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The Literature of American Library History, 2006–2007

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Abstract

Historians of American libraries have spent many years puzzling over the function and meaning of libraries in American life and culture. Perhaps as Aristotle believed those long years ago, we need to peel away all the layers of mythology and mistaken assumptions and look anew at the function of the library in its many guises as a product and a producer of American culture. Recent efforts have shown that we have not shrunk from this duty; indeed, for the period 2006–2007 we have been blessed—for the most part—with another outpouring of scholarship relating to the history of libraries and librarianship. As I have for the past dozen years, I will seek to inform my readers with the writings I have come across during the past couple of years of diligently unearthing what has been written, or at least the part of our literary corpus that I have come across. Although several entries could have been mentioned in more than one of the following sections, I have included each item in only one bibliographic category. Readers may need to look in multiple sections for a work of interest. As usual, I would be pleased to learn about important works that have somehow escaped my attention.

Disciplines

Library and Information Science

Comments

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The Literature of American Library History, 2006-2007

Edward A. Goedeken

Libraries, whether my own or shared with a greater reading public, have always seemed to me to be pleasantly mad places, and for as long as I can remember I've been seduced by their labyrinthine logic, which suggests reason (if not art) rules over a cacophonous arrangement of books.

Alberto Manguel

We must start from this, that everything which has a function exists for the sake of that function.

Aristotle *On the Heavens*

Introduction

Historians of American library history have spent many years puzzling over the function and meaning of libraries in American life and culture. Perhaps as Aristotle believed those long years ago—we need to peel away all the layers of mythology and mistaken assumptions, and look anew at the function of the library in its many guises as a product and a producer of American culture. Recent efforts have shown that we have not shrunk from this duty; indeed, we have been blessed—for the most part—with another outpouring of scholarship relating to the history of libraries and librarianship for the period 2006-2007. As I have for the past dozen years, I will again seek to inform my readers with the writings I have come across during the past couple of years of diligently unearthing what has been written, or least the part of our literary corpus that I have come across. As usual, I would be pleased to learn about important works that have somehow escaped my attention.

Sources and Historiography

Two of our most prominent contemporary historians—one from each side of the Atlantic Ocean—have contributed thoughtful and important essays on the ever-present question of libraries, librarianship, and its historiography. Lamenting the “virulent vocationalism” that has driven the study of library history out of most current library school curricula, Alistair Black, who, until 2009 served as the editor of *Library History*, tackles the issues surrounding the broader topic of the history of all forms of information, not just that handled by libraries. Black discusses the history of print as well as those agencies that produced, organized, or distributed print over the centuries in an attempt to establish an interesting framework for further discussion. (1)

Equally valuable is Wayne Wiegand’s masterful survey of libraries and their impact on how information was created and organized over the centuries. Beginning with the earliest library at Ebla, Wiegand sprints across the centuries highlighting the most significant developments in the long history of western libraries and concluding with a tight summary of library innovations in the United States. Wiegand’s contribution in the Eliot-Rose companion to book history is one of many very good essays within that excellent collection. (2)

Neither of these essays is very long, so there is no excuse not to take a few minutes to benefit from the erudition of these two gentlemen, who have written so much so well for so long.

I also want to mention here that the proceedings of the October 2005 Library History Seminar XI at the University of Illinois were recently edited by W. Boyd Rayward and Christine Jenkins for publication. Titled “Libraries in Times of War, Revolution, and Social Change,” the proceedings were published as a special issue of *Library Trends*, volume 55 (Winter 2007). I will refer to specific essays from this volume in their appropriate places throughout this review.

Special, Private, and Subscription Libraries

In the past few years a significant increase in the number of writings engaging again in an exploration of the history of social and subscription libraries in the early history of our country has taken place. For quite a while this topic languished in the library history wilderness, but for now at least, it is back! Thomas Augst and Kenneth Carpenter’s excellent recent edited collection of essays includes three impressive efforts that chart the history of these precursors to the public library. (3) As will be the case so many times throughout this essay, space precludes me from devoting lengthier treatment for those contributions that

deserve more attention. (I always feel like I am hurrying through these sections, when I would like to stay for awhile and bask in the quality of some of the work I see.) Such is the case here with the three chapters that introduce the Augst-Carpenter collection. James Raven provides an excellent survey of our current knowledge about the eighteenth century origins of American social libraries. Raven's nicely constructed history is complemented by two more focused essays, one by James Green on circulating libraries in Philadelphia and New York, and the other by Michael Baenen that addresses the history of the well-known Portsmouth Athenaeum. (4) Add to this mix the interesting study of the design and furnishings of these early social libraries by Adam Arenson, and Hildie Kraus' impressive analysis of how the Mechanics' Institute of San Francisco thrived in the latter part of the nineteenth century and we suddenly have a wealth of new and well-researched investigations on in an area that certainly can benefit from a recrudescence of attention. Another fine study that should not be overlooked is Jeffrey Croteau's well-researched update to David Kaser's 1980 *A Book for a Six Pence*. Croteau focuses on nearly three dozen Brooklyn circulating libraries during the nineteenth century and adds greatly to what we know about these libraries in that growing city. (5) It is nice, by the way, to see the library history journal published by our British counterparts has begun including more and more American library history. We should not neglect to consider *Library History* as a valuable vehicle for publishing our histories.

A broader picture of other social libraries, sometimes called "membership libraries" is available in a richly illustrated publication edited by Richard Wendorf. Contained within its 350 pages are essays tracing the history and activities of sixteen membership libraries including the Boston, Salem, and Portsmouth Athenaeums, as well as mercantile libraries that operated in New York City and in Cincinnati. Each chapter concludes with a useful list of recommended readings. (6)

The activities of private collectors did not receive much attention in the recent past, with the only example being Milton Gatch's book-length treatment of the remarkable life and career of the nineteenth century bibliophile, Leander van Ess, who created one of the earliest and largest American collections of Reformation pamphlets. Given his status as one of our most beloved founding fathers, it should probably be no surprise that scholars continue to explore the impact books had on Benjamin Franklin's intellectual development. In addition to Wolf and Hayes detailed explication of Franklin's personal library, we also have an intriguing study of the network of publishers associated with Franklin as well as a more popular summary of his life as a writer and publisher. (7)

Special libraries of all types and sizes were, as usual, the subject of several recent historical pieces. Michael Paulus explores the development of the Princeton

Theological Seminary during the nineteenth century, while Phyllis Dickstein, who served for years as head librarian, updates the history of the United Nations library that provided employment to a number of well-known librarians, including Carl Milam during its nearly sixty year history. Both authors show an awareness of the pertinent resources—both primary and secondary—in crafting their stories. (8)

Carlton Sprague Smith, who was chief of the music division of the New York Public Library from 1931 to 1959, is the subject of John Shepard's extensive essay published in *Notes*, one of the most important contemporary music journals, which over the years has published a number of fine historical pieces. Shepard has produced one of the best recent analyses of Smith and his contribution to American music librarianship. Another worthwhile contribution, this time dealing with art librarianship, is Clare Hills-Nova's well-researched study of the Institute of Fine Arts libraries. Also useful is Myron Weinstein's story of how the Library of Congress obtained its first large collection of Hebraica from the inveterate collector and scholar Ephraim Deinhard. (9) Charles Malone's short history of the law library at Western Illinois University contains no references, but does provide some basic information. (10) Some enterprising young historian could really assist us by producing a well-wrought overall history of law librarianship in the United States. The *Law Library Journal* has published a number of historical articles over the years which could serve as grist for a larger history.

