Modern Archives PRINCIPLES & TECHNIQUES

T.R. Schellenberg

WITH A NEW INTRODUCTION BY H.G. Jones

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CHICAGO

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To the

AUSTRALIAN ARCHIVISTS

this book

is

respectfully dedicated

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Introduction to the 2003 Reissue

My diary, now in its 65th year, records that on July 6, 1957, at his Afton Farm beyond Fairfax Circle, Virginia, Theodore R. Schellenberg pitched horseshoes with Walter Jordan of Tennessee, Alvin Roundtree of Illinois, and me. Among those looking on were Ernst Posner, Clarence Carter, Philip Bauer, Victor Gondos, Herman Friis, and their wives. Together with a picnic dinner provided by Mrs. Schellenberg, the afternoon of brim fishing and horseshoe pitching in the presence of these distinguished archivists provided a welcome respite from the intensive studies required during the Eleventh Institute in the Preservation and Administration of Archives.

The event constituted a heady experience for the seventeen members of the class. Like Jordan, Roundtree, and me, most of our classmates had recently taken jobs for which we had little training except for graduate school research in manuscripts. Thrust into positions like that of State Archivist of North Carolina, we didn't even agree on the pronunciation of our title, and before taking the course we had little concept of any profound theories and principles underlying our responsibilities. Yet at "graduation" on July 12 at the fashionable Occidental Restaurant, in the presence of the Archivist of the United States and other dignitaries, we became certified *archivists*. Nearly a half-century ago, it was that easy to earn the title.

We were fortunate; ours was the first summer institute to use an American textbook, and it was written by our own professor. The book, Modern Archives: Principles & Techniques, was initially published in Australia but was reissued by the University of Chicago Press in 1956. That year's October issue of the *American Archivist* carried a review by the venerated Waldo Gifford Leland, who wrote, "This compact and well written book is, at least in the opinion of the reviewer, the most significant and useful statement yet produced on the administration of modern records and archives." Leland continued, "It marks the advanced stage reached by the rapidly maturing profession of archivist in the United States in the brief span of 20 years since the creation of the National Archives Establishment." Recalling efforts earlier in the century toward the drafting of a "Manual of Archival Economy for the Use of American Archivists," Leland concluded that the failure had not been a misfortune, for Schellenberg's book was "much more and far better, the expression of practical wisdom based on experience and distilled by reflection."

Modern Archives was more than the text of a series of lectures delivered in Australia on a 1954 Fulbright Fellowship; it was the product of two decades already spent in the trenches experimenting with and learning about the administration of public records. Fresh out of graduate school, this Kansan performed yeoman service for the Joint Committee on Materials for Research (funded by the American Council of Learned Societies and the Social Science Research Council) by researching technologies for improving documentary research and helping to draft the report, Methods of Reproducing Research Materials (1935). He was involved in the establishment of a federal survey of archives early in the New Deal, then joined the newly established National Archives, where he experimented with the records created by the Department of Agriculture. For four years after 1945 he was records officer for the Office of Price Administration, but he returned to the National Archives where until his retirement in 1963 he held a variety of positions leading to the title of Assistant Archivist of the United States. All the while Schellenberg was testing and refining theories and practices in the face of an avalanche of paperwork produced by the governmental bureaucracy. Additionally, in 1949 he was of enormous assistance to Archivist Wayne Grover, first in resisting the Hoover Commission's recommendations and later in ameliorating their damage after the National Archives lost its independence. This traumatic experience further confirmed Schellenberg's conviction that archivists must become intimately involved in all aspects of the appraisal and management of current records lest the National Archives itself become a passive recipient.

When in 1935 Theodore Schellenberg first entered the archival field, there was little literature on the subject except for two European books— S. Muller, J. A. Feith, and R. Fruin's *Handleiding voor het Ordenen en Beschrijven van Archieven*, a Dutch manual not yet translated into English, and Sir Hilary Jenkinson's *A Manual of Archive Administration*. Although both contributed significantly to archival theory, both also dealt with recordkeeping systems alien to the American experience. Recognizing their inadequacy in the management of American records, Schellenberg developed new principles and practices and instituted his own courses to teach fellow staff members. By 1958, 60 percent of the staff of the National Archives had been exposed to his courses, and when he began offering them at the Federal Records Centers around the country, he was described as a "circuit rider." Happily for archivists outside the federal government, these training sessions were open to them also. Schellenberg also introduced courses at several major universities in the United States, and his influence on archives personnel in Central and South America equaled his earlier impact in Australia and New Zealand.

The growth of the federal government during the New Deal and World War II and the resulting flood of records, together with disparate mediums and filing systems so different from European experience, required the publication of a completely new set of principles and techniques to substitute for those enunciated in the European manuals. It was up to T. R. Schellenberg to develop and disseminate them. *Modern Archives*, addressed as it was to governmental records, thus made a major contribution to the burgeoning field, sometimes grandiosely called "archival science." It became a standard textbook in the few archival training courses around the country, and it was translated into several languages.

There was not, however, unanimous acceptance of Schellenberg's displacement of the Dutch and English manuals as guides for American archivists. He spoke of working *toward* an archival profession, for it certainly had not matured a half century ago, and many workers in public records continued to devise their own practices. Furthermore, Schellenberg's prescriptions, built principle upon principle, were often phrased as dicta, seeming to allow little deviation or compromise. Arguing is a refined art among archivists, and many of them took delight in picking at Schellenberg's perceived truths. In some instances they found weaknesses. Still, no other American book has affected archival principles and techniques as profoundly as *Modern Archives*. It provided a structured framework for those searching for an orderly guide, and it provided a basis for measuring myriad ideas advanced as alternatives, thus challenging archivists to propose competing theories. But no single book can remain the last word on the subject of recordkeeping, appraisal, disposal, and preservation. Schellenberg demonstrated that the nature of records in the United States differed from that in Europe, and the nearly half century since the publication of his book has demonstrated the rapidity of change in the nature of records in our own country. New principles and techniques are being adopted in the face of that change, but in virtually every instance they are measured against those enunciated so forcefully and sometimes controversially in Modern Archives.

> H. G. JONES The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill November 2002

Foreword

Those responsible for the development of new archival programmes in young countries like Australia have been hampered by the lack of authoritative works devoted to the problems peculiar to, or magnified by, modern records. The very excellence and authority of the English and Continental writings, concerned primarily with earlier records, has tended to inhibit the necessary thinking and experiment which the control of modern records in young countries requires. Despite this, there is evidence that some of the younger countries are in fact breaking new ground. Dr. Schellenberg's book is therefore most welcome and most timely. Without neglecting the traditional aspects of the administration of archives it directs special attention to the new problems which face archivists everywhere.

It is highly appropriate that such a book should have come out of the United States where many of the solutions have already been found, especially in the National Archives whose leadership has been an outstanding feature of recent developments in archival theory and practice. It is equally appropriate that the book should be a direct outcome of a visit under the Fulbright programme, the object of which is the interchange of knowledge between the United States and other countries. For we would hope that its use and influence would spread beyond the countries with well established archival systems to those whose rapid political and social development calls for new ideas and techniques in all areas of administration and in the organization of their intellectual processes generally. Archives have also been preserved in the past by newly created states to foster a growing nationalism, as they have been by established countries to document outstanding achievements. In Australia, for example, it was the consciousness of the national effort involved in total war, as well as the threat which the emergency held for the records themselves, which led the Commonwealth Government to establish an archival system in 1942. We should expect the continuing crises provided by the discovery of atomic power to have a like effect on the preservation of archives in the future, unless we entirely abandon hope for our civilization. Indeed, one of the special problems facing archivists in their administrative relationships and in their public relations generally is just this uncertainty. In a very real sense the governmental and public attitude towards the preservation of archives is a measure of our faith in the future.

The influence of Dr. Schellenberg's book should be the more widespread because of the attention it gives to the emerging problems of archival theory and practice. Arising as they do from a universal growth in economic and social organization, often involving new controls by governments, and from developments in the means for communicating ideas, they reflect a new and closer relationship between archival work and the world of affairs. Archival establishments are in no sense cemeteries of old and forgotten records. The essential quality of archives is that they record not merely achievements but also the processes by which they were accomplished. Therefore, as the organization of our corporate life, both governmental and non-official, becomes increasingly complex, archives assume greater importance both as precedents for the administrator and as a record for the research worker and historian. Moreover, those in charge of substantial enterprises, both governmental and non-official, are becoming aware of the efficiency and economy which flow from good records management and of its close relationship in turn to archival management. So this book should interest and inform the government official and the business administrator equally with the practising archivist.

Dr. Schellenberg has indicated that in a sense the book is a by-product of his work in Australia. Those of us who have had some part in causing it to be written would wish to record our thanks to him for supplementing in this important way the nation-wide influence of his visit here and for allowing us to be associated, even indirectly, with this major contribution to the world's archival knowledge.

> H. L. WHITE Commonwealth National Librarian and Archival Authority Canberra, Australia January 18, 1956

Preface

In 1954 I went to Australia as a Fulbright lecturer. Under the program developed for me, I was requested to discuss various aspects of the problem of managing public records. Since I was assigned specific topics to discuss, I had to organize my views on them by developing rough notes and occasionally writing out full statements in advance. Afterwards, in order to restate my views more systematically than was possible during a hurried visit, I began writing this book.

The first chapter, stating the case for archival institutions, embodies views I expressed before the Rotary Clubs in Canberra, Hobart, Perth, Adelaide, and Sydney, the Constitutional Club in Melbourne, and the Institute of International Affairs in Brisbane. The third chapter is a modified version of an address to the librarians of the State of Tasmania on "Problems in the Administration of Archives by Librarians." The fifth chapter, again, contains parts of speeches to the Royal Institutes of Public Administration in Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, and Brisbane. My discussion of the problem of scholarly access to public records before the senior administrative officers of the Commonwealth government in Canberra is reproduced in the last chapter. The main parts of the book, however, arose from the discussions in seminars held in Canberra, Melbourne, and Sydney. This is apparent from a review of the topics that were considered by the seminars:

- "The relationship of archives and other forms of documentary materials,"
- "The development of registry and records management practices,"
- "Current registry and records management,"
- "Standards of selection and potential research use of archives,"
- "Disposal techniques,"
- "Development and application of arrangement principles and techniques,"
- "Descriptive and other finding media," and

"Reference services and public relations."

My initial plan was to reproduce the rough drafts of lectures and seminar statements in their original, rather unfinished form. But on reviewing them after my return home, I found that many phases of the problem of managing modern public records had been left untouched. I concluded, therefore, that in order to present a fairly well-rounded and well-considered statement on the basic principles and techniques of managing such records I should have to add a great deal to what I had written. The book is thus an outgrowth, rather than a reproduction of my Australian lectures.

Archival principles and techniques have evolved in all countries in relation to the ways in which public records are kept while they are in current use by the government. The ways of the United States government are basically different from those of the governments of other countries. In the United States public records are kept according to various new filing systems; in practically all other countries they are kept according to a registry system. This book, then, is in some degree a study of contrasts: contrasts between the principles and techniques evolved in relation to new filing systems in the United States and those evolved in relation to the registry system abroad.

I hope the book will help others, as I have been helped in writing it, to place archival matters in a better perspective; and that it will help them to understand the relation of practices followed in managing public records for current use to those followed in an archival institution, the relation of the principles and techniques of an archival institution to those of a library, the relation of the various activities in an archival institution to each other, and the relation of the principles and techniques of European archival institutions to those of the United States.

In contrasting the principles and techniques followed in the United States with those of other countries, my sole purpose is to make clear their essential nature. I do not believe that American methods of handling modern public records are necessarily better than those of other countries; they are merely different. Differences of method should be understood for purely professional reasons: to promote a general understanding of archival principles and techniques.

The responsibility for all statements in this book is my own. Although many of the views expressed are derived from official publications that I wrote while employed in the Federal government of the United States, they are here produced as expressions of my personal views—not as the official views of any Federal agency with which I have been or am associated. They have no official sanction. My views are derived in part from the Australian archivists, whose knowledge of the principles expounded by Sir Hilary Jenkinson (late Deputy Keeper of the Records in the Public Record Office) served to bring these into sharp focus for me. I also obtained background information on the development of archival institutions and principles from the recently published lectures and papers of Adolf Brenneke, which were assembled and edited by Wolfgang Leesch under the title *Archivkunde* (Leipzig, 1953). The registrars of both Commonwealth and State government departments in Australia were very patient in explaining their registry practices to me.

The Australian lectureship provided the stimulus for writing the book. I would not have undertaken to write on so difficult a subject under the pressure of my current administrative duties in Washington, D.C. The book, therefore, owes its origins to those who made possible my visit to Australia: to Mr. H. L. White, Commonwealth National Librarian, who was largely instrumental in arranging the lectureship, and to Dr. Wayne C. Grover, Archivist of the United States, who promoted my candidacy for it; and to the staff of the United States Educational Foundation in Australia, and particularly its Executive Officer, Mr. Geoffrey G. Rossiter, who made the financial arrangements for it. Mr. Ian Maclean, Chief Archives Officer, suggested the topics for the lectures, and in seminar discussions helped develop my views on the nature of archives and the nature of the registry system. Dr. Robert H. Bahmer and Mr. Lewis J. Darter, Jr., helped me develop the procedures that are followed in the United States government in scheduling records for disposal, and I owe a great deal to them in the development of my views on the important problem of appraisal. On my return, Dr. Grover encouraged me to complete the manuscript I had begun while abroad. In the writing of the book I am especially indebted to Dr. G. Philip Bauer, who patiently read the entire manuscript and made very many valuable suggestions of changes in the interest of clarity and conciseness. I also appreciate the help of Mr. Lester W. Smith in checking references, and of Miss Lucinda F. DeShong in typing and proofreading the manuscript.

> T. R. SCHELLENBERG Washington, D.C.

Part I

INTRODUCTION

Let Your Eminence give orders throughout each and every province that a public building be allocated, in which building the magistrate (defensor) is to store the records, choosing someone to have custody over them so that they may remain uncorrupted and may be found quickly by those requiring them, and let there be among them an archives, and let that which has been neglected in the cities be corrected.

-Emperor Justinian.*

• Quoted by Baldassare Bonifacio in his essay De Archivis, published in 1632, and reproduced by Lester K. Born, The American Archivist, IV, No. 4 (Oct. 1941), 237.

CHAPTER I

Importance of Archival Institutions

T F THE average man on the street were asked why governments establish archival institutions, he would probably ask, "What are archives and what are archival institutions?" If, then, the purposes of an archival institution were explained to him, he would probably dismiss the matter with the comment that the whole thing is just another example of governmental extravagance. As for the archives themselves his final query would more than likely be, "Why not burn the stuff?"

With this popular attitude toward archival work common in all countries it is remarkable that any archival institutions have been established with public funds. There must, therefore, have been other reasons than popular demand for their establishment.

ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Archival institutions probably had their origins in the ancient Greek civilization. In the 5th and 4th centuries before Christ the Athenians kept their valuable documents in the temple of the mother of the gods, that is, the Mētrōon, next to the court house, in the public square in Athens. The temple contained treaties, laws, minutes of the popular assembly, and other state documents. Among the documents were the statement Socrates wrote in his own defence, the manuscripts of model plays by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, and the lists of the victors in the Olympic games. These writings were preserved and transmitted from the earliest times until perhaps the third century after Christ in the form of papyrus rolls. Although they are not now kept in archival institutions, their initial preservation was in such institutions.

Although archival developments during the decline of the ancient civilizations and the Middle Ages had some influence on the character of archival establishments in the early modern period, it is sufficient for my present purpose to consider modern institutions; and of these, despite the great significance of developments in Germany, Italy, Spain, and other countries, those of France, England, and the United States will best serve to illustrate the importance accorded to the preservation of national archival resources.

FRANCE

The basic importance of archives to established society can best be seen by observing how they were treated when a society broke down. During the French revolution institutions that had been evolved gradually since feudal times were destroyed. Foremost among these were the institutions of the state; but others religious and economic as well as governmental—were also uprooted. Property rights and privileges were swept away. An attempt was made to obliterate every vestige of the hated ancient regime.

In this period of upheaval, what happened to the records of society? In the initial fervor of the revolution, in 1789, the National Assembly established an archival institution, in which its acts were to be housed and exhibited. A year later, by the decree of September 12, 1790, this archival institution was made the *Archives Nationales* of Paris. It was the first national archives established by any country. In it were to be kept the records of the New France—records that signified its gains and displayed its glories.

What was to be done with the records of the past? Should the rich archival treasures of the ancient regime be kept—records of the royal council in the *Trésor des chartes* dating back to the 12th century, or records of *curia régis*, the oldest central governmental unit with origins in the 13th century? The more radical revolutionaries insisted on their destruction, for in them were embodied the rights and privileges of an old order. But the more conservative argued that these treasures were now public property and therefore should be preserved. Since they were public property, the public should have access to them; for the public should have the opportunity of searching official records to protect its own interests, which were involved in the liquidation of feudal rights and property relationships.

A decree of June 25, 1794, established a nationwide public archives administration. Under this decree the *Archives Nationales* was given jurisdiction over the records of the various central government agencies in Paris, which had theretofore maintained their own archival depots; over the records of the provinces, communes, churches, hospitals, universities, and noble families; and over district archival depots in which records of defunct and abolished local government agencies had been placed during the revolution. The decree also proclaimed the right of access to public records, thus becoming a sort of archival "bill of rights." The nationwide archives administration was further solidified by the law of October 26, 1796, which gave the *Archives Nationales* jurisdiction over the archival institutions that were established in the main cities of the *départéments* to take over the records formerly held in district archival depots.

Throughout the French revolution records were recognized as basic to the maintenance of an old society and to the establishment of a new. Records of the old society were preserved primarily, and perhaps unintentionally, for cultural uses. Records of the new were preserved for the protection of public rights. The recognition of the importance of records to society was one of the important gains of the French revolution. This recognition resulted in three important accomplishments in the archival field: (1) an independent, national, archival administration was established, (2) the principle of public access to archives was proclaimed, and (3) the responsibility of the state for the care of the valuable documents of the past was recognized.

England

About fifty years later, on August 14, 1838, a central archival institution was established in England. This was the Public Record Office. The reasons for its establishment were quite different from those that impelled the French revolutionaries to establish the *Archives Nationales*. The preservation of evidence of newly won privileges was not one of the reasons. Quite the contrary, for the basic rights and privileges of the English people, which had been established gradually through the centuries, were embodied in registers. From the 13th century onward the contents of important documents, either in an abridged or in a complete form, had been entered on rolls of parchment. These entries, which were acceptable as legal evidence, made reference to the originals unnecessary.

The reasons for the establishment of the British Public Record Office were both practical and cultural. The practical considerations related to the conditions under which public records were found. Although the volume of the rolls in their entirety was considerable, it was not sufficient to impel the government to create a central archival institution for their maintenance. The files that were subsidiary to the rolls were a different matter. Not only had they, lacking value as legal evidence, been neglected; but they had increased greatly as the ancient machinery of the Chancery, the Exchequer, and the Courts of Law gave way to a more complex administration.

In the reign of Charles II, William Prynne, as Keeper of the Records, had tried to restore order to the archives, which "had for many years lain bound together in a confused chaos, under corroding, putrefying cobwebs, dust, and filth in the darkest corner of Caesar's Chapel in the White Tower." For his purpose he said he employed soldiers and women "to remove and cleanse them from their filthiness, who, soon growing weary of this tedious work, left them almost as foul as they found them."¹ A century later certain documents of the reign of Charles I could not be found until under the direction of an ancient clerk some old books were unearthed in a room near the gateway of White-hall.

A disastrous fire in the Cotton Library resulted in a report in 1732, which Sir Hilary Jenkinson says "may well have provoked misgivings not only as to the danger from fire in many of the Repositories in which vast masses of Public Records were vaguely known to exist but also as to the possibility of their loss by other means than accident."² By 1800 records were found in over fifty different and widely scattered repositories in London. This situation led to a full-dress inquiry by a "Select Committee appointed to inquire into the State of the Public Records." As a result of this inquiry a Record Commission was appointed in 1800, the first of six such commissions appointed between 1800 and 1834. The working of the government, however, was so proverbially slow that a committee was appointed by the House of Commons to inquire into the work of the last of the Record Commissions. This committee in 1836 reported that in one repository all public records "were found to be very damp; some were in a state of inseparable adhesion to the stone walls; there were numerous fragments which had only just escaped entire consumption by vermin, and many were in the last stage of putrefaction. Decay and damp had rendered a large quantity so fragile as hardly to admit of being touched; others, particularly those in the form of rolls, were so coagulated together that they could not be uncoiled."3 This inquiry led to the passage of the Public Record Act of 1838.

The cultural impetus to establish the Public Record Office came from the historians. From the 17th century onward they had attempted to develop a public recognition of the value of records. Their efforts, however, met with little immediate public or official response. As late as 1848 a Select Committee of the House of Commons reported that "it is but a small fraction of the public who know the extent and value, and comprehend the singular completeness of the historical documents of this country. Our Public Records excite no interest, even in the functionaries whose acts they record, the departments whose proceedings they register; or the proprietors to whose property rights they furnish the most authentic, perhaps the only titledeeds."⁴

The Public Record Office, under the statute that created it, was made a separate department; it was not subordinated, as in France, to a ministry. It was concerned only with records of the central government, not with those of local or private origins.

THE UNITED STATES

About a hundred years after the establishment of the Public Record Office, the United States government established a national archives. This was done by the Act of June 19, 1934. Throughout the 19th century repeated efforts had been made to induce the government to take better care of its public records.⁵ As early as 1810 a Congressional committee found the public papers "in a state of great disorder and exposure; and in a situation neither safe nor honorable to the nation." Fires in 1814, 1833, 1877, and at other times, destroyed valuable records. The fire of 1877 led to the appointment of a Presidential commission to investigate the conditions under which the public records were kept. In consequence of its report President Rutherford B. Hayes recommended the establishment of a national archives in his annual messages of 1878 and 1879. "The records of the Government," President Hayes said in the first of these messages, "constitute a most valuable collection for the country, whether we consider their pecuniary value or their historical importance." In the decades following this message many Congressional attempts were made to provide better storage facilities for these records. They had as their objective the construction of "a cheap building . . . as a hall of records." Meanwhile, the American Historical Association, which was organized in 1884, had begun to press for the establishment of a national archives. In 1899 it set up a Public Archives Commission, which between the years 1900 and 1912 published various inventories of State archives and sponsored the publication of guides to Federal archives and to archives in Europe relating to American history, and which held annual meetings from 1909 on. The Association, in discussions with the President

and Congress in 1908, stressed the importance of an archival establishment "for researches in American history." In 1910 it petitioned Congress to erect "a national archive depository, where the records of the Government may be concentrated, properly cared for, and preserved." While Congress authorized the development of building plans in 1913, it was not until 1933 that the construction of such a building was begun.

REASONS FOR ARCHIVAL ESTABLISHMENTS

To recapitulate, what reasons led France, England, and the United States to establish archival institutions?

The immediate, and obviously the most impelling reason was the practical need of improving governmental efficiency. At the time of the revolution the pre-revolutionary central ministries of France had filled record repositories all over Paris, while in the interior of the country the archival depots in the districts were overflowing. In England five centuries of government operations had filled many scattered record repositories in London. The records of the Exchequer, for example, had been moved time and again from one place to another, "with what losses and confusion it is hard to estimate," to quote Jenkinson.⁶ In the United States, during a century and a half of the Federal government's existence, public records filled attics, basements, and other out-of-the-way places, into which they had been shoved when they were no longer needed for current work. In the course of time a government naturally amasses so many records that some action must be taken with respect to them. When such records glut government offices they hamper the conduct of business, they occupy valuable office space, and they serve as a daily reminder that something should be done with them.

The second reason was a cultural one. Public archives are one among many types of cultural resources, which include books, manuscripts, and museum treasures. They are as important a resource as parks, or monuments, or buildings. Since they are produced by a government, they are peculiarly its resource. In contrast to other types of cultural resources, which may be administered by private agencies, archives can be administered by no other agency than the government itself. The care of valuable public records, therefore, is a public obligation. This fact was first recognized in France. During the revolutionary period, it has been noted, records of the National Assembly were kept to establish the new order, but the records of the ancient regime, which were considered to be public property, were kept primarily for cultural purposes. These cultural papers (or *Chartes et Monuments appartenant à l'histoire, aux sciences et aux arts*) were set aside for preservation in the *Archives Nationales*. In England and the United States historians were the first to recognize the importance of public records, and largely through their insistence national archives were established in the two countries. Historians saw that such records in their entirety reflect not only the growth and functioning of a government, but also the development of a nation. In the United States, where they stood in the vanguard of the movement to establish a national archives, their views were ably expressed by the late Professor Charles M. Andrews (1863-1943), eminent American historian, who said:

The more it is realized that the true history of a State and a people lies not in episodes and surface events, but in the substantial features of its constitutional and social organization, the more will archives be valued and preserved. No people can be deemed masters of their own history until their public records, gathered, cared for, and rendered accessible to the investigator, have been systematically studied and the importance of their contents determined. . . It has been well said that "the care which a nation devotes to the preservation of the monuments of its past may serve as a true measure of the degree of civilization to which it has attained." Among such monuments, and holding first place in value and importance, are public archives, national and local.⁷

The third reason was one of personal interest. The French revolutionaries were partly impelled by this reason to establish the Archives Nationales. Because they were concerned with the destruction of an old society and the creation of a new one, they were made conscious of the importance of public records in defining various social, economic, and political relationships. They found that such records were fundamental to the protection of feudal rights and privileges, so they established a special agency (agence temporaire des titres) that made a point of segregating for disposal all records pertaining to such rights and privileges (titres féodaux). They also found such records to be fundamental in establishing newly won rights and privileges, and so they marked for retention all papers useful in substantiating the rights of the state to confiscated properties. Public records obviously define the relations of the government to the governed. They are the ultimate proof for all permanent civic rights and privileges; and the immediate proof for all temporary property and financial rights that are derived from or are connected with the citizen's relations to the government.

The fourth reason was an official one. Records, even the older ones, are needed by a government for its work. They reflect the origins and growth of a government and are the main source of information on all its activities. They constitute the basic administrative tools by means of which the work of a government is accomplished. They contain evidence of financial and legal commitments that must be preserved to protect the government. They embody the great fund of official experience that the government needs to give continuity and consistency to its actions, to make policy determinations, and to handle social and economic as well as organizational and procedural problems. In short, they are the foundation upon which the governmental structure is built.

CHAPTER II

Nature of Archives

There is a strong temptation for the practitioners of a new profession to develop terms with highly specialized meanings. If, in addition, the discipline is somewhat lacking in scholarly or scientific substance, a further temptation arises to develop terms not only of specialized meanings but of meanings so obscure that they will give an illusion of profundity.

The archival profession, though relatively new, is not lacking in scholarly and scientific substance; and contrary to custom it has tried to avoid the development of a specialized terminology. But, by the very use of common terms, archivists often verge on obscurity in their professional literature. I have therefore defined the terms I use in this book as they occur.

In this chapter I shall discuss at greater length the definitions of the terms "records" and "archives," not only because they need special attention but because an analysis of the main characteristics of record and archival materials is essential to our study.

DEFINITIONS

The word "archives," which is of Greek origin, has been defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as (1) "a place in which public records or other important historic documents are kept," and (2) "a historical record or document so preserved." This definition is troublesome because of its double meaning. In ordinary conversation, and particularly in professional literature, a distinction must be made between the institution and the materials with which it deals. This distinction can be made clear only by using different terms for the two. The Germans use the term "Archivalien" to designate the materials, but its English equivalent of "archivalia" has never found general acceptance. To clarify this distinction the words "archival institution" will be used in this book to designate the institution, while the word "archives" will be used in reference to the materials that are the concern of the archival institution. The dictionary definition, moreover, does not make clear the essential nature of archives,

which we shall now set about analyzing. In doing this, it will be helpful to review the definitions found in archival manuals written by archivists of various countries.

From the point of view of its worldwide contribution to archival science the most important manual written on archives administration is probably that of a trio of Dutch archivists, S. Muller (1848-1922), J. A. Feith (1858-1913), and R. Fruin (1857-1935). This manual, entitled Handleiding voor het Ordenen en Beschrijven van Archieven, was published in 1898 under the auspices of the Netherlands Association of Archivists. An English translation of it was made by an American archivist. Arthur H. Leavitt, and published under the title, Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives, in New York in 1940. This translation defines the Dutch word "archief" as "the whole of the written documents, drawings and printed matter, officially received or produced by an administrative body or one of its officials, in so far as these documents were intended to remain in the custody of that body or of that official."1 The word "archief," which Leavitt translated as "archival collection," really means the records of a particular administrative body that were maintained in a registry office.

In the 1937 edition of the English manual, entitled A Manual of Archive Administration, by Sir Hilary Jenkinson (the first edition of which was published at Oxford in 1922) archives are defined as documents "... drawn up or used in the course of an administrative or executive transaction (whether public or private) of which [they] formed a part; and subsequently preserved in their own custody for their own information by the person or persons responsible for that transaction and their legitimate successors."²

The Italian archivist Eugenio Casanova (1867-1951), in his manual entitled Archivistica, published in Siena in 1928, defines archives as "the orderly accumulation of documents which were created in the course of its activity by an institution or an individual, and which are preserved for the accomplishment of its political, legal, or cultural purposes by such an institution or individual."³

The German archivist Adolf Brenneke (1875-1946), for many years director of the Prussian Privy State Archives, whose lectures were embodied in manual form by Wolfgang Leesch in a publication entitled *Archivkunde* (Leipzig in 1953) defines archives as "the whole of the papers and documents growing out of legal or business activities of a physical or legal body which are intended for permanent preservation at a particular place as the sources and the evidence of the past."⁴

ELEMENTS IN DEFINITIONS

If the elements which have been stressed in the definitions of the archivists of several different countries are analyzed, it will be found that they relate both to tangible and intangible matters. The elements relating to tangible matters—to the form of archives, to their source, and to the place of their preservation are not essential to archival quality, for the archivists, in their definitions, indicate that archival materials may have various forms, may come from various sources, and may be preserved at various places. The elements relating to intangible matters are the essential ones. In my opinion there are only two such elements. A third, which Jenkinson believes essential, will also be considered.

The first of the essential elements relates to the reasons why materials were produced or accumulated. To be archives, materials must have been created or accumulated to accomplish some purpose. In a government agency, this purpose is the accomplishment of its official business. The Dutch archivists stressed the fact that archives are "officially received or produced"; Jenkinson stressed their production "in the course of an administrative or executive transaction"; Casanova their creation to accomplish "political, legal, or cultural purposes"; and Brenneke their growth as a result of "legal or business activities." How documents came into being is therefore important. If they were produced in the course of purposive and organized activity, if they were created in the process of accomplishing some definite administrative, legal, business, or other social end, then they are of potential archival quality.

The second of the essential elements relates to the values for which materials are preserved. To be archives, materials must be preserved for reasons other than those for which they were created or accumulated. These reasons may be both official and cultural ones. In his various definitions of archives, Jenkinson has stressed preservation by the creating persons "for their own information" or "for their own reference." It is interesting to note that, in his subsequent discussion of how documents become archives, Jenkinson, though primarily concerned with the archives of the past, foreshadows the views of archivists concerned with modern records when he claims that records become archives when, "having ceased to be in current use, they are definitely set aside for preservation, tacitly adjudged worthy of being kept."⁵ It is quite obvious that modern archives are kept for the use of others than those that created them, and that conscious decisions must be made as to their value for such use. The German archivist Brenneke therefore stated that archives are preserved "as the sources and the evidence of the past," obviously for research use. This view is also held by American archivists. Admittedly, the first, or primary reason why most records are preserved is to accomplish the purpose for which they were created and accumulated. In a government this purpose, we know, is to accomplish its work. Records kept for this purpose are not necessarily archives. They must be preserved for another reason to be archives, and this reason is a cultural one. They are preserved for use by bodies other than those that created them, as well as by their creators.

A third element, which Jenkinson believes is essential to archival quality, relates to custody. He states that documents are archives only if "the fact of unbroken custody" can be established, or, at least, a "reasonable presumption" of it can be established. A "reasonable presumption" of this fact, according to him, "is the differentia between a Document that is and one that is not an Archive."⁶ Or, as stated in his Manual of Archive Administration, "Archive quality is dependent upon the possibility of proving an unblemished line of responsible custodians." In his views of custodianship Jenkinson differed somewhat from the Dutch archivists, who required only that documents should have been intended to remain in the originating office. This, in effect, means that they accepted archives that had been out of official custody as possessing full archival status. In formulating his principle of responsible custodianship, Jenkinson probably had in mind how this might be established on the basis of the ancient rolls of the Chancery, Exchequer, and Courts of Law. In dealing with records produced under modern conditions of government, proof of an "unblemished line of responsible custodians" or of "unbroken custody" cannot be made a test of archival quality. Modern records are large in volume, complex in origins, and frequently haphazard in their development. The way they are produced makes futile any attempt to control individual documents, or, in other words, to trace "unblemished lines" of "unbroken custody." This is true no matter what kind of record-keeping system is used. If modern records, therefore, are offered to an archival institution they will be accepted as archives, provided they meet the other essential tests, on the

"reasonable assumption" that they are actually records of the office that offers them.

The modern archivist is concerned, of course, with the quality of the records he receives from a government office. He is anxious to have the "integrity of records" preserved. By this he means (1) that records of a given agency should be kept together as records of that agency, (2) that such records should be kept, as far as possible, under the arrangement given them in the agency in the course of its official business, and (3) that such records should be kept in their entirety, without mutilation, alteration, or unauthorized destruction of portions of them. The evidential value of his materials rests on the way they were maintained in the government office, and the way they came to the archival institution; not on the way in which individual documents were controlled within the government office.

DEFINITION OF MODERN ARCHIVES

Archivists of various countries, we have seen, have defined the term "archives" differently. Each of them has defined it in such a way that it is applicable to the materials with which he deals. Thus the Dutch archivists denominated the contents of an "archief," or registry, archives, and developed rules for their arrangement and description, which they codified in a manual. The Fnglish archivist Jenkinson, similarly, defined archives as corresponding to the ancient public records with which he was primarily concerned, and evolved principles for their treatment that apply particularly to such records. It is obvious, therefore, that there is no final or ultimate definition of the term "archives" that must be accepted without change and in preference to all others. The definition may be modified in each country to fit its particular needs. The definition that is adopted should provide a basis on which archivists can deal effectively with the materials produced by the government they serve. A definition should not be accepted that will vitiate their effectiveness. A definition evolved out of a consideration of medieval materials will not fit the needs of archivists dealing mainly with modern records. The converse of this statement is also true.

The modern archivist, I believe, has a definite need to redefine archives in a manner more suited to his own requirements. Since the major problem of the modern archivist is to select archives for permanent preservation from among the mass of official records created by public (or private) institutions of all kinds, the element of selection should be implicit in the definition of archives. My definition for records is:

"All books, papers, maps, photographs, or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by any public or private institution in pursuance of its legal obligations or in connection with the transaction of its proper business and preserved or appropriate for preservation by that institution or its legitimate successor as evidence of its functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities or because of the informational value of the data contained therein."

It will be noted that this is a slight remodelling of the definition given in the Record Disposal Act of the United States government of July 7, 1943, as amended (44 U.S. Code, 366-80). It should also be remembered that the term "institution" can be applied to such organizations as churches, business houses, associations, and unions and even to private families.

The term "archives" may now be defined as follows:

"Those records of any public or private institution which are adjudged worthy of permanent preservation for reference and research purposes and which have been deposited or have been selected for deposit in an archival institution."

The essential characteristics of archives, then, relate to the reasons why records came into being and to the reasons why they were preserved. We now accept that to be archives, records must have been produced or accumulated to accomplish a specific purpose and must have values for purposes other than those for which they were produced or accumulated. Public archives, then, have two types of values: the primary values to the originating agency and the secondary values to other agencies and to non-government users.
CHAPTER III

Library Relationships

T^N THIS chapter I wish to discuss the relationships of the archival and library professions. I propose to do this by pointing out the differences in the materials with which the two professions deal and the differences in their methods of dealing with them. My aim is not invidious. In emphasizing differences I have only one purpose in mind: to make clear the essential nature of the archival profession.

DIFFERENCES IN HOLDINGS

The differences in the materials that are the concern of the library and archival institutions relate to two matters: (1) the way they came into being, and (2) the way they came into the custody of such institutions.

Let us briefly consider the first of these matters. In the preceding chapter I emphasized as one of the essential characteristics of archives that they must have been produced o. accumulated in direct connection with the functional activities of some government agency or other organization; and much o. their significance depends on their organic relation to the agency and to each other. Their cultural values are incidental. Library materials, on the other hand, are produced in the first instance for cultural purposes. And for this reason they usually consist of discrete items, whose significance is wholly independent of their relationship to other items.

This distinction between archival and library materials prvails regardless of their physical form. Printed materials no mally fall under the purview of librarians, but under certain circumstances they may have or acquire an archival character. This is the case when newspapers are received by a government in consequence of official activity, or when printed broadsides, or pamphlets, or circulars are enclosed with government documents. It is the case also when the government documents themselves appear in printed form. Audio-visual and cartographic materials are of nearly equal concern to librarians and archivists. Motion picture films, for example, that are made or received by a government in the discharge of specific functions may be considered to be archives. This is the case with films made by a government to record actual events, such as films of combat scenes during a war, or to influence public opinion, or to train civilian and military personnel. Projection prints of such films are like copies of books, and should generally be made available for educational or amusement purposes by libraries rather than by archival institutions. The reverse is true of the negative and master positive films that are used primarily for the production of other films.

The manuscript holdings of libraries cannot be differentiated from archives on the basis of their form, their authorship, or their value. They may have come from similar sources, institutional or private; and they may be equally valuable for researches. This last fact has been underscored by Phyllis Mander Jones, Mitchell Librarian, in Sydney, who writes that in contrast to archives, "in private papers the student finds a more personal contact with his subject, perhaps because private papers are the more likely to reflect natural human prejudices and feelings," and because they and "the records of private and semi-public undertakings may present a more concentrated source of colourful data."¹ A distinction can be made, however, on the basis of the way the manuscripts come into being. Archives, according to the American historian Charles M. Andrews, "differ from historical manuscripts in that they are not a mass of papers and parchments fortuitously gathered and arranged with regard only for their topical and chronological importance."2 While archives grow out of some regular functional activity, historical manuscripts, in contrast, are usually the product of a spontaneous expression of thought or feeling. They are thus ordinarily created in a haphazard, and not in a systematic manner.

Whenever textual records that might otherwise be classed as historical manuscripts are created in consequence of organized activity—such, for example, as that of a church, a business, or, even, an individual—they may be referred to as archives; hence the designations "church archives," "business archives," "private archives." Moreover, whenever historical manuscripts become part of the documentation of an organized activity—as, for example, when love letters are introduced as evidence in divorce proceedings—they also may be considered to be archives.

Let us now consider the way materials come into the custody

of archival institutions and libraries. Archival institutions are receiving agencies, whereas libraries are collecting agencies. An archival institution, whether government or private, is established for the purpose of preserving materials produced by the body it serves. As a rule, it does not rely to an important degree on acquiring material by purchase or gift. It normally has only one source, namely the government, the institution, or the person it serves. A government archival institution should receive only the materials produced by the government it serves, not those produced by other governments. An archival institution intended to serve only one department or ministry should receive only the materials of that particular department or ministry. One intended to serve only a single level of government should receive only the materials produced at that level of government. Thus an archival institution of the Federal government should not accept records of State governments; nor should State archival institutions accept records of the Federal government.

Archival institutions, it should be underscored, do not collect materials. This point has been made very clear by Sir Hilary Jenkinson, who wrote:

Archives are not collected: I wish the word "Collection" could be banished from the Archivist's vocabulary, if only to establish that important fact. They are not there, or they should not be, because someone brought them together with the idea that they should be useful to Students of the future, or prove a point or illustrate a theory. They came together, and reached their final arrangement, by a natural process: are a growth; almost, as you might say, as much an organism as a tree or an animal. They have consequently a structure, an articulation and a natural relationship between parts, which are essential to their significance: a single document out of a Group of Archives is no more to be taken as expressing in and by itself all it has to tell us than would a single bone separated from the skeleton of an extinct and unknown animal. Archive quality only survives unimpaired so long as this natural form and relationship are maintained.³

Librarians, on the other hand, do not derive their materials from particular bodies; they may obtain them from anywhere in the world. If they restrict their acquisitions to materials on a particular subject, such as "Agriculture," for example, the restriction is self-imposed; and even then materials on "Agriculture" may be acquired from any source from which they are obtainable.

Libraries are often custodians of archives. In fact, many archival institutions had their beginnings in manuscript divisions of libraries. The Library of Congress, for example, collected archives of the Federal government before the National Archives was established; and, though the Library is not the forerunner of the National Archives, the Chief of its Manuscripts Division, the late Dr. J. Franklin Jameson, was an outstanding advocate of an archival establishment.⁴ In the United States many State archival institutions actually grew out of the manuscript rooms of State libraries. If funds are not available in a State for the establishment of a separate archival institution, the administration of its archives may well be combined with that of its library materials. Within a library, the administration of archives may well be combined with that of private papers and historical manuscripts. Such combinations may be made so long as the distinctions among the various types of materials, the methodology that applies to each of them, and the administrative requirements of an archival program are fully understood.

While libraries have often collected public archives, this practice is to be deprecated. Obviously libraries have rendered very useful services to scholarship by preserving archives when no archival institutions existed to take care of them. But after a government has established both a library and an archival institution, the two should not vie with each other in acquiring public records. The library under such circumstances should not collect public records at all. Nor should it keep archival items that have been improperly alienated from a government, for such items belong with the related records. Each of the two types of institutions has enough work in its own province without encroaching on that of the other, for of the making of many records, as "of the making of many books," to quote a saying, "there is no end."

DIFFERENCES IN METHOD

In discussing differences of method I shall consider first the techniques that apply to specialized materials which may be maintained with equal propriety by librarians and archivists. These materials, it will be recalled, all have the common characteristic that they consist of individual items, each separate from the others, and each with a significance of its own independent of its relationship to others. Since they consist of discrete items, the techniques of the library profession may be followed in arranging and describing them, for such techniques, by and large, relate to the treatment of discrete items. These specialized materials may, of course, be grouped into collections, such as collections of manuscripts, motion pictures, or still pictures. Manuscripts, for example, may be grouped into collections in relation to persons, families, institutions, or organizations. While such collections may be considered similar in character to archival groups, they lack the cohesiveness that archives derive from their relation to activity or purpose. The methods of arranging and describing such collections are somewhat similar to those employed with respect to archival groups. Librarians and archivists, therefore, can contribute equally to the development of a method for their treatment.

I wish now to consider the techniques that apply to materials that should be maintained exclusively by either archivists or librarians in order to show the fundamental differences between them. In the case of the government archivist, these are the textual records produced by the government he serves; in the case of the librarian they are publications of various kinds. The first of the differences of techniques relates to appraisal and selection. In evaluating materials produced by a governmental or private body, the archivist does not approach his work on a piecemeal basis. He does not take an individual item, such as a letter, a report, or some other document, and say that it has value. He judges the value of the item in relation to other items, that is, in relation to the entire documentation of the activity that resulted in its production. He, therefore, normally selects records for preservation in the aggregate, not as single items; and he selects them in relation to function and organization rather than subject. His effort is to preserve evidence on how organic bodies functioned. In the case of a governmental body, he wishes to keep documents that will reflect its origins, its organizational developments, its programs, the policies and procedures it followed, and, in exemplary form, the details of its operations. He has the task, nevertheless, of preserving some records for their informational content, which may be very useful for studies of an economic or sociological nature. His judgments are final and irrevocable. Once records have been destroyed, they cannot be recalled; for often they exist in unique copy only. In making value judgments, therefore, the archivist must be especially sound in his analysis of the organization and functioning of the body with which he deals, and he must have a broad knowledge of probable research needs and interests.

The librarian, in contrast, evaluates the materials to be acquired by his institution as single items. His judgments involve a knowledge of library science, of the bibliography of the subject field concerned, and, in the case of a research library, of immediate research needs and developments. But his decisions are not irrevocable. Except in the case of a book existing in one copy only, a particular item is usually obtainable from many different sources. If it is not preserved in one library, it is likely to be found in another. Judgments therefore involve merely questions of convenience, not of preservation or total loss.

A second difference in the methods of the library and archival professions relates to arrangement. While the term "classification" is used in both professions, its meaning in the two is quite different. As applied to archives, it means their arrangement within an archival institution according to their provenance and in relation to the organization and functions of the agency that created them. As applied to library materials, it means grouping single items in accordance with a predetermined logical scheme of arrangement, and attaching symbols to them to show their relative position on the shelves.

Archivists cannot arrange their materials according to predetermined schemes of subject classification. In Europe one scheme after another was tried, and none of them worked. All had disastrous results in that, by removing items from their context, they destroyed much of their evidential value. The principle of provenance was therefore evolved, in accordance with which records are grouped according to their origins. The archivist must establish a classification that is dictated by the original circumstances of creation. The placement of each archival unit, which is usually a group or series, can only be decided in relation to all other units produced by a particular body. This sort of arranging requires, as has been noted, a knowledge of organization and function—a knowledge that is acquired very painstakingly, often only after time-consuming research into the administrative history of a governmental body.

Librarians, in arranging their materials, which consist of discrete items, may employ any one of a number of systems of classification. The main purpose of a system is to bring like materials together, but the significance of a particular item will not necessarily be lost if it is not classified in a certain place. All the subjects to which it relates importantly can usually be brought out through subject entries for it in the catalog. The librarian must have a precise knowledge of the particular scheme that is used as well as of the content and significance of the items being classified.

A third difference in method between the archival and library professions relates to description. The term "cataloging," which is used in both professions, again has quite different meanings in the two. Library cataloging (by which I mean here what librarians call "descriptive" cataloging, as distinguished from "subject" cataloging) usually concerns itself with indivisible items. These are usually books, which are identifiable by author and title. They may, it is true, include serials, such as periodicals, newspapers, annuals, and proceedings of societies which present special problems and which are, in fact, handled as single entities for cataloging purposes. But, by and large, descriptive cataloging in libraries relates to individual and separate items.

In archival institutions, on the other hand, materials are cataloged, if at all, by units that are aggregates of items, such as groups or series. A group or series is the archival analogue of a book. In identifying his materials, the archivist must first decide upon the appropriate units for treatment. If he were to apply the concept of authorship to such units, he would identify the author in terms of a government department, its major organizational division, and the minor or particular subdivision that produced the archival unit. These facts on authorship are not as readily accessible as they are for most published materials, but must often be established, as noted elsewhere, by timeconsuming researches in administrative history. If the concept of title is to be applied to an archival unit, it must be in terms of (1) a devised title, derived from an analysis of the types of records covered by it and the dates of their production, or (2) the subjects (activities or topics) to which the records in the unit relate.

