

ARRANGEMENT OF PRIVATE PAPERS

In the United States, until quite recently, most of the practices in dealing with private papers were developed by librarians. The papers with which they dealt usually came to them as aggregations of disparate and disorganized items that were derived from families important in the history of the country. They were commonly called "historical manuscripts". The principles and practices that were evolved related to the kind of items with which librarians were accustomed to dealing, namely, discrete single items.

Only in recent years have librarians come to deal with collections which, in almost every respect, are similar to archival groups. These are the collections produced by corporate bodies of various kinds - learned institutions, churches, businesses, and the like - which often consist of items that have an organic relation to each other. As the quantity of private papers available to manuscript repositories has increased, moreover, librarians have been forced to resort to methods suited to the mass handling of such papers. And these methods are the methods of the archivist. Thus the librarian and the archivist have come closer together in their methodology, particularly as it relates to documentary materials that are their common concern.

The term "private papers" is used advisedly instead of the more conventional term "historical manuscripts". The term "manuscripts", in a strict sense of the word, includes only handwritten or typewritten records. The term "records" is a generic term that is applicable to all kinds of documentary materials. Here I wish to use a term that is broader than "manuscripts" and more restricted than "records". The term "private papers" includes cartographic and textual materials, but not audio-visual materials, though the latter may be intermingled with a collection of private papers. It includes all types of textual materials - printed as well as handwritten or typewritten. It includes materials of a corporate as well as of individual origin.

In this paper I am going to discuss, first, the units of private papers that must be arranged, collections and components of collections; secondly, the principles and practices that should be followed in arranging such units; and, thirdly, the system of notation (or symbols) that should be applied in the arrangement of such units.

- 
1. This article is a chapter of the Spanish edition of Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques. The translation, which was made by Dr. Manuel Carrera Stampa, was sponsored by the Committee on Archives of the Pan-American Institute of Geography and History. A sequel to this article, entitled the "Description of Private Papers", will appear in the next issue of Archives and Manuscripts.

A. TYPES OF COLLECTIONS

Collections of private papers fall into two types that may be distinguished from each other by the way they came into being. These are (1) natural or organic collections, and (2) artificial collections.

Natural collections: The term "natural collections" may be applied to aggregations of documentary material that are built up in the normal course of business or of living by private agencies - either individuals or corporate bodies such as businesses, churches, institutions, or organizations. Such collections have certain well-defined characteristics. Each is usually derived from a single source, and is brought together concurrently with the actions to which it relates. Such collections are the product of organic activity, and for this reason have been designated by Lester J. Cappon, now president of the Society of American Archivists, as "organic" collections. In respect to the way they come into being they are similar to archival groups. For all practical purposes the term "archives" could be used interchangeably with the term "natural collection", and the only reason for using the term "collection" in this context is that the term "archives" is often reserved for the records of a public agency and is not conventionally used in referring to the holdings of a manuscript repository.

Artificial collections: In contrast to natural collections of private papers, artificial collections of such papers are brought together after the actions to which they relate have occurred, not concurrently; and are usually derived from many sources, not a single source. They are, moreover, true collections in the sense that their various pieces were "collected", i.e. gathered together. In the case of family papers, to illustrate, the collecting will probably have been done by a particular member of the family, perhaps a son of the person whose papers are being preserved. The collecting, of course, may also be done by others: collectors for commercial purposes; scholars, curators, or archivists for genealogical or research purposes. A manuscript repository, itself, will ordinarily create at least one artificial collection of single items acquired piece by piece from various sources.

The older the papers in a collection, the more likely is the collection to be artificial in character. Most private papers of the last century will have been dispersed over the course of the years so that they must be brought together, i.e. collected, long after the events to which they pertain. They are thus formed into artificial collections. More recent private papers, having passed through fewer hands, often come to a repository in an arrangement that reflects some

extended activity. If they are not so arranged, it is still often possible to associate them with the activity that resulted in their production.

While the terms "natural collection" and "artificial collection" seem somewhat forced and arbitrary, particularly since the term "archives" could be used as well in the case of one of the two types of collection, the terms are here used to emphasize an important point regarding arrangement. It is this. The more a collection is the product of extended activities, the more significant is its original arrangement, and the more applicable is the basic archival principle or provenance that records should be preserved in the order given them by their creators.

#### B. COMPONENTS OF COLLECTIONS

A collection of private papers may be broken down into its physical classes and types in the same way as an archival group. In most American archival groups the records fall into three physical classes. In the audio-visual class are found motion pictures, still pictures, and sound recordings; in the cartographic class, maps and charts. The class of textual records is composed of very many physical types. In a government office the commonest of these are correspondence, reports and directives. As the activities of a government are extended, innumerable other types are created, most of them to accomplish a routine action or for some other specific purpose.

