

Review Articles

Case Studies

The Book Collection: Policy Case Studies in Public and Academic Libraries. By Kenneth R. Shaffer. Hamden, Conn.: Shoe String Press, 1961. 147p. \$4.75.

Most readers will recognize this volume as the third in a projected four-volume series of case studies in the general field of library administration, emanating from Simmons College School of Library Service, written by its director, and presumably in use by its faculty. It would be interesting and useful to have a monograph describing the use of these volumes of case studies in some detail, as well as an evaluation of the technique by students and faculty, but that, hopefully, is another book, to be reviewed at some other time.

Still, lacking such evaluation, and lacking any personal experience with the method or with these cases, the most one can say is that they are interesting. This is not meant to damn with faint praise, because they *are* interesting, and this instructor in book selection is planning to use them at the next opportunity, though probably not in the manner suggested by the author. Most of the suggestions for use, unfortunately, are contained not in this volume but in the prefatory material in the other two volumes, particularly in the first, *Twenty-five Short Cases in Library Personnel Administration*, published in 1959.

Briefly, the intent is that the student use the case as a springboard for considerable research for factual information in library and other literature which might contribute to a reasonable and workable solution to be presented and argued orally in class. The presentation would normally be followed by class participation so led or directed by the instructor as not to become "only an undisciplined vehicle for discussion." In some instances two students might develop solutions to the same case, and so make the point, if their solutions were not identical, that any one case does not necessarily have

only one solution. An example of this is provided in the present volume, in that two representative solutions to a particular case are given in the appendix. While both solutions seem adequate enough and illustrate the different directions in which two students might go in pursuit of the same hare, it is perhaps only inevitable that they should agree that the hare must be caught rather than let go. After all, we must still be for motherhood, against sin, against censorship, and for providing material on all sides of the question.

The twenty-seven cases cover a wide variety of problems involving the acquisition of the book collection rather than its maintenance, evaluation, or disposal (the twenty-sixth case occurs in the appendix, and the twenty-seventh is found in volume two, *Twenty-five Cases in Executive-Trustee Relationships in Public Libraries*, published in 1960). Seven of the twenty-seven, in a very rough tabulation, are concerned with various aspects of faculty participation in the selection process in the college library; six consider aspects of censorship, mostly in the public library; four have to do with problems involving gift material; and three with the meddling of library trustees in book selection. Other problems touched upon in at least one case are those concerning photographic copy, commercial rental libraries, library cooperation, personal ethics, and dealer selection of library materials. All of these are important areas and seem real enough as examples of the kinds of cases librarians are apt to confront in the course of their daily activity. Indeed, the author says in his preface that these cases all stem from one, or usually more than one, actual prototype situations. Presenting them to library school students in this fashion, with the intent that they work out solutions for oral or written presentation, which can then be discussed and evaluated by their instructor or their colleagues, or both, would seem to be a particularly exciting way to be teaching the underlying principles upon which good and workable judgments are made. We are looking forward to trying it.

For those not so fortunate as to be in a teaching situation, the cases make good, intellectually stimulating fireside reading, particularly among a small group of colleagues, for good conversation on how *we* would handle that particular problem. Or, as would probably often be the case, how we *did* handle that problem—and what we found out later was wrong with that solution.—*LeRoy Charles Merritt, University of California, Berkeley.*

Library History

An American Library History Reader; Contributions to Library Literature. Selected by John David Marshall. Hamden, Connecticut: Shoe String Press, 1961. 464p. \$9.00.

If the rate of publication is any bellwether, interest in American library history is increasing. Within the past year have appeared two monographs on the history of library education, a biography of a public librarian, and two collections of readings. (Sarah K. Vann's *Training for Librarianship before 1923; Education for Librarianship Prior to the Publication of Williamson's Report on Training for Library Service*, Carl Milton White's *The Origins of the American Library School*, Martha Boaz's *Fervent and Full of Gifts; the Life of Althea Warren*, Thelma Eaton's *Contributions to American Library History*, and the book under review.) For an area in which few people have heretofore shown much interest, these publications are a genuine act of faith.

John David Marshall, acquisitions librarian at the University of Georgia, has edited a collection of papers read before the American Library History Round Table, plus various other articles especially appealing to him, because "I think they merit the preservation a book—and *only a book*—can give them." Of the papers included in this volume all except three were read before the round table and all except one have been published previously in a variety of library periodicals.

Marshall's anthology is divided into four sections. The two introductory essays are "The Importance of Library History," by Louis Shores, a founder of the round table, and "Long Life to the Library History Round

Table," by Stanley Pargellis, read before the first and second meetings of the organization. Part two contains eleven "historical essays" of varying length and depth of treatment, including personal reminiscences as well as as documented historical papers. Marshall's definition of "historical" is fairly broad; some of the essays are merely records. Biographical essays, some twenty-one in all, comprise the third section, many of them personal reminiscences of the "great librarians" by those who knew them. Part four is a reprinting of the short and sometimes inadequate sketches of the forty librarians chosen for "A Library Hall of Fame" in connection with the seventy-fifth anniversary celebration of the ALA.

As would naturally be true of any collection of papers read before an informal organization such as the ALHRT, the essays in this anthology are uneven in quality. They range from the excellent and thorough essays of Edwin Wolf II, "Franklin and His Friends Choose Their Books," and Clifford K. Shipton's, "John Langdon Sibley, Librarian," to Lawrence Clark Powell's account of the purloining of the *Bay Psalm Book* at UCLA, "Stop Thief." What particular contribution the latter article makes to American library history would be difficult to discover, but it was read before the ALHRT in June 1953.

If criticism can be made (and it can) that first-rate historical essays in this anthology are rare, it should also be stated that some of the reminiscences, the stuff from which history may later be written, are superb. The reviewer was particularly impressed with the two papers of Marian C. Manley, "Personalities Behind the Development of PAIS" and "A Worm's-Eye View of Library Leaders." Some of the reminiscences reveal the authors' keen insight and achieve a discriminating balance between tribute and fact. Particularly useful are the sketches of less well-known librarians such as Electra Collins Doren, Frank Avery Hutchins, and Mary Frances Isom. On a par with the Wolf and Shipton essays are Peter Thomas Conmy's on James Louis Gillis and David Mearns' on Herbert Putnam. On the other hand some reminiscences of major figures are poorer than they ought to be, and I cite only the generalizations of Carl Vitz on William H. Brett as an example.