

THE GUIDE TO COLLECTIONS OF MANUSCRIPTS RELATING TO AUSTRALIA

AN OUTLINE AND ASSESSMENT

BY J. L. CLELAND, B.A.

1. ORIGIN & DEVELOPMENT

A convenient starting point for an examination of the origin and development of the *Guide to Collections of Manuscripts Relating to Australia* is the Conference on Source Material for Australian Studies held in Canberra on 12th July 1961. Chaired by Sir A. Grenfell Price and attended by delegates from libraries and universities throughout Australia and other interested bodies, it was concerned particularly with co-operation in the collecting and deposit of original source material and with facilitating its use through union listing.

Sub-committees were appointed, Sub-Committee A to report to the Conference on future collecting activity and Sub-Committee B to "draft proposals for a union catalogue and the possible method of its preparation".

In its report Sub-Committee B recognised two forms of description of unpublished source material current overseas, a union catalogue on cards and a guide to collections, and favoured the latter. Arrangement by bodies originating the records with at least a broad subject index and an index of repositories was suggested and it was thought that the *Guide* would best be compiled by the supply from repositories of their holdings described at the record group level. It was thought that the *Guide* should be in two sections, one covering government archives and the other non-governmental material, and that the editing would best be done by the Commonwealth Archives Office for the former and the National Library of Australia for the latter. In relation to non-governmental material it was suggested that the machinery of the Australian Advisory Council on Bibliographical Services (AACOBS) might be used in an advisory capacity as it had operated successfully with the National Union Catalog of Monographs. The formation of an *ad hoc* committee, not necessarily of AACOBS members, was thought desirable.

The reports of both Sub-Committees were accepted by the Conference with the intention that they be submitted to the participants of the Conference for consideration by their authorities. This process was set in motion on 31st July 1961 by the distribution of a circular letter enclosing the Minutes of the Conference and the reports of the two Sub-Committees.

In contrast with the report of Sub-Committee A, the proposal for a guide to collections met with widespread approval when examined further in the following months. This was made clear in a summary of the replies to the two reports distributed on 24th March 1962. With the circular letter of this date Sir Grenfell Price indicated that having already referred the recommendations of Sub-Committee B to the Council of AACOBS in August 1961, he now proposed to seek the advice of AACOBS on his proposal to set up a working party to make recommendations to the National Library for the establishment of a guide to collections.

The proposal was approved by the Standing Committee of AACOBS and on 8th June Sir Grenfell Price issued an invitation to form a working party to Messrs H. L. White, National Librarian, R. C. Sharman, Archivist of Queensland, A. R. Horton, University of New South Wales, Ian Maclean, the Commonwealth Archivist, R. S. Parker, who represented the Australian National University at the Conference and G. L. Fischer, Archivist of the

Public Library of South Australia. This working party with myself as Secretary, met in Sydney on 19th August. Mr A. R. Horton was unfortunately unable to attend.

The report of Sub-Committee B together with papers prepared by members of the Working Party and distributed for examination prior to the meeting, formed the basis of discussion.

From this meeting the *Guide* emerged in recognisable form, the report of the Working Party giving specific recommendations as to its scope and function, its form and arrangement, the form of entry, the machinery for compilation, and priorities of material to be listed. Only in the issue and arrangement of entries and their relation to indexes did the *Guide* as eventually produced differ from the proposals of the Working Party. The aim and the great achievement of the Working Party was thus a series of workable proposals leading to early and concrete action.

Not all questions were resolved nor was it intended that they should be. It was recommended that arrangement of entries be further considered but initially be left to recipients, with subject headings provided as a basis for arrangement by those who wished to use them. Accordingly no final decision was sought, for example, on whether entries for government archives and private papers should be in one sequence or not although one sequence was favoured. Similarly while it was recommended that the unit of description be the originating body or individual, and thus a "record group", it was recognised that contributors would at times have to use their own discretion as to what constituted a 'group', and no attempt was made at precise definition of the term.

Following submission and approval of the report of the Working Party by the Council of the National Library on 5th October, further attention was given to the final details of form and arrangement of the *Guide*, and to drafting detailed instructions to assist co-operating institutions in the preparation of entries.

