

# Reviews of Books

RICHARD G. WOOD, Editor

*The National Archives  
Washington 25, D.C.*

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*Research in Public Administration*, Part I, Report of the Committee on Public Administration of the Social Science Research Council, 1934-1945, by William Anderson, and Part II, *Research in Public Administration*, 1930-1945, by John M. Gaus. (Chicago. Public Administration Service, 1945. Pp. xiv, 221.)

From 1934 to 1945, the Committee on Public Administration of the National Research Council, generously endowed with funds by the Rockefeller Foundation, engaged in an ambitious program of research in public administration. The present volume is a report on the accomplishments of the Committee together with a report "designed to sketch out the setting in which the Committee worked and to show something of the events and trends in public administration during the years of the Committee's activity." This was the period of great expansion in the functions of government due to the coercive forces of depression and war.

In the research program of the Committee, provision was made for the general stimulation of research as well as for the accomplishment of particular objects, to be undertaken by research agencies, universities, and outside individuals as well as the Committee's staff. A variety of research methods was employed, with general agreement that the work would be done in direct contact with the institutions, persons, and materials being studied rather than in sole reliance on library materials. While the whole report of the Committee is well worth the attention of archivists and others engaged in the field of record administration, of particular interest to them will be the projects described as "Capturing and Recording Administrative Experience."

In its report on these projects, the Committee recognizes that "the work of the historian is in a sense that of recapturing and recording in their true relations the events of the past, no matter how remote," and that "most of the work of the historian must be done without benefit of direct observation of the events described, or of discussion with those who participated therein," and that "the historian requires, therefore, special training and insight in the ways of finding, utilizing, interpreting, reconstructing, and correlating such available written, printed, or other records as may bear upon his particular problem of research." But the Committee bewails the fact that "the records are woefully incomplete," and that "so much has never been recorded in any way, or has been inadequately written down, and that so

much that was recorded has been irrevocably lost." In the face of these circumstances, the Committee sponsored the "capture-and-record" projects, designed "to build up the record."

Two groups of studies were dedicated to this end—one, projects undertaken by the Committee initiated in 1935 and completed just before the outbreak of war in Europe; and the other, the war history activities of the Federal Government, under the guidance of the Committee on Records of War Administration and the War Records Section of the Bureau of the Budget. During the course of the studies, commendable emphasis was placed on the importance of administrative history to the current conduct of government, the need for proper documentation of administrative activity, and the broadening of the basis of research to include not only the published materials in the library, but also the direct observation, contact, and study of record material at the scene of action.

Impressed by the favorable results of the capture-and-record studies, the Committee recommends: (1) that increasing attention be paid by historians, other social scientists, and government officials, to administrative history; (2) that a more comprehensive recording of administrative actions and results be undertaken; (3) that an "appropriate historical and records officer" be installed in every important agency of government; (4) that a "capture-and-record service" for all significant developments in government, staffed by objective, trained scholars, be made available from outside the government; and (5) that graduate students be encouraged to get out of the library and into the field where they can observe developments directly and hold discussions with men and women who are making history.

In the mind of the thoughtful archivist, some questions will arise concerning the implications of this report. For instance, what is the difference in value between a body of documents that accumulate involuntarily as a by-product of administrative activity, and a record consciously made for the purpose of capturing the story of administration as it unfolds? It would seem that the capture-and-record studies would have historical value in proportion to the extent they are supported by authentic record documents, but can the studies be accepted in place of the records?

The fact that the records of the agencies are wholly inadequate is due, in the opinion of this reviewer, in large measure to the low standards of record administration prevailing at this stage in its evolution rather than to the lack of written records. For many years, concurrently with expanding government activities, this reviewer has noted the increasing use, by policy formulating officials, of the "memorandum for the files" in which is noted items of intelligence, discussions, and agreements arrived at in conference, on the telephone, at hearings, and in reading. The very necessity for communication in a large and complex organization, and the need for reminders of future action to be taken growing out of present activities, are compelling reasons for a more adequate written record. It is true, however, that this informal but important type of policy document is often retained in the private possession of officials and staff members, who look upon them

as more in the nature of personal papers rather than as official record material.

The field of record administration, however, is now in the throes of a concerted movement to establish higher standards, a movement which received its impetus when the National Archives was established, and more recently when the Bureau of the Budget became interested in the record problem.<sup>1</sup> While it is currently involved in the problem of bulk and the need for disposition posed by the enormous accumulations consequent on early neglect, depression, and war, it must ultimately attack the problem of the effective organization of valuable material to meet the reference needs of modern administration. The attainment of that objective would indeed be a milestone on the road to better public administration. At this point may we look forward with hope to the time when both the administrator and the student will have at hand the facility of a reference service based on adequately organized and coordinated record material, supplemented by the capture-and-record technique developed through the efforts of the Committee on Public Administration.

