

Book Reviews

Edited by
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Register of Church Archives. A Select Guide to Resource Material in Australia, Second Edition, edited by Leo J. Ansell, C.F.C., Church Archivists' Society, Toowoomba, 1985.

Archives New Zealand. A Directory of Archives and Manuscript Repositories in New Zealand, the Cook Islands, Fiji, Niue, Tokelau, Tonga and Western Samoa, compiled by Frank Roberts. Archives Press, Auckland, 1984, and Archives New Zealand, Statistics, 1985.

Three years after publication of the first edition of the *Register of Church Archives*, Leo Ansell has produced his second edition. The place this reviewer started was with Peter Moore's review in *Archives and Manuscripts* Vol 11, No 1. Maybe this was the wrong place to begin, but it enabled me to concentrate my attention on what another had perceived as its shortcomings. I was also aware of Greg O'Shea's acerbic review of Ansell and Maike's *The Small Archive* in Vol 13 No. 1. I believe it is time Leo Ansell deserved a good review, if nothing else to encourage him to continue in the desert of archival publication in this country.

I do not want it to be thought that I am merely being charitable. This second edition is a substantial work - indeed it more than doubles its entries from 70 to 146 over the first edition as Br. Ansell proudly informs us. Its format and system of tabulation are new, its presentation professional and its information now much more accessible.

No directory such as this can ever expect to be fully comprehensive, but something, especially something twice the size of the first edition, is better than nothing. Reflecting the general situation in this country, the *Register* is heavily weighted to the Judeo-Christian religions. Were other orders and Churches approached, especially non-English speaking ones? Where there are omissions - such as the Passionist Fathers - were these approached as well?

If they were and did not wish to reply or be included this should be noted, as Peter Moore said in 1981, to provide 'a comparative basis for readers to determine the degree to which the *Register* exhausted its subject. Also, it might hurry dilatory members along for a second (now a third?) edition'. It

is a criticism that could also be levelled at the ASA's very own *Our Heritage* where fully 44% of those approached did not reply. As I shall point out below, our New Zealand cousins have made their Register more comprehensive by this simple inclusion. Also, Ansell should have extracted those institutions at Appendix A (only eleven in number) that are in the process of forming repositories and placed them in the body of the text, accompanied by a short note.

Imitation is the greatest form of flattery, and thus *Our Heritage* should be flattered by the reproduction in negative of its maps introducing each State and Territory section. The format of its entries is similar as well.

Much of Peter Moore's criticisms of the first edition have been addressed in the later work, and make it a much more usable volume. The index — all-important in a publication such as this — appears now to be well cross-referenced and includes both actual and common names, for orders in particular. I do have some problems with the nomenclature of the two indexes, however. The Subject Index is an index to entries, whilst the Agency Index is a name index to places and persons named *within* entries. Maybe better titles would be 'Index to Entries' and 'Name Index'. A small matter, perhaps, but such little things avoid confusion.

The *Register* — any register such as this — is designed as a finding aid, not a learned work on archives arrangement or an administrative history of the Churches in this country. As such it is a valuable publication. It is well placed, as the 'publication blurb' on the back cover says to 'to open to the enquirer's gaze much that is preserved but hidden of our National Heritage'.

I now cast my gaze across the Tasman Sea to *Archives New Zealand*, an excellent publication of 66 pages that provides a directory of archives and manuscript repositories in the Dominion. There are 176 entries, 161 from New Zealand itself, 14 from the island states, and one — the Genealogical Society of Utah — from the USA. 155 of these are complete entries.

The primary organisation of the Directory is by geographic location, from north to south. This suits researchers interested in a certain locality but not necessarily by subject; such needs are generally catered for by a number of indexes. Institutions were asked by questionnaire to provide the following information: name, address, mailing address, telephone number, route from nearest centre, days and hours of service, entrance fee, access restrictions, availability of copying services, acquisitions policy, total volume of holdings, inclusive dates, and a description of the holdings of archival and manuscript material, and the titles of guides, finding aids, or other published works that describe the holdings. I would have found a reproduction of the questionnaire, as provided in the *Register of Church Archives* and *Our Heritage*, to have been of benefit in assessing information provided. In addition, not all institutions have listings under

all headings, presumably because they did not complete them in the questionnaire.