Wrapping up this section, we cannot leave without noting two recent articles on medical librarianship. Reaching back to the late eighteenth century, Carol Perryman examines in some detail (and probably for the first time) library services for hospitals over the past two centuries. In a relatively short space, Perryman explores the rather complex relationship that developed between librarians and patients over the years. The hospital librarian as educator is just one of several topics that Perryman recommends need further investigation. Examining medical librarianship for a more recent period, Keith Cogdill surveys the key developments in health sciences librarianship since 1970 in a nicely crafted essay in *Advances in Librarianship*. Cogdill's chapter contains an extensive bibliography, which would prove helpful for anyone wishing to expand on his synthesis. (11)

It is certainly encouraging to see the new work being done on subscription and social libraries, and it would be even better if a similar level of renewed energy could be devoted to the areas of private libraries and special libraries. Maybe the next review essay will be able to report on new growth there as well!

Public Libraries

Always a large section, which is not surprising since our nation has thousands of them, this time we have about thirty essays and books that treat public library history in one fashion or another. I have divided the writings into two discrete sections: those that treat a specific library and those that address larger issues facing numerous libraries. One of the most striking things about the dozen or so articles devoted to specific libraries is that the preponderance of writings are focused on public libraries in the western part of the United States. I am not sure why. I have not looked back at earlier review essays, so this may just be an aberration. Nevertheless, it is interesting that certain parts of the country may receive emphasis over other parts.

Working my way across the country from east to west, I will start with excellent essay on the New York Library Club that thrived at the end of the nineteenth century. Founded by Melvil Dewey, the New York Library Club served as a place where library directors of all stripes in the New York City area could discuss current issues and concerns. Whether it was cataloging travails or what types of books should be on the shelves, the librarians debated and learned. Glynn is a gifted historian and this work showcases well his talent. North Carolina library history has been often the subject of numerous histories, and this time is no different. Janice Radway, well known for her excellent 1997 history of the Book-of-the-Month Club, focuses her considerable energies on examining book circulation in Durham, North Carolina. Radway sets her treatment within the larger framework of reading and libraries in the period between the world wars. Heather Anderson relies on numerous primary sources to trace the development of Winterville, North Carolina Public Library. Elizabeth H. Smith provides additional information about North Carolina libraries in 1960 and in 1930 in short essays published in *North Carolina Libraries*. (12)

Moving further east (and a bit south along the way) we have an article by Jonathan Jeffrey, who recounts the background to the creation of Owensboro, Kentucky's Carnegie library, which opened its doors in 1911. Jeffrey uses correspondence between the city fathers and the Carnegie Corporation to tell a familiar tale. Annabel Stephens casts a broader net in her discussion of how public libraries were established in a number of Alabama communities during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Stephens provides a nice balance of primary and secondary sources for her history and sought to tap into as many locally written library histories that she could find. Cheryl Knott Malone applies her extensive knowledge of African-American librarianship to an insightful account of the desegregation of the Houston Public Library. A few years earlier she had explained that history of that prominent southern public library at the

beginning of the twentieth century. Now Malone brings her story forward to those tempestuous days in the early Civil Rights Era in Texas. (13)

Public libraries in the Great Basin are covered in a quartet of articles. Richard Wilson briefly describes the development of the Idaho State Library during the twentieth century. The recently published *Encyclopedia of Immigration and Migration in the American West* contains three interesting contributions—although not lengthy—that survey public library growth in that sparsely populated sector of the United States. I am not sure the casual reader would think of looking in this type of encyclopedia for information about public libraries, but we can find Suzanne Stauffer writing about public libraries in Utah, Debra Hansen explaining the impact of the library on immigrants, and Cindy Mediavilla tracing the growth of California libraries after World War II. (14)

The final batch of writings focused on specific public libraries is devoted to libraries on the west coast. Tamara Shaw delves into what the San Diego public library was doing for its citizens as they struggled with the challenges that faced that community during the Second World War. San Diego's shipyards and nearby naval station were a magnet for thousands of servicemen and their families. The library served as an information center as well as a place where families could find useful reading material. Ann Curry surveys the role Vancouver's Carnegie Library played in the development of that great northwestern city during the twentieth century. Finally, Karen Fisher and her colleagues examine the prominent place the Seattle Public Library occupies in that city. Fisher sets her text within the framework of the "library as place", a concept that has received a great deal of attention in the past several years. (15) This idea of how the library fits within its larger society context is something that needs continuous examination by library historians. As Wiegand has often reminded us: we need to constantly ask how the library fits within the life of the user, instead of the other way around.

We now turn to studies that had a broader historical view of public libraries and librarianship. The most significant work by far is Dilevko and Magowan's excellent history of the readers' advisory service beginning in 1870. Dilevko and Magowan despair over the commercialization of reading and publishing that has taken place since the early 1980s and argue that effective readers' advisory services need to remind their audiences of the importance and benefits of all sorts of quality literature, not just that recommended by Oprah or other popular entertainers. Dilevko and Magowan have written a very important history, which includes sophisticated social science theory as well as solid historical research. A rather unique collection of previously published primary documents relating to public libraries has been reprinted by Rory Litwin, editor and publisher of a small library-oriented press in Duluth, Minnesota. Litwin's volume is ably introduced by

Suzanne Stauffer, who traverses a great deal of bibliographic territory in her brief survey of public library history. (16)

Christie Koontz presents a quite valuable essay on the topic of how cities and towns decided where to place their new public libraries. Going back to the last part of the nineteenth century, Koontz surveys not only what the various communities thought, but also the leading assumptions of public library building site consultants. This is a good piece, and deals with a topic that is seldom treated. Another interesting article is authored by someone outside the library fold.