HELEN L. CHATFIELD

U.S. Bureau of the Budget

*Devices for Reducing Health Department Records and Reports*, by Joseph W. Mountin and Evelyn Flook. Supplement No. 187 to the Public Health Reports. (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1945. Pp. 67. \$0.25.)

Records and reports are, to most of us, necessary evils but the devices outlined in this book for the simplification of planning and reporting make the pill much less bitter. The authors who have devised and briefly described the form "Annual Combined Report and Plan of State Health Departments" to be used in reporting to the Public Health Service have, it seems, ably coordinated the two main objectives in any reporting system, namely, that it first meets the need which the information must fill and secondly, that it is as simple as possible.

Acknowledging the fact that with the extension of Federal grants-in-aid for health work, federal agencies charged with the administration of these financial grants must require fairly specific details, it is unfortunate that the reporting has been and for many agencies continues to be so burdensome and so complex. As is pointed out in the text, "through use of a modified check list system, involving use of prescribed symbols, it is possible to show the kinds of services included in each program, the relative emphasis placed on each, those which have grown and those which have been curtailed during the past year, and those for which either expansion or reduction is contemplated during the following year." (p. 6) In addition, forms closely correlated with the Annual Combined Report and Plan for reporting on finances and personnel and services have been suggested as an "evolutionary step directed at both

<sup>1</sup> Some of the ideas taking form are exemplified in W. J. Wilson, *Analysis of Government Records—An Emerging Profession*, The Library Quarterly, Vol. XVI, No. 1, January 1946.

simplification and improvement of reporting to Federal grant-in-aid agencies."

If this system of reporting fulfills the need of one Federal agency, why isn't it possible for related agencies to adopt a similar system? Better still, make one system of reporting adaptable for the use of all related Federal agencies and thus reduce to a minimum the time and energies expended in preparing numerous and varied types of report. Anyhow—orchids to Mountin and Flook!

MARION G. MALOON

New Hampshire Department of Health

*Meddelanden från Svenska Riksarkivet för År 1944.* (Stockholm. Kungl. Boktryckeriet, P. A. Norstedt & Söner, 1945. Pp. 65. 2 kronor.)

The annual report of the Swedish State Archives for 1944 opens with a warm tribute to the late Helge Almquist, who headed that establishment from 1926 to his death on 29 February 1944. Under his able leadership the Swedish State Archives made notable progress in its dual capacity as an archival depot and as a research center. During the period 1926-1944 many significant and valuable accessions were received, including those obtained in the extensive exchange of archives effected in 1929 between Sweden and Denmark. One of Dr. Almquist's first steps was to secure an increased grant for archival publications. Unfortunately his efforts were hampered by the economic crisis of the 1930's and, later, by the outbreak of World War II. Thus, it proved impossible for him to attain a much needed expansion of archival facilities, and in recent years, the work of his organization was burdened and restricted in all phases by the evacuation of records necessitated by the war. Dr. Almquist's successor, Professor Bertil Boëthius, took office on 1 May 1944.

This slender publication consists of a general survey of Swedish archival activity in 1944, followed by the customary scholarly contribution. During the year the editing and publishing of medieval source material have been continued. The usual photographic processes have been employed, and the institution has accomplished considerable binding and repair of the records. Visits by researchers to the Swedish State Archives in 1944 increased to 17,792. Rough drafts of outgoing communications totaled 1,281, while those received numbered 1,516. All told, 42 applications were sent in by foreigners seeking permission to use Swedish archives. The collections in the Swedish State Archives have been augmented by transfers, gifts, and purchases, totaling 8,057 volumes and approximately 949 documents, maps and other papers. On the other hand, after due consideration, official action has been taken to eliminate various groups of records not deemed worthy of preservation. As in previous years, official inspections have been made of a number of archival depositories, resulting in certain recommendations designed to improve their methods and facilities.

HAROLD LARSON

Arlington, Virginia

*Dominion of Canada. Report of the Department of Public Archives for the Year 1945*, by Gustav Lanctot, Keeper of Public Records. (Ottawa, Edmond Chautier, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1946. Pp. XLIX, 200. \$1.00.)

