of the Archivo Gráfico, created in 1939 as an arm of the Argentine Ministry of Justice and Public Instruction for the care and keeping of "motion pictures, photographs, daguerreotypes, and engravings . . . illustrative of the history of Argentina and of the institutions and persons who have been a part of it." The article is witness to the official recognition by that nation that photographs in all forms are becoming an increasingly important archival medium, of vast potentialities, and that they present peculiar problems of storage and service. To some it might seem that a disproportionate emphasis has been given to indexes, registers, and other controls over the collections and to the building and equipment of the archives. But photographs and their negatives do need special housing and handling and the subject mastery of photographic records requires skills and techniques far more complicated and ingenious than are necessary for other types of archival material. A more extensive report on this experience, although it might have upset the symmetry of this study, would have bolstered it considerably. The article is thus less than half a loaf and serves more to stimulate than to satiate one's hunger for knowledge of the advancements and accomplishments made by the archivists of Latin-American nations.

GASTON LITTON

The National Archives

Annual Report of The Librarian of Congress for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1943. (Washington, D.C. United States Government Printing Office, 1944. Pp. 279.)

Here once more is the periodic appraisal of the growth and accomplishments of our national library. Administrators of historical societies, curators of

manuscript collections, as well as archivists, will find herein much to arouse their interest and sympathy. Moreover, they will find portions of it good reading fare: Mr. MacLeish's widely recognized ability with words has put clarity and vitality into several sections of this report. This is especially so regarding Part I, on operations.

Librarians have been following with keen interest the reorganization of the Library of Congress, for which their counsel was sought before it was initiated. The progress of this regrouping of its divisions into a half dozen administrative units, along functional lines, is assessed, and found wanting in some aspects—particularly with regard to the relation between acquisition of materials and their processing. The willingness to adapt the original plan in the light of experience under it is a good sign that there is no desire to force the library into a strait-jacket.

The section on the state of the collections has especial interest for curators of historical societies. There is a brief account of the activities of the keeper of the collections in connection with the security of materials evacuated to repositories outside Washington. We read that there was a general cleaning of collections remaining in the Manuscript Division after the evacuations. It is not encouraging to see by Appendix XII (p. 248) that the bindery processed but 47,787 manuscripts in contrast to 83,017 the previous year. It would be interesting to know the annual average of pieces needing attention in this division with an inventory of 7,500,000 pieces at June 30, 1943. The picture is clearer with regard to printed material: increased binding costs, with an appropriations cut for this service amounting to \$100,000 is adding 6000 volumes annually to an already large backlog of unusable items. War is imposing privation upon large book and manuscript collections just as sternly as upon the smaller, more local ones.

The part of the report covering acquisitions begins with a reiteration by the librarian of "The Canons of Selection" which he set forth in 1940. It is followed by descriptions of newly added materials in twenty special divisions or subject-fields.

Accessions of manuscripts occupy the largest space in this part (pp. 115-130). Especially noteworthy additions appear among the papers of American statesmen. There is recorded an extensive collection of the letters of William C. Whitney, a powerful supporter of Grover Cleveland and Secretary of the Navy during his first term, subsequently regarded as "the creator of the New Navy." Another large unit has been the papers of the now deceased Congressman from Nebraska, George W. Norris. The Manuscript Division received also one of the largest collections ever given to its care—the 180,000 pieces of Booker T. Washington papers. Scanning these accounts of large new collections, and the more itemized lists put into the news notes of *The American Historical Review*, one cannot help wondering whether we who

work in historical manuscripts shouldn't begin applying qualitative examination, perhaps the archivists' disposal practices or some similar set of criteria, to the masses of paper confronting us.

ROBERT W. HILL

The New York Public Library

First Report of the Public Records Commission to the General Assembly of the State of Vermont, September 1, 1944. (Montpelier. 1944. Pp. 46.)

The state of Vermont has been slow in enacting legislation dealing with public records. It was not until 1937 that the General Assembly passed a law creating the Public Records Commission. This commission of five members consists of the secretary of state, the state librarian, the director, the chairman of the Vermont Historical Society, and one other person appointed by the governor. The act was amended in 1939 and again in 1943. The last law appropriated \$2,500.00 annually for the maintenance of the commission.

