

excuses his inroads into the fringes of federal STI activities. For instance, he qualifies the limited discussion of federal libraries by revealing that a separate study of federal science libraries is under way. But the coverage of these libraries, particularly their historical development, is rather extensive. Toward the end of the book the author apologizes for the incursion into international involvements, demonstrating that the UNISIST flexibility concept endorses the decentralized policy approach of United States STI activities, and logically develops the discussion progressively from domestic activities.

Organization, particularly the author's ability to conceptualize each period of STI development under dominant policy themes, is the strong point of the book. The reader is given a sense of direction and can find his or her way through the myriad names, agencies, reports, and programs. Adkinson's statements are clear, but his style is at times torpid, particularly the chapter on federal programs and studies, where the reader plows through a heavily quoted overview of R & D studies from 1942 to 1971. It would appear that that section could better have been blended with the final discussion of future directions so as to signify the importance and impact of some of the studies.

Adkinson sparingly makes known his views and only infrequently injects an editorial comment. Since he has been closely involved with federal science information for many years and certainly was "present at the creation" of the postwar thrust of STI activity, this reviewer sees his restraint as unfortunate, for the views of a knowledgeable and experienced commentator capable of leading one through the dynamism of STI plans, policies, and programs would be welcomed.

It is revealing that Adkinson does not see federal STI policy "overstudied" as many commentators do. And unlike many of those he does not depict the Weinberg report as a turning point for federal policy. In fact, he does not attribute the appearance of information analysis centers (IACs) directly to the Weinberg study. The author sees many advantages in the decentralization of federal STI and urges that policies be de-

veloped toward greater coordination, but not just through agency or departmental reorganization.

Perhaps the largest omission is political analysis for policy shifts; for instance, what is the political significance of the increasing role of the private sector and the cost recovery authorization of the National Technical Information Service, with the resulting dilemma for its public responsibilities? And is there irony in the absence of mention of either the Information Industry Association or the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science when the 1975 Kennedy report is excerpted?

In spite of these shortcomings and oversights, Adkinson has competently given us what up until this time has not existed—an extended historical and interpretive account of federal actions in the dynamic area of scientific and technical information—and consequently closed an existing void.—*Harry Welsh, University of Washington, Seattle.*

**Douglas C. McMurtrie: *Bibliographer and Historian of Printing.*** Compiled by Scott Bruntjen and Melissa L. Young. The Great Bibliographers Series, no.4. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1979. 206p. \$9. LC 78-25682. ISBN 0-8108-1188-X.

An interesting question is posed by the appearance of this slim volume: What does it take to be regarded as a great bibliographer, one able to join the ranks of McKerrow, Pollard, and Dibdin? To answer this question, one must know what McMurtrie produced, his activities, and the events surrounding them. Consequently, the compilers Scott Bruntjen and Melissa L. Young have assembled a "representative collection" (p.xiv) of sixteen works by and about McMurtrie with the assumption that his material will reveal his greatness.

If greatness means being prolific, McMurtrie was surely that. His biobibliography reprinted here and based mainly on Charles F. Heartman's 1942 bibliography includes more than 780 items; much of it is related to the 1930s WPA American Imprints Inventory—a project that ultimately provided bibliographic control of 8,000,000 discrete items of early printing within each state.

If greatness means possessing an inven-

tive mind, McMurtrie seems to have had it. One of McMurtrie's essays details his solution to a national system of location symbols for libraries; today it serves as the basis of the NUC codes.

If greatness means being indefatigable, several of the articles reprinted here attest to that trait, for instance, Herbert Keller's biographical sketch or McMurtrie's own discussion of his search for the earliest printed items of United States history.

If greatness is acquired through attention to detail, then consider the procedure manual reprinted here that directed the thousands of lay workers on the Historical Records Survey; in it McMurtrie covered nearly every eventuality.

If greatness is acquired through depth and breadth of knowledge, McMurtrie had that as well. Several generations of librarians and booksellers will recognize the selection from his 1943 text *The Book*.

If greatness is also accompanied by a propensity for insanity (thinking that one might ever accomplish universal control for any literature), McMurtrie had it. There is a selection from his uncompleted magnum opus, *A History of Printing in the United States*—the first such comprehensive survey in 125 years.

All of the above selections serve to reveal McMurtrie's inventive intelligence, his indefatigable spirit, a prodigiously prolific production, and at the same time the irony of incompleteness due to his untimely death in 1944. Yet, other writers have pointed out that McMurtrie never "receive[d] the accolades of scholarly bibliographers while he was alive" (*Dictionary of American Library Biography*, p.354). While that might have been due to professional jealousy, it seems more likely due to his unbelievable output and the residual question in some minds about "who was intellectually responsible for his publications" (*ibid.*) The latter point is confounded by the compilers' statement that "characteristically, McMurtrie acknowledged all who had helped him with a publication" (p.xiv), unless, of course, they are countering it. Perhaps they may be excused the egregious sin of an overly affectionate high regard for their subject.

But one is still left with the initial question and some alternative explanations left

unexplored by the compilers. McMurtrie's cleverness and profitable productivity may have been motivated by his impecunious background and early business failures. His strong managerial skills may have been acquired by necessity; but, in all fairness, one cannot question his influence in advertising, bibliography, fine printing, history of printing, and typography.

A sage once told us, "Some men are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them." Someone other than these compilers will have to convince us it was not the latter in McMurtrie's case.—*John V. Richardson, University of California, Los Angeles.*

***Reader in the History of Books and Printing.*** Edited by Paul A. Winckler. Readers in Librarianship and Information Science, 26. Englewood, Colo.: Information Handling Services, 1978. 406p. \$22. LC 78-17260. ISBN 0-910972-78-8.

*Reader in the History of Books and Printing*, compiled by Paul A. Winckler, a specialist in this field, is the most recent title in a series of readers for students of librarianship. Its purpose is to serve as a text, and as such Winckler has selected samples from the classic studies of the history of the book. None of the chapters are irrelevant and many are beautifully written. The giants in the field are represented: McMurtrie, Dinger, and Chappell on the alphabet; Morison and Jackson on type; Lehmann-Haupt, Blumenthal, Bland; even McLuhan, addressing the subject "Do Books Matter?"

The introductory selection in section II from Falconer Madan's *Books in Manuscript*, a favorite of this reviewer, leads into the subject of the materials of books and printing and sets the tone for what follows. Winckler has gathered together the best in the literature for the student to sample, and his selection of "Additional Readings" at the end of each of the four sections of the book is comprehensive. The book fills a void in the library school curriculum; and one hopes that after sampling some of the delicious morsels in this buffet some students will want to read the original works in their entirety.

Following an introductory section, sections II and III are devoted to the book in