Douglas Galbi, who works as an economist for the Federal Communications Commission, has compiled a great deal of historical data relating to library circulation. It is difficult to compress all his conclusions within this small space, but suffice it to say: anyone interested in how libraries were used over the past 150 years should consult his data. He cites some of our standard authors, but puts a fresh spin on a rather complex subject. Thomas Augst provides an impressive meditation on the societal role of libraries as a place where civil religion, the impact of the immigrant on the American city, and the all-encompassing educational and social role the public library all come together in the physical entity that the public library building represents in modern American cities. Augst brings together several stands of thought in his essay. His writing reflects a maturity of thought and erudition that greatly enhances our continued quest to understand the library's part in our urban society. (17)

Alexis McCrossen takes another look at the late nineteenth century public library and its concerns with the role of that institution as a place for leisure reading populated by the lower class "bummers". The debate that raged within the library community about the status of the public library and who its users should be and what they should read has occupied library historians for quite awhile now. McCrossen, who teaches history at Southern Methodist University, brings a critical eye to the library as an institution in Gilded Age America. Christine Pawley, one of our better known library historians, continues her fine efforts to create an understanding of how users perceived the library. This time she concentrates on the part that a bookmobile (and its driver) in Door County Wisconsin played in furthering the outreach of the local public library. Donald Boyd takes the topic of mobile libraries in a different direction (and one that is powered by real horse power) in his discussion of how books were taken into the hills of Kentucky as part of the Works Progress Administration program during the Depression. This whole question of how reading material was provided to remote readers by some type of mobile public library is one that we have only begun to understand. (18)

Although it may not appear so at first, I thought Suzanne Stauffer's recent piece describing the habits of local donors to the Ogden, Utah Public Library at the turn of the last century fit nicely with Bernadette Lear's exploration of public

library annual reports for the period from 1876-2004. Annual reports were often used as vehicles to promote the most significant activities of the public library, which would in turn help encourage donations for special projects—whether they be bricks and mortar or collections. (19) I think a library's donor relations and how public libraries sought to portray themselves to their public are both worthwhile for further research.

Public libraries and youth received little attention for the period under review. In his broad survey of public library services to youth, Lukenbill does not delve very deeply into the historical literature, and uses for the most part Du Mont's 1977 *Reform and Reaction: The Big City Public Library in American Life*. Representing an awareness of numerous primary sources, Melanie Kimball examines the impact of public libraries on the lives of school age children in St. Louis during World War I. As has been his want over the years, Wayne Wiegand beats the drum for an increase in research in yet another neglected area of American library history: the history of our public school libraries. Now and then in the past dozen years when I have been doing this essay, I have mentioned that school libraries are seriously underrepresented in our scholarship. Wiegand lays out a useful research agenda for any enterprising library historian—young or old! (20)

Often lumped in with the public library section are writings relating to government information or the Library of Congress. Of this small group, three stand out. Mary Whisner has authored an interesting article that traces the evolution of the United States Government Manual—probably something that every librarian knows about, but few have ever given much thought as to its origin and development. Similarly, Seifert and Russell share their knowledge of how the government transformed its provision of information from print to electronic. Nor should we overlook Mordecai Lee's critical assessment of Clara Edmunds' contributions toward the growth of the United States Information Service during the 1930s and 1940s. Jan Jorgenson extends our awareness of how the government shifted its information policies in the 1980s and 1990s. Finally, Susan Tulis briefly describes the efforts made in the 1980s to restructure the Federal Depository Library Program. (21)

Two books need to be mentioned before I end this section. Those not specifically historical, they are still useful. Shannon Mattern includes a good amount of information about past public library developments in her book on the downtown library. And Ed D'Angelo shares his deep concerns over the commercialization of public libraries in the latter part of the twentieth century in his book-length essay that basically insinuates that public libraries are now a battleground between the traditional values of the public library and the

“barbarians at the gate” represented by fundamentalists of every stripe. D’Angelo’s subtitle says it all! (22)

Other contributions that deserve at least a mention include Thorin and Wedgeworth’s brief survey of the Librarians of Congress that have held office since the days of Herbert Putnam, and Jodi Poe’s useful account of how the famed Information and Referral Services (I&R) got their start. Caroline Nappo has crafted an interesting comparative study of public library services for indigenous populations in the United States and Australia. That is a comparison we don’t see every day! (23)

I have often wondered when we were going to see a modern history of the American public library and it looks like my wishes are going to get answered. Wayne Wiegand recently received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (when was the last time an NEH grant was given for library history?) to write a history of public libraries in this country. This is something we have needed for a long time and I look forward greatly to seeing Professor Wiegand’s final product!

Academic Libraries

Compared to the preceding section, the number of items under review in this one seems especially skimpy. Nevertheless there are some quite good efforts here that need highlighting. Thomas Mann’s powerful essay in defense of the research library should be at the top of any librarian’s reading list. Mann, who works at the Library of Congress and has authored an exceedingly useful guide to library research, argues vigorously that all the talk about digitizing research collections reflects a failure of understanding of the very nature of research collections, how they are arranged and described. The fundamental contribution these large libraries make to the scholarly enterprise is not something that can be replaced by simple digitization and the creation of enormous files of keyword-searchable text. Mann’s thoughts a valuable antidote to the rush toward digitizing of our textual assets and worthy of the few moments it takes to read them. (24)

Taking a look at specific academic library histories, let us start with Patrick Valentine’s survey of early nineteenth century college libraries in the southeastern part of the United States. This is pretty much uncharted territory for library historians and Valentine nicely summarizes some of the more important developments in his short piece. Certainly more work can be done on antebellum college libraries in other parts of the country! Carol Brinkman shifts our attention into the twentieth century with her sobering story of the creation and demise of the engineering library at the University of Louisville. Sheridan Young presents a detailed history of the library at Cameron University in Lawton, Oklahoma. Young’s article reflects a good knowledge of the pertinent primary sources, but the

author neglects to set her story within a larger context of how other academic libraries were faring. Tackling the history of a western academic library, but basing her research on limited sources, Ann St. Clair reveals how the founding of the Montana School of Mines in 1900 created an institution that was highly specialized and thus required a library that was equally specialized. For those with good German language skills, one should note Gernot Gabel's essay on the histories of the libraries at Harvard and Yale. (25)