After the 1943 law was passed, the commission was reorganized and it entered actively upon the duties assigned to it. It employed the services of Mr. Harold S. Burt, examiner of public records, state of Connecticut, who after an investigation made a six-page report on the public records. It also procured the services of Mr. Henry Howard Eddy of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York, who made a more extensive and detailed report. Mr. Eddy gave estimates of the bulk of public records which needed preservation as well as other information and recommendations. These reports are printed in full.

The commission also reports on other activities such as its recommendation for disposition of useless records; an interpretation by the attorney general of the term "Public Records" as contained in the law; the opinion of the commission on the advisability of erecting a new building rather than having an office building for housing the archives; microfilms and photographic prints; present conditions of archives; and a financial statement.

It seems to this reviewer that the commission should have printed its report in full in the first part of the report and included the surveys as appendices. As it is, these surveys are printed in the middle of the pamphlet. In the opinion of this reviewer, the name, address, date of expiration of each member's term, and the organization should have been given first after which the full report of the commission should follow. This criticism, however, does not lessen the importance of the information contained therein. The surveys of Mr. Burt and Mr. Eddy contain good general information for others who are interested in establishing archives or who may be interested in enlarging or modernizing old buildings which are used for the housing of archives and historical manuscripts.

D. L. CORBITT

North Carolina Department of Archives and History

Ninth Annual Report of the Archivist of the Hall of Records, State of Maryland, for the Fiscal Year July 1, 1943 to June 30, 1944. (Annapolis. 1944. Pp. 32.)

In his letter of transmittal to the records commission as well as in the report proper, Morris L. Radoff, archivist, reveals more than just a "cut and dried" listing of accessions, circulation, and the like. The accessions are there, and so are the statistics on circulation, preservation and repair, photocopying, microfilm, and all other paraphernalia so typical of archival and manuscript depository reports, but interspersed, there is also a very human and personal touch, revealing the administrator's concern with the salary scale of his staff, pride in the variety of archives used by searchers, and explanations as to why certain types of records were used more frequently than before.

The formal letter of transmittal is followed by a report on the activities of the records commission, the governing body for the Maryland archives; then comes a section about the staff, and it is pleasing to note that all staff members are listed, even those doing maintenance chores. The archivist rejoices in the increase of staff salaries "especially in the lower brackets," in the procedure for regular advancement, in the granting of increased sick leave with pay, and the inauguration of a retirement system. To these improvements does he attribute improvement in staff morale and slackening of staff turnover.

The financial statement reveals that the Hall of Records received a general appropriation of \$32,893 and spent on general expenditures \$27,669.78. Receipts for such services as photostating, microfilming, certifying, and the like brought in a total of nearly \$600. Circulation statistics show that about two searchers per day, or 614 per year visited the hall while 667 postal inquiries were handled. No record of telephone inquiries is made. A list of printed and typed and hand-written "Aids to Research" is included, and a brief explanation of the arrangement of material received from the executive department is given. The listing (with explanations) of destruction of useless records by various state and local agencies offers concrete evidence of the type of records that may safely be destroyed under a judicious procedure. The sections on preservation and repair, photocopying, and microfilming are prospective as well as retrospective.

In the section on accessions—archival materials are listed, in addition to records received from the state executive department, acquisitions of originals of land records from Frederick County and Somerset County (which are being replaced with photocopies). Other noteworthy collections include the Iron Chest Accounts, No. 1, 1734-1767, of the first issue of paper money in Maryland; and a number of private collections, such as the Baldwin collection relating to churches and schools of Severn Parish. A list of library accessions completes the report.

BERTHA E. JOSEPHSON

Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society

Twentieth Biennial Report of the North Carolina State Department of Archives and History (formerly the North Carolina Historical Commission), 1942-1944. Bulletin No. 44. Christopher Crittenden, Secretary. (Raleigh, North Carolina. 1944. Pp. 59.)

