

THE ARRANGEMENT AND DESCRIPTION OF MAPS
IN THE QUEENSLAND STATE ARCHIVES

R.C. Sharman

(State Archivist, Queensland)

The writing of this article has been prompted by the need to put on to paper the details of a scheme adopted in arranging a collection of over 1000 maps transferred to the Queensland State Archives from the Survey Office, Brisbane, in 1961. The scheme in turn owes a great deal to advice given to members of the Archives staff by Mr. R.L. Heathcote, who was at the time visiting Brisbane in the course of research he was doing towards a Doctorate of Philosophy, undertaken with the aid of a scholarship at the Australian National University. However, many of the things I shall say have been prompted, if only on the lines of the Hegelian doctrine of the dialectic, by what Dr. E.F. Kunz has written in his article "Providing the reader with maps; a matter of co-operation between all major libraries"* For I have found much that is stimulating, as well as much that is provoking in Dr. Kunz's article.

Largely because most of the maps we receive are official publications, the Public Library of Queensland has tacitly burdened the State Archives with the job of arranging and caring for this type of material. Already several maps hitherto preserved in the Oxley Memorial Library of Queensland have been sent to the Archives for description and, presumably, for inter-filing with related maps already in our custody. This arrangement obviously falls far short of the ideal which Dr. Kunz has laid before us, which is

...to create a separate map unit within the library
where the librarian in charge and his assistants
specialise in maps... ** [his italics]

However, it is an arrangement in keeping with the practical view of things we take on this side of the 29th parallel of South Latitude. We are part of the State Reference Library, which has not yet succeeded in finding anyone suitable to appoint to the position of officer-in-charge of reference services. How much less likely would it be for us to be able to appoint an officer-in-charge of maps, with special assistants!

The maps we have received deal almost exclusively with Queensland and Eastern New Guinea. They are mostly official publications, and in almost all cases they have come to us as archives. This means, amongst other things, that they are "used copies". This factor does not in any sense deter an archivist, for all the materials he deals with have that much-used appearance of old clothes dumped on the steps of the city mission. Indeed, this fact may inspire the archivist to make greater

* In Library resources for the nation; papers given at the eleventh conference of the Library Association of Australia... Melbourne, the Assoc., 1961., pp 136-144.

** op.cit. p. 142.

efforts in finding out about the maps - in discovering, for instance, who used them, for what purpose, and during what period. For in the answers to these questions lies the clue as to what provenance shall be attributed to them. Frequently two identical copies of the one map are sent to different departments. The use to which they may be put by the Electoral Office, on the one hand, and the Prickly Pear Land Commission, on the other, will determine what significance these maps have in an archives institution. The librarian may care very little as to what use a map has been put to; he may even prefer, as I suspect Dr. Kunz would, to have mint copies, unsoiled by the dirty hands of a myriad departmental clerks. To the archivist, every thumb print is a precious memento of departmental use and an invaluable fingerpost pointing to provenance, the sacred cow of the profession.

With a collection which emanates mainly from departmental sources surely authorship is a concept of very little significance. It is obviously impossible to reconcile author and provenance as "persons" to whom the main entry should be given, and the archivist will certainly prefer provenance. But the choice of main entry will not necessarily determine the arrangement to which a series of maps is to be subjected. Dr. Kunz, on the other hand, suggests they should be arranged according to area, and his "area card" is the main entry in his catalogue. In the collection of maps with which the Queensland State Archives is dealing, the use of area covered as the criterion by which they should be arranged is not considered practicable. Dr. Kunz is writing about practices in a library which caters for map-readers whose interests may cover any part of the globe. In the Queensland Archives, our interests are concentrated on that precious province, known until 1957 as the Socialist Fifth of Australia.

With the type of map with which most State archives institutions will be dealing, the abiding principle to be observed is that of respect des fonds. Next to provenance, the integrity of series is the most important consideration. It would be quite ridiculous to classify one sheet of a four-miles-to-the-inch grid map of Queensland as a map of the Longreach district, when there are 125 sheets in the entire series. This is part of a map of Queensland, and it must be arranged with the other 124 sheets.