It was at this stage that problems were met with the Working Party recommendation for arrangement of entries to be left to contributors. If even a minimum of references and added entries were to be included, bulking would result, and if indexes were to be used for the purpose they would have to refer to some fixed entry identification symbol, which might also be necessary for the filing of revised entries, a concomitant of the loose leaf system proposed. It was at this stage also that the *National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections* published in book form by the Library of Congress provided an answer. Not previously available, the advantage of its system of entries in arbitrary numerical order followed by supporting indexes was recognised and the great flexibility which this offered.¹ This arrangement was adopted while retaining the loose leaf form recommended by the Working Party.

The *Guide* was now at an advanced stage. On 13th February 1963 details of the proposed features of the *Guide* were circulated to libraries and universities for comment, together with a copy of *Notes for the Guidance of Contributors* giving further information, and the co-operation of institutions in the production of the *Guide* was sought.

Full support was given to the proposed *Guide*, and on 20th June 1963 the submission of entries was invited. At this time also the members of the Working Party agreed to become an Advisory Committee on the technical aspects of publication.

Entries were slow in being forwarded; a deadline for receipt for the first issue was placed at 31st January 1964 and for the second issue at 31st October. It was decided to distribute the first two issues together and this was done in April 1965.

2. FUNCTION, SCOPE, FORM & ARRANGEMENT

The Guide is a publication whose aim is to alert research workers to the existence and location of original source material.

It seeks to enable a scholar surveying a field to decide where his source material is most likely to be found, supplying enough information for him to ascertain when he is *not* interested and when he should seek further information from a repository. To 'alert' is not necessarily to pinpoint the quarry but rather to prevent the research worker from hunting for caribou among the kangaroos. The *Guide* is thus a finding aid and not a descriptive tool. It does not seek to supplant the detailed descriptive lists, inventories, catalogues and indexes that are the concern of the individual repository. To a high degree the function of the *Guide* is one of union listing, bringing together the holdings of many institutions with a consequent ease of reference for the scholar. Papers of an individual, perhaps fragmented in the course of time, can now be seen as a whole and gain fresh significance.

Private papers, business records and government archives, or copies of them, constitute the source material included.

Entries are excluded for maps and theses deposited in university libraries as part of the requirement for a degree. These are covered by Mary Marshall's *Union list of Higher Degree Theses in Australian University Libraries*. Copied material such as microfilm is included as a basic area of resource material.

The material relates to Australia and its Territories and may be held in these areas or elsewhere.

What is meant by 'relating to Australia' is not defined but this feature makes the scope of the *Guide* wider than one of union listing of material held in Australian repositories.

The Guide is made up of entries for collections of material.

For the guidance of contributors a collection is considered to be a group of papers usually with a common source which has been formed by or around an individual, company or organisation (in archives, a 'record group'). Inclusion of material rather than exclusion is the aim and at the discretion of contributors entries may be made for small groups or individual items of sufficient importance but, in general, material should be covered by as few entries as possible bearing in mind that the form of the *Guide* — one entry to a page — demands that the number of entries be kept within manageable proportions. Where necessary, material should be grouped together e.g. according to a common theme, and covering entries prepared under the name of the repository. In selecting material for inclusion in the *Guide* priorities should be given as appropriate to: current material on accession; concentration on strength; private papers where both government archives and private papers are held in the one repository; government archives in other than the official repositories of the relevant government; and pre-Federation government archives.

The Guide is in loose leaf form housed in a binder holding 1200 entries.

The aim has been to encourage the early supply and regular flow of entries by making their later revision possible after a collection has received

more detailed treatment in a repository. Cumulation of indexes is also possible and the elimination of those indexes superseded.

The Guide is in two parts: first, a sequence of entries for collections, one to a page, arranged in arbitrary numerical order, the number containing a prefix indicating the volume.

