

College Library

The Function of the Library in the Modern College: Papers Presented before the Nineteenth Annual Conference of the Graduate Library School of the University of Chicago, June 14-18, 1954. Edited by Herman H. Fussler. Chicago: University of Chicago, Graduate Library School, 1954. viii, 117 p. \$3.75.

Questions of college library policy are continually arising. Have library and administrative policy, authority, and responsibility been clearly defined? Can the library do more than it is presently doing to assist or stimulate the faculty to make the library's resources a center of study and a means toward self-education? How does the library select books for purchase? What is the place of instruction in the use of library materials in the university and what should the content of such instruction be to make it effective? How can librarians recruit persons for their staffs who are "educated" as well as "trained"? Should library resources be broadened to include the provision and use of non-book materials? What standards, if any, may be applied to measure the adequacy of financial support? Wherever college librarians congregate, these same questions provide an un-failing topic of discussion. They are, as a librarian once said, "perennial, like sex in dormitory discussion."

Believing that a discussion of some of these issues would be of value, the Graduate School of the University of Chicago arranged a symposium on "The Function of the Library in the Modern College." The immediate occasion for the symposium was the nineteenth annual summer conference of the Graduate School on June 14 through 18, 1954. The papers presented in the publication under review were prepared for the symposium, for publication in the *Library Quarterly*, October, 1954, and for this volume. Everyone interested in the college library should buy and read this book. Even if, as editor Fussler candidly and honestly admits in his summary chapter, the ideas and the picture of college library operations presented at the conference are not markedly different from those expressed in what another contributor to the symposium describes as the "exhaustive, and at times exhausting" writings on college library administration, you will be missing a

great deal if you don't buy the book and sit down with its richly informative, stimulating, and highly readable essays.

President Carter Davidson of Union College sets the background with his discussion of "Trends and Developments in Higher Education," in which he confesses his weakness for alliteration and sets forth the objectives of the liberal arts college under four headings: culture, character, competence, and citizenship. He leaves to Professor R. F. Arragon of Reed College the job of relating these objectives to the college library. In "The Relationship Between the Library and Collegiate Objectives," Professor Arragon ranges far beyond his assignment to present a portrait of everyday library problems that is clear, balanced, objective, and yet deeply sympathetic. His treatment of the reserve book problem and book selection as it applies to primary source materials for undergraduates is particularly helpful. We most frequently think of the responsibility of the board of trustees and the president for the college library in matters of financing. Their responsibility, as any college librarian knows, goes beyond this. They must lead in classifying the kind of program needed and in defining the external and internal functions of the library. That this is still a goal to be attained rather than an accomplished fact is painfully evident from the findings of Dr. Eugene Wilson's detailed and admirable study of the "Government of the College Library." He discusses institutional control, codes of library policy, library committees, and the position of the librarian in the hierarchy of the college. The crux of the whole problem is, of course, the relationship between the administration and the librarian. Without the whole-hearted cooperation and support of the former, the latter is stymied. Charles Adams' brilliant summary and review of college library building problems, entitled "The College-Library Building," is a mine of information that is detailed but never dull, broadly conceived but never vague. In recent years we have seen the appearance of new and highly influential media of communication adapted to educational purposes. In "The Place of Newer Media in the Undergraduate Program," C. Walter Stone, Associated Professor of Library Science at the University of Illinois, emphasizes the need for broadening the library's program to include the provision and use of non-book materials and suggests

the principles which will guide the college librarian in administering such a service. In the chapter entitled "The Liberal Arts Functions of the University Library," Stanley E. Gwynn occupies himself almost entirely with two matters: first, with the importance of giving students instruction in the role of the library and librarian in society and in the methods of using library materials; and, second, with the admonition that well-qualified librarians can be more influential in encouraging the reading habit among students than "luxuriously furnished reading-rooms and the invitingly arranged shelves." I am sure he would agree that it would be nice to have both. Wyman W. Parker of the University of Cincinnati presents in "College-Library Personnel" an informed and lively discussion of one of our most pressing problems in library work today and makes several promising suggestions for bringing new recruits into the profession. I would like to think that our profession "offers great variety and prestige to its members," and I bless Parker for saying it, but it is a deplorably well-known fact that our lack of prestige is one of the principal deterrents to encouraging young people of ability and personality to become librarians. There are many problems in the theory and practice of book selection, and for those who want a fresh look at how these may be solved for the liberal arts college library, Dr. Newton F. McKeon's gracefully written chapter on "The Nature of the College-Library Book Collection" can be warmly recommended.

The author of the chapter on "Finance and the College Library," Reubin Frodin, executive dean, four-year and professional colleges, State University of New York, may be a newcomer to many of us librarians of the common species, but he has had an interesting and varied library career which he describes at the beginning of his chapter. In view of his background, associations, and obvious wit, it is little bewildering how in this contribution he could write so much in the manner of a dilettante. His treatment is a breezy ramble through the byways of college library finance. He says nothing about the how, why, or wherefore of college library financial problems that has not been better said in the library writings to which he refers so contemptuously. Where sincerity and fundamental seriousness are called for, notes of smugness and falsity are perpetually intruding. The only construc-

tive point in the chapter is the proposal of the New York State Regents' Committee (of which Mr. Frodin is an important member) for linking up the college libraries in the state in a system of mutual help. Presumably many of the college libraries are deficient in support, book collections, and space, and need more help than can be secured in a liberal system of interlibrary loans. The Regents' Committee feels that college library service could be improved by strengthening the New York State Library as a kind of "library's library," to which the college libraries should be able to look for the supply of those rarer and more costly sets and journal files which they cannot provide themselves.

The value of a liberal arts education, the importance of books and libraries in the provision of a liberal education, the necessity for appraising the college library in humanistic terms, the uncertainty about the position of the library and librarian in the college, and the necessity for better communication between library and faculty and library and administration; these, I believe, are the fundamental principles of the annual conference proceedings which Herman Fussler summarizes and interprets in the final chapter of this book. While he states there is nothing "dramatically new" in the ideas expressed in the conference meetings, he and his colleagues have taken, as I am sure Dean Asheim and the Graduate School intended them to take, a wide and high view of the college library task. They have endeavored to establish the position which it ought to hold as one of the most powerful means of enabling the college to fulfill its purpose.—*Guy R. Lyle, Emory University Library.*

Book Collecting

Book Collecting and Scholarship. Essays by Theodore C. Blegen, James Ford Bell, Stanley Pargellis, Colton Storm, and Louis B. Wright. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1954. 67 p. \$5.00.

This handsome little book—designed by Jane McCarthy of the University of Minnesota Press, crisply printed by the Lund Press, and tastefully, as well as durably bound, by the A. J. Dahl Company—will itself be sought by private collectors, librarians and scholars. The collection of essays derives from the program papers read on the occasion