From the foregoing analysis, it is apparent that the basic methodological differences between the archival and library professions arise from the nature of the materials with which the two work. The librarian is concerned, by and large, with discrete and indivisible units, each of which has a significance of its own; the archivist deals with units that are aggregates or smaller units that derive their significance, in large part at least, from their relation to one another. While the two professions sometimes use the same terminology in referring to certain of their methods, those methods are in fact basically different. And even the terminology is becoming differentiated. Thus, the materials received by a librarian are referred to as acquisitions, denoting purchases, gifts, and exchanges, while those of the archivist are called accessions, which are received by transfer or deposit; the librarian selects his materials, while the archivist appraises his; the librarian classifies his materials in accordance

with established classification schemes, while the archivist arranges his in relation to organic structure and function; the librarian catalogs his materials, while the archivist describes his in guides, inventories, and lists.

To emphasize the basic differences between the two professions is not, of course, to ignore those areas where they have much to contribute to each other. With respect to their holdings, archivists and librarians share the common objective of making them available as effectively and economically as possible. For this purpose both should know, in general terms at least, what information the other can provide for inquirers. The archivist should know what classes of information may be obtained from the great wealth of published reference works, just as the librarian should understand what classes of information can be found only in unpublished archives. The materials that are dealt with by the two professions, moreover, must often be used in conjunction with each other. The archivist himself must often use library resources to ascertain the provenance, or origins, of a group of records with which he is working. He should have, as part of his working equipment, a specialized library containing the main series of published government documents and guides to them, published works on the history of government administration, and the main professional literature in the fields of archival and record management. Similarly the scholar must often use both archival and library materials in conducting his researches, for the printed source and the archival source often supplement each other. He should accordingly have ready access to a specialized library containing all the principal publications that he is likely to use in conjunction with archives, such as standard historical and biographical works relating to the development of the nation and its government, and legal, documentary, and bibliographical works.

In the development of their methodology also, archivists and librarians can be mutually helpful. As I have indicated above, in the matter of the physical description of certain types of specialized materials the two professions may freely borrow each other's techniques or adapt them to each other's needs. Library techniques of cataloging and indexing, for example, can be applied, with some modification, to special types of materials that consist of discrete items, such as maps, charts, motion picture films, still pictures, and sound recordings. They can also be applied to individual items in textual form, such as documents, file units, dossiers, and volumes. In small archival institutions such techniques are often used to provide information on textual items relating to persons or places, while in large institutions they are used, to a limited extent, in producing lists of individual textual items in response to specific research demands. The kind of research the librarian has to do in connection with establishing entries for publications of institutional or corporate bodies has certain similarities with the research that the archivist does in administrative history. And the work of librarians in developing and standardizing subject heading lists may be of value to the archivist in the preparation of finding aids that are to be organized by subject, or in the selection of terms to be used in preparing a subject index to an archival finding aid such as a guide, inventory, or special list.

In the matter of training, archivists and librarians can also work together. Since, however, library training focuses attention on the treatment of the individual item, there are some dangers inherent in it for the archival profession. These become particularly acute if archives and manuscripts are both placed under the administration of an archivist with library training. Such training may, though it need not necessarily, lead to a preoccupation with individual items in archival work. The library approach to collecting such items is particularly dangerous if it is taken in the appraisal of public records, for under it the basic documentation of an activity will be allowed to slip through the fingers of an archivist while he is busy picking up individual pieces. The resulting evil may offset any good he may accomplish through the facilities he has for the preservation of records. Library techniques of classification, also, when applied to archives, have invariably had undesirable results, and should not be used in the archival profession. Archives and historical manuscripts, in particular, should always be kept apart in an archival institution, if it has both in custody. The intermingling of historical manuscripts and archives is the unpardonable sin of the archival profession. When, however, librarians recognize the basic differences in the methodology of the two professions, they can advantageously make courses in archival principles and techniques a part of the curriculum of their schools. An archivist, for that matter, should possess a general knowledge of classification principles and systems if for no other reason than that certain of these principles and systems may be applied (though they usually are not) to the management of current records.

Archival Interests in Record Management

M ^Y FURTHER observations on the principles and techniques of the archival profession will be made with reference to public records only, and in relation to two major questions about such records: (1) how should they be managed in the government offices in which they were created, and (2) how should they be managed in archival institutions? To each of these questions I shall devote several chapters.

Let me explain at the outset the reasons for discussing the problems of managing current records in a book devoted to an analysis of the principles and techniques of the archival profession. Public records are the grist of the archivist's mill. The quality of this grist is determined by the way records are produced and maintained while in current use, and by the way records are disposed of. The adequacy of documentation on any matter-whether it be governmental policy or planning, or the social or economic problems that are the objectives of this policy or planning-depends on how the records are made and kept for current use; and the disposition that is made of them after that use has been exhausted. The archivist's judgments on values, of course, have a bearing on how complete a documentation is preserved on any particular matter, but the way records are kept for current use determines how accurately record values can be assessed. It also determines how easily the valuable records can be segregated for retention in an archival institution. The usability of records for research purposes also depends on how they were originally arranged.

Archival methods, moreover, are developed, to a large degree, in relation to current record management practices. It is perhaps sufficient to note at this point that all of the archivist's problems in arranging, describing, appraising, and servicing public records arise out of the way in which such records are handled in government offices. The principles and practices that have been evolved by archivists in various countries all relate specifically to the conditions in which they receive public records. Since these conditions vary from one country to another, the principles and practices of the archival profession also vary; and the literature of a particular country describing such principles and practices is frequently unintelligible to archivists of other countries unless the conditions under which the public records have been currently maintained are fully understood. Practically all statements of the principles governing archival arrangement, for example, have been developed by archivists in relation to the particular ways public records were arranged in their respective governments. The Dutch developed the principle of "herkomstbeginsel," and the corollary principles arising from it, in relation to the product of an "archief" or registry. The Prussian "Registraturprinzip," similarly, was formulated because of the way in which records were arranged in the Prussian registries. Even the English principle of custody, to which some attention was given in a preceding chapter, was based, in part at least, on the way the registers or rolls produced by the ancient English offices were related to original documents.

With respect to modern records, then, a study of the methods and techniques of the file room is the modern counterpart of the study of diplomatics with respect to medieval records. It is a study that is vital to the maintenance of high quality in archival material and archival workmanship.

INTEREST IN MAINTENANCE PRACTICES

The archivist's concern with the way public records are kept for current use involves him in close relations with public officials, and particularly with record officers. The term "record officer" is used in this connection to designate any government official who controls the management of records for current use. He may be a registrar, that is, one who has charge of the work of a registry; or a record officer in the American sense of the term, that is, one who has charge of the work on records within a governmental organization.

The archivist is concerned, in the first place, with current maintenance practices because he must accept the arrangement given records by the government agencies that created them. This arrangement may not be to his liking; for in keeping records for current use a record officer has one primary purpose in mind: to make them serve the current needs of the government. All the techniques and methods he employs are designed to accomplish this one purpose. In arranging records he classifies them with regard to the way they will be used by his agency. This classification will occasionally reflect neither organizational structure nor functioning. It will seldom result in a grouping of records by subjects to meet research needs. But the archivist accepts the arrangement given records while in current use, however ill-suited it may be to his own needs; for it is one of the cardinal principles of his profession that he must maintain this arrangement in his own institution.

The archivist, in the second place, is concerned with current maintenance practices because he describes records in relation to the way they were arranged by the government agencies that created them. In his finding aids he will initially describe records in terms of organization and function, not in relation to subjects; and these are normally reflected in the way records were organized for current use.

The archivist, in the third place, makes records available for use in accordance with the terms laid down by the government agencies that created them. He wishes to make them as freely available as possible and therefore acts as an intermediary between the scholar and the public official in lifting restrictions on access that are not necessary in the public interest.

It should, therefore, be the archivist's purpose to promote management practices that will effectively serve both the immediate needs of the government official and the ultimate needs of the private citizen. He may become involved, as a consequence, in the development of methods or practices of record management. The extent of his involvement will depend on the volume, complexity, and age of the records with which he is dealing, and on the availability of staff leadership elsewhere in the government that is concerned with the promotion of good record management practices.

INTEREST IN DISPOSITION PRACTICES

From a preceding chapter it will be recalled that public archives have two types of value: a primary value to the originating agency, and a secondary value to other agencies and nongovernment users. Several observations may be made on the roles of the record officer and the archivist in appraising these values.

The first observation is that record officers, and the other agency officials, are mainly responsible for judging the primary values of records. Agency officials keep records for their current use—administrative, legal, and fiscal—and are therefore prone to judge their value only in relation to such use. This is quite proper. They must preserve records until their value to the government has been exhausted, or nearly exhausted. And when that value has been exhausted, they must dispose of the records lest they get under foot and hamper the conduct of current business. If an archival institution is available, agency officials should not keep records for secondary uses within their agency unless they are specifically charged, under law, with this responsibility.

The second observation is that record officers should cooperate with archivists in judging the secondary value of records. This is true both with respect to records that are preserved as evidence of an agency's organizational and functional development, and with respect to records that are preserved for the social, economic, or other information contained in them.

A record officer can provide helpful information for the appraisal of records that should be preserved for the evidence they contain of how an agency was created, how it was organized, how it developed, how it carried out its activities, and what were the consequences of its activities. In the course of discharging his duties, he normally develops a knowledge of his agency and its records that is very useful in identifying the particular records that contain evidence of organization and function in the most compressed and most usable form. However, his attention is normally focused by reason of his official duties on the primary value of records. He will therefore need the help of the archivist in preserving the documentation of his agency's functioning. An archivist is not an interested party with respect to the preservation of evidence, whether favorable or unfavorable to an agency's administration. He will not judge of its partiality; he is interested only in preserving all the important evidence.

A record officer can also provide helpful information for the appraisal of records containing information on social, economic, and similar matters. Such records, which are produced in large quantities by modern governments in the course of their social welfare and regulatory activities, contain very useful information for various types of analyses that can help shape the major plans and policies of government. However, the average record officer, or the agency official working with him, is usually not in a position to make final appraisals of such records. He is not apt to recognize research values in his records unless he is especially trained in some subject-matter field. Moreover, unless he is specifically assigned the responsibility of ascertaining the research values in his records, he is not apt to concern himself with them. This viewpoint has also been vigorously expressed by Oliver Wendell Holmes of the National Archives staff, who wrote as follows:

I think . . . that most records officers are not, by education and experience, equipped to make these broader value determinations. They cannot be expected to have imagination as to the potential values of records to scholars of the future unless they have themselves taken courses that deal with research methods or that outline typical areas of research, unless they have some degree with research interests and trends, and unless they have some experience in research themselves. . . They are, for the most part, not of or in the academic life. They are presumably "action" men, and they are under pressures. Their approach is pragmatic, which may be good in considering administrative values but is inadequate for broader research values.¹

In general, record officers, and other agency officials, can contribute substantially in making appraisals of their records for their secondary values, and should have an interest in such appraisals. For, in a large sense, they have a continuing need of all records that reflect upon the experiences of the government in dealing with organizational, procedural, and policy matters, and with social and economic problems. They will thus not regard an archival institution that is established to preserve such records as an unnecessary cultural luxury but as an integral part of the government structure. While handling records for current uses, they will regard the preservation of those having permanent values as an important aspect of their activity. A government agency, as part of its normal functioning, should preserve records of certain types that have uses beyond those of current operations.

The third of the observations is that archivists should have final responsibility for judging the secondary values of records whether these are preserved as evidence of an agency's organizational and functional development, or for their social, economic, or other information. The archivist is usually an historian by training, and, as a matter of course, will preserve records containing evidence of the development of the government and the nation that is valuable for historical research. He will preserve, also, to the extent that he can ascertain a definite need for their preservation, records containing information useful for research in other social sciences, such as economics, sociology, and public administration. He is familiar with research needs and interests, for he is made conscious of them in the course of performing his official duties. Through his training in the methodology of his profession, he knows the proper approaches to be taken in judging record values. He is in a position, moreover, to act as intermediary between the public official and the scholar in preserving records useful for research in a variety of subject-matter fields. If he is in doubt about the value of certain records for historical research, he can easily obtain the help of his professional confreres.

The degree of archival control over the destruction of public records varies from country to country. English and German practices may be taken to illustrate some of these variances in countries using registry systems. In the departments of the English government files usually consist of aggregations of documents pertaining to particular matters, which usually contain an admixture of valuable and valueless items. They often cannot be appraised on any other basis than by an inspection of the individual items within them. They cannot be identified for disposal in relation to organization, function, activity, or subject with any degree of assurance that such an identification will result in the preservation of the essential documentation relating to such matters. The archivists of the Public Record Office, therefore, leave the review of the files largely to the registry clerks themselves, or to operating officials. In Germany, by way of contrast, where the registry system is also used, files are classified in such a way that the particular files relating to the establishment and structure of an agency, to its internal administration, and to its personnel, are separated from the files relating to the execution of functions; and in such a way that on particular functions the files containing general and policy materials are separated from those relating to the application of policies to individual cases. For this reason the German archivists have formulated principles of appraisal in accordance with which the values of files are judged on the basis of their administrative origins and functional relationships, and reserved to themselves the function of appraising them.

In the Act of June 19, 1934, which created the National Archives, Congress made the Archivist of the United States responsible for appraising records reported for disposal by Federal agencies. In this Act, Congress retained for itself authority to authorize disposal, for this was a prerogative it had guarded jealously for over half a century; but it made the Archivist responsible for recommending the disposal of Federal records. It regarded the Archivist as an independent arbiter, who would make his appraisals carefully, impartially, and competently, standing apart from other Federal agencies but vitally interested in all records they created. The present role of the National Archives and Records Service in the disposal of records is set forth in the Records Disposal Act, as amended, and the Federal Records Act of 1950 (41 U.S. Code Supplement 281-90). The authority of the National Archives and Records Service in these matters is implemented by regulations issued by the General Services Administration, of which the National Archives and Records Service is a part, as Title 3, "Federal Records."

In evaluating the experience of the Federal government of the United States in the appraisal of records, Dr. Philip C. Brooks, past president of the Society of American Archivists, wrote:

The most important contribution of the National Archives, in appraising records either for disposal or for transfer, is that of judgment from the research point of view. There is no reason to suppose that administrative officials, busy with current duties, can know to what extent their records may be called upon in later years by historians, political scientists, economists, sociologists, statisticians, genealogists, and a wide variety of other users whose work constitutes research. The National Archives, on the other hand, with its stated objective of making records available both to the Government and to the people, is accumulating a body of experience from which it knows the kinds of records and of information that are sought. Its professional staff consists largely of trained historians, and they are expected to study the utilization of records as part of their daily work. Furthermore, its organization is intentionally such that the staff members who appraise records also have experience in reference service on the specific record groups to which they are assigned.²

In summary, then, archivists should be empowered to review all records that government agencies propose to destroy. They should be assigned the responsibility of evaluating records for the secondary uses they may have after their primary uses have been exhausted. They should make judgments on the value of records in terms of their ultimate usefulness to the people and the government, using whatever professional assistance they can obtain either from public officials or from scholars.

In order to make their reviews systematically, archivists should participate in the development of comprehensive programs for the disposition of the records of the agencies with which they deal. They should promote, and perhaps sometimes participate in making surveys that are intended to obtain information on the content and value of records. They should interest themselves in all activities of the government that affect the disposition of records. The extent of their actual participation in such activities, however, depends on the character of the government with which they are associated, and on the character of the provisions it has made for handling noncurrent records.

Part II

RECORD MANAGEMENT

The instability of the administration has penetrated into the habits of the people: it even appears to suit the general taste, and no one cares for what occurred before his time. No methodical system is pursued; no archives are formed; and no documents are brought together when it would be easy to do so. Where they exist, little store is set upon them. . . .

-Alexis de Tocqueville.*

^o Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, translated by Henry Reeve, I (The Colonial Press, 1900), 213-214.

CHAPTER V

Essentials of Record Management

T is chapter I shall discuss broadly the three large factors that condition success in record management. These factors are (1) the characteristics of modern records, (2) the activities involved in record management work itself, and (3) the kind of the organization that is to do the work.

NATURE OF MODERN RECORDS

Public records have grown tremendously in volume in the last century and a half. Their growth in volume corresponds fairly closely to the increase in human population since the middle of the 18th century. If this population increase were traced graphically from the beginning of history, it could be represented by a nearly horizontal line, rising almost imperceptibly through the centuries but turning sharply upward in the last century and a half. The population increase is partly attributable to technological developments that have made possible an astounding production of the materials needed for human existence. The population increase, in turn, has made necessary an expansion of governmental activity; and this expansion has had its effect on record production. As modern technological methods have come to be applied to the production of records, their growth, in the last several decades, has been in a geometric, rather than an arithmetical ratio.

Yet while the use of modern record-making devices, such as the typewriter and other duplicating machines, have made possible an enormous proliferation of records, the reasons for their production, it should be emphasized, are inherent in the character of modern governments. Man does not make records just because he has machines to produce them. They are produced mainly as a byproduct in the performance of work, and the rate of their production is usually increased by an expansion of activity. This fact may be illustrated by the experience of the Federal government of the United States which has unquestionably produced more records than any other modern government, and very likely more than all other modern governments combined. The expansion of its activities, particularly during periods of emergency, resulted in tremendous increases in records. The volume created between its establishment and the Civil War (1861) was about a hundred thousand cubic feet; between the Civil War and the First World War, about a million and a half cubic feet; and between the First World War and the economic depression, about three and a half million cubic feet. During the decade of the 1930's, when the government was concerned with the economic depression, and with preparation for another world war, another ten million cubic feet were added. During the Second World War production reached the rate of two million cubic feet per year, a rate which has even been exceeded since then.

The volume of public records produced in a country is also determined by the way its government agencies use records in their business. This point may be illustrated by comparing the record situation in the United States with that in other countries. File rooms, which are the nearest American equivalent of European registry offices, are found in most government agencies in the United States; but they seldom succeed in achieving the rigid control over records that is achieved by their European counterparts; and often they are unable to prevent the establishment of considerable files in subordinate government offices. In recent times, as the progressive steps of a transaction are taken by various offices of an agency, each office usually develops and maintains a separate record on it. This practice probably accounts in large measure for the fact that the Federal government in 1954 had about 23,000,000 cubic feet of records in its various agencies. In England in the same year, according to a report of a Committee on Departmental Records,¹ only 600,000 linear feet of preservable materials were found in the English departments. This difference in volume of records far exceeds the difference in size between the two governments.

As records increase in volume, they also become more complex. The complexity of Federal records in the United States is due, in large part, to the complexity of the government that created them. In the executive branch of the government a pyramid-like structure has arisen, with its apex in the offices of the President and its base in a multitude of field offices. This structure has been made more complex in its organization and functioning by certain characteristics that are inherent in the American form of government; e.g., the system of checks and balances under which the legislative branch reviews the functioning of the executive; and the two-party system, under which governmental organization is responsive, to a degree at least, to periodic changes of program and policy. In general, as governmental activities are expanded, they become more highly specialized; and as they become specialized, the records pertaining to them become complex.

The complexity of modern public records, however, is also partly attributable to the way they are kept. For the most part they are kept in a haphazard manner. In the United States, for example, Federal records are arranged under a variety of systems, and occasionally are simply accumulated without system. The earliest American filing systems were quite simple and corresponded somewhat to the registry systems used in Europe during the same period. Gradually, however, the simple alphabetical and numerical systems were replaced by more complicated systems—the Dewey-decimal, the subject-numeric, duplexnumeric, and others. Each agency or office adopted the system of its preference so that there was no uniformity of system from agency to agency or, within agency, from office to office. Nor was there any uniformity in the ways in which the different systems were applied.

NATURE OF ACTIVITIES

The objectives in managing public records are to make the records serve the purposes for which they were created as cheaply and effectively as possible, and to make a proper disposition of them after they have served those purposes. Records are efficiently managed if they can be found quickly and without fuss or bother when they are needed, if they are kept at a minimum charge for space and maintenance while they are needed for current business, and if none are kept longer than they are needed for such business unless they have a continuing value for purposes of research or for other purposes. The objectives of efficient record management can be achieved only if attention is paid to the handling of records from the time they are created until the time when they are released to an archival institution or disposed of.

Record management is thus concerned with the whole life span of most records. It strives to limit their creation, and for this reason one finds "birth control" advocates in the record management field as well as in the field of human genetics. It exercises a partial control over their current use. And it assists in determining which of them should be consigned to the "hell" of the incinerator or the "heaven" of an archival institution, or, if perchance, they should first be held for a time in the "purgatory" or "limbo" of a record center.

The most important aspect of record management relates to the use of records for the conduct of governmental operations. Little is done within government that is not made a matter of record. Both the top level administrators, who are concerned with major programs, and the lowly clerks, who are concerned with routine transactions, need records in their work. The kind of records needed by the two may be different but records are as important at the top as at the bottom of the administrative ladder. At the top, records provide both initial stimulus and background information for executive decisions. On every problem that is considered documents will be assembled from many sources and of many types-correspondence, memoranda, and the like in which the problem is initially stated; statistical tabulations and analyses, performance and accomplishment reports, narrative reports, and the like that contain the information needed for making decisions; circulars, memoranda, and other procedural and policy directives that serve as means of administrative control; selected records of past actions that serve as precedents giving consistency to the processes of government. At the level of operations in which most governmental work is actually done-in which the transactions relating to specific persons, or corporate bodies, or subjects are actually performed -records are needed to transmit from above the policies and procedures that are to be followed, and from below the reports of accomplishment and performance, and to record all phases of the government's dealings with the particular parties involved in its transactions.

The most difficult task of record management relates to the most valuable records. The more important, or valuable, records are, the more difficult it is to manage them.

As a rule, the most valuable records are those that pertain to the origins, the organizational and functional developments, and the major programs of an agency. They relate to the direction rather than to the execution of government functions. They are often not so complete as records on unimportant matters. It is a curious anomaly that the more important a matter, the less likely is a complete documentation of it to be found. While modern technology has aided the making and keeping of records in many ways, it has also made unnecessary the production of many documents that once would have become part of the record of government action. Much that influences the development of policies and programs never makes its way into formal records. Important matters may be handled orally in conferences or by telephone, an instrument that has been referred to by Paul Hasluck, Australian Minister for Territories, as the "great robber of history."²

Important records are difficult to classify for current use. Policy records cannot always be identified as such when they are first created. Policies arise in respect to particular transactions, and so the records pertaining to them may be interfiled with others of no lasting moment on the transactions with which they were initially associated. Records on policy and procedural matters—on general as distinct from specific matters—are difficult to assemble, to organize into recognizable file units, and to identify in such a way that their significance will be made known. Records of routine operations, on the other hand, are easily classified.

Important records are difficult to retire after their current uses have been exhausted. Important records on policy and procedure do not become obsolete, or noncurrent, as soon as the transactions in connection with which they may have been made are completed. The policies and procedures they establish often continue in effect. And even if those policies and procedures are superseded, the records of them serve to explain and give meaning to the change. Such records are thus difficult to retire because the period of their administrative utility is difficult to establish. Records evidencing only the execution of policies and procedures, on the other hand, become noncurrent when all likely actions in the particular case have been taken. The termination of routine actions is usually definite and clear. Important records, moreover, are difficult to assemble for preservation in an archival institution because many of them must first be segregated from a mass of trivia in which they may have been submerged. And this segregation commonly has to be made after the records have lost their significance for current operations and their identity has become obscured.

NATURE OF ORGANIZATION

The efficient management of public records is of major importance to government, and a government's efficiency can often be measured by the efficiency with which its records are managed. Public officials, even at the top level of administration. have a stake in record management, for every refinement in record management has its influence on functioning.

Record management activities are of a highly specialized type, requiring specialized competencies and a specialized background of experience. In every large and complicated government, therefore, a special staff should exist somewhere in its administrative hierarchy to concern itself exclusively with providing leadership for all agencies in their handling of record problems. The placement of such a staff in a governmental structure, its size, and the character of its activities are determined by the size, complexity, and organization of the government it serves. Whenever possible the specialized staff should be attached to a staff agency, that is, one that has jurisdiction in certain matters over all other agencies of the government. These matters usually embrace budgetary, personnel, and facilitative operations, such as the procurement of supplies and the provision of space. The record management staff should thus be attached either to an office concerned with budgetary matters for the government as a whole, to one concerned with personnel matters for the government as a whole, or to one concerned with facilitative matters for the government as a whole. It should not be attached to a line agency that is coordinate with other line agencies. In a word, officials of one department or ministry should not be in a position to tell officials of another how they should keep their records. In the Federal government of the United States, the National Archives and Records Service is part of the General Services Administration, a staff agency that has governmentwide responsibilities with respect to buildings, supplies, records, and the procurement of critical war items. In the Commonwealth government of Australia, the Public Service Board, which has governmentwide jurisdiction over personnel matters, is concerned also with the record management program. A similar arrangement exists in New Zealand.

The authority of the central record management staff may range all the way from simple inspection to complete regulation of the record work of line agencies. This range of authority is partially illustrated in the statutory provisions relating to the management of records in the United States. In the basic act of June 19, 1934, under which it was established, the National Archives was given "full power to inspect" and limited power to requisition records of all Federal agencies. The Federal Records Act of 1950, which superseded the basic act, did not refer to the requisitioning power, since the classes of records that were subject to requisition had been transferred to the National Archives Building in the period intervening between the two statutes. The new Act, instead, focused attention on the management of records within Federal agencies. It made agency heads chiefly responsible for the establishment of "effective controls over the creation, maintenance, and use of records in the conduct of current business." It vested in the head of the central staff agency concerned with record management (1) the power of inspection, which was contained in the National Archives Act, (2) the power of regulating interagency transfers of records, (3) the power to formulate "standards, procedures, and techniques designed to improve the management of records, to insure the maintenance and security of records deemed appropriate for preservation, and to facilitate the segregation and disposal of records of temporary value," (4) the power to "establish standards for the selective retention of records of continuing value and [to] assist Federal agencies in applying such standards to records in their custody," and (5) the power to "establish, maintain, and operate records centers for the storage, processing, and servicing of records for Federal agencies pending their deposit with the National Archives of the United States or their disposition in any other manner authorized by law." While the adoption of centrally developed standards, procedures, and techniques of managing current records was not made mandatory, Federal agencies were required to cooperate in applying them.

In the field of controlling the production and maintenance of records, the functions of the central record management staff should be largely analytical and promotional. A central staff can obtain information on the methods and techniques of record making and keeping that are followed in various government agencies, thus becoming a repository of such information for the entire government. It can analyze the information to determine which methods and techniques are the most effective, which are generally applicable, and which are applicable only under particular circumstances. It can make case studies of effective techniques and methods, including (1) studies of the control of forms, reports, form letters, directives, and the like, (2) studies of the application of microphotographic and other machine techniques, (3) studies of classification systems as a preliminary to the issuance of training manuals, such as those issued on *Records* Procedures by the Australian Commonwealth Public Service Board and on Records by the New Zealand Public Service Commission, and (4) studies of file room and registry office management. A central staff can also conduct training programs to improve the technical knowledge and effectiveness of personnel concerned with record work.

In controlling the disposition of records, the functions of the central record management staff may be executional as well as analytical and promotional. A centralized staff should be empowered (1) to require agencies to develop disposition plans for records and to submit such plans for review to the archival authority, (2) to require agencies to report on the disposition of their records and to submit for review all requests for space and other facilities desired for record purposes, and (3) to control the use of photographic equipment and other duplicating devices in the government with a view to pooling them for use by any agency having need of them. A centralized staff should provide storage facilities to agencies for the storage of their semicurrent or noncurrent records that have to be held for limited periods. Such facilities may be made available to the agencies either on a joint-occupancy basis, as is the case in the "limbo" repositories of the British Public Record Office, or on sole-occupancy basis, as is the case in the "purgatory" repositories in the United States. If the facilities are jointly occupied, the work of processing and servicing records within them is performed by the staffs of the agencies that created the records. If the facilities are administered solely by the central record management staff, this staff performs all processing and servicing activities. A centralized staff, further, may give agencies advice on the methods of developing disposition plans, including the related activities of surveying, describing, and analyzing records, and of preparing disposal schedules and lists. It can prepare general schedules for the disposal of housekeeping and other facilitative records that are the common concern of all government agencies.

The main work in developing a record management program, however, should be done on a decentralized basis. Each governmental agency should have a staff that concerns itself exclusively with the record problems of the agency. The size of the staff should be in relation to the size and complexity of the agency. This staff should bear the major burden of work in controlling the production and maintenance of agency records. It should apply the methods and techniques of good record management, which may be developed by a central staff, to its particular agency, adapting them as need be. It should, for example, determine what filing systems should be used and how records should be classified under them. The agency staff is in the best position to institute methods and techniques that will promote efficiency and economy.

The decentralized agency staff should also bear the major burden of work in controlling the disposition of records. It should determine what should be done with records after they have served their current purposes, i.e. whether they should be microfilmed, transferred to a record center or an archival institution, or destroyed. It should develop disposition plans, disposal schedules, and disposal lists, doing most of the work of surveying, analyzing, and describing records necessary to these ends.

The purposes of a record management staff, it has been noted, are to make records serve the needs of government officials and to dispose of them after those needs have been served, in the most effective and economical manner possible. The staff should have in mind the double objective of promoting "economy" and "efficiency"-words that have become almost inseparable among those concerned with the methods of government administration. The effectiveness of a record management program should not be judged primarily in statistical terms. It is not reflected solely in the volume of records moved from one place to anotherfrom government offices to record centers or to incinerators or paper mills. It is reflected also, and perhaps most faithfully, in the way records are analyzed to determine how they should be classified and which of them should be disposed of. The efficacy of a record management program is dependent on the earnestness and competency of its staff. The more sincere and able the staff, the more effectively will records be classified and filed for current use; and the better they are classified, the more easily can they be disposed of after they have served current needs. The better the staff, the sounder will be its judgments on the disposition to be made of records. The extent to which sound judgments are made depends on the professional competency and thoroughness with which records are analyzed.

Chapter VI

Production Controls

UBLIC RECORDS are doubtless produced in too large a quantity by most governments of the world, and particularly by the Federal government of the United States. Their production may be reduced by simplifying (1) the functions, (2) the work processes, and (3) the record procedures of government agencies. Their production is affected by influences that range all the way from high level decisions regarding organization and program to the minor procedures prevailing in routine operations. Their production is therefore of concern, in the first instance, to the top level administrators who are responsible for formulating and administering agency programs; in the second instance, to the public officials who are specialists in the broad field of office management; and in the third instance, to the more narrowly specialized record officers. The three groups of officials should work together for the simplification of operations. The specialists in the fields of record management and office management should be parts of a single team, whose activities are closely coordinated at the top levels of administration.

SIMPLIFICATION OF FUNCTIONING

Let us consider, first, the simplification of governmental functioning. It is obvious that the basic causes for unnecessary record making and keeping are found in the size of modern governments, the scope of their activities, and the ways in which these activities are conducted. The extensiveness and the complexity of government programs, however, are not our immediate concern; for they are determined by the nature of the social, economic, and other problems with which a government must concern itself. The extent of the government programs cannot be controlled by public officials, who are merely the agents for their execution. The way in which these programs are executed, however, is another matter. The functioning of a government agency can usually be simplified. This, then, is our first point of attack on the problem of reducing the volume of public records.

The machinery of governments is likely to become overly complicated with the lapse of time. Even during the slow expansion of activities in normal times complications usually develop, and during periods of emergency they are sure to develop. Occasionally, then, the governmental machinery needs to be carefully reviewed and its structure and functioning simplified again. An example of such a review is found in the United States where, in recent years, the Hoover Commission on the Reorganization of the Executive Arm of the Government made a comprehensive study of the organization and functioning of the Federal agencies. Its recommendations resulted in substantial improvements and economies in government operations. In the accounting field, for example, it found a "costly system" to exist under which the General Accounting Office, as an agency of the legislative branch, audited the fiscal operations of the agencies of the executive branch. Under this system millions of expenditure vouchers and supporting papers were sent to a central point for individual examination.¹ The commission proposed an on-site audit program that eliminated the need of sending such papers to Washington, D.C. In consequence of this program, fiscal and accounting methods were simplified and standardized throughout the government and the records relating to such matters were greatly reduced in volume.

SIMPLIFICATION OF WORK PROCESSES

Let us consider, secondly, the simplification of work processes. These processes are usually far more complicated than they need be. As a government agency is assigned particular responsibilities, little attention is paid initially to how they are discharged. In the course of time, faulty working methods are likely to develop. The problem then is one of analyzing the steps involved in a particular administrative operation for the purpose of improving procedures and simplifying methods. Each step should contribute positively to the accomplishment of a particular operation; and each step in the administrative sequence should be analyzed. Such analyses are usually made by specialists in the field of public administration. In analyzing procedures and methods, management specialists often use flow charts to show the various steps that are taken. Such charts enable them to visualize how the operation is performed, and how it may be changed. Contemplated changes, too, may be indicated graphically on flow charts. By analyzing work methods, such specialists are able to simplify, or, to use the word that is their stock in trade, to "streamline" procedures. Their work, if it is successful, automatically reduces the production of records; for records are only a byproduct of administrative activity; their creation is not an end in itself.

An excellent example of a simplification of methods in performing a particular activity may be drawn from Australian experience. It relates to the vital matter of establishing title to real property. In Australia the old English law of conveyancing was followed originally. Ownership in land began with a Crown grant, and each successive conveyance of title was represented by a deed. A long chain of titles was thus established by successive documents of conveyance. Largely through the efforts of Sir Robert Richard Torrens (1814-84), this complicated system was replaced by a simple system of land title registration. The new system was embodied in the Real Property Act enacted by the South Australian parliament in 1857. Under this act a title to land is represented by a certificate of title, the indefeasibility of which is guaranteed by the government. The certificate of title is registered on the basis of evidence of title derived from Crown grants and subsequent conveyancing transactions. On it are recorded all later changes of title, and these changes are made without the necessity of searching the documents from which the title was derived. Thus, under the Torrens system, a title is cleared by a single examination and registered in a single document, and all further changes of title are recorded simply and cheaply on the same document. The effect of the system on record making and keeping is tremendous. The system has been adopted by most Australian States, New Zealand, and Canada, by parts of the British islands, by various countries of the European continent, and by certain States in the United States:

SIMPLIFICATION OF RECORD PROCEDURES

Let us consider, thirdly, the simplification of record procedures. Two kinds of record procedures have a particular bearing on the quantity of records produced. The first relates to the creation of records for the purpose of performing repetitive or routine actions; the second relates to the distribution and filing of records.

Records pertaining to routine or repetitive actions are usually of a standardized character. In a large government, such as the Federal government of the United States, most records are apt to be of such a character. They may include reports, directives, letters, the numberless forms used in housekeeping activities, statistical schedules and tabulations, and various types of documents used in relation to persons and corporate bodies; but all have in common a large measure of standardization in both style and content. Because of their volume, the control of such records is an important aspect of record management. If uncontrolled, they multiply like cells and become a cancerous growth on a government body.

In a program designed to control standardized records, the same steps must be taken as are taken in a program designed to simplify work processes. The record management expert may have to go over the same ground that has been traversed by the office management expert. Experts in both fields may review the same work processes—the office management expert to learn how things are being done, the record management expert to learn how records are used in relation to things being done. Both may review the paper work incidental to the doing of things, and both have the same objective in mind: to simplify the doing of things. One is perhaps more concerned with the mechanics, the other with the substance of the work processes.

In the United States, business firms were the first to inaugurate formal programs for standardizing and simplifying paper work. An early study of forms and stationery was that produced by the Hammermill Paper Company in 1930, which engaged the Business Training Corporation of New York City to analyze the business practices of a number of firms over an eighteen-year period. This study, written by Ladson Butler and O. R. Johnson, was published under the title of Management Control through Business Forms. In it the authors state the reasons, as effectively as they have ever been stated, for controlling forms. They indicate that forms are a means of standardizing the handling of routine work, "which constitutes the bulk of every business"; that "when the best method of doing routine work has been evolved," it should be "standardized through the medium of carefully designed forms, manuals, and standard practice instructions." The authors indicate further that "most routine work revolves about forms." They continue: "A study of them, particularly as a group, shows concretely what steps or operations can be eliminated, what changes in sequence are needed, and how writing or other clerical operations can be minimized through more thoughtful designing of forms."2

In the Federal government of the United States the problem of controlling forms did not receive much systematic attention until World War II. The wartime government programs for the control of the production, prices, transportation, and consumption of commodities and resources involved all citizens of the country. They thus resulted in many routine transactions, all of which had to be performed quickly under wartime conditions. In this situation, records, which received the simultaneous attention of many government employees, were reproduced in astonishing numbers, and were generally reduced to forms. spate of manuals on the control of forms issued from many government agencies. The first was one produced by the War Production Board in 1943. In the following year manuals were issued by the Office of Price Administration, the Army Service Forces, and the Tennessee Valley Authority. In the post-war period the best of such manuals was that produced in 1947 by the Bureau of the Budget under the title of Simplifying Procedure through Forms Control.

To control forms, information is needed on the use and the context of each form in a particular government operation. This information should be used to decide, first, whether the form is actually needed; and, secondly, if needed, what should be its content, format, incidence, distribution, and final disposition. By a careful analysis of the paper work incidental to a particular operation, it may be possible to revise forms—to eliminate, consolidate, simplify, and, in general, to dovetail all forms used in an operation.

A special aspect of forms control is that relating to form letters. The National Archives and Records Service has recently issued a Records Management Handbook entitled Form Letters. The Handbook embodies the experience of a number of government agencies in conducting programs for the management of form letters. It suggests standards to be observed in creating and designing form letters and methods by which they should be controlled. The way in which a correspondence management program can achieve economy and efficiency is strikingly demonstrated in a project that was recently undertaken by the Records Administration Branch of the Internal Revenue Service and the Records Management Division of the National Archives and Records Service. The project was designed to improve the management of the correspondence of the Collection Division of the Office of the District Director of the United States Internal Revenue Service in Baltimore, Maryland. This division is concerned with the receipt of tax returns, the collection and deposit of tax moneys, the determination and assessment of tax liability, and the like. In the course of its work it handles a very large volume of mail. As a result of the project designed to improve the management of this mail, the routing, composition, and typing of letters were greatly simplified.

A special type of standardized records is that consisting of authoritative issuances. Such issuances serve to communicate staff policies and procedures to the various line offices of an agency. Policies are guiding principles that indicate the course of action to be followed in various kinds of transactions. Procedures provide detailed instructions on the specific steps and methods to be followed in carrying out policies. The policies and procedures may relate to matters of varying degrees of importance. Memoranda, bulletins, and notices usually relate to matters that are of a temporary nature; circulars to matters of a semipermanent nature; and orders, rules, and regulations to matters of a permanent nature. The directives that embody policies and procedures may be issued in various series, according to the degree of their importance, or according to the type of function to which they relate, i.e. facilitative or substantive. They may also be issued in various forms. Directives of a temporary or semipermanent nature should normally be issued in looseleaf series; those of a permanent nature may be issued in the form of manuals or handbooks.

The second kind of record procedure that affects the quantity of records relates to their distribution and filing. Record-keeping systems have a very important bearing on the quantity of records produced. This may be illustrated by comparing the record situation under a registry system with that under American filing systems. Under a registry system, whenever a new subject comes to the attention of a government office, a new file is opened on it. The movement of this file is controlled as it passes from office to office. Additional documents that arise in connection with the subject are added to the file in single copy only. The whole system results in a control of the production and movement of documents, and in their consolidation by file subjects. Under American filing systems, on the other hand, duplicate copies of documents are usually made for each office to which a matter is referred. In times of emergency, to speed up action when matters may be referred to very many offices, documents may be duplicated to an astonishing degree. Duplication then becomes a substitute for control of the movement

and distribution of documents. The greater the degree of control that is exercised over them, the less documents are likely to be created. While the controls that are implicit in the registry system cannot be instituted in American government agencies, it is obvious that there is prodigality in the number of copies of particular documents that are produced and filed in some of them.

The record management expert should review the needs of various officials for copies of documents. On the basis of this review he should ascertain where copies of records are actually needed, and where they should be filed. In ascertaining where copies should be distributed and filed he will get into the problem of classification, which, in its broad sense, covers the matter of decentralizing files. If files are improperly decentralized, or if individual documents within files are improperly classified, unnecessary records will be produced. In particular, the record management expert should see to it that record copies of essential documents, that is, the copies that serve as the official record of a matter, are properly distributed and filed. In emergency agencies it is very important to designate particular sets of serial issuances as record sets. These may include sets of procedural, policy, organizational, and repertorial documents. Such documents are often reproduced in innumerable copies, which are liberally broadcast throughout various offices. Unless the record officer gives directions for developing record sets, such documents will neither be accumulated nor preserved systematically.

In assessing the efficacy of various measures taken to control the production of records, it is important to place things in proper perspective. Paper work management, by and large, is concerned with the mechanics, not with the substance of government operations. While great things can be accomplished by simplifying paper work, many improvements in government operations may be attributed as much to the simplification of work processes as to the simplification of paper work. The remedies proposed for improving the management of paper work, moreover, are often inadequate, going no further than vague and indefinite references to the "adoption of standards and controls" or "the use of tested methods and practices" for making and keeping records. The problems of paper work cannot be solved by concocting phrases which, like the nostrums of quacks, are prescribed indiscriminatingly to overcome all difficulties that beset the users of records. Inefficient paper work is often a symptom of improper administration. Such ills cannot be cured by improvements in paper work management alone. The ills lie deeper. The cure for many record problems lies in improving the work processes, and, more generally, the organization and functioning of government.

CHAPTER VII

Classification Principles

I MAINTAINING its records for current use, a government agency is concerned mainly with keeping them so that they can be found quickly when they are wanted. The basic problem, therefore, in managing current records is one of putting them away in an orderly and accessible manner. Two things are necessary to accomplish this: (1) the records must be properly classified, and (2) the records must be properly filed.

Classification is basic to the effective management of current records. All other developments in a program designed to control records depend upon classification. For if records are properly classified, they will serve the needs of current operation well. To serve these needs, they should be arranged in relation to their use within particular administrative units of a government agency. They will be grouped on all matters—from important policy matters to matters of routine operation—in relation to their use. They will thus reflect function in the broad sense of the term, and in its narrow sense they will reflect the specific individual transactions that constitute parts of the activities of an agency.

If records are classified to reflect organization and function, they can be disposed of in relation to organization and function. In appraising public records, the first thing to be considered is the evidence they contain of organization and function. Both archival and agency officials take into account the evidential value of records in documenting organization and function. If records are classified to reflect organization, they can be removed for proper disposition when an administrative unit has become defunct. And if they are further classified by function, if the substantive is separated from the facilitative, the policy from the operational, and, generally, the important from the unimportant —then the method of classification provides the basis for preserving or destroying records selectively after they have served the purpose of current business.
Relatively little attention has been given to the principles that underlie the classification of public records. Classification, as applied to public records, means the arrangement of them according to a plan designed to make them available for current use. The plans or systems of arrangement, of course, are many and varied; but for purposes of discussion they may be grouped into two classes: registry systems and filing systems. They involve both physical arrangement and the assignment of symbols to identify units of records and show their relationship to one another. The principles of classification go to the roots of the problem of arranging records. They govern the grouping of records into small units, and the grouping of small units into larger ones.

ELEMENTS OF CLASSIFICATION

There are three main elements to be considered in classifying public records. They are the action to which the records relate, the organizational structure of the agency that produced them, and their subject matter.

Of these elements, I wish first to consider that of action. Most public records are the byproducts of action, and they naturally fall into groups that relate to action. Action may be discussed in terms of functions, activities, and transactions. The term "function" is here used to cover all the responsibilities assigned to an agency to accomplish the broad purposes for which it was actablished. Usually these functions are defined in the law or



of specific bodies of records from particular agencies. Lending activities involve many separate transactions for the loan of specific records to particular agencies.

In order to accomplish the basic functions for which it was established, a government agency has to engage in two main types of activities, which may be characterized as substantive and facilitative. Substantive activities are those relating to the technical and professional work of the agency, work that distinguishes it from all other agencies. Facilitative activities are those relating to the internal management of the agency, such as housekeeping activities, that are common to all agencies. These are merely incidental to the performance of the agency's basic functions.

In carrying on any particular type of activity, whether substantive or facilitative, two main types of transaction take place, namely, policy and operational transactions. Policy transactions determine courses of action that are to be followed in all transactions of a single class. A policy may govern the transactions of an entire agency, or it may be confined to those of only one part of an agency. It may apply to facilitative as well as substantive activities. Operational transactions are the specific individual transactions that are taken in line with policy decisions. The distinction between "operational" and "policy" transactions is obviously not clear-cut, for usually policy decisions are first taken with respect to some particular matter that comes to the attention of a government official.

If the transactions of a government are analyzed, it will be found that most of them relate to persons, since modern governments in the discharge of their public welfare, their regulatory, and their military activities are concerned to an amazing degree with the lives of individual citizens. Many other transactions relate to corporate bodies, such as administrative units of a government, private organizations, or institutions. A considerable number also relate to places, or geographical areas—countries, towns, States, counties, and the like. The geographical areas may be represented by corporate bodies. Those transactions that do not relate to persons, corporate bodies, or places, will relate to topics, i.e. facts, events, ideas, and the like, which are the concern of government.

This breakdown of functions into activities and of activities into transactions may be graphically illustrated as follows:



The second element to be considered in classifying records is the organization of the agency that creates them; for records may be, and usually are grouped to reflect organizational structure. The organization that is given an agency is usually determined by the purposes or functions it is designed to accomplish. Organization thus frequently corresponds to function.

The organization structure of an agency may be broken down into staff and line offices. The staff offices are usually concerned with broad questions of policy, such as how the agency can be organized most effectively to accomplish its work, how its work should be planned, and what main lines of action are to be followed. In these offices are made the organizational, policy, and procedural decisions by which the agency is governed. In large government agencies, special offices may be established to concern themselves exclusively with planning work or with formulating procedures. Attached to the top staff offices also are usually a number that are concerned with legal, fiscal, personnel, and other internal administrative matters of the agency, or, in a word, with the facilitative activities of the agency. Below the staff offices are the line offices, namely, those that do the actual work. In a large government agency these offices are organized on a hierarchical pattern-the topmost being concerned with supervision and management and those lower in the administrative scale with detailed and frequently routine operations.

The hierarchical pattern of organization is illustrated in the organization chart of the General Services Administration, of



which the National Archives is a part. It is reproduced here to show how most agencies of the Federal government of the United States are organized.

The third element to be considered in the classification of public records is that of subject matter. The discussion of this element will be postponed until later, when it will be taken up in relation to the way it is actually taken into account in classifying work.

CLASSIFICATION PRACTICES

Let us now consider how the elements of function, organization, and subject matter enter into the classification of public records. For purposes of discussion the methods of classification may be termed as functional, organizational, and subject.

Functional classification: In considering how public records may be grouped according to function, let us proceed from the smallest grouping that is ordinarily made of records to the largest. The smallest grouping may be called the file unit, which, as has been noted, is ordinarily represented by the folder in the United States and the file in Australia.

As a rule, separate file units should be established for all transactions, the term, transaction, being used in the sense given to it above. Whenever a transaction relates to a person, or a corporate body, or a place, the records pertaining to it can be brought together fairly easily; and as most of the work of a government is concerned with single entities, the classification of most public records is a fairly simple matter.

