

Library, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027.)

The fourth catalog to the oral history collection of Columbia University, this latest edition is a handsome, comprehensive guide to the most prestigious oral history collection in the world.

Oral history in the modern sense, both as term and concept, dates from May 18, 1948, when Allan Nevins of Columbia conducted his first interview with New York City banker and civic leader George McAneny. When Nevins retired a decade later, the Oral History Research Office had gathered more than 100,000 pages of memoirs, and an oral history movement was gaining momentum. Today oral history groups are at work in every state and on every continent.

The four guides to the Columbia collection published in the last nineteen years clearly document the development of this pioneering program in the field. The first edition, a slim booklet of about 120 pages, appeared in 1960. Four years later, a somewhat larger and more attractive guide gave impetus to the growing interest in oral history throughout the United States and abroad. Bolstered by later supplements, this second version continued in use until 1973, when a third edition, coedited by Elizabeth B. Mason and Louis M. Starr, directors, marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the program at Columbia. With an assist from computerization, that 460-page volume, organizing the collection into a single alphabet, with supplemental indexes, described memoirs totaling 364,650 pages.

The 1979 edition, according to coeditor Starr, "quadruples what the first had to offer." A comparison with its most recent predecessor attests simultaneously to the sustained vitality of the Columbia program and the refinement of the collection guide. New memoirs and projects appear, of course. Changes of access since 1973 are carefully noted. To their credit, the editors have not been content merely to record additions and changes. This fourth version is a dictionary catalog presenting persons, projects, and topics of interest in a single alphabet. Topical cross-references also appear for the first time. The two-column page, another change, presents entries set in Times Roman with headings in Gill's

Perpetua. The effect is one of clarity and felicity. Indeed, the entire volume reflects the consummate skill of Warren Chappell, its designer.

Essential to any guide are the directions for its use. Here Louis Starr's lively introduction to the edition; a short background essay that follows, "Coming to Terms: Oral History"; and ten pages of captioned photographs lead the user on to "How to Use the Catalogue," appropriately—though perhaps unnecessarily—presented in the question-answer pattern of the oral history interview. Convenient lists of subject headings, special projects, and abbreviations complete the twenty-seven-page preface section.

Among the new projects reported in the latest guide is one of special interest to librarians. Gerald Gottlieb, Pierpont Morgan Library, has conducted a series of interviews with significant figures in the world of rare books. Initiated in 1973, this section of the Rare Books Project now numbers 669 pages of transcript and is continuing. A later development of the same project, an exploration of the American antiquarian book trade between the two world wars, got under way just last year. Interviewees have included dealers, collectors, and librarians associated with the trade between 1920 and 1945.

Despite the cost of this fourth edition of *The Oral History Collection of Columbia University*, all libraries and other organizations serving researchers and those interested in oral history projects will want to add this volume to their reference collections.—Martha Chambers, *State University of New York, College at Oneonta*.

Soltow, Martha Jane, and Sokkar, Jo Ann Stehberger. *Industrial Relations and Personnel Management: Selected Information Sources*. With the editorial assistance of Nancy Barkey. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1979. 286p. \$11. LC 78-31795. ISBN 0-8108-1203-7.

Aimed at filling the needs of a wide audience of librarians, faculty, students, and "practitioners" for a sourcebook covering all aspects of the employer-employee relationship, *Industrial Relations and Personnel Management* scores a bull's-eye. The authors, one who is librarian for the School of

Labor and Industrial Relations at Michigan State University and the other who is industrial relations librarian at the Graduate School of Business Administration, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, include references that they believe will be most useful to this audience. This knowledgeable preselection has resulted in a manageable volume with succinct, descriptive annotations that does indeed lead the way to the entire field.

With the editorial assistance of Nancy Barkey, they have produced a specialized bibliography devised for efficient use. Arranged by broad topic and divided into two sections, "General Sources" and "Special Interest Areas," it contains an extensive subject index with some entries listed under more than one heading. Personal name and title indexes increase accessibility. There are two appendixes, a listing of selected publications of the Bureau of Labor Statistics from 1973 and the R and D monograph series of the Department of Labor from 1964. Emphasis is given to U.S. references. When foreign sources are cited, information is given on more than one country; thus sources should be available in most large university libraries.—*Barbara R. Healy, University of Rochester, Rochester, New York.*

Clinic on Library Applications of Data Processing, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1978. *Problems and Failures in Library Automation*. F. Wilfrid Lancaster, editor. Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Graduate School of Library Science, 1979. 109p. \$9. LC 78-31801. ISBN 0-87845-050-5. (Available from: Publications Office, Graduate School of Library Science, 249 Armory Building, Champaign, IL 61820.)

This little volume collects the papers presented at the 1978 Clinic on Library Applications of Data Processing. It varies from its predecessors in that it attempts to deal with problems and failures rather than with successes. A refreshing idea, but one not easily realized. The anatomy of this difficulty, to discuss failure, or even problems, is described most succinctly by Estelle Brodman in her paper, "Reactions to Failures in Library Automation." She points

out that the disparity between the literature of failure and the number of known or suspected disasters in library automation suggests an overwhelming reluctance or even a constitutional inability on the part of most of us to document our misadventures in automation. Painful as such revelation might be, she cautions, we cannot further knowledge by avoiding truth.

With two or three notable exceptions, most of the papers in this volume are interesting but contribute little to a willingness to understand the growing mountain of ill-conceived, misdirected, and abandoned automation projects strewn all over the library landscape.

William and Lavonne Axford's paper, "The Anatomy of Failure in Library Applications of Computer Technology," is a glaring exception. The Axfords have described a project undertaken by five community college libraries in Arizona in the late sixties. The disaster that followed, which is traced with a great deal of care, is not unique. In their opening paragraph, the Axfords write: "The basic causes of failure are as relevant today as they were then because they are rooted in the minds of those responsible for them: librarians, computer specialists, and institutional executives." This is worth reading.

John C. Kountz treats us to an exceptionally well written, tongue-in-cheek recitation of the agonies and pitfalls of trying to do business through a government agency, in this case the State of California. His paper, "Problems of Government Bureaucracy when Contracting for Turnkey Computer Systems," is a delightful recitation of a five-year struggle to acquire an "off-the-shelf" circulation system. An excellent paper.

The outstanding contribution to this collection, however, is the introductory survey "What Hath Technology Wrought?" by Allen Veaner. In it Veaner treats us to a thoughtful and penetrating look at ourselves as we grapple not just with library automation but also with a gnawing sense that the technology of librarianship that sufficed yesterday will no longer serve. We are a profession in ferment and the computer is only a manifestation of that change. He ends on a note of optimism, of hope, of certainty