James Rettig probably knows as much about contemporary reference services as any librarian in the country. In a wide-ranging essay in *Advances in Librarianship*, Rettig shares his extensive knowledge of the trends and tribulations of this most public aspect of academic librarianship going back to the mid-1970s. Although ostensibly not a purely historical survey, Rettig nevertheless shows an historical awareness as he covers not only the tools of reference but also the technologies that have evolved over the past three decades. This is a very good piece of writing and one that should be consulted when undertaking any future historical survey of public services in an academic setting. Similar to Rettig, but focused instead on the function of collection development in research libraries, is Hendrik Edelman's overview of the evolution of how academic libraries have selected materials since World War II. Although not lengthy or deeply researched, Edelman's article still has a certain value for the efficient way he covers the main points. The importance the academic and intellectual community attached to access to research material surfaced during the 1930s as the growth of such materials increased considerably, while library buildings groaned under the budgetary strain of acquiring and housing this proliferation of newly published scholarship. Kenneth Carpenter tells the fascinating story of visionary historian Robert C. Binkley's efforts to promote expanded access via microfilming through the support of prominent American scholarly organizations such as the American Council of Learned Societies and the Social Science Research Council. (26)

The topic of the library as place has gained a certain amount of attention in the past few years and seems to be showing little sign of let up. In a volume edited by Buschman and Leckie from which I have already noted some chapters, come two more articles devoted to the role of the library as a scholarly space. Antell and Engel have crafted a rather impressive investigation into the importance to scholars of those tiny study rooms (often no larger than a monk's cell) that most research libraries provide to their local faculty. Antell and Engel help shed light on the view researchers have about the physical versus the electronic library and how the twain often meet in the context of their research activity. It seems clear that although libraries have been hurtling at light speed toward an electronic-only experience for their users, the bricks and mortar aspects of the library as a physical space is something that should not be minimized. Lisa Given complements the

Antell and Engel findings with her own exploration of how undergraduates use the library. (27) Both of these articles are important for helping historians understand better the evolution of the library as a space and its part in the life of the user.

This section, which seems to me to be a bit smaller this time around, concludes with recognition of Jean Preer's nicely constructed history of Columbia University's 1954 bicentennial celebration and its promotion of the free pursuit of knowledge set within the framework of the early years of the Cold War amid the excesses of the McCarthyism and rampant concerns about the role of freely obtained information in an America fraught with suspicions of spying and Communist infiltration of our most hallowed political institutions. Megan Barnard edits a collection of essays that trace the history of one of our most significant research libraries—the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas. (28)

A good history of academic libraries in the United States is still very much needed. If Wiegand can attempt such a thing for public libraries, then certainly someone in our midst can accomplish the same thing for all those libraries that support higher learning in America!

Library Associations

Americans are joiners; at least they have been for much of the past century. And librarians have been no different in their advocacy of various library-oriented organizations and associations. The American Library Association receives its usual level of attention with one of the best articles this time around crafted by Mary Niles Maack, one of our more seasoned historians, who investigates the American Library Association's library in Paris. Maack traces the history of this remarkable collection back to its roots in World War I and brings the story forward to those harrowing days when Paris was under German occupation during World War II. It is a story well told and well researched and adds a new chapter to our knowledge of ALA sponsored libraries that were established abroad. Another quality contribution is by Brendan Luyt, who delves into the impact of the Great Depression on the ALA. Luyt's essay is especially useful in his reconstruction of the economic thought that drove public libraries to support the idea of creating a "constructive economy" that would reform and strengthen a variety of public institutions including libraries. Infused with the theories of Gramsci and others, Luyt's article is a sophisticated portrayal of libraries that fought against the anti-tax mindset that flourished during the difficult times of 1930s America. I was also pleased to see that the British counterpart to *Libraries & the Cultural Record* served as a willing publisher for this quality article devoted to American library

history! Margaret Stieg Dalton, one of our most distinguished long-time scholars contributes an insightful history of ALA's International Relations Office during the period when the United States was actively involved in combating the spread of Communism throughout the world. (29)

The Association for Library Collections and Technical Services has been around since 1957 and its history as well as the history of technical services is the subject of an interesting collection of essays edited by Pamela Bluh. Of special interest is Michael Gorman's lively account of his authorship of the AACR2. Also useful are Peggy Johnson's survey of collection development and Regina Reynold's look at the many challenges serials have presented librarians over the past fifty years. Although I placed this collection in the section devoted to library associations, it could just as well have been placed in the Technical Services, Preservation, and Technology section. Douglas Raber ably describes the creation and contributions of two ALA committees formed during the tempestuous times of the late 1960s. In an effort to become more relevant to the social upheavals of this period the ALA formed the Activities Committee on New Directions (ACONDA) and the Ad Hoc Activities Committee on New Directions (ANACONDA). Raber concludes that the reports emanating from these two committees sought to clarify the role libraries should play in contemporary society and what social obligations that role should contain. Both Luyt's essay noted above and Raber's work reflect diligent recent efforts by historians to understand more clearly how libraries in both periods sought to increase their relevance to their respective communities. Finally, another ALA division—the Library Administration and Management Association—is the subject of a general overview, not historical by any sense, but still useful for (I hope) a more full-fledged treatment at a later time. (30)

The *Law Library Journal* probably publishes more history about a specific library specialty than any other library-oriented journal. With the centennial of the founding of the American Association of Law Libraries being celebrated in 2006, there was a larger than usual spate of historical essays appearing in that publication. Frank Houdek, who over the years has authored numerous articles about AALL history, produced two more this time around. The first one—entitled “Frequently Asked Questions about AALL's First Hundred Years”—displays Houdek's encyclopedic knowledge of his organization's history. The second one summarizes the reminiscences of a number of AALL presidents since the AALL's inception. (31) Anyone attempting an overall history of the AALL will find a great deal of pertinent information from Houdek's writings and the primary resources he unearths in his work.

Other smaller associations that merit at least a mention include Shaw's well-researched study of the Art Libraries section of IFLA. Very little has ever been done on this group. Olson surveys the past twenty five years of the Association of

Christian Librarians, which was founded in 1956. Finally, Ambrose-Fortune sheds light on the history of the library association at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. (32) No doubt every academic library has some sort of library association and it would be interesting to compare how several of these employee associations developed over the past several decades and what common challenges faced them.

Missing this time were any histories of state library associations, and I know there are many states that still lack a comprehensive and well crafted history. Just filling in those gaps would keep library historians busy for years to come. And what about a history of the various journals that arose to record the activities of state library associations? I remember noticing that several southern state library journals began publishing in the 1930s. What prompted these states to begin journals about local librarianship? A question perhaps some enterprising young (or older) historian could tackle sometime.

