

be prepared on a chronological basis, and if applicable, on a language basis.⁸ Groupings could also be made according to the type of record. This is particularly appropriate for institutional units producing the same or similar records, such as District Courts, municipalities or even some businesses.

The record group has been a rather unhappy concept. Jenkinson's "command" the "... whatever else we do we must not break up the Archive Group"⁹ is impossible to keep in the light of recent ideas of the importance of the "series". I have attempted to show that the assumption upon which the record group concept is based is unfounded. If, however, we abandon completely the traditional view of the record group and see the "series" as one grouping of records, we are then in a position to make other groupings of records to make known the contents of archival institutions.

REFERENCES

1. AUSTRALIA. Commonwealth National Library. Archives Division.— *Proceedings of the Archives Management Seminar*, Canberra 1954. Canberra, 1955, 105.
2. *Archives and Manuscripts* II (Apr 1964), 19. See also Sharman's discussion on the definition adopted in 1954. *ibid*.
3. Indeed "arbitrariness" is considered an essential virtue of the record group concept by the National Archives (U.S.A.). See Schellenberg *Modern Archives*, 181 and Fishbein's defence of the record group in the *American Archivist* XXX (Jan 1967), 239-40.
4. See P. J. Scott's article "The Record Group Concept: A Case for Abandonment" (*American Archivist* XXIX (Oct 1966), 493-504). I wish to acknowledge the assistance given to me in the preparation of this paper by Scott. I, of course accept the responsibility for the opinions expressed in the paper.
5. The French equivalent of the English term "series" is "une subdivision d'un fonds d'archives", (*Lexicon of Archive Terminology*) however, the definition does not provide any indication that it is a subdivision of the archive group.
Une subdivision d'un fonds d'archives est un groupe d'articles qui par leur structure ou leur contenu presentent les memes caracteristiques.
6. AUSTRALIA. Commonwealth National Library. Archives Division.— *Proceedings of the Archives Management Seminar*, Canberra 1954. Canberra, 1955, 107.
7. Using this criteria some of the records described by P. R. Eldershaw in the *Guide to the Public Records of Tasmania* Section 3 Convict Department would have to be described in a "record group" of the Administrator of Charitable Relief. See Introduction to the *Guide*, 15.
8. It would be appropriate, for example, to group the records of German New Guinea (those that have survived) according to language.
9. Sir Hilary Jenkinson. *A Manual of Archive Administration*, rev. re-issue. Lond. Lund, Humphries, 1965, 102.

THE ARCHIVES OF ST. MARY'S, SYDNEY

by

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However much one school of historians has tended to ignore the fact, Churchmen have played a most important role in the development of Australia; and religious bodies have had a major influence in shaping national policy in much wider spheres than the exclusively spiritual. Modern writers such as Professor Manning Clark are well aware of this fact, and, consequently, of the value of church records.

As Archivist of the R.C. Archdiocese of Sydney, I now propose to take off the shutters and let some light into the hitherto rather unknown strong rooms in which (appropriately enough) are housed St. Mary's Archives, within the crypt of the Cathedral. That Sydney must contain

the greater part of old documents is an obvious enough fact, in view of the fact that it was the centre of development until the additional dioceses of Hobart and Adelaide came into existence after 1842. The preservation of documents and the compiling of a history began in Sydney.

It was a fortunate coincidence that the same ship that carried the pioneer bishop John Bede Polding also had on board a young man, J. Kenny, a Scotsman who much later (in 1886) wrote the first History of the Catholic Church in Australia, after having served in Hobart, Norfolk Island and Sydney. But this was not the only stroke of good fortune because before Kenny's death the See of Sydney was in the hands of a practising historian of long experience, Cardinal Moran. He was to write the monumental *History of the Catholic Church in Australia* in two volumes. To perform his task he collected material from every available source and there is good reason to accept the traditions of various dioceses that borrowed documents never returned.

In consequence of this combination of historians whose lives overlapped not only were documents collected and preserved but also they were kept in some order in space set apart for the purpose. The Archives always had a curator of sorts before Monsignor Phelan was appointed the first official Archivist to be followed by Monsignor J. J. McGovern and then myself.

It also happened that the two most significant personalities in the first fifty-seven years of the growth of Catholicism were men who wrote a lot and destroyed little. Rough schemes of letters, original copies and acknowledgments were kept, all official correspondence was in duplicate and in Fr. Therry's case all manner of brief notes and receipts were retained. We have some receipts of subscriptions to newspapers. These all add up to a considerable body of manuscripts etc.

The early priests filled in the church registers with scrupulous attention in well bound books. It is possible to trace the missionary journeys into the country from the entries in the baptismal and marriage registers. In 1842 for example we trace Dr Ullathorne to Adelaide in this way. Another extraordinary journey was made by the second priest of Yass, Fr. Lovat, one time professor and Jesuit in England; his progress can be traced as far as Geelong and back. In the case of Fr. Therry there are extant the original register that he carried in his luggage, the entries made after his return in the official book and later on a fair reproduction in another book made by an expert calligraphist.

Though two fires devastated both the original St. Mary's and its temporary replacement the books all survived.

