

## THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND THE PROTECTION OF RECORDS IN WAR AREAS<sup>1</sup>

**B**ECAUSE of concentration on domestic archival tasks, made heavier by the war, the National Archives was slow to awaken to its responsibilities and opportunities to be of service in connection with the protection of archives in war areas. A young agency, it possessed no previous war-time experience in such matters. Insofar as thought was given to protection in the first year of the war, it was to the protection of our holdings on this side of the Atlantic should this by chance become a war area; and in 1942 this chance did not seem so remote that it was not to be taken seriously. "Too little and too late" was a phrase that had seared deep into the national consciousness. As archivists we had failed in the Philippines, just as the military had failed. We had merely been lucky in Hawaii. We thought then of protection with the psychology of those on the defense.

Perhaps the awakening could not come until the offensive phase of the war had advanced to the stage where invasion of the European continent was imminent. With our armies poised on the shores of North Africa ready to strike, we became suddenly conscious of the archival treasures of Europe that would be endangered by the activities of both friend and foe in the coming struggle, that were, indeed, doubtless already being destroyed in preliminary bombing operations. Our psychology was changing fast in the spring of 1943. It was clearly up to the Allies, now as victors, in their reconquest of the lands and countries Germany had overrun, to minimize, if possible, the destruction of the records of that civilization and culture for which we fought. A precious part of our heritage was there within "Festung Europa," threatened by our own armies.

We also had begun to think, after the invasion of North Africa, of the practical importance of records in connection with the government of conquered territory. Dr. Ernst Posner's suggestive paper, entitled "Public Records Under Military Occupation," first read to a small luncheon group on May 5, 1943, and soon thereafter published by the National Archives,<sup>2</sup> was the spark that suddenly lit our sluggish

<sup>1</sup> A paper read at the annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists, Indianapolis, Indiana, November 6, 1945.

<sup>2</sup> It also appeared later, with slight revisions, in the *American Historical Review*, XLIX (January, 1944), 213-227.

imagination and opened our eyes to the importance of protecting records as a military measure. Were the military authorities aware of what lay ahead in the complex civilization that was Europe, so dependent upon records? By protecting the modern records for military reasons it was obvious that we would also be saving the records of today for the future. It should be possible for the Army and archivists to work together on this problem.

One direction in which the influence of Dr. Posner's paper was immediately felt deserves mention, although it is something of a digression at this point. Mr. Shipman, director of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park, had listened to the talk and was prompted by it to write a memorandum to President Roosevelt the next day. He set forth something of the importance of protecting records from the viewpoint of military government as well as because of their cultural values. Two days later the President at a regular cabinet meeting read this memorandum and, after emphasizing that it was a very important matter, asked the members of the cabinet to give attention to it and issue any necessary orders to see that records in war areas were given the necessary protection. The President did not lose interest in this matter. He later sent a cable to the Mediterranean theater expressing his concern for the fate of local Italian records. When Mr. Shipman visited this theater shortly afterwards many thought he had come to inquire into these matters for the President directly. The knowledge in the theater of the President's personal interest in the subject created an atmosphere that was of immense help to Mr. Shipman, as was a personal letter from the President that Mr. Shipman took with him.

To return from this digression, we had come to feel in the National Archives by June, 1943, that we had important information and perhaps valuable advice to offer if proper channels of communication to the armed forces could be opened. The first such channel that offered itself was the Committee on the Protection of Cultural Treasures in War Areas, established by the Council of Learned Societies on January 29, 1943, under the chairmanship of Dr. William Bell Dinsmoor. This committee did not become fully active until June, at which time the archivist accepted an invitation to membership on it and attended its first full meeting in New York City. Early in July, Dr. Dinsmoor and Dr. Sumner Crosby, the committee's executive secretary, visited the National Archives and asked for its advice

and co-operation in the development of lists of cultural monuments, treasures, and institutions to be made available to the armed forces, the military authorities having already indicated to these committee officials that such lists would be welcome and highly useful. A plan for the compilation and furnishing of such information by the National Archives on archival repositories in Europe was presented and agreed upon.