I am no expert on New Zealand, nor its overall archival resources, so I cannot comment on the completeness of the directory. Looking at the contents, institutions canvassed, and indexes it appears to be fairly comprehensive. Addition of those listed institutions who did not reply, or provide full entries, would make further editions more comprehensive, and one can only hope that the subtle pressure of their inclusion as dilatory repliers will make them reconsider in future.

Three indexes over twelve pages are provided in the register. These are alphabetical to institutions (without cross-referencing), a classified index, and a general index to collections. The classified index covers the following areas: art galleries and museums, business, educational institutions, genealogical societies, Government archives, historical societies, Local Government, public libraries, religious institutions, and special libraries and institutions. It is well to remember, however, that general subject areas are mutually exclusive, so the Fine Arts Library at the University of Auckland is found under Educational Institutions, not Art Galleries and Museums, or Public Libraries. The general index to collections is arranged alphabetically by proper name (individuals or organisations) and by general subject. Some confusion can arise here, however; for example the Anglican Church Diocese of Wellington is mentioned in the first and second index as entry 76, but is also in the general index, but only as entry 88 (which is the Alexander Turnbull Library Manuscript Section, which holds some of the Diocesan records). Some cross-referencing between the three indexes would be helpful.

In considering this publication it is worth remembering that, as the compiling Committee says in the Introduction, the booklet 'is designed to be complementary to the vastly more extensive National Register of Archives and Manuscripts in New Zealand (NRAMNZ)'. This National Register is oft-quoted in the last entry for institutions (titles of guides, finding aids, etc) and so this Directory is a handy way in to that bigger publication.

The last two pages of *Archives New Zealand* present a map of the country, divided into provinces, with towns accommodating institutions highlighted by pointers which number the entries. So this is in fact a fourth index, helpful to those interested in a particular geographic location.

Talking of locations, I am impressed by the entry for many institutions marked 'Route'. This includes descriptions of how to get there, by car, foot or public transport. A typical entry may be '400m from PO, Smith Street, right at Jones Street; Bus 7 from Mary Street; 1 km north Black Street intersection'. How very useful for those from out of town. How about something similar in the Second Edition of *Our Heritage*, or the Third of

the *Register of Church Archives*? Not all researchers have a divine knowledge, or an innate sense of direction.

A bonus with *Archives New Zealand* is a slim companion booklet entitled *Statistics* being 'an analysis of the responses to the *Directory* questionnaire 1984 with some material from official sources regarding National Archives 1960-1983'. There are a number of tables and graphs (and some interesting little line drawings for light relief) covering such items as documentary and classified holdings, holdings by Region, etc. As with most statistical reports it is open to interpretation and analysis but proves that, by head of population, New Zealand faces problems of archives management as great as Australia.

The Australian and New Zealand publications reviewed here, whilst neither comprehensive nor perfect, are valuable additions to the Antipodean stock of directories to holdings. They are primarily aimed at providing assistance to researchers, and to this end are to be welcomed.

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Public Record Office of Victoria, *Local Government Records General Disposal Schedule* (PROS 84/25, May 1985)

In the Foreword to this Schedule, the Keeper of Public Records, Chris Hurley, states that the schedule 'is a landmark in the management of information resources in municipalities in the State of Victoria'.

From the dearth of published general, or other, records schedules for local government records in any state of Australia, the schedule could be defined as a landmark in the management of information resources in Australia. The benchmarks against which this schedule can be measured are those general schedules published for state or Commonwealth (federal) agencies and departments or those schedules for local government published overseas, notably in the United States of America (such as those for Ohio, Michigan and Texas).

The Public Record Office of Victoria has wisely placed this schedule in the framework of state information resources, rather than solely within the local government context. It would be a fair assumption that many, but not all, local government officers would view their council's records in a narrow and parochial fashion. Apart from assisting those officers to cope rationally with the ever-increasing volume and complexity of information with which local government today is faced, this schedule should encourage officers to widen their vision to see their council as part of a greater cultural and administrative whole. Being issued as a standard under section 12 of the Victorian Public Records Act, 1973, the schedule

has the necessary imprimatur and authority for it to be prescriptive rather than permissive.

