

## NEWS NOTES

*News from State Archives institutions.*

i. *New South Wales.*

Accommodation for the State archives of New South Wales has been in three specially equipped stack floors of the Public Library of New South Wales building in Macquarie Street, Sydney. All available space for State archives in this building has now been used, and future accessions of State archives will of necessity have to be stored for the time being in the Government Records Repository at Shea's Creek, Alexandria. The Repository is housed in unsatisfactory wooden buildings which constitute a severe fire risk and which are situated in an industrial area. As far as possible the Repository will contain only those State archives which are not at present open for public use but in any case the records can be made available at 24 hours notice or less.

ii. *Queensland.*

The Archivist, Mr R. C. Sharman, has recently completed a visit to the mining town of Mount Morgan, a few miles inland from Rockhampton, and to the most northerly eastern coastal town in Australia, Cooktown. In each case he was requested to make the trip so that he could examine old records in the court house, although in Cooktown he carried out surveys of records in the police station and shire office as well. In Mount Morgan, some 130 bundles and volumes of old records were selected for preservation in the Archives. Some of these date from 1871, though Mount Morgan itself goes back only to the early 1880s. There was a goldfield at nearby Crocodile Creek, and when Mount Morgan rose to prominence it seems that the Mineral Lands Commissioner moved from Crocodile Creek to the new discovery, and brought his records with him. At Cooktown there were over 200 items selected for transfer to the Archives, being records of the Land Agent, the Mining Warden, the Clerk of Petty Sessions, the local office of the Harbours and Marine Department, the Immigration Agent, the Cook Hospitals Board, the District Court and the Cooktown sittings of the Circuit Court. Cooktown once boasted a population of 45,000, but this is now reduced to 450. The records are potentially valuable for the light they throw on mining in the district and on the beche de mer trade.

iii. *South Australia.*

Mr J. Love of the South Australian Archives is at present on leave without pay, and is planning to attend the International Council on Archives Congress in Madrid. At present he has a temporary position at the Public Record Office in London, and has been working on Australian maps for a publication of the P.R.O.

iv. *Tasmania.*

Mr M. Saclier has been appointed Principal Archivist of the Archives Office of Tasmania, in succession to the late Peter Eldershaw. He supplies the following biographical note:

Michael Saclier, born 1937, primary education in New South Wales and Queensland, secondary education in N.S.W. Graduated from Sydney University in May 1965 with second class honours in History after attending lectures part-time and working as a laboratory assistant, clerk, storeman and editorial assistant in a law publishing firm.

From January 1965 to May 1967 worked in the Archives Office of New South Wales, when he took up a Commonwealth Research Studentship at Sydney University to continue his work on an M.A. thesis on the administration of Sir Ralph Darling in New South Wales 1825-31, a work still (sporadically) in progress.

He took up duty in the Archives Office of Tasmania on 29 May, 1968.

The Archives Office of Tasmania is at present housed in the first stage of the State Library Building in Hobart. On completion of the second stage of the Library the office will move onto the sixth and seventh levels of the new tower block.

The building will be air conditioned and should provide a satisfactory environment for the State archives. Provision has been made for approximately 13,000 feet of shelving which is capable of expansion to something more than 20,000 by means of compactus shelving on the seventh level.

A fumigation room, a photographic darkroom and some facilities for manuscript conservation have also been planned. In the search-room or reading-room ample space has been provided for microfilm readers and cubicles are envisaged to allow scholars to use typewriters and tape-recorders under supervision from the desk.

The file borrowing service to departments who have deposited semi-current records in the Archives Office will be operated from the new building as well as access to the Archives proper.

Programmes envisaged in the future are:—

(1) A regular programme of field-work in country districts aimed at the Municipal Councils, Police and local authorities. This it is hoped will, by means of frequent visits, improve the standard of record keeping, ease the strain on storage space for the local bodies and salvage much which might otherwise be lost.