We might not have been so ready to enter into this agreement had we not known that Dr. Posner's services could be made available to us through the courtesy and co-operation of the American Council of Learned Societies. Most of the information was in our library, but a person of his background, knowledge, and general ability was needed to interpret and organize it in usable form. We could furnish overall supervision, materials, typing assistance, and assistance in revision and editing. Dr. Posner himself was eager to make this contribution, and worked with his customary energy and efficiency in the months that followed, giving, except for his classes, almost full time to the project.

Work was begun on archival repositories in Italy a few days before the invasion of Sicily, July 10, and before that campaign was over information as to the name, location, official head, holdings, and buildings for some 140 archival repositories in Italy had been furnished on four-by-six inch cards to the Dinsmoor committee. Similar information was furnished for archival repositories in Greece, Yugoslavia, Rumania, and Bulgaria in August. Before the end of September like material had been furnished for about 370 archival repositories in France.

The Dinsmoor committee meanwhile had worked out with military authorities plans for consolidating the information received by it from many sources and presenting it in map form city by city, and these maps were to be consolidated eventually into atlases for each country. The maps, as they were completed, were reproduced photographically and flown to the theaters where they were used in briefing bombing crews for their missions. The atlases were intended for use in field headquarters and especially for use by military government officials. They were somewhat slow in appearing. Those for Italy and France were published in January, 1944, that for Belgium, Holland, and Denmark in June, 1944, and that for Germany in August, 1944.

In using our data for these maps the Dinsmoor committee omitted the greater part of the information on our cards, and no plans were developed by the committee for presenting this omitted information to the armed forces. Experimentally, therefore, it was decided to retype the data on the cards for Italy on hectograph carbon paper and run off a quantity of hectographed copies of the resulting document for direct distribution to interested government agencies and officials. The Dinsmoor committee in any case had represented an indirect and unofficial channel for an official agency of the government to use in furnishing information to other government agencies, although the advantages of consolidating information from all sources in the map form developed by the committee and approved by military authorities was obvious. It seemed clear that we should continue to use this channel but that it should be supplemented. The response to our first distribution of the list of "Archival Repositories in Italy" to selected government officials was so favorable that it was clear that a need was being met. So many copies were requested by the Military Government Division of the Provost Marshal General's Office for distribution to officers being trained for civil government that the list had to be run a second time. We proceeded at once to retype for hectographing the material for the Balkan countries and for France, and subsequently continued to make the information on the cards for all other occupied and enemy countries available in this form.

Completion of the cards for France was followed immediately by the preparation of cards for archival repositories in Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Denmark, and Norway. The possible invasion springboards were thus covered by November, 1943. Germany, Austria, and Hungary were next, and were completed by the end of April, 1944. Cards for Czechoslovakia were added in May. The order was determined by the committee's schedule in its production of maps. Incidentally, no atlases other than the four mentioned were ever published, a fact that emphasized the wisdom of our decision to make information about archival repositories available in another form. Plans for the preparation of cards for archival repositories in Sweden, Switzerland, Spain, and Portugal, neutral countries that might at any time become involved in hostilities, were abandoned as this possibility became remote. The same decision was made at a later date with respect to Poland and other eastern Euro-



pean countries as it became clear that our armies and civil affairs authorities would not be directly concerned with them. Instead we turned to the Pacific and Far Eastern areas, and, although sources of information were meager, assembled what we could find and eventually issued our two lists, "Archival Repositories in the Philippine Islands, The Netherlands Indies, French Indo-China, and Thailand," and "Archival Repositories in Japan, Korea, and Japanese-Occupied China."

