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will, of course, always be many documents that will never be published or even copied; the scholar must accept the proposition, even in an ideal world, that sometimes and in some places he must be the research Mahomet to the documentary mountain.

Actual methods of publication must be determined by the most suitable process in each case. But I am suggesting for serious consideration that if Australiana is to be published in any great quantity then it must be by the publication of the text itself, cheaply, in photographic facsimile, with a minimum of additional matter which, however useful to the scholar, is someone else's work which he must himself test anyway. This seems to me to be the way of providing the greatest service to the scholar and to be entirely in accord with our responsibilities as librarians and archivists, which is to make the source materials themselves available.

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GERMAN ARCHIVES RELATING TO NEW GUINEA.

The history of the German colony in New Guinea and of the Micronesian Islands which were administered as part of German New Guinea has yet to be written. The main reason for the apparent neglect of the topic has been the lack of adequate materials on which to base a study. Fortunately, this no longer applies to the former German possessions in Micronesia, that is, the Caroline, Mariana and Marshall groups, for the Archives Division of the Commonwealth National Library has acquired an important group of German records pertaining to this area. But the Micronesian Islands formed the less populous and less developed part of the German colony, and for the main centres of German activity in the area, that is, the Bismarck Archipelago and the north-eastern part of the mainland of New Guinea, archival materials on a useful scale are not at present available. Here the historian has to make the best of the published German sources.

At first sight, the range and quantity of such publications are surprising. In the period before 1914 there was probably more written about German New Guinea than about any other colony in the Pacific. Annual reports and other official publications, occasional articles in the half dozen or so German periodicals devoted to colonial questions, books by geographers, anthropologists and travellers, sections on New Guinea in surveys of the German colonial empire - together they make up a substantial literature



on the subject. But their quality varies and correspondingly their usefulness to the historian. On the scientific side, the value of the geographical and anthropological works published by German scholars has been widely recognised. When the historian seeks to understand administrative policy or problems arising from economic penetration and change in native society, he is less well served. Much of the material in the books and journals is repetitive. Some of it is descriptive and at a fairly superficial level. And when due allowance has been made for the cautious selection of material and the optimistic bias in most official reports and for the particular interests and antipathies for contributors to the colonial periodicals, the gaps become all too apparent.

There was a time when many of these gaps might have been filled, for the present dearth of archival and other manuscript sources dates only from 1939. In the 'thirties the historian working in Germany would have had ample sources to draw upon. He would have made an extended visit to the Reichsarchiv at Potsdam his first objective, for there he would have had access to the records of the former German Colonial Office. A survey of the holdings of the Reichsarchiv which related to New Guinea is not available, but the scope of German colonial records was wide. Only one historian (H. Rudin) used them at all extensively, and that was for a study of German administration in the Cameroons; his comments on the range of materials that related to the Cameroons and their excellent condition suggests that records for the other German colonies would have been preserved with the same degree of care. Official documents could in 1939 have been supplemented by private papers. At that time, the New Guinea Company was still active, with interests in South America; presumably, its records were intact in Berlin. Dr. Albert Hahl, the governor of German New Guinea from 1902 to 1914, had just published his book Gouverneursjahre in Neuguinea, an autobiographical account of the years he spent in the colony; his private papers were at his home in Berlin. At Dwasieden in Posen the von Hanseemann family had preserved the family archives, which included the papers of Adolf von Hanseemann, the founder and for many years the president of the New Guinea Company. It is possible, too, that these records in Europe might have been supplemented by some of the records left by the former German colonial government in New Guinea. The writer of this article has been told on several occasions that there were still records of the German government stored in Rabaul at the time of the Japanese occupation, although confirmation of this is lacking.

To-day, none of these sources is available. Some of them have been destroyed. If there were German records in Rabaul in 1941, they did not exist in 1945. Dr. Hahl's papers were burnt in 1943, when the bank in Berlin in which he had deposited them was destroyed by bombs and fire. No trace of the New Guinea Company or its papers



is to be found in West Berlin to-day. The von Hanseemann papers may still be in Dwasieden, but information about them is not available in West Germany.

In view of these losses it is encouraging to know that some, at least, of the New Guinea records of the German Colonial Office, formerly in the Reichsarchiv, have survived. They are now in the custody of the Deutsche Zentralarchiv at Potsdam in East Germany and are not available for scholarly use. However, since they must continue to be regarded as the major untapped source of material for the early history of New Guinea, a note on the circumstances under which they survived the destruction of the Reichsarchiv buildings in 1945 and on their present condition may be useful. Information on these topics is naturally meagre and the following is derived from the various official publications of East German archivists (1).