Collections of private papers, similarly, are composed of various classes of records. Audio-visual and cartographic items are often intermingled with textual items. The physical class of textual records, too, may consist of many physical types, though ordinarily these are not so numerous as they are in an archival group. The commonest physical types are account books, broadsides, clippings, correspondence, day books, diaries, imprints, journals, land papers, ledgers, letters, letter books, minutes, order books, pamphlets, patents, petitions, plans, press-copy books, proceedings, receipts, reminiscences, sales books, scrap books, sermons, speeches, and wage books.

A natural collection of private papers may also be broken down into series in the same way as an archival group. In the United States an archival series is defined as a body of documents, folders, or dossiers that have been brought together for a specific activity. This body of records may be arranged either according to a methodical classification system or according to the form or origin of the records; or it may be informally accumulated to meet a specific administrative need. A series of private papers may be established on a similar basis. It will normally comprise all papers (1) grouped under a particular filing system, or (2) relating to a particular subject or activity, or (3) of a particular physical type.

An artificial collection is not ordinarily divisible into series and consists, for the most part, of discrete items.

C. ARRANGEMENT OF COLLECTIONS

Collections of private papers, whether natural or artificial, should be arranged according to the following principles:

1. As a general rule, each collection should be kept together as a separate and integral unit, just as an archival group originating in a particular source is kept together as an integral unit. Each collection is an entity in itself, and should be treated as such. It should not be torn apart to build up other collections. Papers relating to an important historical personage should not be removed from it to form a new collection. A separate collection should not be made of certain types of papers, such as account books. There is no justification for tearing apart a collection of private papers.

While the greater part of most collections of private papers consists of written textual records in a form and size that permits them to be kept together, certain items may be removed from collections because they require special handling. When such items are removed, a record should be made of their relation to the collection from which they have been removed.

Among such items are audio-visual and cartographic items, which are normally removed, even in archival institutions, from the collections in which they are embodied, and placed with like items. Textual records that present special storage problems because of their physical characteristics - size, bulk, or form - may also be removed, and placed in stack areas in which they can be accommodated. Certain printed textual items, such as pamphlets, imprints, and newspapers, may be removed if the manuscript repository maintains pamphlet, imprint, or newspaper files in which they can be embodied; otherwise they should be left with the collection in which they are found. Clippings, reprints, and other printed memorabilia should not ordinarily be removed.

2. If both collections of private papers and public archives are found in the same repository, the two types of materials should be kept in separate stack areas or at least in separate parts of the stacks. The intermingling of private papers and public archives is an unpardonable sin in the archival profession.

3. Collections should be segregated by class only if separate stack areas are available for each class. Since collections of private papers are often administered by librarians - or historians who have a passing acquaintance with library methods - various schemes for the classification of such collections have been devised, for it is library practice

to arrange things according to classified schemes. Thus Neal Harlow, who in 1948 made a survey of the practices in handling manuscript materials in a number of university and research libraries, found that "in one library, collections are divided between Eastern and Western hemispheres; in another by linguistic and geographic areas, plus a few subject specializations; still another into government archives, private papers, and subject specialties; in a fourth, literary manuscripts, historical material in its special field, and all others; and a business library, which is in itself a subject collection, classifies by 'industry', interestingly enough abandoning the scheme for large collections".<sup>2</sup> In general, collections of private papers have been arranged according to (1) their relation to subject, (2) their relation to place (a geographical arrangement), (3) their relation to time (a chronological arrangement), (4) the type of records involved, or (5) a combination of topics, places, time periods, and other factors.

A scheme that was devised for the arrangement of the collections of the Manuscripts Division of the Library of Congress is described by its assistant chief, J.C. Fitzpatrick, in his book on Notes on the Care, Cataloguing, Calendaring and Arranging of Manuscripts (3d ed., Washington, D.C., 1934), on pages 8-9 as follows:

This arrangement, outside of the large groups of Personal papers of great Americans, may be generally termed a chronologic-geographic one. It follows the sequence of events from the discovery of the Western Hemisphere, through exploration and settlement, as naturally developed: First, the West Indies, Spanish America, Mexico, Central and South America general, then by countries in their geographical divisions and strictly chronological within these divisions; then North America, the grouping therein being the British, French, Spanish, and other colonies. This group arrangement carries through the general miscellany to the Revolution, all the manuscripts being of such a general nature as not to belong clearly to any of the original 13 Colonies. With the assembling of the First Continental Congress the miscellany of the Revolution begins its chronological order, which includes all those manuscripts created by the activities of the general confederation of the Colonies and not clearly emanating from any particular one. The Papers of the Continental Congress form a distinct group within this general scheme. After them, each of the 13 States has its own strict chronological order, which conveniently ignores the Revolution as a period. After the Revolutionary group is the period of the Confederation (1783-1789) and

---

2. Neal Harlow, "Managing Manuscript Collections", Library Trends, IV (Oct. 1955), 207.

the "United States, miscellaneous" from the latter date on. The individual States, other than the original thirteen, have each their own chronological arrangement, and the Personal Papers, beginning with the noble series of the papers of the Presidents, and following in the order of the administrations, are arranged by groups with the single purpose of convenience in handling. Other groups are those of Indians, Orderly Books, Journals and Diaries, Mercantile Accounts, the Army, the Navy .. .., Marine Miscellany, Great Britain, the foreign countries, and other clean cut and logically natural groups.

