

RECORDING OF MANUSCRIPTS OF AUSTRALIAN AND PACIFIC INTEREST HELD ABROAD

PHYLLIS MANDER JONES

An address to Section E, History, of the 1964 Congress of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science, held in Canberra, January 20th to 24th, one of two addresses at the Session at 4 p.m. on Thursday, 23rd. The covering title for the Session was *Two Source Material Projects*, the other address being given by Dr. Edgar Waters and entitled *Sound Recordings as Source Material*. Mr. H. L. White, Librarian of the National Library of Australia, was in the chair.

o o o o o o o o o

Over a long period and increasingly of recent years much research and long and expensive journeys have been undertaken to discover manuscript sources of our history held abroad. Many manuscripts can be acquired, but many others are unlikely to be released by their present owners, so that we can divide manuscripts sought overseas into two categories—those which we can probably bring to this part of the world and those which will remain in distant places. Scholars have often suggested that a survey of the latter should be made and its results published. The object of this paper is to outline a plan to carry this suggestion into effect.

It would be useful to examine similar schemes for other areas, but this would take considerable time and, although we shall benefit from the experience and discoveries of others, my aim is to describe what we should do ourselves. Commonsense must govern our procedure but it is not enough to enable us to begin. It is worth stating in logical order the steps we should take.

We already know a good deal. The knowledge of experts in special fields is at least partly available in their published works, we can consult catalogues and reports and we have collected large numbers of handwritten and typewritten transcripts, photostats and photographs and, since 1948, thousands of strips and reels of microfilm. Some of these copies are privately owned, but governments, libraries, universities and other institutions have been involved. There is no doubt that our transcripts and photographs—only a few of which have been reproduced in print—constitute a priceless store of source material. We lack, however, inclusive lists or guides. The National Library has begun the compilation of a Guide to Collections of Manuscripts relating to Australia, and the Australian Advisory Council on Bibliographical Services has reported on a guide to material copied in the Public Record Office in London, but these are long-term projects, the first very wide in scope and the second narrowed to one repository. We need a concise general review.

This review is an essential preliminary to any survey abroad. I have been honoured with a visiting fellowship in this University to compile such a review and to collect information. I hope something useful can be assembled in the six months available, but the possibility presupposes generous help from libraries and scholars and correspondence will have to supplement my enquiries. I shall be very grateful for notes of new finds and for information on material I have missed.

Before outlining a plan, there are four points which need consideration. First, the term manuscript should include drawings, sketches and maps, as well as various forms of written document, typescript, duplicated and printed, if not technically published but designed for confidential or limited circulation.

Second, we have to define the area to be covered. We should exclude the East Indies and the Philippines, and include the whole of Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia. Besides New Guinea, Australia and New Zealand, we should cover Antarctica and sub-antarctic islands in the southern Pacific and Indian Oceans. We must decide on precise limits but the above description gives the general area.

Third, it must be decided how widely we spread our nets. I suggest that we should try to catch all useful documents, searching public records, libraries, societies, business houses, private papers.

Fourth, it is worth noting that it is not surprising that a general survey has lagged behind copying. Scholars leaving our shores in search of papers are pressed for time. Libraries and other authorities naturally sponsor the copying of special documents brought to their notice. Reviews in some fields have been made, but records of them are available only to a limited extent. The historian must get ahead with his research, with his writing; the library seizes the opportunity which may not occur again for years, perhaps never.

We are fortunate that so much copying has been done. Its beginnings go back over eighty years and brief mention of a few projects will show its scope. Francis Peter Labilliere, George William Rusden and Robert McNab used documents they found abroad and, foremost among our early copyists, our first New South Wales "Archivist," James Bonwick, school teacher, author and indefatigable research worker, assembled the large collection of transcripts called by his name. They form a great part of the two series, *Historical Records of New South Wales* and *Historical Records of Australia*. The question of the resumption of the publication of the second series had some influence when the National Library and the Public Library of New South Wales initiated the important scheme called the Joint Microfilming Project, in which New Zealand, other Australian States and universities in Australia and elsewhere now co-operate. The Project has produced nearly three thousand reels of microfilm of documents in the Public Record Office in London and, in addition, many hundreds of strips and reels of film of documents in Great Britain and Ireland and other countries. I have not taken time to speak of all or even the more important collections of transcripts and photostats, many of them of documents in France and the Netherlands, nor have I attempted to give much detail about the Joint Microfilming Project, which has brought microfilms to Australia and New Zealand, not only from England but from Spain, France, Germany and the United States. I think I have said enough to show that it is advisable to have lists of the copies we have before beginning a survey.

