THE PENNSYLVANIA ARCHIVES

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The investigator who makes his first venture into the published Pennsylvania Archives is usually dismayed by a bewildering array of series and volume numbers and an arrangement of subject matter seemingly without logic or order. If his patience does not become exhausted, he eventually grows accustomed to such disconcerting little trifles as finding the index to the Fifth Series in the Sixth Series, and probably learns how to put the volumes back in their proper order. Many persons with less perseverance, however, have often condemned all this confusion and yearned for some explanation of the whole business.

Today, indeed, we can see many possibilities for improvement in the Archives, but if we study the history of their publication, we may come to a better understanding of why the Archives lack a consistent editorial plan. In fact, when we realize the common indifference of legislatures to such recondite matters as historical records, we should take pride that Pennsylvania has accomplished as much as it has in this line.

The history of the Archives began over one hundred years ago when, at the petition of the American Philosophical Society and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the state undertook the publication of the journals of the Provincial Council under the title of Colonial Records. Begun in 1838, publication lapsed with the appearance of the third volume in 1840 and was not resumed until there was a revival of interest in 1851. At that time it was decided to print also the journals of the Committee and Council of Safety and of the Supreme Executive Council, thus bringing the record down to 1790 and making a total of sixteen volumes. Despite the fact that this extended the series well beyond the colonial period, no change was made in the original title, a fact which is occasionally misleading:

1 See Colonial Records, I, Documents I-IV.
2 Pennsylvania Archives, First Series, I (Philadelphia, 1852), 14-16.
3 The first three volumes were also reprinted with a different pagination, making it necessary to cite the edition in referring to them.
In these journals of our various executive councils, the student will find a record of most executive actions from 1683 to 1790, such as commissions issued, pardons granted, roads opened, and conferences with the Indians. Often, important documents were copied into the journal—letters, petitions, depositions, treaties. The *Colonial Records* are thus indispensable source material for Pennsylvania history before 1790. The original journals are now in the Archives Division of the Pennsylvania State Library, where they may be examined if necessary, but for ordinary purposes there is no need to consult them. They were not edited, the printer setting his type directly from the manuscript. Sample checking indicates that variations from the original are chiefly in spelling and capitalization.

When publication of the *Colonial Records* was resumed in 1851, it was also decided to print other state records of historical interest. Samuel Hazard, author of the *Annals of Pennsylvania*, was appointed editor and, after nine months of research in the Secretary of Commonwealth's office, selected about 11,000 documents which were published in twelve volumes, 1852-1856, as the *Pennsylvania Archives*. His selection was excellent and, like its complement, the *Records*, the First Series is invaluable to any one studying Pennsylvania history before 1790. It includes the same sort of documents that are found copied into the Council journals—letters received, drafts of letters sent, petitions, depositions, treaties, some minutes of Council not recorded in the journals, and other papers. The arrangement is chronological, save that papers discovered during publication were printed out of their normal order in an appendix in Volume XII.

At the time of publication, preparation was made to bind the original manuscripts, but for some unfortunate reason this proposal was never carried out. A search in 1900 failed to locate any of them, but many have since been discovered in the Archives.

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4 Now referred to as "First Series" or "Old Series," to distinguish it from its successors.

5 The arrangement is not always exact, and there are some errors. A petition from Northumberland county, for example, is placed with the papers of 1755 (II, 240), when the county was not created until 1771; most errors are less serious.

6 First Series, XII, iv.

7 American Historical Association, *Report* (1900), II, 282. The article cited is a very useful description of the state of the Pennsylvania archives, both published and manuscript, at that time.
Division of the State Library. These manuscripts are readily identifiable, since they usually have headings and numbers in Hazard's handwriting, just as they were sent to the printer. Differences from the original appear to be chiefly in spelling and capitalization.

Each volume has an index, and there is also a separate index volume to both the Records and the Archives. These indexes are excellent for subjects, giving detailed listings under such headings as Bucks County, Indians, Letters, and Roads, but persons are listed only when the reference is of some importance. The index volume also contains an interesting preface by Hazard, describing the two series.