While this scheme of arrangement has been considerably simplified in the course of years, it retains to the present day its "chronologic-geographic" feature.

The Huntington Library at San Marino, California, another important manuscript repository, arranges its collections in the stacks as follows:

Maps and plans  
Religion (bibles, psalters, breviaries, horae, etc.)  
General medieval history and literature  
Music and art  
Drama  
English and European history  
Literature  
California and Mexican history  
United States history  
Archives (Ellesmere, Hastings, Stowe, Battle Abbey).

The William L. Clements Library at Ann Arbor, Michigan, also an important repository of manuscript resources, divides its collections into two groups, "according to whether the writers lived in the Eastern or Western Hemisphere". Within the two geographic divisions, the collections are arranged alphabetically by their names.

The classification of collections of private papers is a different matter from the classification of books. Such collections have physical characteristics that make their grouping into classes difficult. Because they are so large and cumbersome, they cannot be inserted on shelves, as can books, in a way that their placement will make apparent their relation to subjects. More importantly, collections of private papers are not unitary in character. They are not unitary in their physical make-up, as are books; for a given collection may consist of many physical types, such as correspondence, pamphlets, clippings, and bound volumes. They are also not unitary in their subject-matter; for a given collection may relate to many topics and places and it may span several periods of time. And these multiple relations can be more easily and more usefully shown on paper, i.e. in

descriptive documents and finding aids, than they can be by physical placement.

The arrangement of collections of private papers according to a classification scheme is justified only in very large manuscript repositories in which several stack areas are available. In each area, collections may be placed that belong to broad classes. But classes should not be established beyond the broad ones that can be conveniently maintained separately in the physical facilities that are available. And the classes should be mutually exclusive, not overlapping.

Such a grouping of collections into classes can be justified on the ground that the work of the manuscript repository can be more effectively administered if they are so grouped. By such grouping the work of the staff can be departmentalized; and within each of the organizational units concerned with a class of collections all work of arranging, describing, and servicing can be performed on them. This principle of administration is followed in the National Archives in allocating record groups pertaining to broad subject fields to particular organizational units. By assigning work on records relating to subject-matter fields, a specialization or subject-matter expertise can be developed in the staff.

While large repositories may find it advantageous to classify their collections, no standard classification scheme can be devised that can be applied generally. Collections vary in subject-matter from one repository to another. There are few repositories in the United States that attempt to accumulate collections that relate to the whole of United States history. The Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress is one of the few that does. Most State repositories are interested mainly in the manuscript resources that pertain to their States, though a few acquire materials relating to entire regions. Some repositories are primarily interested in resources of a specialized character, such as those relating to industry, to religious institutions, or to other special organizations. The arrangement of collections should thus be different in each repository, for no two repositories have collections that relate - to any marked degree - to similar matters. A scheme that will suit one repository will not suit another.

4. Collections should normally be placed in the stacks in the order in which they are accessioned.

A collection consists of all papers derived from a particular source. Usually such papers are brought into the repository in a single accession. If additions to a collection are made at all, they usually consist of inconsequential lots of papers that escaped notice when the first accession was made. When the additions are too large to be conveniently placed with the first accession they should be treated as separate collections.

## Page Eight

A scheme of arrangement, Neal Harlow says in the article cited above (page 206), "should be simple, capable of expansion, and easy to handle by informed staff members". A classified scheme, no matter what its kind, is ordinarily not expansible. New collections have to be fitted into the classes that already exist for them, and no human being can devise a scheme that will accurately anticipate space requirements for future acquisitions. Any classified scheme, for this reason, means honeycombing the stacks with empty cells to be filled as materials are gathered in the future. All classified schemes have pigeonhole characteristics, and most such schemes will waste space. Because of the untidy housekeeping that results from their use, they will defeat the very object of any scheme of arrangement, which is to facilitate searching.

The simplest and most practicable system of arranging collections is in the order of accessioning. This system should be followed in all but the very large manuscript repositories. It utilizes stack space progressively as the holdings of the repository increase without disturbing the relations of those already acquired and avoids honeycombing the stacks with empty spaces. The collections can be numbered in the order in which they are received, and these numbers will serve adequately for purposes of control. The system has been used with conspicuous success at the Alderman Library of the University of Virginia.