The value of calendars for important groups of historical manuscripts and archives is always apparent when the annual report of the archivist of the Dominion of Canada comes to hand. With an indexed calendar before him, a research worker can judge quickly in most instances, whether a collection is worthy of his time or the expense of an exploratory trip. Unfortunately, this volume is not indexed. Its calendar is that of the official correspondence of the lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada for a fateful period, 1838-41. Relations with the United States were strained, union of the provinces was imminent, the rebellion of 1837 was still in everyone's mind. Much of the correspondence reflects these conditions. Indian affairs, religious and church problems, the Great Lakes and their commerce, the Hudson's Bay Company, and the settlement of Canada are all discussed, besides many other topics. With this installment, the calendar of State Papers (official correspondence for Quebec, Upper and Lower Canada) for the years 1760-1841 comes to an end.

Besides the calendar the volume includes the report proper, a list of accessions to the manuscript division in considerable detail, and four documents printed *in extenso*. These documents fill twenty-seven pages. The first is Pierre Fortier's recollections of how he outwitted the American troops occupying Montreal in 1775-1776. The second is information regarding Tatmagouche, Nova Scotia, in 1795. The third is a letter revealing Canadian recognition of the collective responsibility of cabinet members. The fourth concerns Sir John A. Macdonald's election as a member for Victoria, British Columbia, in 1878.

To many persons an archivist's report is of as much interest as calendars and publications, for it reveals the administrative problems of a repository and how they are met. If success crowns the effort, then other archivists can profit. If striving, groping and unfruitful energy are the only results, the mere statement of that fact may serve as a warning to other archivists, who conceivably, on the other hand, may be able to offer wholesome advice to a struggling confrere. M. Lanctot's report for 1945 is tantalizing in this regard, for he surely has had outstanding results, but he merely indicates them and does not elaborate on his methods for achieving success. Those methods would have claimed close attention from any reader of THE AMERICAN ARCHIVIST. Let us have an article in these pages giving us M. Lanctot's recipe for running a great national depository of archives.

GRACE LEE NUTE

Minnesota Historical Society

*First Annual Report Division of State Archives State Historical Society of Colorado, September 1, 1943 to September 1, 1944.* (Denver, Colorado.

The State Museum, Division of State Archives, 1944. Pp. 12.)

*Second Annual Report Division of State Archives State Historical Society of*

*Colorado, September 1, 1944 to September 1, 1945.* (Denver, Colorado, The State Museum, Division of State Archives, 1946. Pp. 12.)

Legislated into existence during the war years, this infant agency, through its archivist, Herbert O. Brayer, and associate archivist (acting archivist for 1944-45), Virgil V. Peterson, has presented two reports worthy of some study on the part of its senior sister organizations in the field. Mr. Peterson's account of the second year's work follows fairly closely the pattern of the earlier report, discussing organization and administration, preservation and disposal of records, microfilming, county archives, public and professional relations, and plans and recommendations. Notable additions are the section captioned "Checklist of Territorial and State Documents", in which is described fully the project of revising and bringing up to date the 1910 *Check List of Colorado Public Documents* with the aid of sixteen institutions participating as co-sponsors, and the section on "War Records". As in the previous report, under "Destruction of Records" we find a complete list of the government departments and co-operating officers granted authority to destroy or transfer records, including the number of records handled. The Second Annual Report, however, fails to supplement Mr. Brayer's list of "Departments which have requested the services of the Archivist, and in which surveys are now in progress", though it seems unlikely that no such surveys were initiated in the 1944-45 period.

The collection of war records was directed by the associate archivist until July, 1945, when the responsibility was transferred to the state historian. Mr. Peterson worked with the Smaller War Plants Corporation and the Office of War Production Board, concentrating mainly on materials and information "revealing the impact of the war on society and the commonwealth in general".

The usual great handicap in records work—the lack of authority over records divisions, files, and record storage facilities of the various departments—is dealt with in Mr. Peterson's concluding remarks under "Plans and Recommendations". His solution would be a permanent official setup to systematize records practices. Public records officers "would be appointed by the head of each department. . . . An effort will be made to have such officers given full records authority by the department heads". And he indicates that measures have already been undertaken to achieve this end.

Copies of these two very enlightening twelve-page accounts can be obtained on request at the State Historical Society of Colorado, though the existing supply of the First Report is limited.

DOROTHY KING

Michigan Historical Collections, University of Michigan

*Sixth Annual Report of the Archivist of the United States as to the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N. Y., for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1945.* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1946. Pp. ii, 14. Frontispiece.)

This sixth annual report on the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library is the first



since the death of Franklin D. Roosevelt, its founder and chief donor. Dr. Buck, the archivist, begins with a brief review of the Library's history, records President Roosevelt's unceasing personal concern for its growth and work, and tells about the greater interest shown by the public since his death, in everything connected with him. Twice as many people visited the Library's exhibits in 1944-1945 as in the previous fiscal year.