A sample entry is given below, and the following are notes on the parts of an entry. The records created by an individual or corporate body are entered under the *Name* of the individual, corporate body, government agency etc. Any other collection is entered under the name of the collector whether individual or corporate (i.e. entry can be under the name of a repository). The form of a name adopted is in accordance with the *ALA Cataloging Rules for Author and Title Entries*. Biographical dates for individuals are supplied when available. The *Title* of a collection summarises it in one or more

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A325

NAME	JULL, <u>Dr.</u> Roberta Henrietta Margaritta (née Stewart)
TITLE	Papers (1872-1961)
INCLUSIVE DATES	1886-1942
QUANTITY	2 ft.
LOCATION	Battye Library, State Library of Western Australia
NOTE	Obtained medical degree at Glasgow (1895), came to W.A. and entered practice; married M.E. Jull, Under Secretary for Works (1898); resumed her career during Great War; employed in Health Department as Schools' Medical Officer and pioneered infant welfare work in W.A.; actively associated with women's organisations generally; President of National Council of Women (1930-32); delegate to League of Nations (1929); member of Senate of University of W.A. (1914-42) and active in promotion of a University women's college.
Description	Diaries (1886-90); personal papers; material re conscription referendum (1916), Royal Commission on administration of W.A. Health Act (1938), schools medical service (1920's), University of W.A. (1922-41), National Council of Women (1915-39); papers dealing with history of B.M.A. (W.A. Section), Karrakatta Club, Alexandra Home for Women, W.A. Association of University Women and numerous articles, talks, etc. (1895-1942).
FURTHER DESCRIPTIONS	Detailed list in Library.
ACCESS CONDITIONS	Available for reference.
FORM IF NOT ORIGINAL	
LOCATION OF ORIGINAL	
SUBJECT HEADINGS	
SECONDARY ENTRIES	I. Alexandra Home for Women. II. British Medical Association (W.A. Section). III. Karrakatta Club. IV. National Council of Women. V. University of Western Australia. VI. Western Australian Association of University Women.

words using standard terms such as 'papers', 'letters', 'correspondence', 'records', 'business records' or obvious alternative terms such as 'journals', 'letterbooks', 'diaries'. The title may be the name by which the collection is known or descriptive of an artificial collection. *Inclusive Dates* are supplied giving the earliest and latest dates of the material recorded. A significant part of the entry is the recording of the *Quantity*, giving some idea of the extent of the collection by indicating the running feet of shelf space occupied, which is to be preferred as giving a standard measurement or alternatively the number of boxes, volumes, items or pages, or the number of reels or feet of microfilm. Against *Location* is given the name of the repository, holding body or individual in possession of the material, including the location of the material within a repository, if possible, to facilitate reference retrieval. One of the most important sections of the entry is the *Note* which gives brief biographical details for an individual or in the case of a firm or organisation some historical and administrative background. This is followed by the principal part of the entry the *Description*; a general description of the material including an outline of the types of papers and documents which make up the collection mentioning special features which characterise it, including the dates for which the material bulks largest, the phase most completely covered or particular segments of material included. The naming and describing of individual items is avoided but it is of some importance that names should be used freely and sufficient information given to support the name index entries mentioned below. The existence of *Further Descriptions* such as preliminary inventories, descriptive lists and indexes is noted so that a scholar may refer to a repository to obtain further details about the collection, having been alerted to its existence and significance by the *Guide* entry. *Access* conditions are expressed in standard phrases such as 'available for reference,' 'application to be made to the repository', 'restricted', or specific dates of closure. Where the entry describes copied material the *Form if not Original* is indicated, whether microfilm, transcript or photocopies, and also the *Location of the Original*. Finally on the entry form for a collection there is space for *Subject Headings* and *Secondary Entries*. Subject headings may be supplied if already available but these are not sought as a regular part of an entry in the absence of any subject index to the *Guide*. Secondary entries may be listed on the entry form but an alternative is to use the phrase 'All names mentioned in the Description'. Secondary entries are those names which go to make up the Name Index.

The second part of the Guide is the Name Index.