The next steps must be taken among the actual manuscripts. Something can be done by correspondence, but we shall have to rely chiefly on our own efforts. Many institutions and private owners will give generous information, but in a large institution or private collection we cannot expect the detail we require. We must look at the manuscripts ourselves and decide how to set about the work.

Practical considerations and the experience of other surveys show that it is best to proceed by place where the manuscripts are located rather than by subject. Special qualifications are required for searching in each place and contacts once established are best followed up quickly. A workable area is that within one country or a couple of closely related countries, although, given funds and personnel, there is no reason why parallel schemes should not proceed in a number of countries. Great Britain and Ireland constitute an obvious area to be tackled, and although I have been trying to formulate general principles, several suggestions I am now going to make apply particularly to that area.

Everywhere, of course, we must have experienced and well-informed searchers and good secretarial help. An office, a searcher who will conduct correspondence and a good secretary typist, and we should be able to begin, though it would be advisable to have a second continuously employed searcher because of the extent of the work and in case of accident. This force should be able to accomplish a great deal in Great Britain and Ireland in a couple of years, provided expert help, perhaps from visiting scholars, can be had from time to time. In planning the work force we have useful guidance from a recently completed survey of manuscripts relating to America in Great Britain and Ireland. From the survey a guide has been compiled and published and in the preface we read that the volume is "the first fruit of two years' work of a research team that began as two people and ended with five working full time." The survey and guide were financed by a grant from the United States Information Service in Great Britain, which enabled the British Association for American Studies to organise operations. In considering the value to us of this example, the fact that American sources cover a much longer period than ours is offset by the existence of detailed guides to manuscripts of American interest in selected institutions in Great Britain published by the Carnegie Institution of Washington between 1908 and 1914. The recent guide builds upon these. Another project from which we shall benefit is the survey of materials for eastern studies by the School of Oriental Studies in the University of London.

We can divide the means of discovering manuscripts into four categories:—

(1) Publications. These are of three types. First, general guides to research, of which the best work in our field known to me is A. R. Hewitt's *Guide to Resources for Commonwealth Studies in London, Oxford and Cambridge*, 1957. Invaluable as it is, this work covers a wide area as well as including information on research facilities so that manuscripts must receive summary treatment. We can extract useful hints from the American guides I have mentioned. A second type of publication is the guide or catalogue for a collection or repository. The catalogue, if not published, can be used in card, manuscript or duplicated form. Time does not permit a review of many examples, but I should cite the new *Guide to the Contents of the Public Record Office* . . . revised (to 1960) from the *Guide* by the late M. S. Giuseppi, and the series of Public Record Office Lists and Indexes, previously published and unpublished, for many years available only in the search rooms at the Public Record Office and now to be published by permission by the Kraus Reprint Corporation, New York. Third, we can glean a great deal of information from histories, biographies and other works.

(2) A second means of discovering manuscripts is by consultation with scholars and with the staffs of libraries, record offices, organisations which hold records, with documentation centres, associations of historians and archivists and research centres throughout the world. I can mention only a few examples. In England, the National Register of Archives has correspondents all over the country and maintains well indexed files of reports. Several centres for Pacific studies are now assembling data, among them the Societe des Oceanistes and the Centre Documentaire pour l'Océanie, both with headquarters in Paris, while in the Pacific we already owe a great deal to the Bishop Museum and the University of Hawaii. The Conference proposed by this University to consider the establishment and organisation of an association of Pacific research libraries will doubtless try to find ways and means of efficient bibliographical co-operation.

(3) A third fruitful source which we hope will lead us to new finds is in the copies filed in Australian and New Zealand libraries or in private possession. In connection with copies it should be noted that the Bonwick

transcripts are not wholly superseded by *Historical Records of New South Wales* and *Historical Records of Australia*, nor by the results of the Joint Microfilming Project. Lists currently kept up to date in London for that project will be very useful. There is what is called a "Master List" of Public Record Office microfilms and a separate list of microfilms from other sources. This second list records all data filed at Australia House about the location of still uncopied material. Using these lists it must be borne in mind that they are designed to keep a check on copying in progress and that, faced with the need to copy quickly what turns up, it has been impracticable to make general surveys.

(4) Fourth, we hope for considerable response from appeals in the national and local press and in the publications of historical and trade associations.