The schedule divides the information created by local government into fourteen functional areas - Buildings, By Laws, Community Services, Council, Engineering, Finance, Health, Personnel and Payroll, Private Street Construction, Property, Rates, Subdivision, Town Planning and Valuation. For those records managers and archivists who do not work in Victoria or who are not intimately acquainted with the Victorian Act, it would have been useful to have had an explanation of how the definitions of the fourteen functional areas were decided upon.

Two disappointing omissions, those of general subject correspondence files and building approval/permit files, are two of the hardest functional areas for appraisal purposes. I look forward to the examination of these areas in future disposal work undertaken by the Public Record Office of Victoria. These two areas pose the largest problems of annual accumulation at the Council of the City of Sydney. The first problem area, that of general subject correspondence files, has been handled by a massive disposal schedule which is currently (February, 1986) being tested by the file-by-file examination of over 67,000 files raised within the period between 1979 and 1983. Monitoring of the success of appraisal will continue for the remainder of 1986.

The second area omitted, building approval/permit files (which includes plans) will be commenced in Sydney in April as a priority project. Appraisal work undertaken by archivists elsewhere will be drawn on (such as in Adelaide, Dunedin and U.S. cities).

Several questions to the compilers concern the matters of disposal sentences and appraisal of several areas as being of temporary value, where experience dictates the opposite. The schedule utilises a number of disposal sentences, including destruction after 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 10 years. I would assume that these varying sentences would complicate the lives of records managers in councils, but maybe there is a good reason for these different sentences, which is not readily apparent. From a practical point of view, bearing in mind that few councils would have an abundance of records staff, it could be assumed that thorough and regular (annual) 'clean-outs' for many records series would be easier with standard and across-the-board disposal sentences.

An example of the reviewer disagreeing with a disposal sentence is under 'Street Records', which includes changes of street name and numbering, tree planting and street closures and openings, amongst other inclusions of temporary value. These three aspects of Street Records are of permanent value to The Council of the City of Sydney. Are we more conservative in the north?

The format of the document is easy to use and by use of the index, access can be obtained via keywords in the class title, name of the record and synonyms, including alternative class titles.

In only one place, in the introduction, is mention made of the three-volume Record Management Manual for Local Government, issued by the Public Record Office of Victoria in 1983, and that is in the context of access. I would presume that the schedule should be read and applied hand-in-hand with the Manual - should this be spelt out to officers or are they so acquainted with it that it need not be emphasised? It would be useful for those outside Victoria to be encouraged to view this schedule along with the manual.

This schedule, and the manual, are a credit to the Public Record Office of Victoria and should galvanise, and shame, the other states of Australia into the act of publishing what general disposal schedules for local government exist. It is intended that plans should be well underway for a similar schedule in New South Wales by the time this review appears. Whatever may follow this schedule, this pioneer effort will be seen as the flag-ship of records disposal schedules for local government in Australia.

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Nick Vine Hall *Tracing Your Family History in Australia A Guide to Sources* Adelaide Rigby 1985. 324pp. ISBN 0 7270 1953 8. Paperback. \$19.95

This book is intended for 'amateur biographers and ancestor hunters' those enthusiasts engaged in the 'fascinating quest for family history information'. It is a guide to sources in Australia only, and so does not encompass records held outside Australia which provide information about individuals and families before their arrival in, or after their departure from, Australia. Nor is this guide a how to do your family history manual, although it does direct the beginner to the standard works which perform that function.

Tracing Your Family History in Australia is likely to be used by archivists, librarians and other people providing services to family historians, as well as by the enthusiasts themselves. Our first concern will usually be to confirm that the information presented about the records held

in our own institutions, and any conditions affecting the availability of those records, is correct. We would also hope that such a guide would provide accurate and reliable information about sources held in other institutions. This is because part of the work of assisting family historians involves directing them to other research centres when you do not hold the sources they wish to use. While the answers to the most common enquiries requiring referral beyond your own doors often become a matter of rote response, there are often more complicated and obscure questions to be answered, and the sheer quantity of material contained in this guide should be of considerable value in helping us to answer those questions.