Library and Information Science (LIS) Education

Although many of our current practicing historians labor in library schools, not much attention has usually been given to the history of library and information science education. This time we are blessed with the publication of a top-notch history that explores and explains the history of the library and information science program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. That a library school has lasted one hundred years is noteworthy (considering that such venerable schools as Chicago and Columbia have fallen by the wayside in recent years), moreover the current volume is also exceptional because its history was written by a group of well-known contemporary library historians who have crafted impressive chapters buttressed by primary sources and with an attention to creating context where appropriate. The chapter authors are a virtual who's who of library historians, including Wiegand, Becker, Jenkins, Lundin, Pawley, Ring, Robbins, Seavey, and Wertheimer. This history will easily set the standard for all future efforts of this sort and should be required reading for all neophytes of library history scholarship! (33)

Much shorter, but still important is Jean Preer's call for the continued incorporation of library history into the educational curriculum of library school students. This plea has been offered many times before, but Preer's piece articulates the importance of understanding the past in shaping current student's appreciation of the challenges facing any new librarian. Using as her examples events that transpired during the period from 1926 through 1956 Preer shows that

many of the problems gracing the pages of current library journals are not unlike those that troubled our library ancestors. (34)

Feminist, Ethnic, and Multicultural Librarianship

Over the years the writings in this section have waxed and waned and now are waxing again with the recent appearance of a number of significant contributions. We have three edited collections as well as a smattering of smaller, but still quite useful histories to consider. Beginning with women and librarianship we note a new volume in the series *Print Culture History in Modern America* edited by Danky and Wiegand entitled *Women in Print* which includes a number of high quality essays devoted to women and print culture over the past two centuries. With contributions by a host of well-regarded historians including Samek, Castaneda, Cloonan, Aikin, Pawley, and Passet, just to name a few, this new work should be considered an essential addition to the growing literature that investigates the impact that literature had on women and women's impact on the literature of their times. This volume certainly should share shelf space with other recent books such as Hildenbrand's *Reclaiming the American Past* (1996) or Kerslake and Moody's *Gendering Library History* (2000). (35)

By far one of the most interesting set of articles are those collected in the Winter 2006 issue of *Libraries & Culture* that dealt with the remarkable Woman's Building Library (WBL) that was part of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. Sarah Wadsworth edited a group of fascinating essays that explored various aspects of this unique book collection donated by the states to showcase the literary achievements of women from across the country and around the world. As a snapshot of what was deemed significant by American women at the end of the nineteenth century this collection of 7,000 titles is amazing evidence of the literary tastes and habits of that generation. Wadsworth and her fellow authors provide intriguing analyses of what these books meant to the authors and readers as the twentieth century beckoned. (Wayne Wiegand and Wadsworth are completing a book length manuscript on the WBL that should be published by 2010) (36)

Karin Roffman examines the library careers of two women who later became prominent twentieth century authors. The poet Marianne Moore and the novelist Nella Larsen worked as assistant librarians at different branches of the New York Public Library in the early 1920s. Roffman relates how the culture and organizational scheme of libraries during that period affected their later work as literary figures. Roffman's essay is an exceptional analysis of how the structure of the library and its relationship to the world of knowledge can forever shape the outlook of the artist. I was quite impressed with Roffman's piece and believe her

methodology could prove beneficial for other investigators. Delving into the personal papers of the daughter of a prominent nineteenth century political family, Deirdre Stam explores the reading and writing habits of Fanny Seward, whose father William Henry Seward, the famed politician and Lincoln's secretary of state. Although she only lived to the age of 22, Fanny kept a good record of her literary activities, which provide fodder for Stam's analysis of what a well-off young woman in mid-nineteenth century America considered important to read and make notes about in her diary. Finally, we should not overlook the publication of an update to the standard bibliography on the subject—*On Account of Sex*—covering the years 1998-2002. (37)

Histories of African American libraries and librarianship continue to appear at a steady pace. Binnie Tate Wilkin gathered together an exceedingly useful collection of nearly two dozen reminiscences from African American librarians who established careers in libraries throughout the far western part of the United States. Wilkin, who has an impressive career herself as a library educator, sets the context with an informative historical introduction, and then steps back and lets the various authors speak for themselves. Included in this work are such luminaries as Miriam Matthews, who was the first African American librarian in Los Angeles and Joyce Mumbai, who served as regional library director for the Los Angeles County Public Library. The memoirs included in this volume would provide a solid autobiographical basis for future research in western African American librarianship, which is an area sorely in need of further research. (38)

We are blessed with a number of additional article-length studies that explore different aspects of the African American library experience. Elizabeth McHenry sheds light on the use of libraries and "reading societies" by African Americans during the years leading up to the Civil War. The availability of places where literate African Americans could gather to share news and discuss what they have been reading was an essential feature of many urban African Americans experiences during this period. Likewise, Hersberger and her colleagues flesh out in detail the impact of the Greensboro Carnegie Negro Library and its users. Interestingly, the authors use some recent theories regarding the conceptual framework for how communities actually develop, which I found intriguing. It is always a good thing when library historians adapt social science theories to our writings! Also noteworthy is the inestimable Christine Pawley, who expands on our limited knowledge of African American book clubs with a well researched and carefully wrought exploration of a pre-World War II book club located in Des Moines, Iowa and sponsored by its YWCA. (39)

Michael Fultz is an historian of education and brings his learned perspective to the subject of public libraries for African Americans during the period from beginning of the twentieth century up to the Civil Rights era of the 1960s. This is

a rather lengthy period, but Fultz's presentation of the most salient events helps the reader focus on the most important developments. His suggestion that more work needs to be done regarding the impact of the local schools and school libraries for African Americans and how those entities affected public library services for this obviously underserved group. This is an example of moving our thinking outside the walls of the library and seeing how library services were perceived by the community. Two other articles focus more specifically on individuals with Ethelene Whitmire outlining the career and contributions of Regina Andrews, who labored at the New York Public Library's 135th Street branch for nearly a half century. William Welburn presents a well written survey of the professional life of William Carl Bolivar, who worked for decades to preserve and promote the African American cultural life of his fellow Philadelphians. (40)

Although only tangentially historical, I still included Paulette Rothbauer's piece on the library as place for lesbians, gay, and bisexuals because she casts a bit broader net than simply a recounting of present-day issues, and does provide a limited literature review of earlier writings. (41) Needless to say, this topic has not been anywhere near exhausted from an historical standpoint and we can certainly use much more analysis in the future. Indeed, this entire section will continue to deserve sustained attention for years to come!

