

Book Reviews

A Bibliography of Illinois Imprints, 1814-1858. By Cecil K. Byrd, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966. xxv, 601 p. \$12.50 (65-24423).

This is a successful and important addition to the growing list of bibliographies of early state imprints which are essential to an understanding of the role played by the printing press. Mr. Byrd has chosen to follow the plan laid out by Douglas C. McMurtrie for recording post-1800 imprints by state rather than the wholesale approach used by Charles Evans for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. McMurtrie began by identifying the early press and imprints of each locality; out of this grew that great mass of raw material found in the mimeographed *American Imprint Inventory* lists. From these and other studies have been prepared a number of bibliographies of the imprints of individual states, the most recent of which was McCorison's *Vermont Imprints*. Thus far bibliographers have avoided the great printing centers of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia.

Using the conventional chronological arrangement, the author has endeavored to include all products of "native" Illinois presses, excepting certain state documents printed principally for the use of legislators, blank forms, and similar ephemera. The descriptions are a sensible compromise between short-title listings and detailed descriptions. Enough information is given to identify the item and determine the completeness of a copy in hand. However, Mr. Byrd's modest statement, "editorial comments occur when it was thought that the title, its subject matter, its author was important enough to merit historical or biographical elaboration," fails to warn the user to a significant contribution to this kind of bibliography. There are in fact only a few entries which do not receive the benefit of Byrd's editorial comments. Some run to as much as a half a page. The information he provides makes it possible to place each item in its time and place in the history of Illinois. The book becomes immensely more

useful for both the casual user checking one imprint and for the historian who is surveying this period of the state's history. This is facilitated by the full index which contains not only names of people but also those of organizations. This is particularly important because so many of the items have corporate entries.

Mr. Byrd has followed the principle of recording only those imprints which he felt "reasonably certain still exist," and has omitted titles to which he found references but for which no copies could be located. He is quite frank about the collections which he was unable to inspect. Thus when one of those collections is given as a location, the user is alerted to the fact that the item was not actually seen. It is clear that Mr. Byrd's failure to see these items was not from want of effort on his part. The one, minor, bothersome point is the treatment of the location of copies. Although in many cases two or three locations are given, a large number of entries have only one. Are these items really as scarce as this would suggest at first glance?

In the Introduction is a useful breakdown of the number of items issued each year in each town. The largest number were either government publications or religious texts. One is tempted to make a comparison with the output of the first thirty-five years of the Massachusetts, New York, or Pennsylvania presses.

Although the "not in Byrd" game can now begin, the basis for the history of printing in this vital state is now firmly anchored.—*Thomas R. Adams, John Carter Brown library, Brown University.*

Library Statistics: A Handbook of Concepts, Definitions, and Terminology. Ed. by Joel Williams. Chicago, Illinois: ALA, 1966. 166p. \$5.50 (66-22724).

"The principal objective of this handbook is the standardization of concepts, definitions, and terminology for the several basic types of libraries." How well this has been achieved can only be determined by the application and use of the content. There