The grouping of records by transactions, however, becomes more difficult when they relate to a number of persons, corporate bodies, or places, or when they relate to topics. Here the kind of bodies or the kind of topics and the like become the bases for establishing file units. Records relating to them are harder to distinguish and to bring together than those relating to single entities. Thus, if a transaction relates to a class of persons, the class rather than the persons becomes the basis of grouping the records into file units. Or, if a transaction relates to a topic that is the concern of a number of persons, such as a policy or an event, the topic rather than the persons becomes the basis of grouping. For example, records relating to a labor dispute would be grouped in relation to the event, i.e. the dispute, rather than in relation to the persons involved in it. Or, records relating to a policy that affects a number of persons would be grouped in relation to the policy rather than in relation to the persons affected by it.

File units relating to policy are particularly difficult to establish. For government administrators do not usually conceive policies in ivory towers, though they have been known to do so; they develop them in respect to specific transactions that come before them. As a result, records reflecting policy are apt to be grouped with those relating to specific transactions. At other times policies and plans arise from several different transactional sources and the grouping of all important documents is difficult. Records on important procedural, program, organizational, or policy matters are thus often submerged in file units relating chiefly to other matters of little importance. This intermingling of the important with the unimportant makes records less useful to the government administrator for his current work and greatly complicates the work of the archivist at a later stage in his attempts to preserve the basic documentation of organization and function. Whenever feasible, therefore, separate file units should be established for records that relate to important policies, opinions, decisions, and the like. Policy matters, in a word, should be separated from the operational; the general from the specific; the important from the routine. If this cannot be done, the existence of important records in particular file units should be noted in one way or another. Precedent indexes are useful for this purpose.

File units, themselves, will be grouped into larger units. As a rule, they should be grouped in relation to activity. The various classes of activities that are necessary to accomplish the major functions of an agency provide the basis for establishing subject headings under which file units may be grouped. Records on facilitative activities should be grouped under separate subject headings. These may pertain to personnel, fiscal, supply, transportation, communication, and similar matters.

Records that have been grouped by activities may be further grouped according to function. Functional groupings are the largest classes that should normally be established for the classification of an agency's records. Dr. Ernst Posner, lecturer on archival administration in American University, Washington, D.C., has made the following observation with respect to the German registry system:

Since the eighteenth century there has existed a common agreement that the registry, corresponding to an agency or to a major division thereof, must arrange its holdings in accordance with the main functions of the administrative unit it serves. The organization of the agency, the assignment of functions to its divisions, and the main groups of records must coincide. The registry or the ensemble of registries reflects the agency with its diverse activities and is the lasting image of its multifarious work.¹

In developing a classification scheme for public records, then, function, in the sense in which this term has been defined, should be taken into account in successively dividing records into classes and subclasses. The broadest or primary classes may be established on the basis of the major functions of an agency, the secondary classes on the basis of activities, and the most detailed classes should comprise individual file units, or aggregates of file units, that are established in relation to transactions pertaining to persons, corporate bodies, places, or topics. Intermediate between the secondary classes and the individual file units there can, if necessary, be tertiary classes which group the file units in relation to areas, classes of persons, etc.

Organization classification: Organizational structure provides the basis for major groupings of records. These groupings may be reflected in either (1) the classification scheme itself, or (2) the physical decentralization of the records.

If organizational structure is reflected in a classification scheme, the primary classes usually represent the main organizational elements of the agency. Such a division into organizational classes is possible and advisable only in governments whose organization is stable, and whose functions and administrative processes are well-defined.

The main way, however, in which records are grouped organizationally is by decentralization, which is, in itself, a major act of classification. In Germany and England the registries are decentralized along organizational lines, a separate registry usually being found in each division of a department or ministry. In the Federal government of the United States, records have been decentralized almost to the ultimate degree. This process of decentralization may be illustrated from the organization chart of the General Services Administration, reproduced above. The four main line offices of the Administration, it will be recalled, are the Emergency Procurement Service, the Public Buildings Service, the Federal Supply Service, and the National Archives and Records Service. Each of these line offices maintains its own records, and quite properly so since their functions are quite distinct. The National Archives and Records Service, in turn, is divided into four divisions, each of which carries on fairly distinctive activities and maintains its own records. With the National Archives itself, which constitutes one of the divisions, many of the records are decentralized in the offices of the records branches.

Records may also be grouped on both an organizational and a functional basis by their division into series. A series may be defined as a group of documents, folders, or dossiers that has been brought together for a specific activity. It may be arranged either according to a methodical classification system or according to the form or origin of the documents; or it may be informally accumulated to meet a specific administrative need.

In countries employing the registry system, the correspondence, which normally comprises the main body of a government's records, is broken up into various groups, or series, as the governmental activities become more complex. When files relating to persons or corporate bodies or places become very large, they may be split off from the registered files and held in the offices in which they are most used. Thus, series of case files are developed in which all related papers on a given subject are placed together so as to present the complete story of a transaction from its inception to its close. In England, for example, the so-called "particular instance" papers, such as service records, insurance records, passenger manifests, and records about business concerns, are identifiable as separate series. Even in smaller governments, records may be held outside a registry because of their confidential nature, which makes it desirable to keep them apart from other records that are handled in the registry, or for reasons of simple operating efficiency, since records of special types are often needed in particular offices.

In the Federal government of the United States, most series of records that have been separated from the main correspondence files relate to special classes of activities or transactions. Thus, most records relating to fiscal, personnel, procurement, and other facilitative activities, which constitute a large proportion of those created by a modern government, are separately maintained. So also are records relating to highly specialized substantive activities, and the records of line offices relating to research and planning activities. Most offices, in fact, have, in addition to their main correspondence, separate series of various kinds. If they perform the same type of transaction with respect to a large number of persons, corporate bodies, or places, they are likely to develop series of case files or dossiers.

Classification by subject: While public records, as a rule, should be grouped in relation to their organizational and functional origins, exceptions should be made to this rule with respect to certain kinds of records. This is the case when the records do not arise from or entail positive governmental action. Included among such records are reference and information files. In modern governments such files are quite numerous. They arise whenever governmental activities become highly specialized in relation to particular subjects, or whenever, as under American filing practices, executives insist on having at their elbow, or in outer offices, cabinets of records that serve no other purpose than that of reference.

In classifying such records, the subject headings should be derived from an analysis of their subject matter. If the records relate to a special field of research, such as, for example, "agricultural chemistry," the subject headings, or topics should correspond to the logical subdivisions of that special field. In her book on *Subject Headings*, Julia Pettee has pointed out that "no topic is an entity in itself. . . . It is intimately related to and forms an integral part of a larger whole."² File headings that are derived from a purely logical analysis of the topics comprising a field of human knowledge are comparable to those under which library materials are classified.

Dr. Martin P. Claussen of Washington, D.C., who has made a special study of subject classification systems as applied to public records, and who is producing a handbook on such systems, writes that he has found over a hundred "highly usable and flexible classifications of current knowledge." These, he says, are "excellent tools" in organizing records relating "to types of industries, to types of commodities and materials, particular areas and localities, organic nomenclature and parts of organisms, etc., which might be of very real value to a particular current file room, but only *if* and when it is confronted with specific functions that correspond to some of these and other fields of knowledge suggested above."³

In developing classification schemes for public records, the mistake is often made of applying a broad general scheme of subject headings where the records could be more effectively arranged according to function and organization. This is likely to be the case when the Dewey-decimal system, which was devised by the American librarian Melvil Dewey (1851-1931), in 1873, for the classification of books, is applied to the classification of public records. Dewey's system divides human knowledge into ten major classes, each major class into ten subclasses, and each subclass into ten further subclasses. The system is too elaborate for fruitful application to public records on general subjects and not sufficiently exact for application to highly specialized material. Most public records should be classified according to their organizational and functional origin. Those that call for subject classification should not be forced into a scheme built wholly *a priori* principles but should be grouped in classes established pragmatically on an *a posteriori* basis. These classes should be developed gradually as experience attests to their need.

CLASSIFICATION PRINCIPLES

Several general observations may now be made regarding the classification of public records, to wit:

First, public records should be classified only in exceptional cases in relation to subjects derived from an analysis of a subjectmatter field. These exceptional cases relate to research, reference, and similar materials.

Secondly, public records may be classified in relation to organization. They may be physically maintained in various offices of an agency, in a word, decentralized. And decentralization, as I have noted, is itself a major act of classification. Or if they are physically maintained at a central point provision may be made for their separate grouping by offices in the classification scheme. Records should be physically decentralized only if the offices which accumulate them perform fairly distinctive and separable activities. If activities are closely interrelated, as they usually are in small agencies or in staff offices of large agencies, the records relating to them should not be decentralized. And in any case, a central control should be maintained over records that are decentralized. In England the Interdepartmental Study Group, in its report on Registries of October 1945, recommended neither centralization nor decentralization as a standard policy, but observed that "whenever there is a homogeneous group, it should have its own Registry," and "should be subject to a unified central control of systems and methods."4 In a classification scheme, a breakdown into organizational classes is usually inadvisable; for the organizational structure of modern government agencies is too fluid to provide a safe basis for the classification of their records. The major breakdowns of records in a classification scheme, moreover, can just as readily be keyed to functions as to organizational units.

Thirdly, public records, as a rule, should be classified in relation to function. They are the result of function; they are used in relation to function; they should, therefore, be classified according to function. In developing a classification scheme based on an analysis of functions, activities, and transactions, the following points should be observed:

Point one. It is essential that the classes should be established on an a posteriori instead of an a priori basis. The classes should be established as experience attests to their need, that is, as records are created in the performance of functions. They should not be arbitrarily set up on the basis of speculation as to the subject content of records that are yet to be produced. In the beginning of an activity, the records may be grouped under a number of major coordinate classes. As the activity expands, the classes may have to be broken down into a number of subclasses. The complexity and size of an agency will normally determine how many classes should be established for the classification of its records. A practical test of the extent of subdivision necessary may be made by asking: Is a subdivision beyond the secondary class necessary to find records? If so, is a subdivision beyond the tertiary class necessary? And so on. The purpose of classification is to facilitate the location of records when they are needed. It should not proceed in its subdivision of classes beyond that required to localize searches in reasonably small units. Records should not be overclassified. The normal tendency, in developing a classification scheme, is to overclassify rather than to underclassify.

Point two. It is important that the successive levels of subdivision in a classification system should be consistent. Thus, if the primary division is by functions, all headings at that level should be functions; if the secondary division is by activities, all headings at that level should be activities. All headings and file titles should be chosen carefully. They should reflect the functions, or the activities, or the transactions to which they relate. Headings such as "general" or "miscellaneous" should be avoided; for they cover a multitude of sins, usually sins of misfiling. If the headings are not mutually exclusive, or if their significance is not clearly apparent, filing instructions should be issued to explain which records are or are not to be included under them.

Point three. It is desirable to establish separate headings for facilitative activities, as distinct from substantive activities.

Point four. It is desirable to establish separate headings for the important records relating to policies, procedures, programs, and the like, and to break down such headings in greater detail than those for operational records. If this cannot be done, procedures should be instituted whereby such records are flagged or otherwise noted.

Point five. It is desirable to keep a classification scheme current in the sense that its headings reflect the current functioning of the agency. Classification schemes should be periodically adjusted to current needs.

Chapter VIII

Registry Systems

TROM THE beginnings of recorded history, when records were first made, man has had the problem of record management. Among the ancients, the Mesopotamians perhaps left behind more records than any other group of peoples. They were indefatigable letter writers, and what they wrote they preserved, for it was written on imperishable materials. The clay tablets on which they inscribed their cuneiform characters were baked in ovens that converted them into small tiles, somewhat like the modern roofing tiles used in Australia. On these tablets are found not only their private letters, business contracts, religious rituals, mathematical and scientific treatises, stories, and the like; they also contain the public records, such as official correspondence, laws, and regulations, of which there were many. While thousands of these clay tablets have been unearthed by archaeological excavations, they have not been found in any perceptible order. Accumulations of tablets were presumably stored in piles on racks, rather like a heap of roofing tiles, and indexes to their contents were inscribed on the edges of the tablets to avoid unnecessary shuffling through a pile.

Perhaps the earliest known system of keeping records in order is the registry system. This system had its beginnings in ancient Rome, when the magistrates began keeping private notes, called *commentarii*, on matters that came before them each day. These notes were soon developed into daily court-journals, or commentarii diurni, in which entries were made, in chronological order, for all inward and outward documents, including minutes of judicial proceedings, evidence submitted by litigants, and other records. These daily court-journals, the entries in which were acceptable as legal evidence, were given an official status toward the end of the Roman republic and became part of the holdings of the public archives. Under the imperial administrations that followed, various government departments kept registers similar to the court-journals. The official acts of the emperor, for example, were registered in the commentarii principis.

The Roman practice of keeping registers of outward documents strongly influenced the practices of the church, which, in an intellectual sense, bridged the gap between the ancient and modern worlds during the Middle Ages. Because the church was the only stable institution in that unsettled period, the medieval kings and knights entrusted to it their valuables, including their documents. Because it was the only institution in which scribes were found, they eventually relied on it to conduct their correspondence, and in doing this the church reverted to the practices of the ancient Romans. It kept inward letters in their original form as a separate series, and made copies of outward letters in separate books.

With the expansion of governmental activities after the establishment of modern kingdoms, and particularly after paper came into general use in the second half of the 14th century, a great increase in the volume of records occurred. New offices were created to deal with the expanding activities, which, generally, in all royal households, related to secretarial, financial, and judicial matters. The secretarial offices, or chanceries, were established to handle the documentary work, that is, to receive and produce the documents needed by the royal administrations. From them sprang the registry offices.

Under a primitive registry system the records of an office are kept in two simple series: one consisting of outward and the other of inward papers. The essential feature from which the system derives its name is the register. In a register a record is made of documents in the order in which they accumulate. The documents are assigned numbers consecutively. These numbers are the key by which documents in both series are controlled. They provide a means of reference to the writers and subjects of the documents in that index references to persons and subjects are keyed to them. They indicate the order in which the documents are filed in each series.

Under a more advanced registry system, the records of an office are kept in one series that consists of file units in which both inward and outward documents have been brought together. The file units are recorded in a register in the numerical order in which they accumulate; and indexes to the names of the writers and the subjects of the documents are made and keyed to the numbers of the file units.

Since the registry system is one of the earliest devised for arranging documentary materials, the equipment used for it is that which was originally the most suitable and which through the centuries has been most readily available for storing such materials. This equipment is shelving. While the use of shelving is not essential to the operation of a registry system, shelving, as a matter of fact, is used in most countries which have registry systems. The registered documents or files obviously could be placed in filing cabinets, but there is no particular advantage in doing so.

DEVELOPING SYSTEMS

In Germany: Registries, which are the administrative units of a government that are responsible for the maintenance and use of public records, developed differently on the European continent than in England. The basic difference in their development arose from their relative position in the governmental structure. In Europe the clerical function of writing and copying letters was separated from that of providing service on records. Special offices known as "registries" were thus gradually evolved to concern themselves exclusively with preserving and servicing current records.

At the present time German registries are decentralized on a divisional basis. There is one registry for each division of a ministry, which is the equivalent of an executive department in the Federal government of the United States. The registries receive the divisional mail from a central clerical office. This they register, index, route to the proper officials with all pertinent attachments, and, after its return, classify in accordance with an established scheme of classification. In performing this work they maintain (1) registers, consisting of ledgers or card files which contain entries for the individual documents in consecutive numerical order, (2) indexes to persons and subjects, (3) classification schemes, indicating the subject headings under which the records are physically arranged, and (4) inventories, showing the actual files that are kept in accordance with the classification schemes.

Each file consists of a binder that contains all documents on a particular matter of official business. The documents are fastened into the binders—formerly by stitching and now by mechanical means. If the documents on a given matter are very numerous, several binders may be used to hold them. The binders, which are identified by call marks, were formerly stored horizontally on pigeonholed shelves; but in recent years they are being stored in filing cabinets.

The German registry system has been explained for American archivists by Dr. Ernst Posner, who tells us that registry offices, which were intermediaries between the chanceries and archival institutions, have been in existence in Germany for over three hundred years, during which time, while concerning themselves with the arrangement of obsolete public records, they have developed various systems for the classification of records. The early systems, he observes, showed a tendency toward "superrationalization and over-refined subpartitions"; but these complicated systems were gradually replaced by simple logical schemes of classification.¹ The contributions of registry offices to archival theory and science are ably discussed by Brenneke-Leesch in Archivkunde. Two chapters of this book are devoted to a discussion of the practical-inductive principles of classification evolved in the 16th and 17th centuries, and the rationaldeductive principles of the 18th century.

According to present-day German archival theory, public records are arranged within classes by the names of physical or corporate bodies, by the names of geographical or administrative units (countries, provinces, districts, towns, and the like), by subject matter, or by date. In classifying a group of papers two or more methods are usually combined.

In the present-day German classification schemes, a four-digit system is generally used, which is an adaptation of the Deweydecimal system of classification. In such schemes the main or primary breakdown of subjects, which usually designate main fields of activity or major administrative units, is denoted by the first digit; the secondary and tertiary breakdowns, which represent classes or subclasses of the main subjects, are denoted by the second and third digits; and the individual file units, which are usually grouped in relation to individual topics, are denoted by the fourth digit. Not more than ten groupings by individual topics are permitted under the four digits, so that the use of the decimal point after the digits is generally unknown. An example of the four-digit system used in the German postal service is as follows:

2-Mail service and operation

22—Internal postal regulations

220—Agreements with foreign postal administrations 2200—First file unit, usually identified by topic 2201—Second file unit 2203—Third file unit Smaller government organizations may use a similar threedigit system while the more complex ones may need a breakdown to the fifth digit. Uniform classification schemes have also been established for entire branches of departments, so that in their district and field offices as well as in their central offices records pertaining to the same matter are classified the same way.

Provision is made in the classification schemes for the separation of records relating to the establishment and organization of an agency, its internal administration, and its personnel from records pertaining to its functions and their execution. In classifying records pertaining to functions, moreover, a separation is made between the general and policy materials on the one hand and materials relating to the application of policies to individual cases on the other.

In England: In England the king's chaplain was originally entrusted with the duty of writing the royal letters. Later this duty was performed by the chancellor, who handled all matters of business of the royal household. In 1199 he began the practice of enrollment, that is, of keeping on parchment rolls copies of the more important letters he sent. Initially only the important letters were copied, but gradually the less important also were reproduced in an abridged form. Gradually, too, copies were made of letters received, so that the entries on the rolls, or registers, came to be divided, in the course of time, into inward, outward, and internal. The rolls came to be regarded as having the same evidential value as the original inward documents, just as the commentarii of ancient Rome had been; and thus they came to be used instead of the originals in most transactions. The originals for which there were entries on the rolls were therefore neglected as subsidiary records. Documents that could not be brought into relationship with the rolls were called the "Ancient Miscellanea."

V. H. Galbraith in his Introduction to the Use of the Public Records (Oxford, 1934) discusses in some detail the various series of rolls that were created by the Chancery, the Exchequer, and the Courts of law. The rolls of the Chancery, which began as one series, were later divided into three main series. The first of these was the series of Charter rolls, or grants of privileges to religious houses, towns, and corporations; the second was the series of Patent rolls, or letters addressed under the great seal to the liege lords; and the third was the series of Close rolls, or letters sent under the great seal to particular persons for particular purposes, not intended for public inspection. These main divisions of the Chancery rolls continued for centuries, though

grouped into files on the basis of the rule "one subject, one file"; papers relating to organizations, persons, and the like are grouped into files on the basis of "one person, one file" or "one organization, one file," and so forth.

Files are not grouped into classes that have been as carefully defined as those in the German registry system. In some registries the files are not classified by subjects at all but are simply maintained in the numerical sequence in which they are created. In such cases they are indexed only by title, that is, by the "key" word in the subject of the file. In most registries, however, classification schemes have been developed, according to which files are classified under main headings and subdivisions of main headings. The headings are usually derived from an analysis of the subject matter of the files. The files are classified as they are created, not after they have been returned to the registry, as in Germany. The system employed for the correspondence of the territorial sections of the Foreign Office may serve to illustrate the method of classification:

111 Primary or

135 secondary

148

subject groups

1481 First file of group 148

1482 Second file of group 148

- 1483 Third file of group 148
 - 1481/37 First file of group 148 that pertains to a country that has been assigned number 37 as an identifying symbol
 - 1482/37 Second file of group 148 that pertains to a country that has been assigned number 37

In Australia: The Australian registry is an outgrowth of the system of keeping records that was prescribed by the British Colonial Office for the records of the Colonial Secretaries in Australia. In the colonial administration the Colonial Secretaries occupied particularly important places. They were not only important administrative functionaries, for practically all matters of business came to their attention; they were also registrars, for practically all records passed through their hands. Under the registry system prescribed for their use, inward correspondence was filed separately and copies of outward letters were kept in letter books. Often separate series were established for despatches received from or sent to the Secretary of State for Colonies as contrasted to those to and from other correspondents. Each inward letter or despatch was entered, according to the order of receipt, in a register, which showed the number of the document, dates sent and received, subject matter, and action taken. The letter or despatch was also recorded in an index book, which was divided alphabetically in sections according to the main subjects dealt with by the office concerned.

Under the present-day registry system, generally used both in Commonwealth and State governments, inward and outward documents are brought together into files just as in England. The Australian "file" is almost the equivalent of a dossier when it relates to specific persons, organizations, or the like; for a dossier has been defined by Fournier as "a collection of pieces concerning an affair" that "must be homogeneous; that is to say it must contain nothing but documents on the same subject; it may just as well consist of single piece as a great number of pieces."² This is not the case when a file relates to a subject that is broader in scope than one relating to a specific body, such as a file relating to a policy, an organization, a procedure, or a topic that is the concern of many persons.

In establishing files, the English principle of "one subject, one file" is generally followed. A paper, as it enters the registry, is placed as the first document on a new file if it relates to a new subject or transaction; if, on the other hand, it relates to a matter previously dealt with, it is simply stamped, added to the appropriate file, and marked with the folio number (the document number within the file). The papers are not necessarily fitted into, or classified by, groupings established before the records were created as in the case with the German registry system, under which all records are grouped in pre-established topical classes.

The files themselves are arranged either under very simple or under very complex systems. The simplest system, which is known as the single number system, is one under which each individual file, as it is created, is given a number and is then placed in its numerical order. The numerical sequence is usually recommenced at the beginning of each year and the file number prefixed by the year, e.g. 54/2356. Various finding aids are obviously needed to help locate files that are arranged in this simple fashion. Aids usually consist of an index to persons which identifies all files that, in England, would be termed case files; an index to subjects, which identifies all subject files; and a precedent index, which identifies particular subject or case files containing policy information.

The single number system, advocated by the Commonwealth Public Service Board in its training handbook on Records Pro*cedures*, is growing in favor in Australian registries. The Commonwealth Public Service Board argues that, while numerical control of file units is essential from the outset, the correct subject relationships of the files of a whole organization, whose functions and activities may change frequently, cannot be adequately covered in a rigid formal classification of the individual files themselves; and, in any case, it is impossible to classify files minutely on the basis of the first paper relating to a particular transaction. The single number system, as it is now applied, removes subject classification to the subject index. The index is controlled by an authoritative list of indexable headings, which can be altered without affecting the numerical grouping of the files themselves. Additional or modified subject references for each file can be made without affecting the numerical grouping of the files themselves. Additional or modified subject references for each file can be made as the contents of the file accumulate without changing the file number or duplicating many documents. In the list of indexable headings, subjects are broken down into a number of classes just as in file classification schemes. A portion of a list of indexable headings produced by the central office of the Commonwealth Department of Labour and National Service, is reproduced here:

Primary Heading	Secondary and Sub- Secondary Heading	Instructions
APPRENTICESHIP	1. COMMITTEES	See also "INDUSTRY
	2. TRANSCRIPTS OF EVIDENCE	AND TRADES"
ARBITRATION	1. AGREEMENTS	
	2. AWARDS AND DE-	See also "TRADES
	TERMINATIONS	AND
	.01 CWLTH.	PROFESSIONS"
	PUBLIC	
	SERVICE	
	3. BASIC WAGE	See also "COST OF
	4. BREACHES AND	LIVING"
	PROSECUTIONS	
	5. JUDGMENTS	
	6. WAGES & WAGE	
	MARGINS	

The use of such a list can be seen by tracing the various steps taken in registering a file. Under the procedures recommended by the Commonwealth Public Service Board, a new file is opened

(or created) when a letter or paper is received on a new matter or transaction. The letter is first referred to a classifier, who, on the basis of the list of indexable headings, determines under which subject heading the file is to be indexed after it has been registered and marks the paper accordingly. The letter is then referred to a clerk who places it in a folder, on the front cover of which he records the file number, i.e. the next consecutive number, and the file subject. The clerk then registers it in a file register consisting of cards, each card containing about ten file titles in numerical order, and on which is recorded the subsequent movement of the file through the department. After entry on the register card, the file passes to the indexing clerk who enters the file title on the appropriate card in an index arranged in the same order as the list of indexable headings. Cross references are made (in special colored ink) on other related subject cards. A second clerk indexes the names of persons concerned in the file. The file is then referred to the appropriate office or official who, when he has completed his work on it, either returns it to registry or directs its passage to another office or official by a note on the cover sheet. The movement is usually through the registry where new papers are attached and outward letters dispatched and, if necessary, alterations made in the subject index entries. After its final return to the registry, the file is referred to a files analyst who makes any necessary entries in a precedent index, adjusts the subject index as required, and indicates the eventual disposal action to be taken. In marking the disposal action he consults a disposal schedule, based on the list of indexable headings, which has been agreed to by the archival authority.

Under the more complex systems of classification, which are called the multiple-number or three-figure systems, the individual files may be grouped into two or more classes; but under each of these classes they are placed in the numerical sequence in which they are created. In many registries new subject groups, as in the case of new files, are established as the need for them arises, with the result that the primary and secondary subject groupings are frequently very numerous. In larger departments, such as the Commonwealth Department of Navy, the numerous subject headings have been organized into major groups corresponding to the functions of the various branches within the departments.

The various classes into which files are grouped are usually indicated by numbers. The method may be illustrated by reproducing a portion of the classification system of the Commonwealth Postmaster General's Department:

232 Parcels Exchange, which is a main subject

232/4 Canada, which is another secondary subject under Parcels Exchange (in this instance all secondary subjects relate to countries or geographical areas)

232/2/1 First file under Parcels Exchange, Aden

232/2/2 Second file under Parcels Exchange, Aden

There are, of course, many variants of the multiple-number system. Letter symbols may be used to indicate the primary subject classification instead of number symbols. Or classification schemes, sometimes variants of the Dewey-decimal system of classification, may be used to break the files down into various subject categories. Their use may be illustrated as follows:

300 Finance, a main subject

300/20/ Banking, a secondary subject under Finance 300/20/1 First file under Finance, Banking 300/20/2 Second file under Finance, Banking

In the multiple number system, the registration procedure is similar to that described under the single number system except that new files are registered on subject cards or in booklets arranged according to the subject classification outline. Name indexes and often specific subject indexes are maintained for these systems also.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SYSTEMS

There are several characteristics of the registry system that should be noted. Most of these arise from the physical makeup of the file units and the methods of storing them.

File units have certain characteristics of books. They generally contain all documentation of a particular subject according to the rule of "one subject, one file." When a subject arises in the course of official activity, all the documents pertaining to it are collected, and fastened in the chronological order of their creation in folders or cover sheets. Within the file unit the individual documents are often numbered.

^{232/2} Aden, which is a secondary subject under Parcels Exchange

The Australian file units have been described as follows:

Each departmental file is in itself a history of some piece of departmental activity. A file is, in appearance, a number of papers secured inside a manila folder, on the cover of which the title of the file and reference numbers are written. The papers are added one by one as the transactions to which the file relates are carried out step by step. A file may be extremely slim or it may be several inches thick. It may be neat, orderly and well-kept, or it may be a slovenly mass, carelessly compiled and carelessly handled.³

File units are handled as books while they are in current use. The documents within them usually exist in unique copy. Reference copies of documents are not made under the registry system to the extent that they are under the American filing systems. The file units are literally charged out to action desks, and their movement is often controlled as they pass from office to office. Throughout their use, until they are returned to the registry, all documents within the file units are kept together.

File units are also shelved in the registry like books. They are usually kept either in a vertical or horizontal position in a numerical or classified order.

The classification of file units may take place either before or after official action on them has been taken; that is, they may be preclassified or postclassified. When they are preclassified, they are assigned to classes, in accordance with a classification scheme, as they are created. They are also preclassified if they are indexed in accordance with a "list of indexable headings," as recommended by the Australian Commonwealth Public Service Board, for the index cards will show which file units relate to particular subjects. When they are postclassified, they are assigned to classes after official action on them has been completed.

File units, like books, are usually indivisible units. Each one individually contains the documentation of some particular matter. Collectively the units have an affinity, or relationship, only because they are produced either by a particular office or in consequence of a particular activity or in relation to a particular broad subject. The significance of file units collectively may be judged either by the importance of the office that produced them, i.e. the importance of their author; or by the importance of the activity that resulted in their production or of the general subject to which they relate, i.e. the importance of their content. The significance of the individual file units may sometimes be judged by their titles, as books would be judged by their titles. Since the titles, or the subject headings that are given file units, are often meaningless or misleading—just as are those of books -the merits of the contents of such file units often must be judged by an inspection of the individual documents within them.

The problem of managing registry files, both for current use and for disposition, narrows itself down to one of classification —one of grouping the individual documents into file units, and grouping file units in relation to activities and subjects. If the items within file units are properly grouped, the units can be evaluated individually, as books on a library shelf, by their titles. If the file units are properly grouped, they can be evaluated, as classes of library books, in accordance with the classification scheme under which they are organized.

The ideal features of a registry system from the archival point of view, according to the findings of the Archives Management Seminar held by the Australian archivists in Canberra, on July 12-23, 1954, are the following:

- (1) that it should be planned in relation to the functions and activities of the department;
- (2) that it should, as far as possible, reflect the organization of the department;
- (3) that groups of records relating to specific activities should be segregated from the main body of registry records if their bulk and characteristics warrant it;
- (4) that varying levels of value should be distinguished in the "subject" outline and that the archivist should be consulted when the outlines are being drawn up to ensure satisfactory disposal provisions;
- (5) that documents of purely ephemeral value should not be registered in the first instance.⁴

CHAPTER IX

American Filing Systems

ODERN AMERICAN filing systems may be differentiated from registry systems by the fact that they do not use registers-the books or cards on which are recorded the receipt and movement of records while they are in current use. In other respects the two kinds of systems are sometimes very similar. In some modern German registries records are arranged according to adaptations of the Dewey-decimal scheme of classification, the registered files being grouped under the smallest classes of the classification scheme and housed in filing cabinets, instead of being numbered and placed on shelves in the manner that is usual under registry systems. Outwardly the files of such registries look just like those in an American file room. The only apparent difference is that the German registries use a register to control the receipt and movement of files; but even in this respect the difference may be more apparent than real; for American file rooms may use tickler cards, or other similar devices, to achieve the same control. In American file rooms, on the other hand, file units, such as case files, are often arranged numerically just as registered files would normally be.

Modern American filing systems, however, are usually also differentiated from many registry systems by the way records are physically arranged under them. American records are arranged under a variety of systems that can be employed effectively only where certain types of modern filing and duplicating equipment and supplies are available. Under registry systems file units are usually arranged in numerical sequence; under modern filing systems they may be arranged alphabetically by name, place, or subject, or in accordance with subject classification schemes, as well as numerically. Under most American filing systems, moreover, records are controlled while in current use by the way they are arranged, not by the use of registers. The records are usually arranged on a self-indexing basis in the sense that guides or other devices are used to indicate the location of records in files, though under certain systems indexes must be made. Under most American systems, moreover, records are decentralized to the extent that a strict control of their movement by the use of registers is unnecessary. Such a decentralization is made possible by the use of various duplicating devices.

In this chapter I wish to analyze briefly, first, the origins of American filing systems, showing how they developed out of the European registry systems; secondly, the evolution of modern filing systems, discussing particularly the essential preliminaries to their evolution, such as the development of duplicating and filing equipment and supplies; and, thirdly, various types of modern filing systems, showing the essential features of each.

ORIGINS OF SYSTEMS

Both early American and early Australian record practices probably had their inception in instructions from the British government, or at least corresponded very closely to the practices followed by the British government. Records of the American colonial governments were doubtless kept according to the registry system. Thus a Massachusetts law of 1665 refers to the "Rolls, Records, or Register"¹ of various courts and offices, while a resolution of the lower house of the Maryland Legislature in 1740 refers to "Records, Enrollments, Publick Registrys and offices of this Province."²

When the Federal government of the United States was established, it acquired "all books, records and papers" of the preceding government, which was the Continental Congress, constituted under the Articles of Confederation.³ These "books, records and papers" consisted of manuscript volumes and loose papers. The manuscript volumes were of several kinds: (1) those containing copies of outward documents on domestic matters, (2) those containing copies of outward documents on foreign matters, (3) those containing copies of inward documents on foreign matters, such as "the Letters received from the American Ministers abroad," and (4) those containing the "rough" journal of the Continental Congress. The loose papers, which included such important documents as the Articles of Confederation, the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution, consisted in the main of letters to the President of the Congress, despatches from representatives abroad, official communications from the several States, reports of committees, and credentials of delegates. The record system of the office of the Continental Congress was similar to that employed by the English government during that period. The series of records maintained by the Secretary of the Congress, it will be noted, bear a striking resemblance to those of the Colonial Secretaries of the Australian colonies.

Shortly after the inauguration of President Washington on April 30, 1789, the "books, records and papers" of the Continental Congress were turned over to the newly established Departments of State, War, and Treasury. These departments generally followed the record keeping practices of the preceding government, simply adding to series of records that were already in existence.

The early filing system they employed, according to Miss Helen L. Chatfield, was "simple and primitive," and had somewhat the following pattern.⁴ Three main record series were usually developed: (1) inward letters, (2) outward letters, and (3) miscellaneous papers. Inward letters were usually numbered in the order of their receipt, and were folded and probably tied into bundles. Outward letters were copied in letter books. Registers were often maintained for both series. Both series were indexed, at first in book form and later on cards. Miscellaneous papers were usually filed in various series, certain of which usually related to matters of internal office administration and others to special activities.

The application of this system—which is a primitive form of a registry system-may best be illustrated by reviewing the records of the Department of State. The diplomatic correspondence of the department consists, in the main, of two series: (1) the inward despatches from representatives abroad, which were maintained both in their original form and in the form of "recorded" copies in letter books from the time of the Continental Congress onward, and (2) the outward instructions to representatives abroad, which were copied in letter books in a chronological series until 1820, and thereafter in several series according to country. The consular correspondence follows a similar pattern: (1) despatches, and (2) instructions. The "domestic letters," a continuation of the "American Letters" of the Continental Congress, consisted of replies to letters from outside the department, which were copied in letter books. The "miscellaneous" series consisted of the originals of inward letters from the outside. These main correspondence series were maintained virtually unbroken throughout the 19th century though additional miscellaneous series were added as the scope of the department's activities increased. "In the field of foreign affairs, at least," according to Dr. Carl L. Lokke, "the new Government did not break off sharply from the old" in the maintenance of record series. 5

Originally the War Department records were arranged in the same manner as those of the State Department. The inward letters were kept as a separate series. They were folded, and probably maintained in bundles between boards. As early as 1835 army regulations prescribed that "each letter will be folded in three equal folds. . . . "⁶ The outward letters were copied in letter books, which have been referred to as a "venerable army institution and bottleneck of correspondence."7 Registers were maintained for both inward and outward letters. Very soon, however, the War Department developed special record series that related to the main ingredients of an army-the men that made up its military units, the supplies of food by which they lived, and the supplies of tools with which they fought. The activities relating to military personnel and supplies increased with each war-the War of 1812, the Indian Wars, the Civil War, and so forth. Many of the transactions relating to men and supplies therefore became routine and repetitive, so that they could be recorded on forms. The development of forms within the War Department illustrates in a striking way how particular forms are divided and subdivided into new forms to handle various phases of an expanding activity.

The Treasury Department, which was the third of the original executive departments to which the "books, records and papers" of the Continental Congress were transferred, had the usual record series: the letter books, unbound folded papers, and registers, as well as special series of huge, unwieldy tomes labeled journals, ledgers, and waste-books. The other executive departments: Navy, Justice, Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, and Labor, ran through the gamut of record keeping practices. The older of the departments began with the registry system, the newer adopted the filing systems in vogue at the time of their establishment.

DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN SYSTEMS

Certain physical conditions for the creation and maintenance of records had to exist before modern filing systems could be developed. New methods of duplication and filing were important preliminaries to the development of modern filing systems. The reasons for this may be explained as follows: First, before outward and inward papers could be combined into single file units, copies of outward papers would have to exist, and, hence, devices for making them would have to exist; secondly, before systems could be instituted for arranging file units in other than numerical order, filing equipment would have to exist in which the units could readily be grouped and regrouped as new material was incorporated, and filing supplies would have to exist that would make apparent their grouping.

Let us first consider the relationship of methods of duplication to the development of filing systems. The first device used for producing copies of outward documents was the press-copying machine, which was invented in 1780 by James Watt (1736-1819), the inventor of the steam engine. In its day it was a device of great practical value for copying manuscripts by using a glutinous ink and pressing the written page against a moistened sheet of thin paper. Both George Washington and Thomas Jefferson used the device. Washington received a press-copying machine as a gift from John de Neufville & Son, the Holland merchants who fitted out the Bon Homme Richard for John Paul Iones.⁸ The device was first used in the Federal government in 1790 by the Department of State, which on April 21st of that vear paid by Monsieur le Prince £20 "for a copying press and apparatus to copy letters." Before the Civil War, certain offices of the War and Navy departments used it to make security copies of various types of documents, most of which were also transcribed in letter books. With the development of aniline dyes, which gave permanency to the inks, press-copying machines came to be adopted in many government agencies. They came into general use in the War Department during the Civil War and in the rest of the Federal agencies about a decade lator Dr. 1007 ------- the Cost-well Committee on Matheda

ducing copies of documents. Early carbon papers were smeary and unstable. Durable carbon paper was not made until 1905, when Brazilian carnauba wax was first used to give stability to carbon inks. In 1912 the Commission on Economy and Efficiency, created by Act of Congress of June 25, 1910, and appointed by President William Howard Taft, recommended "that carbon copies should constitute the record of outgoing correspondence and that press copying should be discontinued."⁹ Eventually the typewriter and carbon paper revolutionized record work. It was the first of a series of office machines that were developed in the 20th century for duplicating documents. The earliest of these were mechanical devices, such as mimeograph and hectograph machines. These were followed by photographic devices, the best known of which is the photostat, and these are now being supplemented by electronic devices.

Let us next consider the importance of filing equipment in relation to the development of filing systems. Easy insertion and expansion are the critical elements in such equipment. Shelves admit of easy enough insertion but are expansible only at the end. In the early part of the 19th century, letters and other papers of the government, apart from letter books and registers, were generally folded, tied into bundles, and placed on shelves, or, occasionally, as in the Navy Department, into chests. In 1868, two types of filing equipment were invented, both of which had an important bearing on filing practices. Both permitted expansion at any point with a minimum of labor.

The first of these types of equipment was a file holder invented by E. W. Woodruff, consisting of a wooden box about 3½ inches wide and 8 inches high into which folded documents could be placed in a sequential arrangement. A goodly portion of the inward correspondence of the Federal government was placed in Woodfuff file holders in the four decades following its invention.

The second type of filing equipment consisted of vertical files of the modern type. The first such equipment, which came onto the market before Federal agencies were prepared to adopt it, was produced by the Amberg File and Index Company in 1868.¹⁰ Twenty-five years later, in 1893, a vertical file was devised by Dr. Nathaniel S. Rosenau, secretary of a charitable organization at Buffalo, New York. His equipment, which was similar to present-day filing cases, was made to accommodate case files, i.e. the reports and papers produced by visiting agents of his organization in relation to the recipients of its charity. The system under which these records were organized, using guides and folders, had been developed in 1892 by the Library Bureau, an organization established in 1876 by Melvil Dewey to promote the interests of librarians. Dr. Rosenau's file cases received public attention because they were displayed at the World's Fair in Chicago in 1893, but more particularly because of their sponsorship by the Library Bureau. Various other types of filing equipment similar to the Rosenau vertical files soon came on the market. By 1912 the Taft Commission on Economy and Efficiency was in a position to recommend that the folding of documents should be discontinued, that documents should be filed flat in vertical files, and that "no book or card record of incoming or outgoing correspondence should be made except where absolutely essential, and that all bound-book registers of correspondence received and sent should be discontinued."11 As a result of these fateful recommendations the last vestiges of the registry system were eliminated from the Federal government, and the way was cleared for the introduction of new filing systems.

TYPES OF MODERN FILING SYSTEMS

Modern systems fall into various types: (1) those which place file units in numerical sequence, (2) those which place file units, irrespective of whether they relate to persons, subjects, or places, in alphabetical sequence, and (3) those which place file units in a rational order according to a classification scheme. There are, also combinations of these types that should be noted.

Numerical systems: In some government departments the use of registers was abandoned quite early. The use of numbers to designate file units, however, was continued even after modern filing equipment made possible a more rational grouping of units. Since record clerks were used to dealing with numbers under the registry system, it was natural that they should assign numbers to file units even when this was no longer necessary or desirable. Many early correspondence series were thus simply arranged in numerical order. Letters on each transaction inward as well as outward—were placed in consecutively numbered folders, the contents of which were usually indexed by names of writers and occasionally by subjects.

The simple numerical system is particularly unsuited to the handling of name files, that is, files that can be identified in relation to persons or corporate bodies. The system makes necessary the creation of alphabetical indexes, which are not needed if folders are arranged alphabetically by name. It results in the filing of records of particular correspondents in separate folders, the contents of which are thus usually very skimpy. It complicates searching by subdividing records excessively, making it difficult to find a particular folder that may be needed.

The simple numerical system, however, was also used quite early and very effectively in handling case files. These may be defined as file units containing all documents pertaining to a particular transaction. Such files are often developed in the legal, regulatory, and investigative activities of a government. A good example of a case file is one pertaining to a particular labor dispute. In such a dispute at least two parties are involved as adversaries; many subjects may be involved, such as the various matters under dispute; and many types of documents may be created, such as minutes, journals of proceedings, rules, and regulations. Case files normally pertain to transactions involving a variety of subjects that are the concern of many individuals or corporate bodies and consisting of a number of types of documents. They cannot therefore easily be arranged either in relation to names or subjects, or by types of documents. They can be filed most easily in the consecutive order in which the transactions to which they relate are initiated; and if they are numbered as they are filed, the numbers will serve as keys to indexes.

The simple numerical system was also applied very crudely in the early years of the Federal government to subject files. Numbers were simply assigned to various subject headings in relation to which records accumulated, usually in the order in which the headings were selected. The system may be illustrated as follows:

- 1 Education
- 2 Communications
- **3** Accounts
- 4 Personnel
- 5 Supplies
- 6 Organization
- 7 Finance
- 8 Publications
- 9 Reports
- 10 Legislation

From this simple numerical subject system was evolved the duplex numeric system. As records increased in subject-matter range and quantity, the various main subject headings were subdivided into related subordinate headings. These subordinate headings were also assigned numbers, which were added to those assigned to the main subjects. This system may be illustrated as follows:

2 Communications		
2-1	Mail	
2-1-1	Postage	

Alphabetical systems: The first modern alphabetical filing system introduced in the Federal government was probably that of Fred C. Ainsworth (1852-1934), who applied it to the various forms that he developed in relation to military personnel in the War Department. The system was introduced in this way. In 1879 the Congress of the United States enacted legislation that provided pensions for veterans of the Civil War. Because of this legislation the War Department, through its surgeon general's and adjutant general's offices, had to verify the claims of innumerable applicants by searching through military service and hospital records. The way these records were kept thus became a very important matter.

When Ainsworth was made head of the SGO Record and Pension Division in December 1886, he found a backlog of requests for pension verifications piled up in its offices. A few months later he made some radical innovations in handling these requests. He started a project of copying on "index-record cards" the names and medical histories of individual soldiers. He described his work in copying information on the cards or slips as follows: "These slips are assorted and arranged in alphabetical order by regiments, so that the hospital record of a soldier who may have been treated in a number of hospitals and at different times and places may be readily found without laborious and, sometimes unsuccessful, search of the worn and faded original hospital records now required to be made; and they serve at the same time the double purpose of a copy and a general index."¹²

Ainsworth's work on medical records, meanwhile, was brought to the attention of the Congressional Committee on Methods of Business in the Executive Departments of which Senator F. M. Cockrell was chairman. The committee in 1887 "made a minute inquiry into the workings of the index-record card system as applied to the medical records of the Army, and gave careful consideration to the possibility of enlarging its scope and extending it to the reproduction and preservation of other records."¹³ As a result of the committee's recommendation, the system of compiling "index-record cards" was applied to the military service records of the Adjutant General's Office. The military and medical records were consolidated in 1889, and Ainsworth was made head of a Record and Pension Division attached directly to the Secretary of War's office. Eventually about sixty-two million cards were prepared, which covered the services of American soldiers from the Revolutionary through the Civil War.

The Ainsworth system of "index-record cards" literally started an "industrial revolution" in record keeping. Under it information on the military service of individual soldiers was abstracted on cards from numerous muster rolls, returns, books, and papers of every description. All cards pertaining to the same man were assembled, and placed in paper jackets, one for each individual name. The jackets were arranged alphabetically, in the order of soldiers' surnames, under army units, and these under the several States. The jackets were placed in Woodruff containers, the fronts of which were labeled to show what jackets they contained and the army units to which they pertained. The system thus embodied certain essential features of modern filing systems: it brought together all records on particular subjects into separate file units, and it arranged these file units by organizational units in containers that made apparent the order of their arrangement.

The alphabetical system of arrangement was also developed for vertical files by the Library Bureau. Late in the 19th century this Bureau evolved two types of alphabetical systems, both of which it patented and marketed. Under one system papers were filed in simple alphabetical order with guides and folders that were specially devised for use in vertical files; under the other, called the "automatic" system, papers were filed with guides and folders that indicated breakdowns of the letters of the alphabet.

For very large alphabetical name files the Soundex system was developed, under which file units are arranged by code instead of in strict alphabetical sequence. The code is based on the sound of consonants in names. File units are thus grouped by names that sound alike, irrespective of whether they are spelled alike. This system was applied to the 100 million cards on which information on 400 million cards on 400 million persons was abstracted from the schedules of the population censuses of 1880, 1900, and 1920. The work of abstracting this information, for use as evidence of age or citizenship, was done by unemployed labor as a Federal Works Project in the mid-thirties.

While the alphabetical system was first used in arranging records relating to persons, it was also gradually applied to records relating to subjects. Perhaps the simplest method of arranging records in relation to subjects is to file them in the alphabetical order of selected subject headings under which they may be grouped. An illustration of such an arrangement is found in the general records of the Office of the Secretary of Agriculture for the years 1906-1939. The records, which consist of correspondence, memoranda, reports, and other inward and outward papers, were filed under subject headings arranged in alphabetical order. The first few headings were the following:

> Abattoirs Accounts Acetylene Acids Acknowledgments Acorns Acreage, Adjustment Contract Payments Adding machines Addresses

This system served the needs of the Secretary adequately during the years when the activities of his department were simple and restricted in scope. As these activities were expanded, new subject headings were added to take care of the records pertaining to them. The subject headings gradually became a mixture of "apples, potatoes, and oranges"—a mixture of incoordinate headings, arranged without indication of subject relationships. The simple subject system, as a rule, is limited to use where the volume of records is small and their subject matter simple.