It appears to me, in fact, that the criterion that ought to be adopted in arranging the maps of any one state or territory is that of scale, except where the use of this criterion would conflict with provenance or respect des fonds. It is seldom that sheets of a given series differ from one another in scale, although this phenomenon has been noticed in two instances in the maps of which I am writing at the moment. In one of these, the series was the Queensland run maps, which were produced in eight miles and twelve miles to the inch sheets. In another, a six-sheet "Postal map of Queensland", 1910, 16 miles to the inch, has one sheet principally occupied by an inset map of the south-east part of the State, drawn at 8 miles to the inch.

Arrangement by scale is convenient because it is easy to remember, and it provides a simple method of determining the location in the stacks of one map in relation to all others. From experience I would say that one of the biggest problems in administering a collection of maps is putting them away after consultation. They must, of course, be extracted from their filing drawers by skilled labour, for it is usually only the skilled assistant who can locate the correct map for the enquirer. If the system of arrangement is by scale, however, I think the putting away of the maps can be left to semi-skilled assistants. Such an arrangement very much commends itself to the present writer.

Dr. Kunz in his article already noticed tells us that the Mitchell Library arranges maps by area, and classifies catalogue cards on the same principle. In this way, he says, "the system dispenses fully with ambiguous and overlapping geographical terminology". Just how this can be true is not clear, as geographical terminology, ambiguous and overlapping or not, would seem to me to be essential in any method of arranging or describing maps. If the Map Department of the Mitchell Library has developed a system of cataloguing by substituting numbers for place names, I am sure it is all very convenient for its own staff. I am inclined to suspect that students have some difficulty in consulting the catalogue, however; that is, until they have learned the language. The truth is, that the number 823 used by the Map Department of the Mitchell Library means Gippsland.- It is no more a precise method of referring to that part of Victoria than the use of the word Gippsland. If it has to be explained to any person, the word Gippsland has to be used in the explanation. So why claim that "ambiguous and overlapping geographical terminology" has been fully dispensed with?

In the Queensland State Archives, we have found that key maps provide the most useful single finding-aid to the location of a particular map. Dr. Kunz hints at the use of key maps, but he does not tell us very much about them. In the Queensland State Archives, the key maps have nearly all had to be compiled by the State Archives staff. In the case of the present-day four-miles-to-the-inch maps, the key map could be obtained from the Survey Office. The earlier series at this scale, the two-miles-to-the-inch series, and various larger-scale maps of restricted areas (forty and twenty chain maps of the Darling Downs, Moreton and Wide Bay/Burnett Districts, for instance). required the drawing of special key maps. To do this, a map of about foolscap size is chosen, which shows the whole area of country covered by the series to be "keyed". It will, of course, be of considerably smaller scale than the maps in that series. On it, will be drawn lines to represent the limits of the various maps in the series, and within those limits thus represented will be shown the number of the appropriate map within the series. On the back of the key map will be recorded the serial numbers of the maps making up the series, and the dates and other data concerning the maps. Finally some

indication will be given of the accession numbers of the various maps, for these numbers will provide the clue to the source of the maps and the date they came into the archives.

The whole task of drawing key maps is not easy. When the various sheets making up the series are the same size (and drawn to the same scale of course) and when there is very little overlap, or such overlap as there is clearly indicated, the problems are not very great. But there are often unexpected difficulties, and we have still failed to find a way of drawing a key map to certain large scale maps of the Moreton district of Queensland.