Technical Services, Preservation, and Technology

Although quite slim in number, there are a couple a quite interesting contributions to this section for the period under review. Two are especially historically oriented. Barbara Mitchell has crafted an excellent narrative examining the impact of the new card catalog on female employees in Boston area libraries in the middle of the nineteenth century. This is a most impressive piece of scholarship! Also worthy of consideration is the recent article by Richard Veith who analyzes Vannevar Bush's famous 1945 Memex article. Of course Bush's writings have been scrutinized endlessly, but Veith goes beyond the usual explications to examine not only what Bush said, but also to point out what later readers erroneously credited him with saying. Most striking to me was Veith's comment that Bush's article was focused on a memory machine that would be useful for the individual; Bush had little initial interest in its application to libraries. Veith's assessment is worth a look, especially if one is only vaguely familiar with Bush's thought. Erik Rau has produced a remarkable study of the impact of operations research (which grew out of World War II bombing calculations) and how this methodology was applied to library operations in the post-war era. Rau explores the careers of MIT physicist Philip M. Morse, as well as the later work of Michael Buckland and Purdue's Ferdinand Leimkuhler.

Simply put, Rau's treatment of how this military technology was applied to librarianship is fascinating. It made me wonder how much we know about the impact of the war on the thinking and actions of academic library leaders in those years following the war. I do not think we know as much as we should! (42)

The integrated library system has now been around for nearly 40 years, if we want to go back to the creation of the MARC record in the mid-1960s. Over the years libraries have steadily automated all their functions with the assistance of OCLC and the numerous vendors who created various ILS systems. Primich and Richardson trace this rather well-known history and bring the story up to date with their assessment of the impact of the web and the plentitude of applications that it allows libraries to consider expanding the traditional catalog to include access to information beyond the library's walls. Finally, Kasia Solon provides a concise summary of the role of technology in law librarianship since its formal inception with the 1906 creation of the American Association of Law Libraries. Providing access to legal literature through such basic tools as the *Index to Legal Periodicals* was an early desire to this group. Despite their acknowledge of the need for reliable bibliographic control and a standard classification schedule for legal materials, it would take until 1968 for the Library of Congress to begin the KF call number scheme! (43)

Biography

We are blessed with two book length studies and a number of smaller treatments that focus on the life and careers of librarians. Clare Beck has spent the last several years polishing an expanded version of her biographical study of Adelaide Hasse that first appeared as a chapter in Hildenbrand's *Reclaiming the American Library Past*. Hasse is known for her work with government documents at the Astor Library and the New York Public Library during the first half of the twentieth century. Beck, a longtime government documents specialist herself, has now produced what should be considered the standard biography of this accomplished librarian—warts and all! Belle da Costa Greene, who served for years as J. P. Morgan's personal librarian, is the subject of a large biography by Heidi Ardizzone published by a major American press: W.W. Norton. Greene, who was a light-skinned African-American, moved among the highest social circles of early twentieth century New York City and always portrayed herself as some of Mediterranean ancestry. Ardizzone is a professor of American Studies with a specialty in race, but is not well versed in either art or librarianship, so her study is skewed more towards the racial issues of the period than with Greene as a practicing librarian with a very special client. Still, the book is filled with detail

about Greene and her various social connections, which, if nothing else, can serve as a good resource for a more library-focused future assessment. In the earlier section on Library and Information Science Education, I noted the new history of the University of Wisconsin-Madison school. Here I need to highlight the 2006 autobiographical pamphlet that salutes the contributions of Margaret Monroe, who headed the Wisconsin school during the turbulent 1960s. Finally, I need to mention also in this section the publication of a useful collection of Evan Farber's writings. In its introduction, Richard Werking provides a concise biographical essay on Farber's life and contributions to instruction in college libraries. (44)

A cluster of shorter works have also appeared to complement the above-mentioned books. A couple of individuals deeply involved in the technical services aspects of librarianship at different ends of the twentieth century received their due recently. Ruth C. Carter gained fame as the long-time editor of *Cataloging & Classification* but was also heavily involved at various levels of the profession for three decades. Kathryn Luther Henderson traces her life and career in an informative piece in the same journal she edited all those years. Sandra Roe and her co-authors supplement Henderson with an interesting bibliographic analysis of *Cataloging & Classification* that covers much of the period Carter served as its guiding light. (45) William S. Merrill contributed his cataloging skills to the Newberry Library for over 40 years and was the compiler of *A Code for Classifiers* that built on the work of other pioneers in classification and description including Poole and Cutter. His life and work is explored in a perceptive essay by Anita Coleman, who considers him to be one of the earliest information scientists for his work in tackling the chronic challenges of information retrieval that have faced libraries for centuries. (46)

Charles McCarthy, who was instrumental in establishing Wisconsin's famous early twentieth century Legislative Reference bureau, is the subject of an informative and well-documented essay in the *Law Library Journal* by Paul Healey. McCarthy was deeply concerned that the legislative process be free from political influence and adhere to constitutional rules, and in so doing helped create a model for effective and active legislative reference service. Healey's piece helps flesh out the larger context for McCarthy's work. Two other recent contributions in the same journal help inform us more about prominent law librarians. Butler examines the career of Yale law librarian, Frederick Hicks, and Mulhern adds to our limited knowledge of the life of University of Washington law school library director, Marian Gould Gallagher. (47)

Other articles run the gamut from music librarianship to state librarianship and include an excellent account of the life and times of Ruth Watanabe, longtime director of the Eastman School of Music. Based on primary sources, interviews, and solid secondary works, Carol Bradley has crafted a well-done historical work

and one worth consulting as an example of good biographical writing. Erin Lawrimore recounts the tireless work of James Ramsey in his quest to create a reliable history of Tennessee in the antebellum period. Louise Robbins, whose fascinating study, published in 2000, of Bartlesville, Oklahoma's Ruth Brown set a standard for contemporary biography, brings her story forward with a retelling of what has happened to that project since the book was published. (48)

Wrapping up this section, I will point to two additional items: Brian Dillon presented a light-hearted, though thinly documented, account of his father, Richard H. Dillon, who served as the director of the Sutro Library Branch of the California State Library for nearly 30 years and was a well-known California historian. Finally, Patricia Galloway enlightens us about the early history of the Mississippi State Archives and its incomparable and energetic leader, Dunbar Rowland. (49)

Reading, Printing, and Publishing

Each time I confront the literature reviewed in this section I struggle against being overwhelmed at the sheer volume. Part of this is my fault, since I probably identify more items than I should, but we all know the writings on reading, printing, and publishing have been growing exponentially for quite some time now. Given space considerations I will have to gallop across this section and not spend nearly as much time discussing the various items that they deserve.