(2) In the same way, a systematic survey of governmental departments and authorities will be undertaken as soon as staff and the exigencies of day-to-day administration will allow, but this is a bigger and more complex task which may take longer to achieve.

(3) On a broader plane, it is hoped to collect detailed information on records management and disseminate this to government departments and local authorities and where practical, to construct disposal schedules for them.

(4) A series of preliminary inventories is under way, following the three written by Peter Eldershaw. Record groups or areas of interest on which work has started are the Executive Council, Royal Commissions and Boards of Enquiry and the Immigration Board. Others which it is hoped to begin on soon are Muster and Census records and the records of the Van Diemen's Land Company.

#### v. *Western Australia.*

Miss Margaret Pamplin, who was on the staff of the Batty Library in 1967 has returned to England and is now engaged as an assistant to Miss P. Mander-Jones on the projected Guide to Manuscripts in the British Isles relating to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands.

Miss Mollie Lukis has been invited by the German Government to visit Germany from 6th to 31st October as a guest of the country. She will be one of a party of eight women prominent in various fields throughout

Australia. Arrangements have been made for her to visit the Federal Archives in Koblenz and other institutions. The party will spend several days in each of the towns of Cologne, Bonn, Bremen, Kiel, Hamburg and Munich.

Miss Margaret Medcalf has recently returned from a 1,500 mile trip around the Goldfields where she set aside over 300 volumes of records and a quantity of other material to be sent down to the Battye Library and State Archives, mainly Mines Department and Police records from now defunct offices.

The largest single transfer, over 100 volumes, will be made from Laverton some 200 odd miles North East of Kalgoorlie, where a tin shed full of Mines records was located. Records had been left there when the Mining Registrar's office was closed in the 1940s and they dated back to the opening of that office in 1898. Over 100 volumes were set aside for transfer. Other large quantities to be sent are Mines Department material from Coolgardie, Police records from Leonora and Sandstone, State Battery records from Sandstone. Non-government records were also collected, the most important group being A.L.P. records from the Trades Hall, Kalgoorlie.

The two long-established annual journals which publish research in history (mainly local) in Western Australia are *University Studies in History* and *Early Days: the Journal of the Royal W.A. Historical Society*. A special, additional number of *Early Days* is about to go to press which will contain half a dozen essays on local history by students of the teachers training colleges. The entries are a selection of prizewinners in the annual Lee Steere essay competition which is sponsored by the Society and the Lee Steere family. The first two issues of a third such W.A. periodical have recently appeared; named *Historicus*, and as yet in roneoed format, it is put out by the History Association of Western Australia, primarily a group of history teachers.

#### *News from the Commonwealth Archives Office.*

Mr I. Maclean, Chief Archivist, Commonwealth Archives Office, is leaving that position to take up duties with S.E.A.T.O. in Bangkok. He remains a member of the Commonwealth Public Service, but his work with S.E.A.T.O. is likely to extend over the next three years. It is expected that other developments relating to staff expansion and reorganization will be announced in the *Commonwealth Gazette* from time to time, but it is too soon yet to give a final picture of the pattern that will emerge.

#### *News from University Archives institutions.*

##### i. *The University of Melbourne.*

The University of Melbourne plans to construct an Archives Centre, and the project has been considered in outline by the office of Don Hendry Fulton, Architects. The University has allocated a site adjacent to the boundaries of the University at the corner of Grattan and Barry Sts., Carlton. It is envisaged that the building will incorporate a repository tower, accommodating 36,000 linear feet of records on railed compactus shelving. Ground level accommodation will provide for goods access and reception, sorting, repair, administration, mechanical plant room, store room, lift and stairs. Mechanical services will provide control over climate, dust and fire hazard.

The first floor will house research facilities and reference library administration, reception, business history display, toilets and staff room, photographic section, conference room, and a Baillieu memorial room. The building has been costed at \$500,000, and it is planned that it will be completed by December 1969. A section of the building will house the University's own records, including those of central administration, faculties, clubs, societies and individuals associated with the University.