Lastly, a few notes on what facts about manuscripts should be recorded. It will be convenient to give information on repositories at the beginning of entries for their holdings, and for each manuscript or group we shall want a brief statement of the origin and background of the papers—biographical notes and explanations of historical significance, in the case of public and business or society records, a few words on the system of administration which created them, or references to easily accessible published information. Additional notes should give call numbers or other location data, reference to catalogues or works on the papers and a note whether copies have been made for Australia or New Zealand and where such copies are held.

No survey can claim completeness. New accessions are made to libraries and collections and it is too much to expect that some material should not remain undiscovered even by an intensive survey. It is certain that an organised search would uncover a large amount and that it would co-ordinate the knowledge we already have. It will be valuable to publish the results so that as many as possible can benefit and, although a counsel of perfection might be for delay, what is likely to be immediately useful and reasonably inclusive should justify publication.

Such is the scheme now being discussed. Suggestions and criticisms are invited.

NOTES ON DISCUSSION

Questions were asked as follows:—

Question 1: Whether all sub-antarctic islands including those in the South Atlantic, would be covered?

Answer: So far a decision has not been made on the sub-antarctic islands in the South Atlantic, but this point must be decided.

Question 2: There must be important records of Australian, New Zealand and Pacific interest in France, in the National Archives and in the possession of French families. Have surveys been made in France?

Answer: Copying of records in France was begun as the result of a visit to Australia by the Comte de Fleurieu before the first world war. The Trustees of the Mitchell Library, Sydney, and the Committee of the Commonwealth National Library employed a copyist recommended by the Comte de Fleurieu, Mme. Helouis. She transcribed by hand and obtained some photographs of documents in the Archives Nationales, in the Service Hydrographique de la Marine, in the Bibliotheque Nationale and at Caen. Transcriptions of French documents have been made for New Zealand and some microfilms have been obtained. The choice for a large selection of documents for microfilming was made by Mr. Leslie R. Marchant. Important records of Baudin's voyage, 1800 to 1804, at Le Havre have been photographed for the Public Library of New South Wales with the idea of including them in the Joint Copying Project. There are, of course, many records in other countries and microfilms have been obtained of Spanish, German and United States archives.

Question 3: Where would a survey in Great Britain begin?

Answer: The obvious place to begin is London, but, provided searchers are available, there is no reason why surveys should not begin in other places while the large deposits in London are being examined.

Question 4: What is meant by publication?

Answer: I think I am right in saying that a publication is a document of which there are a number of copies some of which are offered for sale. Published documents are, as a rule, excluded from a survey of manuscripts, but some are so rare that they are worth including.

Question 5: Will searchers for the survey see that documents found are placed in suitable repositories?

Answer: It will not be the function of those employed on the survey to see that this is done, but the survey will be in close touch with representatives of repositories in Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand.

On the question of the publication of the results of the survey in Great Britain, Sir Keith Hancock said that in discussions with the Council of the Australian National University he had recommended the publication of a guide on the lines of the guide to manuscripts relating to America in Great Britain edited by Dr. Bernard Crick.

SELECTED REFERENCES

(No references are given here for transcripts, photostats, photographs, microfilms, etc. A catalogue of these is outside the scope of this list. The aim of my six months' work as a Visiting Fellow in the Department of History of the Research School of Social Sciences of the Australian National University, January to June, 1964, is the preparation of a review of transcripts, etc., of manuscripts in Great Britain and Ireland.)

Manuscript Sources of Australian and Pacific History Abroad—

- Bonwick, J.—The Writing of Colonial History: Report of a Paper read before an Afternoon Meeting of the Royal Colonial Institute on Tuesday, March 26th, 1895. Reprinted from *The Home News*. See also Royal Colonial Institute Proceedings, vol. xxvi., 1894-5, pp. 270-272.
- Appreciations of James Bonwick. Printed by H. E. Cornwall, West Norwood, S.E. 27, pp. 34 (A collection of newspaper notices, one reporting Bonwick's paper to the Royal Colonial Institute, March 26th, 1895, and the rest obituary notices, 1906).
- Labilliere, F. P.—The Early History of Victoria from its discovery to its establishment as a self governing province of the British Empire. 2 vols. Lond. Sampson, Low and Co. 1878. (Quotes Admiralty and Colonial Office documents in the Public Record Office.)
- McNab, R.—Historical Records of New Zealand. 2 vols. Wellington, Govt. Printer, 1908-1914. (Vol. 1 is taken from the Historical Records of New South Wales and from copies of transcripts and documents in Sydney. Vol. 2 contains documents relating to Tasman, Cook and a few from the Archives de la Marine in Paris. See also McNab's Murihiku.)