### D. ARRANGEMENT OF COMPONENTS OF COLLECTIONS

The most important and most difficult step in the management of private papers is to distinguish the constituent parts of a collection. This step is important because it is an essential preliminary to any effective description of the papers. Most private papers, just as most archives, should be described collectively, i.e. by aggregations of items, rather than singly. And before this can be done, the units of collective description must first be established. These units are called series, for want of a better term. Even if papers are to be described singly, that is, item by item, this can be done far more easily if the collective units of which they are a part have first been established and identified.

The step is important also because it is an essential preliminary to the effective servicing of the papers. If a collection is properly broken down into its constituent parts, and these parts are identified and properly described in finding aids, searching in the collection is made much easier. The units in which searching must be done are smaller; the searches are localized and need not cover entire collections.

The components of collections of private papers should be arranged according to the following principles:



1. Whenever series are found to exist in a natural collection, they should be maintained as distinct and integral units.

Most natural collections of private papers - and most recent collections are natural collections - are organic groups in the sense that they were created by a corporate body, such as a church, a business, a learned institution, or the like, or by a person or family engaged in a particular activity. A natural collection should be broken down into its constituent parts in the same way as an archival group. Approximately the same steps should be taken. In the case of an archival group, its provenance is analyzed; the government agency that created it is studied, and its organizational structure and functions are ascertained. Record units are then established in relation to the organizational subdivisions and functions of the agency. A collection of private papers produced by a corporate body is similar in its structure to an archival group. If it is large, it can be broken down both on an organizational and on a functional basis. Collective units of papers can be established that represent the accumulations of particular organizational subdivisions of the corporate body or the accumulations resulting from particular activities. If the collection is small, it can probably be broken down only on a functional basis, that is, in relation to activities. A large collection of private papers produced by an individual also has some of the characteristics of an archival group. For the individual who creates a large collection must carry on many activities to create many papers. And these activities are the basis on which his papers are probably grouped and organized during his lifetime.

To ascertain what are the constituent parts of a collection it is necessary to analyze the collection as a whole. This fact has been stressed by Ellen Jackson in an excellent article on "Manuscript Collections in the General Library" in the Library Quarterly (April 1942). She states on pages 276-277 of her article that

It is worse than useless - it is extremely dangerous - to try to arrange any portion of a collection without a considerable familiarity with the whole. Even if the papers appear to be completely disordered, breaking up an old file may destroy a clue vital to the nature and original condition of the whole collection. The librarian or assistant who is to handle it can do no better at the start of work than to sit down and begin exploring, like an archaeologist digging in a prehistoric rubbish heap, not looking for anything in particular, but alert for whatever significant items may meet his eye, always aware that the arrangement of materials may be as significant as the materials themselves.

Natural collections should be preserved in their original arrangement, to the extent that this arrangement is ascertainable and intelligible. To such collections the mathematical formula, known to every schoolboy, that

"the whole is equal to the sum of its parts" does not apply. The whole collection, as Dr. Cappon points out,<sup>3</sup> is more than the sum of its parts because the collection has a meaning that is derived from its arrangement, the way it was organized during its creation, or the context in which its documents were kept. This arrangement may show time sequences, personal relationships, or organic connections. If read in chronological order, for example, the individual documents may show how things actually happened, how an idea budded and blossomed into action, or how the thinking of a person developed. These matters may be shown to a degree that would not be possible if the individual documents are simply considered separately - as isolated pieces. Similarly, if read in relation to particular persons under an alphabetical arrangement, the individual documents may reveal in a striking way how a friendship developed, or how views were interchanged on sundry matters between two persons who corresponded with each other. If read in relation to an activity, the documents may throw light on how an organization was started, on what work it performed, or on what resulted from its work - matters that would be obscured by a consideration of each document as an isolated piece. The collection, in a word, has more meaning as a whole than the individual documents within it have separately, and this added meaning is derived from the context in which the documents were kept and used, i.e. the series that were established for them. The order in which documents were accumulated, or the filing system under which they were organized, may throw light on the nature of the collection, just as the order in which archives were accumulated throws light on the organization and functioning of the body that created them.

Whenever series are found to exist in a natural collection, the archival principle of provenance should be applied. The series should be preserved to reflect, to the fullest extent possible, the activities that resulted in their production. Papers that are arranged under a particular filing system should be regarded as one series. They should be kept in the order they received while they were being accumulated. They should not be rearranged.

2. If series are not found to exist, they should be created by grouping individual items within the collections.

Series are not normally found in artificial collections. Items within such collections are usually not arranged according to a perceptible system. If they are, the system is one that was imposed on them after their creation by members of a family, curators, archivists, scholars, or collectors.

The arrangement given items in an artificial collection of personal papers has no presumptive value, but may be judged strictly on its merits. It is important only to the extent that it makes the collection usable. The single items derive no added meaning from their

3. Virginia. University. Library, Thirteenth Annual Report on Historical Collections, 1942-43, p.2.

position among other items, though a good arrangement may make their meaning more apparent. The items stand by themselves and can be treated in the repository individually, without reference to the group or collection of which they form a part. In this respect, it is to be noted, they differ fundamentally from archives, in which each single item torn from its context is likely to lose some of its meaning. Their arrangement is not a result of the activity in which they had their origin, as is often the case in regard to archives. The archivist or curator should therefore have no compunction about rearranging single items within an artificial collection.