With maps whose constituent sheets do not represent areas of regular (e.g. quadrilateral) shape, additional difficulties are encountered. This is especially true of maps of electorates, local government areas, pastoral districts, counties and parishes. But some of these are parts of series, and the use of key maps is much to be commended. We have been able to copy photographically small outline maps of counties, showing boundaries of constituent parishes, and on these photographic copies we have shown for which of the parishes we have maps (i.e. in the 40 chains series). Similar methods have enabled us to draw key maps of counties (2 miles to the inch) and of pastoral districts (various scales). The illustration included in this issue shows which of the pastoral district maps we have in the run maps series. This was a combination of a grid and an irregular boundary method of dividing the State for mapping purposes, and is fraught with some pitfalls. Different colours are used in the key maps in use in the Archives to differentiate between areas differently covered by maps. In this reproduction colour could not be used, of course.

In addition to the key maps, we have found that only one additional finding-aid is necessary, and that is an index to geographical names covered by the maps. I have already indicated that we do not share Dr. Kunz's distrust of place-names. We find that they have been used with remarkable consistency in Queensland. For instance, the fifteen pastoral districts* of this State have been fixed for 100 years, the boundaries having been altered very little, and the names not at all. I do not remember seeing the two Gregory districts named otherwise than in the inverted form, nor do I remember seeing the Kennedy districts named in the inverted form, in any official document. Wide Bay and Burnett are often combined as one district but this is a development one might expect when some of the other districts were so large in comparison.

The names of counties and parishes are reliable enough, surely.

* Burke, Burnett, Cook, Darling Downs, Gregory North, Gregory South, Leichhardt, Maranoa, Mitchell, Moreton, North Kennedy, Port Curtis South Kennedy, Warrego and Wide Bay.

Names of towns and even cities change, of course, but these changes are generally memorable enough, and a few cross references in the index would cover most of those we are likely to need. I would suggest that the unsatisfactory nature of geographical place-names lies, not so much in the names themselves, as in the inconsistent use that has been made of them. There are certainly some areas covered by place-names whose boundaries (and the names themselves) will change over the years. Some of the best examples are electoral districts and local government areas. I do not see that the use of numbers instead of names will obviate this difficulty. If an enquirer wants a map showing the boundaries of the Woothakata State Electorate in 1910, he will not be satisfied to be shown a map of the county of Chelmsford. We must accept the facts that Woothakata was a name given to an electoral district, that its boundaries were changed under several redistributions, and that students may well ask to see maps of it. It seems to me, therefore, that the best way to index any map we may have of this electoral district is under the name Woothakata.

In the arrangement and description of our maps, it has been discovered that the rules we applied to other public records could not be applied to this cartographic material. Just as Dr. Kunz discovered that ordinary library practice could not be applied to maps, so we have discovered we cannot use archival techniques in their entirety. Both library and archival methods help us in some phases of the work, but in the last analysis we found ourselves to be dealing with something different. Our accession registers provide for items to be entered in the order in which they are received in the Archives, and this constitutes a listing, adequate for all time, of the individual items we receive. Series catalogues, guides or preliminary inventories may provide finding aids at the series level of description; but nothing that condescends to the level of the individual item (i.e. accession unit) will be attempted again. This is all very well for the greater proportion of the public records we deal with. It will not do, however, for the maps. It would be stupid to keep separate from one another two sheets of the same map series, for each of which the last administrative use was made, say, by the Land Tax Office, merely because they came to us at separate times. In our terminology, they are parts of different transfers, and, if they were ordinary public records, would never be listed in one entry in an accession records because of that fact. But clearly with maps exceptions have to be made. The date of their coming into archival custody is of less importance than their complementary relationship to one another. Whereas two parts of the same series of ordinary public records would not be brought together until the record group as a whole was classified, maps can scarcely be allowed to suffer the same delays. The need to shelve maps in special cabinets of large shallow drawers also predisposes one to shelve all maps, no matter when they came to the archives, in the one part of the repository.

The outcome of these factors is that the large transfer of Survey

Office maps mentioned at the opening of this article has no longer identity as a separate transfer. It has been supplemented by subsequent transfers of a similar type, and these are arranged by (firstly) provenance, secondly by series, and thirdly by scale. Where individual maps do not belong to any particular series, they are inserted within the system according to scale. Where a series has maps of various scales within it, it is filed according to the scale of the greatest number of its parts.