The simple alphabetical subject system may be modified in various ways to achieve a better grouping of records. The first way is to standardize subject headings, so that you would not have separate entries for related or similar subjects. The second is to subdivide the main subject headings so as to bring related subjects together. Thus, a main subject heading may be broken down into a number of related subordinate subjects. These may
be indicated as secondary or tertiary headings under the main subject headings. For example, the main heading

COMMUNICATIONS, may be broken down into secondary and tertiary headings of

Mail

postage Correspondence Telecommunications

The relationship of the subordinate subject headings to the main subject headings may be indicated by numerals. This system, which is known as the subject-numeric, superseded the simple alphabetical subject system used in the Office of the Secretary of Agriculture until 1939. A similar system, known as the alpha-numeric, uses letters of the alphabet to designate the main subject headings and numerals to designate subordinate headings. The use of the subject-numeric system may be illustrated as follows:

COMMUNICATIONS

- 1 Mail
- 1-1 postage
- 2 Correspondence
- 3 Telecommunications

The relationship of the subordinate subject headings to the main subject headings may also be indicated by alphabetical symbols suggestive of subjects. This system, which is known as the mnemonic system, may be illustrated as follows:

Α	ADMINISTRATION
Ab	Administration of Buildings and Grounds
Ag	Administration, General
Agl	administration, general, legislative
Ap	Administration of Personnel

The relationship of the subordinate subject headings to the main subject headings may also be indicated by symbols derived from titles of organizational units. This system, which is known as the organic system, may be illustrated as follows:

E	ELECTRICAL DIVISION
ER	R esistance Measurements Section
EI	Induction and Capacitance Section
EE	Electrical Instruments Section
EM	Magnetic Measurements Section

The system is being successfully used by the National Bureau of Standards. It is limited to use where the organizational structure of an agency is stable and where its functions are sharply defined.

Classified systems: Classified systems differ from numerical and alphabetical systems in that they attempt to bring all records arranged under them into a logical order. Under numerical systems file units, as we have seen, are usually simply grouped in a consecutive numerical sequence, and under alphabetical systems in a consecutive alphabetical sequence. Under certain of these systems, it is true, file units may be brought into logical relationship with each other under main subject headings. But this rationalization is confined to records grouped under such headings.

Classified systems have their origin in the decimal classification for the arrangement of books which was invented in 1873 by the American librarian Melvil Dewey. Dewey's premise was that all human knowledge, and the books relating to it, could be divided into ten classes, as follows:

000 GENERAL WORKS
100 PHILOSOPHY
200 RELIGION
300 SOCIOLOGY
400 THEOLOGY
500 NATURAL SCIENCE
600 USEFUL ARTS
700 FINE ARTS
800 LITERATURE
900 HISTORY

The Dewey-decimal system was made widely known through the Library Bureau. It was first applied to records by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad in 1898. This firm developed a system for organizing railroad records, known as the "Railroad Classification File," which it copyrighted in 1902.

While adaptations of the Dewey-decimal classification system were applied to records of a few government agencies before 1912, it was not until the Taft Commission on Economy and Efficiency published its "Memorandum of Conclusions" on February 12 of that year that the system was widely adopted in the government. One of the Commission's recommendations was "that all correspondence, both incoming and copies of outgoing, should be filed upon a subjective classification arranged as nearly as possible upon a self-indexing basis, and where numbers are regarded as essential that a logical arrangement of numbers under a decimal or analogous system should be employed."¹⁴

The Dewey-decimal system is not suited to the handling of the public records in an expanding government. It is excessively rigid. Its breakdown, in most cases, is too minute. Its symbols are too complicated. And philosophical approach is unsuited to the practical operations of a government office.

Various adaptations of the Dewey-decimal system to record materials have been developed. An example of its application to correspondence is the following:

400 MI	NING
410	MINING ENGINEERING
411	Working of Mines
411.1	metal mining
411.11	gold mining
411.111	placer mining
411.111.1	ditches and flumes

In conclusion I should like to make a few general observations about filing systems. The first of these is that filing systems furnish only the mechanical structure in relation to which records are to be arranged. By the use of symbols or otherwise, they indicate the order in which file units should be grouped. But they are of little assistance in determining the subject headings under which particular papers or files would be most aptly placed. This process, involving a large measure of subjective judgment, is the process of classification.

My second observation is that records can be arranged effectively under almost any filing system. There are certain exceptions that will be noted. In general, however, any filing system, no matter what it is, can be made to work satisfactorily if it is properly applied. Inadequacies of filing are more often attributable to human failings than to failings of system.

My third observation, which arises out of the second, is that filing systems should be explained, and instructions should be issued on their use, if they are to operate successfully. In Australia the Public Service Board and in New Zealand the Public Service Commission have issued clear and explicit instructions on the operation of the registry systems of the two countries. Filing manuals have also been issued in the United States by various agencies for the guidance of their file rooms.

My fourth observation is that the most suitable filing system should be applied to each type of records, and should be applied to the type uniformly. In Australia and New Zealand practically all types of records produced by government agencies are embodied in registered files. Special filing systems are seldom used for special types. The Australian Public Service Board is therefore urging the adoption by all Commonwealth government agencies of the so-called "single-number system," which has been described in a previous chapter. The system can be applied even in large agencies by breaking files into sections on a functional basis, as is being done by the Commonwealth Department of the Navy. In the Federal agencies of the United States special record types can be filed most efficiently in accordance with special filing systems. The record officer should determine what system should be applied to each record type, and should ensure that any system chosen is consistently applied to the appropriate type. In choosing record systems, the following points should be borne in mind:

Point one: The system should be simple. A simple subject system is to be preferred to a subject-numeric system whenever records are small in volume and restricted in their subject-matter coverage. The symbols used in more complicated filing systems serve two purposes: one is to indicate to searchers where particular documents are filed or, by means of cross-references, where related documents are filed; the other is to indicate to classifiers where documents should be filed. Symbols increase in importance as the volume and complexity of the records increase.

Point two: The system should be flexible. The symbols should not be keyed to things that are unstable, such as organizational units, which are constantly changing in modern governments. The mnemonic system, therefore, has a very limited application to modern records.

Point three: The system should be expansible. It should permit the insertion of new main headings to take care of records resulting from new activities, and the division of old main headings as records relating to activities become complicated. Both the subject-numeric and the duplex-numeric systems permit such an expansion. The alpha-numeric system, on the other hand, does not permit the addition of new main headings beyond twenty-six. The Dewey-decimal system limits the number of primary, secondary, and tertiary subjects to ten, but permits the expansion of numbers indefinitely beyond the decimal point. Under this system, as the German archivist Adolf Brenneke has pointed out, records are arbitrarily forced into a Procrustean bed of ten compartments.¹⁵

CHAPTER X

Disposition Practices

THE TERM "disposition," as it is used in this book, embraces all actions taken with respect to records that determine their ultimate fate. This fate may be transfer to a record center for temporary storage or to an archival agency for permanent preservation, reduction in volume by microphotographic means, or outright destruction.

The effectiveness of a record disposition program should be judged only according to the correctness of its determinations. And the correctness of determinations will depend in large degree on how the records are analyzed before the determinations are made. In all cases the basic problem is one of value. In the case of transfer to temporary storage, the value is for future administrative, legal, or fiscal use; in the case of transfer to an archival institution the value is for research or other continuing purposes. When microfilming is proposed, its high cost can be justified only if the records have either primary or secondary values that warrant the expenditure. And, obviously, value judgments must be made whenever actions are taken to destroy records.

In a disposition program there is no substitute for careful analytical work. Techniques cannot be devised that will reduce the work of deciding upon values to a mechanical operation. Nor is there a cheap and easy way to dispose of records unless it is one of destroying everything that has been created, of literally wiping everything off the board. Such a drastic course will appeal only to nihilists, who see no good in social institutions or in the records pertaining to them.

In this chapter I wish to discuss (1) the kinds of information that are needed to decide questions of disposition, (2) the documents that should be prepared to describe records for purposes of disposition, and (3) the kinds of action that may be taken to effect disposition.

TYPES OF DESCRIPTIONS

Public records, it should be observed, can be described in relation to two distinct matters. One is their substantive content, the other is their structure or physical character—that is, their unitary form and their arrangement. They can be described substantively in relation to (1) the organizational units of the agency that created them, (2) the functions, activities, and transactions (as these terms have been defined in a previous chapter) that resulted in their creation, and (3) the subjects to which they pertain. They can be described physically in relation to (1) the classification scheme (or segments of it) under which they were filed, (2) the file units into which they were grouped, or (3) the documentary types of which they consist. The description of records may be graphically illustrated as follows:



Let us first consider descriptions in relation to arrangement. Under an ideal registry system, file classes or file units are established, as was noted in a previous chapter, in relation to function, activity, or subject. If the records are properly classified, they can be identified quite accurately in relation to such classes or units. If the records, however, are not properly classified, the individual file units usually consist of undifferentiated masses of valuable and valueless items. An identification of the particular materials to be destroyed or retained is thus virtually impossible. Under an ideal American filing system, similarly, the classification or filing scheme should provide the basis for an accurate identification of materials to be destroyed or retained. Under most American filing systems, the small file units, such as folders, are usually established on the basis of a careful differentiation of records by subject matter; but these units are often grouped together without regard to classification principles. An identification of the materials to be destroyed or retained in terms of segments of the classification scheme is thus impossible. For purposes of disposition records should be identified by their file classes only if they are properly classified.

Let us consider, secondly, descriptions in relation to unitary form or documentary type. From this point of view records may be broadly distinguished as textual, audio-visual, or cartographic. These broad classes may be broken down into various subordinate types. Audio-visual materials include motion pictures, still photographs, and sound recordings. Cartographic materials usually consist simply of maps and related records. Textual materials can be broken down into innumerable physical types, each of which is usually created to facilitate a common type of action, such as making an application, executing a contract, or requisitioning supplies. Thus are created the physical types of "applications," "contracts," and "requisitions." Some other common physical types are "correspondence," "payrolls," "questionnaires," "reports," and "schedules." If the records of any particular office are analyzed, they will be found to fall into one or more of such physical types. The types, however, may be further refined. Correspondence, for example, may be distinguished as inward, outward, or both, or as reading files or chronological files. Forms may be identified by number and title. Reports may be identified by their nature (e.g. statistical or narrative) or by their frequency (daily, monthly, or annual).

Let us consider, thirdly, descriptions in relation to substance. Records may be substantively described in broad general classes according to their origin established as records of specified organizational units or records of specified functions or activities. They may be described in specific terms as pertaining to particular transactions or subjects. And their description can be made still more specific by combining the elements of substantive analysis with those of physical analysis discussed above. For example, "reports," which are a physical type of record, might be produced in relation to the subject of cash assets on hand in an office; they might then be described as "reports on cash assets." Or "reports" might be produced in relation to a specific transaction in the activity of requisitioning supplies for an office: and so we might have "receiving reports" or "surplus reports." "Reports on cash assets" and "receiving reports," it will be noted, can be collectively described because the subject or kind of transaction to which they relate was dealt with again and again. Such types of records, arising from repetitive actions,

may be designated as "recurrent" types; and they frequently consist of forms.

Recurrent types of records are produced mainly in relation to (1) facilitative activities, i.e. those relating to property, communications, supply, equipment, budgetary, personnel, and similar matters, and (2) activities that are concerned with the execution, as distinct from the direction and administration of government programs. The number of recurrent types produced by an agency depends on the degree to which its functions are performed in accordance with prescribed policies and procedures. The larger the agency, the greater is their number likely to be. In a large agency, even at the higher levels of administration, transactions may be performed in accordance with standard operating procedures, thus resulting in the production of recurrent types. At the grassroots level of the operations of such an agency, transactions involving classes of persons or corporate bodies may be conducted in a routine fashion, or, in a fashion that permits the grouping of the records pertaining to them into recurrent types.

DISPOSITION DOCUMENTS

Since in practically all countries of the world proposals to destroy public records are reviewed by archivists, all officials that handle public records and archivists meet at the time such reviews are made. What types of documents should be prepared to meet the needs of both the record officer and the archivist for the appraisal of public records and for the actions on them that are taken in consequence of their appraisal?

Disposition documents may serve varying purposes. The purpose can be the simple one of identifying bodies of accumulated records in a government agency which should be disposed of immediately or at some specified time. A document made for this purpose is called a "disposal list." Or the purpose can be the complex one of identifying recurrent types of records of which a future disposal should be made at specified intervals. A document made for this purpose is called a "disposal schedule." Or the purpose can be the comprehensive one of identifying all bodies of records in an agency and indicating the disposition that should be made of each of them whether by disposal or by transfer to an archival institution. A document that comprehensively covers all records in this manner is called a "disposition plan." Disposition plans: The main purpose of a disposition plan is to provide the basis for an understanding between agency and archival officials on what should be done with the records of the agency to which it relates. It is a plan of action not only with respect to the destruction of records; on the contrary, it is specifically designed to ensure the preservation of certain of them. It thus not only covers records that lack values; it should cover both the valuable and valueless. It is not intended to serve primarily the needs of either the agency or the archival institution; it should serve both. Its purpose indicates its content and format: its coverage should be comprehensive; its descriptions should emphasize the valuable records; and its preparation should be a matter of collaborative effort on the part of archival and agency officials.

Since a disposition plan is comprehensive in its coverage, it should provide an overall view of the documentation produced by the agency to which it relates. It should thus contain certain general background information about the agency's origin, development, organizational structure, and programs that is needed for an appraisal of its documentation. This information can best be presented in narrative form in an introductory section. The disposition plan, further, should analyze the agency's documentation in its entirety by showing the significance of particular groups of records produced at various levels of administration in relation to major programs or functions. For this purpose its information about records should be organized under functional headings. It should show the various relationships of the records: the relation of particular records to a given function; the relation of the substantive to the facilitative records on a given function; the relation of the policy to the operational records on a given function; and the relation between records produced at various administrative levels on a given function.

Since a disposition plan by reason of its comprehensive coverage includes records to be preserved, it should describe valuable records in a way that will make apparent their value. This means that records relating to substantive functions, many of which are not ordinarily included in disposal lists or schedules, should be described in considerable detail. They should be described in relation to the functions, activities, or subjects to which they pertain, and to their types. The information on records of value should be more complete than that on valueless records. The disposable types of records should be described in general terms only. Information on them should be included in disposition plans primarily to show the relation of records to be destroyed to those to be retained, for dependable judgments on what should be destroyed cannot be made without a knowledge of what is retained. If a sample of recurrent types of records is to be preserved as evidence of an agency's operations at the grassroots level of government, or for other purposes, the plan should indicate the kind of sample that is to be taken.

Since a disposition plan constitutes a memorandum of agreement as to the fate of the records of a particular agency, it should be developed on a cooperative basis by agency and archival officials. The general background information on the agency and its documentation is the sort an archivist needs to interpret its records, once they come into his custody; and he should therefore accumulate it or help in its accumulation. The detailed analysis of the relationships of records should be developed by the agency record officer.

Disposal schedules: The procedure of developing schedules for the disposal of public records has been followed in various countries for some time. I shall review how this procedure was developed in a country using the registry system, namely England, and in a country using modern filing systems, namely the United States.

In England the Master of the Rolls, under the Public Record Act of 1877, was empowered, with the approval of the Treasury and, in the case of departmental records, of the head of the department concerned, to make rules "respecting the disposal by destruction or otherwise of documents which are deposited in or can be removed to the Public Record Office, and which are not of sufficient value to justify their preservation in the Public Record Office." Before the power of disposal could be exercised in relation to any records, the Master of the Rolls was required to "cause a Schedule to be prepared of the documents for the time being proposed to be disposed of, containing a list of the documents," or of classes of documents that were of a similar nature, "and such particulars as to their character and contents as may be calculated to enable the Houses of Parliament to judge of the expediency of disposing of such documents in the proposed manner." In the preparation of a schedule the Act provided that, "where there shall be several documents of the same class or description, it shall be sufficient to classify them, as far as practicable, according to their nature and contents, instead of specifying each document separately."1

Under rules formulated by the Master of the Rolls in 1882, which are in effect today, government departments were requested to nominate officers "specially conversant" with records to draw up "destruction schedules" for them. In drafting them the officers were required to "take every precaution against the inclusion in the schedules of any documents which can reasonably be considered of legal, historical, genealogical, or antiquarian use or interest, or which give any important information not to be obtained elsewhere." The schedules and the records to which they refer are inspected by the staff of the Public Record Office, which is required to keep minutes of the proceedings and to "mention therein every document or class of documents which they may examine."²

In the Federal government of the United States the procedure of developing disposal schedules grew out of the practice of preparing disposal lists. The practice of listing was instituted by an Act of Congress of February 16, 1899 (25 Stat. 672), which provided that records that "have no permanent value or historical interest" should be reported by the heads of departments to Congress, which reserved to itself the right of authorizing destruction. In accordance with Executive Order No. 1499 of March 16, 1912, the lists of disposable records were also submitted to the Librarian of Congress in order to obtain "the benefits of his views as to the wisdom of preserving such of the papers as he may deem to be of historical interest."³ In the Act of June 19, 1934 (48 Stat. 1122), which established the National Archives, the Archivist of the United States was made responsible for submitting annually to Congress "a list or description of the papers, documents, and so forth . . . which appear to have no permanent value or historical interest."

The review of the annual lists of disposable records was quite time-consuming for the staff of the National Archives. In a memorandum of July 30, 1938, I therefore proposed that schedules be developed for the records of the Department of Agriculture, which were my especial concern at that time. This proposal grew out of the practice of the Forest Service of submitting annual lists specifying the various types of its records to be retained or to be destroyed at periodic intervals. Before the establishment of the National Archives the Forest Service submitted such lists to the Secretary of Agriculture, who was empowered by the Appropriation Act of March 4, 1907 (34 Stat. 1281), to authorize the disposal of records of his department without reference to Congress. The procedure of developing disposal schedules was recommended to the Federal agencies as early as 1925 by the Interdepartmental Board on Simplified Office Procedures, which was created by the Bureau of the Budget on May 16, 1924. The Board recommended a "fixed and uniform policy" for the destruction of records based on an analysis by a committee within each office of the "classes of papers [which] in its opinion should be retained permanently and which destroyed after, say—one, three, five, etc., years."⁴ The procedure of preparing disposal schedules was prescribed for all Federal agencies in the Records Disposal Act of July 7, 1943 (57 *Stat.* 380-383). The procedure in the United States, however, has its origins neither in the recommendations of the Interdepartmental Board on Simplified Office Procedures nor in the practices of the English government.

Disposal schedules should be designed to accomplish the single but important objective of obtaining authorization to destroy recurrent types of records. The required analysis of such types of records is different from that of the basic documentation of organization and functioning. It focuses the attention of the record officer and the operating officials on those measures that will most improve the management of records. These are (1) the standardization and simplification of administrative processes and procedures, and (2) the correct classification and filing of records for current use. Both measures will increase the number of recurrent types of records that may be placed on schedules.

A disposal schedule, therefore, should relate to records that will be made in the future-records of a kind that are currently produced and that will continue to be produced. These are recurrent records. They are produced, it has been observed, mainly in relation (1) to facilitative activities, and (2) to substantive transactions at the lower levels of government operations which are conducted in accordance with standard policies and procedures. When I first proposed the scheduling procedure in 1938, I stated that schedules "should pertain to records which are recurrent and routine and not to records which are unique. . . ."5 This view, I believe, has been shown by experience to be valid. If nonrecurrent records are described on schedules, the latter become obsolete whenever such records are destroyed. Experience in the Federal government of the United States has shown that schedules must be developed again and again for records of particular organizational units of the government. The primary reason for this is that such schedules are keyed to things that are temporary, that is, to types of records that occur but

once. Schedules are not an appropriate means of obtaining an archival review of the basic documentation of an agency's organization and functioning because these matters are constantly changing.

A disposal schedule should describe records in a manner that will facilitate their disposal. The test of the effectiveness of a schedule is whether the records covered by it can be removed and disposed of at the end of the retention periods prescribed.

In order to provide a workable program for the elimination of future record accumulations, a disposal schedule should identify records in relation to circumstances and conditions that are reasonably stable. Organizational structure is a flexible thing and therefore does not provide a good foundation on which to build a program of future disposal. Such a program is thrown out of kilter with each organizational change; for the organizational units to whose records it applies may have been discontinued, consolidated with other units, or otherwise modified. As a rule, disposal schedules should be prepared in relation to major functions rather than in relation to organizational units. If prepared in this way, the various records should be itemized separately under functional headings.

To prove workable, moreover, a disposal schedule should identify records in terms of the physical units which are to be eliminated. When the records in question are of a recurrent type, little difficulty is encountered in describing them on schedules. The particular items may be identified first in terms of their physical types, such as "questionnaires," "reports," "schedules," or "returns": and, secondly in terms of forms, though, as a rule, titles and numbers of forms should be used to identify records only when the forms are of a standard or permanent kind. When the records in question consist of correspondence, or other similar records that are embodied in classified files, more difficulty is encountered in describing them on schedules. The items may then be identified in general terms by reference to classes in a classification scheme or in specific terms by reference to file units. Identification on this basis, however, is possible only if the records were properly classified and filed when they were in current use. This may be illustrated by the experience of the English government in applying schedules in which classes of records are listed in reference to broad headings. These headings, according to the Grigg report, often bear "little relation to the way in which these documents accrue in the course of current administration."6 When the classes consist of particular types of

documents, such as accounting documents or statistical returns, the Public Record Office staff can determine their nature by examining a few specimens. But when the classes consist simply of records identified under broad subject headings, the staff leaves the examination of individual documents within the classes to the departments themselves. The departments must then review the files to determine if they shall be destroyed in their entirety, and, if not, which individual documents within the files shall be destroyed. "The effect of these arrangements," according to the Grigg report, "is to place the major onus for exercising the historical criterion on the least qualified to bear it, namely the comparatively junior officers by whom reviewing work is done."⁷

A disposal schedule should describe records in the degree of detail that is necessary to protect the interests of the agency that produced them. Records pertaining to fiscal matters should be described precisely for this reason. Their improper destruction is likely to involve operating officials in administrative embarrassment, financial loss, or legal liability. Such records, therefore, should not be described in general terms as, for example, records pertaining to a major facilitative function like the "procurement function." Such a description is too broad to provide a safe basis for their future elimination. Nor is a description adequate if it is in terms of an activity, such, for example, as the "purchasing of equipment" under the "procurement function." Fiscal records should be identified in terms of recurrent types established on the basis of their relation to transactions, such, for example, as "requisitions for purchases," and the like. Descriptions in this degree of detail are required to protect the interests of the agency; not to provide information basic to the archivist's appraisals.

Despite their limitations, disposal schedules provide the basis for the orderly removal and disposal of large quantities of useless papers from current files. They are thus an important tool of management.

Disposal lists: Disposal lists are easily prepared. Since they serve as the basis for single disposal actions in the sense that the actions will be taken only once, their emphasis in the information they contain about records should be on their content. Substantive descriptions are needed for the appraisal of the records by both operating and archival officials. For the most part, such records will relate to the administration and direction of government programs, which, it has been noted, consist of types that will be reviewed only once. These, it should be emphasized, are the records with which the archivist is particularly concerned, and for purposes of his appraisal full information should be provided on them. Information on their physical identity is relatively unimportant, since they will not have to be identified again and again as is the case with records scheduled for future disposal at periodic intervals.

Information should be developed periodically on the past accumulations of records of each organizational unit within an agency. The records should be described by groupings or units in relation to (1) the functions, activities, or subjects to which they relate, (2) the physical types of which they consist, i.e. whether correspondence, forms, reports, or the like, and (3) the physical characteristics by which they can be identified.

DISPOSITION ACTIONS

Once decisions on the disposition of records have been made, the actions that may be taken to carry them into effect are fairly simple. I shall, therefore, confine my observations to the main factors to be considered in taking any one of several alternative actions without touching on the details of procedure to be followed in taking them.

Destruction: The first of the alternative actions is the outright destruction of records. Most of the factors leading to decisions to destroy have already been considered. I should like to review them briefly:

Decisions to destroy records should be made correctly, on the basis of thorough analyses, and on the basis of proper reviews by operating officials who have an interest in the records for current uses, and by archivists who have an interest in them for secondary uses.

Records to be destroyed should be correctly identified when they are removed from shelves or containers. Their accurate identification in disposition plans, disposal schedules, and disposal lists is an essential preliminary to their correct identification at the time of destruction.

Records should be correctly classified for current use as a preliminary to their accurate identification in disposition documents. Records should be classified and filed in such a way that they can be readily removed for destruction after they have served their current uses. The sifting or weeding of files—whether these are arranged in accordance with a registry system or an American filing system—is a costly matter. Sifting, in fact, can hardly

be justified from the point of view of achieving economy unless a goodly portion of the records that are being reviewed can be segregated for disposal, for it may be cheaper to keep the useless items along with the valuable than to segregate them for disposal. Classification, then, has a direct bearing on disposal practices. Records need not be preclassified with a view to their disposal. Separate classes of correspondence, for example, need not be established to permit their removal and disposal at specified intervals. It is difficult enough to classify records properly for current use without adding to the problem of classification that of disposition. A preclassification for disposal introduces an extraneous and complicating factor into classification. Records should be classified primarily to facilitate their current use, and only secondarily to facilitate their removal and disposal. But if records are properly classified in relation to function they can usually be eliminated in relation to function, for they derive much of their significance from their relation to function.

Decisions to destroy records should be final and irrevocable. The greatest and the most easily proved economies in a record disposition program can be achieved by immediately destroying records after they have served their current purpose and have been appraised as valueless for secondary uses. Unnecessary expense is incurred when records that should have been destroyed on the spot are held temporarily in offices or in record centers, or when records are reduced to microfilm that should have been destroyed in their original form. Except in unusual circumstances records should not be held temporarily or microfilmed in order to postpone the necessity of judging their worthlessness or to substantiate an opinion by observing their lack of use. Sound opinions as to the worthlessness of records can usually be formed by making thorough analyses of them and of their probable future uses.

Records should be destroyed in a proper manner. The methods followed in destruction are relatively unimportant. Normally they are sold as wastepaper. If they are, however, they should be macerated or otherwise treated to destroy their record content. If a contract for their sale is let, it should include a clause prohibiting their resale as records or documents. Maceration or some other treatment is always advisable in the case of confidential records. If the records cannot be sold to advantage or if the agency believes it necessary in order to prevent the disclosure of information prejudicial to the interests of the government or of individuals, they may be destroyed by burning.

Microfilming: The second alternative action that can be taken with respect to records is to microfilm them. Microfilming is a method of preserving records in another medium or form. It is the technique of making photographic copies that are too small to be read without magnification. When a microphotographic copy of a record is consulted, a microfilm reader is usually used to magnify the image to readable proportions on a viewing screen. The objectives in microfilming records are usually twofold: (1) to reduce their bulk, and (2) to insure their permanency. Any determination to microfilm records should be based on the following principles:

Records to be microfilmed should have values that would justify the cost of filming them. The costs of microfilming, as has been noted before, are high. They must be weighed against the cost of preserving records in their original form.

Records to be microfilmed should have the physical characteristics that make them suitable for filming. Since one of the objectives of microfilming is to reduce bulk, records to be filmed should ordinarily be in large series. Since it is possible to consult filmed documents only one at a time, each document in a series to be filmed should be an integral unit in the sense that it has a meaning apart from that derived from its relationship to other units in the series. Documents on film cannot readily be subjected to comparisons, for two documents cannot, as a rule, be projected simultaneously.

Records to be microfilmed should have an arrangement that makes it feasible to film them. They must be arranged according to some clear pattern or system—either numerical, alphabetical, chronological, or according to a well defined system of classification. Documents that are so arranged can be found readily by reference to their scheme of arrangement. When the arrangement of documents is not simple, they must be edited and indexed in order to locate them on the film. An excellent manual on editing and indexing was issued in 1946 by the War Department of the United States under the title *Microfilming of Records*. A revised edition was issued in 1955.

Records should be microfilmed in a proper manner. The photographic copies should capture all significant record detail of the original records which may be needed for probable future reference. Technically the film stock and its processing should be of such a quality that the copies will have the durability of 100 percent rag paper. The photographic copies should be an adequate substitute for the original records in every essential respect.

Microphotography offers a means of reducing the bulk of records in the same geometric ratio in which their quantity has increased as a result of an extension of governmental activities and the use of modern duplicating devices. It makes permanency possible for paper that is short-lived. If judiciously applied, microphotography can contribute materially to the solution of an agency's record problems. It is a modern technique suited to the management of modern records.

Transfers to record centers: The third alternative disposition action is to transfer records to a record center for temporary storage. Record centers serve at least three very definite needs: (1) they serve to accommodate certain types of records that regularly accumulate in the government and must be held for long periods of time, (2) they serve to accommodate special accumulations of records of defunct agencies or of terminated activities, and (3) they serve as places for the concentration of all past accumulations of records—regular and special, valuable and valueless—at the inception of a record management or an archival program.

In serving the first of these needs, record centers provide cheaper storage space than is available in government offices, make records more accessible for use, and often create conditions that make their analysis and ultimate disposition easier. Certain types of records that are held for long periods in costly office space, where they get under foot and hamper operations, can be moved into the centers. By their removal the filing equipment and space they occupy can be used for other current records. For the government as a whole, centers thus provide a means for the orderly movement of such records as they become noncurrent from costly space to cheap space, and for their storage in the latter until they can finally be destroyed or transferred to an archival institution.

In serving the second need record centers provide storage space for records that must be removed from costly office space because the matters to which they relate are no longer of concern to the government. Included among such records are those produced by agencies established to deal with an economic depression or with wartime controls of production, transportation, and the like; or those produced as a result of activities that were terminated by congressional fiat or in some other manner. In serving the third need, record centers are a means of cleaning a government's house. Into them can be transferred records that have accumulated in the course of time in innumerable basement and attic rooms in government buildings. Before housecleanings of government buildings are undertaken, a record center should be available to accommodate records that need a more intensive analysis than can be given them in the space to which they were relegated. If such centers are not available, the valuable records of a government may be swept out with the accumulated debris of past generations.

Several facts should be considered if record centers are to achieve the objectives of saving money and improving the efficiency of government operations.

Record centers should not be used for the storage of useless papers, when this can be avoided. The transfer of records of questionable value to centers is justified only if decisions cannot actually be made on them, as is the case in governments where centers serve as a first step in a record management or archival program. If, while preparing disposal schedules, or at other times, officials consign records to centers for the simple reason that they do not know what to do with them, the chances are good that the centers will become dumping grounds for the prolonged retention of useless materials. They then defeat their purpose of economy. The British Committee on Departmental Records, in fact, observed that "the biggest disadvantage of a 'Limbo' repository scheme lies in the incentive it gives to Departments to defer the reviewing of their records."8 Record centers should not normally be used for the storage of records whose fate government officials cannot, for the moment, decide.

Record centers should be used primarily for the storage of certain types of records. These types may be identified by the activities to which they relate, and the duration of their usefulness. The types most suitable are the large record series, which all modern governments create, and which arise from fiscal, regulatory, investigative, litigational, personnel, or other similar activities. In England these are called "particular instance" papers; they commonly provide information about persons and business concerns. They are recurrent records—the kind that can be appraised on the basis of their informational content, that pertain to specific actions which are usually definitely terminable, and that can ordinarily be retired by schedule for disposition. They should be distinguished from nonrecurrent types those that are appraised on the basis of the evidence they contain on organizational and functional origins, that pertain to policy, procedural, and program matters, that are not definitely terminable, and that can be appraised only with great difficulty if removed from their context. If these large record series relate to long-term transactions or obligations of government agencies they may properly be removed to record centers after their immediate current uses have been exhausted.

Whenever nonrecurrent types of records are transferred to record centers, precise and complete information should be obtained on their administrative origins and functional significance to facilitate their appraisal. While such information is very helpful in appraisal, written descriptions of records are seldom an adequate substitute for the information that can be provided orally by those who created them. And this information is particularly significant for the appraisal of the documentation of organization and function.

Transferring records to temporary storage may be a means of postponing a decision on their value; it does not obviate the making of a decision. For records in the centers that have no value will eventually have to be cleared out. Perhaps the decision on value can be arrived at more easily when records are removed from the hands of the officials who created them. Perhaps records, like persons, lose their glamor when at a distance. Public officials may no longer be impressed with the importance of preserving records for future use when the records are not immediately at hand to remind them of such use. Records, after all, can become mental crutches on which public officials will lean in weaker moments rather than rely on their mental acumen to resolve the problems that come before them. The conservative instincts of the public administrator incline him to hang onto public records, particularly when they relate to financial or legal matters, on the off chance that the matters to which they relate many possibly come under review again.

While decisions on the primary value of public records can perhaps be made more easily after they have been removed from the offices in which they were created, this cannot be said for judgments on their secondary values. Public records frequently lose their identity and their meaning when they are removed from their setting, i.e. their place of creation and use, just as words lose their meaning when removed from their context. This is particularly true of records relating to the documentation of organization and function, which are the especial concern of archivists. Such records, it will be shown later, must be appraised in relation to the total documentation produced by an agency. When they are taken from the agency, it frequently becomes difficult to ascertain either their organizational or their functional origins. I found this to be the case while attempting to appraise records of certain defunct Federal agencies.

Records should be transferred to a record center in a proper manner. The National Archives and Records Service has recently issued a Records Management Handbook entitled *Federal Records Centers*, which tells how to transfer records to a repository. The substance of this Handbook need not be repeated here.

Transfers to archival institutions: The fourth alternative disposition action is to transfer records to an archival institution for permanent retention. Several considerations will determine whether records should be so transferred.

The first of these is their value. Records must clearly have secondary values that warrant their permanent retention. The criteria by which these should be judged will be discussed in the next section of this book.

The second is the currency of the records. Records must be noncurrent, as well as valuable, to be suitable for transfer to an archival institution. "Currency" relates to the use made of records in carrying on the governmental function in connection with which they were accumulated. It is to be distinguished from the "activity" resulting from other uses, for example, the use of records by the public or by other agencies. To determine where records should be held the character and the frequency of their use, their nature and value, and the facilities affecting use must all be considered. An archival institution should not normally accept records likely to involve frequent loans back to the office of origin, although a record center might undertake such services.

The third consideration is the physical condition of the records. The bodies of records transferred to an archival institution should be complete and logical units accompanied by any pertinent indexes; they should be in good order and should be stripped (if possible) of valueless items that may have been interfiled with them.

The fourth consideration is the condition of access to the records. This subject will be discussed in detail in the next section of the book. Here it should suffice to observe that an archival institution should not accession records which are subject to restrictions on use that are believed to be unreasonable and contrary to the public interest.

PART III

ARCHIVAL MANAGEMENT

Archivists, who flash the torch Of Truth along Time's mould'ring records, Illuminating all the fading past, Like golden letters on an ancient scroll.

-Mrs. W. R. Wilde.*

[•] Quoted in Sir John Gilbert's Record Revelations Resumed (London, 1864), p. 117.

CHAPTER XI

Essential Conditions of Archival Management

TN THIS section of the book I shall consider the general problem of how public archives should be managed in an archival institution. In the first of its chapters I shall discuss the essential conditions of archival management, while in succeeding chapters I shall discuss how public records should be appraised, arranged, preserved, described, published, and serviced.

In referring to essential conditions I have in mind (1) the nature of modern archives which determines the nature of the activities in the field of archival management, (2) the nature of the archival activities themselves, (3) the nature of the authority required by the archivist if he is to carry on his proper activities, and (4) the nature of the institution that is responsible for archival activities.

NATURE OF MODERN ARCHIVES

Modern public archives have certain characteristics because of the way they come into being and the way they are dealt with after they have served their immediate purposes. They are produced by all kinds of modern duplicating devices, and hence they are in various physical forms, such as books, papers, maps, and photographs. They are derived from many sources though they may all emanate from a single government. The archivist is concerned with the entire documentation of the government he serves, and this may include records from various of its agencies, and within each agency records from various of its organizational units.

Modern archives are often difficult to identify. They are not created, as are books, by one person or group of persons in consequence of an interest in some subject, but are the byproduct of an activity of a government unit. They are not therefore readily identifiable by author and title, for the government unit that created them and the activity to which they pertain can often be established only by time-consuming research into their administrative and functional origins. This is particularly true because the records with which an archivist is concerned are usually old and almost always noncurrent. The identity of older records has often been obscured or lost because of their neglect after they were no longer needed while that of more recent records, too, is often difficult to establish because they were poorly classified during their current use, or were improperly handled after they had served their current purposes.

Modern archives are often indeterminate in their contents. They present themselves as a body of material that has grown organically out of a government activity. Because of their organic growth, they are not organized primarily on a subjectmatter basis. They do not thus ordinarily correspond by title or organization to a unitary subject or area of inquiry. Unlike books, their subject matter is not reflected in a title and presented in an appropriate order made apparent by pagination and chapter divisions. They are not made susceptible of use for purposes of research through the simple media of a table of contents and an index.

Modern archives are variously arranged. The several groups of archives with which an archivist deals may be arranged under all kinds of systems: numerical, alphabetical, or classified; or by physical types. They may simply be accumulations without perceptible order that arose in relation to some subject or activity. The arrangement given individual documents within the groups by the originating agency are ordinarily preserved by the archivist, who must bring the groups into proper relationship with each other. In doing this he cannot proceed in accordance with a preconceived, universal classification scheme, as a librarian can; he must analyze the organization and functional origins of each group and bring all groups together so as to reflect the functioning of the organism that produced them.

Modern archives are unique in character. They do not exist in large and widespread editions as is often the case with publications of various kinds. While many copies of particular records may be made, the archivist is usually concerned only with the unique files in which they may be embodied.

Modern archives are selected materials. They are chosen because of their evidential or informational values from a great mass of records produced by a government. They are chosen, not on the basis of a consideration of particular records by themselves, but because of their significance in the entire documentation of a particular subject or activity, or, more broadly, in the documentation of an agency, or a government, or even a society at some stage of its development.

Modern archives are valuable records. In an earlier chapter, it will be recalled, public archives were defined, granting certain other qualifications, as the public records "that are adjudged worthy of preservation for reference and research purposes and which have been deposited or have been selected for deposit in an appropriate institution."

Modern archives are valuable for a number of purposes. A committee of the National Archives of the United States, appointed in 1952 to draft job standards for Federal archivists, found them to be valuable as "source materials" in two senses of this term. It adduced a number of examples of the fields in which holdings of the National Archives serve as source materials, in the sense of providing basic information for various forms of study, research, or inquiry. Among the fields enumerated were

public administration, in which are available the records that document the organization and functions of each government agency, as well as records of special bodies (such as the Dockery, Keep, Taft, and Hoover commissions) that concerned themselves with administration in the entire government;

diplomatic history, in which are available the diplomatic and consular despatches, instructions, etc., relating to the foreign activities of the government; trade statistics relating to economic matters; and motion-picture newsreels, sound recordings, news despatches, and press clippings relating to public opinion, etc.;

national history, in which are available records from many sources on every matter in which the national government was concerned, including records on various wars, on broad movements such as the westward expansion within the nation, on particular historical events or episodes, etc.;

economic history and theory, in which are available data gathered by regulatory and labor agencies showing the concentration of industry; labor dispute, employment service, transportation and other records bearing on labor history and labor relations; maritime, railroad, and regulatory records showing transportation developments; records of the courts and numerous quasi-judicial bodies showing the development of business law;

demography, in which are available passenger lists, census schedules, and records of a number of special agencies, and of immigration and naturalization agencies that document the history and problems of racial and national-origin groups; records of agricultural, labor, transportation, and business-regulatory agencies that show the rise and decline of areas, etc.;

biography and genealogy, in which are available census, Land Office, military service, and military pension records, etc.;

technology, in which are available maritime, census, labor dispute, and patent records, etc.; and

physical science, in which are available the records of a number of scientific agencies.

The committee stated further that archives are source materials in another sense of the term. They may be used in establishing various rights, privileges, duties, immunities, and the like that derive from or are connected with the citizen's relationship to the Federal government; and in regulating the activity of government officials and agencies. The committee cited the following examples of ways in which holdings of the National Archives serve as source materials in this sense of the term:

In citizen-government relations, to provide evidence of entitlement to lands (land grant records); to pensions (service records); to citizenship (naturalization and numerous collateral records); to legal residence (census records); to eligibility for regulated types of employment (maritime records); and to exemption from damages or other liabilities (accident investigation records, contract records).

In relations between citizens that are affected by relations with the government, to determine royalty rights (patent records, contract records); to settle wage disputes (labor relations case files, cost-of-living studies); to settle disputed contracts to buy or sell (rate schedules and studies, price regulations and their supporting data); to give evidence of job experience (service records).

In official activity, to deal with the General Accounting Office (fiscal and budgetary records); to answer claims (contract and employment records); to find precedents for policy or action (conference minutes, administrative histories, papers developing orders and regulations); to determine employability (investigation and service records).

In summarizing its views, the committee stated that "records or archives, as the material in which the archivist works, considered as a whole are a principal category of source material, documenting all Government activities, valuable for a wide range of studies, fundamental for all civic rights of the individual and for many matters of equity as between individuals, and important in regulating Government activity itself, unique, and presenting themselves as bodies of documents reflecting the functions and structure of Government agencies."

NATURE OF ACTIVITIES

In working with his materials an archivist has the dual objective of preserving them and making them available for use. Thus the objective of the National Archives of the United States has been officially defined as that of serving this and future generations by safeguarding for their use the evidence of the nation's experience that is embodied in the permanently valuable records of the Federal government. In doing his work, the archivist carries on a number of functional activities. These activities are not clearly separable or exclusive of one another; they are all part of the tasks of preserving and making available for use the source materials preserved in an archival institution. The activities, morevor, may be defined in various ways. For purposes of internal administration, the National Archives has grouped them under four major functional headings, as follows:

(1) Disposition Activities, which include appraising records proposed for disposal or for transfer to the National Archives building, reappraising accessioned records, segregating and removing to a record center records of temporary value, segregating and destroying records of no value, and taking other actions affecting the disposition of records.

(2) Preservation and Arrangement Activities, which include packing and labeling records and shelving the containers in the stacks; rearranging and consolidating records, according to plan, by repacking, relabeling, and reshelving them; examining and selecting records for repair and rehabilitation and selecting records that should be reproduced for purposes of preservation;

(3) Description and Publication Activities, which include analyzing and describing accessioned records so as to make them available for use; preparing descriptive inventories, lists, catalogs, guides, and other finding aids; and selecting and editing records for microfilm or other documentary publication; and

(4) Reference Service Activities, which include furnishing information from or about accessioned records; finding and lending such records to other government agencies; making such records available for search room use; selecting and identifying records for exhibit or reproduction; and authenticating reproductions of accessioned records. Basic to practically all activities of the archivist is his analysis of records. This analysis involves him in studies of the organizational and functional origins of records to obtain information on their provenance, subject content, and interrelations. This information is used in appraising, arranging, describing, publishing, and servicing records. Analytical activities are the essence of an archivist's work; the other activities that are based on them are largely of a physical nature.

Thus records can be appraised only after they have been analyzed. Appraisals, as will appear in the next chapter, should be based on a thoroughgoing and comprehensive analysis of all documentation produced by a particular government agency and of its relationship to all other documentation.

Accessioning, which follows appraisal, brings records that are judged to be valuable into the physical and legal custody of the archival institution. In the initial stages of his work an archivist may encounter great resistance in government agencies to the release of records to an archival institution. Government officials may have become accustomed to having all records pertaining to their work at their elbow or, at least, under their immediate control. They may even regard filing cases as fixtures of their offices and their contents as personal property. Accessioning under such circumstances is quite difficult and calls for a great deal of tact and patience on the part of the archivist.

Records can be arranged only after they have been analyzed. In arranging records, as will be shown in a later chapter, the basic principle of provenance is observed. According to this principle, archives must be so arranged that the organization and functions that produced them will be clearly reflected by them, administrative unit by administrative unit, subunit by subunit, and record series by record series. This principle of arrangement can be followed only if a thorough analysis has been made of the records. Arrangement not only affects the accessibility of archives; it also affects their evidential values, for archives must be arranged in a manner that will protect their integrity as historical evidence and as evidence of organization and function. It is often highly important that individual papers be maintained in their original and significant physical context.

Thoroughgoing analysis is also an essential preliminary to the production of finding aids. These finding aids may be of various types, but all of them embody the information that is obtained from an analysis of records. Some finding aids, such as guides, inventories, lists, and catalogs, show the character and significance of archives in relation to their provenance; others, such as subject guides and reference information papers, show their character and significance in relation to their subject matter.

The servicing activity is doubtless the most important of all activities performed by an archivist. It means furnishing archives, reproductions of archives, or information from or about archives to the government and the public. It may involve the archivist in extensive searches for particular archives, which must be selected from among many other archives, identified, and assembled and evaluated before they are made available. Or it may involve him in research studies, surveys, or investigations of his own in order to prepare reference reports on specialized topics, or to provide advice and assistance in the location, interpretation, and utilization of archives.

NATURE OF AUTHORITY

An archivist's authority is derived from the position and responsibilities assigned to him in the government he serves.

Administrative status: Archival positions range from those that give their incumbents complete freedom of action to those that are completely subordinated to some other government office. The position in which a particular archivist should be placed depends on a number of factors.

One is the status of archival work in the country. Beginnings are always difficult, and they are particularly so in the archival field. The obstacles that confront an archivist at the initiation of his program are sometimes almost insuperable. He cannot remove them alone. He should have the help of enlightened public administrators, scholars, especially historians, and all others who are interested, in developing a public consciousness of record values and in obtaining recognition on the part of the government that the care of public records is a public obligation. A government seldom recognizes the value of its records until after it has reached historical maturity when, ironically, many records relating to its development are likely to have disappeared. And, even after a government has provided authority and facilities for archival work, the archivist's task is still a difficult one. Initially, in his relations with government agencies, he will face the entrenched habits of public officials in dealing with records which make them regard records as the exclusive property of their offices, useful only for purposes of current administration and of no concern to an outsider.

The position in the governmental hierarchy in which an archivist should be placed depends also on the character of the governmental organizations with which he deals. Their size, complexity, and age are important aspects of their character that should be taken into account. An archivist, for example, may be concerned with records of one of several types of governmental organizations: Federal, State, ministerial, local, or other. These organizations may be old or new: they may have existed for centuries, as in most European countries, or only for a few decades, as in the United States and Australia.

Present-day national archival institutions usually enjoy a fairly high degree of autonomy in the administration of their work. The national archives of France, England, and the United States, it will be recalled, were each placed differently in the governmental structure of their respective countries. The *Archives Nationales* was subordinated to a ministry, while the Public Record Office was given separate ministerial status. The National Archives of the United States was initially made an independent agency, but was later subordinated to another governmental body.

Many State and local archival institutions are subordinated to other governmental bodies upon whom they are dependent for their personnel and monetary resources; though certain others enjoy an independent status. In the United States, the State archival institutions, which incidentally have complete control over State archives, have been given various positions in the State governments. In thirteen States, they were made entirely independent of other governmental bodies, in eight States they were subordinated to State libraries, in fifteen States to State historical associations, and in nine States to other governmental bodies.

