

BOOK REVIEWS

*Manuscripts in the British Isles relating to Australia,
New Zealand and the Pacific.*

Ed. Phyllis Mander Jones. Canberra, Australian National University and
The National Library of Australia, 1972. xxiii, 697p.; 25 cm \$25.00
(recommended price), ISBN 0 7081 0450 9.

No other work has had the amount of pre-publication exposure in *Archives and Manuscripts* that has been given to the work under review. It has been, one might almost say, a blow by blow – or at least phase by phase – description. Beginning in 1964 (Vol. 2, No. 4) with the conceptual skirmishings between Miss Mander Jones and assorted historians at ANZAAS, it was followed in 1965 (Vol. 3, No. 1) with a short piece on progress in Australia, also by Miss Mander Jones. Then, after two years, another longer piece by Miss Mander Jones on work in the United Kingdom (Vol. 3, No. 4), and then in 1970 an extensive study at grass roots level by Miss Judith Baskin (Vol. 4, No. 3).

With so much exposure, not to mention a review already published in *The Australian Library Journal* (Vol. 22, No. 5, p.198) there would seem little scope for a conventional review in the pages of this journal. Indeed, criticism of a technical kind seems almost superfluous since it is unlikely that another guide will be issued for a decade or more (the far less comprehensive Cambridge British Empire list stood for about forty years) and any criticism offered now will not only be forgotten within a few years but also is very likely to be irrelevant to such a future undertaking. The guide is a vast compilation, clearly and most competently done, which will be of considerable use to many kinds of users and institutions. Most significantly, the work is *done* and we can accept it gratefully and honestly in the knowledge that it will advance Australian scholarship in many fields. The guide is a fitting crown to Miss Mander Jones' long and distinguished involvement with Australian archives and manuscripts.

The Guide and its past publicity however, do prompt some general observations on the nature of this kind of project. Such works are, for example, clearly a long time in preparation – this one nearly a decade. This is not a criticism, merely an appreciation of the size of the task. Some other listing projects initiated within Australia – the Pre-Federation Guide and the Guide to Manuscript Collections – were started earlier and with much enthusiasm and have failed to achieve anything like the anticipated coverage. It is worth noting that the earlier projects were exercises in co-operation, lacking the central unifying force of a single director. If such large-scale listing projects are desirable the lesson for success should be clear.

Projects of this kind have to be adequately funded if anything is to come of them. In the case of the Guide under review both the Australian National University and the National Library of Australia subsidised the work, though it need not be assumed from this that other similar projects should only be funded from these bodies, even if they were agreeable to it. There are organisations – archival agencies, universities, State and institutional libraries, and some foundations – all of which have particular backgrounds and expertise. It seems only commonsense to seek appropriate professional resources for particular projects, quite apart from the scholarly value of spreading such projects around.

Like many listing projects, the Mander Jones Guide owes much to the initial inspiration of academic historians – H. E. Maude and R. Gollan are specially mentioned in this regard – and to the support later on of other historians, notably Sir Keith Hancock. Apparently it was on Hancock's advice (A & M Vol. 2, No. 7, p.7) that the structure of the Guide would be "on the lines" of B. R. Crick's *A guide to manuscripts relating to America in Great Britain and Ireland* (OUP 1961). This suggestion was clearly acted upon, though not in every detail. The page size and type area of the Crick Guide are somewhat squatter and perhaps because of this the entries require less concentration in reading than they do in the Mander Jones Guide. Crick places London and its repositories in

alphabetical sequence with the counties; Mander Jones gives London first. For some reason, Mander Jones does not follow Crick in a geo-political sense, preferring the term "British Isles" to Great Britain and Ireland.

Taking Crick as a model of arrangement solved a major policy question at a very early stage of the project and so cleared the way for gathering of material for the entries. The geo-repository model, supported by an index, is an accepted method, but it might be asked by archivists at least whether it is the best method of approach. In a sense, of course, it is an approach based on a kind of provenance, since it groups together all records listed for any given repository. Through its index, which is its main finding aid, the Guide directs users to some whole groups, to specific parts of many groups and collections, and to specific pieces of information. The information to which the user is directed appears to be much more concerned with people, places and things than with subjects. The index entries relate to the content of the descriptions of records in the first part of the Guide; obviously the actual material listed in the Guide could not itself be 'indexed' for subject content, or even for all actual name and place content. There are some broad subject headings in the index directing users to 'business records' or 'education', for example.

Another way of organising such a guide might be to list records in broad subject categories within chronological periods. T. R. Schellenberg has commented –

A scholar can ordinarily use records effectively if they are identified in broad terms, that is to say, in relation to large classes of phenomena, to chronological periods, and to geographical areas. He can ascertain for himself if records relating to a given phenomenon, time, or place contain information that is pertinent to his subject of inquiry if he is properly trained in research method. He will seldom rely altogether on an archivist, or on the finding aids an archivist produces, to provide him with this information.