Series, moreover, are not readily perceptible even in natural collections. Usually such collections come to a repository in a state of disorder that is attributable to various reasons. The papers may not have been properly arranged while they were accumulated. They may have been disarranged as they were relegated to the out-of-the-way places to which obsolete records are usually consigned.

A breakdown into series is advisable only in large collections. In small collections the single items - regardless of their physical type or provenance - should simply be kept in a single series. This should be done because it is the easiest thing to do. Artificial collections that consist of miscellaneous items received singly and from various sources, and that are found in most manuscript repositories, should be kept as a single series. The various items should be arranged in the order of their receipt, and assigned numbers to indicate this order. A register should be maintained as a record of how they were acquired, and as a means of controlling them.

In a large collection, as has been noted before, a breakdown into series is essential both to effective work in describing and servicing private papers. Series are usually difficult to establish. They must be established on an ad hoc basis for each collection. They vary in quantity, and they vary in their physical character from collection to collection. In establishing series, it will be recalled, the following factors should be taken into account: (1) the arrangement of the papers, (2) their physical type, and (3) their relation to subject or activity.

The first of these factors does not apply here, since we are here discussing collections in which series do not exist, i.e. are not perceptible on the basis of the arrangement given the papers.

The second factor, i.e. the one relating to physical type, is usually taken into account in arranging collections of private papers. The librarian-historian Worthington C. Ford, who was one of the first manuscript curators to express himself in regard to the arrangement of private papers, recommended grouping materials in a collection according to their physical type and form. While writing on "Manuscripts" for Charles C. Cutter's "Rules for a Dictionary Catalog" in 1904, he stated (page 135) that a collection

should be divided into three classes, as follows: "1. Separate volumes of distinct material, such as orderly books, journals of exploration, or a formal report of government. 2. A collection of the correspondence of a public character, or of a public office. 3. Loose papers which have no connection with one another and are occasional in nature". Neal Harlow suggests in his previously mentioned article (page 207) that within large collections there may be "sub-groupings by form, such as personal correspondence, business papers, diaries, speeches, etc...." Ellen Jackson suggests that a collection can usually be broken down into diaries, ledgers, and correspondence, Robert B. Downs indicates that the collections in the University of North Carolina library fall into the following types: diaries, reminiscences, letters, plantation records, and ledgers.<sup>4</sup> Most large collections of private papers can be broken down into series established on the basis of their physical type. Letters are the first type of papers that are normally assembled to form a series. A series need not be established for each physical type found in a collection; ordinarily series for the main physical types suffice. The number of series to be established depends on the size and complexity of the collection.

If the series cannot be established on the basis of the physical types of papers involved, they should be established on the basis of their relation to activity or subject. Most collections of personal papers are divisible into two groups: one relating to purely personal or family affairs; and the other to the activity for which the person, whose papers are being preserved, became noteworthy. These groups may be regarded as series. If the person engaged in a number of noteworthy activities, separate series may be established for each of them. Thus there may be series relating to a particular kind of activity or a particular event. Series should be established in relation to activities with great care to avoid overlapping, for often papers on various activities are interrelated, as, for example, papers on personal and business activities. Series, in a word, should be mutually exclusive, so that individual items will fit into only one of them.

3. In arranging single items within series that exist or that are created, the following practices should normally be followed:

(a) Correspondence items should normally be arranged in either a chronological or an alphabetical order, though under special circumstances some other order may be imposed on them.

---

4. Robert B. Downs, "Organization and Preservation of Manuscript Collections in the University of North Carolina Library". American Library Association, Public Documents, 1938, p. 374.

Page Thirteen

It should be reiterated, at this point, that correspondence items within natural collections should not be rearranged at all, but should be left in the order given them by their creators, whenever their original order is ascertainable and intelligible.

It should be noted, further, that, while the arrangement of items within a correspondence series is here discussed separately, the correspondence series as such should always be kept with other series to which it relates.

Both chronological and alphabetical systems are simple ones that can be applied by untrained clerical help. Under either system facts have to be ascertained that can be established easily - in the one case, dates; in the other, names. Both systems have the merit of being quite objective.

Chronological arrangement has the sanction of long usage, and is often preferred to the alphabetical system. As early as 1904, Worthington C. Ford expressed a preference for chronological arrangement. He did this in his section on "Manuscripts" found in Cutter's Rules for a Dictionary Catalog, which became a standard reference work that governed library practices in regard to manuscripts for many years. In it he wrote on page 136: "Two systems of arrangement offer themselves: one alphabetical, which brings together all letters written by one man, and the other chronological, which arranges the material without respect to writer, but according to the time of writing. For personal information the alphabetical arrangement is the simpler; but for historical purposes, and all large collections possess a greater historical than personal interest, the chronological arrangement offers more distinct advantages".