President Roosevelt's last gifts of noncurrent sections from his White House files increased his manuscripts in the Library to about 2,000 cubic feet. In June, 1945, more than four times as many papers were awaiting legal transfer to the Library, having been removed from the White House and temporarily stored by his executors. These great collections, supplemented by papers of some of his contemporaries, constitute an invaluable body of historical source materials for the years 1910-1945.

The manuscript collections in the Library were not yet open for public inspection during the year 1945. It was expected that parts of them would be made available to qualified researchers before the end of 1946, although complete guides, calendars, and other finding aids can not be compiled for some time, even with a much larger staff than the wartime one.

The chief donor during the year covered by this report was Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, who gave her papers for the period of her husband's governorship, her White House files, 1938-April 1945, and thousands of letters of condolence received after her husband's death. President Roosevelt presented to the naval history collection the correspondence, journals, and notebooks, 1812-1855, of Commodore David Connor (1792-1856), and he and others added to the Library's collections of microfilmed manuscripts, motion pictures, photographs, sound recordings, books, pamphlets, and museum objects.

The building in which these growing collections are housed was built during President Roosevelt's second term, and was not calculated for the accumulations of his subsequent war years in the White House. A larger building is needed now, and the archivist reports that a study is being made of the additional space required adequately to preserve the Roosevelt papers, and related materials likely to be acquired in the future.

DOROTHY C. BARCK

New York City

*Report of the Board of Trustees of the Public Archives of Nova Scotia for the year ending 30 November, 1945.* (Halifax, N. S., King's Printer, 1946. Pp. 48.)

In this latest report the provincial archivist describes the growth of the collections and the continuation of the intra and extramural services of this well known provincial public archives agency. This list of accessions for the year, consisting of books and manuscripts received from private sources and a few printed public documents, might lead the uninitiated to conclude that this was merely a repository for miscellaneous historical material whereas in fact the Archives possesses many important series of early provincial and local public records. Apparently the government of Nova Scotia is not regu-

larly transferring to the Archives any large quantity of records produced during the present century. It is to be hoped that this indicates that these public records are being preserved as carefully by the offices of origin as they would be by the Archives.

The report concludes with an appendix containing several letters from the early correspondence of the Nova Scotia Historical Society whose manuscripts have been transferred recently to the Archives, and eight letters of Thomas Chandler Haliburton (Sam Slick) relating to his early literary efforts.

LEWIS H. THOMAS

Office of the Saskatchewan Archives

### SHORTER NOTICES

"Analysis of Government Records an Emerging Profession", by William Jerome Wilson, *The Library Quarterly*, 16 (January, 1946), 1-19, is an interesting summary of some of the efforts that have been made to control the mountains of records that have been created and that continue to be created by the Federal Government. Mr. Wilson, probably because of his connection with the OPA Historical Records Office, appears to be concerned principally with the fate of large masses of records. His solution, patterned after the experience of WPB, is the documentation file or, alternatively, the "source book". By offering these solutions, Mr. Wilson appears to accept the principles that all "policy" papers can be detected immediately and that one research analysis can, with a single stroke, exhaust the potentialities of any given group of records. The classic rejoinder to this oversimplification of the problem of evaluating records of the Federal Government is the "Old Loan" papers of the Treasury Department upon which Beard based his *Economic Interpretation of the Constitution*; under Mr. Wilson's program these records would have been destroyed many years before Beard thought of exploring them from a new point of view.

T. W. MITCHELL

National Archives

American Society of Refrigerating Engineers. *Refrigeration Data Book*. Second edition. (New York, the Society, 40 West 40th St. 1945. \$5.00.)

The second edition of a volume dealing with "Refrigeration Applications", one of a series of data books published by the American Society of Refrigerating Engineers, has recently been issued. The contents have been considerably expanded and now cover almost the entire field of the use of refrigeration and air conditioning in general.

A large part of the book deals with the refrigeration of foods but a considerable amount of information of general interest is contained in the sections: Industrial Applications of Refrigeration, Comfort Air Conditioning, and Industrial Air Conditioning. Included in the last are chapters dealing with the air conditioning of printing plants and of libraries and museums.



The chapter on libraries and museums was written by R. E. Cherne, Consulting Engineer. The part dealing with overcoming the deteriorative effects in libraries of light, abrasive dust, acidic pollution of the air, and adverse temperature and humidity, is based largely on research by the National Bureau of Standards carried out in cooperation with the American Library Association. Information of this kind is given for museums relative to paintings, fabrics, furniture and woodwork, and metallic, china and porcelain exhibits. Several representative air conditioning installations in libraries are described.

VERNON D. TATE

Excerpt from

News Bulletin of the Paper Section

National Bureau of Standards

April-May 1946