

ARCHIVES AND THE GEOGRAPHER

The aim of the following brief comments is to illustrate some facets of the geographer's interest in archives, an interest perhaps not generally recognised. The papers were prompted by the Queensland State Archivist, Mr. R.C. Sharman, following a visit by two geographers to that State in July-August 1960. He suggested some comment on the part played by archives in geographical research, and on their return to Canberra, the two geographers passed on his suggestion to other members of the Department of Geography in the Institute of Advanced Studies. Three questions were posed. First, "What are the aims of your study?" Secondly, "What contribution is, or could be, made by archives?" Finally, "What organisation of archival materials would best facilitate your study?" Since the papers are the independent views of several members of the Department, they should not be taken as a statement of official policy but as illustrations of work that some geographers are doing and their ideas on the ways in which archives might help.

ARCHIVES AND POLAR EXPLORATION

by

Ann Savours.\*

Perhaps before considering this question in general, I should make it clear from what viewpoint and with what amount of experience I speak. I have been in Australia for a little more than six months with the task of making a survey of original material in Australian archives, institutions and private hands, relating to the history of the Arctic and Antarctic, with some reference to whaling and sealing. This aspect of my work is an extension of the surveys I have made in England and Scotland of similar material. I am also doing some historical research on my own account into the early history of the Antarctic and in particular into the lives of John Biscoe, James Weddell and Sir James Clark Ross, three of the great exploring captains of the Nineteenth Century.

As a research student, it is a help if on arrival or through the post beforehand, one can be given a general idea of the scope of an archive collection to enable the most likely avenues of approach to be determined. The archivist too, can point out the series and personal papers where relevant documents might be found. Provision of a detailed catalogue or description of certain series is a great help, e.g., the Guide to the Public Records of Tasmania, describing the archives of the Governor's and Colonial Secretary's offices. Not only the number of volumes, dates, etc., are given, but also an indication of the topics dealt with in the correspondence. As a newcomer to Tasmanian history, I found the list of Governors, Colonial Secretaries, and Premiers at the back of this guide, particularly useful.

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A note on any peculiarities of filing and administration is a further help in deciding on the most fruitful approach to the problem, but after all this assistance, it is up to the historian to use his detailed knowledge to follow up such clues as he has in the contemporary indexes to the archives concerned.

But of course, not only contemporary indexes are of value. Indexes to local newspapers are an immense help, as are lists of arrivals and departures of ships, with their masters, owners, cargoes, port of destination, last port of call and number of passengers, etc. It is a great boon if the subject matter of manuscript collections is indexed as in the Mitchell Library, not only under general headings, but also under persons, places and ships which happen to be mentioned in the body of a letter or journal. An indicative note of the subject matter is added, for example one writer of a letter might make a reference to the character of a third person, or say, the achievements of a sealing firm in which one is interested. This of course is sheer luxury and must entail a tremendous amount of work and a large staff.

Besides formal aides mentioned above one is always glad to be able to discuss one's work with the archives' staff, especially if they are experts in a field of their own, or have a good knowledge of the collections after some years of work in the same place. In conversation the archivist can get a clear picture of what the historian is looking for, and some useful inspirations may result. It is a pity if archives staff are switched round in the same way as library staff, since it is frequently their specialised knowledge which is of great value to the student. One also appreciates the chance to be put in touch with private individuals who are expert in related fields, and to be told of private collections of manuscripts to whose owners one may write for permission to consult. Finally, a photographic service is of great value.

I should like to end by paying tribute to the staff of the various places I have visited, for their kind help and patience in my search.

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## ARCHIVES AND THE HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHER

by

R.L. Heathcote \*

Speaking generally, the aim of the historical geographer is to study past geography both for its own sake, to reconstruct conditions which may no longer exist, and as a prerequisite to study of contemporary geography. Methods used include the recreation of the geography of areas at certain points in time, say the Western Division of New South Wales in 1900 and 1950; study of the development of an area over a period of time, say the

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spread of settlement in the Western Division from 1900 to 1950; or a combination of both methods, say a survey of the Western Division in 1900, followed by a study of factors affecting development of the area 1900-1950, and completed by a survey of conditions in 1950. These are not the only methods, but are perhaps the most common.

As the title of the study suggests, the historical geographer shares many of his interests in archives with the historian. Government records, personal memoirs, company papers and contemporary histories are consulted, but with an emphasis upon descriptions of country and settlements, land use and the spread of population.

