BOOK NOTICES


Jean Favier is Directeur Général des Archives de France and Professor of History at the Sorbonne. In his foreword to this volume he makes clear that the purpose is to give an overall picture of primary documentation in various French depositories that are available to scholars dedicated to the history of Latin America and the Antilles. This volume is in no way intended to be a substitute for the detailed inventories existing for the various collections.

Marie-Antoinette Menier, Conservateur-en-chef of the French National Archives, further describes the history and limitations of this volume in the introduction. The guide had its origins in a 1958 international meeting of archivists. The guidelines were established in a subsequent preliminary meeting sponsored by UNESCO in 1959. It was decided that the volume would be dedicated to archival sources in a strict sense and to archives of printed material. Material in the Bibliothèque Nationale is therefore not included. The resources included date from both before and after independence. The United States is excluded because of a previous volume entitled Guide des sources de l’histoire des États-Unis dans les Archives Françaises (Paris: France Expansion, 1976).

The present volume is divided into sections according to the nature of the various depositories. The first section is dedicated to the Archives Nationales (pp. 25–416) with the following categories: “Section ancienne: L’ancien régime; Section moderne: 1789–1940; Fonds divers, Fonds ministériels (Marine, Affaires étrangères, Colonies), and Section Outre-Mer. The next section is dedicated to Archives Départementales et Communales; it contains material on various provincial archives (pp. 321–416). Other repositories then described are Ministère des Relations Extérieures (pp. 417–436); Ministère de la Défense (pp. 437–501); Ministère de l’Économie et des Finances (p. 503); Ministère de l’Intérieur (pp. 504–508); Archives des Assemblées (pp. 504–508), Archives Imprimées (pp. 515–576), and Chambres du Commerce et d’Industrie (pp. 577–590). The value of Archives Privées (pp. 591–616) is highlighted in the discussion of “Archives Missionnaires” (pp. 591–609), which gives a brief introduction to each of the various religious orders that sent missionaries to Latin America and the location and nature of their archives.

Of extreme importance are the various appendices, giving the names and dates of service of the various Ministres et Secrétaires d’État, the Directeurs de l’Administration Centrale des Colonies, Gouverneurs, and Représentants de la France à l’Étranger. The volume closes with a bibliographical orientation listing journals published in France which focus on Latin America and the Antilles. Especially useful is the listing of foreign periodicals found in the libraries of Bordeaux (pp. 682–687) and Marseille (pp. 687–689).

The introductions to each archive discussed provide information on the history of the depository, type of documentation housed, and finding-aids available (both published and unpublished). These highly informative introductions and the manner in which this guide is organized allow researchers to develop a sense of the type of documentation produced by the various offices of the French government. The Archives Nationales de France, with the publication of this indispensable research tool, has made a significant contribution towards the advancement of Latin American historiography.

Historic New Orleans Collection

ALFRED E. LEMMON