Historical Records of New South Wales—1762-(1811). (Ed. by A. Britton and F. M. Bladen.) 7 vols. in 9. Sydney, Govt. Printer, 1892-1901.

Historical Records of Australia (ed. by J. F. Watson).—Published by the Library Committee of the Commonwealth Parliament. 33 vols. Sydney, Govt. Printer, 1914-1925. (Series 1: Governors' Despatches to and from England; Vols. 1-26, 1788—Dec., 1848. Series 3: Despatches and papers relating to the settlement of the States; Vols. 1-6, 1803—January, 1830. Series 4: Legal papers, Section A, vol. 1, 1786-1827).

Binns, K.—The Publication of Historical Records of Australia. (Paper read at the Third Annual Conference of the Australian Institute of Librarians at Adelaide, June, 1940.) **Historical Studies, Australia and New Zealand**, vol. 1, No. 2, Oct., 1940, pp. 91-6.

Leeson, I. E.—Archives in New South Wales. (Paper read at the Third Annual Conference of the Australian Institute of Librarians at Adelaide, June, 1940.) **Historical Studies, Australia and New Zealand**, vol. 1, No. 2, Oct., 1940, pp. 96-9.

Mander Jones, P.—Australian Records Abroad. **Royal Australian Historical Society Journal and Proceedings**, vol. xxxvii, pt. 2, 1951, pp. 81-95. (Paper read 25th July, 1950.)

White, H. L.—Source Material for Australian Studies. (Based on a paper read to Section E of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science at its 32nd Meeting at Dunedin, 17th January, 1957.) **Historical Studies, Australia and New Zealand**, vol. 7, No. 28, May, 1957, pp. 452-465. (Supplement: List of Microfilm of Original Material of Australian Interest up to 1900 in the Public Record Office. **Historical Studies, Australia and New Zealand**, vol. 9, No. 34, May, 1960, pp. 204-5.

(Manuscripts: Papers of Sir Henry Parkes in the Mitchell Library, Sydney. Vol. 18, pp. 106-9, letter from J. Henniker Heaton, Lond. March 28th, 1882, urging the need for obtaining copies of documents relating to Australia; also Correspondence, A-B, pp. 703-6, letter from Bonwick, Sep. 19th, 1884, supporting his request to be employed copying documents in London. Also letter from Bonwick to Parkes on the same subject, January 16th, 1884 in Autograph Letters in the Mitchell Library, A9, p. 51.)

Guides to Manuscript Sources in London, Oxford and Cambridge. —

Hewitt, A. R.—Guide to Resources for Commonwealth Studies in London, Oxford and Cambridge. University of London, published for the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, The Athlone Press, 1957. (Includes general information and printed material.)

Public Record Office.—Guide to the Contents of the Public Record Office—revised (to 1960) from the Guide by the late M. S. Giuseppi, F.S.A. 2 vols. Lond. H.M.S.O., 1963.

Virginia State Library—The British Public Record Office, History, Description, Record groups, Finding Aids, and Materials for American History with special Reference to Virginia. Special Reports, 25, 26, 27 and 28 of the Virginia Colonial Records Project. Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia, 1960.

Public Record Office—Lists and Indexes. (These are being reissued with revisions by the Public Record Office and the Kraus Reprint Corporation, N.Y. 1962-).

Guides to Manuscript Sources of American History in Great Britain and Ireland—

Crick, B. R., and Alman, M. ed.—A Guide to Manuscripts relating to America in Great Britain and Ireland. Oxford University Press for the British Association for American Studies, 1961. (This Guide supplements earlier guides published by the Carnegie Institution of Washington.)

Andrews, C. M.—Guide to the Materials for American History to 1783, in the Public Record Office of Great Britain, 2 vols. Published by the Carnegie Institution of Washington, Wash. D.C., 1912-1914.

Andrews, C. M. and Davenport, F. C.—Guide to the Manuscript Materials for the History of the United States to 1783 in the British Museum, in minor London Archives and in the Libraries of Oxford and Cambridge. Carnegie Institution of Washington, Wash., D.C., 1908.

Paullin, C. O., and Paxson, F. L.—Guide to the Materials in London Archives for the History of the United States since 1783. Carnegie Institution of Washington, Wash, D.C., 1914.