The Second Series was a labor of love for its editors, John Blair Linn and William H. Egle, both well-known writers on Pennsylvania history. It contains an amazing wealth of material on many phases of Pennsylvania history including, also, invaluable reproductions of flags, maps, and facsimiles of important documents. The variety is so great that it is almost impossible to summarize the papers that may be found here, but most of them come under the following general headings: papers relating to the provincial period, especially to the boundary controversies with Maryland and Connecticut; papers relating to military affairs—the Revolution, Indian wars, Whiskey Insurrection, the War of 1812; lists, chiefly of genealogical value, such as marriages, immigrants, naturalizations, and oaths of allegiance. It is not possible to give any general directions for locating this material in a specific volume, as the subjects are scattered through different volumes without definite arrangement. The only advice that can be given to the student is that he must become familiar with this series by use. There is unfortunately no general index, although each volume has its own index.

The confusion of the Second Series was not entirely due to lack of editorial planning. Handicapped by publication over twenty years (1875-1895), growing from an original three to an eventual nineteen volumes, the editors frequently had to re-

The papers relating to the Revolution and the War of 1812 have been largely reprinted in the Fifth and Sixth Series, where they are better arranged and better indexed. The lists of immigrants are published more accurately and more usefully in R. B. Strassburger and W. J. Hinke's *Pennsylvania German Pioneers* (Norristown, Pa., 1934).
vise their plans. During these years each volume was reprinted from two to four times, with different pagination, making it necessary to cite the edition when referring to this series.

The sources of the Second Series were in the main archives in the various state departments, but the manuscripts are now hard to locate. Those in the Archives Division are, for one reason or another, generally uncataloged, and many cannot be found there, being, presumably, still in the state departments. Moreover, the Second Series includes much material which is not state archives. The church records in Volumes VIII and IX can hardly have been government archives, and other records are confessedly reprints. It is also well to remember that in several cases the editors printed compilations taken from documents, rather than the documents themselves. Checking which has been possible indicates that manuscripts were usually printed literally, although the editors were sometimes over-enthusiastic in supplying omissions.

The Third Series, published 1894-1899, under Egle's editorship, shows an improved organization. It was actually issued in two parts, and the first ten volumes should be treated separately as a continuation of the Second Series. That series had ended in the middle of the minutes of the Board of Property, and the Third completed publication of those minutes, along with other similar land records. Following these four volumes are three containing accounts, chiefly of the Revolutionary militia, and three comprised of commissions, deeds, and proclamations, chronologically arranged. Each volume is separately indexed.

9 An interesting account of the difficulties faced by the editors will be found in Dr. Egle's preface to Volume XXVI of the Third Series.
10 The papers relating to the Dutch and Swedish settlements on the Delaware in Volumes V and VII, for example, are in large part taken from the Colonial Documents of New York. See Volume V, 3 (1877 ed.), and Volume VII, 486 (1891 ed.).
11 In publishing the provincial officers, the editors state they filled in many names from other sources (Volume IX, 622, 1890 ed.). The records of Revolutionary soldiers also seem to have been frequently compiled from other sources.
12 A list of York county militia officers in Volume XII, 526-542 (1896 ed.) is printed with the date of 1779. The manuscript shows the last two figures in the date illegible, and internal evidence indicates that it could not have been earlier than 1780. The editors also added signatures to unsigned drafts of letters.
13 The four index volumes, XXVII-XXX, bear the name of George Edward Reed, who had succeeded Egle as State Librarian when they were issued.
14 These indexes are reprinted in Volume XXVII.
The second twenty volumes are devoted chiefly to tax lists dating from 1765 to 1791, arranged by counties, along with some additional Revolutionary War records, and lists of land warrants issued in the various counties. There is a name index to these records in Volumes XXVII-XXX.\textsuperscript{15} The sources of the Third Series seem to have been entirely archival, but, as in the Second, they are often difficult to locate. Most of the tax lists are cataloged in the Archives Division, and some of the other originals are to be found there. The tax lists were not reproduced exactly, and some information—the value of the property assessed, for example—is occasionally omitted. The minutes of the Board of Property, like most of the land records, are available to the student in the Land Office.\textsuperscript{16}

The Fourth Series, which was published 1900-1902 in twelve volumes, with George Edward Reed as editor, was conceived as a selection of the papers of the governors, including the presidents of council when there was no other executive head, from 1681 to 1901. It presents many of the addresses, messages, and proclamations of each governor; correspondence is given "where it has been of evident historical value, and where it has been readily accessible."\textsuperscript{17} Letters, in actual fact, are very infrequent and there are virtually none for the nineteenth century. The series declines in general interest in the later years, but the documents are useful for reference.