The chief channel of distribution for all these lists was the Military Government Division of the Provost Marshal General's Office, which in turn used its highly developed channels for distributing civil affairs publications to get these lists to points where they could be effectively used in the various theaters of operations. The Military Government Division, because of its special interest in the document, offered to multilith "Archival Repositories in Germany" and thus include it in its series of official Civil Affairs Guides and at the same time to make a larger quantity available. As these lists became known, there were frequent requests for additional copies. The lists for France, Northwest Europe, and Austria had to be rerun to meet the demand. These lists were not considered publications, and there has been no distribution of them to libraries or scholars in this country.<sup>3</sup>

In all, these lists provided data on some seventeen hundred archival repositories. Many minor ones of course were omitted, as were offices maintaining only current administrative records. Asterisks were placed in the margin opposite the entry to designate the more important repositories. In the theaters these lists were used to some extent as reference tools by intelligence units. Their main use, however, was by personnel of the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives units for the purpose of identifying and checking on the

<sup>3</sup> The following is a complete list of those issued by the National Archives:

Archival Repositories in Italy—29 p. (August, 1943)

Archival Repositories in France—88 p. (December, 1943)

Archival Repositories in the Balkan States—18 p. (January, 1944)

Archival Repositories in Enemy Occupied Countries of Northwest Europe—42 p. (January, 1944)

Archival Repositories in Hungary—31 p. (April, 1944)

Archival Repositories in Czechoslovakia (May, 1944)

Archival Repositories in the Philippine Islands, The Netherlands Indies, French Indo-China, and Thailand—15 p. (November, 1944)

Archival Repositories in Japan, Korea, and Japanese-Occupied China—13 p. (June, 1945)

*Archival Repositories in Germany* (124 p.) was issued by the War Department (War Department Pamphlet No. 31-180) in May, 1944.

fate of archival buildings and their contents. These lists were drawn upon in both the Mediterranean and European theaters in the preparation of other lists of officially protected monuments and cultural institutions, that for administrative reasons were arranged by regions. Such lists, published with appropriate orders and directives, became part of the governing body of regulations under which the troops operated.

It probably will never be possible to appraise with any satisfaction the exact contribution made by our lists. Reports received from monuments and archives officers abroad indicate that they were generally available to them and that they were much appreciated for their convenient form and arrangement and exact information. They were the first such lists and, for many months, they represented the only information on archives available to these officers. Lieutenant Colonel Mason Hammond reported that these lists helped all concerned to understand and appreciate the nature and magnitude of the archives problem. Because of them greater attention was given to archives in written directives than would have been the case otherwise. He contrasted the situation with that for libraries, for which unfortunately no such lists were prepared, with the result that in their concern for these institutions the responsible officials worked largely in the dark.

Other informational contributions made by the National Archives to the work overseas will have to be mentioned more briefly. One of our staff members, George C. Reeves, translated the Italian archives law of 1939, a very comprehensive statute, and typewritten copies were made available to the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives Subcommittee of the Allied Control Commission for Italy. Dr. Posner prepared for us a study entitled *The Administration of Current Records in Italian Public Agencies*, intended to assist civil affairs personnel in Italy by giving them a picture of the organization and handling of modern records in Italian governmental offices.<sup>4</sup>

The War Department publication *Field Protection of Objects of Art and Archives*,<sup>5</sup> intended as a manual of first-aid to be placed in the hands of monuments and archives officers accompanying the armies, contains a section on protection of "depositories of books,

<sup>4</sup>Published by the National Archives as Records Administration Circular No. 5 (November, 1943).

<sup>5</sup>War Department Pamphlet No. 31-103 (May, 1944), 46 p.

manuscripts, archives, and records," prepared with the assistance of the National Archives. Also prepared under our auspices, at the request of the War Department, was a study issued by the department in its Military Government Information Guide series under the title *Information on German Records*.<sup>6</sup> This stressed the organizational and technical aspects of modern German record keeping and was intended to assist intelligence and civil affairs officers in understanding and using the large bodies of records that would be taken into custody in Germany. We prepared, arranged for, or contributed to a number of other studies or projects of the War Department, State Department, and Office of Strategic Services, the nature of which we are requested still to keep confidential. We received praise from many quarters for these contributions. The War Department began to have such faith in us that it looked to us with confidence for the preparation of a guide to key records in Japan. At that point we failed them because we neither had on our staff nor knew of anyone elsewhere with expert knowledge in this field.