From the nature of the functions it is to accomplish, it is obvious that an archival administration should be given a place in the governmental hierarchy that will enable it to deal *independently* with all units of the government. Unless it is ministerial in character, the archival institution should either be an independent agency, or be subordinated to another organizational unit that can deal independently with all government departments. In the case of the National Archives of the United States this organizational unit is one that renders housekeeping services (on supply, building, and record matters) to all government agencies. Many State archival institutions in the United States, it has been observed, are independent agencies; but those that are not have been subordinated to other governmental bodies, such as libraries or historical associations, that can deal independently with all government departments.

The archival administration, moreover, should be given a place in the governmental hierarchy that will enable it to deal effectively with all other agencies of the government. The effectiveness of an archivist, personal considerations being left aside, depends upon his status in the government, and his status should depend upon the nature of the work he is to accomplish. In all his work, it has been emphasized, the archivist is involved in close relations with all other agencies of the government he serves. In this work he obviously encounters all kinds of problems, some relating to matters of high policy and others to routine transactions. If the archival program is a new one, they may relate to matters that are ordinarily handled only at top governmental levels, such as the placement of his institution in the governmental structure, its legal authority, and its policies that have governmentwide effect. Or they may relate to various phases of the execution of the new program, such as the conduct of surveys to ascertain the character and value of records, the formulation of policies regarding access and preservation, the provision of storage facilities, and the development of a disposal program. If most of his problems involve policies handled at the top governmental level, he should be placed high enough in the hierarchy to enable him to deal effectively with government officials on them. He should then be able to deal with other government departments on the basis of equality. If, contrariwise, most of his problems are of an operational nature, he may be placed lower in the hierarchy. The archivist, in a word, should be able to deal directly and equally with officials who are concerned with his problems.

If the archival administration is subordinated to another agency, such as a library or an historical society, certain administrative arrangements are necessary to ensure its effectiveness. The archival program should be made a distinct and separate program of such an agency. This is necessary because the methodology of the archival profession, as has been shown, differs from that of other agencies, i.e. libraries and historical societies, to which it is likely to be subordinated. It is also necessary because the archival profession cannot survive on the budgetary crumbs that are likely to fall from the table of agencies primarily concerned with other programs. The funds appropriated for the archival program should be distinctly earmarked for that program. In order to ensure the effectiveness of the program, independent governing boards should be established, on which the archival profession should be properly represented, to review its requirements and the resources that are made available to meet them. In most States within the United States such boards are nonsalaried, nonpolitical, selfperpetuating bodies composed of educators, historians, and public officials who are either elected by historical societies or appointed by State governors.

Responsibilities: An archivist's responsibilities with respect to public records should be carefully defined in law. It is especially important that the materials with which an archivist is to work, namely public records, should be legally defined at the outset. The term "public records," as has been observed, may be defined in various ways to suit the needs of various governments; but it should always be defined precisely.

Any definition of "public records" should be based on the premise that such records are public property. They are the property of all the citizens, who collectively constitute the state. In the United States the act that established the National Archives provides that "all archives or records belonging to the Government of the United States (legislative, executive, judicial, and other), shall be under the charge and superintendence of the Archivist." [Italics mine.] The concept of public ownership, which is implicit in this provision of law, is expressed also in numerous provisions of the Federal Records Act of 1950, which supersedes the National Archives Act.

The concept of public ownership is important in establishing the right of a government to retain and preserve records created in the course of its official activity. It is difficult, however, to formulate a law or directive that will effectively control the personal use of public records. In the United States, from the earliest days of the Republic, the disposition of such records has been a matter of discretion among top-level government officials, such as cabinet officers and presidents. By tradition such officials may remove their records when they vacate their offices. The precedent for the removal of presidential papers was established by George Washington, who, after his second administration, had his papers packed and sent to Mount Vernon. His papers Washington considered "as a species of Public property, sacred in my hands."1 They remained at Mount Vernon for nearly thirty years until they were published by Jared Sparks (1789-1866). Eventually they were purchased by the State Department, which was then the manuscript depository of the Federal government; and today they are in the Library of Congress among the papers of many other presidents.

The right of presidents to take their office records with them on leaving office has been generally admitted without question. The right ordinarily extends only to the correspondence and other papers created in their immediate offices. It does not extend to papers that have become part of the records of the government, which, according to Jefferson, "having become the acts of public bodies, there can be no personal claim to them."2 Under no circumstances, in fact, should any paper be taken that will leave a gap in the official records of the executive agencies. In view of the increasing importance of the president's office in the structure of the Federal government, the character of the records of his office has gradually changed through the years. They are no longer a relatively small lot of papers, largely of a personal nature, like those of Washington, who, in his leisure hours, could "overhaul, arrange, and separate papers of real, from those of little or no value."³ They are now very voluminous and largely impersonal in character. The American Historical Association in its 1945 meeting, therefore, appropriately resolved that

WHEREAS, It has been the general practice of Presidents of the United States, upon retirement from the White House, to take with them considerable bodies of records, official as well as personal: and

WHEREAS, The Federal Government now possesses admirable facilities for the expert care and servicing of all official files, and the use of them is essential to scholars and government officials for intelligent performance of their functions in our democracy: now therefore be it

Resolved, That the American Historical Association express, and give full publicity to, its earnest hope that, henceforward, our chief executives may take with them upon retirement only that correspondence which is strictly personal in character.⁴

A new tradition is now in the process of development, under which the presidents, on leaving office, deposit their papers in special libraries, which are then given to the Nation and administered as part of the National Archives system.

Because of the highly personal character of the cabinet system in the Federal government of the United States the tradition of removing public papers has been extended to cabinet officers. Customarily such officers take with them papers they consider personal and private, especially papers bearing on their activities as members of a political party, and leave behind what they regard as bearing on the business of government. But occasionally they may take with them copies of official papers they produced as a protection against possible attacks on their reputations or their work. For this reason, as early as 1800, press copies were made of Timothy Pickering's official correspondence as Secretary of State, with the permission of John Marshall, Pickering's successor.⁵ Cabinet officers may also occasionally remove copies of the public papers they produced to write memoirs or diaries. The incentive for public officials to maintain personal records should not be destroyed; for diaries and memoirs, while often quite subjective and faulty, are an important supplement to the formal and diffuse public records, adding color and intimate details to them.

The tradition of removing public records on leaving office does not extend to officials below the cabinet rank, though customarily such officials take with them private papers, and sometimes copies of public documents. But it is clear that records that are made or received in connection with the transaction of public business or in pursuance of law are public property. No official or employee of the government has either a legal or moral right to take possession of government documents. They belong to the office, not to the officer; they are the property of the government and not personal property. Even if made or kept on their own initiative, and even if in the form of copies, they are not the private property of the individuals concerned. A government has first claim to all copies of public documents that are filed in its offices; it may, of course, make whatever disposition it wishes of copies not desired by the archival institution. There can be no justification for a government official using his public office to accumulate records, such as those containing confidential business data, from which he will profit personally on leaving office.

Public records, then, should be recognized in law to be public property. The title to such records should be held exclusively by the government that created them, and should be held in perpetuity. Any law that pertains to the management of public records, therefore, should make provision for their recovery if they have been improperly alienated or removed from the government. Dr. Waldo G. Leland has correctly observed that "... the State should have full power to replevin any documents, wherever found, which it can prove to have once been part of its public archives, or which (such as the official papers of agents of the State) should properly have been a part of its public archives, although they may never have actually been placed in an archive depot."⁶ Dr. Randolph G. Adams, more-
over, has pointed out that "the common law permits a state or Federal government to sue to recover a piece of public property, such as archives, regardless of how long it has been in the hands of a private citizen. The underlying principle is *nullum tempus occurrit regi*, which has been translated, 'time runneth not against the king.' In other words the sovereign is exempt from any statute of limitations which affects the right of recovery on the part of a private citizen. This principle is a recognized part of our law because it protects the people from the negligence of public officials."⁷

The public records law, moreover, should clearly define the archivist's custodial responsibilities. The concept of custody may be explained in relation to the concept of public ownership. Public records may be held in custody of any particular agency of a government, but they are not its property. When public records are transferred from the custody of one agency to that of another, there is no transfer of ownership, for the records were and continue to be the property of the state. It simply means that one agency instead of another has the records in hand. The terms under which the records are held depend upon the statutory provisions that govern transfers of records. These should make clear that records may be transferred to an archival institution not only in a physical sense but also in a legal sense. "Records that are once transferred to an archive depot," according to Dr. Waldo G. Leland, "should pass into the legal as well as the physical custody of the archivist. Nothing but vexatious friction can come of any arrangement that permits the legal custody of archives to remain with those who no longer possess them."8

Legally, then, an archivist should have custody of records that are physically in his possession in the following respects: First, he should have the same rights and privileges with respect to the records that the creating agency had. These pertain to such matters as reproducing and authenticating copies. Secondly, he should have certain additional rights and privileges with respect to the records that are not commonly exercised by the creating agency. These pertain to their arrangement, description, and publication, for purposes other than those for which they were originally created—for the purposes of serving the secondary uses of other government agencies and private individuals. These rights and privileges are needed by the archivist if he is to discharge his duties effectively. The archivist's responsibilities with respect to the appraisal of public records should also be clearly defined. Legal procedures for the destruction of public records should be provided. These procedures should prohibit the destruction of any public records by any public official without the approval of the archival authority. They should be exclusive. No other way should exist for public records to be destroyed, and all other laws that are in conflict with the procedures should be repealed.

The archivist's responsibilities with respect to making his materials accessible for use should also be defined as precisely as possible. While having records in custody, an archivist will naturally arrange, describe, and publish them to make them accessible for use. The law, however, should stipulate the conditions under which such records should be opened for use the procedures under which restrictions on use should be developed, the general character of the restrictions on use, and the like.

A model draft of a law was prepared for American archivists by a committee of the Society of American Archivists in 1939, and published in the April 1940 issue of *The American Archivist*. This model law refers to all matters that should be considered in drafting archival legislation.

NATURE OF ORGANIZATION

An archivist should carefully select and train his staff, plan its work, define the procedures and policies it shall follow, and, in general, develop an effective organization.

Developing an organization: An archival institution should be organized, in the main, on a subject-matter, not a functional basis. By this I mean that it should be so organized that its staff will be assigned archival work on the basis of its relation to subject areas or fields of inquiry, not on the basis of its specialized professional nature. A knowledge of the principles and techniques of arranging, describing, publishing, and servicing archives should be developed with respect to particular bodies of archives. This knowledge, in fact, can be developed most effectively if it is applied to such bodies. By applying the knowledge in this manner, moreover, a special knowledge is gained of the archives-of their content, their arrangement, their significance for research uses, and the like. This special knowledge, which may be referred to as a subject-matter knowledge. is extremely important for efficient archival operation, quite as important as a knowledge of archival principles and techniques.

An archival institution, therefore, should be organized in a manner that will most effectively develop subject-matter knowledge in its staff. And this is an organization in which its staff is assigned work on archives on the basis of their relation to subject areas or fields of inquiry. This organization, moreover, should be a stable one, so that the staff can develop subjectmatter expertese in specialized fields of knowledge that can be applied to long-range programs for arranging and describing archives.

Since modern records are very voluminous, it might seem that an archival institution could carry on its activities with respect to them more efficiently on a functional than on a subject-matter basis. Obviously, as the holdings of an archival institution increase in volume, more work of a physical nature must be performed. Large masses of records must be moved, packed, shelved, and repaired. But the basic professional activities of analysis and appraisal underlie all these physical activities. The physical activities cannot be undertaken before the basic professional work has been done, and they should not be undertaken without professional direction.

In its early years the National Archives was organized on a functional basis. It had divisions that accessioned, classified, cataloged, and performed reference services on all archives in its custody. This form of organization proved to be ineffective, and was superseded by an organization that facilitates the development of subject-matter specialization in its staff. Under its present organization most substantive functions of the National Archives are performed by record branches that deal with material relating to broad subject-matter fields, such as the fields of war, natural resources, and industrial matters. A few activities are still assigned to specialized organizational units that operate on a functional basis.

Libraries and archival institutions differ from each other organizationally because the former are usually organized on a functional and the latter on a subject-matter basis. The same difference also usually exists between archival institutions and record centers. In record centers, operations can often be conducted more effectively if specific staff members are assigned to specific activities, such as transferring, packing, shelving, or servicing records.

Planning work: The work of an archival institution is never ended. It is work for posterity in the double sense of being done for and by posterity. There is no limit to the amount of time that can be spent in analyzing archives, in perfecting their arrangement, and in creating finding aids to them. The number of individual items with which an archivist must deal, even in a small institution, is almost infinite. Because they are usually engaged a lifetime in their work, archivists are often thought of as old men, bearded and bent, working in ill-lit stacks, and puttering around in musty documents. This conception is not an accurate one. If an archivist dealing with modern records is to accomplish his tasks, even to a moderate degree, he must be an efficient administrator, capable of planning and directing the work of his staff. The larger the institution, the greater is the need for careful planning.

In order to formulate work plans, an archivist should first ascertain what work there is to do. For this purpose he should divide his holdings into a number of segments, which may be called "archives groups," "record groups," or "record series." Their character and size depend on the character and total volume of the public records with which he is working. The archivist should analyze each segment of records to ascertain what work is required to eliminate useless items from it, to place it in good order, and to describe it in the detail that is required to make it available for use. He should then formulate annual work programs designed to accomplish the specific things that should be done on each record segment.

In accomplishing his work programs, the archivist should proceed uniformly on all his holdings. He should not describe one unit in great detail while leaving all the rest undescribed. He should not arrange one unit in perfect order while allowing the rest to remain in disorder. He should proceed uniformly in all his activities. He should not, for example, complete all his arrangement activities before proceeding to other activities but should carry on his various activities concurrently. He should proceed progressively in accomplishing his programs, step by step, and year by year, working ahead on all his record units in all phases of his activities to the extent that monetary and personnel resources are made available to him. He should not allow himself to be sidetracked from his programs, to spend all his energies on matters that momentarily come to his attention. If he is to accomplish his finding aid program, for example, he should not permit himself to be diverted from it to serve special interests. Until he has provided a general guide to records, he should thus not develop detailed analyses of records for particular historians relating to some particular historical topic, event, or episode, or provide indexes to names of persons and places primarily to serve genealogists and antiquarians.

Formulating policies and procedures: A definition of the technical and professional policies and procedures is basic to the maintenance of high standards of archival work. The policies and procedures relate to the substance of the archivist's job; they will, in fact, determine if his job has real professional content. An archivist therefore should outline the policies, as precisely as he can, that are to be followed by his staff in programming and in carrying out various phases of its work; and he should develop procedures that indicate, quite precisely, how the various professional and technical activities are to be performed. The National Archives, for example, has issued for the guidance of its staff a Handbook of Procedures, which contains a statement of its policies and procedures, organized in relation to its major functions. This Handbook is supplemented by "Staff Information Papers," in which detailed instructions are given on such professional activities as preparing inventories, preparing detailed lists, or preparing records for microfilming.

In every country all archivists-whether they are State, Federal, or local-should work together in developing policies and procedures despite the necessary differences in the professional emphasis of their jobs. In the development of appraisal standards, for example, the Federal archivist will probably take a different approach than will a State archivist. The point is, however, that the criteria by which values are judged should be defined at the Federal, State, and local levels. In the development of instructions on finding aids, the Federal archivist, confronted by the problem of mass, will devise procedures designed to obtain an immediate broad control over his records and afterwards to obtain a preliminary control in somewhat more detail; a fully detailed control may have to wait for many generations. He will first identify and describe record groups created at the agency or bureau level, and then he will proceed to identify the series of records found in the record groups. He will initially approach his job of analysis from the point of view of organizational and functional origins-not from the point of view of subject matter. He will analyze individual items-documents or dossiers-only after he has accomplished certain other preliminary steps. The local archivist, on the other hand, dealing largely with individual items, will concern himself with procedures designed to identify and describe their content. He will probably begin by preparing such detailed tools of research as indexes, lists, and calendars. The State archivist will approach the problem of producing finding aids in a way intermediate between the ways of the Federal and local archivists. All procedures, however, are designed to accomplish the same objective —to make records known and available; and the efforts of all archivists should, in the last analysis, complement each other.

Training: A professionally-trained staff is essential for the success of any archival program. An archivist should have, first, a broad general training in some field of learning, and secondly, a specialized training in archival principles and techniques.

In Europe a broad general education is a prerequisite for admittance to such highly specialized archival schools as the *École* des chartes in France and the former Institute for Archival Science and Historical Training in Germany. The École des chartes, which was established by royal decree on February 22, 1821, has the rank of a university; and students are admitted to it only by competitive examination. It provides three years of training. The courses given in the first year are in paleography, romance philology, bibliography, and library service; those given in the second year are in diplomatics, the history of French institutions, French archives, archival service, and primary sources in French history and literature; and those given in the third year are in the history of civil and canon law, medieval archaeology, and primary sources in French history and literature. The former Institute for Archival Science and Historical Training, which was organized in the Prussian Privy State Archives in Berlin-Dahlem in 1930, was an advanced postgraduate school to which students were admitted only if they had a Doctor of Philosophy degree in history and if the work for this degree included training in historical research and methodology, paleography, historical geography, legal history, and Germanic languages. In the Institute the students were given further intensive training in paleography, in the use of historical sources of the middle ages, in the critical examination of manuscripts, and in the preparation of manuscripts for publication, as well as in archival techniques that relate to modern materials. The work of the Institute is now being done by archival schools at Marburg and Munich.

In the United States archival institutions have relied upon universities to give students the basic training that will make them effective archivists. "The existing instruction in American history, leading to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy," according to Samuel Flagg Bemis, eminent American historian, "offers fundamental elements for a sound preparation for archival careers, but the student intending to go into professional archival work should be directed into a thesis which would cause him to handle manuscript material of some considerable range and out of official archives, thus affording him training in such problems of diplomatics and paleography as can be associated with American history."⁹

The best preliminary training that an archivist can have, in my opinion, is advanced training in history. This provides him with a knowledge of the development of his country and its government, which is basic to any evaluation of the research values that are to be found in its public records. It provides him with training in research methodology, which is needed in all the work he does in rationalizing public records, in arranging them in proper relation with each other, and in describing them in terms of organization and function. Since the formulation of the basic archival principle of provenance in the middle of the last century, archival institutions in all countries have stressed the importance of historical training for archivists.

The advanced training in history should be supplemented by specialized archival training. In September, 1953, the National Archives inaugurated a basic training course for its junior professional employees. This course was intended to accomplish two main purposes: (1) to give all such employees a systematic grounding in their profession, and (2) to determine by means of fairly rigorous tests the qualifications of such employees for continued professional work and promotion. As an incentive to those who took the course and as a means of correcting certain faults in the staffing pattern of the National Archives it was agreed that all who completed the course and passed the examinations and who served one year in the junior professional grade would be promoted to positions that were one grade higher. The course was not intended to provide its members with a detailed knowledge of the particular subjects and records with which they were directly concerned in their individual jobs. Training of this specialized kind is a continuing responsibility of the branch and sectional supervisors, who are expected to impart it either formally or informally on the job. The basic training course was designed rather to develop in its members a broad versatility in their profession that would enable them to handle intelligently assignments involving unfamiliar subjects and records and so make possible a greater flexibility of assignment. It sought to give its members a correct understanding of the

overall organization and functions of the institution with which they were associated, a sound knowledge of basic archival principles, a mastery of necessary archival skills, and a general familiarity with all the more important record holdings of the National Archives. The course consisted of required readings, weekly lecture and discussion sessions, individually supervised practice finding aid projects, and a series of tests. The lectures and discussions extended over a period of eight months.

Beginning in September 1955 the National Archives training course will be coordinated with the training courses given by the American University in Washington, D.C. The training course, which will be open to others than National Archives staff members, will be accredited by the University as one of its series of courses in archival history and administration. Training has also been provided in annual summer Institutes in the Preservation and Administration of Archives conducted by the American University in cooperation with the National Archives, the Library of Congress, and the Maryland Hall of Records.

CHAPTER XII

Appraisal Standards

THILE DEFINING what I mean by public records, I indicated that such records have two kinds of values: primary values for the originating agency itself and secondary values for other agencies and private users. I indicated further, while discussing archival interests in the management of public records, that agency officials have the main responsibility for judging primary values. It may be argued that an archival institution, as an agency of the government whose valuable public records it administers, should also concern itself with primary values. Admittedly, when public records are transferred to an archival institution, the government itself continues to make the most important and most frequent use of them. But such public records are preserved in an archival institution because they have values that will exist long after they cease to be of current use, and because their values will be for others than the current users. It is these lasting, secondary values that I wish to consider here.

Archivists of various countries have attempted to formulate standards by which to judge the values of records. These standards serve as guidelines to steer the unwary through the treacherous shoals of appraisal work. They are often little more than general principles. They can never be very precise, and they should never be regarded as absolute or final. They should always be applied with judgment and common sense. In this chapter I shall examine briefly the development of such standards in France, Germany, England, and the United States.

EUROPEAN STANDARDS

France: When the first national archival institution was established in France in 1789, the foremost problem that confronted its staff was that of appraisal. This problem has always been one of the most difficult with which archivists of various countries have had to deal, but for the French revolutionists it was a particularly difficult one. The pre-revolutionary records that had to be evaluated had lost their significance for governmental, fiscal, legal, civic, and other similar purposes; for the institutions, rights, and privileges to which they pertained had been swept away. By the decree of June 25, 1794, which established public responsibility for the care of public records, the task of evaluating the pre-revolutionary records was assigned to a special committee (Agence temporaire des titres, later Bureau de triage). For purposes of appraisal, four classes of records were established: (1) useful papers (Papiers utiles), which included the basic documents that were necessary to establish the right of the state to confiscated properties, (2) historical papers (Chartes et Monuments appartenant à l'histoire, aux sciences et aux arts), (3) feudal titles (Titres féodaux), which consisted of documents pertaining to feudal rights and privileges, and (4) useless papers (Papiers inutiles). The last two classes were to be destroved.

The approach taken by French archivists in appraising the pre-revolutionary records was one of selecting particular documents that had historical significance. The standards that were taken into account in making the selections were not clear. Obviously, however, the records were not viewed as having value in documenting the functioning of pre-revolutionary bodies or institutions. They were appraised in the manner in which they were later classified—in relation to subjects, without reference to provenance or to organic relationships—and in the manner of librarians rather than that of archivists.

The ill-considered actions of the various early commissions concerned with the selection (triage) of public records for preservation in the Archives Nationales led the French government to establish rigid rules regarding the destruction of public records. These are exemplified in the general regulations pertaining to departmental archives (Règlement général des archives départmentales), which were approved by the ordinance of the Minister of Public Instruction of July 1, 1921. These regulations contain seven articles (numbers 51-57) in title VIII that pertain to the destruction of public records. Besides prescribing the procedures to be followed in destroying such records (i.e. the listing of records proposed for destruction, the archival examination, the authorization to destroy, and the methods of destruction), the regulations indicate the approach to be taken in appraisal. The approach indicated is a cautious one. Article 51, to illustrate, states that the greater part of the public records shall be "preserved indefinitely," and article 55 states that elimination shall be "considered as exceptional."

Article 52 requires the indefinite preservation of all materials that were created before 1830, all that can help determine a right in favor of an administration, an association, or an individual, and all that have or can acquire an historical interest. Article 53 states that materials may be destroyed that contain information which is summarized in printed form or that have an interest only for the period of their current usefulness.

Germany: In Germany the archival institutions that grew out of registries were the first to concern themselves with the problem of appraisal. They fell heir to the accumulations of the registries, and initially they followed the practice that is usual among government agencies of discarding the oldest, and perhaps the most valuable materials as space became crowded. As modern conceptions of archival management gained acceptance, however, German archivists came to regard public records as evidence of organic growth and functioning, and accordingly they kept intact the various registries that reached the archival institutions. Since the files that comprised the registries contained items that were obviously worthless, the archivists for some time questioned whether they were justified in tearing them apart to remove such items. At present German archivists generally approve of removing useless items from registered files. They argue that the removal of such items does not necessarily involve a dissection of an organic body that will destroy its life but that the process gives a registry vitality, making apparent its essential characteristics-its arrangement and content -and making it more usable. The selection process, in fact, is now regarded as one of a number of steps by which a registry is transformed into an "archival group." The Germany archivists also emphasize that useless items should be predesignated for segregation, preferably at the time of their classification for current uses, and that if they are found in a registry they should not be regarded as essential parts of it.

In 1901 H. O. Meissner, former head of the Prussian Privy State Archives, formulated a number of appraisal standards that have had a pronounced effect on the thinking of German archivists.¹ Five of his standards were general and had the character of maxims rather than of precise standards. The first of these is that "old age is to be respected" in records, a maxim that is obviously true, for records of the past become valuable as they become scarce. The next two are similar to the Aristotelian precept of "moderation in everything, excess in nothing." They are that "extremes are to be avoided" and that "too great an abstraction is an evil." The last two of the general maxims are that records created to serve a definitely temporary purpose are generally disposable, though the end product of such records may be preserved; and that records about the origins and development of permanent arrangements are generally to be preserved.

Two other of Meissner's appraisal standards take into account the matters with which a government body deals. One of these standards is that files relating to real property should be preserved if they establish the rights of the state to such property or if they relate to the administration of property that is of special or historical interest. The other standard is that files relating to non-governmental rights should be preserved only if these rights pertain to substantial matters, such as real property, mortgages, loans, or titles of various sorts; only if these rights involve notable persons, such as would be affected by laws relating to large inheritances; and only if the files pertaining to the rights serve to show typical administrative processes and typical rights.

Five of the standards are concerned with the source of records in a government body. The first of these is that files relating to administration should be preserved for each administrative unit. Among the administrative matters that Meissner recognized as worthy of record were the organization, direction, housing and business arrangements, and personnel of the unit. The second standard is that general files (those consisting of records on policy, procedure, and the like that have general applicability) should be preserved in the central administrative units, and at the points where they originated-that is, where they grew out of the functioning of an administrative unitand not at points where they were merely transmitted or received; and that the value of general files in subordinate administrative units should be determined by taking into account the activities of such units. The third standard is that records of intermediate administrative units should be preserved if they relate to the actual administration of such units and not merely to their direction from above. The fourth standard is that special files of lower or subordinate administrative units should be preserved if they relate to the administration of such units. And the fifth standard is that files of judicial bodies should be preserved if they relate to the substantive activities of such bodies or if they reflect the development of permanent rights and

institutions, important historical episodes, political processes, or the customs and mores of past ages.

Shortly before World War II the Prussian Privy State Archives appointed a special commission to formulate appraisal standards. Although the commission was dissolved in 1940 before it had completed its work, two products resulted from its activity: a report by H. O. Meissner at the meeting of archivists at Gotha, and a discussion of Meissner's viewpoints with H. Meinert. Meissner emphasized the importance of a correct archival approach in appraisal work, insisting that the old conception of appraisal as a matter of intuitive or fingertip feeling was completely discredited. Meinert endorsed the standards formulated by Meissner, but he regarded as most important those standards that considered records from the point of view of their source. He thought appraisals should take into account the significance of the source, which should be established by considering the position of each administrative unit in the government structure, the nature of its activities, and the relations of its activities to those of superior and subordinate administrative units. Records, he held, cannot be reviewed singly as isolated pieces; they must be appraised in their administrative context.

England: The British views on appraisal were first stated fully in a memorandum issued in 1943 by the British Records Association in connection with the wartime demand for paper salvage. In a pamphlet issued later by the Public Record Office the principles of appraisal contained in this memorandum were applied to public documents. This pamphlet, entitled "Principles governing the Elimination of Ephemeral or Unimportant Documents in Public or Private Archives," discussed the principles in relation to preserving records for business purposes and research purposes. British archivists agree with the Americans that "those responsible for the conduct" of a business should decide which records should be preserved for business purposes. For purposes of research the British would preserve records for three "historical or general uses": (1) to show the history of the organization concerned, (2) to answer technical questions regarding its operations, and (3) to meet possible scholarly needs for the information that is incidentally or accidentally contained in the records.

For the first of these uses, i.e. the history of the organization concerned, the pamphlet favors preserving records that contain sufficient evidence to show "what was the Business or other form of organization whose activities they served—how it was con-

ducted, by whom, and with what results." It indicates that the records containing this evidence are similar to those needed for the conduct of business. These include "Minutes and other Documents which give decisions on Policy; major series of Accounts; Correspondence leading to significant activity; Muniments of Title relating to Land and Property held by the person or organization concerned; and regularly kept Registers or Memoranda of Cases, Tests or Operations, Transactions put through or Operations carried out: roughly all the Documents reflecting policy and practice, past and present, which would enable someone else, if the present staff or practitioner were wiped out, to carry on or revive the business or work." For research purposes, the selection of records may be a bit more drastic than for business purposes, however, "Very often," according to the pamphlet, "all needs are served by preserving a few key documents and representative selections from regularly kept series and from large classes of constantly recurring documents of a routine character. Specimens should be selected for their representative character as illustrating the structure of the Business rather than for any adventitious interest. . . . "

For the second use, that is, to answer technical questions regarding an organization's operations, the pamphlet would preserve evidence only for organizations that belong to "a category of Institutions or Businesses whose Archives have rarely been preserved," that are themselves of "outstanding importance" in comparison with others in the same category, or that belong to "a category of Businesses etc. the general history and development of which are of outstanding importance and can only be traced by the use of collective evidence."

For the third use, that is, to meet possible scholarly needs, the pamphlet gives a number of practical hints on how to evaluate records. These are: (1) to regularly eliminate the "Purely Ephemeral" at the earliest possible moment; (2) to include among the purely ephemeral the large accumulations of most modern offices resulting from "purely Routine Procedure"; (3) to eliminate documents "concerning only the Internal Administration or Routine of the Office," including personalia, but, in doing this, to take into account the nature of the office, distinguishing between organizations (such as commercial firms) that exist mainly to do business outside and those (schools or museums) whose work is mainly internal, for in the latter case internal organization is obviously most important; (4) to use, as a rough criterion of possible value for all kinds of undefined interests, the coverage of the document or series of documents, considering whether they "affect, name, or touch by interference a large number of persons and/or things or topics"; (5) to ascertain if most of the information contained in the documents is available elsewhere; (6) to take into account the place and circumstances of the preservation of the documents, not necessarily regarding them as valueless because it is known that many copies were made of them; and (7) to preserve indexes or registers even when the papers to which they relate are destroyed.

AMERICAN STANDARDS

In discussing the appraisal standards that have been evolved in the National Archives of the United States I shall refer to two matters: (1) the evidence public records contain of the functioning and organization of the government body that produced them, and (2) the information they contain on persons, corporate bodies, problems, conditions, and the like, with which the government body dealt. Public records thus have two types of value: evidential value and informational value. The terms "evidential" and "informational" are meaningless if taken literally and if unexplained. By evidential value I do not refer here to the value that inheres in public records because of the merit of the evidence they contain. I do not refer, in a Jenkinsonian sense, to the sanctity of the evidence in archives that is derived from "unbroken custody." I refer rather, and quite arbitrarily, to a value that depends on the importance of the matter evidenced, i.e. the organization and functioning of the agency that produced the records.

The distinction between the two types of value may be clarified by analyzing the definition of records in the Records Disposal Act of the United States Government. In this act the word "records" is defined to include, first, all materials containing evidence of the "organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, and other activities of the Government." Essentially these would be materials containing evidence on the organization and functioning of the agency that created them. The term functioning is here taken to include all activities of an agency that are necessary to accomplish the purposes for which it was established. Materials containing evidence on the or ganization and functioning of an agency have value for the public administrator to the extent that they are needed for the current or future functioning of his agency; they have value for the archivist to the extent that they are needed for an understanding of that functioning. The records of an agency that contain "evidential" value, then, are those necessary to provide an authentic and adequate documentation of its organization and functioning.

The word "records" is further defined in the Records Disposal Act to include materials that should be preserved "because of the informational value of data contained therein." This "informational" value is ordinarily called research value—the value that inheres in public records because of the information they contain that may be useful in research of various kinds.

Evidential values: There are a number of reasons why archivists should consciously and deliberately apply the test of evidential value in the sense in which this term has been defined and why records having such values should be preserved regardless of whether there is an immediate or even a foreseeable specific use for them.

It is natural that an archivist, as an agent of government, should be first concerned to preserve evidence of how the government was organized and how it functioned. All archivists assume that the minimum record to be kept is the record of organization and functioning and that beyond this minimum values become more debatable. By a judicious selection of various groups and series an archivist can capture in a relatively small body of records all significant facts on how the agency was created, how it developed, how it is organized, what functions it performs, and what are the consequences of its activities.

Records containing information on organization, functions, activities, and methods of procedure are indispensable to the government itself and to students of government. For the government they are a storehouse of administrative wisdom and experience. They are needed to give consistency and continuity to its actions. They contain precedents for policies, procedures, and the like, and can be used as a guide to public administrators in solving problems of the present that are similar to others dealt with in the past. They contain the proof of each agency's faithful stewardship of the responsibilities delegated to it and the accounting that every public official owes to the people whom he serves. For students of public administration who wish to analyze the experiences of an agency in dealing with organizational, procedural, and policy matters, they provide the only reliable source. The test of evidential value is a practical one. It involves an objective approach that the modern archivist is especially trained to take; for his training in historical methodology has taught him to look into the origin, development, and the working of human institutions and to use records for the purpose. The test is not easy, but it is definite. It will bring to view first the records on which judgments of value can be made with some degree of assurance, the degree depending upon the thoroughness with which the records have been analyzed. It can be applied by all archivists, for no archivist is likely to question that evidence of every agency's organization and functioning should be preserved. Differences of judgment will arise only as to the completeness with which such evidence should be preserved. The test of research value, on the other hand, brings to view records on which judgment are bound to differ widely.

The information obtained by an archivist in applying the test of evidential value is needed to understand the significance of records from every other point of view. The archivist must know how records came into being if he is to judge their value for any purpose. Public records, or, for that matter, records of any organic body, are the product of activity, and much of their meaning is dependent on their relation to the activity. If their source in an administrative unit of a government or in a particular activity is obscured, their identity and meaning is likely also to be obscured. In this respect they are unlike private manuscripts, which, as we have noted before, often have a meaning of their own without relation to their source or reference to other manuscripts in a collection.

In applying the test of evidential value the archivist is likely to preserve records that have other values as well—values not only for the public administrator and the students of public administration, but also for the economist, sociologist, historian, and scholars generally.

Archivists of various countries have developed appraisal standards that require the preservation of records showing how public agencies were organized and conducted their business. German archivists, in particular, have been quite precise in this regard. In same instances the standards refer to the nature, the objects, or the problems of the business conducted; in other instances they refer to the organizational levels within the agency at which the business was conducted or to the nature of the activities involved. In the United States the character of standards relating to evidential value has depended largely on the way records are organized in the agencies that produce them. In the Federal government organization and function are often reflected in the way records are kept for current use. In many Federal agencies, offices at various administrative levels build up their own files, which are usually related to and often duplicate, in part at least, those of offices below or above. In the central organizations of such agencies departmental records may be related to bureau records, bureau records to divisional, and divisional to the sectional. In field organizations records of regional offices may be related to those in State offices, and records of State offices to those in subordinate offices.

To judge the evidential value of records an archivist should know in general terms (1) the position of each office in the administrative hierarchy of an agency, (2) the functions performed by each office, and (3) the activities carried on by each office in executing a given function. He should know the organization, functions, policies, procedures, and operations of every agency with which he deals. He should also know in general terms the broad social, economic, or other conditions with which they are concerned. He should view an agency's records in their entirety to determine their interrelations and the significance of any given group of records to the entire system of documentation. He should not make his evaluations on a piecemeal basis or on the basis of individual organizational units within an agency.

The fact he can most easily determine is the position of an office in the administrative hierarchy of the agency. This is important for archival evaluations, for upon it the value of the records largely depends. The key staff and line offices of both the central and field organizations of an agency can be easily identified. Of fundamental importance to the archivist are the records produced in the administrative and staff offices of the agency where the policy, procedural, and organizational decisions are made, by which it is governed. Attached to such offices are various organizational units engaged in handling legal, budgetary, procedural, and internal administrative activities or engaged in research or investigations incidental to the formulation of policy or procedure. Less obviously important and more difficult to evaluate, are the records of offices having supervisory or management functions. Lowest in the administrative scale are the offices concerned with detailed and often

routine operations, which result in records that are least likely to have enduring value.

A second fact that is significant for purposes of evaluation is the character of the functions performed by each office. Functions, it has been noted, may be classified as substantive and facilitative. Substantive functions deserve thorough documentation. Facilitative functions, though admittedly important to efficient operations, are merely incidental to the performance of the agency's substantive functions; and a thorough documentation of them is therefore not considered important by the archivist unless they are distinctive in character.

A third fact of significance for evaluation is the character of the activities carried on under a given function by each office in the administrative hierarchy. In the execution of any given function, action is usually taken by offices at several administrative levels. These activities normally become progressively less important from the point of view of functional documentation as the work flows down through the various levels to completion, changing from the general to the specific and from the varied to the routine. This point may be illustrated by reproducing a chart prepared some years ago by the United States Civil Service Commission, which shows the typical distribution of personnel in agencies of the Federal government.



Fifteen percent of the personnel shown in the chart, namely the administrators, the executives, and the supervisors, are concerned with the formulation of policies and decisions, with the development of procedures and organization designed to accomplish the purposes for which the agency was established. The other 85 percent are concerned with detailed and often routine transactions necessary to carry out programs in accordance with the policies and procedures formulated above. For each function, as a consequence, there is a chain of successive transactions, each link of which represents a preliminary step toward the final action. The value of any particular series of records in this chain is largely determined by its relations to other series. If these relations are analyzed, it is possible to determine the relative value of various series in providing evidence on organization and function. It may be found that certain series contain substantially all the evidence needed, or that certain other series may be required to provide supplementary evidence. To be adequate this evidence may have to cover the entire range of an agency's activities-at least, in an exemplary selection-from the top to the bottom, from the important to the routine.

In trying to solve the problem of values in this manner, the decision on which records to preserve depends on a number of factors, the more important of which are embodied in the following questions:

1. Which administrative units in the central office of an agency have primary responsibility for making decisions regarding its organization, programs, policies and procedures? Which administrative units perform activities that are auxiliary to making such decisions? Which field officers have discretion in making such decisions? Which record series are essential to reflect such decisions?

2. To which functions of an agency do the records relate? Are they substantive functions? Which record series are essential to show how each substantive function was performed at each administrative level both in the central and the field offices?

3. Which supervisory and management activities are performed in administering a given function? What are the successive transactions performed in executing it? Which records pertain to the administration, as distinct from the execution of the function? To what extent are such records physically duplicated at various administrative levels? Which records summarize the successive transactions performed under the function? Which records should be preserved in exemplary form to show the work processes at the lower administrative levels?

In analyzing the evidence on the organizational structure and functioning of an agency, the value for functional documentation of certain major categories of records must also be considered. These categories are not necessarily complete nor are they mutually exclusive.

(1) Policy records. The term "policy" simply means a course of action that has been determined on by an agency to be followed in more than one instance. It may govern the transactions of an entire agency or only of a part of an agency. It may apply to substantive or facilitative functions. No rigid distinction can be made between "policy" and "administration," since supervisory or management activities frequently result in policy formulation, and programs often deviate significantly from declared policies. Records that evidence genuinely significant activities of either type may have permanent value. The policies that are deserving of thorough documentation are those relating to the substantive functions and to the more important management or facilitative activities of the agency. The wider the applicability of policies, the more significant are the related records likely to be. In general, the policy records to be preserved are those relating to the organization, the plans, the methods and techniques, and the rules and procedures which the agency or one of its parts has adopted to carry out its responsibilities and functions. Particularly important among such policy documents are the following types:

(a) Organizational documents. These may include statutes and Executive orders as well as drafts and supporting material relating to creation, organization, and reorganization of the agency and the discontinuance and consolidation of the functions of its various organizational units; budgets and budget planning records, including justifications and estimates of requirements; interpretations, opinions, and memoranda of law; organizational and functional charts; directories; correspondence and memoranda delegating or defining powers and responsibilities, or showing working relationships with other Federal agencies, with State and local governments, or with industry or private organizations; staff studies and special reports relating organizational problems.

(b) *Procedural documents.* These may include procedural manuals, directives, rules and regulations, circulars, instructions, memoranda, or any regularly recurring issuance that

established a course of action for the agency or one of its parts. The sets of issuances should be obtained at the administrative level at which they were created. They should include superseded issuances as well as those currently in effect. The procedural documents should include, also, any staff studies or special reports relating to methods, techniques, and operations or analyzing workloads and performances. A master set of the forms developed for each of the agency's operations should also be included.

(c) Repertorial documents. These may include annual reports, or other periodic progress reports, whether narrative or statistical; special reports of accomplishment; transcripts of hearings; minutes of meetings and conferences.

(2) Operating records. The bulk of the records of most agencies are not those that record its general management, the determination of its policies, or its internal administration but rather those that record the specific individual transactions that make up its actual operations. These records not only have the greatest bulk; they present also the most serious problems of evaluation. Normally most of the significant evidence relative to the operations of an agency is relayed upward through statistical or narrative reports, through correspondence and memoranda, and other summary records. It would seem, therefore, that the records of individual transactions are seldom basically essential as evidence of policy, organization, function, or procedure. In some agencies, however, the preservation of operating records, at least in an exemplary form, is necessary to show how policies were implemented, how procedures were executed, and what kinds of problems, not always recorded at the policy level, were encountered. A selection, then, of operating records may be necessary to exemplify the administrative processes at the lower level or to illustrate the variations in such processes.

In regulatory or quasi-judicial agencies, for example, policy is frequently developed through the determination of particular cases. In such agencies a selection might be made of a limited number of outstanding cases designed to illustrate the more interesting points of law or the application of various types of sanctions or regulatory measures. In the case of new agencies of this sort, or of new programs, complete documentation of operations may be desirable for the early period. In agencies having extensive field organizations it may be desirable to select records of representative offices to show how policies and procedures worked at the "grassroots" level or how governmental activities impinged on the life of the people. The retention of properly selected examples of operating records is usually sufficient to serve the purposes of documentation.

(3) Housekeeping records. A substantial part of the records of any agency represent the everyday personnel, fiscal, procurement, and property-control actions by which its internal operations are carried on. The evaluation of such records is affected by the retention of related records by the Treasury Department, the Civil Service Commission, and the General Accounting Office. Such records, it has been noted, ordinarily pertain to activities common to all agencies and therefore, as a rule, contain little evidence essential to an understanding of the functioning of any particular agency. The preservation of selected groups of such records is necessary, however, to reflect the major facilitating operations of an agency and to help in the interpretation of other records representing its substantive functions. Less important from a documentary point of view, but not necessarily from the legal or administrative point of view, are the basic personnel records. If an agency carries on internal management activities that are distinctive, that deviate from the normal pattern or that pertain to problems peculiar to the agency, records of such activities or problems should be preserved.

(4) Publications and publicity records. In addition to administrative publications, such as regulations and other directives, manuals of operation and the like that are clearly valuable, considerable quantities of printed and processed materials are produced in most government agencies. The form of such materials is not the determining factor in considering their suitability for retention in an archival institution, for books are included among the documentary materials that fall within the definition of the term "archives."

Publications produced in the performance of substantive functions should, as a rule, be preserved in libraries rather than as part of an archival record group. This is the case with respect to bulletins, pamphlets, circulars, and other issuances produced by agencies primarily engaged in scientific, statistical, or research activities. There are, however, exceptions to this rule. Administrative publications created by an agency that are basic to an understanding of its functioning or organization, and publications accumulated by an agency that are basic to its own policy formulation may be considered eligible for transfer to an archival institution. Publications embodied in records relating to their creation may also be considered eligible, particularly if the records contain successive drafts that reflect substantial changes in content. If, interfiled among the records, there are publications that do not directly relate to the agency's functioning or organization and that are readily separated without loss of significant interrelationships, they should be removed.

Publicity materials produced in connection with informational and promotional activities should be preserved in an archival institution rather than in libraries. They provide the main documentation of programs that some agencies must undertake to interpret their actions to the public. Publicity materials may be in the form of press and radio releases, bulletins, pamphlets, charts, posters, and the like. They are produced in large quantities but usually disappear almost as rapidly as they are created, for they are considered as not falling within the definition of "records." The problem with respect to such materials is that of obtaining master files of each of the items from which all duplicate copies have been eliminated. The files should be obtained at the administrative level at which they were created. Press clippings should be transferred if they are necessary to record informational activities or substantive functions of an agency on which other documentary materials are inadequate, and if they are organized in an accessible manner. The origin of the press clippings must also be taken into account. Press clippings of specialized or small newspapers or journals should be given preference over those taken from metropolitan newspapers that are readily available at the Library of Congress.

Informational values: Informational values derive, as is evident from the very term, from the information that is in public records on persons, places, subjects, and the like with which public agencies deal; not from the information that is in such records on the public agencies themselves.

In appraising the value of such information in public records, we are not concerned with the source of the records—what agency created them, or what activities resulted in their creation. The only thing that matters is the information that is in them. Informational values can therefore be appraised piecemeal, for the records are judged solely on the basis of their content and not on their relation to other records produced by an agency. Such appraisals depend on a professional knowledge of research resources, research needs, and research methods as distinct from the specialized knowledge of administrative background that is required to make appraisals of "evidential" values. Records that contain information on the various phenomena that are the concern of government agencies should be appraised in relation to all other documentation on those phenomena regardless of its form, whether published or unpublished. The total documentation on such phenomena should thus be brought into review by the archivist. In the case of a Federal archivist it is the documentation within his nation; in the case of a State archivist it is the documentation within his State.

The standards that apply to informational values are thus not absolute, but relative both as to time and place. Archivists should use different criteria in evaluating records of different periods, for what is valuable for a past age may be valueless for the present. The American historian Justin H. Smith (1857-1930) observed that "A great deal is said by some people about 'rubbish,' but one investigator's 'rubbish' may be precious to another, and what appears valueless to-day may be found highly important to-morrow."2 Archivists of different archival institutions may also use different criteria in evaluating similar types of records, for what is valuable to one archival institution may be valueless to another. Complete consistency in judging informational value is as undesirable as it is impossible of accomplishment. Diverse judgments may result in records on particular phenomena being preserved at particular places which are not deserving of general preservation. Diverse judgments will spread the burden of preserving the documentation of a country among its various archival institutions, making one preserve what another may discard. Diverse judgments, in a word, may well assure a more adequate social documentation.

In appraising the informational value of records various research uses may be taken into account. These uses may be made by scholars in all kinds of disciplines, by historians, economists, sociologists, and geographers, by scientists interested in purely physical matters, and by genealogists interested in purely personal matters. Obviously, archivists cannot be expected to know the research needs of all scholarly disciplines. In evaluating records needed for disciplines in which they are not trained they should, if necessary, seek the help of specialists in those disciplines. If the archival institution is a very large one, a number of subject-matter specialists are likely to be found on its staff whose special competencies can be brought to bear on the evaluation of special groups of modern public records. If the archival institution is small, the number of subject-matter specialists will be limited, and the need for outside help will be greater.