When the chronological system was first applied to manuscripts, modern filing equipment and supplies, which permit other systems of arrangement, were not generally available. The system, moreover, was applied when it was customary to produce calendars in which items are listed in chronological order. It is a system that is ideally suited to calendaring. The practice of arranging chronologically has now become so ingrained that letters taken from natural collections are often completely rearranged in chronological order, though their organic relations are disturbed by such a rearrangement.

A chronological arrangement is one that is most meaningful to the historian, who is the chief user of personal papers, for it places information on phenomena, persons, and things in a time sequence - or one that tells a story. The significance of various letters can often be determined only by reading them in sequence, by literally "reading between the lines" as to what happened at a given time.

The alphabetical arrangement may occasionally be preferable to a chronological one. This will be the case whenever the personal relations reflected in letters are more important than the time sequence of the events recorded in them. Usually correspondence of a highly personal nature is more

significant if arranged on a personal rather than a chronological basis, as was pointed out by Ford. Letters between important persons have often been published separately for this reason. Thus the Correspondence between Thomas Jefferson and Pierre Samuel du Pont de Nemours was published separately by Dumas Malone, and the Correspondence of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson separately by Paul Wilstach. Here the intellectual relations between Jefferson and his friends is the all-important thing. Whenever, then, letters are primarily significant for the personal information in them, they may be grouped in relation to persons, not in chronological order.

The interests of historical scholarship are served as well by an alphabetical as by a chronological arrangement. If personal papers are arranged alphabetically, their content and significance can be revealed more easily in finding aids than if they are arranged chronologically, for dates are not so descriptive as are names. The importance of a collection may be indicated, partly, at least, by listing the names of the writers that produced it. Names are important for historical research, whether this is focused on national, State, or local matters. They become more important as the research becomes localized, that is, as it narrows down to a locality or a person.

The further question arises as to whether correspondence items may ever be arranged in other than a chronological or alphabetical order. Modern filing systems and supplies, which have come into general use since Ford formulated his dictum about the arrangement of correspondence, make possible all kinds of arrangement, and particularly subject or classified arrangement. If these new systems can be applied effectively to new correspondence, why not to old?

Aside from the fact that personal papers are difficult to group by subject, there are also difficulties in applying the new filing systems. Subject and classified systems are more difficult to instal than chronological and alphabetical systems. They are also less objective. To indulge in a poor pun, a subject arrangement is likely to be subjective, for it involves making a choice of subjects in relation to which records are to be organized, and a determination of the main subject dealt with in each letter where several subjects may be involved.

In arranging correspondence items, enclosures are often removed from the particular letters with which they were enclosed. This practice is customary when such items are arranged chronologically or alphabetically, for obviously the order itself is disturbed if enclosures are left with the letters with which they came. The enclosures are therefore removed and placed in the chronological or alphabetical order in which they belong. Since the relationship of the letter and enclosure is usually meaningful, a record should be made - by pencil, perhaps, as is the practice at the Library of Congress- to show the relationship.

(b) Book records, including letterpress books of outward correspondence, account books, day books, order books, and the like, should normally be arranged in a chronological order, or, if numbered, in a numerical order. The books, of course, may be grouped into series. Thus Robert B. Downs of the University of North Carolina Library suggests that three logical groupings are possible: one, by type; two, by author (corporate or personal); or, three, by place of origin. Downs questions "whether a subject approach would be successful", and adds that temporarily he is arranging volumes alphabetically by authors, but that this scheme is only moderately satisfactory. Normally series of manuscript volumes, just as other physical forms of personal papers, should be grouped by their physical type. Thus, separate series should be established for each type of volumes, i.e. for letterpress books, account books, scrap books, and the like. Within the series the volumes should normally be arranged either chronologically or alphabetically.

(c) Other physical types should be arranged in whatever order seems best suited to facilitate their use. They may be arranged numerically, chronologically, alphabetically by name or subject, or in some other order.

The method of arrangement depends, to a degree, on whether the series is open or closed. In an accumulating or growing file of items, such as the pamphlets, imprints, and other printed items that may be removed from a collection for special handling, a strictly numerical order should normally be followed, and a register should be maintained to indicate the source of each of the items, and to provide a means of controlling them.

In a closed series, to which no further additions will be made, any one of several systems of arrangement may be followed.

A closed series of printed items, such as pamphlets or imprints, that can be identified by author and title should be arranged alphabetically either by subject or by name of author. If the series is very large, a subject arrangement is desirable. The list of subject headings in relation to which the items are to be grouped should be developed on an ad hoc basis for each series. The subject headings should be derived from an analysis of the accumulation of such items, not from pre-chosen subject headings derived from library classification schemes. Nor should the subjects invariably be broken down into classes and sub-classes, as is done in library classification schemes. The extent to which subjects should be broken down into classes and sub-classes should be decided on the basis of the size and complexity of the series under consideration. The classification should not be refined beyond the stage needed to localize searches to a reasonably small group.