All of the above mentioned activity may be classified as informational in character. As mentioned previously, there was on our part acute realization that what was needed in addition to information was a more effective field program for the care of archives, including modern records, on the part of our military authorities. How could that be promoted? What part should the National Archives attempt to play?

In Italy there had been set up a Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives Subcommittee under the Allied Control Commission, but, despite the use of the term "archives" in the subcommittee's title, there were to our knowledge no professionally trained archivists active in connection with the program. The so-called "monuments" officers (this being merely a convenient short title for "monuments, fine arts, and archives" officers) that were being sent to that theater in increasing numbers were supposed to concern themselves with archives but the National Archives was not being consulted in their selection. Most of them were trained in the arts or in archeology; a few were historians but of the medieval period. If these men were interested in manuscripts, such interest was likely to be limited to illuminated manuscripts or medieval codices.

Although not archivists, some of these "monuments" men did

<sup>6</sup> War Department Pamphlet No. 31-217 (February, 1945), 44 p.

good work as they, of necessity, came into contact with archival problems. Their reports of the destruction at Palermo and at other points in Sicily and southern Italy emphasized the need for archives specialists. These reports unfortunately did not reach us until two to four months after they were written. Oral reports, leaking through to us as to the mishandling of modern records, indicated that expert attention to that phase was also needed. We were informed of nothing officially, however, in those early months, and it was difficult, with the situation but vaguely understood, to know what action to take.

When in November, 1943, there was referred to the National Archives a cabled request from Allied force headquarters in Algiers for an "archivist," the occasion was seized upon as a means of securing what military men call an "estimate of the situation." It was decided to send, instead of just any one available, a man qualified to examine into the situation, organize, if possible, a practical program capable of being put into operation at once, and appraise future needs. The recommendation of the writer that Mr. Shipman be sent on this mission was promptly approved by Dr. Buck. Mr. Shipman's early interest in the subject has already been indicated; he was at once excited by the challenge; and he agreed that if he could be sent over for several months on a temporary mission he would go. He did not feel he could leave his family, responsibility for the library, and White House duties for a longer period. We hoped he could in that time establish the work so that it could be carried on by others, and rationalized that his knowledge and experience, when he returned, would be valuable in planning and organizing similar activities in other theaters.

Mr. Shipman left Washington in March, 1944, and was gone slightly over two months. Traveling on White House priority, he was given every reasonable facility in the Mediterranean theater for the accomplishment of his objectives. It is hoped that some day his report, or a revised version of it that he may prepare, can be published. Only some of the major accomplishments can be recited here. Approval was secured for the appointment of a permanent American archives adviser to the Subcommittee on Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives. Mr. Shipman and Hilary Jenkinson, secretary of the British Public Records Office, who was also in the theater at the time, arranged for archivists to be attached to the armies to go forward with

the troops, worked out with advance intelligence officers procedures for better controlling the handling and exploitation of records when needed for intelligence purposes, and arranged with civil affairs officials for application of the same principles of protection for the records when they came into the custody of the military government. Mr. Shipman made a survey of the condition of major archival repositories in southern Italy and Sicily, talked with archival authorities of the Italian government and with ecclesiastical authorities of the Roman Catholic church, and generally secured information which formed the basis for a number of recommendations made to Allied force headquarters in Algiers and to the Civil Affairs Division in Washington. Mr. Shipman on all possible occasions talked with officers of the importance for military purposes of the proper protection and handling of modern records, and he felt that his efforts had definite results. It was a favorable time, of course, with Rome as the next objective, for this emphasis to be appreciated.

