

A DESCRIPTIVE GUIDE TO REFERENCE WORKS

The HISTORIAN'S HANDBOOK

HELEN J. POULTON

with the assistance of MARGUERITE S. HOWLAND

FOREWORD BY WILBUR S. SHEPPERSON

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Foreword

Many students of history rely on zeal and tenacity to overcome a lack of technical expertise in their daily explorations into the catacombs of the library. Perhaps most people who use the library could save much time and frustration and improve their work if they knew how and where to look for historical material. Indeed, some of us have half-seriously suggested to students in our seminars that they first become librarians and then study to be historians.

Fortunately, Helen J. Poulton followed similar advice and acquired advanced degrees in both history and library science. This background enabled her to prepare this volume with precision and authority.

The Historian's Handbook: A Descriptive Guide to Reference Works is designed to aid both students and scholars of the social sciences. It surveys a wide variety of the major reference works in all fields of history, as well as important titles in several allied disciplines. An opening chapter on the organization of the library helps make this study a valuable key in the unlocking of a library's secrets.

WILBUR S. SHEPPERSON

Preface

The history student is required to find and use widely scattered and often complex materials, such as government documents, archives, and legal works, as well as books, newspapers, and periodicals. This volume attempts to select and list the major reference titles which can help the student and researcher select most efficiently from the thousands of titles the specific ones he needs. It is not a catalog of all the materials that might be useful or relevant to a subject.

Many people have helped me, but I wish to express my gratitude in particular to: Quirinus Breen, Professor Emeritus of History, University of Oregon; Angie Debo, formerly of the Oklahoma State University Library; Mrs. Ruth Donovan, Assistant Director, University of Nevada Libraries; Jerome Edwards, Assistant Professor of History, University of Nevada; Mrs. Marguerite S. Howland, Head Documents Librarian and Coordinator, Social Sciences and Humanities Areas, Oklahoma State University Library; James W. Hulse, Associate Professor of History, University of Nevada; Wilbur S. Shepperson, Professor of History, University of Nevada; and James Tigner, Professor of History, University of Nevada.

Helen J. Poulton

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The Historian's Handbook

A DESCRIPTIVE GUIDE TO REFERENCE WORKS

1

The Library and Its Catalog

Libraries have always played an important role in the transfer of information. They have existed to acquire, to preserve, and to make available recorded information. With today's explosion of information, the role of the library is increasingly important. As Verner W. Clapp has defined it, the function of a research library "is to enable inquirers to identify library materials relevant to their inquiries and to supply them with copies of these materials for their use."¹

From earliest times the principle of local self-sufficiency and the principle of sharing resources have shaped the growth of the world's libraries. Today the continuing increase in the number of publications, the complexity of languages, and rising costs have caused even the largest and most specialized libraries to recognize the fact that they can not have completeness of resources. Foster E. Mohrhardt, Director of the National Agricultural Library, has said:

As we move rapidly into an era of computer-aided sharing of

¹ Verner W. Clapp, *The Future of the Research Library* (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1964), 11; see also, Katharine G. Harris, "Currently Available Tools—Their Adequacy for Today's Needs," in *The Present Status and Future Prospects of Reference Information Service: Proceedings of the Conference Held at the School of Library Service, Columbia University, March 30–April 1, 1966*, ed. by Winifred B. Linderman (Chicago, American Library Association, 1967), 103.

library resources, I feel certain that, within the next decade, the multiple-access computer will be in general use by research libraries. I would assume that possibly in ten years, instead of mailing tapes to libraries throughout the country, we will probably have the computers electronically connected so that each can tap the other's information. We will not have a common computer storing all the information but, among research libraries at least, a commonly joined computer system.²

Research libraries have large bibliographic collections to identify the material the user wants, and they use the telephone, teletype, photoduplication, telefacsimile, and delivery and mail services to implement the principle of sharing resources. The student should investigate the interlibrary loan services at his library. Because most libraries follow the American Library Association's National Interlibrary Loan Code of 1968, they do not usually ask to borrow United States books in print of moderate cost, serials if the item can be copied at moderate cost, rare materials, reference materials, genealogical materials, bulky or fragile newspapers, or doctoral dissertations when they are available on microfilm. The borrowing library has the responsibility of identifying the request according to accepted bibliographic practice and citing the source of the reference.

Many libraries have local, state, regional, and national arrangements to facilitate the acquisition of materials not available locally. The University of Nevada Library, for example, follows the Interlibrary Loan Code in obtaining material for its faculty and graduate students working on their theses and dissertations. It also provides material for all the libraries of Nevada, which funnel their requests through the Nevada State Library at Carson City. In addition, the University of Nevada Library has joined the Consortium of Western Universities and Colleges, which, accord-

² Foster E. Mohrhardt, "The Library Kaleidoscope: National Plans and Planning," in *The Present Status and Future Prospects of Reference Information Service*, 85, 89.

ing to its bylaws, hopes "to provide, through the close cooperation of the acquisitions and services program [extended interlibrary loans and photoduplication service] of the libraries of member institutions, better research material and study opportunities in the field of international relations and area studies for students and faculty members of the associated institutions." With the University's new two-year medical school, the University of Nevada's Life and Health Sciences Library will be able to participate in the National Library of Medicine system which provides faster interlibrary loan and reference service through MEDLARS (Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System) tapes deposited at selected regional centers.

A library should organize its books, serials, documents, tapes, manuscripts, records, and microforms so that its users will be able to find what they want. If the researcher will learn a few basic, common library practices, he will save time and avoid much frustration.