After years of leading the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing (which he also helped found), Jonathan Rose and his co-editor, Simon Eliot, have put together an all-star roster of authors to produce an impressive work that summarizes the state-of-the-art in book history. A *Companion to the History of the Book* contains 40 chapters that consider all aspects of its subject both thematically and chronologically. This is a must-have volume for anyone (or any library) with an interest in the history of books and book culture. In 2006 Finkelstein and McCleery came out with an updated edition to their well-regarded *The Book History Reader* (2002). This time they restricted some of the sections and added 13 new essays making their reader even more valuable to the novice and the expert. Along those same lines, it is a pleasure to see that a new volume in the series *A History of the Book in America* came out in 2007. Volume 3, edited by Scott Casper, et al., covers the period from 1840-1880. It will be good when this series is complete in its projected five volumes. For those unfamiliar with the entire area of book history, a good introduction is by

Leslie Howsam, who has published extensively in the field himself. His *Old Books and New Histories* is a short, well-written overview that covers a lot of territory in less than 100 pages. Ann Hawkins has edited a fine collection of essays that cover a wide range of topics relating to not only book history, but also its related fields: bibliography and textual criticism. Finally, while I am looking at recent contributions that focus broadly on book history, I need to note the interesting article by Dilevko and Dali that explores the notion that book historians have sometimes characterized immigrant literature as lowbrow, while considering the writings of more established ethnic groups as somehow higher brow. (50)

Beyond the general approaches I mentioned above, a number of book-length treatments of publishing and reading history deserve attention. Simon Eliot, and colleagues Andrew Nash and Ian Willison have edited an extensive collection of essays that in some respects mirror the broadly conceived approach of the Eliot and Rose *Companion* book. Deliberately international in focus, the chapters in *Literary Cultures and the Material Book* help frame and promote the discussion of book history along both geographical and chronically axes in a most impressive way. The nineteenth century book publishing world and its readers is the focus of Sarah Wadworth's well-written account. Reading in historical New England is subject of yet another weighty tome from the Zborays, who have already done so much to enlighten us about reading in that part of the United States. Supplementing—or complementing—the Zborays' book is the new work by Matthew Brown, who reexamines New England readers in the Colonial period. (51)

Christine Pawley gathered together a small collection of essays that treated how reading and libraries have intersected historically in both the United States and in other countries. Her lead article helps set the context for this ongoing conversation of historians seeking to understand better how libraries and readers have related to each over the decades. In that same issue, David Steward sheds light on how library users viewed the antebellum reading room—both its contents and those who occupied the library premises. Steward provides a fascinating picture of how the pre-Civil War library—in whatever guise—served many purposes for its patrons, many of them unanticipated by those in charge of the space! Abigail Van Slyck, who has written so wisely on library architecture and its impact on users, brings her considerable analytical skills to an examination of how library architects have consciously sought to create a comfortable and pleasurable place for users over the years. (52)

The ever-present specter of censorship amid public hysteria about foreign influences undergirds a recent book by the indefatigable Wayne Wiegand, who was joined by his wife to craft the fascinating story of the 1940 arrest and subsequent trial of an Oklahoma City bookstore owner, who happened to be the

Oklahoma state Communist Party secretary during those tense years leading up to World War II. The Wiegands tell an incredible story of false arrest, intimidation, false truths, and all sorts of shenanigans, all for the sake of national security. It might be noted that the library community overall was rather quiet during this entire episode. The larger lesson from the Wiegands' book is that as librarians we must all keep a careful watch over the civil liberties of our fellow citizens, whether it be 1940 or 2009! (53)

War is seldom good for books or for libraries, yet for at least the past five millennia we seem to have been unable to avoid violent conflict. Several recent articles examined the impact of World War II on libraries and their contents, and unfortunately here I am limited to only providing a summary at best. Kathy Peiss discusses American policy development in response to the potential destruction of book collections and other cultural artifacts in Europe during the war. Nikola von Merveldt recounts to events that led to the founding of the German Freedom Library in Paris and the American Library of Nazi-Banner Books at the Brooklyn Jewish Center in New York. Merveldt's essay should be read in conjunction with Matthew Fishburn's more broadly conceived summary of wartime domestic American reactions to the Nazi book-burning campaigns of 1933. (54)

Books and their readers were examined from a number of different directions in other writings, including Martin Joachim's exploration of what books were important to the citizens of Monroe County, Indiana in the period prior to 1850. Joachim expanded on the topic that had been first broached by Michael Harris in his 1971 dissertation and took a close look at what books were actually owned by Hoosiers in the antebellum era. From a different standpoint, Sandra Powers enumerates and then analyzes the military titles American and French officers during the Revolutionary War. The question of gender and reading are probed in two interesting publications, one looking at boys and the books and magazines they read during that latter half of the nineteenth century, and the other focusing on the way publishers and librarians sought to keep Progressive Era girls from "going bad" by advising what they should read. (55)

The history of books and how they are made and sold continues to intrigue scholars. Mondlin and Meador present an informative history of the antiquarian book trade in New York City during the thirty years that bracket the turn of the twentieth century. Broadening the time frame, yet narrowing the focus, Onosaka examines the origin and growth of women's bookstores in the United States during the past century. Children's book publishing is always under investigation and this time is no different. Jacalyn Eddy provides a detailed study of the accomplishments of the founding "mothers" of the children's book industry during the years following World War I as part of the series *Print Culture History in Modern America*. In her book, Eddy brings out the work of such well-known

figures as Anne Carroll Moore, Alice Jordan, and Elinor Whitney Field as they sought to create and promote a worthwhile literature for children. Robert Desmarais has put together a colorfully illustrated volume based on his personal collection of picture books created by the genius of Randolph Caldecott. Finally, John Wiley & sons recently produced a huge coffee table book that acknowledges its bicentennial as a publishing house. (56)

Historical aspects of serials as a form of communication generated an impressive amount of literature this time around. The most significant writing—at least by size—is Isaiah Wilner’s finely crafted biography of Briton Hadden, who with his Yale roommate, Henry Luce, founded *Time* magazine in 1923. The serials business in the last fifth of the twentieth century is the subject of well-researched analysis by Albert Greco and his colleagues. Soules helps set the definitional context for serials as a distinct format and provides a history lesson at the same time. Matthew Shaw shows how early Americans believed in the importance of producing reliable almanacs, while Bernadette Lear sheds light on the fascinating history of a publication with which we are all familiar, but probably never gave much thought as to where it came from: the college yearbook. And Malachy McCarthy shares his extensive knowledge of Catholic journal publishing in his account of creating a union list of Catholic periodicals. (57)

