

which it is not classified. However, this is clearly a minor criticism and a small subject index does help. Its positive advantage as an introduction to any aspect of archival and manuscript work is of immense value, and indeed this is clearly the purpose. How much easier it is now to be able to refer to a single volume instead of combing through *The American Archivist* and *Archivum*.

Some of the less common archival topics that librarians will find useful are chapters on: Cartographic and Related Records; Still Pictures and Other Pictorial Records; Motion Pictures and Film Archives; Sound Recordings; Microphotography and Other Copying Methods; Oral History; Automation and the Control of Archives and Manuscripts.

Librarians and archivists will benefit from this work. It is hoped that annual supplements and cumulations will follow so that maximum usefulness will be sustained.—Richard C. Berner, *University of Washington, Seattle*.

Book Catalogs. Maurice F. Tauber and Hilda Feinberg. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1971. 572p. \$15.00.

This collection of twenty-five papers constitutes a record of what has been developing in the production and use of book catalogs since the publication of Kingery and Tauber's *Book Catalogs* in 1963. The papers cover the period 1964–1970; some papers were written specifically for this volume, while others are reprints of articles published in journals since 1963.

The primary emphasis of the papers is on the comparison of book catalogs to card catalogs, now that technological developments, particularly the computer, have made the production and updating of book catalogs feasible and economical. Coverage includes book catalogs as a substitute for or supplement to the card catalog, production costs, formats, production methods, and problems such as coding, computer filing, and updating techniques. Experiences with book catalogs by specific college and university libraries, medical libraries, county library systems, public libraries, school libraries, and mail order library services are recounted. A lengthy article by Hilda Feinberg, "Sample Book Catalogs and Their

Characteristics," presents sample pages from thirty-two catalogs and gives the characteristics (page size, format, arrangement, general description), method of production, frequency of issue, costs, and person(s) responsible for each catalog. The one historical article is John Cronin's "History of the National Union Catalog, Pre-1956 Imprints." A lengthy, well-chosen chronological bibliography is provided for the years 1964–1970; and the editors have appended ALA's recent book catalog directory, "Book Form Catalogs: A Listing Compiled from Questionnaires Submitted to the Book Catalogs Directory Subcommittee, ALA, 1968."

There is considerable overlap and duplication between papers in the collection, since many papers were not written with this volume in mind. The introduction provides an overview which ties the separate papers to the main theme; the articles cannot be read separately if the reader is to get an overview of developments in the last fifteen years. Taken as a whole, however, the collection does a good job of describing new developments in and future directions of the production and use of book catalogs. On the basis of the articles, the editors predict that "Recent technological advances in computer capabilities, along with decreasing computer costs, increase the likelihood that libraries will venture in the future towards increased computer-aided book catalog production. . . . The need for card catalogs for current records and for special listings will no doubt continue."

This volume is pertinent to any librarian interested in current library technology and its effects on bibliographic control and patron usage of catalogs, and to any librarian contemplating the use of book catalogs in his library. It is a necessity for any library school collection.—Nancy L. Eaton, *The University of Texas at Austin*.

Melcher on Acquisition. Daniel Melcher, with Margaret Saul. Chicago: American Library Association, 1971. ix, 169p. \$8.00.

This book doesn't have a subtitle—and probably doesn't need one since the three-word title says it all. But even so, I am tempted to paraphrase one, something like "Plain Language from Truthful Dan." It is

the kind of book that many people would like to write but can't, because few have the ability to express themselves as succinctly, as forcefully, and as engagingly as Melcher. For this is above all a personal book expressing the wise opinions and reasonable prejudices of a knowledgeable and rational man, one who employs wit instead of anger, and who prefers the rapier to the bludgeon as a weapon for scoring points.

Of special interest and value is that Melcher is a publisher, so that while he is viewing the common terrain, his perspective is 180° out of phase with that of the acquisitions librarian. Thus, for example, the incredibly complicated discount structure that governs relations between publishers and wholesalers, and which the librarian is probably only aware of as a molehill on the horizon, appears close-up as the formidable mountain it is, capable of inhibiting the smooth flow of books from source to ultimate consumer. This difference of perspective does not mean that Melcher is insensitive or unsympathetic to the plight of the acquisitions librarian and the problems that confront the latter at his own end of the territory. If there is criticism of some traditional library practices—and there is—it is not offered in shrill condemnation but as encouragement to change what is to what should be. Melcher not only wants us to take our dreams and pretensions at face value, but takes it for granted that we have the capability of realizing them.

Perhaps the true value of the book lies in this atmosphere of self-confidence that pervades it and in its open avowal of bootstrapping. This is not to suggest that it favors exhortation over information; on the contrary, it contains a plethora of facts and figures on the operation of the book business, especially as it relates to libraries. Nor is it a how-to-do-it book in the usual sense. Rather, it offers information with the tacit assumption that a knowledgeable librarian is more capable of shrugging off the dead hand of conventional practice and of fulfilling his purpose than one who remains wholly ignorant or poorly informed. In this respect Melcher's book may appeal less to the neophyte than to the scarred veteran who still retains a spark that can be fanned into a flame of challenge to the status quo. Again and again the point is made, rein-

forced by examples, that no situation or procedure has to be accepted or continued just because it is hallowed by tradition, that all aspects of an operation should be examined and judged on how efficiently they contribute to the ultimate purpose of getting books to readers. And always Melcher advocates grass roots solutions, which he defines as "... solutions which grow out of the problems . . .," as opposed to "... pre-packaged solutions imported from elsewhere." (The latter he feels "... are about as satisfactory as mail order dentures.") It is hard not to want to respond to this kind of approach with a new surge of determination to make things better and make them work. If some of the author's confidence in an individual's ability to dominate the institutional system he is a part of is absorbed by the reader, librarianship in general and acquisitions work in particular cannot help but benefit.

Earlier I alluded to Melcher's prejudices. (I called them reasonable ones and will stick with that despite the paradox.) Some of them are well known by now, but the reader should enjoy encountering these once more and others for the first time. Melcher is not one to stand mute before the sacred cows and begged questions of librarianship, but his observations are constructive, not retaliatory, and he is practically one of the family. While he may be a heretic, he is not an apostate.

If I were to indulge myself in a minor disappointment, it would be that he allows to stand unchallenged the concept that a primary objective of an acquisitions department is speed in getting books to readers. Better is faster. It may well be true, but I would have enjoyed a hard-nosed Melcher appraisal of it so I could be sure. But on the other hand, I suppose a man who has lost his faith in computers and the Library of Congress has to retain belief in something.—Howard A. Sullivan, *Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.*

OTHER BOOKS OF INTEREST TO ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS

Adamson, John William. *Pioneers of Modern Education in the Seventeenth Century*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1971. 285p. \$6.95. (79-165366).