The foregoing information gives an indication of the wealth of the source material conserved from the beginning.

The most exciting discovery of recent years was the cutting book compiled by the first Irish-Australian lad (C. Fitzpatrick) to be educated in the Colony. He was a contemporary of Macquarie and a most accurate observer, endowed with a prodigious memory. He left behind a series of some forty letters to Goulburn newspapers of the time. Some of these such as "Reminiscences of the early days" are a mine of detailed information of life in both N.S.W. and Tasmania, while others chronicle happenings in Goulburn where he served as an alderman for some years in the forties.

At this point it may be well to leave Sydney for a while and give a general picture of the archival situation throughout Australia, which will portray a very varied attitude to old records, their present state and their availability.

The Directory mentions an official Archivist in Perth, Rev. J. Moynihan and an Archives in Adelaide without mention of any incumbent. In those two cities it would not be difficult to trace any documents and since both dioceses go back to the fifties what they have is important.

In Hobart and Melbourne there are two keen historian priests, both now very senior, who hold in their heads a rather thorough knowledge of what exists in the line of documents, but they hold no official position nor can it be said that Archives as such are available to outsiders.

In Brisbane a good collection was in the hands of the late Archbishop Duhig and since his death some attention has been given to it, but not as yet to the extent of formalizing it.

In these days more attention is being given to the preservation of records in the country dioceses but the Bishops are inclined to keep their own eyes on them, rather than entrust them to particular clerics. They would hardly aspire to use the term archives for what they have.

So we are back in Sydney again with a feeling that perhaps it was just as well that much material gravitated there at different periods and remained.

With gratification I can now say that at the moment the architects are busy in Sydney on plans for redesigning the area allotted to the Archives. Extra rooms are being provided and modernized for the better use and preservation of the documents. Separate study and copying rooms will be suitably furnished and the compartments allotted to the material will retain the best atmospheric conditions for their purpose.

The historical sense, always lively in Sydney, has been responsible for the flourishing Catholic Australian Historical Society, a valuable adjunct to the Archives because the two work in close liaison to their mutual benefit.

There is no need to enumerate in detail the types of documents since they are paralleled in similar collections. They mirror in detail the spread of the Church from the ministry of one chaplain through the creation of a diocese and its gradual fragmentation into a full national organization. There are letters, official and personal, registers, diaries, manuscript biographies, cutting books of many kinds of newspapers.

In recent years we have been able to enlarge our holdings considerably by the acquisition of thousands of microfilms and photostats of original letters held in other cities of Australia as well as in Ireland and Rome. They complement our own and the final picture should be rounded off. However it will take a long time even to survey all that is coming especially since the use of much of it is restricted by agreements made with the donors.

The Organization

The arrangement and cataloguing of all the material goes on continuously and has already progressed sufficiently to render the search for particular items fairly easy. There are three main periods, the first covering almost a century until the death of Archbishop Vaughan in 1883, the second the Moran episcopate and the third the years since 1911. Each of these is under the charge of a different specialist and as they are members of the History Departments of Universities competence is not lacking.

Particular sub-sections are set apart for activities which run through the three chronological periods. Each suffragan diocese and each religious congregation is treated as a separate unit, and the same applies to the parishes as well as individual priests and laity. This necessitates a lot of cross indexing, a labour that takes time.

The system of classification is followed in a card index system which locates the press, the compartment and the box containing each item. Additionally as much information as possible is being put on the cards to indicate the contents of the boxes. The same is often written on the outside of each box.

Contents

Documents, original and (or) copies, plans, books, photographs, financial registers, baptismal and marriage entries, diaries and newspapers make up the contents of the presses and shelves.

The library section is confined to books of historical significance. All the others have been transferred to the library of St. Patrick's College, Manly. The series of annual Directories is almost complete. It goes back as far as 1841, though this initial production was not followed on for another twelve years. They often include many items of general information of value.

There is a large number of photographs which are now in process of identification and classification. New ones keep appearing as a detailed search of bundles of papers brings hitherto unknown ones to light. There are also political cartoons by leading artists, especially of the Moran era.

As far as newspapers are concerned we can report the possession of a set of the Australian Chronicle of Duncan running from 1833 to 1839, and of the Catholic Times. The sequence of the Freeman's Journal is irregular but many years are included. The Catholic Press set is complete. These are in bound volumes though not always in the best of repair.

The pamphlet collection including the Pastoral Letters of the Bishops would be unique in any library or Archives, we believe, going back to the days of Archbishop Polding. It is to be found in chronological order.

We are negotiating for the present for the purchase of a machine for reading microfilms and we also plan to do our own photostat copying. In the meantime this part of our activities is restricted and we are not able to find out what is contained in the microfilm. However we are in no great hurry at present.

Access to the Archives is granted to bona fide students on arrangement. The conditions are along the usual lines. The applicants must state exactly what period or topic is being studied and ask for permission to copy documents for outside use.

Access is limited for all material after 1900 but is given if warranted.

The ordinary time for interviews with the Archivist is a Tuesday afternoon and application should be made to the address of St. Mary's Cathedral, Sydney.