Taking a closer look at specific journals, Goedeken provides an historical overview of nearly thirty years of *Serials Librarian*. A much more impressive and sophisticated analytical effort was conducted by a number of scholars who helped the august journal *Library Quarterly* celebrate its first seventy-five years as one of the library profession’s most esteemed scholarly publications. In a pair of articles Arthur Young provides a bibliographic analysis of the journal’s articles as well as its management literature. Hope Olson examines how *LQ* treated the topic of information organization over the years, and Charles Osburn reflects on the journal’s various articles dealing with collection management during its first 75 years. All in all, an exceedingly useful collection of articles written by some of our most esteemed library scholars. (58)

Wrapping up this rather long section, I need to make sure that some additional histories are not neglected. Gordon Neavill sheds light on the publishing history of Random House’s well-regarded *Modern Library Series* and shows how the war affected the book buying tastes of Americans on the Homefront. Louise Robbins explains how the Library of Congress and ALA’s International Relations Committee partnered to create the Franklin Book Program, which beginning in 1952 helped make possible the publication of over 3,000 titles in a wide variety of languages and then helped market these titles throughout the world. Randy Silverman explains the importance of bindings to an increased understanding of the book as an artifact. Oliver Pollak describes how libraries

made available for popular consumption the hundreds of self-help *Little Blue Books* titles churned out by Emanuel Haldeman-Julius between 1919 and 1951. Finally, last but certainly not least, Robert Armstrong has published two more entries in his long-running series of articles describing printing history in the American west. Armstrong has been publishing on this topic for at least two decades and shows no sign of slowing down! (59)

Clearly this part of the review continues to generate a very active outpouring of literature, and, as usual, I have a sense of frustration because there is so much I should say—and yet have so little space. But at least the reader has a good sense of the dimensions of this literature, which seems to grow larger each time

General Studies

A number of writings end up here because their subjects either lie outside the established parameters of the previous sections, or are so general that they cross multiple topical boundaries. George Bobinski, long-time educator and scholar at SUNY Buffalo (and well-respected for his seminal 1969 work on Carnegie libraries) has published an historical survey of libraries during the sixty-year period following World War II. Told from an autobiographical standpoint, Bobinski recounts the most important individuals and the most significant events that took place during the last half of the twentieth century. In his final chapters he lists library leaders of this era—which would provide a useful shorthand for anyone looking for an initial list of names for the next supplement of the *Dictionary of American Library Biography*—as well as a compilation of what he considers the most noteworthy happenings in the profession that took place between 1945 and 2005. (60)

The philosophical underpinnings of library and information science continue to spur debate and discussion. A trio of articles in a 2006 issue of *Library Quarterly* represents some of the best recent thinking currently available. John Budd, whose productive output is awe-inspiring, crafts a nice piece on ethics and librarianship; John Buschman explores the impact of Habermas on library theory; and Andersen and Skouvig critique current concepts regarding the organization of knowledge using the theories of Foucault and Habermas. (61) Augmenting these valuable contributions, one can consult theoretical musings by Zins, a quite interesting article by Don Fallis describing his research on the topic of social epistemology, and an additional two more equally intriguing essays by Buschman that get the contemplative juices going. (62)

Winding down this final part of the review, we note a recent piece by Cohen and Minow that traces the history of intellectual freedom in American libraries

since the 1970s. In the same volume Fogerty provides an assessment of and a guide to how best to conduct oral history. Jane Aiken explores governmental planning that went into making sure that our cultural resources and artifacts would be safe from war and pestilence during World War II. Benjamin Hufbauer has written an impressive study of the institution of the presidential library as a feature of our architectural heritage. Along these same lines, Heather Ewing has added to the groaning book shelf of biographies of James Smithson, with her fine study of that man and the venerable museum he helped create. A little different, but endlessly fascinating, is Richard Stillson's recent history of how the participants in the mid-nineteenth century California Gold Rush shared their discoveries through various means of printed communication with their fellow American citizens. As a model for how the history of information and communication can be conducted, Stillson's book is an impressive outing. (63)

The broader view of the history of libraries is reflected in three other recent titles that deserve mention. The destruction and devastation of libraries and their contents over the centuries is the focus of Lucien Polastron in his *Books on Fire*. The actual act of burning books as a way of controlling what people think and read is recounted by Haig Bosmuajian in his *Burning Books*. On a happier note, I will conclude with a nod toward Alex Wright's exuberant gallop across the history of libraries and librarianship in the interestingly titled *Glut*. Wright's book is an absolute delight and a pleasing antidote to more turgidly written library histories that so often plague us. (64)

Conclusion

When I began gathering material for this review, I estimated that the number of items for consideration would be somewhat less than earlier essays. I have not painstakingly counted the individual references in the endnotes, but I would estimate that there are at least 200 of them. So, the practice of library history appears to be alive and well as we move into the last half of this century's first decade. I am especially pleased that interest in the earlier period of American library history—that part dealing with subscription and libraries of that sort—is beginning to pick up, since for quite a while that aspect of our library history had been neglected. We still need a good history of school libraries and of academic libraries.

Three major collections of essays were produced during 2006 and 2007, and I want to remind my readers that they each are worthy of some attention. The proceedings of the eleventh Library History Seminar edited by Rayward and Jenkins and published in *Library Trends* captures some quite important recent

investigations of libraries in times of duress. The history of books and libraries and their role in American society is the subject of Augst and Carpenter's gathering of insightful essays and produced in *Institutions of Reading: The Social Life of Libraries in the United States*. Finally, recent investigations into the historical aspects of the library as place are brought together by Buschman and Leckie in their edited work, *The Library as Place: History, Community, and Culture*. Throughout my essay, I have discussed the specific contents of these three collections, but I want to emphasize again the value each holds for our future historiographical efforts.

I began this essay with a quote from Aristotle, so I believe it would only be fitting that I return briefly to the thought of that ancient Greek thinker. In his *Poetics* Aristotle pondered the difference between history and poetry, noting that while poetry and philosophy were not limited by the particular, but instead could float about in the realm of universals, history, on the other hand, was wedded to a the construction of a narrative about what actually happened. For Aristotle, this limitation made history an inferior discipline when compared with the "higher" forms of literary production that could describe the essence of the universe. (65) So for all of us who labor in the many rooms that make up the mansion of history, we will always be forced to do our best to describe what actually happened. Despite the Aristotelian belief in a universe that consists of an unlimited number of possibilities, for us the fact remains that each historical event takes shape in a certain way at a certain time with certain participants. It is our responsibility as historians of libraries and its attending culture to tell this story the best way we can buttressing our facts with the appropriate sources and then analyzing what we have found and setting all of it within the larger framework of American history.

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