

Police, 1852 - 1940. These are a very large group of records shelved in chronological order and by police districts, but not yet fully processed for use.

Public Library, 1854 - 1945. A well-developed group of great value to the State Library and librarians since it documents the growth of the institution from its inception and also sheds light on the early cultural history of Melbourne. A valuable find amongst these records is a collection of the private papers of Sir Redmond Barry, Chairman of the First Board of Trustees and a Justice of the Supreme Court.

The Ships Passenger Lists, 1852 - 1923. These are a much used group, both by Commonwealth Departments and by professional and amateur genealogists. The Lists have been recently cleaned, repaired, re-shelved in covers and microfilmed.

Other groups of records include Public Service Board, 1893-1909; Council of Public Education, 1906-52; Lands Department Registers of Deeds, 1850-1925; Exhibition Building, 1881-1941; Crown Lands, 1829-60; Treasury, 1856-63; Public Works, 1844-1903; Companies Registration Branch of Crown Law, Defunct Companies, 1867-1900; Public Works, Local Government Branch, 1881-1932; Workers Compensation, 1938-53; State Rivers and Water Supply, Grazing Permits, 1870-1950; Chamber of Commerce, 1851-1924; Austin Hospital, 1896-1927; Royal Children's Hospital, 1872-1943.

An interesting recent accession has been the records of the Organising Committee of the XVith Olympiad held in Melbourne in 1956.

An external programme for the surveying and assessment of the accumulated backlog of records held in departments has also been carried out and the disposal of the ephemeral records by the introduction of disposal schedules has been initiated.

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ARCHIVES' SECTION PROGRAMME AT THE L.A.A.

CONFERENCE in MELBOURNE, 1961

The Eleventh Conference of the Library Association of Australia will be held at the University of Melbourne from August 21st to August 25th. The theme of the conference is 'Library resources for the Nation' and the Archives' Section will be holding three sessions. The first of these will be on Tuesday, August 22nd, when Mr. C.A. Burmester will give a paper on the collecting of Australian historical records - this will deal in part with the outcome of the Canberra conference being held in July on the same subject. Also on Tuesday, August 22nd, there will be a symposium 'Archival resources of Australia' in which papers by Mr. R. Sharman, Mr. P.R. Eldershaw, and Mr. H. Nunn will discuss aspects of holdings in the Archives of Queensland,

Tasmania and Victoria. On Wednesday, August 23rd, there will be a second symposium - 'Exploiting the official and private archival resources of Australia' in which several papers will be given on the listing of Public Record Office microfilms, preparation of an inventory, the Guide to Pre-Federation Archives, and the publication of lists of accessions. Those contributing will be Miss. M. Lukis and Miss M. Medcalf (both of West Australia), Mr. David Bluford (N.S.W.) and Mr. G.L. Fischer (S.A.). In addition, Mr. Allan Horton will represent the section at a special session of AACOBS and Australian Libraries to be held on Tuesday, August 22nd. As this will be the rare occasion on which archivists are congregated in one place it is hoped that the annual meeting of the section can be held on Wednesday afternoon, August 23rd.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Parkside, South Australia.

The Editor,  
Archives and Manuscripts.

Dear Sir,

If anyone wishes to raise a hollow laugh in archival circles, he only has to mention the Guide to Pre-Federation Archives, a project which was suggested in 1954, and which, to date, can hardly be said to have got under way.

To recapitulate. In 1954 an Archives Management Seminar was held in Canberra. At this Seminar Dr. T.R. Schellenberg, Director of Archival Management in the National Archives and Records Service of the United States, suggested that State Archivists might consider the possibility of preparing a co-operative inventory of their holdings up to 1900. This suggestion was enthusiastically received by the State Archivists present, and a number of commitments and stipulations were made, hardly any of which have, as yet, been fulfilled.

Why did this happen? I believe that the project has been hindered, from the start, by a misapplication of effort. Archival description can proceed at any one of three main levels, (1) the group, (2) the series, or (3) the item, and finding aids resulting from these practices are usually referred to, in the same order, as (1) guides, (2) inventories, and (3) lists. The practice in the National Archives is to gain a general, overall, control by means of the guide, and then to proceed to the level of series description in the inventory. The last process, listing of specific items within a series, is only reserved for series of sufficient importance to warrant the expenditure