
Here are fifteen fascinating essays—originally presentations at the Fifth Library History Seminar, which took place in Philadelphia on October 3–6, 1976, almost exactly 100 years after the historic first meeting there of the ALA. The seminar was financially sponsored by Beta Phi Mu, which also partially funded this publication. Harold Goldstein of the Florida State University School of Library Science chaired a committee that planned the seminar. The American Library History Roundtable was also of assistance.

This collection is led off by Dan Lacy’s provocative and well-written “Liberty and Knowledge—Then and Now: 1776–1876–1976,” in which he presents an overview of the communication system of the United States in relation to equality and freedom in American society.


Of interest also would be Doris Cruger Dale’s “ALA and Its First 100 Years, 1876–1976,” Roger Michener’s “The Contemplation of the Library in America,” Donald E. Oehlert’s “American Library Architecture and the World’s Columbian Exposition,” and Laurel Grotzinger’s “Dewey’s Splendid Women” and Their Impact on Library Education.


There are critical commentaries following the essays of Bonk, Cole, Grotzinger, Cazden, and Dain by William L. Williamson, Wayne A. Wiegand, Ellen Gay Detlefsen, Ellen Fain, and David L. Reich in the same order.

This uniformly excellent collection of essays by well-known scholars is a welcome addition to the growing field of American library history. It belongs in every library that has even a modest library science collection among its holdings. This handsome volume should also be read by librarians as a sampler of the rich historical heritage of our profession.—George S. Bobinski, State University of New York at Buffalo.


A report of this type of publishing in the countries of the Third World is bound to be broad because of the very nature of the geographical spread inherent in the subject. The essays in this volume attempt to present an up-to-date view of scholarly and popular publishing, production, bookselling, and distribution practices. One senses there are overriding problems facing most of the countries in their publishing endeavors: economics, technical know-how, distribution and marketing, literacy, and lack of demand for print media.

The most serious problem is that of literacy. However, literacy must be discussed in light of the question: literate in what language(s)? Most of the publishing being done in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean is in the languages of the former colonial powers. But, increasingly, minority and vernacular languages are being used in publishing. India is a good example of this: 40 percent of books annually are in English.

A key consideration in any discussion of publishing today is to look at other communications media as a whole. Peter Golding does just this in his paper and concludes
that publishing in the Third World, like broadcasting, "is largely run by and caters to urban elites whose tastes and values are shaped by European or American materials."

Keith Smith and Heriberto Schiro in their essays probe along the same vein as Golding when they look at publishing in Africa and Latin America. They both see the situation mostly as discouraging, presenting a challenge to inventiveness of authors and goodwill of governments. However, the use of books is basically a problem of the wider context of a country’s cultural, political, economic, and social problems.

Papers by Altback, Oyeoku, Rizk, Alleyne, and Mordecai are concerned with scholarly and educational publishing in Southeast Asia, Africa, Egypt, and the Caribbean. They conclude that much needs to be done to right the “lopsided development” in publishing scholarly and educational materials. What is called for is establishment of national book councils made up of librarians, publishers, and booksellers to guide, encourage, and oversee national book publishing. But what is lacking is a good model for establishing such councils.

G. P. M. Walker concludes in his article that publishing in the USSR has taken a slightly different turn in the past decade. Where national publishing is tied in with the ideological and economic goals of that nation, there is movement away from dictating "what ought to be read."

At best one gets glimpses of a broad subject from this work. But what is written is well done and goes to some extent to present an accurate picture of the publishing scene. The commentaries are thoughtful and provide substantial documentation. What is needed is a comprehensive survey of Third World publishing.—Miles M. Jackson, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Honolulu.


Michael Harris and Donald Davis, Jr., already well known as library historians and editors, have done librarianship a further service in producing American Library History: A Bibliography. There is no doubt that it will fulfill their hope of providing "librarians with some guidance in their examination of the history of American librarianship, while at the same time pointing the way for those scholars in other disciplines who would like to investigate one aspect or another of the history of library development in this country as part of broader studies of American social or intellectual history" (p.ix).

Indeed the book will be, by its comprehensiveness, the standard bibliography in its field, going as it does beyond books, pamphlets, and periodical articles to encompass the numerous master’s and doctoral theses in library history and parts of larger works such as festschriften. Though the editors aimed to list only those works "written consciously as library history" (p.x), they have, in including material from the nineteenth century and earlier, as well as autobiographies, bibliographies, and various other original works, also incidentally provided access to a good deal of primary source material.

Given the 3,260 entries, it would have been impossible to supply annotations and critical comments for each, but an attempt to combine the enumerative with the selective approach was made in the introductions to the chapters. There the chapter topics are elucidated, major works in the field pointed out, and references made to supplementary bibliographies and other sources. Still, there is the unavoidable problem for users to sort out for themselves and for their own purposes the useful from the not so useful, the good from the indifferent. And, given the omissions that are also inevitable in a work of such scope (as Edward Holley notes in his thoughtful "Foreword"), serious researchers will, as always, have to go beyond it to search out additional materials on their particular topics.

The cutoff dates for the entries is 1976, but we are promised that access to significant post-1976 writings will be provided by the continuation in the Journal of Library History of its feature "The Year’s Work in American Library History," out of which this volume grew.

The arrangement of entries into thirteen chapters, covering both general subjects and