

the sacred precincts of universities, are given to peculiar, not to say reprehensible practices in the use of documents obtained on loan.

The nature and degree of censorship and supervision actually enforced by librarians are interesting portions of Mr. Burpee's exhibits and discussion. Courtesy prompts to generosity and liberality; prudence and adverse experience prompt to close scrutiny and alert watchfulness on the part of the custodian. The degree of acquaintanceship between the custodian and the student or examiner for the most part seems to determine whether or not the examination is closely supervised by attendants. An analysis of human relationships must needs convince that this is the major premise of sensible procedure. The mechanical arrangements for supervision of those examining the collections in the Division of Manuscripts of the Library of Congress afford us an excellent illustration of a successful working scheme that "splits the difference" between the extreme policies advocated.

—F. I. H.

USE OF OUR PUBLIC ARCHIVES.

A survey of the written requests for the use of Iowa public archives which were required by the Curator of the Historical Department, shows that from June, 1914, to April, 1915, 133 requests for material have been taken care of. Of these, eighty-one have come from the various State offices: fifty-eight from the Board of Health; three from the Governor; one each from the Secretary of State and Treasurer of State; seven from the Auditor of State; one from the Attorney General; three from the Executive Council; one from the Law Library; two from the Insurance Department; two from the Board of Education; one from the Railroad Commission and one from the Board of Control of State Institutions.

Of the remaining inquiries, eighteen have been of a purely historical character, such as requests for information from persons making historical research with a view to publication of historical books, theses and articles for periodicals. Legal

inquiries have numbered thirteen, and cover a variety of cases from pension claims to bank controversies and settlement of land titles. Business interests have consulted the archives on thirteen different occasions, the last request coming from a stone quarry wishing to know the test made of its product at the time of the erection of the present capitol. Eight miscellaneous requests complete the total which shows the varied field of inquiry which this Department is called upon to serve.

—E. B. V.

NOTES.

What are public archives or public records?

* * * * "the words 'public records' shall, unless a contrary intention clearly appears, mean any written or printed book or paper, or map, which is the property of the State or of any county, city, town, or village or part thereof, and in or on which any entry has been made or is required to be made by law, or which any officer or employee of the State, or of any county, city, town or village has received or is required to receive for filing."—*Laws of New York*, 1913, ch. 424, sec. 1194.

Archives have been housed in various places, from attics and storage vaults, old castles, judicial buildings, museums and libraries to the modern archives building specially equipped with iron and steel cases, fireproof vaults and cement floors.

In Europe, in former years, the most valuable papers were stored near the front of the building that they might be easily removed in case of fire or flood.

At Neuwied, Germany, where the archives were endangered by the overflow of the Rhine, papers were placed on shelves in portable boxes which could be easily removed during high water.

The enterprising Dutch archivists have planned and erected some of the best models of modern archives buildings and the cost of these structures has been very moderate. The Germans also, though still utilizing a number of old castles and

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.