When war broke out in 1939, no immediate steps were taken to evacuate records from the Reichsarchiv repository, for it was considered that Potsdam was in no immediate danger from bombing. The belief that precautions were unnecessary lasted until 1943, when the increasing tempo of air attacks on Berlin led to the formulation of plans for the removal of more valuable archives from Potsdam to temporary repositories away from the large cities. Disused mines near Stassfurt and Schönebeck were utilised and between August 1943 and early 1945 about fifty per cent. of the holdings of the Reichsarchiv were stored at these cities. In the early stages of this evacuation the danger to Potsdam was not regarded as sufficient to warrant a general removal of records; by the beginning of 1945, when the need was clear, it was too late to arrange transport for all. The end came on April 14th, 1945, when the repository of the Reichsarchiv at Potsdam was hit and fire completed its destruction. With the building went about one-half of the records that had been deposited with the Reichsarchiv. Only approximate accounts of the archives destroyed have been compiled, for the losses included many files transferred hurriedly from government departments after war had broken out and imperfectly recorded in the Reichsarchiv, while the loss of many of the registers has prevented an exact comparison with the pre-war holdings. German archivists, however, are confident that the most important records were saved by evacuation.

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(1) See especially, Die staatliche Archivverwaltung im Staatssekretariat für Innere Angelegenheiten; Archivar und Historiker (1956), and Schriftenreihe des deutschen Zentralarchivs Nr.1, Übersicht über the Bestände des Deutschen Zentralarchivs Potsdam (1957)



Potsdam, Stassfurt and Schönebeck are located in that part of Germany which became the Russian zone in 1945. Consequently, control over the surviving records of the Reichsarchiv rested with the Soviet authorities in the immediate post-war years. Some of them were taken to Moscow. However, the Soviet Military Administration took steps almost immediately to create an archival authority in East Germany to replace the old Reichsarchiv and in June 1946 it established the Deutsches Zentralarchiv at Potsdam, which became responsible for the archives of the Reichsarchiv as well as other formerly independent groups, such as the Prussian Privy State Archives. Since 1949 the Deutsches Zentralarchiv has been under the Minister for the Interior in the German Democratic Republic. It has secured new buildings in Potsdam and the transfer to them of the records assigned to its charge. Records evacuated to Stassfurt and Schönebeck have been reassembled and those taken by the Soviet authorities to Moscow were returned to Potsdam in 1955.

Amongst the records returned to Potsdam by the Soviet Union in 1955 were the surviving archives of the former Colonial Office. According to a report published in East Germany in that year, the records of the Colonial Office deposited in the Reichsarchiv before 1939 comprised the general files of the Office, which covered the administration of all the German colonies in Africa and the Pacific, and in addition a separate series for each colony individually. The criteria by which documents were allocated to the general or particular series are not clear, but it appears that at least in the case of South West Africa the great majority of the documents allocated to the special series for that colony were Personalakten, that is, files relating to the appointment and service of officials stationed in the colony. All the records relating to particular colonies, with the exception of the South West Africa, are lost. They were not evacuated from Potsdam and were destroyed in the repository. However, about sixty per cent. of the general files of the Colonial Office were evacuated and are now back in Potsdam. They comprise about 9100 volumes and include, in addition to the documents accumulated in the course of the administration of the colonies up to 1914, records relating to the former German colonies up to 1943. A review of its holdings published by the Deutsches Zentralarchiv in 1957 stated that New Guinea records were in the group.

Beyond that, no information is available and access to these records in the Deutsches Zentralarchiv is not granted. Until such time as the authorities in East Germany welcome foreign scholars to Potsdam, the historian interested in New Guinea can only speculate about their contents.



In view of this, the German records relating to Micronesia, now in Canberra, are of considerable interest. As they originated in an area which, with the exception of the island of Nauru, has never been administered by Australia, their present location in Canberra needs to be explained. The islands were acquired by Germany towards the end of the nineteenth century. The first official moves to establish German control in the area followed immediately upon the German annexation of New Guinea in 1884. In 1885 Bismarck sanctioned the annexation of the Marshall Islands and a few years later gave to a chartered company, the Jaluit Company, an economic monopoly and certain rights in the administration of the group, which was nominally the responsibility of an Imperial Commissioner. A German attempt to acquire the Caroline, Palau and Mariana groups at the same time was foiled by a Spanish claim to their possession and a decision by the Pope in favour of Spain when the ensuing dispute was submitted to his arbitration. In 1899, however, Spain, defeated in the Spanish-American War, was glad to accept a German offer to purchase the groups, and German control over these Micronesian islands, which were known collectively to the Germans as the Inselgebiet, was recognised in that year. Although distances were great and communications poor, the German government was anxious to avoid the additional expense involved in the creation of a separate colony north of the equator and attached the newly acquired islands to the colony of German New Guinea. The separate administration in the Marshall Islands was maintained until 1906, when the agreement with the Jaluit Company was terminated and these islands, too, were added to German New Guinea.