The particular sources which the historical geographer would like to find in archives would include maps and illustrative materials. The availability of modern maps prepared by official bodies appears to have overshadowed the importance of old maps. Thus, past editions of government maps are not usually kept by the survey departments who are interested only in maps which are "up-to-date". A sequence of the editions of maps such as the Queensland two-mile and four-mile to the inch series, would be an invaluable source for the reconstruction of land ownership, property boundaries, the development of settlements and the spread of road and rail nets. Since much of eastern Australia was occupied before the land was surveyed, however, government maps in many cases only show conditions after the land had been occupied for some time. Any study of the country before occupation or at the time when occupation was taking place must, therefore, rely on other evidence, principally private maps made by pioneering squatters. Such maps were drawn but few have appeared in archives, and probably many have been destroyed.

The illustrative materials of particular interest to the historical geographer include photographs and sketches of the urban and rural scenes. These sources have most value if they can be dated and given a definite location, so that if necessary, a duplicate view of the contemporary scene can be taken, but for general studies views of the countryside for example, need not be given a definite location. Undated photographs, however, have only a limited use.

The best method for storing maps is flat and unfolded. Map cabinets accommodate sheets up to 33" x 54" (with a smaller sized cabinet taking 30" x 43" sheets). Rolled maps take up more space, deteriorate rapidly and in use, tend to engulf the unwary cartographer unless held down securely. Map indexes should indicate the general area and nature of data shown, e.g., "Dubbo to Bourke, roads and towns only," as well as the more obvious details of title, scale and compiler.

In all archival materials an index of places mentioned is a welcome sight and the creation of such an index for the map collection and illustrative materials noted above would be a luxury appreciated by all geographers.

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ARCHIVES AND POPULATION GEOGRAPHY

by

Peter Pirie\*

Although population geography tends to be a contemporary study there are many aspects which must depend to an important extent on archival material. Briefly the study is concerned with the location, size, growth, densities and component parts of a population and the way these things vary and differ from place to place. Because these variables must be studied in relation to the inhabited area, archival material on the processes of settlement and economic development, to name only two aspects, must be consulted.

The distribution, rates of growth, or age structure of a population in any area may be fundamentally altered by occurrences to which at first they may seem to bear little relation. Hitler's grim obsession to exterminate the Jews, a snap decision made by a bureaucrat in an alcoholic daze, the berthing of a ship carrying an epidemic, such are the random happenings which may go to shape a population, past, present, or future. They are various, unaccountable and often not to be foreseen. For this reason the population geographer must have available archives containing a wide range of records, reaching back at least as far as the life-span is long, and even further if studies in the historical geography of population are to be attempted.

The types of material most frequently used are maps, showing place names, the spread and development of communications and the location of settlement. Records of statistical boundary changes, the establishment of new settlements and of the policies and decisions of Government departments and local authorities which have affected population, are also essential. Material on economic trends and their effects in local areas is another example of the type of records in which at some time a population geographer is likely to be interested.

It is particularly unfortunate that in those under-developed areas of the world in which population studies are needed most, archival material is likely to be seriously deficient. Compared with the essentials of public health and education, the organisation of archives must seem a luxury to many governments, such as those of the Pacific island territories, and this combined with lack of trained archivists along with rapid deterioration of records due to such things as insect pests and mould has meant that the preservation of records is at a very rudimentary level. This would seem to be a field into which Australian archivists could usefully extend their activities.

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AUSTRALIAN TRANSPORT STATISTICS

by

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In Australia, a unique opportunity exists for economists and geographers to do research on transport, and particularly on studies of rail passenger and goods movements. At a time when the transport picture is changing so rapidly, studies of this nature cannot fail to be of great value in assessing the situation as it changes over time. Because railways are Government-owned, the Accounting Section of the Central Office of each Australian Railway system has become the repository for commodity and passenger movement statistics. However, different accounting procedures mean that there is a certain lack of uniformity from state to state in the arrangement in which these figures are recorded. The New South Wales Railways accounting system, which records both the origin and destination of a goods shipment (i.e., accounts on both inwards and outwards station), is perhaps the most useful in commodity movement research.

All forms of traffic flow data, including the initial goods invoices issued at the various stations, summary sheets, punched cards, and machine-printed tabulations from these cards<sup>||</sup>, are of immense value. Storage of all this material would be both impossible and unnecessary, but from my experience with New South Wales statistics the machine-printed "tabs" emerge as the source of greatest utility, particularly in terms of the time necessary to work through them.

Collection of this material on a yearly basis would soon produce an acute storage problem, and collection on a two, three, or five year basis should yield a satisfactory sample for future research.