It was Mr. Shipman's hope, and ours, that an archivist could be appointed and assigned to the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives Subcommittee before he left the theater so that there would be no loss of momentum. This was not to be. Our suggestion of Captain William D. McCain, then in the theater as an historian with the Fifth Army, never reached Mr. Shipman, so erratic were communications at that particular period. On May 30, however, Dr. Buck sent to the Civil Affairs Division a letter recommending Captain McCain for this assignment. If he had been appointed at once the subsequent story might have been very different, but the appointment was held up several months, and, even after it was made, there were further delays before he finally reported, September 9, 1944. All this meant that no American archivist was on duty during the summer advance from the area around Cassino to the foothills of the Appennines at Florence, which advance included the occupation of Rome. British archivists, who were present and did excellent work in this period, remained in key positions in the subcommittee for the remainder of the Italian campaign.

After Captain McCain's appointment, the National Archives worried little further about the Italian theater. Including the British, there were three first-rate archivists there who should be able to handle almost any situation. The forward movement had slowed down, and the front apparently was being stabilized for the winter.

Furthermore, in Italy we had the wholehearted and effective cooperation of the Italian state archives administration, headed by Dr. Emilo Re, a man whose personal and professional standing was such as to command respect and confidence on the part of all who had business with him. We shall hear further of him doubtless when Captain McCain tells us of the Italian experience in greater detail. The rest of the story of archives in the Italian theater is Captain McCain's, and I shall not presume to try even to summarize.<sup>7</sup>

Mr. Shipman had hoped to return by way of England, but, with D Day but a few weeks away, the visit was discouraged. He would have found there at SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force) a Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives Section established to carry out a program patterned after that of the MFA&A Subcommittee in Italy. In the spring of 1944 experienced "monuments" officers were being withdrawn from the Mediterranean theater to staff it. Those drawn from Italy had been exposed to the archives phase of the program, and several, notably Major Mason Hammond, had become impressed with the importance of the subject. Such planning for archives as was done by Americans in this theater before D Day was done largely by Major Hammond. He had access to informational materials prepared in the National Archives and the early directives that he drafted were very satisfactory.

Again, however, there were no professionally trained archivists among the "monuments" officers. As in Italy, fine arts specialists were in on the ground floor and by D Day they had filled all the positions allocated to the MFA&A section in the approved table of organization. Again it was decided to draft Mr. Shipman to do the needed promotional work. Dr. Buck in a letter to Major General John H. Hilldring of the Civil Affairs Division, written July 27, 1944, recommended that Mr. Shipman be sent to the European theater on temporary assignment "to make much the same kind of survey of the situation that he made in Italy, to work out arrangements with the military authorities . . . and with British archivists . . . for a complete and effective program for the protection and handling of archives and modern records, this program to be built upon the program already in existence and to represent a tying together of loose ends that might exist." To avoid the mistake made in

<sup>7</sup> Captain McCain's talk followed the reading of this paper.



the Italian theater of an interim period when no American archivist was present to carry on, it was recommended also that Captain Asa Thornton, a former National Archives staff member, be sent with Mr. Shipman and permanently assigned to the theater in the best position to carry on the contemplated program until re-enforcements arrived. It was suggested that additional archivists would be needed when the occupation of German territory was imminent.

The recommendation was referred to the theater, and for nearly six weeks an answer was impatiently awaited while the Allied forces broke loose in Normandy, swept across northern France, captured Paris, and continued their advances unchecked. A favorable reply was received September 6, the theater command agreeing "that there is definite need at that headquarters [SHAEF] for the permanent services of an archivist, and also for the services of an expert to assist in the preparation of a basic plan covering the preservation and utilization of the archives of Germany." Captain Thornton was on his way within a week and Mr. Shipman followed on September 19.

