

## REVIEWS

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*Instruction and Amusement: Papers from the Sixth Australian Library History Forum*. Edited by B. J. McMULLIN. Monash Occasional Papers in Librarianship, Record-keeping, and Bibliography, no. 8. Melbourne: Ancora Press, 1996. Pp. vii+203. AU\$40.00 (paper). ISSN 1036-2037.

The most recent set of papers to issue from Australia's biennial library history conference reflects the uniqueness of the Australian situation at the same time that it resonates with concerns central to American library history, namely, the origins of free library service; the history and purposes of reading; censorship; professional biography; and the transformation of library science to library and information studies. Aside from stumbling on the occasional anglicization in spelling or historical usage (for example, *expirees* on p. 8, *ticket-of-leave men* on p. 16, *inquiry room* for *reference room* on p. 135, and *tertiary* instead of *higher* education throughout), nonspecialists will find the collection engaging, although the papers were largely accepted as written by the editor and are somewhat uneven in terms of quality of documentation and approach.

There are several characteristics of Australian library history with which the reader should be familiar before approaching the subject for the first time: (1) the fundamental role played in Australia by mechanics institutes libraries in the Victorian era (a much stronger one than in, say, Great Britain, where they were quickly superseded by other variations on the subscription or social library); (2) the relatively late emergence of university-affiliated professional library education (due in part to the fact that after World War II universities were too crowded to take on more students), plus a system of national testing for certification—historically an outgrowth of apprenticeship models of library training; (3) the preponderance of men in Australian university and government library affairs until quite recently; and (4) the deferral of state-supported public library service until 1948. On the other hand, the decrepit state of Australian library services in the 1920s and 1930s resembled nothing so much as that of southern United States libraries during the same period, and southern libraries, like Australian libraries, aroused national attention during the time of worldwide depression. It is probably also worth noting that the American Library Association did not begin national library planning until 1935, and therefore Australia's first national library survey, conducted during the same year, financed by the Carnegie Corporation and led by Ralph R. Munn of the University of Pittsburgh, represented not so much a remedial as an international effort at standardization.

Three papers address the histories of individual mechanics libraries (Swan River in Perth, Sandhurst in Bendigo, and Kyneton) and two others address aspects of other particular institutions (the development of the Central Catholic Library in Adelaide and the rise and fall in fortune of the library at the Congregational College in Victoria). A final essay describes the philosophical debate surrounding the formation of prison libraries in Australia. For reasons not entirely clear to me, the editor has placed Peter Mansfield's very interesting contribution on changing Victorian attitudes toward popular fiction in a section with library education history papers.

The themes of these papers are broader than this summary implies: anti-Catholicism, for example, was quite strong in Australia during much of its history, particularly following World War I, and reading clubs plus other lay and parochial organizations provided Catholic workers with a forum for self-education, enlightenment, and discussion of radical social reform as well as a common social outlet. In the case of Congregationalism, modern readers may be surprised at how easily Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregational clergy switched denominational alle-

giance in the nineteenth century; membership numbers and finances, rather than religious differences, convey the ultimate ascendancy of the Presbyterians and Methodists in Victoria. As for the mechanics institutes, Jan Partridge's history of the Swan River Mechanics Institute is perhaps the most complex and satisfying, since it challenges social control theories that have provided no small degree of controversy concerning the purposes of the mechanics libraries. Through careful analysis of membership records, the author argues that the theory does not take into account the desires of the members (p. 16), that the working class had little motivation, time, or means to enjoy membership, and that many tradesmen used their membership to attain middle-class status. While Partridge's essay will not represent the last word on the subject by any means, she has established the fact that social leveling, and democratization of at least a clubby sort, was at work.

Three biographical studies trace the careers of Colin Badger (1906–93), the person largely responsible for drafting the report made by the Australian Library Board on the need for public library service in 1944, and those of Leigh Scott (1926–45) and Karel Axel Lodewycks (1956–73), librarians of the University of Melbourne. In the case of the Badger sketch, it probably should not have been written by his son, if only because the author's effort to remain objective seems strained. Scott, who is described as certainly a gentle gentleman, quiet, reserved, hardworking, and conscientious, not overly ambitious and academically inclined (p. 135), emerges as a pallid figure indeed in Lucy Edwards' account, which is competent but almost numbing in its factual enumeration of accomplishments and virtues, and bereft of "warts" that would render that portrait at least interesting. More sophisticated is James Kilpatrick's analysis of the administrative fumbling of Axel Lodewycks during the period 1968–73, a cautionary tale in low professional self-esteem.

Maurene Keane and Maxine Rochester trace the history of library education in Australia since 1944, and while both of their accounts are dry, and Keane's application of a management "life-cycle" theory seems unnecessarily tedious to the task at hand, they are by no means without pertinence or interest, although American readers may be surprised at the relatively value-free interpretation of the advent of information science. The difference in the Australian attitude toward technology may be attributable to the great expanses of sparsely settled landscape still remaining on that continent: computers are essential for efficient communication, and serve therefore a more utilitarian purpose than they do outside the academy in the United States, where function is often subverted by the frippery of market-driven gimmickry. Rochester observes that information science displaced comparative librarianship and library history in the curriculum (p. 96), which serves perhaps to explain why this volume, although it should be of great interest to any librarian with a modicum of curiosity about library history or library development in other parts of the world, will probably not be in great demand in those library education programs that have already abandoned the humanities.

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*International Companion Encyclopedia of Children's Literature.* Edited by PETER HUNT. London and New York: Routledge, 1996. Pp. xv+923. \$130.00. ISBN 0-415-08856-9.

It is a daunting task to craft a one-thousand-word review of a 923-page reference work containing eighty-six substantial entries, a work that its publishers claim to