It is too early to say how well the system works. Certainly I would not be able to reel off a list of seemingly difficult enquiries such as Dr. Kunz details on p. 141 of the article I have had under notice, which he claims that his staff had to deal with in the weeks immediately prior to his writing his paper, and which he says they were able to answer within minutes! It would have been more interesting if he had listed a similar number of his failures, for without some such statement as this it is impossible to judge of the effectiveness of the Library's system.

However, I have worked with these maps for a sufficiently long time to know that the sort of co-operation Dr. Kunz pleads for is very desirable. He wants all the major libraries to co-operate in three fields. The first of these is in providing accession lists and other aids to map selection. The second is in providing assistance in establishing dates for undated maps; and the third is in the provision of reciprocal research and photographic services.

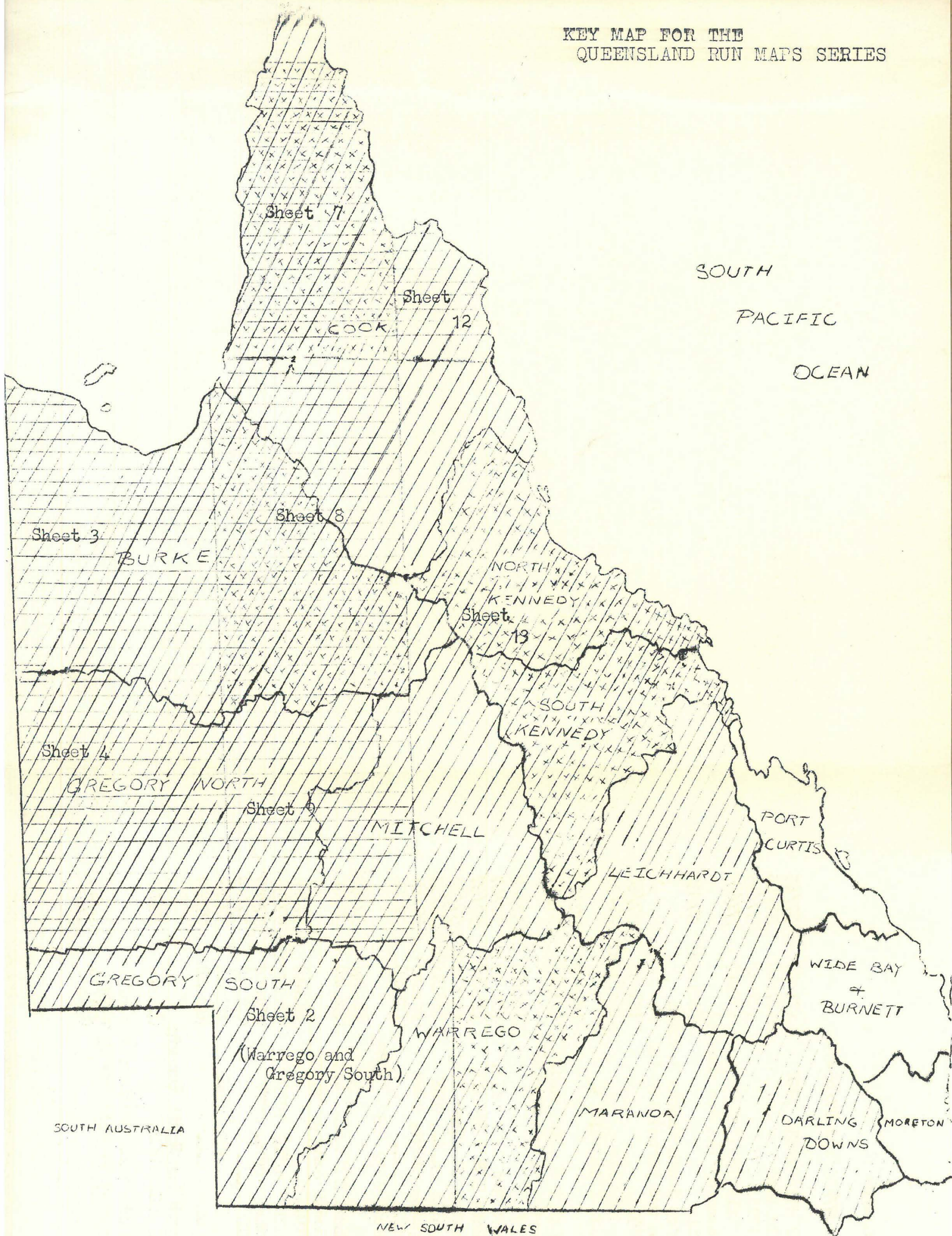
It would be interesting to know whether other archives institutions and libraries are in any way interested in the type of co-operation Dr. Kunz suggests. Like Queensland, some of the other States may not be able to take that administrative step ("the appointment of a senior and an able librarian with capacity to adapt or develop a system suitable for maps and to create a map unit") which Dr. Kunz suggests. However, perhaps our failure to emulate the Mitchell Library in this regard will not militate against our co-operating in other ways. In view of the interest that members of the Archives Section would have in this subject, I would think it not inappropriate for Archives and Manuscripts to provide the forum for its discussion.