Mr. Shipman found no lack of appreciation of the importance of archives in the European theater. The lesson had been learned in Italy. The problem instead was co-ordination. Officials were busy in many quarters making plans and writing directives on the subject—in MFA&A, control group, and MFA&A, SHAEF; in G-2 (Intelligence) and G-5 (Civil Affairs). There were, as usual, differences between the viewpoints of the British and the Americans. Mr. Shipman worked on directives, reviewed them and commented on them, endeavoring diplomatically to reconcile some of the differences. He tried, without lasting success, to bring together the many different competing intelligence units and subject them to uniform control so far as archives were concerned. He and Captain Thornton found when they got to SHAEF at Versailles that, as usual, there was no place for an American archivist on the MFA&A Table of Organization, and it was decided that meanwhile, until a place was open, Captain Thornton should go with the American First Army in Belgium where there was great need and where he would gain valuable field experience. A trip was made to First Army Headquarters at Verviers, Belgium, to place him in accordance with arrangements worked out with SHAEF. It was agreed by General Frank McSherry that there should be an archives officer with each of the other American armies and Shipman cabled back for recom-



mendations from the National Archives. Then he visited Italy once more. Upon his return to Paris he found three recommendations for archivists from the National Archives, but he could not secure the release of these men for the proposed assignments. He thought he had secured an archivist in the theater for the Ninth Army, and one actually reported only to be detached several weeks later for reasons not known to us at present. The news did not reach us at the National Archives until January.

Mr. Shipman returned home in early December. We attempted to find persons qualified as archivists to recommend, but we could find none within the restrictions then imposed by the theater—that they be chosen from G-5 (*i.e.*, Civil Affairs officers). Worse still, in January the news came that Captain Thornton was ill and was being returned to this country for limited service. The first archivist to reach German territory, he had done good work around Aachen until the winter weather, hardships, and strain of the Bulge Campaign proved too much for him. With no archives officers with the armies, none at MFA&A section in SHAEF, and none elsewhere in the European theater, we were back where we started. With the military situation still critical, the restrictions on assignments were maintained until February. They were then liberalized to permit the assignment of officers from any branch of the service. A new set of recommendations was admitted, but by that time the forward movement in the theater was too rapid even to permit location of the men recommended or else it was the old story, a refusal to release these men for this work. Usually, of course, the men recommended were already in positions of some importance, and we were given to understand that it was probably impossible for the time being to expect anyone connected with the operating forces to be released from his assignment.

Thus, one way and another, following a long series of disappointments, we found ourselves without archivists in the European theater when our armies were racing through Germany. There were the “monuments” officers making archival inspections as always, but not many of them for the huge areas of operation that had suddenly opened before them. There were also the documents teams of G-2 (Intelligence), well trained for their targets; but they were set for exploitation, not protection and preservation. Too often after finding what they thought they could use, they took it without

record and gave no thought to what was left although it might have been useful to other intelligence teams, to military government officials, or, eventually, to scientists, economists, historians, or others. There was no one watching over the fate of both older archives of cultural importance and modern records of administrative and intelligence value or responsible for what might fall in between, nor was there anyone trained in the care, administration, and control of large bodies of records once they were inspected or exploited. It was a real failure at a critical time that should not be glossed over.

The only favorable development to be reported in this critical period was the approval of our recommendation, made March 7, 1945, that Mr. Sargent B. Child, known to us all as the former national director of the Historical Records Survey, be sent to the theater as American archives adviser to the U. S. Group, Control Council. A civilian was acceptable on the control council, and it was agreed that, although assigned there, he could serve as archives adviser to SHAEF also. Once the surrender occurred, the control council would take over and the force under SHAEF would be transferred to it, so that this was obviously the strategic post for the future. Child, in the interim before his departure, with energy and enthusiasm familiarized himself with the entire background of the work I have been summarizing, with the personages and organizations involved in the European theater, the plans and directives in existence, and the possibilities of the assignment. We realized that although it was probably late to accomplish much in connection with military operations, the problem of the administration of captured German records would be an ever-growing one and that it would reach formidable proportions. It seemed reasonable to expect that higher priority would be given to all phases of records work as the fighting drew to a close. Mr. Child left early in April, determined to bring new life into the program. He had to start from scratch, build a new organization, and convince the theater that his organization of archivists was the outfit to be entrusted with the task. Few archivists have faced such a challenge.

