

# Recent Publications

## COLLEGE & RESEARCH LIBRARIES

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Jackson, Sidney L. *Libraries and Librarianship in the West: A Brief History*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974. 489p. \$12.95.

I think it would be possible to write a review of *Libraries and Librarianship in the West* which would not be openly hostile or negative. I found it impossible for me to write such a review.

Dr. Jackson has bitten off more than anyone can chew. Question: How is it possible to cover the history of libraries and librarianship prior to the Renaissance in less than 100 pages? Answer: It isn't, but that's what this book attempts to do. Question: If you are writing a history which theoretically stops at 1919, why provide a skimming summary of the next fifty years? Answer: I don't know! Imagine covering the ideas and events associated with the civil rights movement in libraries, the information explosion, open stack libraries, and all the other problems of librarianship in the twentieth century in thirty pages: impossible!

In the final analysis, Dr. Jackson doesn't really give us much library history that isn't already available in published sources (which he, himself, acknowledges in his preface), but he does squirm a lot giving us many bits and pieces in an attempt to put too much information in too little space.

In its overall plan, the book badly needs a good editor, but it is clear that no good editor has been allowed near the manuscript. In the first eight pages I found five sentences that either mean nothing, are ambiguous, or don't say what they obviously are intended to mean. At the end of those pages, I quit counting. For some unspecified reason, the book has an alphabetically arranged bibliography followed by a chapter-by-chapter listing of "Additional References." Then it has a "Main Index" only three and one-half pages long followed by a separately alphabetized "Subject Index." And as if that weren't enough, it is

one of those paperback books doctored to have the appearance of a regular hardbound trade edition—presumably to help keep buyers from screaming at the outrageous \$12.95 price.

An acquaintance of mine, an anthropologist, once said of a horrible book about the American Indian that, "In every library there should be a place for at least one truly bad book." I leave you with that thought.—*W. David Laird, University Librarian, University of Arizona, Tucson.*

Irvine, Betty Jo. *Slide Libraries: A Guide for Academic Institutions and Museums.* Littleton, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited, Inc., 1974. 219p. \$12.50.

*Slide Libraries* is an ambitious undertaking. There has been no attempt before in the literature to create a complete guide to the establishment and management of slide libraries; this is a commendable first effort by Betty Jo Irvine. It covers the breadth of the field—the historical development of photography and slidemaking, professional qualifications for slide library staffing, classification and cataloging of slides, use of standard "book library" techniques, acquisition and production methods, storage systems, layout and planning of physical facilities, projection systems, equipment and supplies—but in 157 pages of text it cannot deal with most of these topics in enough depth to make it a definitive manual. The chapter on classification and cataloging, for instance, describes in only 20 pages the diverse classification systems of seven different institutions. Such brief descriptions may confuse more than they enlighten unless the reader understands them as introductions to alternative solutions and follows up the leads to primary sources for more detailed information.

The book does present a broad overview and identifies the major organizational watershed decisions that must be made in establishing a new collection—what cataloging strategy to follow, whether to organize and file in fixed sets or by individual image, whether to store for maximum interfiling expandability or for maximum visual display, etc. To these questions Ms. Irvine does not offer dogmatic solutions, but suggests a variety of options as they might ap-

ply in a variety of situations. Answers to the tough questions are, therefore, indecisive and may leave some readers dissatisfied. Part of the problem is that an all-encompassing book on slide libraries must speak to museums, instructional media centers, and teaching departments in art and other academic subjects, as well as to libraries in the traditional mold.

Perhaps the strongest feature of the book is the fifty-plus pages of source material following the text: a directory of distributors and manufacturers of equipment and supplies, a directory of commercial slide sources, a directory of over 200 slide libraries, and an extensive bibliography of books and articles dating for the most part from the 1960s and 1970s. The book will be generally useful to anyone in the throes of organization; the source features may prove useful to an established slide library.—*Wendell W. Simons, Associate University Librarian, University of California, Santa Cruz.*

Downs, Robert Bingham, ed. *Guide to Illinois Library Resources.* Chicago: published in cooperation with the Illinois State Library by the American Library Assn., 1974. 565p. \$10.00.

Downs' *Guide to Illinois Library Resources* is a potpourri of information encompassing a broad spectrum of subjects, types of materials, and individuals both local and historical, as well as an extensive bibliography of references to books, pamphlets, etc., which list or describe library collections in Illinois. The impetus for this survey of Illinois resources came from the Illinois Board of Higher Education but was essentially financed by the Illinois State Library. The remaining forty-nine states would do well to follow the example set by the state of Illinois.

The information for this guide was obtained by means of a questionnaire in which librarians were asked to provide detailed information about their collections. Four subject fields—American literature, medicine, law, and music—were surveyed by specialists.

According to the introduction, the *Guide* has the broadest possible scope and is unrestricted as far as library collections are