A closed series of clippings should normally be grouped first on a geographical, and then on a subject, basis. Occasionally a simple chronological arrangement is preferable. Minutes, proceedings, sermons, or speeches should normally be arranged chronologically.

E. NOTATIONS.

A system of notation, or symbols, will prove useful if applied to collections of private papers and their components. Such symbols may be either pure, that is numbers only or letters only, or mixed, that is numbers and letters combined.

A system of notation serves different purposes when applied to private papers from those it serves when applied to library materials. In a library, symbols are basic to most systems of classification. They indicate the arrangement of library materials on the shelves. They show the subject class and sub-class to which a particular item belongs and its relative position among other items in the class and sub-class. Certain symbols also have mnemonic features; they denote certain forms of material (year-books, encyclopaedias, and the like), and certain geographical areas.

A system of notation has only a limited application and usefulness when applied to private papers. Papers are different from books in their substantive and physical nature. "The average manuscript, unlike the average book, has an individuality that defies neat classification schemes ready for use and adaptable to most libraries of printed works", according to Dr. Cappon. "Likewise a corpus of manuscript papers, being something more than the sum of its parts, is not susceptible to regimented arrangement without loss of character".<sup>5</sup> Whereas library items are usually discrete items, to which symbols can easily be affixed, private papers often consist of aggregations of items that are heterogeneous in their content and physical type, so that symbols can be affixed only with great difficulty. Only artificial collections consist of discrete items, and even these are often grouped for purposes of arrangement and description into series. Natural collections usually consist of series, or aggregations of items that have an organic relation to each other.

In developing a system of notation for private papers, it should be recognized that the system cannot serve the same purposes as one designed for library materials. When applied to private papers, symbols are chiefly useful as identifying devices, not as classifying devices. They cannot show the arrangement of private papers by subject classes (which are unsuitable for the detailed arrangement of private papers), except in regard to very broad classes established in large manuscript repositories. Nor can they be used profitably to show the arrangement of private papers in relation to organic structure. But their value is undeniable for the internal administrative and professional work of a manuscript repository, if they are used properly and for the purposes that they can serve.

1. Symbols should be used to identify collections as a whole. When assigned to collections, symbols facilitate the administrative and professional work on collections by providing a shorthand system of identification. They make reference easier to collections in internal administrative documents,

---

5. Virginia. University. Library, Thirteenth Annual Report, p.2.



such as accessions registers and work programs, and in professional documents, such as finding aids and reference service requests.

The symbols assigned to collections should be simple and pure. If collections are arranged in the stacks in the order of their receipt, the symbols should consist simply of numbers assigned to each of the collections. If collections are arranged in a classified order, as in large repositories, the symbols should denote both the class and the order in which collections were received within the class.

2. Symbols should also be used to identify series within collections. When assigned to series, symbols are particularly useful in descriptive work, while analyzing individual items within series, as in indexes, catalogs, and lists. They are useful in restoring the order of a series after it has been disturbed in use. They also facilitate reference to series in service requests and citations.

Symbols should be assigned to series that have been identified within a collection. Usually it is easier to assign symbols to the components of a collection of private papers than to those of an archival group. Archival groups are usually not closed as are collections of private papers, and symbols can be used effectively only in regard to a body of documentary materials to which no further additions will be made. Archival series, moreover, are often arranged under systems that have their own notations, and these notations, assigned during their current life, are utilized by the archivist after the series reach his custody. An archivist thus uses notations already given to components of his group; a manuscript curator, on the other hand, is seldom likely to find such notations in his collections. The latter thus has considerably more leeway than the archivist in devising a system of notation for his materials.

T.R. Schellenberg  
United States National Archives

F. BIBLIOGRAPHY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

On arrangement generally:

Jackson, Ellen. "Manuscript Collections in the General Library".  
The Library Quarterly, XII: 275-283 (Apr. 1942).

Harlow, Neal. "Managing Manuscript Collections". Library Trends, IV:  
203-212 (Oct. 1955).

Ford, Worthington C. "Cataloguing Special Publications and Other Material. 1. Manuscripts." In Cutter, C.A., Rules for a Dictionary Catalog (4th ed., Washington, D.C., 1904). p. 135-138.

Library of Congress. Manuscripts Division, Notes on the Care, Cataloguing, Calendaring and Arranging of Manuscripts (3rd ed., Washington, D.C., 1934), p. 8-16. Prepared by J.C. Fitzpatrick.

On arrangement practices of particular institutions:

Alderman Library, University of Virginia:

Marks, G.K. and Jennings, J.M. "Manuscript Arrangement of the Virginia Historical Society". Virginia Librarian, II: 45 (Jan. 1956).