Today the picture is as follows. Mr. Child's official station is in Berlin. His activity comes under the Economics Division of the Office of Military Government for Germany (United States). He collaborates closely with Major R. H. Ellis, representing the British at the same level. It is hoped that eventually the French and Russians

will appoint archives advisers in their sections of the control council, and that the four of them can work closely together, exchanging information and developing common policies. There is also to be an archivist at USFET (United States Forces, European Theater) at Frankfurt to have actual administrative responsibility for archival work in the American zone of occupation. To date Mr. Child has handled the duties of this position himself, spending much time in the American zone. Outside Frankfurt two large buildings of the I. G. Farben plant have been set aside as a concentration center for homeless archives, records, and books of the western part of the American zone.

Mr. Child assisted in establishing in May near Kassel in the northeast corner of our zone a so-called Ministerial Collecting Center where the records of the former German ministries are being concentrated. It is estimated that eighty per cent of these were taken into custody by British and American armies. The British have from the start collaborated in depositing here those found in their zone. Latest reports are that there are over two thousand tons of ministerial records at this repository. They are brought in by Army trucks, assembled and arranged largely by screened German archivists and former ministerial employees under Allied supervision, and made available here for research to interested agencies of the United States and British governments and to military government officials. Technically this establishment is under G-2 (Intelligence), but Mr. Child as archives adviser is responsible for planning and policy. He has been ably assisted in this by Captain Lester K. Born, who has been the resident archivist at the center since June. Born's translations and abstracts of European archival writings are familiar to many readers of *THE AMERICAN ARCHIVIST*. Ultimately it is expected that microfilm copies of the more important of these records will be made available not only to Allied governments but to scholars for study and analysis of modern Germany and Nazi rule.

At Oberammergau, forty miles southwest of Munich, a number of large buildings have been secured as another collecting center for homeless records, this time chiefly for the holdings of archival and other cultural institutions that for the time being are not able to take back their materials. This depository serves for all southern Bavaria and for German materials that were removed to Austria and are being returned. Dr. Harold J. Clem, a young Harvard Ph.D.

in the field of modern German history, has been placed in charge of the activity in Bavaria, with headquarters at Munich, and the center at Oberammergau comes under his supervision. Some forty screened German archivists are at work under his supervision. At Bamberg in northern Bavaria and at Landshut in eastern Bavaria similar centers have only recently been established. There were in addition eight so-called documents centers in the American zone, recently consolidated into two, located at Heidelberg and Freising, at which records, chiefly industrial, economic, political (*i.e.*, largely Nazi party), and scientific in character, had been concentrated by G-2. Their exploitation for intelligence purposes practically over, the question of the disposition of these records is now uppermost. It is quite possible that in the near future they will be turned over to Mr. Child's organization. This would be in line with the announced policy of placing civil government activity increasingly in the hands of civilian officers. It is from these various centers that restitution is already being made to claimant governments of records taken from those countries by the Germans. From these centers records belonging to German archival agencies and institutions will be returned to their custody as soon as these institutions are functioning properly and have buildings and facilities for caring for them. Also from these centers records of certain categories, to be decided at high policy levels, will presumably be removed from Germany for an indefinite period, perhaps permanently.

Four able civilian archivists have recently been sent over by the War Department, upon recommendation from the National Archives, to assist Mr. Child in his work. They are, in addition to Harold J. Clem, Jesse Boell, Paul Vanderbilt, and Edgar Breitenbach. A fifth archivist, Captain Seymour Pomrenze, will go shortly. More will probably be needed. Mr. Child has secured some assistance from qualified Army officers available for assignment from the forces in Germany, but most of these men wish to come home, and replacements will probably be needed. Mr. Child hopes soon to return for a month in this country to discuss with War Department, State Department, National Archives, and Library of Congress officials future plans for archival work in Germany. He has made an excellent beginning, but only a beginning. Problems of large scale microfilm operations, of restitution of materials taken by the

Germans from occupied countries, of recommending what shall be removed from Germany permanently, of deciding what shall be returned to the Germans and how and when, loom large in what we tend to call the second phase of the program. The story will not be complete for several years. I hope that eventually Mr. Child will have the privilege of presenting it himself before this society.