Since modern archivists are generally trained as historians, it may be assumed that they are competent to ascertain the historical values of public records. Ordinarily, for that matter, an archivist, no matter what his training, will appraise records primarily on the basis of their historical value or interest. This is the basis on which Camus and Daunou appraised the prerevolutionary records of France. Many records can easily be appraised from this point of view. All records acquire a historical value when they reach a certain age, and this fact led Meissner to formulate his maxim that "old age is to be respected" in records. Archivists of various countries have, accordingly, set chronological date lines before which they propose that all records shall be kept. In Germany 1700 was adopted, in England 1750, in France 1830, and in Italy 1861. The Italian date corresponds fairly closely, for reasons of historical coincidence, to that adopted by the National Archives in America, where almost all records before the Civil War, which began in 1861, are being preserved. All records have value when they relate to important historical personages, episodes, or events. No American archivist, for this reason, would knowingly destroy anything relating to an episode like the Whiskey Rebellion, an event like the Louisiana Purchase, or a personage like Abraham Lincoln. If an archivist's knowledge of history is profound, he is likely to preserve records relating to less widely known personages and episodes whose influence on the course of events was considerable.

The appraisal of records from the point of view of their historical interest becomes difficult when the records relate to broad historical movements, historical causation, and the like. Here a discriminating choice may have to be made among the records that are available. A movement like the westward expansion of the United States, for example, can be traced in a number of record groups in the National Archives, including those of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the General Land Office, and various other government bureaus. In making this choice, the archivist may need the help of historical specialists. A panel of experts was used to help evaluate the records of the General Accounting Office, an agency of the legislative branch of the government which audits the fiscal operations of agencies of the executive branch. The records offered by this office to the National Archives spanned the years 1776-1900 and comprised over 65,000 cubic feet. They obviously had very little value for the evidence they contained of organization and function; but since they covered the whole of the national history of the United States, they were likely to contain incidental or accidental information on important historical, economic, or social phenomena. The appraisal of records relating to these phenomena was an onerous task that could not very well be accomplished by any one person, no matter how comprehensive his knowledge of research resources and research needs might be. After the records were reviewed by various subject-matter specialists on the staff of the National Archives, therefore, help was obtained from specialists in the fields of military history, western history, and public administration.

When records relate to recent social, economic, or political phenomena, a greater degree of specialized knowledge is required for their appraisal than is ordinarily possessed by historians. Here the knowledge of economists, sociologists, political scientists, and scholars in other disciplines comes into play. Recent public records that are of interest to such scholars are usually very voluminous since they cover the broad relations of the government with individuals and groups of individuals. They arise chiefly from the regulatory and social welfare activities of modern governments. They may be of real significance for studies of various aspects of modern society. They may be used, for example, to study the consequences of public welfare activities, what happened to private economic organizations under government regulation, the rural and urban patterns that are developing in a country, social trends, and the like.

Since the records that are useful for studies of broad questions usually consist of large series that are costly to preserve because of their volume, the archivist should actively explore the interest of groups of scholars in them. He should act as a catalyst to precipitate decisions on the fate of such records. Appraisals should take into account the form in which the information is available in the public records, the extent to which it has already been exploited, and the extent to which it is available elsewhere. With respect to the form of the records Dr. G. Philip Bauer of the National Archives staff, in a provocative essay on "The Appraisal of Current and Recent Records," has observed that three main elements must be taken into account. These are: "(1) the amount and character of the information contained in them; (2) the convenience of their arrangement; and (3) the degree to which their textual substance is concentrated."³ With respect to the degree to which the information has already been exploited, the archivist must consult the agency officials who created or used the records. He must ascertain if the information has been summarized in a statistical or narrative form. Ordinarily, public officials conduct researches in the records accumulated by them whenever these are likely to throw light on the programs or policies of the government in its regulatory or social welfare activities. With respect to the extent to which information is available elsewhere, the archivist should consult with subject-matter experts if he cannot arrive at a dependable judgment on the value of records on the basis of his own knowledge or his own researches. Before obtaining the help of the experts, however, the archivist should accumulate information about the records that will be necessary for their appraisal. He should describe the various series to be appraised, indicating their form and volume, the types of information available in them, their relation to other groups or series that contain similar information, their relation to published sources, and the like, in order that the scholars consulted may determine which particular series or group contains information valuable for investigations of various types of phenomena and which contains this information in the most usable and condensed form.

The archivist's role, moreover, should be that of a moderator. Archivists dealing with modern records realize that not all of them can be preserved, that some of them have to be destroyed, and that, in fact, a discriminating destruction of a portion of them is a service to scholarship. They are therefore inclined to agree with Meissner that "too great an abstraction" in the appraisal of records "is an evil," for they realize that any scholar with a little intellectual ingenuity can find a plausible justification for keeping almost every record that was ever produced. "Even the most convinced advocates of conservation in the historical interest," according to the pamphlet issued by the British Public Record Office, "have begun to fear that the Historian of the future dealing with our own period may be submerged in the flood of written evidence."4 In evaluating the large series of records that are useful for social and economic studies, therefore, the archivist must take into account the practical difficulties in the way of their preservation and bring these to the attention of the scholars who are interested in preserving them. He must show that a careful selection of the documentation produced by a modern government is necessary if he is not to glut his stacks with insignificant materials that will literally submerge those that are valuable. He must call attention to the fact that a government has but a limited amount of funds for the preservation of its documentary resources and that these funds must be applied judiciously for the preservation of the most important of these resources. "One basic principle [of appraisal] founded upon simple logic is that the burden of proof should rest upon the side of the affirmative," according to Dr. G. Philip Bauer, "that is, upon the averment that certain records have sufficient value to warrant the expenditure of the necessary public funds for their preservation."

Since "informational" values are found mainly in the large series of modern government records which relate to persons, corporate bodies, and places, let us see what kinds of information may make them valuable for research.

Records relating to persons: In considering the values attached to records containing information on persons, a distinction should be made between two types of value: (1) value for the persons to whom the records pertain, and (2) value for other persons, notably scholars and genealogists.

As noted by the National Archives committee that concerned itself with job standards, public records are the ultimate source of evidence "for establishing every right, privilege, duty, immunity, status, or position that derives from or is connected with the citizen's relationship" to his government. Certain of these rights, privileges, and so forth, are deep-rooted, and of long duration; others are of a passing nature. Let us examine some of the more important record series that relate to these rights and privileges.

Among the most important records relating to persons are those that establish the facts of their existence, identity, and marital status. These facts are essential in establishing a whole host of collateral rights, such as the rights to property, to the privileges of citizenship, and to social benefits of various kinds. In every advanced society, therefore, the state has provided for the maintenance of vital records of births, marriages, and deaths. The history of their maintenance is a long one. The formal registration of information about births, marriages, and deaths in the English speaking world began in 1538 when Henry VIII required that the incumbents of parish churches throughout England enter in books a record of each baptism, marriage, and burial that occurred in the parish. This practice spread to other Christian countries so that by the 18th century legal registration of vital data by Protestant and Catholic officials was widespread.

In 1789, during the French revolution, the responsibility for handling French registrations was transferred from church officials to town halls throughout the country. In the next century other European countries followed the practice of France in making such registrations a state rather than a church responsibility. In England a registration law was enacted in 1836 that created a central register office with responsibility for the records and statistics of births, marriages, and deaths-by causefor all England and Wales. This act of 1836 was the prototype of registration laws for the British colonies, including those of Australia, and for certain of the American States, notably Massachusetts, which enacted the first registration law in America in 1842. In the middle of the 19th century a number of American States passed laws requiring that public records of births, marriages, and deaths be made and that copies of such records be sent to a central bureau of vital statistics in the capital city of the State. New Jersey began the practice in 1848, and Rhode Island and Virginia in 1853. Largely through the agitation of the American Public Health Association, founded in 1872, various other States adopted registration systems, so that by 1919 every State had a central registry of vital statistics.⁵ Vital records pertaining to births, deaths, and marriages should be permanently maintained by the State. After they have lost their value to the persons to whom they relate-after they have become completely noncurrent—a question arises as to the place of their further preservation. In my opinion vital records should be preserved by the agencies that created them, and in an order that will facilitate personal reference, not in an order designed to facilitate statistical use as is the case in most American State registries of vital records. The State and local registries, in a word, should be the sole responsible repositories of such records. If they are to pass into the custody of an archival institution after they are completely noncurrent, it should be a State, not a Federal institution.

Another important class of records relating to persons is that which establishes the facts regarding citizenship; for from these facts flow a number of collateral rights, such as the right to social benefits of various kinds, the right of suffrage, and others. These facts relate to birth in, or legal entry into a country. In the National Archives, naturalization records, passenger lists, census schedules, homestead applications, passport applications, pension applications, personnel records, and other series, which incidentally contain information on entry and birth, are used to establish proof of citizenship. Most of these series, however, are preserved for reasons other than the incidental information they contain that is useful in establishing this proof.

Another important class of records relating to persons is that which establishes facts regarding property. Most such records relate to property rights of a purely temporary nature, such as arise out of contracts with the government, loan agreements, and the like. These have a value only for the duration of the commitments between the government and the persons involved. There are, however, certain property rights which, as Meissner has correctly pointed out, relate to substantial matters, such as titles to real property that was once owned by the state. In the National Archives this class of record is best exemplified by the records of the General Land Office that relate to the transfer to private persons of title to land on the public domain. These records, too, are kept for reasons other than the uses they have in establishing or verifying land titles.

Another important class of records relating to persons is that which establishes facts regarding their service to the government either in a military or a civilian capacity. These facts are also essential in establishing a number of collateral rights, such as rights to pensions and to old-age or retirement benefits. The personnel records of Federal civil servants have been found to be very sketchy for recent years. They contain only the information necessary to establish retirement rights and the like; and they are therefore being retained (in the Federal Records Center in St. Louis, Missouri) only for the duration of such rights. For the early years of the Federal government, however, the personnel records are replete with documents of a personal nature. The National Archives is therefore selecting a limited number of such folders for retention. These are the folders of key employees who served the government in a supervisory, executive, or administrative capacity. The records of military service, which it is believed an archival institution is obliged to keep, are found in various record series, such as muster rolls, "indexrecord cards," pension files, and docket books and classification lists of the Selective Service System.

There are innumerable other classes of records that are important to persons in support of their "rights." "There is no end to the list" to quote Dr Bauer. They arise every time an inpolicy. For records that relate to purely temporary relations between the citizen and his government, the conclusions of Dr. Bauer are valid, viz.: first, that "an agency established to protect or regulate certain private interests ought, of course, to maintain appropriate records and preserve them as long as the interests primarily affected by them subsist," and secondly, that "a fair working principle for fixing the retention period of such records would be to consider them only in relation to those interests that fall within the jurisdiction of the agency creating or accumulating them and not in relation to all the limitless rights and interests that could be defended by their collateral use." For the records that establish fairly permanent relationships—records pertaining to births, deaths, and marriages; to citizenship; to rights to property that was once held by the government, and the like—a government should provide permanent protection.

The second type of values that reside in records relating to persons are those with which an archivist is more particularly concerned. These are the values for persons other than those directly concerned in the records. They are the values for scholars who pursue studies of all kinds-for analyses of a historical, demographic, social, or economic nature. The values reside in personal records mainly because of the information they contain on aggregations of persons, not because of the information they contain on specific persons. On such aggregations the information is not exclusively of a personal nature; it may relate to economic, geographical, or other phenomena. The aggregations may consist of various classes of persons established by their relation to occupations, or by their ethnic origins, or by the geographical areas in which they reside. Such classes are illustrated in the National Archives in the records pertaining to farmers participating in the Agricultural Adjustment Administration and the Rural Rehabilitation Administration programs during the economic depression of the 1930's; to laborers affected by various labor regulations or decisions of labor boards; to Southern sharecroppers; to migrant workers; to Indians; to nationality groups, and the like.

In selecting such records for retention, two alternative courses are possible: to select, as Dr. Bauer suggests, the types of records in which the textual substance is concentrated, i.e. in which information is provided in a single document on a number of persons; or to select a limited number of case folders or documents that contain information on individual persons.

In the former of these alternatives, the "rough criterion of possible value for all kinds of undefined interests," which the British archivists suggested, should be followed. This relates to records that "affect, name, or touch by inference a large number of persons and/or things or topics." Such records, the British held, should be preserved "if both persons and things are involved in quantities." The population schedules accumulated by the Bureau of the Census of the Department of Commerce serve to illustrate the application of this criterion. Though taken primarily for statistical purposes, the schedules may be used in demographic researches, such as studies of nationality groups and population movements; in genealogical searches; and in obtaining or verifying basic facts about persons in historical or biographical studies. For such uses, as well as for genealogical uses, the National Archives has in its custody the schedules from the decennial censuses from 1790 to 1880. Since these schedules from 1850 onward show the name and age and the State, territory, or country of birth of every free inhabitant in the United States, they are also used to establish facts about persons that are ordinarily derived from vital records when such records are unavailable. The Census Bureau has established an organizational unit that concerns itself exclusively with providing such vital data from the schedules of the censuses of 1880, 1900, and 1920. Its services are similar to those performed by registries of vital records; they are not archival in character.

In the latter of the alternatives, namely that of selecting for retention a limited number of case files on individuals, two principles may be followed: (1) that of statistical sampling, and (2) that of special selection.

The principle of statistical sampling is illustrated in the procedure followed in preserving records on the rehabilitation loan program of the Rural Rehabilitation Administration, an agricultural agency of the last economic depression in the United States. This procedure has been described by Dr. Carl J. Kulsrud in an article in *The American Archivist* for October 1947, entitled "Sampling Rural Rehabilitation Records." In granting rehabilitation loans to relief clients, the agency developed case files for each such client containing reports, correspondence, and other papers. These case files are rich in information on the social, economic, and human factors that led to the rehabilitation loan program. They are useful, therefore, for social studies, and studies of the economic conditions in the depression period as well as for a study and evaluation of the procedures, ideologies,

and techniques followed in the program. Since the files were very voluminous, a sampling was made of them that saved only three percent of the total. The sample consisted of all case files for typical counties in 134 distinct farming areas as classified by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics of the Department of Agriculture. The principle of statistical sampling may be applied whenever a limited quantity of records of a given type will provide information that is representative of the entire quantity. This is the case when records relating to persons that are individually unimportant contain information that is important in relation to various factors other than personal ones, such as economic, social, or geographical, and when such records exist in sufficient quantity. The size and character of a sample are determined by the uses that are made of it; there is no such thing as a statistical sample of general utility. For this reason an archivist must consider very deliberately the types of use that he intends to serve before he attempts to fix on a sampling formula.

The principle of special selection may be illustrated by the retention in the National Archives of personnel folders of key civilian employees of the Federal government. Here the persons are individually important so that a selection is made in relation to individuals rather than to abstract matters that can be studied by sample.

Records relating to corporate bodies: Modern government agencies, particularly regulative and quasi-judicial agencies, create many records on corporate bodies. Such records, which are usually in the form of case files, may have a research interest because of the detailed information they contain about the organizations. This is particularly true if the agency's regulations or statutory provisions require the submission of data on business, labor, financial, or other operations. The records may have value because of the facts they contain about particular organizations or because, in the aggregate, they contain facts about economic or social conditions.

In appraising such records the archivist should establish certain facts regarding the information in them. The first is whether the information could be developed from published sources if the records did not exist; the second is whether the information could be developed from other records that contain similar or approximately similar information in a more usable or more condensed form. If he decides that the information is of a unique character, the archivist should then determine if all the records are needed to provide the information that is useful for research or if a selection or a statistical sampling of them would suffice.

Since case files on corporate bodies are usually not so numerous as those on persons, the principle of statistical sampling cannot ordinarily be applied to them. Such files should therefore be selected for retention because of the importance of the corporate bodies with which they are concerned or the importance of the information they contain, either singly or in combination, or the importance of the administrative or judicial actions they reflect. These principles of selection are illustrated, in the action taken by the National Archives in preserving various kinds of case files. In selecting files of the National Labor Relations Board for retention, the importance of individual cases was established in relation to the following standards: (1) the issues involved in the case; (2) the influence of the case in the development of principles, precedents, or standards of judgment in such matters as the definition of the jurisdiction of the Board and the limits of interstate commerce; the meaning of unfair labor practices; the implications of bargaining in good faith; the determination of what constitutes undue interference, restraint or coercion; the unit appropriate for purposes of collective bargaining; the problem of inclusion in bargaining units of fringe groups or supervisory employees; (3) the contribution of the case to the development of methods and procedure; (4) the intensity of public interest in the case; (5) the effect of the case on the national or local economy or on the industry, and (6) the strikes, lockouts, etc., attendant upon the case. On the enforcement of price, rationing, and rent regulations of the Office of Price Administration during World War II, a limited number of files were selected for retention (1) to illustrate the application of various sanctions, both judicial and administrative, at Federal, State, and local levels; (2) to illustrate the more interesting points of law in the enforcement of such sanctions; and (3) to document outstanding events in the agency's litigatory history. On price adjustments made to individual firms under various price control regulations, a limited number of files were selected for retention under each price regulation that serve (1) to provide economic data on the industry covered by the regulation, and (2) to illustrate the methods and procedures followed in administering it.

Records relating to places: Records on localities should be preserved in a federal archival institution whenever they have a general as well as a purely local or antiquarian interest. To illustrate, they may have a general interest because of their information on social or economic conditions in particular localities. A special selection should be made of such records on a small number of localities having characteristics of some general significance. If records on places have only a local interest, they should perhaps be preserved locally, for a federal archival institution cannot burden its stacks with such records.
CHAPTER XIII

Preservation Practices

M ODERN ARCHIVES are almost as ephemeral as they are voluminous. To those who are skeptical of the value of modern archives this may be a matter of consolation. They will not be submerged in the flood of modern public records, for these will disappear almost as fast as they are produced. But to the modern archivist the perishable quality of his materials is a matter of real concern.

The modern archivist must consider two factors that affect the preservation of the materials in his custody. These have been referred to by the Bureau of Standards as "external" and "internal" agents of deterioration. The external agents are those introduced by conditions of storage and use; the internal are those within the materials themselves. The archivist must seek to protect his materials from both these destructive agencies. He must provide storage facilities that will remove, or reduce the deleterious effects of the external agencies; and he must employ methods that will preserve, either in their original or some other form, the materials that are inherently perishable.

STORAGE FACILITIES

In 1931 the Bureau of Standards began a survey of leading libraries to determine the extent to which conditions of storage were responsible for the deterioration of materials stored in them. In its summary report, published in 1937, the Bureau stated that "light, adverse temperature and humidity, acidic pollution of the air, and impurities in the paper were indicated as the main deteriorative agents."¹ The principal external agent of deterioration, according to the Bureau, is the acid gases in modern atmospheres and particularly sulphur dioxide. This gas, which is a byproduct of modern industrial processes, was found to be present in many large cities, as is evident from the following table:²

	Tons H_2SO_4 per
Cities	sq. mi. per yr.
Glasgow	194.1
London	180.2
Salt Lake City	134.0
Manchester, England	95.0
San Francisco	83.1
Philadelphia	83.1
Berlin	16.1

The acid pollution of the air, as well as the other external deteriorative factors of adverse temperature and humidity, can be dealt with only by using the modern technological countermeasure of air-conditioning. In areas where a high degree of atmospheric pollution is encountered, air-conditioning systems should be installed in archival buildings. The report of the National Bureau of Standards recommends various other measures to inhibit deteriorative factors in storage.

Other features and equipment desirable in an archival building are discussed at some length in a National Archives bulletin entitled Buildings and Equipment for Archives, issued in June 1944. This bulletin contains three articles. The first is by Louis A. Simon, who was superintendent of the Architectural Division of the United States Treasury Department at the time the National Archives Building was planned and constructed and who actively participated in developing plans for the building. Simon points out that "there is no surer way of avoiding mistakes in designing archives buildings than to follow the procedure used in planning industrial buildings, namely, to make a diagram showing the operations that take place in the building. Such a diagram begins with the moment the records leave their place of origin and extends to their arrival at their permanent place in the stacks and their subsequent life as a part of the general body of archives." This observation obviously implies that a professionally training archivist should have a hand in developing plans for any structure that is to be used for archival purposes. This point is discussed at greater length by Victor Gondos, Jr., in the second of the two articles which is entitled "Collaboration Between Archivists and Architects in Planning Archives Buildings." Gondos suggests that the archivist should know the volume of record material with which he will deal and the rate of its accumulation. With this information he can calculate his space requirements intelligently and discuss them with his architect. Gondos indicates that the archivist must provide for "three fundamentals-efficient space distribution, service facilities, and damage prevention." In considering these the archivist must take into account the space needs for administrative functions and for operating functions. The operating functions of an archival institution require space for work rooms for receiving, fumigating, cleaning, repairing, binding, and duplicating records, custodial rooms, search rooms, and-most important of all-stacks for storing the records. In the third of the articles entitled "Equipment Needs to be Considered in Constructing Post-War Archival Depositories," William J. Van Schreeven provides information on the equipment needed in the core of the archival buildings, namely, the stack area where the records are to be kept. Van Schreeven calls attention to certain features of the stacks to be considered: First, equipment designed for other than archival uses, such as standard library stacks, should not be used; secondly, stack equipment should be obtained that permits the widest interchangeability and flexibility; thirdly, the stacks should be adjacent to search rooms to permit direct servicing from them; and fourthly, stack equipment should protect records to the utmost extent. Van Schreeven points out the objections to the use of standard vertical filing equipment in stacks and concludes that "horizontal filing appears to offer the most satisfactory solution to the shelving of unbound records." Various types of containers or storage boxes may be used. In the National Archives steel containers were initially installed at great cost for storing documents horizontally. This equipment, however, was replaced by more economical and manageable cardboard cartons (described in the July 1954 issue of The American Archivist), in which documents are stored vertically.

It is obvious that a public archival institution needs to have proper physical facilities for housing the materials that are turned over to it by the government it serves. Such facilities are particularly important in any new archival program. In such a program the activities relating to the arrangement, description, and servicing of records are secondary to the important matter of their preservation. In the initial stages of such a program all other activities should be subordinated to the important matter of placing the records beyond all possible danger of destruction. To preserve records, space is the first essential. When the quantity of records produced by a government is so great that more space must be found to hold them, a critical determination must be made as to their fate. The archivist intervenes at this point; for when offices are glutted with records, practical administrators are inclined to undertake housecleanings, to sweep out the accumulated debris of ages and with it valuable public records. If, at such a juncture, the archivist lacks facilities to accommodate records, he will have difficulty in preventing their indiscriminate destruction. Surveys of records designed to accomplish office housecleanings are premature if facilities are not available for preserving records whose significance they reveal. If a permanent structure cannot be provided at an early stage in a new archival program—and it usually cannot—temporary accommodations for the records should be found. As these accommodations are to preserve records, they should be such as will protect the records from destructive agents like dust, adverse temperature and humidity, and sunlight, from insects, and rodents, from theft or mutilation, and from the hazards of fire and flood.

REPAIR FACILITIES

The internal agents of deterioration, it will be recalled, are those within the materials themselves. They are found in the substances on which records are made and the media used in recording on them. Both the substances and the media used have become more perishable in the course of history. Ancient and medieval documents were made of clay, papyrus, parchment, and velum, which were strong and durable. Even documents of the modern period, until about the middle of the 19th century, were made of paper produced from rag (cotton, flax, and hemp), which was also comparatively strong and durable. Writing inks, before the middle of the 19th century, were of three types, namely, the so-called India ink, nutgall ink, and sepia ink, all of which were fairly permanent. But modern archives are produced on woodpulp papers and written with inks produced from coal-tar dyes. They carry within themselves the agencies of their own destruction.

Perhaps the best way to ensure the preservation of archives is to have them made with permanent materials. This is a preventive measure that can be taken only at the time when records are first created. It is a measure that can be prescribed by law or by regulations issued in pursuance of law, requiring the use of permanent papers and inks for records of permanent value. The model draft of a law appearing in the April 1940 issue of *The American Archivist* contains provisions relating to paper and ink. Most public records, however, particularly in large government organizations, will be produced on impermanent paper and with impermanent ink; and many of these records have value.

In order to repair a large number of documents rapidly with a minimum of skilled staff the modern archivist must resort to modern repair methods. Various methods of repair, old as well as new, are described at some length in the National Archives bulletin entitled The Repair and Preservation of Records, issued in September 1943. The new method of repairing documents which is strongly advocated in the bulletin is that of laminating documents between thin sheets of cellulose acetate. This method was adopted by the National Archives on recommendation of the National Bureau of Standards. In the summary report of its research on the preservation of records, issued in 1937, the Bureau stated that "since cellulose acetate is thermoplastic (i.e. flows under the influence of heat and pressure), it was easily applied by placing a sheet of newsprint between two slightly larger sheets of cellulose acetate and transferring this combination to a hydraulic press where, under the action of heat and pressure, one homogeneous unit was obtained." The laminating process, the Bureau continues, "yields a product which is infinitely more satisfactory [than that produced by older methods of repair] from the standpoint of increased resistance to deterioration. Documents laminated with cellulose acetate foil by means of heat and pressure alone, resist the accelerated aging test very well and are very resistant to attack by insects and molds. They retain the flexibility of the untreated paper and are easily legible."3

Two methods of applying the cellulose acetate sheets are now in use in the United States: the method used in the National Archives and the method devised by W. J. Barrow at the Virginia State Library. In the National Archives a sheet of the plastic is placed on a steel plate. The document to be repaired is placed on top of this sheet. Loose fragments are fastened to the plastic sheet with a colorless solvent called acetone. The prepared document is then covered with another sheet of plastic and another plate. Several sets of steel plates with the plasticencased documents are then placed on the flat bed of a steamheated hydraulic press. Under heat and pressure the cellulose acetate is forced into the fiber of the papers. A reinforcement of Japanese tissue is added to the laminant for cartographic records or other records in a very fragile condition.

In the Virginia State Library and the Library of Congress, under the Barrow method, the document to be repaired is deacidified before being laminated. In an article in The American Archivist for July 1943 Barrow maintains that "documents should be treated for acidity before restoration by any method is attempted." His pre-lamination treatment consists of passing a document through a solution of calcium hydroxide to neutralize the acidity and a solution of calcium bicarbonate to prevent a renewal of acidity. His procedure in preparing the document for the laminating machine is essentially similar to that used in the National Archives, but Japanese tissue is always added to the laminant. The Barrow laminating machine consists of a spring bar calender roller press that works on the "clotheswringer" principle. Each document, encased by tissue and film, passes between two electrically heated plates and from these between two calender rolls revolved by an electric motor. Under heat and pressure the cellulose acetate and the tissue are fused with the document under repair.

In reviewing the National Archives bulletin on the repair and preservation of records, D. L. Evans, now Deputy Keeper of the Records in the British Public Record Office, asked: . . . what guarantee is there of the permanence of the qualities of the new material: that, with the passage of time, its transparency will not be marred by discoloration and its flexibility give way to brittleness?"4 After twenty years of experience with the lamination process the National Archives has found this skepticism to be at least partially justified. In 1954, accordingly, it initiated a fresh investigation of the lamination process by the National Bureau of Standards. This investigation, which will be conducted over a three-year period, is being jointly sponsored by the National Archives, the Library of Congress, the Army Map Service, and the Virginia State Library. Its purposes are (1) to develop information necessary to establish specifications for cellulose acetate of commercially practicable quality that will have the maximum stability for lamination; (2) to determine whether pretreatment of documents with alkaline media is necessary or desirable before lamination taking into account (a) the effect of acidity on the paper, ink, and laminating film, and (b) the effect of pretreatment on the document (particularly the legibility of the writing); (3) to determine the increased tear and folding endurance resulting from the use of tissue reinforcement of various types and weights and the effect of such reinforcement on legibility; (4) to determine the effect of lamination on inks and papers; (5) to develop comparative data on typical flatbed and cylindrical laminating equipment;

and (6) to make a preliminary study of the newer plastic films not commercially available when the cellulose acetate process was developed to determine their acceptability for lamination purposes.

ALTERNATIVES TO REPAIR

In certain circumstances the microphotographic reproduction of records may be considered as an alternative to their repair. Although microfilm may not be a permanent medium, both its cellulose acetate base and the emulsion on this base are fairly durable. It can, moreover, be easily reproduced before deterioration sets in. In determining if microphotographic reduction is feasible the archivist should consider the answers to the following questions:

Are the physical form, condition, and arrangement of the records such that they are susceptible to being reproduced by microphotography?

How does the estimated cost of reproduction compare with that of repair when the continuing cost of the space that might be saved by reproduction is considered?

Do the records have intrinsic values that justify their preservation in their original form?

CHAPTER XIV

Principles of Arrangement

THE PRINCIPLES that apply to the arrangement of public records in archival institutions are to be distinguished from the principles, discussed in an earlier chapter, that apply to their arrangement within government agencies. The agency record officer, it should be emphasized, is ordinarily concerned only with arranging records created by his agency. Under a registry system these records may be arranged on a departmental basis as in Australia and New Zealand, or by divisions within departments as in most European countries. Or they may be arranged under an American filing system into groups that pertain to the operations of an entire agency, an administrative subdivision within the agency, or a particular official of the subdivision. The arrangement of records within government agencies is intended to serve current or primary purposes, and it is done in accordance with prescribed schemes of classification and filing.

The principles of arrangement that are applicable in archival institutions differ from those applying in government agencies in various ways. The archivist is not only concerned with arranging records of a particular agency, as is the record officer. He is concerned with arranging all records in his custody, which may emanate from many agencies, many administrative subdivisions of agencies, and many individual officials. He arranges his records for noncurrent as contrasted with current use; and he arranges them in accordance with certain basic archival principles, not in accordance with any predetermined classification or filing scheme.

Archival principles of arrangement relate, first, to the ordering of groups of records in relation to each other, and, secondly, to the ordering of individual items within the groups. Let us examine how these principles have been developed and how they should be applied to modern archives.

DEVELOPMENT OF PRINCIPLES IN EUROPE

Before the 19th century no general principles of archival arrangement had been developed in Europe. As records were received by an archival institution, they were usually incorporated into existing collections in accordance with some predetermined scheme of subject matter, much as books are classified in libraries today.

In France: During the French revolution, it will be recalled, a nationwide public archives administration was established by the decree of June 25, 1794. The first heads of the Archives Nationales, which became the central archival institution of France, were Armand-Gaston Camus (1740-1804) and Pierre-Claude-François Daunou (1761-1840). Since both were librarians by training, they adopted a schematic arrangement for the records entrusted to them for administration. Camus established four groups (called séries) for the records of the central government, and to these Daunou, who succeeded him in 1804, added twenty others. These groups, which were assigned letter symbols, were organized into sections as follows: A legislative section, with symbols A-D, consisting of record groups from the revolutionary period, such as proceedings of the National Assembly, laws and decrees, and rolls of elections and votes; an administrative section, with symbols E-H, consisting of record groups from various administrative bodies; an historical section, with symbols J-M, including the Trésor des Chartes along with groups of historical, ecclesiastical, and miscellaneous memorials; a topographical section, with the symbol N, consisting of plans and maps; a property section, with symbols P-T, including titles to domains, papers of princes, documents relating to sequestrations; and a judicial section, with symbols U-Z, consisting of record groups from various judicial bodies, such as revolutionary tribunals, chancelleries, law-courts, and the like.

The subgroups (called *sous-séries*) within record groups also represented a rational grouping rather than one based on provenance, though many subgroups were established on the basis of their origins in a particular institution or kind of institution.

The records of the central government in the Archives Nationales, then, were initially arranged in accordance with an arbitrarily devised "methodical" scheme that was derived from library experience. The record groups and subgroups subsequently changed in character as the records comprising them were shifted, and their number was gradually increased. By 1867, as revealed by the Inventaire général sommaire des Archives de l'Empire (Paris, 1867), thirty-five record groups had been established; by 1891 the number was thirty-nine, as is evident from the État sommaire par séries des documents conservés aux Archives Nationales (Paris, Delagrave, 1891); and by 1937 it was forty-six, as is evident from the États des inventaires des Archives Nationales, communales, et hospitalières au premier janvier 1937 (Paris, H. Didier, 1938). According to the last of these publications, the record groups were reorganized into three sections: an "ancient section" for archives before 1789, a "modern section" for archives after 1789, and a "secretariat section" for the records of an administrative nature produced by the Archives Natonales itself.

The first major theoretical departure from the old method of arranging archives in accordance with predetermined schemes of classification occurred when Guizot (1787-1874), who was Minister of Public Instruction from 1832 to 1839 and head of the cabinet from 1840 to 1848, issued regulations for arranging the records of the *départements*, which were placed under the jurisdiction of the *Archives Nationales* by the law of October 26, 1796. The first of his regulations was issued on August 8, 1839, and was elaborated in a circular issued by the Minister of Interior, Count Duchatel (1803-1867), on April 24, 1841. This circular, entitled "Instructions pour la mise en ordre et le classement des archives départementales et communales," established a logical scheme for grouping the records of the *départements*, which, though modified by two later supplements, is still in use.

The general principles laid down for carrying out this scheme were the following:

1. Records were to be grouped into *fonds*, that is, all records which originated with any particular institution, such as an administrative authority, a corporation, or a family, were to be grouped together and were to be considered the *fonds* of that particular institution.

2. Records within *fonds* were to be arranged by subjectmatter groups, and each group was to be assigned a definite place in relation to other groups.

3. Items within the subject-matter groups were to be arranged as circumstances might dictate, either chronologically, geographically, or alphabetically.

This scheme,¹ as modified by later supplements, provides for the grouping of records of the *départements* into the following fonds:

I. Ancient fonds (before 1790)

Civil Archives

A. Acts of the sovereign power and the public domain.

B. Courts and jurisdictions.

C. Provincial administrations.

D. Public instruction, sciences and arts.

E. Feudal matters, families, notaries, communes, civil affairs, and corporations.

- E. Supplement—Fonds of communes.
- F. Miscellaneous fonds connected with civil archives.

Ecclesiastical Archives

- G. Secular clergy.
- H. Regular clergy.
- H. Supplement—Fonds of hospices.
- J. Miscellaneous fonds connected with ecclesiastical archives.

II. INTERMEDIATE PERIOD (1790-1800)

- L. Administration from 1789 to the year VIII.
- Q. Domains.

III. MODERN FONDS (after 1800)

K. Laws, ordinances, and decrees.

- M. Personnel and general administration.
- N. Departmental administration and accounting.
- O. Communal administration and accounting.
- P. Finances.
- R. War and military affairs.
- S. Public works.
- T. Public instruction, sciences and arts.
- U. Justice.
- V. Religions.
- X. Welfare establishments.
- Y. Correctional establishments.
- Z. Miscellaneous matters.

In the circular of April 24, 1841, is formulated the basic principle of *respect des fonds*, according to which all records originating with "an administrative authority, a corporation, or a family" are to be brought together into a *fonds*, within which the records are to be arranged by subject matter and thereunder either chronologically, geographically, or alphabetically. The interrelations of subject-matter groups within a *fonds* is to be determined by their content. The important group is to be placed before the unimportant, and the general is to precede the specific. For example, an inventory of the records of a monastery or a chartulary of a monastery containing transcripts of its most important documents is to be placed on the shelves before the records therein inventoried or transcribed. The arrangement of items within a subject-matter group is to be determined by the following practical consideration: What arrangement permits an archivist to answer any possible question put either by a governmental agency or by a private searcher in the quickest and most accurate manner. "Inquiries," it is stated, "usually contain as a point of departure for searches either a date, or a place name, or the name of the individual, depending upon the nature of the inquiry. It follows, therefore, that the arranging must proceed from the chronological, geographical, or alphabetical point of view. If, for example, a collection of decrees, or of laws, or of judicial decisions is under consideration, the items should be arranged chronologically, since a searcher usually gives the date of such documents. If, on the other hand, the matters of municipalities are considered, a geographical arrangement is preferable, since searchers usually indicate the name of the municipality. . . . If records pertaining to private individuals are concerned, an alphabetical arrangement by names of the individuals obviously best facilitates searches."2

The basic principle of the circular of April 24 was given a more definite statement in a meeting of the Archives Commission, created by the Minister of Interior, held later in the year on June 8. At this meeting the eminent paleographer, Natalis de Wailly (1805-1886) justified the principle of *respect des fonds* in the following terms:

A general classification of records by *fonds* and (within *fonds*) by subject matter is the only way properly to assure the immediate realization of a regular and uniform order. Such a classification offers several advantages: In the first place, it is more easily put into practice than any other system, for primarily it consists of nothing more than bringing together items, only the origin of which it is necessary to determine. In a large number of cases this classification is made easier, since it involves simply the reproduction of the order of the former custodians: this order might perhaps be effected by means of existing inventories, in which case it is sufficient to collate the documents inventoried to rearrange them in their original order. If, instead of following this method, a theoretical order is proposed, based on the nature of things, all these advantages are lost.³

In the circular of April 24 and the statement of June 8 by de Wailly are thus found the origins of the basic principle of respect des fonds.

Though the principle of *respect des fonds* was thus formulated as early as 1841 and was thereafter generally observed in France with regard to the larger archival groups, it would be a mistake to conclude that the system of "classement général par fonds" was applied to the records of the various smaller administrative bodies. In the scheme reproduced above for the arrangement of records of the *départements*, for example, the principle of respect des fonds was not applied with equal strictness to the three main groups. From this scheme it is evident that records prior to 1790 were organized into fonds by agencies of origin, each of which was assigned a definite letter symbol. Records of the revolutionary years from 1790 to 1800 were simply grouped together into one fonds, a procedure justified by the special political and administrative developments of that period. Records after 1800 were not grouped by agencies of origin at all but were grouped rather by general subject categories, such as financial records, judicial records, and public works records, without taking into account whether they originated in a prefecture or in some other administrative body within a département. For the records of municipalities, fifteen subject categories were again set up, into which the records were grouped without taking the slightest account of their origins. Thus it is noteworthy that only a part of the records of *départements* were organized by agencies of origin and that in the arrangement of the records of municipalities the principle of respect des fonds was entirely neglected.

While the principle of *respect des fonds* was not consistently followed in France after its formulation in 1841, nonetheless an important step forward had been taken. The old system of arranging records according to some arbitrary scheme of subject matter had been abandoned, at least theoretically, and had been replaced by a system based on a generally applicable principle. This principle is that public records should be grouped according to the nature of the public institutions which accumulate them.

In Prussia: The French principle of respect des fonds was extended and developed in Prussia, where it was decided, first, that public records should be grouped according to the administrative units that created them (rather than according to the nature of the institutions that created them as in France), and secondly, that the arrangement given public records by the creating agencies themselves should be preserved in the archival institution.

The principle of grouping public records according to their origins in public administrative bodies is called the Provenienzprinzip or principle of provenance. This principle was first expressed by the eminent historian Heinrich von Sybel (1817-1895) after he became director of the Prussian State Archives in 1874. In his "Regulative für die Ordnungsarbeiten im Geheimen Staatsarchiv,"4 which he issued on July 1, 1881, he instituted a new system for the organization of the records of the Prussian State Archives. These regulations, which had been drawn up by the archivist Max Lehmann (1845-1929), were discussed in a conference of the officials of the Prussian State Archives on July 1 and were unanimously approved. Paragraph 2 of the regulations stated the fundamental principle, based upon the French principle of *respect des fonds*, that "the arrangement of records in the Secret State Archives is to proceed according to the provenance of their constituent parts." This Provenienz*prinzip* simply provided that the main divisions within the State Archives were to be formed by separating the records originating with the various administrative units of the government. The regrouping of records from different agencies into subject-matter categories was thus recognized as an impractical procedure, particularly since the volume of records being transferred was greatly increasing. Paragraph 7 of the regulations made the principle of provenance retroactive to the extent that records of the cabinet council and of the foreign ministry which had been incorporated into those of the privy councilor were to be segregated and maintained as separate collections. Similarly, records of the Central Government of the Kingdom of Westphalia, which had been taken over by the Prussian State Archives, were to be consistently separated from the records with which they had been merged.

In paragraph 4 of the regulations of July 1, 1881, a new principle, called the *Registraturprinzip*, was developed, which provided that the records of every agency should be maintained in the archival institution in the order given them by the registry office of the agency and should not be reorganized by subjectmatter groups. Official records in Prussia were properly arranged by registry offices before their transfer to the State Archives; and the records in their entirety, which were thus arranged, are often referred to as registries. The statement of the *Registraturprinzip*, set forth in the fourth paragraph of the regulations, reads as follows: Each agency, as soon as it begins to release records, is to be assigned a stack area (*Repositur*) intended exclusively for the records of that agency. Within this area, the official papers are to be maintained in the order and with the designations which they received in the course of the official activity of the agency concerned.

The principle is based on the fact that before records were released to an archival institution they were properly arranged within the registry offices of the agencies which created them. In contrast to the French system, under which records within a fonds were substantially reorganized to meet research needs, the Prussian system provided for the maintenance of registries to conform to the administrative functioning of governmental agencies. In contrast to the French instructions of 1841, which refer to an "arrangement" (disposer) of the fonds of any particular agency "according to a certain order" and to a "classification" of records "according to their contents," the Prussian instructions of 1881 provide for the maintenance of "archival bodies" or "entities" (Archivkörpern) in the order in which they were created.

On October 12, 1896, the various provincial archives in Prussia were urged to adopt the regulations prescribed in 1881 for the central archives in Berlin. On July 6, 1907, definite instructions were issued for the organization of records in these provincial archives. These instructions pertained in part to the disposition of records which, as a result of territorial changes, had come into the archives of provinces to which they did not belong. Records "from the registries of the central agencies of the Brandenburg-Prussian State" were to be segregated and transferred to the Prussian State Archives.

In the Netherlands: The principle of provenance, as developed in Prussia, was accepted in the Netherlands, where it was given a theoretical justification by three Dutch archivists.⁵ The principle was given official sanction by the Dutch government in a regulation issued by the Minister of Interior on July 10, 1897. A year later, the Dutch archivists Muller, Feith, and Fruin published their well-known manual, which became a bible for modern archivists, being translated into German in 1905, Italian in 1908, French in 1910, and English in 1940. It contains carefully developed principles of arrangement and description and recapitulates the views expressed in numerous conferences of the Netherlands Association of Archivists and in the Nederlandsch Archievenblad.

Like the Prussians, the Dutch archivists were concerned with records arranged according to the registry system. All their principles of arrangement, therefore, apply to records organized in registry offices or Archiefs. The fundamental principle adopted by the Dutch archivists, which they considered "the most important of all," reads as follows: "The system of arrangement should be based upon the original order of the registry (Ar*chief*), which in its essentials reflects the organization of the administrative body that produced it." In setting forth this principle, the authors of the manual discussed the relative merits of two alternative systems: One was an arrangement of records under various arbitrary subject headings, such as are ordinarily found in library classifications; the other was an arrangement of records corresponding to the administrative organization of the government which created them. A system of subject headings, they pointed out, cannot be all inclusive. It must be arbitrarily imposed from without and does not arise from the order or content of a collection. It thus forces an archival group into "an alien mold." While it may help a searcher to consult a particular heading for a particular subject, it may turn him from the right path since other headings may contain records on the same subject and since, indeed, a single document may treat of a score of subjects. Records, in fact, cannot be consistently organized under subject headings because of the variety of subjects with which a single document or a single volume may treat. On the other hand, the authors held that a system of arranging records according to their organization in a registry provides a satisfactory basis for making searches under an innumerable variety of subjects and can be consistently applied. Such a system is based on the work of registrars, who either consciously or unconsciously follow definite rules in preserving and arranging the records in their charge-rules which are based on the character of the records and on the official demands for service upon them. It is neither possible nor desirable, therefore, to destroy the original order of a registry and to replace it with another based on what might appear to be a more logical scheme of subject headings.

In stating this principle, the Dutch archivists emphasized the necessity of maintaining the "original order" of a registry. "The original order of a registry," they explained, "was not created arbitrarily; it is not the result of chance, but the logical consequence of the organization of the administrative body, from the functioning of which the registry is a product." They insisted that it is the "original order" developed in the registry office, and not a scheme designed by archivists to reflect the administrative structure of the governmental agency, that should be applied in the arrangement of records. If the "original order" has not been maintained, they held that the prime objective of an archivist should be to restore it. And accordingly they formulated the corollary principle that "in the arrangement of a registry (*Archief*) . . . the original order should first of all be restored as far as possible. Only thereafter is it possible to judge whether, and to what extent, it is desirable to deviate from that order."

To reconstruct the "original order" of a registry, the Dutch archivists suggested certain definite rules. Since in the course of time records are maintained by succeeding groups of recordkeeping officials, changes may have been made in the original plans under which they were organized. If such changes accord with the organic development of the administrative body that produced the registry, they are to be maintained; but if they are the result of errors or thoughtlessness on the part of later recordkeeping officials, the records are to be restored to their original order "to carry out the main idea from which the old order developed." The manual states this principle as follows: "The order in which records are received from a registry office may be modified in order to correct deviations from the general plan of the registry, whether those deviations are attributable to mistakes of registrars or to temporary changes in the registry system." But changes in the "original order" are to be made only in such exceptional cases as inconsequential irregularities attributable to record-keeping officials - faulty insertions, occasional deviations from the general plan of the registry, the filing of older documents with more recent ones for purposes of easy consultation, or the like.

The Dutch archivists compared the work of restoring the "original order" of an Archief or registry to the work of a paleontologist who handles the bones of a prehistoric animal. Just as a paleontologist joins together the skeleton of such an animal, placing each bone in its proper position though it may have been separated from the rest or may be partly missing; so also an archivist is to reconstruct the skeletal organization of a registry. The principle is stated in the manual that "in the arrangement of a registry one should keep in mind that documents that contain the proceedings of the administrative body or of one of its officials acting in his official capacity form the skeleton of the registry." In restoring the constituent parts of a registry to their original order, therefore, the archivist will begin with the main series containing the proceedings of the administrative body.

The Dutch archivists formulated various principles for proceeding after the skeleton of the organization has been restored. These principles are conveniently available in the English translation of them provided by Arthur H. Leavitt. In contrast to the arrangement of such materials recommended by the French, which was either chronological, geographical, or alphabetical, the Dutch archivists prefer that they be arranged in an order exactly corresponding to the order in which the main series are organized. No arbitrary groupings are to be made if the main series developed in the registry offices can be determined. A definite and thorough relationship should exist between loose items and the organic units of a registry. Loose items which appear previously to have formed parts of series or dossiers are to be combined again, if possible, into series or dossiers. If it is not possible to determine the original order of such loose items, they may be organized either according to the dossier system of grouping records by subject matter or according to the series system of grouping records by organic units, depending upon the system followed in the registry offices in which they originated. If no reasons exist for the preference of either of the systems, the application of the dossier system is recommended.