The name index is a fundamental feature and the basic tool for referring to material listed in the *Guide*, particularly in the absence of other indexes. While aimed primarily at revealing sub groups within a collection it may include personal or corporate names connected with the collection whether as authors, subjects, or addressees. Sufficient information is given in the description of a collection for users of the *Guide* to assess the significance of a name index entry. The name index entry numbers are asterisked when referring to a collection as a whole.

The *Guide* is issued in instalments of 300 entries with a covering index. Indexes are cumulated at the close of a volume. Entries are received typed up on entry blanks supplied to contributors. Responsibility for the collection of entries, editing and issue of the *Guide* rests with the National Library acting in consultation as necessary with the Commonwealth Archives Office. Entries are reproduced for publication as they stand by photolithography. From the entries a name index is prepared on cards publication being completed by the

Fotolist process. In general, little editing is involved. Further locations may have to be added to an entry — particularly with Australian Joint Copying Project microfilm — when it is recognised that other institutions hold the same material. The bulk of editing time is taken up with the name index, its preparation, and in identifying names repeated in collections from differing repositories. The nature of a collection is often sufficient for the necessary distinguishing of individuals, but the addition to common names in an entry of full first names or initials, birth and death dates or the name of a place or organisation with which the individual was associated, or his occupation is of assistance.

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3. ASSESSMENT

A Society of American Archivists workshop programme on the Library of Congress *National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections* made an appraisal of this project prior to the publication of the latest volume.² At that time some 12,324 collections had been listed from 398 repositories, but the initial criticism was lack of comprehensiveness. Very much remained untouched and it was pointed out that 25 institutions housed more than two-thirds of all the collections reported, and that few more than a hundred institutions were responsible for almost 90% of the collections listed.³

The supply of entries by contributors is the crucial problem in any such union listing project and the Australian *Guide* is no exception.

The fourth instalment of the *Guide* brings the total of entries to 1200 and fills the first volume of the loose leaf binder. The cumulated Name Index contains some 5500 index entries. Initially *Guide* entries have been sought from the main repositories of original source material, the State and University libraries and archival institutions. Contributors to the first volume total 18 but it may be noted that 85% of the material listed is held in 5 repositories, and over 50% in 2. Criticism is not the present intent but it is essential to recognise that the *Guide* is what entries make it and that on the inflow of entries all else depends. The *Guide* has been formally discussed with scholars and the comment is not on the form of the *Guide* or the entry or the other matters which will be discussed below. What the scholar needs is a *Guide* which is more comprehensive, and a specific problem is that the scholar wanting to survey a particular field must still visit and search the record of holdings of individual institutions.

Clearly this problem cannot be removed quickly and to a degree will always be present but it does suggest some lines of action one of which has been sectionalization of the *Guide*. In discussion at the meeting of the Working Party, the scale of the task and the known limited resources suggested not only separation of government archives and private papers but also the division of private papers themselves into records of societies, religious organisations, and business records, for example, and for the *Guide* to be issued in parts covering each of these. The suggestion has also been made that a separate listing of copied material should be made since this can be conceived as a coherent and self-contained as well as manageable area requiring union listing. There are other suggestions, of course, such as listing material within a chronological period. This would for example be of great assistance to such projects as the Australian Dictionary of Biography.

Sectionalization however is not of great assistance in a scheme depending on the supply of entries by institutions whose available staff time is already limited, since it is as difficult to provide entries on a sectional as on a general basis. It is more viable as a project by an individual or a team. The Working Party saw the disadvantages of fragmentation and the difficulties of achieving completeness and effective updating and saw as a possible solution the series of priorities which are an integral part of the *Guide* and which have already been mentioned. One of these, particularly emphasised, has been the submission of entries for current accessions. Clearly incoming material is not already covered in catalogues and to be able to go with confidence to the *Guide* for a comprehensive cover of all recent accessions in Australian institutions would help the scholar plagued with the necessity of searching and researching institutional holdings. It can also be argued that incoming material must be given some treatment and the preparation of entries for the *Guide* may be appropriate at this point. On the other hand, with inadequate staff the

more important collections whether recently received or not take priority, whereas incoming material to be comprehensively covered involves allocating staff time to the less significant. There appear to be other obstacles as well. The same shortage of staff leads to wariness at publicising new accessions because of the difficulty of satisfying customer demand before a collection is fully processed. It is likely also that there is, on occasion, feeling that to publicise recent accessions is to indicate to competitors one's current fields of collecting; a remarkable position that may nevertheless accurately reflect the level of institutional co-operation in collecting.