The fact that the Micronesian Islands were administered by the Governor of German New Guinea explains the present location of these records in Canberra. At Herbertshöhe (now Kopoko) and after 1910 at Rabaul German New Guinea had its capital; here was the residence of the governor and the administrative headquarters of the whole colony. From the capital the governor occasionally visited the districts and stations which were established at various points in the colony, from Bougainville in the south to the Marianas in the north. Generally, his responsibility for subordinate officials in the districts was discharged by means of written reports and directives, which in time must have come to form a considerable body of records in his office in the colonial capital. The Micronesian archives now in Canberra formed part of the records accumulated in this way at Rabaul. At some stage, probably after 1914, they were detached from the more numerous records pertaining to the Bismarck Archipelago and the New Guinea mainland, and while the latter appear to have remained in Rabaul and to have been eventually destroyed in World War II, the Micronesian files were transferred to Canberra. Details of their provenance are not available, but it is obvious that they came into Australian possession as the property of the German Government in Rabaul from which the Australian administration took over.



The majority of the documents in the collection originated in the Micronesian islands in the form of official letters and reports addressed to the governor of the colony. In addition, there are occasional letters from private individuals relating to the islands and communications from the Colonial Office in Berlin.

At first, the tie between the officers stationed in the groups north of the equator and the governor at Herbertshöhe was a tenuous one, for ships were rare and little was known in the capital of New Guinea about the remote and scattered islands in Micronesia which Germany had recently acquired. After 1902 some of the obstacles to communication were removed when Dr. Albert Hahl became governor of German New Guinea after several years' residence in the East Carolines as Vice Governor, and shipping facilities improved slightly. Communications by sea, however, were never satisfactory and the consequent difficulties in maintaining close contact with the Micronesian islands militated against centralisation and the assimilation of the northern groups with the rest of the colony.

This meant that many of the details of administration had to be entrusted to officials on the spot. They were required to report extensively on their activities, and Hahl followed them closely and instructed them in matters of policy as his often lengthy minutes on their letters show. From their reports and Hahl's comments, which form the bulk of the Micronesian records in Canberra, one can gradually build up a picture of German administration in Micronesia. Not all the records are of value. There are the usual lengthy explanations about funds disbursed in the discharge of public duties, which seem inevitable in colonial correspondence, and accounts of protracted disputes about rights to small areas of land. Much space, too, is taken up by routine correspondence about supplies and equipment. Against these relics of the tedious minutiae of administration one can set reports of tours of inspection of the islands with their descriptions of native society and discussions about proposals to change the system of land tenure or introduce native taxation. The impact of these reforms upon native society is sometimes revealed, particularly in Ponape, where precipitate action by the district officer provoked the uprising of the Jokaij people in 1910. The desire of the German government to reduce American and other non-German influences in the area is evident in the correspondence with the missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and the plans for the teaching of the German language in the schools. Reports upon the health of the natives and medical facilities indicate the extent of German efforts to combat the diseases which were rampant in the islands at the time of the German occupation.



Then there are the files relating to foreign commercial activity. Official preference for the large company rather than the individual trader, who was often regarded as an impecunious adventurer, was as marked in the Micronesian islands as in other German colonial areas in the Pacific. Japanese economic penetration was closely watched and the view was sometimes expressed that unless the Japanese were restrained they would eventually predominate in the group. Examples might be multiplied. They would only serve to reinforce the impression of the varied contents of these records.

The historian who is accustomed to British colonial records will notice differences in the German system of classification and filing. All the Micronesian records are classified according to their subject and made up into volumes. Unfortunately, the registers, which would have elucidated the system of filing as well as facilitated the location of particular documents, have been lost. It appears that when a letter was received in the governor's office, it was stamped and numbered. After it had been seen by the governor and the appropriate action on it perhaps had been indicated in a minute, it was allocated to a particular subject volume, and attached by stitching to other documents in the volume. There are over one hundred such volumes, varying in size from half a dozen to several hundred pages.

These records are of value primarily for the information they afford about the Micronesian islands, they open up the possibility of studying the early history of these islands communities before they passed under Japanese and, since 1945, American control. It is worth noting, however, that particularly after 1907 German administration in this area was deliberately being brought more into line with that in New Guinea, and in the absence of archival materials for New Guinea the Micronesian records may serve to illuminate aspects of German policy and administration south of the equator. Within their compass it may be possible to learn something of the methods and principles of an able and humane governor, Dr. Albert Hahl. But, useful as they may occasionally be to the historian of New Guinea, they provide indication of the gaps to be filled rather than the materials by which the printed sources may be supplemented and checked. A satisfactory investigation of the history of German New Guinea must wait upon the readiness of the authorities in East Germany to open the colonial archives at Potsdam.

Marjorie Jacobs.

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