It is desirable to say a few words about the Far East. We felt especially concerned at the National Archives with the fate of archives in the Philippines. Toward the end of 1944 we discussed the possibility of sending an archivist to that theater of operations in connection with the reoccupation, but we were not encouraged. Nevertheless in February, with the reoccupation of Manila imminent, the archivist of the United States addressed a letter to the War Department expressing his concern for the safety of Philippine records and suggesting that Major Arthur E. Kimberly, formerly chief of our Division of Repair and Preservation, be dispatched to Manila to initiate and supervise first-aid measures. This letter was referred to General MacArthur's staff and acted upon favorably by the late Dr. Joseph R. Hayden, MacArthur's civil affairs adviser and author of the standard treatise on the Philippines under American occupation. There were the usual hitches and delays, a little more complicated than usual in this instance, and Major Kimberly did not arrive in Manila until June, long after the time for effective first-aid measures was over. He could do little more than make a comprehensive survey of the condition of the archives and advise as to further action. His report was received late in August.

Major Kimberly reported what we had already learned from other sources, that the more important older records, including most of those of the Spanish regime, had survived purely by chance, no measures having been taken for their protection, but that the situation with respect to present conditions of storage is extremely grave. The Japanese had paid little attention to them, but neither had anyone else. Most of the records of the Spanish regime, dating from the early seventeenth century, together with many of those of the American period, totaling some ten thousand cubic feet, are now in confusion in a wing of Bilibid Prison, heaped in piles on a floor below street level and subject to damage from water, fires, rodents, insects, and unauthorized access. Perhaps the greatest loss

in Manila are the records of the Supreme Court (including the old *audiencia* records of the Spanish period) from the early 1600's to 1930. Important old records of the religious orders located in the Intramuros area were also destroyed, those of the Recollect Order completely and those of the Jesuits, Franciscans, and Augustinians in part. Comparatively recent records of government offices operating before Pearl Harbor are in some cases widely dispersed, and exact losses will not be known for some time.

The War Department has relinquished responsibility for civil affairs in the Philippines to the Philippine commonwealth government and the American high commissioner. A major program of archival rehabilitation and reconstruction in the Philippines must be initiated and the National Archives is now working on such a program with the State Department's Division of Cultural Cooperation, which has funds for cultural reconstruction in the Philippines that it has indicated to us can be used for this purpose. It is hoped that an archives adviser will soon be on his way to the islands and that he can be given the necessary assistance to begin the task of reconstruction. One of his tasks will be to train Filipino assistants to carry on. A new Philippine archives building is included in the approved plans for the rebuilding of Manila.

We hardly know what to expect in Japan. A Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives Section had made its appearance in the military government set-up, and the former executive officer of the National Archives, Captain Collas Harris, has been assigned to it and has managed to have the archives angle fully incorporated into the directives that have been prepared. He is probably now in Japan. That is another story to be left for the future.

The National Archives looks back upon its record with mingled feelings of both success and failure. It kept ahead of developments generally so far as furnishing information when needed. Its promotional work has had definite results of beneficial character both in Washington and in the theaters of operations. There is no question but that we should have been in touch earlier with Intelligence and Civil Affairs authorities in the War Department, working out with them plans and procedures for the handling of records that could have been integrated with their general planning and training of intelligence and civil affairs officers. Yet, these are not areas in which an archival agency traditionally operates. We could easily and comfort-

ably have ignored any responsibilities in this field. It is my belief that it will be to our credit in the future that we did not do so. Events have proved that even though late on the scene, the National Archives was not too late to make significant contributions. The returns are still coming in.

OLIVER W. HOLMES

The National Archives