The card catalog is the key to the library. It is an index to the cataloged material in the library. Some library catalogs are dictionary catalogs, that is, author, title, and subject cards are filed alphabetically in one catalog. Other library catalogs may be divided catalogs, with author and title cards filed alphabetically in one section and subject cards filed alphabetically in another section. Filing rules differ in libraries, but the student should note a few of the important variations, especially whether the cards are filed letter by letter or word by word.

Word by Word

New England
New era
New Mexico
New York
Newe Metamorphosis
Newell
Newfoundland

Letter by Letter

Newell
Newe Metamorphosis
New England
New era
Newfoundland
New Mexico
Newport

Newport
News

News
New York

For author and title cards, if the first word is an article (a, an, the, *le, les, un, une, der, das, die*), it is disregarded in filing. When an article is within the title, it is counted in the alphabetizing. *Le Grand Frederic avant l'avènement* by Ernest Lavisse, for example, is filed under *Grand* and not under *Le*; however, *l'avènement* is filed alphabetically under *l'avènement*.

Abbreviations are arranged as though they were spelled out—*St.* as *saint*, *Dr.* as *doctor*, and *G.B.* as *Great Britain*.

Words beginning with *M'*, *Mc*, and *Mac* are filed as though they were all spelled *Mac* and interfiled with other words beginning *mac*; thus the following arrangement:

McAdoo, William Gibbs
Macalih, Basile
Mac Annan, George Buss
Macao
McArthur, Arthur
MacArthur, Douglas

Numerals are filed as though spelled out: *1066* and *All That*, for example, is filed as though it began *Ten Sixty Six*.

Organizations are considered authors if they have issued publications. These organizations include institutions such as the University of California,³ government agencies such as the United States Department of State,⁴ societies such as the American Academy of Political and Social Science,⁵ and corporations such as Rand, McNally and Company.⁶

³ University of California, University at Los Angeles, Committee on Latin American Studies, *Statistical Abstract of Latin America* (Los Angeles, 1955-).

⁴ U.S. Department of State, Historical Office, *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents* (Washington, D.C., 1956-).

⁵ *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 1- (Philadelphia, American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1890-).

The student should also learn how the library files foreign names. What does it do with names with prefixes (*de* and *von*), with names with an umlaut (ä, ö, ü), and with hyphenated names? The library usually disregards prefixes; thus Joachim von Kurenberg is filed under *K* and Maximilien de Bétherne, duc de Sully is filed under *S*. Libraries do file sometimes under *du*; thus Madame du Barry is filed under *Du Barry*, *Marie Jeanne Bécu, comtesse*. If the student is hunting Müller, for example, he should check both *Mueller* and *Muller* to be safe. In the case of hyphenated names, libraries usually file under the first part of the surname; thus Desmond Chapman-Huston is filed under *Chapman*.

Finding subject headings requires a little knowledge and finesse. The student can learn how. There are four basic types of subject headings. The simplest type is without divisions: History. The next type has subdivisions:

- History—Bibliography
- History—Collections
- History—Curiosa and Miscellany
- History—Dictionaries
- History—Methodology
- History—Periodicals
- History—Philosophy
- History—Sources
- History—Yearbooks

A third type has inverted subject headings: History, Ancient or History, Modern. The fourth type consists of a phrase: History in Art.

Filing may differ in libraries, but the following illustrates a typical arrangement of the four types of subject headings:

- History
- History—Bibliography

⁶ *The World Book Atlas*, 1966 ed. (Chicago, Field Enterprises Corp., 1965).

History—Sources
History—Sources—Bibliography
History, Ancient
History, Modern
History, Modern—Sources
History, Modern—18th Century
History, Modern—19th Century
History, Modern—20th Century
History in Art

Note that chronological subdivisions are filed in chronological order after all the form and topical subdivisions.

In the card catalog the student will also find cross references. A reference referring from a form not used to forms used in a *see* reference: History, Medieval *see* Middle Ages—History. A reference from a form used to related headings where additional titles are listed is a *see also* reference: History, Modern *see also* Civilization, Modern; Reformation; Renaissance.

Most large, scholarly research libraries follow the list of *Subject Headings Used in the Dictionary Catalogs of the Library of Congress*.⁷ By checking this list, the student can learn what subject headings and cross references to look for. While there are revisions to keep the list up to date, some terms may never get in it. For example, the term *cold war* is now so much accepted it is in *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language*, but the subject heading for Louis Joseph Halle's book, *The Cold War as History*, is History, Modern—1945.

Libraries classify their materials to bring together those on a particular subject. The two most commonly used classification schemes in United States libraries are the Dewey Decimal Classification and the Library of Congress Classification. The Dewey decimal scheme, developed by Melvil Dewey in the 1870's, is based on figures used decimally. Dewey divided all knowledge into ten classes.

⁷ Ed. by Marguerita V. Quattlebaum, 7th ed. (Washington, D.C., for sale by the Card Division, Library of Congress, 1966).

Main Classes

000–099	General Works	500–599	Pure Science
100–199	Philosophy	600–699	Technology
200–299	Religion	700–799	The Arts
300–399	Social Sciences	800–899	Literature
400–499	Language	900–999	History

Each main class is divided into ten divisions. For example, the main class History is divided as follows:

History

900–910	History—General Works
910–919	Geography, Travels, Description
920–929	Biography
930–939	Ancient History
940–949	Europe
950–959	Asia
960–969	Africa
970–979	North America
980–989	South America
990–999	Other Parts of the World

Each division is divided into ten sections:

North America

970	North America—General Works
971	Canada
972	Mexico and the Caribbean
973	United States
974	Northeastern States
975	Southeastern States
976	South Central States
977	North Central States
978	Western States
979	Far Western States and Alaska