Virginia. University. Library, Thirteenth Annual Report on Historical Collections, 1942-43, p. 1-7.

Baker Library, Harvard Business School:

Cole, Arthur H. "Organization and Preservation of Manuscript Collections in the Baker Library of the Harvard Business School". American Library Association, Public Documents, 1938, p. 380-386.

Cole, Arthur H. "Business Manuscripts: Collection, Handling, and Cataloguing". The Library Quarterly, VIII: 93-114 (Jan. 1938).

See Harvard University. Graduate School of Business Administration. Baker Library, Archives Bibliography No. 1 (n.p., n.d.) (1953) for additional items.

Clements Library:

Peckham, Howard H. "Arranging and Cataloguing Manuscripts in the William L. Clements Library". The American Archivist, I: 217-229 (Oct. 1938).

Congress, Library of:

Brand, Katherine E. "Developments in the Handling of Recent Manuscripts in the Library of Congress". The American Archivist, XVI: 99-104 (Apr. 1953).

Martin, Thomas P. "Organization and Preservation of Manuscript Collections in the Library of Congress". American Library Association, Public Documents, 1938, p. 387-389.

Shelley, Fred. "Manuscripts in the Library of Congress: 1800-1900". The American Archivist, XI: 3-19 (Jan. 1948).

Duke University Library:

Nuermberger, Ruth K. "A Ten Year Experiment in Archival Practices". The American Archivist, IV: 250-266 (Oct. 1941).

Hoover War Library:

McLean, Philip T. "The Hoover Institute and Library". The Library Quarterly, XIX: 235-249 (Oct. 1949).

Huntington Library:

Haselden, R.B. "Manuscripts in the Huntington Library". The Library Journal, LIII: 764 (Dec 15, 1928).

Schulz, H.C. "The Care and Storage of Manuscripts in the Huntington Library". The Library Quarterly, V: 80-82 (Jan. 1935).

McCormick Historical Association Library:

Kellar, Herbert A. "Organization and Preservation of Manuscript Collections in the McCormick Historical Association Library". American Library Association, Public Documents, 1938, p. 357-364.

Minnesota Historical Society Library:

Minnesota Historical Society. The Care and Cataloguing of Manuscripts as Practised by the Minnesota Historical Society (St. Paul, 1936). Prepared by Grace Lee Nute.

Kane, Lucile. "A Guide for Collectors of Manuscripts". History News, XI: 19-21 (Jan. 1956).

Nute, Grace Lee. "Suggestions for a Code for Cataloguing Historical Manuscript Collections". American Library Association, Archives and Libraries, 1939, p. 54-63.

Ackermann, Gertrude W. "Organization and Preservation of Manuscript Collections in the Library of the Minnesota Historical Society". American Library Association, Public Documents, 1938, p. 365-372.

North Carolina University Library:

Downs, Robert B. "Organization and Preservation of Manuscript Collections in the University of North Carolina Library". American Library Association, Public Documents, 1938, p. 373-379.

On the arrangement of printed items removed from collections of private papers:

Amerince, Elizabeth. "The Clipping and Pamphlet File". Wilson Bulletin. IX: 113-119 (Nov. 1934).

Condit, Lester. A Pamphlet about Pamphlets. (Chicago, 1939).

Dickey, Philena A. The Care of Pamphlets and Clippings in Libraries. (White Plains, N.Y., 1917).

Fairfax, Virginia. Pamphlets and Clippings in a Business Library. (San Francisco, 1921).

Hall, Wilmer L. "Arrangement and Disposition of Pamphlets and Clippings". Virginia State Library Bulletin, XV, No. I. 1924.

Ireland, Mrs. Norma A. The Pamphlet File in School, College, and Libraries. (Rev. and enl. ed., Boston, 1954).

Kehl, W. Margaret. "General Principles of Filing Pamphlets". Special Libraries, VI: 17-19 (Jan. 1954).

Oathout, Melvin, and Oathout, Evelyn. "A Pamphlet Method for Research Libraries". College and Research Libraries, VIII: 414-421 (Oct. 1947).

Smith, Margaret G. "Solving the Problems of a Pamphlet Collection". Special Libraries, XXVIII: 75-79 (March 1937) and 110-114 (Apr. 1937).

Wyllie, John O. "Pamphlets, Broad-sides, Clippings, and Posters". Library Trends, IV: 195-202 (Oct. 1955).

RECENT ARCHIVAL ACTIVITIES IN NEW ZEALAND

On the rare occasions when I am invited to speak to an audience I find it difficult to decide whether an invitation has been extended on the grounds of an anxiety on the part of the organisers to provide that which they consider to be the best that is offering at the moment, or whether in desperation I have been invited on the grounds that 'no-one else wants to speak and he's usually good for 30 minutes anyway'.