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## BOOK REVIEWS

***Dictionary of American Library Biography.***  
 Editorial Board: George S. Bobinski,  
 Jesse Hauk Shera, and Bohdan S. Wynar.  
 Edited by Bohdan S. Wynar. Littleton,  
 Colorado: Libraries Unlimited, Inc.,  
 1978. 596p. \$65 U.S. and Canada; \$78

elsewhere. LC 77-28791. ISBN 0-87287-180-0.

The *Dictionary of American Library Biography* is a major one-volume work described by its publishers as "the first scholarly dictionary of past American library leaders . . . [and] probably the first biographical dictionary of its kind for any profession in the United States." It was con-

ceived, planned, and brought to completion by George S. Bobinski, Jesse Hauk Shera, and Bohdan S. Wynar, who comprised the editorial board.

In addition, a group of fourteen people prominent in librarianship, including four library school deans and two emeritus deans, six library school faculty members, and two administrators, served on the advisory board. Finally, 217 people, representing a wide range of library interests and areas of service, knowledgeable about professional leaders at state, regional, and national levels, and interested in library history, contributed the 302 biographical sketches that comprise this publication.

In the preface, the editors describe their underlying philosophy as based upon the premise that "library history is necessary to our professional self-knowledge, and it is written in the lives of those men and women who have practiced it, have thought and written about it, and have given it vitality and life" (p.xxix). The criteria used in selecting figures for inclusion were significant national contributions; influential professional writings; national positions and major achievements in librarianship; and scholarly, philanthropic, legislative, or governmental support activities having considerable effect upon American libraries. Although only people deceased as of June 30, 1976, were included, additional sketches will be published in the *Journal of Library History* in order to keep the DALB record continuous and timely.

Shera's sketch of Ralph A. Beals serves as the model that was followed by other contributors. In addition to the biographee's name, dates, place of birth, and parents, the format in general includes a record of education, marriage, and family; influences that led to a career related to librarianship; positions occupied and notable accomplishments; professional offices held and major contributions; honors received; bibliographical description of writings; assessment of professional philosophy, contributions, and activities; quotations when appropriate; biographical listings, obituaries, and books and articles about the person; bibliographical listings of primary sources and archival materials; and the name of the contributor.

Although authors were advised about the length of each sketch (ranging between 1,000 and 6,000 words), coverage varies from several hundred words in some cases to as much as nine and one-half double-column pages for Melvil Dewey. Sketches are arranged alphabetically, and a very complete index provides names not only of biographees but also of family members and other people with whom the subject had professional relationships who are cited throughout the *Dictionary*.

The main value of this work will be for reference and research use. It is also a book, however, that offers a rich source of information for the curious reader. Through the lives and careers of notable librarians, one is led to an understanding and appreciation of libraries and library activities as they developed in the life of the nation.

It is interesting to learn, for instance, that James Bertram was the "real power" behind the Carnegie benefactions between 1897 and 1934; that it was John Shaw Billings' suggestion that led Herman Hollerith to develop a machine to tabulate data from punched cards; that Walter Stanley Biscoe assumed responsibility for developing and refining the Dewey Decimal Classification schedules after Dewey moved into other fields of interest; that Sadie Peterson Delaney's activities and use of library materials with patients in rehabilitation and mental hospitals opened up the field of bibliotherapy; and that Samuel W. Starks was the first black person to hold the position of state librarian (West Virginia) in the United States.

The development of outstanding collections and libraries is related in the careers of Arthur Alfonso Schomburg, a leading bibliophile whose collection on Negro history was purchased by the New York Public Library in 1926; Carl B. Roden, whose association with the Chicago Public Library spanned sixty-four years; Belle de Costa Green, who served as director of New York's Pierpont Morgan Library for twenty-four years; and Charles Ripley Gillett, who laid the foundations at Union Theological Seminary in New York for one of the great theological collections of the nation.

Accomplishments in fields closely related to librarianship are recorded in sketches of

Angus Snead Macdonald, who advanced the development of library stacks and was an early proponent of the modular plan of library construction; Richard Rogers Bowker, who was a major figure in library publishing for some sixty years; Frederick Winthrop Faxon, who promoted subscription and related library services; Halsey William Wilson, who devoted more than half a century to compiling and issuing library indexes and abstract journals; and Hans Peter Luhn, whose work at IBM led to information retrieval programs, the early concept of the key-word-in-context (KWIC) index, and programs for the selective dissemination of information (SDI).

For most readers the coverage provided by this volume will appear remarkably complete and, perhaps, may even raise questions about why some individuals whose contributions could be considered modest were included. For others, however, names may come to mind of worthy people for whom sketches do not appear. Notable in the latter category is Joseph Cummings Rowell, who headed the University of California library at Berkeley for forty-four years (1875-1919); was a founder and first president of the Library Association of Central California (later to become the California Library Association); served as vice-president of the American Library Association; initiated interlibrary loan services on the west coast; compiled the first union list of periodical holdings in the San Francisco Bay area and made other contributions in the areas of classification, periodical indexing, and library building planning; and was successful in acquiring for the university the Hubert Howe Bancroft library of Californiana and western American history. Also absent from the *DALB* are sketches for James T. Babb, Emily Miller Danton, Frank A. Lundy, John Crerar, Walter L. Newberry, John Henry Ottemiller, and A. S. W. Rosenbach.

A number of impressions may be formed as one reads about the prominent library figures in the United States. They have represented a great variety of backgrounds, interests, and activities and have shown considerable diversity in their approaches to professional issues in librarianship. In short, librarians have not fit a stereotype. As a

group they have evidenced a strong sense of dedication, service orientation, and scholastic integrity. Librarians have represented a breadth of subject interests that would undoubtedly equal those of any other professional group. They have been committed to professional organizations and cooperative efforts and have had strong associations with civic movements and public causes. A significant number of prominent figures in librarianship have also had theological training and experience.

The *Dictionary of American Library Biography* is an impressive publication with which few will find fault. It is a large volume with double-column pages measuring eight and one-half by eleven inches. The physical design is attractive and the arrangement uncomplicated. The type is clear and readable; the weight and quality of paper appear to be very good; the binding should be adequate for average use but may not be sufficiently strong for library reference collections. The price is high, probably of necessity, since the *DALB*'s primary sales will be to a limited number of institutions rather than a large group of individuals. The editors, advisory board members, contributors, and publisher are all to be commended for their successful efforts in producing this important and valuable work.—Kenneth G. Peterson, *Southern Illinois University at Carbondale*.

Johnston, Donald F. *Copyright Handbook*. New York: Bowker, 1978. 309p. \$14.95. LC 77-27449. ISBN 0-8352-0951-2.

Librarians and others inundated with information about the new copyright law will welcome the appearance of this handbook, which contains a vast amount of information in its 309 pages. The author, who serves as legal counsel to R. R. Bowker Co., declares his purpose is to "explain the new copyright law and its complexities, . . . to offer a general understanding of the law . . . [in] an accessible format in which specific information can be expeditiously located." The book is to be used by librarians, publishers, educators, authors, and others who "have a need for direct access to information about the law." Not only does this handbook admirably achieve the author's purpose and well serves its intended audience, but it