Listing records within a given repository, as the Guide does, may require the user to examine all of the descriptive entries to gain this kind of general conspectus. I would not wish to underestimate the difficulties that might be encountered in a subject/chronology approach to such a project as the Guide. There might be multiplication of entries, and perhaps a special entry numbering system would have to be devised, and there might still be value and need for an index of some sort to the entries. But such a broad subject/chronology approach might allow or encourage the 'group' as the unit of entry, and not, as the Guide often does, merely list isolated parts relevant to Australia. Listing groups as entry units would probably entail the user in writing to the repository concerned for further information, but I do not see this as necessarily a bad thing. The repository presumably knows best what is in its collections since its officers are working with the material and continually updating or revising their knowledge of the collections. I do not think it essential that a Guide of this kind be specific in approach. That is the traditional library view of listing records and its general impracticability in dealing with archives has been demonstrated sufficiently in the past – it obscures the wood with a myriad of trees and tends to limit the amount of records that can be effectively dealt with. The Guide itself admits to situations where the extent of material has made specific description impossible.

Whether other archivists see any merit in a subject/chronology approach, there would seem little doubt that they are interested in the problems raised by such projects as the Guide. I hope they will be given the opportunity to offer their professional expertise in the planning of any future projects.

G. L. FISCHER.

Australian Joint Copying Project Handbook – Part 1

Canberra: National Library of Australia and the Library of New South Wales, 1972. 36p.; 30 cm \$1.00, ISBN 0 642 98994 X.

Any assistance to help one find one's way along the vast footage of microfilm generated by the Australian Joint Copying Project is to be welcomed,

and the Handbook will be of some help. It is essentially a more easily-used copy of the duplicated shelf lists which have been in circulation for some time, adding the covering dates for the descriptions. The descriptions are, of necessity, extremely brief and in many cases, not really indicative of the contents. It would be hard to imagine a cry of "Eureka! I have found it" on reading that Reel 288 BT6/58,88 1792-1807 is GENERAL. Miscellanea. The history of the AJCP is hardly cloaked in mystery and the previously used shelf lists could have been retained for a little longer and generally users of the AJCP would have been served better if a detailed guide to one of the departments whose records have been copied had appeared. My criticism is of the timing of the release of the Handbook rather than its contents. I found the reference to the synopsis misleading, and spent some time searching for it, only to discover it was on the back cover, surely a novel position for anything as vital as a synopsis. From the layout point of view, the Handbook is good, but a combined list of institutions holding both PRO and Miscellaneous Copying would be adequate.

It is to be hoped that the detailed departmental guides will be produced as soon as possible, as it will be these publications which will enable the AJCP user to have maximum benefit from the scheme.

M. GLOVER.

Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, *Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the U.S.S.R. – Moscow and Leningrad* (Studies of the Russian Institute, Columbia University), Princeton University Press, 1972, XXX + 436p., US \$22.50. ISBN O 691 05149 6.

This first comprehensive directory to archives and manuscripts in Moscow and Leningrad should be warmly welcomed, as filling a long-felt need of western scholars. Apart from articles by V. V. Maksakov in *Indian Archives*, Vol. 12 (1958) and Vol. 13 (1959-60), and by G. A. Belov in *Archives*, Vol. 7 (1964), and the *American Archivist*, Vol. 26 (1963), which are now largely out of date because of administrative re-organisations in the 1960's and a previous article by Mrs. Grimsted herself – based on her research experience in 1964 – in the *Slavic Review*, Vol. 24 (1965), entitled "Soviet Archives and Manuscript Collections: A Bibliographical Introduction", very little has been available in English to reveal to researchers the organisation and richness of Soviet archives.

As Mrs. Grimsted points out in her preface, the foreign scholar can all too easily be overwhelmed by the number and variety of Soviet repositories, by the complexities of archival organisation and procedures, by documentary migrations, by the many changes of name or location of different archives and collections and by the bulk of published literature in Russian in the archival realm. In her principal aim of aiding the foreign researcher by clarifying the archival arrangements of the U.S.S.R., Mrs. Grimsted succeeds admirably.

In the book, there are firstly introductory sections on the history of U.S.S.R. archives, procedural information (archival arrangement, finding aids, access etc.), and a general archival bibliography and list of research aids. Mrs. Grimsted then described the holdings of over seventy-five institutions, in each case giving details of their history, contents, published descriptions and catalogues, and working conditions. The archival and manuscript institutions are listed in six groupings: (1) Central State Archives of the U.S.S.R., (2) Archives and Manuscript Collections of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., (3) Special Archives (including the Communist Party and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), (4) Manuscript Divisions of Libraries and Museums in Moscow, (5) Manuscript Divisions of Libraries and Museums in Leningrad, and (6) Republic and Local State Archives in Moscow and Leningrad. The directory is thus a basic reference work for all manner of archival materials in the two cities – government archives, economic archives, mediaeval manuscripts, personal and family papers, maps and plans, photographs, films and sound recordings.

There is a useful glossary of Russian archival terms and two indexes (author-title, subject), as well as appendices on research in libraries and reference aids for paleography and ancillary historical disciplines.

