

often hilarious historical analysis of forces shaping contemporary American civilization. It is the cleverest and shrewdest commentary I know on American life in the twentieth century.

Indiana University

Richard M. Dorson

The National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections, 1959-1961. Compiled by the Library of Congress. (Ann Arbor, Mich.: J. W. Edwards, 1962. Pp. viii, 1061. Indexes. \$9.75.)

The multiplicity of manuscript repositories in the United States and the wide dispersal of collections among them has made it difficult in the past to ascertain what letters and papers of a given man or on a subject were available and where they were to be found. The need for an aid to location has long been felt, but the magnitude of such an undertaking has postponed its realization.

The project which has resulted in the publication of the present volume has centered in the Library of Congress. Active planning began in 1951, but it could only be put in motion in 1958 when a grant from the Council on Library Resources, Inc., provided for the primary costs of the work.

To draw up policies upon which to proceed an advisory committee of scholars representing learned societies and other groups interested in the preservation and control of manuscripts was appointed.

In order to keep the project within manageable bounds it was decided that the listing would be one of collections rather than of individual manuscripts. For this purpose a collection was defined as "A large group of papers (manuscript or typescript, originals, or copies, of letters, memoranda, diaries, accounts, log books, drafts, etc., including associated printed or near-print materials), usually having a common source and formed by or around an individual, a family, a corporate entity, or devoted to a single theme" (p. v).

There were no limitations on time, place of origin, or nature of collections, but certain types of materials were excluded. Among these were ostraca, clay tablets, and papyri, which were considered to be of interest to only a limited number of scholars who had adequate means of locating them in the United States, and collections of photocopies or transcripts of material if the originals were in public repositories in the United States. Collections of copies were to be listed if the originals were in foreign repositories or if they were in private collections in the United States to which research workers were not regularly admitted. Archives were to be excluded if located where one would expect to find them, for example county records in a county courthouse.

An attempt was made to include the holdings of all public and quasi-public repositories, such as libraries, historical societies, and archives which regularly admit research workers. Information for the catalog was gathered from data sheets prepared by the repositories or from existing records. These were then edited at the Library of Congress and printed on regulation size catalog cards which were made available for purchase.

For each collection listed, the information given includes the name and location of the collection; an indication of its size; a brief description of its contents and, when available, references to published and unpublished descriptions; and notes on restrictions to access, literary rights, and provenance.

In 1959 the first cards were printed. The present volume contains the 3,688 entries issued in the years 1959-1961. According to present plans supplements will reproduce the cards appearing in succeeding years. It is estimated that the total number of collections included will run to some 20,000.

The arrangement of the main body of the catalog is by numbers assigned to each entry as it was printed. There are three indexes: a name index of about 30,000 names of persons, families, associations, institutions, business firms, governmental agencies, etc., associated with the collections listed; a subject index to the principal contents of the collections listed which has more than 3,000 entries; and an index to the more than 400 repositories represented in the volume.

As a step in bringing the large manuscript resources of the United States under bibliographical control this work is of considerable importance. Not only does it give the scholar a means of ascertaining what collections in his field exist in a large number of repositories in the United States, but it should also prove valuable in establishing much needed standards for cataloging and describing manuscript holdings, which should result in increasing their usability.

Indiana University

Doris M. Reed

Guide to Federal Archives Relating to the Civil War. By Kenneth W. Munden and Henry Putney Beers. (Washington: The National Archives, 1962. Pp. x, 721. Appendix, index. \$3.00.)

This volume is primarily concerned with a description of records of the Federal government during the decade of the 1860's, but in some instances it appropriately extends its coverage to the resolution of problems which existed during the war or were born of the war. The value of the *Guide* is increased by noting the location of records not in Federal custody and by excellent short statements of the functions and purposes of the various offices and agencies. The inclusion of the most significant edited works, monographs, and articles, as well as the membership of special committees and heads of offices and agencies, adds to its usefulness as a reference tool. If the companion work (now in preparation) on the archives of the Confederate States is of the same high quality as this one, a long-felt need for a descriptive guide to the extant records of the two governments will have been met.

The records of Congress, the Judiciary, and the Presidency are first described. The executive departments and their subordinate components are then taken up in turn, and a final chapter is devoted to miscellaneous agencies. The coverage is complete: from the presidential proclamations to the records of the District of Columbia jail.

Historians and Civil War "buffs" will welcome this book, and both groups may be somewhat surprised to find that only about five pages are devoted to the official records of the contending armies and navies!

Indiana University

Chase C. Mooney