The arrangement is, of course, chronological by governors, with a brief sketch of each executive at the beginning of his papers, and a portrait when available. Each volume has an index of its own, and there is a general index in Volume XII, chiefly to the headings of the documents, with other names mentioned generally omitted. All the manuscripts published were at that time in the office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth. Some of the proclamations printed are now in the Archives Division in an uncataloged "Proclamations Collection," and other papers have probably also been transferred to that Division. Checking of

\textsuperscript{15} There is also an unnumbered appendix volume of maps of Pennsylvania.

\textsuperscript{16} The minutes of the Constitutional Convention of 1776 and the incomplete journal of the Council of Censors (X, 755-804) appear to have been reprinted from a volume issued at Harrisburg in 1825, The Proceedings, etc., 45-82. The incomplete manuscript journals, now in the Archives Division, differ considerably from the printed version.

\textsuperscript{17} I, vi.
originals indicates that there was no intentional alteration of the

text, although there are frequent variations in spelling and capi-
talization and occasional omissions.

The Fifth Series likewise had a definite purpose, that of making
all the existing Revolutionary War records available in a single
arrangement under a single index. It reprints the various lists
of soldiers of the Revolution in the Second and Third Series,
with the addition of all the similar records then discovered in
the Division of Public Records.\(^{18}\) The general arrangement is
relatively simple. Volume I contains the records of provincial
soldiers and the Pennsylvania Navy; II and III, the continental
line; IV, miscellaneous records of both continental line and militia;
the succeeding four volumes take up the militia of the counties in
alphabetical order. Although Northumberland is the last county
given, the other four counties—Philadelphia, Washington, West-
moreland, and York—make up the first two volumes of the Sixth
Series.\(^{19}\) The arrangement within each county is first by battalion
number, then chronologically; this is sometimes confusing, as
the battalions in each county were numbered differently in 1777,
1780, and 1783, and sometimes as many as four battalions appear
under the same number.

Published in 1906 under the editorship of Thomas Lynch
Montgomery, the Fifth Series was a notable accomplishment, and
is today probably the most used of all the Archives, especially by
prospective members of the D. A. R. and kindred societies. It
is indexed in Volume XV of the Sixth Series—bound in two
very large "parts"—very carefully, by name in exact spelling,
with infrequent errors. The manuscript sources are now being
sought out and arranged in the Archives Division, and although
the work is not completed, many originals can now be examined.
In general, the manuscripts seem to have been reproduced care-

\(^{18}\) Now the Archives Division. Each record is marked with its source:
"a" for the Second Series, "b" for the Third, "c" for a manuscript in the
Division. The complete key will be found in Volume I, iv. The militia
accounts in Third Series, V-VII, were not included, although these records
are sometimes of value.

\(^{19}\) There is some mystery about these volumes. Although fifteen volumes
were authorized for the Fifth Series (P. L., 1905, 460) and the Sixth was
not authorized until 1907 (P. L., 1907, 32), these two volumes were pub-
lished in 1906 as part of the Sixth. It is regrettable that they could not
have been included in the Fifth to which they properly belong, as this
would have brought the Revolutionary records into a single index.
fully, save that fines, absences, and other annotations are usually omitted.

The Sixth Series, issued 1906-1907, likewise with Montgomery as editor, completed the publication of the military records of the state down to the Civil War. As already mentioned, it completed the Revolutionary records, then continued the militia down to 1800, following with records of the War of 1812 and the Mexican War. Also included were some church records in Volume VI, and scattered archival material in Volumes XI-XIV. Among this group are election returns for counties down to 1789, papers dealing with the forfeited estates of the Loyalists, and orderly books of the Revolution.