In England: Sir Hilary Jenkinson in his Manual of Archive Administration (first edition, 1922; revised edition, 1937) provides rather complete information on English archival practices in arranging public records. The British Public Record Office, just as the archival institutions in Prussia and the Netherlands, must deal with the product of registry offices; but this product, as we have seen elsewhere, was different from its counterpart on the European continent. The English registers, it will be recalled, consisted of rolls containing entries on inward and outward documents. To these were related a large volume of subsidiary original documents, the connection of which to the rolls was frequently quite tenuous. The problem, therefore, was not one of keeping intact bodies of records kept within registry offices or of preserving their original order. It was one of identifying the administrative bodies that produced the records and relating original records to registers. In organizing public records within the archival institution, according to Jenkinson, the object clearly is "to establish or re-establish the original arrangement." Records are to be arranged into "archive groups," which he defines as accumulations "resulting from the work of an Administration which was an organic whole, complete in itself. capable of dealing independently, without any added or external authority, with every side of any business which could normally be presented to it." Within these "archive groups" records are to be arranged in their original order. Jenkinson questions whether the method suggested by the Dutch archivists for organizing records goes far enough. According to this method records are to be grouped by main series, which are to form the skeleton of the organization and to which the loose items are to be made subsidiary. What about the invertebrates, asks Jenkinson, "archive groups" which have no main series? He suggests an analysis to determine the functions of the administration which produced such an "archive group." These functions are to be the general headings under which classes of records are to be organized. If loose items cannot be brought together in such functional classes, they may be arranged under any system, according to Jenkinson-"alphabetical, chronological, formal, or what not"-provided that the accession number of the materials is retained and that no "original file, fastening, or binding is broken up." In his view, an archivist is justified in breaking up a well-established original order only "on paper, leaving the physical arrangement, where there is definite arrangement," in the state in which it is found. Jenkinson admits that there may be special circumstances in which the fundamental principle of preserving the original order might be compromised, but he warns that the archivist who undertakes such a rearrangement "is taking a very grave responsibility."

DEVELOPMENT OF PRINCIPLES IN AMERICA

In the United States the principles of archival classification were frequently discussed at the American Historical Association's annual conferences of archivists between 1909 and 1917. One of the earliest, and one of the most cogent statements of the basic principles of classification is that made by Dr. Waldo G. Leland at the 1909 conference. In a paper on "American Archival Problems," Dr. Leland stated that "in general, the principle enunciated by the Dutch, and adhered to in most European archives, the 'herkomstbeginsel,' the 'respect des fonds,' or 'principe de la provenance,' should be adopted. The archives should be classified according to their origin; they should reflect the processes by which they came into existence."

He reiterated this statement a few years later in an important article on "The National Archives: A Programme," which was published in 1912 in the American Historical Review and which was reprinted in 1915 as a Senate Document. In this article he stated that "no decimal system of classification, no refined methods of library science, no purely chronological or purely alphabetical arrangement can be successfully applied to the classification of archives. The sad work that Camus and Daunou made of the Archives Nationales in attempting to apply a logical system of classification should be a sufficient warning. The administrative entity must be the starting point and the unit, and the classifier must have a thorough knowledge of the history and functions of the office whose records he is arranging: he must know what relation the office has borne to other offices, and the relation of each function to every other function." His fullest statement on classification principles, however, is found in a report of recommendations on the management of State archives which he made in 1913 to the Illinois State Education Building Commission. In this report he wrote: "The first essential is a guide to the public offices and their history which shall show for each office its origin, its functions, the origin of these functions, where transferred from another office or arising from new legislation, the modifications of these functions or their cessation, the organization of the office, with any changes therein, and finally the termination of the office (if it be no longer in existence) showing whether the functions then ceased or were transferred to other offices. . . . Each public office is an administrative unit, and its records form a homogeneous group reflecting its activities. This large group naturally falls into sub-groups, and the sub-groups into series following the organization and functions of the office. The principle that must be borne in mind then, is that the archives must be so classified that the organization and functions that have produced them shall be clearly reflected by them. This is the substance of the famous principle of the respect des fonds."

In the 1914 conference of American archivists a paper was presented by Ethel B. Virtue of the Historical Department of Iowa on "Principles of Classification for Archives." This paper, which was to be made a chapter of a primer for archivists that was planned at the 1912 conference, accepted the principle of *respect des fonds* as the basic principle of archival classification to be followed in the United States and illustrated its application to the archives of Iowa. With the establishment of the National Archives in 1934 the principles of Leland and others, which represented to a large extent views derived from European practices, were applied for the first time to a voluminous mass of modern records.

One of the first problems with which archivists of the Federal government were concerned was to define the record unit call it "fonds," "archive group," or what you will—that should serve as the main unit of arrangement in the archival institution. The tremendous volume of records that came into the custody of the National Archives—almost 800,000 cubic feet in one decade—had to be divided into a number of manageable units for purposes of arrangement, description, reference service, statistical reporting, and other administrative purposes.

The American archivists used the term "record group" to designate these units. It is a curious anomaly that in England where the archival institution is called a record office the record units should be called "archive groups," whereas in the United States where the archival institution is called an archives the record units should be called "record groups." The term "record groups" was first defined officially in the National Archives in February 1941 as meaning "a major archival unit established somewhat arbitrarily with due regard to the principle of provenance and to the desirability of making the unit of convenient size and character for the work of arrangement and description and for the publication of inventories."⁶

The American "record groups" are different from their European counterparts. They are to be contrasted with the English "archive groups" because of the difference in the administrative units of government that created the "record groups." The English concept of closed groups—accumulations "resulting from the work of an administration which was an organic whole, complete in itself, capable of dealing independently, without any added or external authority, with every side of any business which could normally be presented to it"-could not be adopted. This concept is applicable only to dead records-past accumulations to which no more records will be added or records of dead agencies. Although the administrative history of the Federal government is littered with dead agencies, for some of which record groups have been established, the archivists of the National Archives had to deal primarily with live agencies. The government organization with which they were concerned was not a static one, which would permit the establishment of a fixed number of records groups; it was a dynamic one with constantly changing organizational units and constantly changing functions. In the National Archives, therefore, record groups were established for records of administrative units of varying status and authority in the government hierarchy. The administrative units that created, accumulated, or maintained the groups need be neither complete nor independent administrative units, as in England. They could, of course, be independent agencies, but they could also be parts of larger agencies of the government.

The record groups are also to be contrasted with the French "fonds," which represented records from similar types of institutions. Only the so-called "collective record groups" are similar to the French *fonds*, since they comprise records of a number of agencies (such as the committees or commissions of Congress) that have certain characteristics in common.

The record groups are of course quite different from those produced by registry offices in Prussia and the Netherlands. The National Archives record groups, as a rule, consist of the documentation produced by an administrative unit at the bureau level of government. This documentation may consist of both filed and unfiled materials. The filed materials may have been maintained at a bureau, or a divisional, or even an office level. The constituent elements of an American record group are thus far more numerous, and far more varied in their form and character than those of a European registry. Most of the record groups contain several subgroups, usually established on the basis of their organizational and functional origins. The subgroups are made up of record series, established on the basis of their arrangement in accordance with a particular filing system, their subject matter or functional affinity, or the physical uniformity of their record types. And the series, in turn, are made up of file units, i.e. volumes, folders, dossiers, individually filed documents, or individually filed forms. These elements, singly and collectively, reflect to a far greater degree than their European counterparts the organization and functioning of the administrative units that produced them.

A less difficult problem for the archivists of the Federal government was to decide on the principles that should govern the allocation of records to records branches within the National Archives for purposes of administration. The principle adopted was to allocate textual records by record groups according to their relation to a few broad subject fields (such as defense, industry, or natural resources). The subject-matter relationships considered for this purpose are defined mainly in the terms of the general functions of the agencies that created the records. Thus records created by the Department of Agriculture and by independent agencies broadly concerned with agricultural activities are allocated to the Natural Resources Records Branch and within that branch to the Agriculture Records Section. Maps and pictorial and sound records belonging to all record groups are allocated for administrative purposes to two branches that are specially staffed and equipped to handle them.

A third problem with which archivists of the Federal government were concerned was the arrangement of record groups. This problem was dealt with for the first time in the Staff Information Paper on "Principles of Arrangement" issued in June 1951. In the first years of its operations, various factors made it difficult for the National Archives to arrange its record groups in a logical pattern within the stacks. The most important of these was the character of the Federal government, which produced the records. The multiplicity of government agencies and the complexity and fluidity of their organization made impossible a completely logical arrangement of all record groups. Another important factor was the manner in which records were accessioned. In its initial years the National Archives was striving to bring into its custody as rapidly as possible the large volume of records that had accumulated in the Federal government since its establishment. This accumulation was released by the agencies piecemeal, in innumerable small lots. What records should be attributed to particular record groups could not be identified until their origins had been analyzed; and advance calculations of the space and equipment required for each record group could not be made with accuracy. A few years ago, however, the records branches developed ideal plans for the arrangement of their present holdings and such new accessions as could be foreseen. These plans are now being carried into effect; all records in the building should be in good order by the end of fiscal year 1956.

One basic principle of the plans is to arrange record groups in either an organizational or a functional relation to each other. The organizational method of arranging record groups is preferred when it is practicable. This plan of arrangement is usually followed when record groups have been established for each of the several bureaus or offices constituting a large government agency, such as an executive department. When this is the case, the groups are arranged in conformity with the hierarchical structure of the larger agency. Where the organizational arrangement is impracticable, or for some good reason less desirable, a functional arrangement is used. Under this arrangement record groups established for a succession of agencies or offices related by function are arranged so as to show the development of the governmental organizations that performed the same functions. Considerations of accessibility are also taken into account in determining the arrangement of record groups in the stacks.

Another basic principle of the plans of arrangement is to maintain record groups as integral units. The logic that underlies the creation of record groups requires that the records in each record group should be kept together without intermingling with them the records of other groups. The separation of records in a record group is permitted only when parts of the group require special equipment or are security-classified so that they cannot be kept with the main body of the group to which they belong.

A fourth problem with which archivists of the Federal government were concerned was the arrangement of the elements within the record groups. These elements are the subgroups, series, and individual items. Subgroups are usually the records of subdivisions of the administrative unit that produced the record group. Frequently agencies for which record groups have been established have passed through so many organizational changes that the records accumulated by many superseded or discontinued units within them have lost their administrative identity. The functions of the agencies may have remained unchanged though the units that performed them may have been altered or abolished; and the records pertinent to the functions may span many such units without any clear breaks to distinguish those that were produced by the successive units. In such cases, the subgroups are established in relation to functions. Occasionally the natural subgroups of records within a record group do not correspond either to organizational units or to functions but correspond rather to types of records that cut across both functional and organizational lines. In such cases the physical characteristics of the records distinguish the subgroups. The Staff Information Paper on "Principles of Arrangement" gives instructions for arranging subgroups according to either their organizational relations or their functional relations to each other or according to the types of records involved.

The subgroups, in turn, are usually composed of series, which are defined differently in the United States than in Europe. The differences of definition should be clearly understood. In Europe generally the term archival series is applied to file units in a registry that contain documents of a particular type. These are called Reihenakten in Germany, liasse in France, and Bundel in the Netherlands. They are to be distinguished from file units that contain a variety of documents pertaining to particular subjects, which in Germany are called Sachakten and in France and the Netherlands, dossiers. In the United States the term "series" may apply to aggregations of documents of a particular type, as in Europe. It may, however, also be applied to the entire body of records organized according to an integrated filing system, irrespective of whether the individual file units within this system are of a particular type. The meaning of the term has been extended even to include aggregations of records brought together without perceptible order, whose only bond of coherence is their common relation to a particular subject or activity. This extended use of the term belies the dictionary definition: "a number of things . . . standing or succeeding in order, and connected by a like relation."

Within the subgroups, series are arranged in the National Archives according to some logical pattern that reflects the interrelation of series and where appropriate the relation of series to organization, functions, chronological periods, places, or subjects. The considerations to be taken into account in arranging series are outlined in the Staff Information Paper on "Principles of Arrangement."

The final, most detailed, step in arranging records is concerned with single documents, folders, dossiers, volumes, or other file units. File units usually consist of records kept together because they relate to the same subject or transaction or because they have the same form. These units, which vary in size and character, are usually placed in a sequential order that is determined by the filing system employed. In a subject system—whether it is arranged on an alphabetical, a subjectnumeric, a classified, or any other basis—records will ordinarily be filed together under subject captions, each of which covers a folder or several folders, which, in turn, contain a number of separate documents. In a case-file system—whether it is arranged numerically, or in some other way—records will be assembled in case folders or dossiers. Where records are kept together because of similarity of form, the units of form will often be considered as the file units. This is the case with respect to bound volumes.

If the unity of a series derives from the fact that it is organized according to an integrated filing system, it will be kept precisely in the order, whether alphabetical, numerical, or chronological, that was given to it by the originating office. A problem of rearrangement arises when this order has been disturbed or lost or when, in exceptional circumstances, it is unintelligible. In such instances the archivist will attempt to restore the order given the records by the agency while they were in current use. In a subject system, the folders or dossiers will be assembled under the appropriate subject headings and the headings will be placed in the order prescribed by the filing system that was employed in the agency. The individual documents in each folder will be placed in proper sequence. In modern file folders it is customary to file such documents in reverse chronological order, the last item being placed first, while in many older folders the opposite order is employed. The order followed by the creating agency will be observed by the archivist. In restoring the arrangement of files reference is made to the filing schemes, if any exist, or to indexes, subject captions, folder labels, file notations, and the like.

If a series was established on the basis of the form of the records the problem of the archivist is fairly easy. Bound volumes, for instance, are normally placed on the shelves in a simple chronological or numerical order.

If the arrangement given records by the originating office is unintelligible or one that makes reference service very difficult, the archivist may devise a system of his own. Such new systems must protect the integrity of the records, however, by reflecting their functional or administrative origins and should be designed to facilitate the use that can be anticipated for the records.

If records are received from an agency in complete disarray, with no perceptible order, the archivist again may devise a system of his own. Series of miscellany, in particular, will be arranged in whatever order is best suited to make known their character and significance. The individual items within such series may be grouped by subject, activity, type, place, or time, depending on the nature of the records. In developing a system of arrangement the maxim that "simplicity is the shortest road to accessibility" is followed.

CONCLUSIONS

1. As a rule, modern public records should be kept in separate units that correspond to their source in a governmental agency. This is in accordance with the principle of provenance. The principle of provenance has gained acceptance in the archival profession for a variety of reasons. (1) The principle protects the integrity of records in the sense that their origins and the processes by which they came into existence are reflected by their arrangement. Most government records are accumulated in connection with official actions; and as the actions of government are related to each other through function and administrative organization, so the records are most intelligible when they are kept together under the identity of the agency or the subdivision of an agency by which they were accumulated and in the general order given them by that agency. (2) The principle helps to reveal the significance of records; for the subject matter of individual documents can be fully understood only in context with related documents. If records are arbitrarily torn from their context and reassembled according to a subjective or other arbitrary system, their real significance as documentary evidence may be obscured or lost. (3) The principle provides the archivist with a workable and economical guide in arranging, describing, and servicing records in his custody. To break up the existing natural units and substitute arbitrary new ones would consume a great deal of an archivist's time to no good purpose, and the complexity and diversity of the subject matter covered by the records would make the completion of any such undertaking impossible.

2. As a rule, the holdings of an archival institution should be divided for purposes of administration into a number of units or groups. Various factors should be considered in establishing such groups. The first, and the most important of these, is the provenance of the records. The limits or boundaries of record groups, in a word, should be defined on the basis of their origins in some public body. The kind of body may be defined rather nebulously as in France, where certain types of institutions, such as administrative agencies, corporations, or families, are regarded as the source or the *fonds* of classes of records. Or it may be defined precisely as in Prussia and the Netherlands, where the records arranged within a registry office are considered the unit of treatment in the archival institution. Or it may be defined as in England where the body is an administrative unit of the government that has nearly complete autonomy. With respect to modern records other factors than provenance may also have to be considered in establishing record groups. There should be neither too few nor too many record groups, for an excessively small or an excessively large number will complicate the task of their administration. They should, in a word, be established with some regard to their number and size. The administrative body that produced them need not have been complete and independent as in England; it should, however, have been one whose records can be readily distinguished from other record groups on the basis of their relation to a distinct function or a distinct subject field.

3. As a rule, modern records that are preserved for the evidence they contain of organization and function should be maintained in the order given them by the agencies that created, maintained, or accumulated them. While this arrangement will not bring records together by subjects that will meet all the research needs of scholars, it is the only workable way of placing records in order while preserving their evidential values on government functioning. To rearrange according to some arbitrary plan records that are already in order or partly in order would be a prodigal waste of time, and to impose such an arbitrary plan of arrangement on the few records that are wholly without arrangement would serve no conceivable purpose. The archivist, therefore, should resist any efforts on the part of scholars to induce him to arrange records according to any abstract system of universal subject classification. This should be the case whether the archivist is employed by an archival institution or by any other government agency.

The principle of preserving the original order imposed on registries has been subjected to a critical examination by Carl Gustaf Weibull, the Swedish archivist in Lund, in an article published originally in *Scandia Tidschrift for historisk forskning*, 3:52-77 (1930), and republished in German in the Archivalische Zeitschrift, 42-43:52-72 (1934).

Weibull questioned the validity of the thesis of the Dutch archivists that the "original order" of the records by a registry office must be accepted as a norm for their arrangement in an archival institution. "It is not to be denied," he wrote, "that the original order of a registry determines its arrangement to a certain extent and indicates its main outlines. A registry arranged according to the series system can hardly be reorganized into one arranged according to the dossier system. . . . But this position is a long way removed from the position that the activity in organizing archives is to be primarily restorative in character, and only secondarily should take into account the interests of historical research. The justification—that the original order adequately served official purposes and still serves these purposes—is hardly tenable. In most instances, officials in the beginning allowed documents to accumulate without arranging them according to a well-thought-out system, in a manner that appeared most simple, chronologically as they came in, or possibly arranged them into one or two groups, as, for example, letters separately, or papers regarding various protocols separately, and so forth. The successors adopted the same mechanics, eventually probably creating still further groups or subdivisions."

The objective in organizing archives, according to Weibull, is not that of a paleontologist, motivated by the traditions of a museum, to restore records in an order which is an end in itself. Rather, he argued, it is to make possible the answering of questions put by official and unofficial searchers as rapidly and as accurately as possible-an objective emphasized by the French as early as the fourth decade of the 19th century when they formulated their principle of respect des fonds. Weibull insisted that the research point of view, which has been obscured by theoretical considerations, must again receive the emphasis it deserves, whether the searches are undertaken to answer questions of an administrative nature or to prosecute historical studies in the true sense of the word. If one accepts the validity of this point of view in organizing records, one should group them logically by subject matter within *fonds* or archival groups, so far as such a grouping is possible and practicable. In doing this, Weibull pointed out, the archivist would be doing work that is not merely restorative but actually creative in character.

In the Nederlandsch Archievenblad, Fruin, the only member surviving of the Dutch triumvirate which compiled the manual, stated his objections to Weibull's position, maintaining that "archives are designed in the first place to clarify the administrative activities of government agencies" and pointing out that the archivist cannot anticipate the research needs of scholars but that any subject grouping of the records of an organic unit might facilitate the searches of one group at the expense of inconvenience to others.

Georg Winter, Director of the Prussian State Archives, expressed a similar view of Weibull's strictures in the Korrespondenzblatt des Gesamtvereins der deutschen Geschichts- und Altertumsvereine, 138-147 (1930). In an earlier article on "The Principle of Provenance in the Prussian State Archives," published in the *Revista de la Biblioteca*, Archivo y Museo del Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 10: 187, however, he admitted that the organization of records in a registry office prior to their release to an archival institution was "preliminary to preserving the fonds in their organic structure." He wrote as follows:

Admittedly—and with this admission we wish to take into consideration a few fundamental exceptions to departures from the principle of provenance—the existence of a usable and reasonable arrangement of registries, or the possibility of re-establishing such an arrangement, is the preliminary condition to preserving *fonds* in their organic structure. There existed, particularly in earlier periods, registries in which the grouping and maintaining of records was without system, foolish, and impractical. In such cases, the archivist should not—as every one with insight will admit literally ride the principle to death, but instead he must attempt an entirely new arrangement.

An exception to the rule of preserving records in their original order should be made with respect to modern records when they were rearranged within government agencies after their primary purpose had been served. The original arrangement should be preserved if it reflects the use made of the records when they were current, but artificial rearrangements intended to serve other than current purposes should be preserved in the archival institution only if they meet archival needs. A number of illustrations of such artificial rearrangements can be cited.

The incoming correspondence of the Office of the Secretary of War for the period 1800-24 was broken up into subject groups, as well as a general miscellaneous file, which necessitated search in a variety of places. In the National Archives the correspondence was restored to its original order, which was evident in the registers relating to it, namely, the alphabetical order of the names of the writers.

The Office of Indian Affairs also rearranged its early unbound papers. The papers before 1824, when a separate Bureau of Indian Affairs was established, were thrown into one file arranged in strict chronological order. This file was made up largely of two groups of field records (the records of the Creek factory, 1794-1822, which was under the defunct Office of Indian Trade, and the records of the Cherokee Agency, 1800-24); but it also included records from at least twenty different government offices. In creating this file not only was the provenance of the records obscured; enclosed letters were almost always separated from letters of transmittal. In the National Archives this artificially created chronological file was broken up into its original constituent series.

An artificial body of naval records was created by the Office of Naval Records and Library, which was organized in 1882 as a pai, of the Office of Naval Intelligence. One of the important duties of this Office has been to collect, preserve, and service the operational records of the Naval Establishment. Before World War I the Office was given custody of the early bound records of the Office of the Secretary of the Navy for the period 1800-85. To this group were added other bound records from various offices, bureaus, and short activities of the Naval Establishment. After World War I the Office gave special attention to the collection of all available records of naval operations; and it acquired many other documents, both originals and transcripts, from official, public, and private sources, extending from the Revolution to World War I. This collection of records was placed in two major groups-an "area file" and a "subject file" -and all available documents were arranged chronologically under a designated area or a given subject. Eventually each "file" was broken into two parts, an earlier part extending from about 1775 to 1910, and a later part from 1910 to the present. The official records which were placed in the files came from different sources. In some instances poorly bound volumes were torn apart and the individual documents were placed under some "area" or "subject" designation. Frequently documents relating to naval operations were removed from other bodies of records and placed in these series. Most of them came from the files of the Office of the Secretary of the Navy, the Office of Detail, and the Bureau of Navigation. In the "area" and "subiect" files, a valuable record collection was established that proved useful in tracing naval operations. The arrangement of the collection, however, exemplifies practices generally employed with respect to historical manuscripts rather than accepted archival principles. The National Archives has made no significant changes in the arrangement of the "area" and "subject" files, but the bound volumes within the collection have been arranged in series rather than chronologically.

The War Production Board of World War II imposed an artificial arrangement on a large part of its records. Under its records program, a "policy documentation file" was created that was organized under a Dewey-decimal system of classification. Policy documents, intended to reflect all facets of the agency's organization and functioning, were to be selected and incorporated in this file. About 40 percent of the policy documents had been selected when the agency was abolished. The remainder were selected under a hastily-developed program that utilized a large but untrained staff. This program of selecting and organizing individual policy documents was not only too ambitious; it ran counter to all accepted archival principles of arrangement. For criteria of selection that are broad enough to capture all significant documents are meaningless, and their interpretation must be largely subjective. The War Production Board, therefore, chose not to define its criteria at all. And the arrangement of the documents in a classified file destroyed much of the significance which attaches to records by reason of their relation to other records.

In general, if individual documents are arbitrarily torn from their context, namely, from the files of the administrative units that created them, and rearranged under classified or other systems, they lose their integrity as a record of organization and function. If records are to serve as evidence of organization and function, the arrangement given them by the organizational units that created them should be maintained, and they should not be reorganized on a subject or other basis. In rearranging them every precept of good archival practice that has been developed either in this country or abroad is apt to be violated.

An exception to the rule of preserving records in their original order should be made when the original order is not ascertainable or is manifestly bad. While most records developed by European governments are organized in registry offices before their release to archival institutions, many records of the Federal government of the United States are left in a disorganized state. Several attempts have been made to bring about uniformity on a national scale in the record-keeping procedures of government agencies, but the only result has been the adoption of systems which have tended to complicate rather than to simplify the organization of the records of any particular agency. Few records, even at the present time, are organized with the consideration in mind that they may eventually be transferred to an archival institution. And in the past, when no such institution existed, records were simply allowed to accumulate and, after having served their current purposes, were relegated to out-ofthe-way storerooms. The basic condition is generally lacking by which the principles of the German and Dutch archives concerning the preservation of the original order established in a registry office can be made to apply. The reconstruction of the

original order, therefore, is often very difficult and occasionally undesirable. The original order—to use the words of the Director of the Prussian State Archives in describing older registries —is "without system, foolish, and impractical." In such cases, the arrangement to be imposed on the records should be determined by the archivist.

4. As a rule, modern records that are preserved for their informational content-without reference to their value as evidence of organization and function-should be maintained in whatever order will best serve the needs of scholars and government officials. A goodly proportion of modern records are preserved, as has been noted, solely for the information they contain on persons or places or on sociological, economic, scientific, or other matters. Such records should be arranged solely with a view to facilitating their exploitation by scholars, scientists, and others without regard to how they were arranged in the agency. An example of such records are the climatological reports that were received by the National Archives from the Surgeon General's Office, the Smithsonian Institution, the Signal Office, and the Weather Bureau. Under the original arrangement of these reports, it was impossible to ascertain what climatological data existed for a given place. They were, therefore, rearranged. The series created by each of the agencies were kept intact, but the volumes containing the reports were unbound and the individual reports within them were arranged by places (States and localities) and thereunder in chronological sequence.

CHAPTER XV

Description Practices

I N THE earlier chapter on "Disposition Practices" I showed how records may be described for disposition purposes either in relation to their substance or in relation to their structure. I indicated that records are substantively described by referring to the administrative body that created them, the functions or activities that gave rise to their creation, and the subjects to which these functions or activities relate. Records are described structurally by providing information about their physical nature and the systems by which they are filed or classified.

In this chapter I wish to discuss the ways in which public records in an archival institution should be described. The same elements that were taken into account in describing records for disposition purposes must also be considered by the archivist in describing them for reference purposes. They are broadly similar to those of a library's descriptive catalog, which identifies books by author and title and gives information on their various physical characteristics, such as edition, imprint, and pagination. The elements, however, are more difficult to distinguish in records than in books. The first element in a description of records is their authorship, which is indicated by stating the name of the administrative unit within a governmental agency that created them. The second element is the physical type to which the records belong-correspondence, reports, directives, schedules, or the like. The third is the title of the unit being described-usually a short identification of the function, activity, or subject to which it relates. The fourth is the physical structure of the unit—whether it consists of parts of a classified group of records, bound volumes, bundles of records, or containers of records. Archives are generally described in terms of their authorship, type, title, and structure, regardless of whether the units being described are large or small. The amount of detail will obviously vary but all the elements should be taken into account in archival description.

In almost all archival institutions of the world the same four elements appear in the description of records. The greatest differences in descriptive technique between countries using registry systems and countries using American filing systems relates to the elements of physical type and structure. I wish to discuss these differences briefly by showing first the types of finding aids produced in Europe, as represented by France, Germany, and England, and then the types of finding aids produced in the National Archives of the United States.

EUROPEAN FINDING AIDS

France: The holdings of the Archives Nationales are divided, as we have seen in a preceding chapter, into a number of record groups (séries). These began with the four established by Camus and have gradually increased in number until now there are almost fifty, and these have occasionally changed in character as records have been shifted from one group to another. The record groups, in turn, are subdivided into a number of subgroups (sous-séries), which usually consist of fonds or records originating from particular sources or kinds of sources. The archives themselves are composed, in the main, of registers (registres) and the documents themselves, which are in the form of file units (liasses) and separate items (pièces). The documents are usually placed in containers (cartons). These, then, are the materials that must be described.

For descriptive and arrangement purposes, the French use a number of symbols to designate these materials. The record groups are designated by one or several capital letters (A, AD, B, F, ZZ, etc.). The subgroups are designated by superscript Arabic or Roman numerals (F^7 , AD^{xv} , etc.). The containers or volumes are designated by Arabic numerals. Thus, " F^7 , 2201" means record group F, subgroup 7, container 2201. An asterisk or star is used to denote a register or bound volume. Thus " F^7 , *2200" means a bound volume or register in record group F, subgroup 7. The individual file units, as well as the individual items of which they are composed, are usually numbered so that it is possible to refer to a particular item in a record group as follows: " F^7 , 2201, *liasse* 2, *pièce* 7." The finding aids produced in the *Archives Nationales* are keyed to this system of designation.

The most general type of finding aids produced in the Archives Nationales are guides, which cover all or most of the record groups. The first of these was compiled by Daunou in 1811, and was entitled Tableau systématique des Archives de l'Empire au 15 août 1811. This was followed by a general inventory, to which I referred in the last chapter, that was begun by M. de Laborde and issued under the title of Inventaire général sommaire in 1867. It contains an enumeration of the items or articles—bound volumes, file units, and cartons—that are found in each record group. This was followed in 1871 by an Inventaire sommaire et tableau méthodique des fonds conservés aux Archives nationales, which contains an analysis of the provenance and subject matter of the pre-revolutionary record groups. The last general inventory, also referred to in the last chapter, was the État sommaire, issued in 1891, in which the holdings of the Archives Nationales are grouped into thirtynine record groups and each group subdivided into subgroups as follows:

Record Group F.—Administration—France in general Subgroups F¹.—Administration—general F².—Administration—departmental F³.—Administration—communal F⁴.—Accounts—general F⁵.—Accounts—departmental F⁶.—Accounts—communal F⁷.—Police—general, etc.

Under each of the subgroups, the registers, cartons, or file units are enumerated as follows:

Subgroup F⁷.—Police—general °1-2200. —General registries and repertories 1792-1837 2201-2312.—Administrative registries, transcripts, of arrests, copies of letters, reports, lists and name control registers, etc. . . 1792-1830 4001-4215.—Police reports and bulletins Year ix-1859 4825-6138.—Papers relating to emigration

The next most detailed type of finding aid produced in the Archives Nationales is the inventory or repertory. There are two kinds of inventories: (1) numerical or summary inventories (inventaires numériques or sommaires) and (2) analytical inventories (inventaires analytiques). A checklist of inventories and repertories prepared at the Archives Nationales was published in 1938, under the title: État des inventaires des Archives Nationales, departementales, communales, et hospitalières au premier janvier 1937. Since this checklist follows the arrangement of the archives themselves, it serves as a guide to the
record groups and subgroups that existed at the time of its publication. Microfilm copies of the unpublished inventories covering the "Section Moderne" of the *Archives Nationales* are available in the Library of Congress; and a list of them is published in the American Historical Association annual report for 1951.

Numerical or summary inventories consist simply of numerical lists of the items-bound volumes, containers, or file units-in a record group. They represent a first step in the analysis of records. In them the contents of containers or file units are identified in general terms. If individual items within containers or file units are of a similar physical type, they are simply identified by physical type, and their inclusive dates are shown. If, on the other hand, such items are of various physical types, the containers or file units are identified in terms of particularly important items, usually the items in relation to which other items were created. While such inventories are being compiled, notes are usually made on the cover sheets of the file units that call attention for later use in descriptive work to particularly important documents, to chronological gaps, and the like. A model of a numerical repertory of the archives of the port of Algiers, subgroup IA, is reproduced in the Notice sur l'organisation des dépôts d'archives des arrondissements maritimes et des sous-dépôts historiques published by the Service des archives et bibliothèques in Paris in 1921 (pp. 21-26). The repertory is broken down into a number of sections, such as "orders and instructions," "correspondence," and "ministerial despatches"; and the containers and registers are listed under these sections as follows:

Analytical inventories, which are compiled only after numerical or summary inventories have been completed, contain quite detailed descriptions of the contents of containers and bound volumes in the record groups. They give the number of file units and separate items in each container. If the file units consist of heterogeneous documents, an item by item analysis is made of them, and the contents of the more significant items are summarized in such detail that the summaries frequently serve in place of the originals. If the file units, on the other hand, are homogeneous in content, they are described in terms of the type of documents of which they consist. The inventories, however, do not usually provide a detailed item by item description of the contents of file units; this would be too time-consuming to prepare and too lengthy to publish.

Some analytical inventories describe records by containers (instead of by file units within containers). A model of such an inventory of the central marine archives, subgroup BB^4 , is found in the *Notice sur l'organisation*, cited above, as follows:

1-3. Current business (October 25-November 17, 1896). 4. Organization of the occupied territories, extension of the pacified zone (November 28). 5. Confirmation of a telegram relating to the repatriation of personnel of the port of Majunga and the flotilla (December 12). 6. Action of the naval division of the Indian Ocean on the west coast of Madagascar (December 12). 7. Changes of personnel (December 27). 8. Project for the construction of a light-house (January 5, 1897).

Germany: The holdings of the various German archival institutions usually consist of groups created by government agencies. A record group ordinarily consists of the records of a German ministry, which is the equivalent of an executive department of the Federal government of the United States. The group is composed of subgroups transferred to it from the various divisional registry offices within the ministry. Each subgroup usually consists of file units or binders (*Akten*), in which individual items are fastened in the order of their accumulation. The binders or file units, which are arranged according to classification schemes, are identified on cover sheets by means of entries that indicate their source in an agency (*Behörde*) or a registry (*Registratur*), their title (*Rubrum*), their dates, and their classification or call numbers.

The archival holdings usually also include special groups that are established for archives of particular significance or for particular physical classes of archives. Among the significant archives for which special groups are established are treaties and documents on parchment (*Urkunden*), which are brought together without regard to their provenance. Special groups are also established for maps, seals, pictures, and other physical classes.

Within the archival institution, the archives—whether loose documents or binders—are usually either packaged in bundles, which are stored horizontally, or fastened into stiff pasteboard covers, which are stored vertically on shelves. Four to eight inches of material are usually placed in each lot, and the wrappings or covers in which they are placed usually bear call marks or other indications of their contents.

The general types of finding aids, or guides, produced in Germany are similar to those produced in France. The German guides (Übersichte der Bestände), which are found only in manuscript form in most German archival institutions, identify the various record groups in custody and indicate their provenance, inclusive dates, approximate bulk, and often also their location in the stacks. Examples of printed guides, which have been produced by a few archival institutions, are those of the Prussian Privy State Archives, published in 1934 under the title Übersicht über die Bestände des geheimen Staatsarchivs zu Berlin-Dahlem, and of the Wurtemberg State Archives, published in 1937 in Stuttgart under the title Gesamtübersicht über die Bestände der staatlichen Archive Württembergs. In the latter guide the holdings (Bestände) of several archival institutions in the State of Wurtemberg are systematically grouped for descriptive purposes under ten major headings that were established on the basis of the source of the archives and their chronology. For example, there are headings for the archives of "Agencies of the Transitional Period, 1803-17," and for the "Recent Files of the Central and Intermediate Agencies, 1806-17." These major headings, which are designated by capital letters, are, in turn, subdivided into subgroups established largely on the basis of the provenance of the archives, such as archives relating to "Financial Matters" or to "Military Matters." Under each of these subgroups the contents of bundles are described, their place of custody is indicated, and the finding aids that have been produced to them are noted by means of symbols. A portion of the guide follows:

E 64. German Conferentiation (1819-1869).

Contains treaties, orders, protocols regarding the Confederation in general.

A repertory by Pfaff, 1825, with supplements by Lotter and others.

E 65-68. German Confederation.

1 volume with register.

1st div. [of a classification scheme]: Various files of the Wurtemberg representatives in Frankfurt and original reports to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1815-1826).

2nd div.: Files of the Wurtemberg military plenipotentiaries at the federal diet (1818-1846).

3rd. div.: Files of the Wurtemberg Ministry of Foreign Affairs relating to matters of the German Confederation (1816-1866) and the Federal Military Commission (1851-1866).

4th div.: Copies of treaties (1806-1861) from the registry of the Wurtemberg legation to the federal diet. German Empire (1870-1871).

E 69.

Treaties regarding the joining of Wurtemberg to the German empire.

A repertory by Pregizer, 1876.

The repertories and inventories produced in Germany are similar to those produced in France. The repertories (*Repertorien*) consist of unpublished handwritten or typewritten lists, bound into volumes, in which the individual binders or file units in a record group are briefly identified. Since the carefully developed systems of classification used in German registries provide accurate information on the content of such binders or file units, German archivists use this information in preparing their repertories. The titles or subject headings that are given the binders in the registries are entered on slips or cards. These are then arranged in the order in which the binders are to be listed in the repertories, usually in the order in which the binders are placed in the stacks, but occasionally in an alphabetical or chronological sequence.

In addition to repertories, another type of unpublished finding aid that is produced is called an analysis (*Analyse*). The analyses are special finding aids that are prepared only for documents of exceptional interest that may be found in binders or file units. They describe such documents in a degree of detail that is considered superfluous for most documents in view of the accurate information provided on them in the registries.

The inventories (*Inventare*) are repertories in published form, usually augmented by explanations of the significance and interrelations of archives and citations to pertinent literature that are not found in repertories. Inventories fall into several types: Comprehensive inventories that cover the contents of entire record groups; special inventories that relate to archives on particular subjects in one or more record groups; and analytical inventories that contain exhaustive information on historically important documents, such as parchments or treaties. Illustrations of how various types of materials-such as parchments, treaties, manuscripts-are described or listed may be found in the Inventare des Groszherzoglich Badischen General-Landesarchivs, published at Karlsruhe between 1901 and 1911. The method of describing bundles of official archives is illustrated by the following entry, under the subject heading "Emigration," taken from volume 3 of the inventory:

8. 1763-1766. Reports of the imperial diet and files relating to the emigration of German colonists to Russia and relating to various counter measures taken by the German states. 1 bundle.

England: General information on the holdings of the Public Record Office may be obtained from its Summary of Records which has passed through several editions. In the 1950 edition the "archive groups" are listed in the alphabetical order of their descriptive titles, and under each group the classes, which are identified by descriptive titles and dates, are listed in numerical order. Certain of the archive groups, it is apparent from the Summary, are broken down into various divisions. The Admiralty archive group, for example, is broken down into the following eleven divisions:

> Secretary's Department, Accountant General's Department, Adjutant General, Royal Marines, Chatham Chest, Controller of the Navy's Department, Greenwich Hospital, Marine Pay Office, Medical Department, Navy Board, Transport Department, Victualling Department.

The classes are established, as in the case of the Admiralty group, on the basis of the type of records; and in the case of other groups, such as those of the Colonial or Foreign Office, on the basis of geographical or political areas. Other factors are also taken into account in establishing classes.

The holdings of the Public Record Office are divided into seventy-eight archive groups which are designated by short titles or letter symbols as follows: Admiralty (Adm.), Colonial Office (C.O.), Foreign Office (F.O.), Home Office (H.O.), and the like. The archive groups, in turn, are divided into 3250 (in 1949) classes. For the Admiralty group, the first few classes, of which there are 116, are "In-letters," "Out-letters," "Minutes," and "Admiralty patents." The classes are designated by Arabic numerals; thus class 2 of the Admiralty group is cited as "Adm. 2." The classes are composed of "pieces"-volumes, rolls, bundles, and the like-of which there are estimated to be 680,000 (in 1949). The first piece within the second class of the Admiralty group should thus be cited as "Adm. 2/1," and the first document within this piece should be cited as "Adm. 2/1/1.

Several guides to the holdings of the Public Record Office have been published, the latest of which, by Giuseppi, is now being replaced by a new edition, which will appear in installments as they are completed. Giuseppi's Guide to the Manuscripts preserved in the Public Record Office, published thirty years ago, describes the holdings by groups and classes, and provides an index to their subject content. An excerpt from Giuseppi's guide pertaining to class 2 of the Admiralty archive group will serve to illustrate the type of descriptive information it provides:

Records of the Admiralty

Secretary's Department

Out-Letters

1656 to 1859. 1,756 Vols. These are classified under some thirty headings, of which those given below are the more important. In most cases each volume is indexed but a few indexes dealing with special sections are here noted.

Orders and Instructions, 1656 to 1815. Digest, 1660 to 1790. 2 Vols. MS. Lords' letters, 1660 to 1815. The Lords' letters from 1695 onwards to the Secretaries of State are entered in separate books.

Secretary's Letters, 1679 to 1815. These are subdivided as follows:

General Letters, 1679 to 1746.

Letters to Public Offices and Admirals, 1746 to 1815.

Index, 1802 to 1807 in Index, &c., Ser. III, Nos. 29-34. Common Letters, 1746 to 1808.

Letters to Captains and Lieutenants, 1809 to 1815.

Letters Relating to Admiralty and Vice-Admiralty Courts and Business, 1663 to 1815.

In connection with the preparation of his guide, Giuseppi listed all finding aids that related to the holdings of the Public Record Office in an eight-volume transcript "Catalogue." The most common of these finding aids are lists, of which a large number were made and some printed. After archives have been arranged into groups and classes and the "pieces" within the classes have been numbered, lists of the individual "pieces" or documents within the classes are compiled. These lists are bare enumerations of the pieces or documents, which are identified merely by number and date. The printed List of Admiralty *Records* (London, 1904) will serve to illustrate the style of entry. In class 2 of the Admiralty record group, which consists of "Out-Letters," the pieces are described under a number of subheads, such as "Orders and Instructions," "Lords' Letters," "Secretary's Letters," which, it will be noted correspond to entries in Giuseppi's Guide. An excerpt from the List follows:

Orders and Instructions			
Number	Date		
1	1665-1679.		
2	(Missing.)		
3	1689 Mar27 July.		
4	" 29 July-17 Dec.		
5	" 8 Dec1690 14 May.		
6	1690 14 May-25 Nov.		
7	" 26 Nov1691 29 May.		
8	1691 30 May-1692 22 Jan.		
9	1692 21 Jan18 Aug.		

Certain of the lists, such as those pertaining to the Colonial Office archive group, contain a bit more descriptive information. An excerpt from Class 5, "America and the West Indies," serves to illustrate the type of entry:

Reference C.O. 5	Date	Description Original correspondence-Secretary of State.
3	1702-1710	Despatches and Miscellaneous
4	1711-1732	»» »»
5	1733-1748	»» »»
6	1749-1754	,, ,, ,,
7	1755-1779	»» »»
8	1780-1783	" " (Military)
9	1710-1713	Expedition against Canada
10	1710-1752	Massachusetts; New Hampshire; Rhode Island
11	1711-1713	Commissioners of Transports, Privy Coun- cil, Commissioners of Accounts

The kinds of information that may actually be found in one of the above pieces, namely 9, identified as "Expedition against Canada," is apparent from Charles M. Andrews' two-volume Guide to the Materials for American History to 1783 in the Public Record Office of Great Britain (Washington, D.C., 1912-14), which describes this item as follows:

"Contains letters from the commander-in-chief and other officers to the Secretary of State with reports, copies of letters, journals, petitions, representations, and resolutions of councils of war.

"A number of documents relating to affairs in North Carolina in 1712; one document dated 1685, another 1709.

"Letters from the governors of the colonies and others relative to matters of colonial co-operation.

"Addresses and petitions other than military.

"Letters from colonial agent.

"Maps of forts, rivers, etc."

Other types of finding aids produced in the Public Record Office are descriptive lists, which, as their title indicates, provide more descriptive information than is found in the bareboned lists; inventories, which provide information on the character, content, size, condition, and completeness of classes of records without specifying the individual pieces or documents of which they consist; indexes, which are alphabetical lists of names or subjects with references to the documents in which they may be found; calendars, which contain descriptions and extracts of individual documents; and transcripts, which are exact reproductions of individual documents.

AMERICAN FINDING AIDS

The National Archives has developed a finding aid program that has taken its character from the records with which it has to deal. Records of the Federal government of the United States have certain characteristics which differentiate them from those contained in the older archival institutions in Europe. The records, by and large, are modern in creation; for very few of them originated earlier than the 19th century. They, therefore, do not present the problems of identification which older, medieval documents do. A knowledge of the auxiliary historical sciences and of medieval languages is not required to describe their source or their contents. The records are modern in form. They consist of innumerable physical types, the most common of which are correspondence, reports, memoranda, and directives; but they also include forms, created to handle the routine operations of a large, modern government. Among the latter are applications, authorizations, awards, bids, certificates, claims, contracts, deeds, manifests, notifications, payrolls, petitions, questionnaires, receipts, returns, schedules, specifications, vouchers, warrants, and the like. The records are arranged under modern systems of arrangement, which, it has been noted, range from simple numerical, alphabetical, and subject systems to highly complicated subject-numeric, duplex-numeric, Dewey-decimal, and other systems. These systems, moreover, are not applied uniformly from agency to agency, or within an agency from office to office. The records are not centrally maintained as in Europe where registry offices are never found at a lower level than that of a division; instead, the records are decentralized almost to the ultimate degree so that almost every official of the government has files relating to his particular activities.

As was noted in the last chapter, the holdings of the National Archives, like those of archival institutions of Europe, are divided into a number of major groups for purposes of administration. The record groups, of which there are about 300, consist most frequently of the records of single agencies (and their predecessors) at the bureau level in the government framework, such as the Office of Indian Affairs, the Coast Guard, or the Weather Bureau. Occasionally the records of several agencies have been brought together on the basis of administrative or other relationships to constitute "collective" record groups. The record groups serve as the basic framework for all arrangement, analysis, and description activities.

Within a record group the units described in the National Archives are quite different in character and form from those we have noted in France, Germany, and England. In the latter countries, it will be recalled, the units of description were usually volumes, bundles, or containers. In the United States the units are normally series, which, as was noted in the preceding chapter, are given a special and, perhaps, a forced definition in the National Archives. A series, as it is here conceived, usually embraces all records arranged in a single integrated filing system. Such records are regarded as constituting one series even if their volume runs into thousands of cubic feet. But the term series is also applied to an independent aggregation of records having a common physical form or relating to the same activity or subject. Occasionally, of course, records may be described in units that are smaller than series, such as volumes, folders, or documents. The present holdings of the National Archives comprise thousands of record series and millions of documents, created by hundreds of agencies.

The National Archives, in describing its records, takes two different approaches. In one the records are described in relation to their organizational and functional origins; this is the approach of *provenance*. In the other approach the records are described in relation to their subject matter; this is the approach of *pertinence*.

Descriptions according to provenance: In describing records from the point of view of their provenance a number of steps can be distinguished. The first is to find out which particular administrative unit within a complex governmental hierarchy produced the body of records under consideration. The second is to learn about the function or the activity that gave rise to them. The third is to identify their physical type, that is, whether they consist of correspondence, reports, directives, schedules, or the like. The fourth is to determine their arrangement, that is, whether they were arranged under a given type of filing system or were simply kept together because they relate to a particular subject or activity or because they had a particular form. These basic data on the administrative and functional origins, the type, and the arrangement of records are developed in the preparation of all finding aids of the National Archives that take the approach of provenance.

The National Archives produces general finding aids that cover all the record groups in its custody. These are called guides and are published for use by government agencies and the public. The *Guide to Records in the National Archives*, published in 1948 as a complete revision of the earlier *Guide*, 1940, covered over 800,000 cubic feet of accessioned records, in 247 record groups. This new *Guide* is extensively indexed as to the subject matter of the record groups. In 1946 the National Archives published a guide in capsule form, entitled *Your Gov*ernment's Records in the National Archives. The general guides analyze records in terms of provenance; they consolidate the information developed in the various finding aids that are prepared for each record group.

The entry in the 1948 *Guide* on record group 84, records of foreign service posts of the Department of State, will serve to illustrate the method of reporting. In its introductory statement the entry contains a one-page (45-line) history of the Diplomatic and Consular Services and their records, with references to pertinent literature. This is followed by paragraphs describing in general terms the diplomatic and consular post records. The latter are described as follows:

Records of consular posts. 1790-1943. 8,280 feet.