Foremost among new acquisitions are the records of the *Stock Exchange of Melbourne*. These date from 1884, the time of reorganization of the exchange and occupancy of its new Collins Street building, designed by William Pitt, architect for many famous boom era Melbourne buildings, such as the nearby Rialto in Collins Street. As is so often the case, change of building meant "a clean sweep" of the records. Invaluable earlier records were destroyed. Even so the acquisition is a magnificent body of source material, comprised of companies files 1880s to 1963, and daily sales records, occupying some three hundred and fifty feet of shelf space.

The other outstanding acquisition of recent months is the records of *Foy & Gibson Ltd.* These were directed to the University by the receiver for *Cox Bros. (Aust) Ltd.* The records were housed in the strong room of Foy & Gibson's Smith Street, Collingwood, retail store. The store, planned on the grand scale, when the area was one of Melbourne's leading retail centres, was part of a selling and manufacturing complex with frontages measuring over two miles of central Collingwood. The collection spans the full range of business records from minutes to cash books, dating from the 1880s to the 1960s, and covering some one hundred and fifty feet of shelf space. It embraces operations of the company as they extended to the city centre, other suburbs, and interstate.

Items of early business furniture and equipment, such as a carved oak brokers chair, and an early example of an electric drive ledger-posting machine, were obtained from these two sources for use in the early office display to be included in the proposed new Archives Centre.

ii. *The Australian National University.*

Mrs Gillian Marsden has been appointed as the Deputy Archives Officer from 17 October. Mrs Marsden was previously with the National Library and worked on the Australian manuscripts project in England with Miss Mander-Jones. She is a graduate and qualified librarian with excellent experience in archives work.

Four new repository areas are now in use in the Coombs Building of the Australian National University with a capacity of 3,000 linear shelf feet.

Work is expected to commence in March 1969 on the permanent accommodation for A.N.U. Archives.

Two exceptionally significant projects are under way. First is the accession of the Dalgety New Zealand Loan Ltd. (two separate companies) records, of which Perth, Geelong and Melbourne deposits, jointly comprising some 300 boxes, have already been received and are being processed. The earliest records so far are from Melbourne and dated 1843. It is expected that the total collection will measure 3000 linear feet and take five or six years to put in order. Second is the microfilming of records of the Australian Workers' Union. This microfilming is taking place in the offices of the Union throughout Australia. The contract for the work was

given to Microdata Pty. Ltd. of Canberra. Special cameras are used and installed on the job. So far 80,000 frames have been taken.

*Guide to Collections, Manuscripts Relating to Australia*, contains 210 entries which are descriptions of some collections held in A.N.U. Archives.

The Menzies Library, Institute of Advanced Studies, A.N.U. has acquired an important collection of letters of Australian and overseas poets from Mr Flexmore Hudson, previously editor of *Poetry Australia* — an international quarterly of verse, 1940-1947.

#### *News from Banking Archives institutions.*

##### *i. Commonwealth Banking Corporation.*

Mr G. C. Wotherspoon, a graduate in Commerce from University of N.S.W. was recently appointed to the staff of the corporation's archives section.

Amongst new accessions were included:

(1) The first depositor's pass book issued by the former savings bank department of the Commonwealth Bank, which in 1927 became the Commonwealth Savings Bank of Australia, has been accessioned. Issued to prime minister Andrew Fisher in Melbourne on 15 July 1912, the day the bank first opened for business, the pass book, in excellent condition, was discovered among sundry papers in a cupboard at the bank's London office. (Fisher had resigned the prime ministership in 1915 to become Australia's high commissioner in London).

(2) New account forms relating to Melbourne office a/cs numbered 3 & 9, also opened on 15 July 1912 by King O'Malley and W. M. Hughes, have been accessioned.