Except for the church records, and probably some of the material in Volume XIV, the sources seem to have been in the Archives Division. Those sources in general are not cataloged and are usually difficult to locate. As in the Fifth Series, the editing appears to have been a relatively faithful reproduction of the original. The index likewise is of the same type, by name, but not by subject. The index was published in 1914 in five volumes as the Seventh Series, also under the supervision of Montgomery. Through an accident in printing about 650 names between "Sterner" and "Stinsen" were omitted. The manuscript record of these missing names is preserved in the Archives Division and should be printed as a supplement.

The Eighth Series contains the *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives of the Province of Pennsylvania*, which is usually given the short title of *Votes of Assembly*. It contains the proceedings of the House from the first session on December 4, 1682, down to September 26, 1776. The journal gives very little of the debates, but it provides a record of all legislative action for the provincial period, paralleling the *Colonial Records*. Like that publication, it also includes many documents—letters, messages, reports of committees—which are very useful.

Published in 1931-1935 in eight consecutively paged volumes, under the editorship of the State Librarians—first Miss Gertrude MacKinney, later Dr. Charles F. Hoban—the Eighth Series dif-

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20 This is not intended to imply that all the existing records of this type have been published. There is an enormous mass of material in the Archives Division yet unpublished, especially of papers dealing with the peace-time militia.
fers from its predecessors in being entirely a reprinting. The original *Votes of Assembly*, published 1752-1754 and 1774-1777, had become so scarce as to be inaccessible to the general student, and it was decided to reissue them. Since the manuscript journals had vanished as long ago as 1851, the printed journals were the only source. Although the lover of typography might shudder at the way the beautiful eighteenth-century page is reproduced, the text follows the original faithfully. For reasons of economy, the marginal headings supplied by the first printer were omitted, although their inclusion would have made the work more useful. Another warning is that footnotes in the original are reprinted in the body of the page without any differentiation in type. Such shortcomings, however, will be more than compensated for by the index which has been prepared and which will be published as soon as funds are available. This should be the most valuable of any of the indexes to the *Archives*, since it will give full listings under both name and subject, with subdivided entries for headings appearing more than twelve times.

The Ninth Series was issued simultaneously with the Eighth in ten consecutively paged volumes, with Miss MacKinney as editor. In subject matter it is a continuation of the *Colonial Records*... When the Executive Council was replaced by the governor in 1790, the minutes of Council were continued as the Executive Minutes, recording the official acts of the governor. Included are pardons granted, peddlers' licenses issued, incorporations, appointments and commissions of officers, proclamations, and a few documents such as letters and messages. They do not have the general interest of the earlier minutes of Council, but they will be valuable for reference on publication of the index which is now being prepared, similar to that for the Eighth Series.

Those Executive Minutes published fill in manuscript fifteen large volumes, now deposited in the Archives Division, almost entirely in the beautiful handwriting of James Trimble. They cover

21 *Pennsylvania Archives*, First Series, I, 12.
22 For example, the printer added a note giving the titles of the laws passed at the first session of the Assembly as he found them in "some old copies," which appears (pp. 11-13) as part of the regular journal, although the titles given were not correct.
23 This faithful public servant deserves at least a footnote in Pennsylvania's history. He filled the same position for the state for fifty-nine years, first as Assistant Secretary to the Council from 1777 to 1790, then
the period down to 1838, after which the minutes were kept in smaller books, growing steadily skimpier. The printed version follows the manuscript faithfully and exactly; virtually the only change noticeable is the omission of several drawings without notation of this fact. In general, there is no need to consult the original.

Summing up, the student of Pennsylvania history in its many aspects will find a wealth of material in the *Archives*. He has the journal of the Assembly in the Eighth Series, the executive journal in the *Colonial Records*, other executive papers in the Fourth Series, and general documents in the First. He must also investigate the Second, and may find some useful material in Volumes VIII-X of the Third and Volumes XI-XIV of the Sixth Series. The searcher for military records of individuals should use the Fifth and Sixth Series; if he is interested in military history, he should examine the Second Series also. The genealogist will find valuable material in the church records of the Second and the Sixth, and the tax lists of the Third Series. Sources for the history of the state since 1790 are less rich, but the Fourth and Ninth Series are useful supplements to the published state records other than the Archives, which are outside the scope of this survey.

with a change of title as Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth. In 1836 he met the general fate of state employees, giving way to a political appointee.