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## **BOOK REVIEWS**

Frick, Elizabeth. Library Research Guide to History: Illustrated Search Strategy and Sources. Library Research Guides Series, no.4. Ann Arbor, Mich.: Pierian Pr., 1980. 96p. \$9.95 cloth; \$5.95 paper. LC 80-83514. ISBN 0-87650-119-6 cloth; 0-87650-123-4 paper.

This guide outlines a search strategy for a term paper, through the use of a sample search topic, and introduces basic reference sources in chapters on topic selection, the card catalog, evaluating books, indexes to current information, government documents, and guides to historical literature. The text is supplemented by a classified list of six hundred basic reference sources for history, a summary of three methods of searching for materials for a paper, and an index to the text (which does not include the bibliography). Written primarily for college juniors and seniors, the book is also of interest to graduate students, history professors, and reference librarians. Its chatty, informal style holds the reader's attention and each chapter concludes with a clear, concise summary. Use of a specific search topic somewhat skews the presentation of reference tools, but it is a far more effective teaching method than mere discussion of each tool one by one. Furthermore, concentration on American history as a sample topic keeps the book to a manageable size for the student.

Occasionally the author does not generalize from the tools examined for the specific search topic to a search strategy useful for other topics. For example, on pages 6-7, specialized book bibliographies are introduced, but the relationship between the three cited bibliographies and a search strategy for any other topic is not drawn. Presentation of such general and peripheral tools as PAIS Bulletin and Social Science Citation Index before specific history tools appears to be in reverse order. Neither does Frick's work solve the problem, exhibited by other guides to reference sources, of isolating abstracting services as a distinct form, and thereby inadequately emphasizing their function as current bibliographies. Here the most comprehensive current bibliography in American history, America: History and Life (AHL), is relegated to the end of the list of tools considered, a weakness made more noticeable by the absence of the AHL Index to Book Reviews from the discussion of book review indexes and the omission of the AHL American History Bibliography from the earlier section on history indexes.

The text is generally well designed, clear, and amply illustrated (37 figures). There are, however, several instances of references in the text that are not clear in the illustrations; one of the illustrations on page 28 is in reverse order of the text's discussion, for no useful reason; and several captions need more complete information for accurate identification. The list of basic reference sources inexplicably begins, following its initial outline, without even a heading or generous space division, in the last two inches of the inside column of a verso page.

This useful, attractive guide to history research may be used effectively by bibliographic instruction librarians and history professors, and it is priced for student purchase.—Joyce Duncan Falk, American Bibliographical Center, Santa Barbara, California.

Boston Printers, Publishers, and Booksellers: 1640-1800. Ed. by Benjamin Franklin V. Boston: G. K. Hall, 1980. 545p. \$30. LC 80-17693. ISBN 0-8161-8472-0.

This reviewer likes books, and in particular he likes books about books. How-someever, as someone once said, he does not like this book.

The book contains a number of excellent biographical sketches of printers and publishers who were active in the Town of Boston. Massachusetts-particularly those by Mary Ann Yodelis Smith, J. P. O'Donnell, R. E. Burkholder, John B. Hench, Charles E. Clark, and a few others who did some original research. Madeline Stern contributed a tour de force that overwhelms sketches of persons in the trade who were much more important to it than was Joseph Nancrede. The primary vardstick for determining the length of the entry allotted to a person appears to be his significance, but nowhere is "significance" defined, except in an indirect way, such as the number of imprints in which the subject's name appears. Thus, "less important individuals" are defined as "generally those appearing in fewer than twentyfive imprints." The emphasis on imprints and the editor's device of attaching to each sketch lists of "Major Authors" and "Publishers Served" has caused authors of the sketches to emphasize highlights and milestones in their subject's lives which sometimes obscures a balanced view of the whole. The narrative style decreed for all sketches makes the briefest ones appear ludicrous. A telegraphic "Who's Who" style of entry might have been more appropriate for those. The majority of the sketches are based on common secondary sources (or no sources) and add little to the sum of our knowledge. The best that can be said about this compilation is that it lists in one convenient place the known members of the Cambridge-Boston book trade in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

This reviewer dislikes saying such critical things about a book put together by someone carrying as distinguished a name as Benjamin Franklin V. Butl. . . . It begins with an illustration of a "Ramage Press as used by James and Benjamin Franklin." Ramage made his first press about the year 1795. The sketch of Isaiah Thomas contains the amusing, but apocryphal, story of Thomas's printing of *Fanny Hill.* The manufacture of this book about printers is all but a disaster, although