(3) Depositor's ledger of the East Maitland, N.S.W. branch of the former Savings Bank of N.S.W. (1832-1914), date span 1853 - 1859, has been accessioned.

(4) Harden N.S.W. Commonwealth Savings Bank post office agency register for year 1913, containing signature of J. B. Chifley, prime minister 1945-49, has also been accessioned.

##### *ii. Reserve Bank of Australia.*

In addition to administering the permanent archives of the Bank, the Archives Section manages current records systems, acting as a central control over procedures and the operations of several decentralised records sections. Mr J. M. Gornall, B.Ec. has been appointed Assistant Archivist with responsibility for administering the archives programme, so giving the Archivist, Mr K. A. Polden, and the Records Control Officer, Miss B. M. Vaughan, more opportunity to establish a standard records system throughout the Bank.

A group of three from the Archives Section recently visited the Bank's Note Printing Branch at Fitzroy, Melbourne to survey and organise the accumulated records of more than fifty years. As a result, current records are now being managed on the Bank's standard system and a disposal schedule provides for the ultimate destruction of valueless material and the transfer of permanent archives to Head Office, Sydney. The accumulated archives transferred include some records of the Note Issue under Commonwealth Treasury control 1910-1920 and records of other security printing, such as postage stamps, dating back to pre-Federation days.

Experiments are being made to establish the efficacy of Mr W. H. Langwell's new method of deacidification publicised in the *Journal of the Society of Archivists* (see Vol. III, Number 3, April 1966, p. 137) — vapour phase deacidification by cyclohexylamine carbonate (CHC). In our early tests of the interleaving sheets and the powder sachets, records having a high acid content have shown improvement but not near enough to pH neutrality. Nevertheless, CHC offers attractive possibilities and experiments are continuing in the hope that further experience in use will give improved results.

## BOOK REVIEWS

Gawrecki, Drahoslav.—*Compact library shelving*, translated from the Czech by Stanislav Rehak. Chicago, A.L.A. Library Technology Program, 1968. (L.T.P. Publications, No 14). Reviewed by R. C. Sharman.

This manual was originally published in Czechoslovakia in 1960, and the writer of the Foreword, Robert H. Muller, specifically states that no attempt has been made to bring the material up to date by including articles published after the original Czech publication. The manual was originally published in three separate volumes, and its being brought together in this way involves quite a lot of repetition. It is all the more valuable, therefore, to have the author's general summary in Part I, entitled "General characteristics of compact shelves". In this section the author classifies the various types of compact shelving as follows:

- (a) stationary shelves combined with movable revolving segments:
- (b) stationary shelves with movable drawers:
- (c) movable sliding shelves.

As for the first type, the "revolving" segments do not, in fact, revolve completely — i.e. they do not pass through all 360° of a revolution, but merely through a 90° or at most a 180° angle. Swinging shelving would probably be a more appropriate description of the segments that move, and this type could further be broken down into "double-wing" and "single-wing" varieties. The second type operates on the same principle as the standard steel filing cabinet, so familiar in offices in Australia. Design of this type of unit is complex, and could well result in great expense. On the other hand, the author is inclined to favour the further investigation of this principle:—

In our opinion, the applicability of drawer-type shelving will have to be re-evaluated when it is considered as being used in combination with movable sliding shelves, especially those which slide sideways; and we expect that this combined type of system will provide an important contribution to the economic organization of space with maximum effectiveness. For this reason, we cannot, at the present time, accept without reservation the unfavourable evaluation of drawer-type equipment which is often found in professional circles in Europe today.

Finally, the sliding shelf variety, with which Australians are more familiar, may use either the suspension (hanger type) or the under-carriage principle. Again, the sliding variety may be considered in relation to the direction of their movement — either laterally moving (e.g. "Stormor") or frontally moving (e.g. "Compactus"). Even as early as 1960, the author had come to the conclusion that the frontally moving or "parallel" sliding shelves