The author's emphasis on a broad range of sources awaiting use by the family historian should be commended. The lists of genealogical and local history societies by state and territory, for example supplement the explanations of the different published and unpublished records which may be consulted. There is also sensible advice on how to approach research from a distance and some suggestions on what to do with the data amassed in the search. The facts that archivists and librarians have other responsibilities and limited numbers are wisely mentioned, and the list of record centres indicates when an institution has a policy of not answering written or telephone genealogical enquiries.

The guide has six main chapters - one for each of the states — and a very brief one covering all the territories. After an introductory statistical section, there is a *Location of Records* section which gives brief outlines of the history and holdings of the major institutions useful to the family historian in the particular state or territory. This is followed by the core of the chapter — the *Record Categories* section — where forty-one source headings from aborigines to business records to convicts to government gazettes to manuscript letters and diaries to passenger records to undertakers' records are described. There are three appendices: Published Family Histories, Record Location Codes (explaining the alphabetic codes used for record centres in the text) and a Bibliography, which has three hundred and twenty-seven entries arranged alphabetically *by title*. There is no index, which is rather inexplicable. A work which the author has taken seven hundred and sixty hours to research and write and which covers such a gamut of genealogical bits needs an index. The detailed lists of contents for each chapter and the use of cross-references within the text do not compensate fully for the absence of a general index.

New South Wales receives the most extensive treatment in the guide, its chapter occupying over one-third of the book. This is for a variety of reasons, including the fact that New South Wales has the largest population and the longest history of European settlement. This chapter also has information of Australia-wide interest, and is meant to be used in conjunction with the other chapters to gain maximum benefit from the guide. A note to this effect is given in the Introduction, and is repeated

occasionally in the text. Some of the 'national information' presented is incorrect: the Mitchell Library's *Catalogue of Manuscripts*, A and B series, is not a national guide to unpublished material, it is a finding aid to part of that institution's holdings of manuscript and archival material only. The *Location of Records* information about the major New South Wales institutions appears generally accurate.

One important omission is of any reference to the *Genealogical Resources Kit* now being marketed by the Archives Office of New South Wales. This large-scale copying project will see some of the most-heavily used material from that institution available in local libraries in microform, and can be expected to have an impact on the patterns of genealogical research in New South Wales. It is possible that the publishing deadlines for *Tracing Your Family History in Australia* and the initial appearance of the *Kit* overlapped, but such an important project deserved mention at least as a foreshadowed development. In the *Record Categories* section of this chapter, it is the discussion of the content, location and significance of sources such as parish registers and electoral rolls which will be of most use to genealogists. Others, such as the brief treatment of business records, may perplex rather than enlighten. This part begins with the information that a 'surprising number of businesses and government departments maintain records of past employees and some even have an archivist to care for these records'. Bank records and the records of law firms are cited as examples of this source, and some basic, if outdated, details about the Archives of Business and Labour are provided.

There is a lot of information packed into this guide, and to read it in full is rather like reading an enthusiastic tourist guide which makes you footsore before you start your travels. Many readers will want to use it as they would use other reference works — selectively rather than exhaustively. While the record categories and record centres arrangement facilitates quick reference, other features of the organisation of the guide increase the need to read large sections of the text. The lack of an index means that it is hard to check all references to one institution or one type of record, or to find some of the helpful lists of reasons why a name might not appear in a particular source, for example a directory or a parish register.

The organisation of the bibliography by title rather than author means that works by the one individual or corporate author are dispersed, unless they are part of a numbered sequence, for example, the *Guides* produced by the Archives Office of New South Wales. The author's reason for this arrangement is to achieve standardisation, as all references in the text are by title. However, his aim of ease of reference could also be met by a bibliography presented in the more familiar tradition of listing works by author, with breakdowns into different types of work, such as standard reference works, repository guides and journal articles. Both family historians and the custodians of the sources they seek would be assisted in their tasks if

retrieval of information from the guide was not quite so reliant on a full reading of the text.