Apart from its obvious value for western scholars wishing to use Soviet archival resources, the directory with its bibliographical data will prove useful for university and research libraries in keeping their holdings of reference materials up to date. Students of archives theory and practice will also find much of interest, including questions of access, finding aids and general administrative organisation. There has been a considerable degree of centralisation in archival administration in the U.S.S.R., with particular standardisation in methods of arrangement and description.

The basic unit is the "fond", which may be equivalent to either a record group or sub-group or series in U.S. practice. Each "fond" is divided into basic "storage units" (i.e. individual items, volumes, files, etc.), which are listed on a master inventory ("opis"), though in some instances a larger "fond" may have more than one "opis", the different "opisi" serving as a type of series division.

The history of Russian archival institutions is a rather complex story. Although the author manages to clarify many of the developments and changes in archival administration, it might have been useful to have added, as an appendix, a brief chronological table of all central government archival institutions, showing their dates of establishment and abolition, their predecessors and successors, with explanatory notes, where appropriate. In reviewing the history of archival administration it is perhaps not altogether surprising to see a few institutions established in pre-revolutionary times maintaining their existence under a new guise and forming the basis for present-day arrangements. The Main Archival Administration of the U.S.S.R. (GAU) presently controls eleven separate Union Archives, some reflecting previous establishments, others being new creations for special materials, such as economic, scientific, literary, photographic and phonographic records:

- (1) **Central State Archive of Ancient Acts (TsGADA), Moscow:**
Main repository for historical records from earliest times through to the early 19th century. Direct successor to the Moscow Archive of the Ministry of Justice, founded in 1852, and incorporating the Moscow Main Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1720), the State Archive of the Russian Empire (1834), the Moscow Archive of the Ministry of the Imperial Court (1869) and the Central Land Survey Archive (mid 18th century).
- (2) **Central State Historical Archive of the U.S.S.R. (TsGIA), Leningrad:**
Principal repository for pre-revolutionary records of the central Imperial Government of the 19th and 20th centuries. Before the revolution, the archives of the Senate, the Holy Synod and the State Council had already been housed in these archive buildings.
- (3) **Central State Archive of the Navy of the U.S.S.R. (TsGAVMF), Leningrad:**
Originally established in 1718 as the archive of the Admiralty College, later the Ministry of the Navy, and administered as a separate repository from 1934.
- (4) **Central State Military History Archive of the U.S.S.R. (TsGVIA), Moscow:**
Direct descendant of the Moscow division of the Archive of the Inspectors' Department of the General Staff, established in 1819. Main repository for pre-revolutionary military records from the 17th century to World War 1.
- (5) **Central State Archive of the October Revolution, High Organs of State Government, and Organs of State Administration of the U.S.S.R. (TsGAOR), Moscow:**
Established in 1920 principally for post-revolutionary material, it acquired a number of earlier police and censorship records, 1802-1917, after the liquidation in 1961 of the Central State Historical Archive in Moscow.
- (6) **Central State Archive of the Soviet Army (TsGASA), Moscow:**
Established originally in 1920 as the Archive of the Red Army, for material from 1917.
- (7) **Central State Archive of the National Economy of the U.S.S.R. (TsGANKh), Moscow:**
Established in 1961, from fonds relating to industry, agriculture, etc., formerly with TsGAOR, with date coverage mainly from 1918.

- (8) **Central State Archive of Scientific and Technical Documentation in the U.S.S.R. (TsGANTD), Moscow:**
Planned from 1964, to take particular categories of fonds from TsGAOR and TsGANKh.
- (9) **Central State Archive of Literature and Art of the U.S.S.R. (TsGALI), Moscow:**
Founded in 1941 for mainly personal fonds and fonds of cultural organisations.
- (10) **Central State Archive of Film and Photographic Documents of the U.S.S.R. (TsGAKFD), Moscow:**
Originated in 1921 as a division of the Archive of the October Revolution, and separated in 1935. Some holdings date back to 1855 (photographs) and 1896 (films).
- (11) **Central State Archive of Sound Recordings (TsGAZ), Moscow:**
Separated in 1967 from TsGAKFD, but with origins in the Central Archive of Sound Recordings, which existed from 1932 to 1935.
The Main Archival Administration is also responsible for the archives of the Russian Federation (R.S.F.S.R.), the principal constituent republic of the U.S.S.R., including:
- (12) **Central State Archive of the R.S.F.S.R., Moscow:**
Established in 1957 as a repository for republic level records of the R.S.F.S.R. since its formation in 1923, receiving fonds previously kept in TsGAOR.

One problem in any Directory of this nature is in maintaining the current applicability of the information in it. Most statements reflect the position in 1970, and it is to be hoped that means will be found to provide additions and supplements, possibly in appropriate Slavic or archives journals.

Although the present work is limited to repositories in Moscow and Leningrad, the author has already written articles on regional repositories, in the *Slavic Review*, Vol. 28 (1969), and more recently in the *American Archivist*, Vol. 36 (1973). A companion directory, to cover regional archives, is now being prepared by Mrs. Grimsted and will be eagerly awaited.

P. J. SCOTT