12 and 8 mile run maps

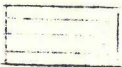
Accession numbers 37/33 and 37/65-70

Darling Downs, 12 mile	1883, 1900	(flat)	37/65
Leichhardt	12 mile	1884	(flat) 37/65
Maranoa	12 mile	1893	(flat) 37/65
North Kennedy	12 mile	1885	(flat) 37/65
North and South Kennedy (in two sheets)	1885	12 mile	(folded) 37/33
Warrego and Gregory South Sheets 1 and 2	(the latter in two parts)	12 mile	n.d., 1882, 1893
			(flat) 37/66
Warrego Sheet 1	12 mile		(folded) 37/33
Gregory North Sheet 4	12 mile		1892, 1905
			(flat) 37/67
Gregory North Sheet 4	8 mile	n.d.	(flat) 37/67
Gregory North Sheet 9	12 mile	1896	
			(flat) 37/67
Gregory North Sheet 9	8 mile	n.d.	(flat) 37/67
Gregory North Sheets 4 & 9	12 mile		(flat) 37/67
Burke part of Sheet 8	12 mile	1883	(folded) 37/33
Burke Sheet 3	12 mile	n.d., 1895	(folded) 37/33
Burke Sheet 3	12 mile	1891, 1902	(flat) 37/68
Burke Sheet 3	8 mile	n.d.	(flat) 37/68
Burke and Cook Sheet 8	12 mile	1909, 1906	(flat) 37/68
Burke and Cook Sheet 8	8 mile	n.d.	(flat) 37/68
Burke, Cook and North Kennedy Sheet	13	12 mile	1910
			(flat) 37/68
Cook Sheet 7	12 mile	n.d., 1890	(folded) 37/33
Cook Sheet 7	12 mile	1908, 1891	(flat) 37/69
Cook Sheet 7	8 mile	n.d.	(flat) 37/69
Cook Sheet 12	12 mile	1909, 1892	(flat) 37/69
Cook Sheet 12	8 mile	n.d.	(flat) 37/69
Leichhardt and North and South Kennedy	and Mitchell	12 mile	1884
			(flat) 37/70
Torres Strait Islands (and northern tip of	Cape York Peninsula)	12 mile	1892, 1901
			(flat) 37/70

KEY MAP FOR THE
QUEENSLAND RUN MAPS SERIES



See reverse for accession numbers and dates



shows districts for which we hold
8 miles to the inch maps



shows districts for which we hold
12 miles to the inch maps



shows districts for which we have, in addition to the flat
filed maps at 12 miles to the inch, maps cut into sections
for folding at 12 miles to the inch.