It was a constant concern of the Working Party that the preparation of *Guide* entries should dovetail into existing accessioning and descriptive procedures in individual institutions. Here, I believe, allied indeed with increases of staff and resources, may be something of the solution to the inflow of entries if greater uniformity of practices could be achieved.

One of the resolutions passed at a conference of representatives of national and state libraries in November 1953 was that a joint survey should be made to determine the methods and means of adopting standard procedures for the description of manuscript material. This has yet to be made. Such a survey might examine all areas of processing including accessioning and the preparation of descriptive tools of various kinds, and in some cases examination of the rulings of institutional auditing authorities which on occasion demand identification and description of individual items in a collection at the time of accessioning. Some uniformity in accessioning procedures and the level of description of incoming collections at this point would result in a greater inflow of entries for the *Guide*.

The *Guide* suggests a form of entry for an initial coverage of a collection which is applicable to the holdings within any one institution. But the quality of an entry is also dependent on the techniques of description used for original source material and thus the problem here is one of the joint advancement of professional thinking and practices in the field of manuscripts and archives.

It may be noticed that in the first volume of the *Guide* there are very few entries for Government archives whereas the inclusion of both Government archives and private papers was a feature of the reports of both Sub-Committee B and the Working Party. The question of inclusion was a subject of discussion by the Working Party but was resolved in the affirmative. In considering the question, the recommendations as to priorities should also be borne in mind. Where private papers and government archives are held in the one repository, priority is to be given to the listing of private papers; pre-Federation archives is another category given priority; and it is also suggested that government material in other than official repositories should also form a priority. This last priority points to a fact of fundamental importance, that with official archives the material expected is in most cases where one would expect it to be. This is recognised by the Library of Congress *Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections* which seeks entries for private manuscripts in archival repositories and archival records found outside the normal archival repository.

Thus by the limitation of priorities a great area of archival material is, in effect, excluded. The one priority which could present a different picture is that of entries for material currently received. With official archives however this is an entirely different question to that with private papers, at once positing a principal problem of what is to be a unit of description for *Guide* purposes and the useability of the present *Guide* entry form in this context. The question needs further and thorough examination not proposed here. The

Guide is flexible; its use should not be discounted in this area but examination of the finding aids being developed and already produced by archival authorities is necessary and a reappraisal of the union listing needs in this field of original source material.

As laid down, the scope of the *Guide* covers material relating to Australia and its Territories whether held in these areas or elsewhere. Thus in the strict sense it is not a union list of original source material held in Australia. Instead it would have similarities with the eleven volume *Manuscript Sources for the History of Irish Civilisation* edited by Richard J. Hayes, Director of the National Library of Ireland, published in 1965. This lists material from collections held in some thirty countries, although drawing mainly on published and unpublished sources of description. In practice any similarity between the *Guide* and this publication is not evident as material so far listed in the *Guide* can be taken as being wholly located in Australia. It is thus closer to a union list particularly as the phrase 'of Australian interest' has not been so rigidly interpreted as to exclude for instance a New Zealand or Pacific interest in some collections and material. This inclusion indeed has been welcomed, and since holdings are increasing of original source material not relating to Australia including European, South-east Asian and Asian manuscripts and archival material, in my opinion there would be considerable advantage in limiting the *Guide* to the function of a strict union list. It is significant to note that this is of course the function of the Library of Congress-NUCMC and that with the development in the Library of Congress of the Centre for the Co-ordination of Foreign Manuscript Copying Abroad the NUCMC is looked on as the medium through which United States holdings of such copied material will be made known.

Turning from material not related to Australia to material of Australian interest held overseas, it would appear to be well covered by such a project as that on which Miss Mander Jones is now working; the *Guide to Manuscripts in the British Isles relating to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands*, a project directed jointly by the Australian National University and the National Library of Australia which will lead to a publication in book form. Material uncovered by this excellent survey and copied for Australian libraries or other institutions would come within the ambit of the *Guide* as a union list and coverage at this stage would certainly appear to be the most appropriate.