Tracing Your Family History in Australia is a reference tool which will, no doubt, be welcomed and used by its primary audience, family historians consulting Australian sources. Whether it is received favourably by archivists and librarians will probably depend on their assessments of the information presented about sources in their own institutions, or sources for a whole state or territory, or sources covering a particular record type, as well as their reactions to the organisation of the guide as a whole. The author looks forward to a future edition which will update address lists, and correct errors and omissions, and he invites his readers to notify him of gaps and inaccuracies. For archivists, doing this will help co-operation with a major user group, whose needs and interests we cannot afford to ignore.

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Australian Joint Copying Project Handbook. Part 8 : Miscellaneous (M series) 2nd edition Canberra: National Library of Australia and the State Library of New South Wales, 1984

Readers of this journal and, indeed, most users of archival institutions in Australia, will be very familiar with the series of guides known briefly as the AJCP handbooks. Without the eight fascicules which appeared between 1972 and 1980 it would not have been possible to gain the quick access we have enjoyed to the rich collection of archives microfilmed from original materials in the Public Record Office, London and, to a lesser extent, to original records - private and official - in locations other than the PRO.

The main section of this edition of Part 8 of the *Guide* contains descriptive entries for the 263 collections covered in the 'M' series. However, even a glance at the preceding three sections in the volume is enough to give one an idea of the broad scope and variety of records captured in this phase of the Project. The first section is a list of the microfilms in the 'M' series arranged according to holding institutions, a device making interlibrary co-operation a practical proposition. The second is a list of the collections themselves arranged alphabetically by name (useful for quick reference), while the third is a list of institutions in Great Britain and Ireland (ranging from Avon to Armagh County) holding the original records themselves.

Not readily apparent from the title page or introductory matter of this volume is the extent to which it differs from the first edition, published in 1980. A prominent and succinct note to this effect would have been useful.

The differences lie, most obviously, in the greater number of entries (263 now compared to 168 in the first edition); corresponding additions to the list of holding institutions; and, a new feature, the listing of British and Irish record repositories containing the microfilmed material as mentioned above.

The descriptive entries give the sort of detail one would expect from painstaking research. In addition to basic data about title, dates, quantities and location (comparable, say, to levels one and two of AACR II cataloguing), there is an historical note on the subject itself, rationalising both obscure and obvious connections with Australia (how else would many of us know why the papers of the philosopher Jeremy Bentham are here?).

A further paragraph then gives a somewhat more detailed description of the papers themselves : their form, coverage, and content, the last named unusually analytic in a work of this kind. Worth remembering, too, is that reference is also made in this paragraph to the corresponding information to be found in Phyllis Mander-Jones' *Manuscripts in the British Isles relating to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific*, in conjunction with which work the present volume should be consulted. Where a more detailed listing is available this, too, is mentioned. Of special interest in this regard is entry number 74 which, being a comprehensive listing of British Colonial Office records, will be of value to researchers interested in those records described in previous parts of the *Guide*.

To say that what is normally expected of an index has been exceeded on this occasion would be a fair assessment. The index appears to be a very full one indeed (despite what was obviously a printer's omission against the name of the library with which this reviewer is associated!). Not only are main entries indexed, but so are the names of all the individuals, organisations and even subjects covered by the descriptive entries. Under New South Wales, for example appear references to several collections of general interest to that State, followed by specific descriptions such as drawings and paintings, import statistics, Society of Friends, Treasurer, etc. Another example of thoroughness is the provision of an entry in its own right, so to speak, under Pictorial material, an aspect often overlooked in guides of this nature. The efficiency of the index is weakened a little by the fact that column numbers (or letters) are not given in addition to the entry number, but this is a problem only when the descriptive entry is a longish one.

Because it is very much a key to the exploitation of the records filmed for the Project, it would be a truism to say that this publication is an indispensable tool. However, such an assertion can be made in this case as a fair value judgement: its merit as a guide and source book is indisputable.

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