It is interesting to note that problems of archival and manuscript care are likely to be the same the nation over. After enumerating the services of the North Carolina Department of Archives and History—very signal services, incidentally—the secretary shows that a new building with modern equipment, shared with no other department, is needed, as well as larger appropriations and a bigger staff. This is the story from coast to coast. Like many other states, North Carolina combines its archival agency and its historical society. A recent article in this publication, "Librarians and Archivists," by Herman Kahn, shows the inherent weaknesses of such a union. Is it possible that a separation of these two somewhat disparate agencies for preserving records would redound to the benefit of both in North Carolina, and result in increased appropriations adequate to the need of each? Consideration, at least, might be given to the possibilities of such a divorce.

The same problems and a similar union of agencies are found in the reviewer's state. There experience seems to prove that the problems of the two united agencies must be presented separately to legislators and state officials in order to command attention. Almost certainly, therefore, the final result will be an archives establishment separate from the state historical society.

Indeed, the fine report made by Mr. Crittenden on two years' labors and acquisitions is not without signs of confusion in aim and methods resulting from the state's attempt to make one agency do the work of two departments. Archives must be administered on totally different principles from historical manuscripts, and it is the rare person or institution that can do equal justice to both under one roof.

GRACE LEE NUTE

Minnesota Historical Society

The Annual Report of the National Library of Wales for 1943-1944. (Aberstwyth, Wales. 1944. Pp. 36.)

This work is of particular archival interest because of the deposit of the episcopal, chapter, diocesan, and other records of the Church of Wales reported and described therein. The action of the Representative Body of the church in deciding to place these records on deposit in the national library is hailed as "a landmark in the history of British archives," and is expected to have lasting effect upon records custody throughout the country, and to be instrumental in attracting other classes of records to the library.

The records already deposited, comprising episcopal and diocesan registry

and chapter records, consist of about a million items. When all such records, together with certain other classes (parochial ecclesiastical records, and the records of, and in the custody of, the Representative Body and Governing Body of the church) have been deposited the total will be about a million and three quarters. They range in date from the fourteenth to the twentieth century, half of them covering the period 1700 to 1850. Only the main groups are listed in an appendix (pp. 32-34) of the *Annual Report* since a comprehensive account is scheduled to appear in the *National Library of Wales Journal* for 1945. It is anticipated that, with the recovery of estrays and the normal annual accrual, the collection will exceed two million items within a period of ten years.

MATILDA F. HANSON

The National Archives

Guide to the Manuscripts of the Wisconsin Historical Society, edited by Alice E. Smith. (Madison. State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1944. Pp. xiv, 290.)

The description of manuscript collections has not been reduced to a technique. Possibly it would be a mistake to try. However, some general principles could be standardized, such as use of terms "papers," "collections," "correspondence," and others; the biographica data; the elimination of meaningless continuities which make English sentences but hamper thought; the proper way of enumerating statistics; the amount of analysis as opposed to general description; the method of handling dates and names of writers represented in the collection.

There have been many guides published during the last fifteen years. Considerable variety on all the above points is inevitable. The Wisconsin Historical Society guide is on many points similar to the Minnesota Historical Society guide (1935). Miss Smith has attained a fine balance between extended analysis and general description. Of course, what every student would like is an extended analysis of each important collection with a complete index, something like the Carnegie guides to manuscripts in the European archives relating to America, as for example the Paullin and Paxson. But such a guide is costly. Extremely few staffs have time for it, and WPA help is not quite up to that mark.

Furthermore the variety of types of collections make a standard description impracticable. There is no greater variety in historical work than is found in handling manuscript collections. For instance, the completely adequate description of the papers of Joseph T. Dodge, 1845-1899 (entry 185) relates that they are of "a Wisconsin civil engineer relating to railroad building." The type of letters, where from, what roads are covered, the six

lines on subject matter really covers the material. On the other hand the description of the James R. Doolittle Papers, 1831-1935, with fifteen boxes including sixteen volumes (entry 187), is about the same length as the Dodge, but covers broad general subjects such as various political activities and the slavery controversy. So far as it goes it is well done and it could not expand a little; it must begin an extended analysis as the next step.

The first criticism at hand is the minimum of biographical detail, true of practically every guide except the William L. Clements which, however, sacrifices description. A sketch of the subject should be the skeletal organization of each important collection. One other criticism which I would make is the treatment of Wisconsin's archival material. A brief discussion of the housing and status of the archives would have been a decided advantage. I would suggest their listing in an archival arrangement in a separate section instead of alphabetically under "Wisconsin."