THE GEOGRAPHY OF TOURISM AND OUTDOOR RECREATION

by

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<sup>||</sup> The tabulations are printed in the process of checking the punching of the Powers cards; as well as being typewritten, in the case of Intersystem traffic, all material is numerically coded, which can be a decided advantage in research involving a large amount of tabulation.

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The study of tourism and outdoor recreation in Tasmania is a pioneer attempt to give geographical perspective to the development and present status of rural outdoor recreation and the tourist industry. An attempt is being made to discover whether geographical methods of enquiry, if intensively applied, can make a contribution towards the understanding of tourist activity and the pattern of recreational land use in Tasmania. Thus the study is concerned with the interpretation of a wide range of documentary and field evidence.

Collection of documentary material is made difficult by the great variety of recreational activities and the small size and large number of organisations or units catering for tourist needs. The chief items which have been found useful so far, are as follows:

- 1) Journals and accounts of early tourists.
- 2) Tourist promotional literature.
- 3) Records of government agencies concerned with land for recreational use and the needs of the tourist, e.g., in Tasmania the Scenery Preservation Board, the Animal and Birds Protection Board, the Crown Lands Department and the Inland Fisheries Commission. The administrative files must be consulted before the part played by the statutory body in the provision of facilities for recreation can be assessed.
- 4) Records of voluntary tourist bodies, such as tourist and progress associations.
- 5) Records of visitor attendance and cash receipts at tourist attractions as well as details of coach tour patronage.
- 6) Records of occupancy of hotels and other places of accommodation, for the study of the rhythm of the tourist life. Guest registers for example show origin of visitors and length of stay.
- 7) Records of organised outdoor groups such as bush-walking, skiing, and fishing clubs.
- 8) Field Books of the Valuation Branch, providing assessments of forms of recreational land use, including hotels and shacks.

Much of the material referred to above, is still held by the body responsible for its preparation. Apart from a few tourist journals and some promotional literature, little has found its way into libraries and, as far as is known, none into archives. The usual fate of government documents is to be assigned first to the "dungeons" and then to the incinerator. There is still much that could be rescued, but many of the minute books of National Park boards and voluntary tourist organisations have already been destroyed. The records of the tourist industry appear



to have a life-span of only five to ten years.

It is hoped that in the future archivists will become increasingly aware of the social importance of tourism and recreation and allocate some space on their shelves for pertinent raw materials.

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#### RETIREMENT OF MR. JOHN McLELLAN

On 31 October 1960 Mr. John McLellan resigned from his position as Archivist in the Archives Department of the Public Library of S.A. Mr. McLellan joined the administrative staff of the old Public Library, Museum, and Art Gallery Board as far back as 1915 and continued in this office until 1936 when he took up an appointment as a librarian in the Public Library. 1936 was the Centenary of South Australia and such an occasion naturally meant that the Archives Department of the Public Library became the centre of a great deal of reference and research activity, and Mr. McLellan was appointed as an assistant to the then Archivist, Mr. G.H. Pitt.

The Archives Department held particular interest for Mr. McLellan and his talents and abilities were especially suited to the indexing and organising of historical material for reference use. In his official capacity he was responsible for building up much of the carefully catalogued collection of the Archives Department which is the delight of research workers and the envy of less fortunate Australiana collections. Apart from this important work Mr. McLellan devoted a great deal of his private time to the making of specialised indexes, all of which have contributed greatly to the efficiency and accuracy of the Archives' reference work. Of special interest among these self-imposed tasks are a detailed index and locality guide to the licensing of hotels in South Australia, indexes to immigrant arrivals from 1845 to 1887, and to the establishment of Methodist and Anglican churches.

During the latter part of the 1939-45 War the material in the Archives Department was dispersed throughout the State for security reasons and the work of the Department virtually ceased, and from 1942 to 1945 Mr. McLellan was the officer in charge of the Periodicals Section of the Public Library. At the end of the war Mr. McLellan returned to the Archives, and, following Mr. Pitt's appointment as Principal Librarian, he took charge of the Department. He was appointed Archivist in 1948 - a position he filled with distinction until his retirement.

During his twenty-four years service in the Archives, Mr. McLellan's expanding knowledge of the Archives' collection and his continual study of South Australian history made his ready assistance and wide knowledge greatly valued and sought after by professional historians and the public alike. He carried out original research on his own account and some of this work has been published, and he gave expert and willing assistance to the State Nomenclature Committee and to the Historical Memorials Committee and the