

Although most of her examples fail to meet this standard, they are presented "for entertainment rather than use." I was so taken by some that I yearned to look up and read the texts being indexed. The book teases the reader with a great deal of oddball, but fascinating, erudition. Ideally, one would read it in a well-stocked research library in order to follow up on its choice leads.

This witty book presents the index as art form. Although the topic is specialized, it will delight bibliophiles and belongs in all general libraries.—*Peter Briscoe, University of California, Riverside*

Tate, Thelma H. *Camel Library Services in Kenya, July 22–28, 2001: Report on the Assessment of Non-Motorized Mobile Libraries.* The Hague: International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA Professional Report, no. 73), 2002. 51p. Euro 10 (ISBN 9070916835; ISSN 01681931).

Tate, Thelma H. *The Donkey-Drawn Mobile Library Services in Zimbabwe, August 6–13, 2001: Report on the Assessment of Non-Motorized Mobile Libraries.* The Hague: International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA Professional Report, no. 72), 2002. 38p. Euro 10 (ISBN 9070916843; ISSN 01681931).

The Kenya National Library Service operates the only camel library service in the world. It was launched at the town of Garissa in North Eastern Province in 1996. Three years later, a second camel service was launched at another town, Wajir. The province is very large (126,186 square kilometers, approximately 22% of Kenya's land area) and very underdeveloped: illiteracy is 85 percent, compared to the na-

tional figure of 31 percent. In this arid and sparsely populated region, many of the people are nomads. Roads are poor, and the camel is a standard way of transporting goods. From the base at Garissa Branch Library, camel caravans set out to visit a number of schools and refugee camps within a twenty-kilometer radius. Boxes of books, a tent, a ground mat, and circulation stationery are loaded onto the camels in the early morning, after which their herder-librarians lead them to their destination. Under future plans, the herdsmen will ride the camels rather than trek alongside them. The camels are well looked after, being given days of rest and checks by veterinarians for camel pox, hepatitis, anthrax, capparitis poisoning, ticks, and worms.

Donkey-drawn mobile libraries operate in two locations in Zimbabwe: Nkayi District in Matabeleland North Province and Matobo District in Matabeleland South Province. The area is semiarid, roads are poor, and donkeys are used for ploughing and transportation. In contrast to Kenya's North Eastern Province, however, illiteracy in Nkayi District is estimated as no more than 14 percent. The donkey library service started by the Rural Libraries and Resources Development Programme in 1995 is credited with contributing to the high literacy level. Cart librarians are volunteers, and there is a need to provide a training program for them. Another innovation is the Donkey-Drawn Mobile Electro-Communication Library Cart. The solar unit on the roof provides the power to run its radio, television, videocassette recorder, telephone, fax, and Internet service. In the rainy months of November to March, the carts are less practical because donkeys find wet conditions difficult.

These two reports are based on brief visits to Garissa in Kenya and Nkayi District in Zimbabwe, together with discussions in Nairobi, Harare, and Bulawayo. Obviously, they complement each other, but within each, there are repetition and data that should have been edited out. Why do readers need to know that Africans in Kenya fall into "three broad ethnic clusters,

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namely: Bantus, Nilotes and Cushites"? The reports make suggestions such as the need for the camel service to provide more material in local languages. This is a valid point, but the frame of reference is too narrow. There are no linkages to the history of mobile library service in Africa, or indeed to book and library development in general. The need for relevant material in African languages, for example, was a guiding principle of the East African Literature Bureau, set up in Nairobi as far back as 1948. In North Eastern Province, many of the residents are Kenyan Somalis, and many of those living in the refugee camps are Somalis from across the border. Somalis have a fine oral tradition, but their language was only written down in the early 1970s. The disintegration of the Somali state in the late 1980s and the 1990s did nothing to help the development of printed material in the language.

Accepting that both camels and donkeys bring books to communities that received none before, the sad fact is that neither, as yet, do more than serve very small parts of very large areas. This is something that could have been made more obvious to readers. Another issue deserves more extensive probing: why camels and donkeys at all? For example, the author of the reports was accompanied on her visit to North Eastern Province by staff from the Kenya National Library Service. Did they all leave their Garissa hotel before dawn and trek with the camels and herdsmen for up to twenty kilometers until their destination was reached? One suspects not. If they were able to go by motor vehicle, could not the library books and tents be transported in the same way? Of course, motor vehicles are expensive. They have to be imported. They break down. But none of these factors is a concern when something is rated sufficiently important. Countries under military rule in Africa, the Middle East, or elsewhere want the latest aircraft and tanks for their troops. They do not start donkey brigades.

This is not to say that there is no place for camel and donkey library services. They are interesting initiatives, especially the lat-

ter. But are they likely to be ever more than peripheral? One advantage for their providers is that people in the West see them as appropriate for Africa's current stage of development. They attract publicity, and then the donor money follows. These two IFLA reports provide useful information but ask no uncomfortable questions.—*Anthony Olden, Thames Valley University.*

Wagner, Ralph D. *A History of the Farmington Plan.* Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow, 2002. 441p. alk. paper, \$69.50 (ISBN 0810842599). LC 2002-17624.

Cooperative efforts by libraries, especially in collection development, have a rich history in theory, but variable results in practice. Most librarians would say that cooperation is good but in the same breath question its achievability. The Farmington Plan stands as a prime example of this ambivalence. One might consider Farmington of minimal relevance to current issues in librarianship given a general understanding of its purposes and failures, but Dr. Wagner, through illuminating exposition, exhaustive coverage of source materials, and a fresh interpretive perspective, shows how a fair analysis of the development and life of the Farmington Plan is instructive in the twenty-first century. Those who are actively engaged in cooperative work will see their own challenges reflected and may even see elements of a solution.

Wagner accomplishes two primary historical tasks in the book. The first is to place the Farmington Plan within an overall context of precursor cooperative efforts by libraries that had an impact on Farmington and subsequent cooperative efforts that were influenced by Farmington. The second is to show the breadth and span of programs encompassed by the plan during its thirty-year active life span. In this, of course, individual librarians and libraries are essential protagonists. Chapters 1 through 4 explore early efforts toward nationwide library cooperation, including calls for a national library, cooperative indexing, union catalogs, exchanges, and interlibrary loan programs that span the period from 1842 to 1942. Whether these are direct precursors