

Les archives des entreprises sous l'Occupation: Conservation, accessibilité et apport [The Archives of Companies under the (German) Occupation: Conservation, Accessibility and Contribution]. Edited by Hervé Joly. Lille: IFRESI, 2005. 314 pp. Notes, figures, illustrations, tables. €40.00. ISBN: 2-911-97530-8.

Reviewed by Florence Hachez-Leroy

*Les archives des entreprises sous l'Occupation* is a collection of about twenty articles by historians and archivists who have compiled an inventory of the private archives pertaining to economic activity in France during World War II. Their contribution furthers the public discussion generated by the French National Archives' publication of the essential research tool *La Seconde Guerre mondiale: Guide des sources conservées en France 1939–1945* [The Second World War: Guide to Archival Sources in France, 1939–1945] (1994).

This collection, edited by Hervé Joly, highlights the point that historians of World War II must not limit themselves to public collections but must take advantage of private archives as well; and it reveals the wealth of material that exists in these private archives. French companies still hesitate to grant scholars access to their records, and even when they make documents available for research, they are just as apt to withdraw the option or even to destroy their files. The National Archives in France stores a significant number of company collections, most of which are preserved at the Centre des archives du monde du travail (CAMT) in Roubaix, which was opened in 1993. CAMT has received the archives of companies that had been preserved in series AQ of the National Archives of Paris, and it also integrates around fifty new collections per year into its holdings.

The contributors to *Les archives des entreprises sous l'Occupation* assess these collections, only some of which will be mentioned here. Christian Hottin and Amable Sablon du Corail examine fifty-five years of collections in the National Archives, and Magali Lacousse discusses the archives of press companies also preserved at that institution, particularly seven collections relating to collaborationist newspapers. She mentions the private archives and photographic collections of journalists as well.

French public companies, under pressure from the government since the 1980s, have organized their archives and made them more accessible to researchers. Since many of these companies were monopolies, their archives enable studies to be organized by industry. For example, Éric Godeau writes about the Industrial Department of Tobacco and Matches (SEITA), a company that was privatized in 1995, and Marie-Françoise Berneron-Couvenhes covers shipping companies. Recent reorganization in the shipping sector led to the creation, in 1995, of the Association of French Lines, which was charged with conserving the archives of these public companies under the auspices of the Archives of France.

The archives of the French National Railways (SNCF) are described in two articles. The first, by Christian Perrot, discusses the measures taken by the company to make public documents dating from 1938 to 1948. However, the firm delayed in carrying out this task, which was not completed until the end of the 1980s. In the second article on SNCF, Coralie Immelé and Georges Ribeill analyze the internal paradoxes of the company's conservation practices, which differed from one department to another. The outcome is that scholars consulting the SNCF archive collection will have to supplement their research by turning to other sources as well, particularly those of the government and the trade unions.

The papers of the Régie autonome des transports parisiens (RATP), described in an article by Henri Zuber, have a history similar to those of SNCF. Its archives were created only in 1990, and a guide to sources for the history of transport appeared in 1998. Zuber outlines the most recently completed historical work and delineates the opportunities that these papers open up to researchers.

Alain P. Michel covers the car manufacturer Renault, which was nationalized at the end of the war. The company's records became available earlier than those of other firms, but many were destroyed by the bombing during the war. However, a considerable number of documents were either recovered or reconstituted.

Patrice Baubeau analyzes the various collections devoted to Devanlay & Recoing, a hosiery company labeled "Jewish" and "foreign" by the Vichy government. Veronique Pouillard looks at the fashion house Hirsch & Co., whose Jewish family of German origin settled in Belgium in 1860. Florent Le Bot explores the case of a small shoe factory

whose records were found by chance in an airplane hangar and then transferred to municipal archives.

Some banks and insurance companies, most notably the Crédit Lyonnais, opened their files to researchers early on. Nevertheless, according to Catherine Dardignac, many important records remain inaccessible, as she demonstrates in her chapter on the collections from the Société Générale in Paris. Although certain files contain a wealth of materials, much work must be done to fill in the remaining gaps. In looking at newly released records on the relations between some companies and the Vichy and German authorities, Hubert Bonin concludes that business history must consider the constraints that were imposed on companies by totalitarian regimes, as well as the human and economic stakes that confronted them.

Pierre Martin was given complete freedom to peruse the archives of the Azur company, but he found that many of the papers had been damaged and were organized haphazardly. Dominique Barjot and Bruno Jégou encountered similar problems in sorting through the papers of civil-engineering firms. Madeleine Jacquemin describes the Société générale of Belgium, whose archives, perfectly classified, are now preserved at the Archives générales du Royaume in Brussels.

This collection is a useful complement to the previously published guides to sources and inventories dealing with the subject of business in France during World War II. It will be a tremendous resource to historians of the period.

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