An assessment of the *Guide* would not be complete without some examination of its form and arrangement, the question of what constitutes a collection and the possibility and role of additional indexes.

It can be considered desirable that the physical arrangement of entries in such a guide provides one means of approach to the material listed while indexes supply alternative approaches. Thus an arrangement may be alphabetical, supported by a chronological index. The *Guide* does not benefit in this way since the entries are in random order with an arbitrary numeration. There would not appear to be any alternative to this if the great advantages of a fixed run of entries and a completely independent and flexible index or indexes are to be obtained. It may be noted that in the *Guide*, entries from individual institutions appear in blocks but such an institutional approach can be best handled by a Repository Index listing against the name of a repository the entry numbers of those collections relevant.

Consideration should be given however to whether the loose leaf form is essential or whether a bound volume would not be possible. It is feasible to cover revision of entries without using a loose leaf form although for a bound

publication it would be desirable that as few entries as possible be revised. But it may well be considered that the *Guide* is still at an experimental stage and its loose leaf nature makes experimentation simpler.

Factors favouring a bound publication in serial form include the ability to close up entries saving space, and to extend description of collections where these are sizeable and the present form of the *Guide* entry is too great a restriction. Such possibilities require a reassessment also of the technical methods of production and a cost analysis. On the other hand it may be early but not too early to consider the implications and application of automated procedures which in the foreseeable future may radically alter the form, production and use of such union lists.

Turning from physical form and arrangement of the *Guide* to the basic unit of description; a 'collection' has been defined briefly as a group of papers usually with a common source formed by or around an individual, company or organisation; this gives it the character of a 'record group', an essential concept in relation not only to archives but private papers as well. But from the point of view of organic creation and quantity much manuscript material does not partake of the character of a record group. Thus when contributors are asked to seek to be comprehensive of their holdings while recognising that entries should not proliferate, then some artificial grouping of isolated items or small quantities of material must be done. To an extent this decision as to what constitutes a group must be left to contributors. The Library of Congress has used a cut off definition of not less than fifty items and criticism has been made of this since it can exclude significant diaries and log books for example.

What constitutes a collection ties in with the question of the level of description required. It is essential that consistency and uniformity of the level of description be sought and this of course links with some agreed uniformity on the techniques of processing collections of original source material. But it does not mean for instance that while a selection of the correspondents in a collection of personal papers may be listed, names of correspondents in the correspondence of a business firm should also be listed. It is more a question of uniformity of description for specific categories of material. It can be said perhaps that an archival group is interpreted best by a series listing whereas names and name indexing is more necessary with private papers.

There is another element, the extent to which a collection can itself support research. If a whole collection is grist to a scholar's mill then he will not benefit particularly from a detailed description. But where collections are small and are subject to heavy casual use — meaning frequent reference for specific papers such as the letters of particular individuals, and this type of casual use is the case for a large number of Australian collections — then more detailed indexing gains prominence and a greater emphasis needs to be given to revealing the names of correspondents for instance.

While lack of consistency in what is taken as constituting a collection may give an uneven character to the *Guide*, additional to the variation which must be recognised as inevitable, it appears likely from an examination of entries that greater unevenness is caused by lack of adequate description of collections; that is, by variation in the detail provided by contributors say for collections in all respects comparable. This was a fundamental criticism of the *Library of Congress Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections*, and examined from this stand point, three levels of reporting were noted. Entries which gave a full subject description and also listed correspondents' names; entries which gave a subject coverage only and neglected to list names; and thirdly, entries which gave little information at all.⁴

While in the *Guide* there are very few entries of the third category and a very great number in the first category, the second is still a frequent type of entry. It should be remembered, however, that entries have been sought before processing of a collection has been completed, the loose leaf form of the *Guide* making revision of entries a simple matter. A number of entries can be cited where an individual's papers are said to contain 'correspondence' but even where it is clear that the correspondents involved are likely to be highly significant figures they are not listed selectively or otherwise, although an index to the collection may be held.

