

Historic Resources in Minnesota. A Report on their extent, location and need for preservation. St. Paul, Minn.: Minnesota Historical Society, 1979. 172 p. ISBN 0 87351 139 5. (Available from MHS, 69 Cedar Street, St. Paul, Minn., 55101)

What They Wrote: 19th Century Documents from Tompkins County, New York. Edited by CAROL KAMMEN. Ithaca, NY.: Cornell University Libraries, 1978. 146 p. ill. \$6.00.

These two American publications address themselves, in different ways, to the third part of the archival mandate, "to obtain, preserve and make available."

Historic Resources in Minnesota is a report of the Minnesota Historical Society to the Minnesota legislature on a state-wide survey of historic resources. Resources are interpreted broadly to include historical organizations, manuscripts and archives, tapes, newspapers, photographs and paintings, artifacts, historic structures and places and archeological sites. The stated goals are to identify and make accessible these resources, plus planning for their conservation. The breadth of the task is awesome but it is built on the 1973 Minnesota Manuscript Resources Inventory project and that in turn harks back to inventories done under the Works Project Administration of the 1930s. It is not surprising that Minnesota should make such a pioneering effort, for its strong Historical Society was created in the first year of the state, 1849, and was responsible for public records until 1947. At present, there are 300 historical and historic preservation societies in Minnesota—illustrative of the strong base of state and local history in the United States. The Minnesota Historical Society has over 6000 collections itself and now has set up eight regional centres in co-operation with state universities. In the eighteen months of the survey, nearly all the county and local manuscript repositories were inventoried.

Realization of a national crisis in preservation helped prompt the survey, as well as interest in new areas, sparked by programmes in ethnic history, women's studies and so forth. The report strongly recommends copying information wherever possible, with some emergency assistance for newspapers and photographs. The other specific recommendation is for the creation of a state Preservation Service Office. In a state with a strong historical tradition it seems surprising that such a service has not existed before or that state institutions had not come within the outreach of an active organization like the New England Documents Center. Also hovering in the background of the recommendations is the acknowledgement that some sort of data bank should be created if the potential usefulness of the information collected is to be fully exploited. This issue is not really faced, so one wonders if it was included in the original planning.

There is a section in the report devoted to each type of resource surveyed. Methodology and definitions of spheres of interest are clearly, if briefly, stated, and answer many questions that spring to mind. The appendices catalogue institutions, collections and sites. Researchers will be pleased by the information given under institutions—facilities, hours, collections—but the listing by regional and non-regional is confusing. The survey did not uncover any unknown problems or solutions but the breadth of it makes it a real achievement and its report a useful handbook.

Cornell University addressed itself to another aspect of making resources available—publication, an aspect hardly touched in the Minnesota report. *What They Wrote: 19th Century Documents from Tompkins County* was produced by the Cornell Department of Manuscripts and University Archives. The aim was to produce from such documents and printed sources as letters, diaries, memoirs, advertisements, newspapers and travellers' accounts a local history of Ithaca and area that would not simply stay on the shelf. With a promise from the Ithaca school system to use the volume in the junior high schools, Cornell produced this work as its archival outreach.

Aiming at more than the nostalgia market, the book seeks to relate happenings in Ithaca to national trends. The editorial comment on individual documents and the selection of the material itself is keyed to this aim. Not only are there illustrations of such themes as religious revival, nativism, boosterism and the agony of Civil War but recurring extracts from the census abstracts give a yardstick of change. The volume is fortunate in the quality of its editorship under Carol Kammen. At the risk of being accused of chauvinism, it might be mentioned that she is part of a remarkable husband and wife historical team, for her husband is Michael Kammen, Pulitzer prize winning American Historian and professor of American history and culture at Cornell. Of course, Ithaca can hardly be typical of a small nineteenth century city because few can have had so many citizens who published their memoirs, nor had such visitors as British socialist Beatrice Webb who sprayed her acid comments on American life and academia.

The layout of the book has strengths and weaknesses. An historical introduction is printed on the wide margin beside the document in question for easy reference. This is a welcome change from lumping all comments together. Many documents were reproduced by photography rather than typesetting to give an authentic flavour, but also unfortunately reproducing poor nineteenth century print which in some cases is almost illegible. The disappointing element is the way in which the numerous photographs were treated. The source of the photographs is recorded, if one can find it, at the front of the book but there are neither captions nor dates on them. There are few attempts to reproduce contemporary paintings despite the existence of good New York state collections.

This is not to quibble about details of an excellent volume, the product of adventurous outreach. *What They Wrote* has been used in community colleges and some state university campuses and a teaching guide plugged into the school curriculum is under discussion. Has any Canadian archives duplicated this effort?

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National register of archives and manuscripts in New Zealand. Completed and edited at the Alexander Turnbull Library and the National Archives. Wellington: National Library of New Zealand, 1979. First installment, \$8.00.

The publication of a national register or union list of archives and manuscripts is a significant event. In the first place it is the most comprehensive, and therefore most useful, guide for researchers to available sources. It is also a remarkable professional achievement because of the degree of national cooperation among repositories and agreement on standards of description which are required. While a national register or union list should have a high priority in every country the small number that have been established is a measure of the difficulties involved. The new national register of New Zealand, then, is a rare national achievement which is particularly remarkable because of the limited resources devoted to archives and the small number of professional archivists in that country.

This is, nonetheless, a second attempt and the first of several installments. Part I of a Union Catalogue of New Zealand and Pacific manuscripts in New Zealand libraries was published by the Alexander Turnbull Library in 1968, thus coinciding with the first edition of the Canadian Union List of Manuscripts. It included approximately 1500 non-Turnbull Library entries. Part II which listed more than 2000 Turnbull Library entries was published in 1969. This union catalogue excluded public archives, it lacked an index and it used basically a library rather than an archival type of description. Many entries were under the name of the author, for example, rather than the name of the archival unit.