The consular posts are usually represented by such items as instructions from the Department, instructions from the supervising post, and copies of despatches and reports to them; general correspondence; records of fees received for notarial, shipping, and miscellaneous services; records of passports issued or visaed; records of births, marriages, and deaths of American citizens; records regarding the disposal of property, the settlement of estates, and the protection of American citizens; certifications of merchandise shipped from or received in the consular district; journals of events and memoranda; and financial records and property inventories of the post. In addition, from seaport consulates there are records of the arrival and departure of American vessels and descriptions of their cargoes; records of services performed for American ships and seamen; lists of seamen shipped, discharged, or deceased; records of marine protests; and other maritime documents. Various registers and indexes are also present. Records of some 690 consular posts are in the National Archives. Almost all countries in which posts have been maintained are represented, with the exception of Norway, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Turkey, from which few if any records have been received.

For each record group the National Archives produces a series of finding aids, which proceed from the general to the particular, becoming progressively more detailed as the records are analyzed in smaller units. In the most general of these finding aids, the *record group registration statement*, the record group itself is the unit of reference. Less general than the registration statement is the *preliminary inventory*, which describes the records in terms of series. Records description becomes particular in the *detailed or special lists*, which pass below the series level and enumerate or describe such individual record items as volumes, folders, and documents.

Record group registration statements are designed to provide certain minimum essential information about the record group, which can be made available shortly after it has been established, and which can easily be kept current by revisions as additional records are accessioned. To establish a further control at so early a stage in the analysis of records is impracticable. The registration statements are used chiefly as working tools by the staff of the National Archives, and because of their frequent revision they serve to supplement the general guides that cover all records in custody. They consist of one- or two-page narrative and descriptive documents, which give the main facts about the origin, organization, and functions of the agencies whose records constitute the respective groups, brief descriptions of the records belonging to the groups in the custody of the Archivist, references to the accessioning transactions by which the records were brought in, the names of the branches within the National Archives that have immediate charge of the records, and brief statements about the location of other records not in the custody of the Archivist that would appropriately belong to the record groups.

The "Registration of Record Group No. 84" will serve to illustrate the kind of information furnished in registration statements. This registration, which is in processed form, contains a very brief statement, about one-fourth as long as that contained in the *Guide*, on the history of the Diplomatic and Consular Services and their records. The records of the consular posts are described as consisting of

. . . communications to and from the Department of State, supervising diplomatic posts, other consular establishments, business firms and other organizations, and individuals; records of births, marriages, and deaths of American citizens; documents regarding the disposal of property, the settlement of estates, and the protection of American citizens; certifications of merchandise shipped from or received in the consular districts; journals of events and memoranda; financial records and property inventories of the posts; and (for seaport consulates) various maritime documents having to do with American ships and seamen.

Preliminary inventories represent a second stage in the description of records according to provenance. Instructions on their preparation are found in the National Archives "Staff Information Paper" No. 14. Normally, a preliminary inventory is intended to cover an entire record group. When a record group has very complex administrative origins and can be conveniently divided into clearly distinct parts, these parts may be covered by separate preliminary inventories. A preliminary inventory is provisional in character and is prepared as soon as possible after records are accessioned. It is prepared primarily for internal use, not only as a finding aid but also as a means of establishing inventory control for various administrative purposes over records in the National Archives. Preliminary inventories provide information on the character of records in terms of their administrative and functional origins; their types; their chronological, geographical, or subject-matter coverage: their relations to other records; and their arrangement. This information is provided in an introduction, in which the record group is described and identified as a whole; in analytical series entries,

which are grouped under administrative, functional, or other headings; and in appendixes, which usually provide additional information about the contents and arrangement of particular series. Inventories produced in the National Archives differ from those produced in most European archival institutions chiefly in the unit of description that is employed. The unit is a series. In the inventories the series are given titles, which distinguish the type of records involved and give other identifying attributes, the inclusive dates, and the quantity. Under each series title a brief paragraph gives additional information about the type of records comprised by the series, their physical form, their administrative and functional origins, and any other pertinent characteristics. The appendixes usually consist of lists of subject entries derived from the headings of filing schemes, from folder headings, or from analyses of the contents of particular series.

The preliminary inventory of record group number 84, which will be used to illustrate the form of entry, covers only records of representative diplomatic and consular posts. Its introductory section contains more complete information than is found in the *Guide* or the "Registration Statement" on the history of the Diplomatic and Consular Services and their records. This information is supplemented in appendixes by lists of the ranking diplomatic and consular representatives at the posts covered by the inventory, a reproduction of the regulations concerning the maintenance of post records and of the identification system used for such records, a list of related State Department despatches, and a list of the Secretaries of State. The form of entry for each of the record series is illustrated by the following:

DESPATCHES TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE. Dec. 31, 1833-July 19, 1912. 17 vols. 3 ft. 61

Copies of communications from the consulate to the Department of State. Included are reports, requests for particular instructions, acknowledgments of instructions received, and explanations of conduct. Most of the reports submitted by the consulate up to the early 1900's are extensive and detailed and touch upon all phases of activity within the consular jurisdiction of Amsterdam. Subjects most frequently discussed are the imports and exports of the Netherlands, manufacturing, agriculture, shipping, and the diamond market. Also included are a few reports on contemporary social, economic, and political conditions. Arranged chronologically. Beginning with Nov. 6, 1906, each volume includes a subject index. The despatches after Oct. 26, 1866, are listed and summarized in the register described in entry 74. Beginning with Aug. 1912 similar despatches are included in the general correspondence described in entry 76. ANNUAL AND OTHER REPORTS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE. Oct. 1881-Apr. 1907. 5 vols. 8 in. 72

Copies of commercial, annual, and other special reports submitted to the Department of State. Typical are reports on the condition of labor in the Netherlands, the shoe and leather industry, general suffrage in Holland, the diamond market, and the coffee, sugar, and oleo-margarine trade. Each volume contains a subject index. Arranged chronologically. The reports are listed in the register described in entry 74. Similar reports dated earlier than Oct. 1881 and for the period 1907-12 are included in the despatches described in entry 61. Beginning with Aug. 1912 they are in the general correspondence described in entry 76.

This register shows the date and number of letters, to whom and to what place sent, the subject or contents, the number of enclosures, and the amount of postage paid. It relates to the letters described in entries 61, 63, 65-68, 70, and 72. After 1911 this register was replaced by the one described in entry 78. Arranged chronologically.

Card catalogs, which were prepared on an experimental basis in the early years of the National Archives, simply represent another form in which information similar to that contained in preliminary inventories may be made available. The experiment in cataloging archives is described in an article in The American Archivist of July 1939, entitled, "Cataloguing at the National Archives," by John R. Russell, the chief of the former Division of Cataloguing. In this experiment main entry cards, which were arranged in alphabetical order, were made for the names of government agencies from which archives were derived. For each agency history cards were prepared containing substantially the same information that is now to be found in the introductory sections of preliminary inventories. The records of each government agency were broken down for cataloging purposes into groups of series and series, both of which correspond to the breakdowns in the preliminary inventories. Cards on accession units were also prepared. While the cataloging experiment showed that it is feasible to present descriptive information on archives in card form, it was abandoned when the present program of preparing preliminary inventories was begun.

Detailed or special lists of records are sometimes prepared in the National Archives, but their preparation is not prescribed as a routine step in the finding aid program. Since these lists are usually prepared in relation to subjects, I shall discuss them in the next several paragraphs that are devoted to .ubject-matter finding aids.

REGISTER OF LETTERS SENT. Oct. 29, 1866-Mar. 31, 1911. 5 vols. 4 in. 74

Descriptions according to pertinence: The second of the two approaches that may be taken in analyzing records, namely that of subject pertinence, is followed only to a limited degree in the National Archives. The subject approach is a difficult one, and the archivist is justified in taking it only where it serves to make information available to a considerable class of users in a form that is most convenient for them. The general public, as a rule, is unfamiliar with the hierarchical structure of a government and considers subjects without regard to the government agencies that dealt with them. To promote the fullest exploitation of its holdings, therefore, an archival institution is justified in developing a program of analyzing records in relation to their subject matter rather than their provenance.

The holdings of the National Archives could doubtless be described by subjects in general guides. For administrative purposes the record groups are already assembled into broad classes relating to such general subjects as war, natural resources, and industrial economics. While these classes are too broad to serve as the basis for the compilation of subject guides, they could be broken down into a limited number of smaller subject classes. For a program designed to produce a series of guides to archives on particular subjects, a number of subjects could be selected that are reasonably coordinate in importance and fairly exclusive of one another and that would encompass all record groups in the National Archives. If such a list of subjects were developed, all record series could then be described in the order of their pertinence to the selected subjects instead of their relation to the record groups in which they are found.

The subject approach to its holdings could also be provided by means of a card catalog. In compiling such a catalog it would be necessary to (1) ascertain the principal subjects of each archival unit described, (2) identify the units on the cards by their source, i.e. the particular administrative body in the government that created them, and (3) prepare added entry cards under the selected subject headings for each archival unit in which the subject is represented. The National Archives has not considered it feasible to prepare such a card catalog of its holdings. The range of subjects would be almost limitless. Although under existing instructions it is a regular part of inventory procedure to determine the subject content of series, the subjects covered by series are seldom identified in other than the most general terms. This is particularly true of long series that comprise all records arranged under classification schemes. To prepare a subject catalog, a reanalysis of most series would be necessary to identify the subjects to which they pertain. The number of subject entry cards that would be necessary for each archival unit described would be very large. On each subject entry card the series (or perhaps the individual item), the subgroup, and the record group would have to be identified; and, unless symbols were used, the identifications would be very cumbersome.

Although the National Archives has not considered a card catalog feasible, it does produce two types of special finding aids which describe records in relation to particular subjects.

One of these types is the Reference Information Paper. A number of Reference Information Papers were published during and after World War II. Each paper deals with some special subject, on which records are to be found in many different record groups. Several of them relate to geographical areas, to commodities (such as rubber or forest products), and to other subjects that were of particular interest to war agencies. About forty have been issued to date; and, for the subjects that they cover, they enable the searcher to find his way through the complexity of hundreds of series of records of many different agencies. A good recent example is the paper entitled "Materials in the National Archives relating to the Historical Programs of Civilian Government Agencies During World War II." In the body of the paper are described pertinent series of records created or collected by the wartime historical units and aggregations of drafts or other significant materials accumulated in the process of writing histories. In the appendix are listed individual documents of significance concerning the historical programs, manuscript histories, and historical studies, reports, and sketches.

The second of the special types of finding aids are *detailed or* special lists. Instructions on their preparation are given in National Archives "Staff Information Paper" No. 17. Two broad types of lists may be distinguished: one indicating what records are available on a particular subject, and the other what subjects are covered by particular records. In the former records are listed in relation to subjects; in the latter subjects in relation to records.

The former type of lists may be either selective or comprehensive, in the sense that only particular items or all items pertaining to a given subject may be included. An example of a comprehensive list is that prepared for documents relating to special agents of the Department of State for 1789-1906. This list, which was prepared by Natalia Summers, covers documents relating to the special missions of ministers and consuls who were instructed to perform duties not related to their posts. It brings together information about all items relating to a particular subject without regard to the relative importance of the items. The documents are scattered among many series of records of the Department of State and are listed under the names of the agents as follows:

RINGGOLD, CADWALADER

1853

To negotiate and conclude treaties of friendship and commerce with sovereigns of the islands in the Indian and Pacific Oceans with whom it might be advantageous for the United States to have treaties. Special Missions:

Vol. 3—To Ringgold, instructions to negotiate and sign treaties, Mar. 2, p. 25 (1853).

Miscellaneous Letters:

From Sec. of Navy, suggesting Ringgold be given diplomatic powers, Mar. 1 (1853).

Despatches, China:

Vol. 9—From R. McLane, Am. Min., at Hong Kong, Mar. 20, No. 1; at Macao, Apr. 8, No. 2, enclosing correspondence with Ringgold; from P. Parker, at Canton, re Ringgold, July 4; from McLane, at Shanghai, Nov. 18, enclosing correspondence with Ringgold (1854).

An example of a selective list is that prepared for certain records of the National Recovery Administration. Selective lists help solve the problem of mass for the user by singling out for special mention items of importance in relation to a particular subject, thus bringing to the attention of the user the best sources of information on the subject that interests him. This is illustrated in the list of the National Recovery Administration, which identifies selected individual documents fully and uses symbols to show their series location as follows:

Industrial Control

- Brief Preliminary Survey of Industrial Control and Recovery Measures in Foreign Countries: Supplement on Australia. No author. Mar. 1935. 21 pp. and appendix. SR & P.
- Brief Preliminary Survey of Industrial Control and Recovery Measures in Great Britain, Germany, Italy, and France. No author. Mar. 1935.42 pp. and appendix. SR & P.
- A Rational Plan for the Division of Industrial Control Under the Recovery Act. By Charles R. Cosby. Sept. 18, 1933. No consecutive pagination. MR & D.
- Regulation of Industrial Relations in Australia. By Carroll B. Spender. Mar. 1936. ii, 23 pp. WM 60.

The second type of detailed or special lists consists simply of an enumeration of the subjects to which records in a given series or record group pertain. An excellent example may again be given for record group number 84, namely, the records of the Diplomatic and Consular Services. Special List No. 9, entitled "List of Foreign Service Post Records in the National Archives," enumerates the diplomatic and consular posts as follows:

Abyssinia. See Ethiopia. Albania, 1922-39. 44 cu. ft. Argentina, 1820-1932. 72 cu. ft. Austria, 1837-1935. 168 cu. ft. Austria-Hungary. See Austria.	Estonia, 1930-37. 5 cu. ft. Ethiopia, 1908-36. With the con- sular records of Addis Ababa. Finland, 1920-38. 17 cu. ft. France, 1789-1935. 410 cu. ft.
Austria-Hungary. See Austria.	France, 1789-1935. 410 cu. ft.
Belgium, 1932-1935. 101 cu. ft.	Germany, 1835-1913. 89 cu. ft.

CHAPTER XVI

Publication Programs

While Discussing the development of archival institutions in France, England, and the United States in an earlier chapter, I pointed out that historians were particularly influential in promoting their establishment. Since historians realize the value of documentary source material, they importuned governments to protect and make available for use one of the principal classes of such material, namely, the public records. Archivists therefore owe a great deal to historians. They are repaying the debt they owe by the help they give historians, first, in guiding them through voluminous source materials by means of finding aids and, secondly, in making available to them the most important records by means of documentary publications.

In the publication of documentary sources archivists and historians have helped each other. The publication of documents by archivists stimulated historical scholarship. Historians first began to write history critically, and with a degree of scientific exactness, when documentary sources became easily available to them. This was especially notable after the publication of certain of the great collections of medieval source materials.

In Italy critical history writing began after Ludovico Antonio Muratori (1672-1750) published his Writers on Italian Affairs (Rerum Italicarum scriptores)(28 volumes, 1723-38). Muratori's output of source materials is perhaps greater than that of any other single individual in the whole history of historiography. It is perhaps significant that this man, who is known as the father of Italian history, was an archivist by profession. He was keeper of the archives at Modena.

The great German collection of medieval source materials, the Monuments of German History (Monumenta Germaniae historica) (115 volumes, 1826 to date), which was partly the work of archivists, also stimulated the critical study of medieval history. The documents found in the Monuments have been used since their appearance in archival seminars to train students in historiography and the auxiliary historical sciences. The publication owes its origins mainly to the efforts of Baron vom Stein (1757-1831), noted statesman of the Napoleonic period, whose interest in historical research and publication led him to found the Historical Society of Germany (Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde), under the auspices of which the work of publication was begun. The work is now directed centrally by a committee consisting of members of the Academies of Science at Vienna, Berlin, and Munich. The guiding spirit of the publication during its first fifty years was Georg Heinrich Pertz (1795-1876). When Pertz began his work on the Monuments in 1823, he was secretary of the archival institution at Hanover. Later he became librarian at Hanover and Berlin.

In England the great collection of Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages (Rerum Britannicarum medii aevi scriptores) (251 volumes, 1858-1911) was published under the nominal direction of the Master of the Rolls and hence is called the Rolls Series. The materials in the collection were edited by competent historians working with the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records in the Public Record Office. Besides including chronicles and memorials of the medieval period, the Rolls Series includes many calendars of state papers and lists and indexes of other public records that pertain to the modern period. The publication of the Rolls Series revealed the great wealth of historical sources in England and gave impetus in that country, as similar publications did on the continent, to the development of the modern school of critical historians.

Archivists have received much help from historians in publishing documentary source material. In compiling and editing the great medieval source collections to which I have alluded they brought to bear the training they had received from historians. Their products were monuments of historical scholarship. But besides a knowledge of history, they had to use the auxiliary historical sciences, e.g. diplomatics, paleography, and sphragistics. It is in this regard, parenthetically, that their work is to be most sharply distinguished from that of archivists dealing with modern records.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PUBLICATION

To an ever increasing extent governments are assuming financial responsibility for the publication of documentary resources. The publication of the great medieval collections is now being supported by public funds. This is the case with the new edition of Muratori's Writers of Italian Affairs, and with additions to the Monuments of German History, both of which originated as private ventures.

In the United States the Federal government has been quite prodigal in its financial support of documentary publication. After reviewing the publications produced with public funds, Dr. Clarence E. Carter, eminent American historian, stated in the Mississippi Valley Historical Review for June 1938 that "... it is plain that Congress is not unfriendly to the general principle of publishing the essential records of the nation, and that it is ready to do its share provided there is sufficient evidence of support from interested people-support which is authentic and genuine." Even during the period while the nation was being formed, in the midst of a revolution, the Continental Congress gave its support to Ebenezer Hazard's plan to assemble and publish a collection of important state papers. Since its establishment the Federal government has published or subsidized the publication of many important collections of historical documents. Among these are Peter Force's American Archives, the American State Papers, the War of the Rebellion records, the State Department's annual volumes of Foreign Relations, and the volumes of Territorial Papers edited by Dr. Carter.

The program of the Federal government in publishing documentary material has often received the attention of American historians. Under their prodding, President Theodore Roosevelt about forty years ago appointed a committee of nine distinguished historians to survey the published documentary material relating to United States history and to determine the need of additional publications. After reviewing the measures taken by European governments to publish documentary source material the committee recommended that Congress create a permanent Commission on Historical Publications and provide funds for additional documentary publications. A quarter of a century later, in the act which established the National Archives, provision was made for the creation of such a commission. This commission, however accomplished little and was superseded by a new commission in September 1950. The latter's functions are twofold: (1) to "make plans, estimates, and recommendations for such historical works and collections of sources as it deems appropriate for printing or otherwise recording at the

public expense," and (2) to "cooperate with and encourage appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies and non-governmental institutions, societies, and individuals in collecting," preserving, and publishing documents that are "important for an understanding . . . of the history of the United States."¹ The commission is one of the constituent units of the National Archives and Records Service.

In the United States, then, as in many other countries, the Federal government recognizes its responsibility to publish documentary source material. It has established a special commission to concern itself exclusively with planning the publication of such materials. This commission is attempting, and quite successfully, under the leadership of its Executive Director, Dr. Philip M. Hamer, to promote publication projects, generally along the lines of using private funds to publish private materials and public funds to publish public materials.

The committee of American historians appointed by President Roosevelt forty years ago questioned whether government documentary publications should be produced by historical or by archival organizations. This question of responsibility is one that has been largely resolved with the lapse of time. Private publishers will obviously choose whom they wish—whether archivist or historian—as editors. And the historical profession should obviously have an opportunity of making known its need of documentary publications, as it has through the National Historical Publications Commission; but, having expressed its need, it should perhaps rely on the custodial institutions to make the best arrangements they can for the editorial supervision of any publications that are undertaken.

In the National Archives the editorial work on documentary publications is being done by both historians and archivists, the former doing the work on the principal publications appearing in conventional print form, and the latter on publications appearing on microfilm. Instructions for the preparation of sources for printing are given in bulletin number 7 on *Historical Editing* by Dr. Carter. Instructions for editing material for microfilm are given in Staff Information Paper number 19 on "The Preparation of Records for Publication on Microfilm."

The only documentary publication that is now being produced at the National Archives in print is the *Territorial Papers of the United States*. This project of compiling, editing, annotating, and publishing papers relating to the government of the territories began before the National Archives was established. It was initially authorized by Congress in an act of March 3, 1925, and was provided for by later acts in response to the urgent solicitation of members of the historical profession, notably the American Historical Association, the Mississippi Valley Historical Association, and various State and local historical societies. Work on the project began in 1931 at the Department of State but was transferred in 1950 to the National Archives. Dr. Carter, who has editorial supervision of this project, is an historian and a specialist in the field.

A program of documentary publications on microfilm was begun at the National Archives in 1940 under the direction of Dr. Solon J. Buck. This publication program, which was first known as the File Microcopy Program and later as the Microfilm Publication Program, consists of making facsimile copies on microfilm of selected series of records of high research value. The *List of National Archives Microfilm Publications*, issued by the National Archives in 1953, describes 4,666 rolls of master negative microfilm containing reproductions of more than 3 million pages of records. The number has now risen to over 4 million pages. The editorial work in preparing records for microfilm reproduction is done by professionally-trained archivists, many of whom also have training as historians.

The publication and finding aid programs of an archival institution are closely related. Normally records should be described in finding aids before they are published. Finding aids facilitate the work of selection and editing. In preparing finding aids in which individual items are described, as in lists, the archivist must give the same meticulous attention to detail as an editor in publishing such items. The same skills, in a word, are needed in the two types of work.

FORMS OF PUBLICATION

"The nearest to the ideal of a comprehensive publication of the federal archives that has ever been projected,"² according to Dr. Carter, is the American State Papers published by Gales and Seaton between 1831 and 1861. The thirty-eight volumes in this series contain information on all phases of Federal government activity for the period 1789-1832. Six of its volumes are devoted to foreign affairs, 7 to military affairs, 4 to naval affairs, 2 to Indian affairs, 1 to postal affairs, 8 to public lands, 5 to finance, 2 to commerce and navigation, 1 to claims, and 2 to miscellaneous matters. Few aspects of Federal activity escaped attention in these volumes. In attempting to achieve this ideal in the publication of recent public records the archivist must make several determinations: (1) He must make a selection of the records that are suitable for publication, (2) He must determine the form in which they are to be published, and (3) He must determine whether the individual documents are to be published in full text or in an abstract form. There are two main alternative forms of publication to be considered: the printed form and the microfilm form.

It is obviously impracticable to publish in printed form for the recent years a set of documents that will provide the same comprehensive coverage of Federal activities as was provided in the American State Papers for a century earlier. Public records of the recent period are too voluminous to permit comprehensive publication in printed form. With the enormous expansion of the government's activities in the last fifty years the prospect of getting even a modest representation of its vast yearly accumulation of important documents published in this manner has become hopeless. The letterpress form of publication is an expensive form, almost a luxurious form. Its product is admittedly the most convenient, for its pages are easily read (without the use of projectors), easily compared with each other, and easily cited.

The printed form of publication, therefore, should be reserved for documentary sources of the greatest and the most general research interest. It should be a highly selective form of publication. The criteria for selecting modern public records to be published in printed form are probably best indicated by referring to certain publication projects now under way or now projected.

Public records are most likely to be eligible for publication in printed form if they relate to the beginnings of things. The *Territorial Papers of the United States* illustrate the application of this criterion. This publication consists of official papers relating to the 28 continental territories of the United States before their admission as States of the Union. The principal basis on which documents are selected for inclusion in the publication is their relevancy to the administration of a territory. The documents thus disclose the evolution of the American territories and of the territorial administrations within them. The criterion of relation to beginnings is also illustrated by the National Historical Publications Commission's plan to publish a comprehensive documentary history of the First Federal Congress. The work of this Congress was of the greatest importance in establishing the principles, working methods, and organization of the Federal government.

Public records may be eligible for publication in printed form if they relate to outstanding historical events or episodes. The application of this criterion is well illustrated by the tremendous 129-volume publication entitled War of Rebellion: a Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies. Here the importance of the event was the principal warrant for publication.

The printed form of publication is especially suitable for public documents that are dispersed among many series and that are to be brought together in a different order in relation to some particular subject. This is the case again with respect to the *Territorial Papers*, which are selected from many record groups in the National Archives and reassembled without regard to their order in the files to provide an insight into every aspect of American governmental activity in the territories. It is also the case with respect to the projected publication of the documentary history of the First Federal Congress. In this publication materials are to be brought together from official and private sources as well as from contemporary published sources.

The printed form of publication is suitable, moreover, for public records when the individual items require editorial attention. Such attention may be desirable because of the importance of the items, the diversity of their source, or the fact that they were cited in contemporary or other publications. In such cases annotations may be necessary to explain the significance of the individual items or their relation to other items or to refer to relevant literature.

Microphotographic reproduction is a technique that is suited to the publication of many series of modern records that cannot be reproduced, for reasons of cost, in the conventional way. It is a technique that makes possible the production of unique copies or very limited editions at a unit cost far lower than is possible with other techniques of reproduction. In microphotographic reproduction minimum unit costs can be achieved in very small editions, for the additional costs of producing extra copies of films are relatively low after a master negative copy has been produced. In near-print processes, on the other hand, it is necessary to produce at least a hundred copies, and in printing processes at least a thousand copies before minimum unit costs can be achieved. Microphotographic reproduction is a less selective form of publication than the printed form. It can, therefore, be employed in making available modern records of the recent period in the comprehensive way in which they were made available for the early period of the Federal government in the American State Papers. It can be employed to supply the basic sources for new fields of study, whose progress is often hampered by the lack of materials. It enables scholars to cope with the problem of analyzing the complexities of modern society by supplying them with copies of highly specialized materials. It is, in short, a modern technique that can contribute to a scholarly synthesis of modern society.

Microphotographic reproduction, moreover, provides exact facsimiles of original records. Since the technique is a cheaper process of reproduction than printing, many documents are likely to be included in a microfilm publication that would ordinarily be rejected for publication in the more expensive printed form. Editorial work is reduced in preparing documents for microfilming, the editorial comments generally being confined to entire series rather than individual documents; and the element of subjectivity is reduced in the editorial process, for the user rather than the editor is made responsible for determining the significance of documents that are reproduced.

Microfilm publications may be produced as supplements to printed publications. Several examples of this procedure may be cited. In the case of the records of the Continental Congress, the Library of Congress published the *Journals* (34 volumes, 1904-37) for the years 1774-1789. The National Archives, which received the records in 1952, is now preparing a microfilm publication of records supplementary to the journals. The National Archives is also planning to supplement future printed volumes of the *Territorial Papers* by microfilm copies of unprinted documents relating to the territories covered by them.

Documents may be reproduced in an abstract form in calendars. The pattern for the production of calendars was probably set by the British *Calendar of State Papers*. The British began to compile calendars of public records early in the 19th century. When the Public Record Office was established in 1838, the first Deputy Keeper of Public Records, Sir Francis Palgrave (1788-1861), undertook to prepare calendars systematically as records were identified, sorted, classified, and listed by his staff. Beginning in 1841 calendars produced by his office were printed in appendixes to his reports and after 1855 in a separate series. As the work on calendars progressed, they were made more and more complete, eventually providing so much information on particular documents that reference to the originals was unnecessary. When calendars serve as substitutes for the originals because of the abundance of information contained in them, they may be considered as a form of documentary publication; normally they are considered as a form of finding aid.

The British calendaring procedure was adopted by many archivists and historians of the United States at the turn of the last century. A whole series of calendars was produced, for example, by the Bureau of Rolls and Library of the Department of State between 1893 and 1903. The most notable of these covered the papers of Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe, which had been purchased by the Federal government about fifty years earlier. The calendaring procedure is also being followed in some State archival institutions. An excellent description of the procedure by Dr. Morris L. Radoff is contained in the articles entitled "A Practical Guide to Calendaring," published in *The American Archivist* for April and July 1948.

CHAPTER XVII

Reference Service

THE END of all archival effort is to preserve valuable records and make them available for use. Everything an archivist does is concentrated on this dual objective. He reviews and appraises public records to determine if they should be kept or destroyed, and in doing this he has in mind the future use that may be made of them. He brings records into his building for such use. He houses and repairs records so that they will be preserved and used. He administers records in such a way that an arrangement that served official needs will also serve scholarly needs. He describes them in finding aids so that their content and character will be made known. He intercedes with government officials to lift restrictions so that records will be open for use. He provides access to records under conditions that will satisfy both government officials and the general public and makes records equally available to both.

An archivist's activities are well illustrated by the work of the National Archives with the public records of the Federal government of the United States. Before the establishment of the National Archives these records had accumulated, for a century and a half, in various buildings, both public and private. In the course of this time they had usually been relegated, as they were no longer used, to inaccessible cellars and attics where their very existence was soon forgotten. The first act of the National Archives, therefore, was a survey to obtain information of their location, volume, and character; and on the basis of this information it retrieved those that were valuable. Thereafter it systematically fumigated, cleaned, and stored the valuable records in stacks where all conditions affecting their preservation were controlled. It then analyzed the records to determine their character and significance and prepared finding aids to make known to the government and the public what records existed and what information might be found in them.

In this chapter I shall discuss two aspects of the problem of making records available for use: the policies that should govern access to records and the policies that should govern their use.

POLICIES GOVERNING ACCESS

In evolving policies for the regulation of access to public records that will be found reasonable by both government officials and the public it is necessary to devise procedures for defining and enforcing restrictions on their use. In the National Archives of the United States the first step in defining such restrictions is taken when a government agency offers records for transfer. At that time a statement of restrictions is developed which is acceptable both to the National Archives and to the agency involved. If an agency insists on unreasonable restrictions, the National Archives will not accession the records on which they are imposed. The statement of restrictions is embodied in a document called an "Accession Inventory," which formalizes the transfer of legal custody of the records from the agency to the National Archives. The second step in defining restrictions is taken after the records have been brought into the National Archives Building. The records are allocated for purposes of further work on them to a "record group," which usually consists, as we have seen, of records of a major governmental entity such as a bureau. For each record group, then, a number of control documents are prepared, including a "Restriction Statement," which embodies all the restrictions agreed upon in various accession inventories that pertain to the particular record group. Usually a Restriction Statement is a one-page document though it may run into several pages. The statements are issued in a distinctive colored paper, so that employees are alerted to any prohibitions on use that may apply to the records on which they are working. The statements are also published in National Archives finding aids. This procedure serves to crystallize access policies.

Every restriction should be subject to some limitation in time so that all records that are preserved will eventually be opened to public use. The National Archives has been able to obtain legislation that removes all restrictions on the use of records that have become fifty years old unless the Archivist specifically determines that the restriction should be extended. Such general legislation serves only to remove unreasonable restrictions on the use of older records. For time limitations cannot be applied indiscriminately or uniformly to all government records. A

chronological deadline, according to Dr. Waldo G. Leland, "is undoubtedly convenient from the administrative point of view, but it is artificial and needlessly hampers or makes quite impossible many lines of investigation. A more satisfactory procedure would be to establish a chronological line on the earlier side of which any investigation (except possibly in certain specified cases) could be made without the obtaining of special consent, but on the later side of which each case should be treated on its merits. . . .^{"1} The shortening of the time period during which records are withheld from the critical scrutiny of scholars may have an adverse effect on the quality of public records that are produced. If they know that what they write will be used shortly, perhaps within their lifetime, for historical purposes, public officials may produce records with an eye to history. They may put into their documents what they believe will reflect creditably upon them or the administration with which they are associated. Military and diplomatic officials, in particular, are apt to write for posterity under such circumstances. By being too hasty in opening records for public use the archivist and, parenthetically, the historian may defeat their purpose of promoting objective research.

Records should be open for use to the maximum extent that is consistent with the public interest. Since the purpose of an archival agency, as we have seen, is to make records available for use, an archivist normally favors a policy of free access. He is a sort of physiocrat among those who deal with records, an advocate of laissez-faire in the matter of use. His desire is to promote free inquiry to the fullest extent. His contribution to the search for truth lies in making available the evidence that is in his possession. He believes that in most circumstances the public interest is served best by making known the truth about matters-even unsavory matters in public life-for the truth, it is said, will make us free. He is not, himself, a muckraker (to use an American expression); he is not a gravedigger who disinters the bones of rottenness and holds them up to public view. As a responsible public official he is conscious of his obligation to safeguard the public interest. But he is not a censor. His judgment on what should be made available and what should be withheld from public use is thus based on conflicting considerations, for his desire to foster free inquiry may conflict with the demands of public interest. The public interest is an imponderable thing that may be one thing at one time and another at another time. The archivist, therefore, is well advised to

follow a middle course in arriving at his judgments on access, taking into account all the factors that have a bearing on the problem.

Let us look at some of the reasons why access to records should be denied in the public interest, and while considering this matter let us see if under certain circumstances the impediments to free access can be removed.

First, the public interest is most obviously served by preventing access to records containing military information that affects the present or future security of a nation. Such records should be held inviolate. No one will quarrel with this point of view, I am sure. Governments usually issue special regulations governing access to records of this class. In the United States such records are administered under security regulations, which are interpreted for the staff of the National Archives in its Handbook of Procedures. Although military records bearing directly on the security of a nation should not be opened to public use, this does not mean that all military records should be withheld from such use indefinitely. Military strategy and tactics are subjects of continual study in all defense establishments, and they are proper subjects of study and criticism for political leaders and the public in a democracy. If a government is responsible to the people for its conduct in the area of defense, the record of its defense activity needs to be as freely open to examination as the necessities of defense will permit. Records relating to military history at least-to military exploits in the past -should be opened to the public as soon as their opening will not conflict with the interests of security. This is true even if the information contained in them may reflect adversely on the valor of an army, the strategy of a campaign, or the tactics of a battle.

Secondly, the public interest is obviously served by preventing access to records relating to the conduct of foreign affairs in the immediate present. Secrecy in diplomatic negotiations is as vital to a democratic society as to any other. Though in a democracy the public has a right to know the major objectives of its government in the conduct of foreign affairs, the public interest is hardly served by making every delicate move in these affairs a matter of public debate. The policies that determine the relations of one government with another are a matter of slow development and are reflected in records covering long periods of time. Such records, therefore, must be kept secret for a time. No one, probably, will quarrel with this point of view though differences of opinion may exist as to the length of time during which records pertaining to foreign affairs must be withheld from scrutiny, and as to the persons to whom and purposes for which such records should be made available before they are generally opened. In the United States Charles Evans Hughes, as Secretary of State, prescribed rules in 1921 for "study and research" in the records of his department. These provided that "applicants must be duly accredited by responsible sources known to the Department or must themselves be known to the Department. Research privileges will not be accorded unless the Department is convinced of the responsibility of the applicant and that the purpose of the contemplated research is legitimate and useful."² After World War II a standard rule was established opening virtually all the department's records after a lapse of twenty-five years. For the more recent records the department issued a regulation in January 1953 which stated its general policy in the following language: "The Department shall make its records available to persons not officials of the United States Government, and to officials when engaged in private research, as liberally as possible without violating its principles or procedures consonant with the security of the nation, the protection of the public interest, and the efficient operation of the Department."³ A policy of "limited access" is difficult to administer fairly and is of questionable merit, for access to public records should be given without regard to person or purpose. Insofar as archivists control access to records they must apply the principle of equal access to all legitimate searchers. That is to say, they must grant access to historians that are critical of the past administration of foreign policy as readily as to those that are laudatory of it. If this is not done, if records are opened only to the so-called "court historians," the objective of promoting free inquiry is defeated. In this connection I should like to point out that what is considered to be the public interest in opening records relating to foreign affairs may be greatly changed by circumstances. After the first World War one European chancellery after another opened most of its foreign archives, sometimes in justification of its pre-war diplomacy and sometimes, as in the case of Russia and Germany, in deprecation of a pre-war government. Normally these secret records would have been withheld from public inspection for generations; actually some are still being withheld. In the United States today certain scholars are pressing for access to much of the documentation relating to recent diplomatic events;

and political considerations may hasten the time when access to such records will be granted.

Thirdly, the public interest is obviously served by preventing access to records containing confidential business and financial information. The disclosure of such information may have adverse effects in two ways: First, it may adversely affect the government's relations with private organizations and individuals from whom such information is obtained; and secondly, it may adversely affect the relations of private organizations and individuals with one another. Let me explain a bit further. On the first point, a government would be seriously hampered in the conduct of many of its fact-gathering and regulatory activities if it allowed free access to information submitted in confidence. Such information would be unobtainable in the future if its confidentiality were not maintained. The government is honorbound to keep it secret. On the second point, business or financial concerns would be seriously harmed if the confidential information they submitted to the government on production, costs, profits, trade processes, and the like, were made available to competitors. The disclosure of such information might cost some firms their life. It would be similar to exposing the military secrets of one government to another. Free competition, which is the essence of the American economic system, would be greatly hampered.

In the United States the Congress has safeguarded the confidentiality of various types of business and financial data through numerous acts of legislation. Most of these relate to the use of specific types of information that is being furnished to the government in confidence. One general law, the Federal Reports Act of 1942, governs all fact-gathering activities of Federal agencies. Confidential information is either supplied on a voluntary basis or extracted under statutory provisions that give subpoena powers to government agencies. Very few agencies have been granted subpoena power to obtain information, and under the Federal Reports Act information thus obtained can be divulged only to other agencies having the same power.

Some examples of records containing confidential information obtained from business concerns are (1) the statistical records of sales, production, employment, and the like, submitted by the mineral industries to the Bureau of Mines, (2) the cost and profit information which was obtained by the Office of Price Administration as a basis for establishing price regulations and making price adjustments during World War II, and (3) records on trade secrets and processes obtained by the United States Tariff Commission. Examples of records containing confidential information obtained from financial concerns are (1) reports of bank examinations by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, and (2) records of trading at the Chicago Board of Trade received by the Commodity Exchange Administration. Examples of records containing confidential business and financial information obtained from private persons are (1) income tax returns received by the Bureau of Internal Revenue, and (2) farm returns on acreage and yield received by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

As with military and diplomatic records, however, there are conditions under which the granting of access to confidential business and financial records is in the public interest. Such records, like all other types of confidential records, lose their confidentiality with age and should be opened, as they usually are, after a certain time, for exploitation by scholars. The periods during which they are withheld from use should, as a rule, be shorter than in the case of military and diplomatic records. And provision should be made whenever possible for their current exploitation by private investigators who are interested only in general economic or financial data rather than in data relating to specific firms or individuals. The objective of the archivist, generally speaking, should be to define the conditions of access in such a way that scholarly researches will be possible while private interests will be protected.

Fourthly, the public interest is obviously served by preventing access to records containing certain types of personal information. In modern governments, which reach to an ever-increasing extent into the private lives of citizens, a great deal of information is recorded that is of a private nature. We are all the administration of personnel or medical services; nor should it preclude the use of personal data, such as are contained in census schedules, if such data are used in the aggregate and not on an individual basis; nor should the rule be applied for an indefinite period of time. I should, perhaps, add that records on the official activities of public servants, as distinct from records dealing with their personal lives, should not be withheld on the ground that access to them might hurt their reputations; for public servants, whether in the military, diplomatic, or civilian service, are not a privileged class and owe an accounting to the people they serve.

POLICIES GOVERNING USE

Since public records are the property of the state, all citizens, who collectively constitute the state, have a right to their use. The rights of citizens as joint proprietors, however, do not extend so far as to permit them individually to use records in a manner that is injurious to the records. The property of the people must be faithfully preserved by its official custodians so that it may be used by future as well as by present generations. An archivist must therefore devise rules and procedures for the use of records that are in the interest of all. He should attempt to make his materials available to the fullest extent that is consistent with a reasonable regard for their preservation, weighing the demands of present-day inquirers for their use against the demands of posterity for their preservation.

In making his materials available the archivist should make no distinction between official and private users. Both should be served equally well. Many archivists, especially in Europe, hold the view that an archival institution, as a part of the government, should give the government preference over the public. The government, of course, should be provided with records it needs for its current work—the primary purpose for which they were created. But an archival institution is equally concerned with the research use that may be made of records their secondary purpose; for it was established primarily to preserve and make available records for such use. This is implicit in my definition of public archives as public records that have value for purposes other than those for which they were created, i.e. for secondary purposes.

If priorities are established in servicing records, they should be established on the basis of the character of the service requests, not the source. Within the categories set up by such priorities, requests for service should be handled in the order of their receipt. It may be expedient, of course, to give highest priority to requests that emanate from the arm of the government that appropriates funds for the archival institution. But, ideally, service requests should be handled on the basis of their importance. All requests should be handled courteously and considerately, but special consideration should be given to those from inquirers seeking information needed in establishing their legal or civic rights or from inquirers engaged in work that will contribute significantly to the increase or dissemination of knowledge.

Archives can be made available for use in various ways. They can be placed before the user in the search rooms of the archival institution, they can be lent, copies of them can be furnished, or information can be provided from them or about them.

Search room use: While archives should be made freely available, certain precautions are necessary to protect them while they are in use. Archivists should observe certain procedures in dealing with inquirers. They should require inquirers (1) to establish their identity, (2) to acknowledge in writing the receipt of archives delivered to them in order to insure an accountability for them, and (3) to familiarize themselves with the rules governing use of the archives.

An archivist, by the nature of his profession, is anxious to help an inquirer. His discreet inquiries about an inquirer's plans, the subject in which he is interested, the length of time he has to devote to it, and the like, do not stem from idle inquisitiveness; he is simply trying to get the information that will enable him to provide helpful guidance in the use of the archives in his custody. Nor is his requirement that an inquirer provide identifying information about himself a bit of unnecessary government red-tape. An archivist is less concerned with a user's qualifications than with his trustworthiness. The identifying information called for is needed to protect the archival resources. An archivist is quite within his rights in requiring prospective users to sign for the documents they receive, for he is responsible for their preservation, and some of them may have great monetary value. An archivist should ask every inquirer, no matter how important he may be or may count himself, to become familiar with the rules governing use of the archives. A truly important inquirer will not object to the observance of a
few commonsense rules designed to preserve the cultural resources that he uses.

The rules governing use of the Federal archives of the United States have been published in the *Federal Register* and have the effect of law. They are generally similar to rules issued by most other archival institutions. They are designed (1) to protect archives from such physical harm as might result from using various types of fasteners on them, folding or otherwise mishandling them, smoking or eating while using them, or using photographic chemicals near them; and (2) to protect them against all acts that might impair their integrity, such as rearranging, altering, or writing on them. If these restrictive rules seem onerous, they should be weighed against the tremendous facilities that modern archival institutions have made available to inquirers for the use of archives.

Lending: Archives should be lent, if at all, on an institutional, not on an individual basis. They may be lent to the government agencies that produced them or to responsible private research institutions but not to private individuals, whether these are within the government or outside the government. They should be lent to government agencies for official purposes only, for such agencies should recognize the role of an archival institution in making archives available for other purposes and refer the latter requests for direct handling by the archival institution. Other government agencies should not be intermediaries between private persons and an archival institution in making available archival materials or information from them.

Archives should be last only under conditions that will are-

serve them physically and preserve their record character. The possible injury or destruction of archives by their use elsewhere than in the archival building should be weighed against the borrower's needs. Archives in poor physical condition should not be lent until they have been repaired. Any mutilation, alteration, or disarrangement of archives while on loan should The procedures by which records are made available for use in the National Archives make a distinction between use by the government and use by the public. The most important difference is that government agencies may borrow records for use outside the National Archives Building while private institutions or individuals may not. Records needed by a government agency are usually delivered by the National Archives to an officer specifically designated to be responsible for them. The rules controlling government use of Federal archives are published in the Regulations of the General Services Administration, Title 3, entitled *Federal Records*. These regulations have the force of law, and permit the borrowing of records provided

- (a) That documents of exceptional intrinsic value shall not be removed from the National Archives Building except with the written approval of the Archivist,
- (b) That records in fragile condition, or otherwise deteriorated to an extent that further handling will endanger them, will not be loaned,
- (c) That each official who borrows records shall provide a receipt for them at the time they are delivered, and that he shall assume responsibility for their prompt return upon the expiration of the time for which they are borrowed.

Reproduction services: Frequently circumstances make it advisable to furnish reproductions of records to inquirers instead of making records available to them in their original form. The National Archives normally furnishes such reproductions free of charge to other Federal agencies whenever they are needed for current official business. Government officials should be encouraged to accept reproductions instead of the loan of originals whenever the latter are very valuable or in a bad state of repair. Unreasonable requests, however, such as those requiring an excessive amount of work preparatory to reproduction, should be rejected.

Reproductions of records should also be furnished, at cost, to other archival institutions instead of the loan of originals. If the records are large series the reproductions should normally be in the form of microfilm copies. Through its microfilm publication program, the National Archives has made many important bodies of research materials available in film form. The microfilm publications, which now comprise over four million documents, greatly reduce the need for lending documents to other archival institutions.

Reproductions of records should be made on demand, whenever the demand is reasonable, and at cost, for private inquirers. By furnishing such reproductions an archival institution can relieve the inquirer of the laborious work of transcribing documents by hand and, frequently, of taking notes on documents by hand.

Information services: This type of reference service consists of providing information from or about records as distinguished from making the records themselves or copies of them available for use. Information may be provided over the telephone or by letter, written report, or personal conference. Certain requests for information may properly be denied. Among these are requests from persons seeking information for purposes that can be served adequately by the use of published materials in countries where adequate libraries exist. An archival institution should not, as a rule, furnish information from library materials even to persons at work on important research projects; but inquirers may be given general bibliographical suggestions when this can be done without the necessity of special research.

The extent to which information should be provided about records depends on the character of the request. If the request is one about records that are of general interest, and one that for this reason is likely to be repeated, considerable time may be spent in preparing a substantial description of the records. Or if the request is one which, if fulfilled, will result in information about certain records being made generally available, then again considerable time may be spent in providing the information. Less time should be spent on requests for information that contributes only to the pursuit of one person's hobby.

In general, an archivist should help inquirers in every way possible. He should direct them to the records that are of interest to them. Although he should not presume to direct their researches, he should provide such information about records, and their value, as will prove suggestive to them in opening up new fields of inquiry. But he should interpret records only in the sense of identifying and describing them, not in the sense of making known their meaning in relation to some subject. He should not say that the record shows this or that or that it supports one interpretation as against another. His interpretations should be designed solely to make known the character and literal content of records. His relationship to all searchers is a professional one. He should not casually discuss the work he knows them to be doing. But if knowledge of research already being engaged in by one searcher will be helpful to another, he may ask permission to inform the other that such research is in progress. Finally, if he conducts researches of his own, he should do this in an unofficial capacity; for he is hired to be an archivist, not a researcher. He should not subordinate his professional duties to his own research interests. In a word, he should give his knowledge about records unstintingly, even at a sacrifice of his own research interests.

The archivist thus may be regarded as a hewer of wood and a drawer of water for the scholars. In cynical moments he may observe that the wood he has hewn is just being converted into a lot of "learned lumber" or that it is being cut on the bias; and that if the scholarly uses of his materials are futile, his work in behalf of them is even more so. But this view does not place his work in its true perspective. Historians may lose their balance, their objectivity, their attitude of suspended judgment, as they often have, in times of trouble. They may be as "clouds that are carried by the tempest" of ideological prejudices. The archivist's job at all times is to preserve the evidence, impartially, without taint of political or ideological bias, so that on the basis of this evidence those judgments may be pronounced upon men and events by posterity which historians through human failings are momentarily incapable of pronouncing. Archivists are thus the guardians of the truth, or, at least, of the evidence on the basis of which truth can be established.

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