Of particular significance in a *Guide* entry is the *Note* giving some biographical details of an individual or historical and administrative details of a firm. Where this is lacking the description is handicapped although it may be full in terms of subject coverage, and the approach by name adequate. In cases where a description of a collection may be brief it is helped considerably by a *Note* of this kind.

A final matter to be examined is that of further indexes. Mention has already been made of a repository index listing entry numbers against repository names so that special categories of material such as business records can be sought out by users of the *Guide*; it has been suggested that this could also give details of particular institutions such as times of opening, and conditions regarding application to use collections and what other details institutions might require to fully inform customers on the use that can be made of their holdings. This type of index could be readily prepared from entries to the *Guide* already received. But the basic approach to original source material appears to be on four levels: the name approach, the chronological approach, the subject approach and the geographical approach and perhaps in that order of importance. The development of indexes or an index covering these four categories would greatly increase the value of the *Guide*. It would also increase the amount of editing and place greater pressure on contributors in respect to the standard of entries forwarded. It would necessitate action in the field of uniformity of techniques for the processing and description of collections, and would be affected by the level of professional staffing and the number of such staff in individual repositories throughout Australia. With regard to these four categories also, Schellenberg's book *The Management of Archives* and particularly the two chapters on the description of private papers and manuscript collection should be critically examined.⁵

Archivists criticised the first volume of the *National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections*⁶ which used traditional library subject headings. It is of great interest to archivists therefore that in the later volumes the Library of Congress departed fundamentally in its subject treatment of collections from traditional library practice, in the direction of tailoring its indexes more to the requirements of original source material. Clearly there are developments of considerable interest in the field and it is to be hoped that with the support of corporate thinking the *Guide* may pioneer in these areas.

In conclusion, the *Guide* may not as yet be a 'basic roadmap for any scholarly adventure' or a boon to students in search of seminar topics or thesis subjects, or for professional writers of fiction or non-fiction seeking the material they need.⁷ But it has been brought into existence, it functions successfully, it is steadily growing and it is capable of adapting itself to new roles. It is a joint project, jointly conceived and jointly executed and it is hoped that it will develop further the sense of community existing between research centres. It presents a heartening prospect to the scholar and a foretaste of the future.

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COPYRIGHT IN LETTERS UNPUBLISHED AT WRITER'S DEATH

by PROFESSOR GEOFFREY SAWER, B.A., LL.M.

Professor of Law at the Institute of Advanced Studies,
Australian National University

In *The American Archivist* for July 1965¹ Mr H. B. Cox, a former archivist, outlines the American law on the above subject; he indicates how inconvenient it is from the point of view of archivists and historical scholars, and discusses the numerous proposals for changing that law which have been put before the Congress of the U.S.A. In Australia, as in the U.S.A., copyright is a subject of federal power and is governed by federal statutes; the Australian law, as indicated later, is also under review and likely to be changed within the next year or so, but since the date of the change is still uncertain and since this particular subject may not be affected at all, a note on the Australian situation as it now exists may be useful.

The present Australian law is contained in the Commonwealth *Copyright Act 1912-1950*, which adopts (and sets out in a schedule) the U.K. *Copyright Act 1911*.² This sets up a code on the subject which replaces the earlier common law of copyright and displaces any earlier State legislation on the subject. The position with respect to letters is not explicitly mentioned but judicial decisions and accepted commentaries put beyond doubt the following propositions.³

A letter, however trivial, is a "literary work" for the purpose of the Act.

The writer of the letter is the author of that work and accordingly *prima facie* the owner of the copyright.

The sending of the letter to its addressee does not, *prima facie*, transfer the copyright to the latter.

The sending of the letter does not in itself constitute publication. Even if the letter is sent to a newspaper for publication, copyright remains with the writer; if the letter is actually published by the newspaper, then it becomes a published work whose copyright duration is life of the author and 50 years thereafter.

If a letter is not published in a newspaper, or in some other way by the writer or someone on his assignment or licence during the