

Basler, Roy P. *The Muse and the Librarian*. (Contributions in American Studies, no.10) Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1974. 207p. \$11.50.

One of our most distinguished colleges recently advertised in these pages for a library director who was "interested in the world of books." Since job descriptions for librarians these days are more likely to call for an interest in the world of computers than the world of books, the advertisement seemed perhaps a trifle quaint. One assumed that the demands of modern librarianship had placed the bookman-librarian on the list of endangered species.

Nevertheless, it is good to be reminded from time to time, as we are with this collection of essays unfortunately titled *The Muse and the Librarian*, that the species is not altogether extinct and that the muse (any muse!) is still being consulted. Roy P. Basler has combined about as well as anyone a distinguished career as a librarian (he was formerly chief, General Reference and Bibliography Division of the Library of Congress, and has recently retired as chief of the Manuscript Division) with that of man of letters. He has written extensively on Lincoln and the Civil War and has edited Lincoln's collected works. The present volume shows him to be as enthusiastic and as informed about American poetry as American history. There are discerning, appreciative essays on the work of Carl Sandburg, Merrill Moore, Lee Anderson, Oscar Williams, and M. B. Tolson. Mr. Basler is perhaps less successful as a social commentator, as evidenced by the essay which originated as a Phi Beta Kappa address ("A Literary Enthusiasm; or, the User Used") or by the one which had its inception in an attempt to explain "the American character" to a group of Peace Corps volunteers ("Who Do You Think You Are?").

Only two of the essays in the collection have anything to do with the author's experience as a librarian, and then only tangentially as *librarian*. Among his other duties, Mr. Basler has been a kind of man-in-charge-of-poets at the Library of Congress. "Yankee Vergil—Robert Frost in Washington" tells of his associations with the poet when Frost was consultant in poetry. There

are some wonderful glimpses here of the "Yankee Vergil" as he eagerly ascended the national stage which his "consultantship" (consisting primarily of self-called press conferences) afforded him. Not to be forgotten, too, is an episode in which a mean-spirited and "competitive" Frost resented Basler's inviting Carl Sandburg to an LC luncheon at which Frost, the guest of honor, expected to be the only silver-thatched bard in attendance.

As far as library history is concerned, the most important contribution in the book is the title essay, an interesting, if somewhat rambling, account of the advancement of poetry at our national library through its Poetry Office, the Whittall Poetry Fund, and the Consultants in Poetry. For those decades between the WPA programs of the 1930s and the establishment of the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities in the 1960s, the Library of Congress was virtually alone in providing support for the arts at the federal level. Even though the programs were modest and the financial support came primarily from private sources, this is an important chapter in the history of governmental support of the arts in the United States. Basler was long involved in the administering of LC's poetry programs, and his narrative is detailed and authoritative.

As good as the individual essays are, however, what are we to make of such a book? All but one (the title essay) have appeared previously in generally accessible journals, and the title essay itself could easily have found a place in one of the library periodicals. And so why a book, particularly one with such a title? It is not really a book about, or for, librarians. For those essays which are critiques of twentieth-century poetry, what does it matter that they were written by a librarian? In some quarters that may be faint recommendation indeed. So hard pressed is the author to justify his bringing these disparate works together in book form that he asserts their "common theme" is nothing more than that "struck inadvertently by the later discovery of Amy Lowell's lines apostrophizing the Library of Congress, and America—'this vast confused beauty.'" Such lame justifications after the fact do credit

neither to authors or their publishers. This is a book that should have been left to the journals; they wear their vast confused beauty much more becomingly.—*Norman Hoyle, School of Library and Information Science, State University of New York at Albany.*

Kennedy, James R., Jr. **Library Research Guide to Religion and Theology: Illustrated Search Strategy and Sources.** (Library Research Guides Series, no.1) Ann Arbor, Mich.: Pierian Pr., 1974. 53p. Cloth \$7.50 Paper \$3.50.

A well-planned, delightfully written guide to research strategy in the field of religion and theology. One might question whether the student who has reached his junior or senior year in college without feeling the need to acquire many of the basic library skills will suddenly be impelled to exert himself to study such a complete manual in order to write one term paper. However, hope springs eternal in the breast of every reference librarian, and Pierian Press is to be congratulated on instituting such a potentially helpful series of research guides. Since many graduate students are woefully lacking in library skills, this guide should serve as a valuable tool for them as well.

Mr. Kennedy's easy style is appropriate for the level of library maturity which he anticipates in his readers, and at the same time he approaches his task with serious intent and obvious competence. The guide is well organized, and individual chapters such as those on the card catalog and on evaluating books would be equally useful applied to other disciplines. The summary diagram on search strategy is eye-catching and thoughtfully designed.

The appendixes are valuable inclusions, though one might wonder whether Appendix 1 (the catalog pretest) would serve well if placed at the beginning of the book, since the preface recommends its early use. The excellent bibliography is strengthened by the use of symbols indicating sources which are mentioned in the text and titles recognized as predominantly Roman Catholic or evangelical/conservative in viewpoint.

The paperbound copy which was used by this reviewer is attractive as to size and

type, but the first few pages are already cracking away from the spine. It is to be hoped that the guide will hold up through repeated use, since it is questionable whether a student would pay more than twice as much for a hardbound copy.—*Margaret Umberger, Head Reference Librarian, James M. Milne Library, State University College, Oneonta, New York.*

OTHER BOOKS OF INTEREST TO ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS

Aiyepoku, Wilson O. *Geographical Literature on Nigeria, 1901-1970; An Annotated Bibliography.* Boston: G. K. Hall, 1974. 214p. \$19.50. (74-8589). (ISBN 0-8161-1145-6).

Aldous, Joan, and Dahl, Nancy. *International Bibliography of Research in Marriage and the Family.* Vol. 2, 1965-1972. Minneapolis: University of Minn. Pr., 1974. 1,530p. \$35.00. (67-63014). (ISBN 0-8166-0726-5).

The Almanac of World Military Power. 3d ed. New York: Bowker, 1975. 400p. \$25.00. (ISBN 0-8352-0730-7).

Baron, Herman. *A Concordance to the Poems of Stephen Crane.* Ed. by Joseph Katz. Boston: G. K. Hall, 1974. 311p. \$18.00. (74-22083). (ISBN 0-8161-1130-8).

Bishop, Selma A., comp. *Isaac Watt's Hymns and Spiritual Songs (1707); A Publishing History and a Bibliography.* Ann Arbor: Pierian Pr., 1974. 479p. \$19.95. (73-78316). (ISBN 0-87650-033-5).

Bleznick, Donald W. *A Sourcebook for Hispanic Literature and Language; A Selected, Annotated Guide to Spanish and Spanish American Bibliography, Literature, Linguistics, Journals, and Other Source Materials.* Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Pr., 1974. 183p. \$15.00. (74-77776). (ISBN 0-87722-036-0).

Chapman, Dorothy H. *Index to Black Poetry.* Boston: G. K. Hall, 1974. 541p. \$25.00. (74-8838). (ISBN 0-8161-1143-X).

Choral Music in Print. 2 vols.: Vol. 1, *Sacred Choral Music*; Vol. 2, *Secular Choral Music.* Ed. by Thomas R. Nardone, James H. Nye, and Mark Resnick. Phila-