This is an important addition to our archival knowledge. It contains 802 entries covering over 600,000 manuscripts and over 2000 volumes of manuscripts. Though the central theme be Wisconsin, great resources therein relate to our national history.

CURTIS W. GARRISON

The Hayes Memorial

"Territorial Papers of Wyoming in the National Archives," by W. Turrentine Jackson. *Annals of Wyoming*, 16 (January, 1944), 45-55.

"Territorial Papers in the Department of Interior Archives, 1873-1890: Washington, Idaho, and Montana," by W. Turrentine Jackson. *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, 35 (October, 1944), 323-341.

"Dakota Territorial Papers in the Department of the Interior Archives," by W. Turrentine Jackson. *North Dakota Historical Quarterly*, 11 (July, 1944), 209-220.

Administration of the territories by the federal government resulted in the acquisition of thousands of documents, records, and reports most of which are now housed in the National Archives. Such presidential appointees to territorial positions as governors, secretaries, judges, and the like, were required to make periodic reports to their respective superiors as to the condition and affairs of the territory they represented. Reports until the year 1873 were made to the Department of State and thereafter to the Department of Interior.

In each of these three articles the author gives a generalized description of territorial papers in the National Archives which is very similar in content—almost a repetition. This is followed in each case by a breakdown under the administration of the respective governors describing the Executive Proceedings, Appointment Papers, Charges Files, Domestic Letter Books, and Special

Letters as well as the Miscellaneous Letters from the Patents and Miscellaneous Division. A description of the Penitentiary Papers for each of the territories involved is also given.

While the author through these articles has described much valuable material vital to historical research he has omitted other significant records found in the National Archives. A good example is found in connection with the records of the territory of Wyoming. It is a fact recognized by all good historians of the West that the cattle industry was solidly intertwined in the weave of Wyoming's early history. It is as basic to Wyoming's early history as the search for gold was to the exploits of the early Spaniards in America. No one will question the fact that the papers described in Mr. Jackson's Wyoming article shed some light on the development of the cattle industry, yet the incompleteness of this presentation is appalling in consideration of the fact that the author had only to go a few steps farther to add additional equally significant materials to his catalogue. In a recent visit to the National Archives this writer had occasion to examine the Wyoming materials and through the able co-operation of Mr. Herman Kahn, chief, Division of Interior Department Archives, establish the availability of much Wyoming material unmentioned by the author. Chief among these are:

1. The letters received and sent by the Division of Lands and Railroads, Office of the Secretary of Interior. Closely allied to these documents are the Miscellaneous Correspondence files of the General Land Office which deal among other things with the controversies of private fencing on the public domain as well as problems of overgrazing, thus contributing to cattle wars and the eventual decline of the cattle industry.
2. Briefs of the correspondence of the Commissioner of Cattle, an office established in 1881 by the Treasury Department are valuable in relation to cattle quarantines which materially affected the Wyoming industry.
3. Records of the Department of Justice and particularly the correspondence of the Attorney General lend additional light on the economic struggles which finally culminated in the "Johnson County War" after Wyoming had entered statehood.
4. Military post records of the War Department are vital in that they portray the outrages committed by cattle rustlers and the quelling of disturbances by the troops.
5. The population schedules of the Bureau of the Census available in the National Archives, show the trends of industry in territorial Wyoming and could in no wise be profitably neglected by the social or economic historian making a study of this area.
6. Archives of such governmental offices as the Office of Indian Affairs, Interstate Commerce Commission, the Customs Service and the Diplomatic and Consular Service although not directly related to the Wyoming archives

also contain material which would be vital to a study of the territorial activities in Wyoming.

From the foregoing analysis it seems logical to conclude that it would be unsafe to assume that the listing of materials by Mr. Jackson in the other two articles is complete. Their value as aids to research, although incomplete, cannot be questioned, but through soliciting the co-operation of the National Archives staff any future work of this nature could have even a greater value. There has long existed the need for an adequate analysis of these documents, and students neglecting to use the facilities of the National Archives by-pass one of their finest opportunities in research.

VIRGIL V. PETERSON

Colorado State Archives