

- we debated whether to have children before our Ph.D.s, after our Ph.D.s, or not at all.
- we earned tenure but burned out trying to balance our academic career and family responsibilities.
- we earned tenure but sacrificed personal relationships for job mobility and remained single.

- we failed to get tenure and became independent scholars.

We have not "got it all." But we haven't given up, and thanks to this fine group of new titles, the odds of having it all are improving.—Susan Klingberg, *Head of the Education and Social Science Library and Associate Professor of Library Administration, University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign.*

BOOK REVIEWS

Metcalfe, Keyes DeWitt. *My Harvard Library Years, 1937-1955: A Sequel to Random Recollections of an Anachronism.* Ed. by Edwin E. Williams. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard College Library, 1988. 285p. \$25 (ISBN 0-074-59600-5).

This is a year of momentous anniversaries: ACRL and this journal reached fifty and in Cincinnati we celebrated a century of progress. The year 1989 also marks the centennial of Keyes Metcalfe's birth. Born in Elyria and educated on the playing fields of Oberlin (and in the library), this son of Ohio made an indelible mark on the profession literally throughout the country. By his own reckoning, Metcalfe traveled the equivalent of eighty times around the globe (p.206) on more than 550 consulting assignments after his "retirement" in 1955. Now, five years after his death, Metcalfe is known chiefly for his work with library buildings which he distilled into his magisterial *Planning Academic and Research Library Buildings* (1965). But he was very far from one-dimensional; with the publication of *My Harvard Library Years*, we can appreciate more fully this indefatigable giant of the profession.

In *Random Recollections of an Anachronism* (1980), the first of a projected three volumes, Metcalfe described his background and activities to 1937 when he left the New York Public Library to become director of the Harvard University Library and librarian of Harvard College. Related more "quietly and plainly"—as President Pusey observed of Metcalfe's style (p.269)—than the sometimes rollicking first vol-

ume, *My Harvard Library Years* stands well independently as an account of Metcalfe's activities during 18 years at our largest university library.

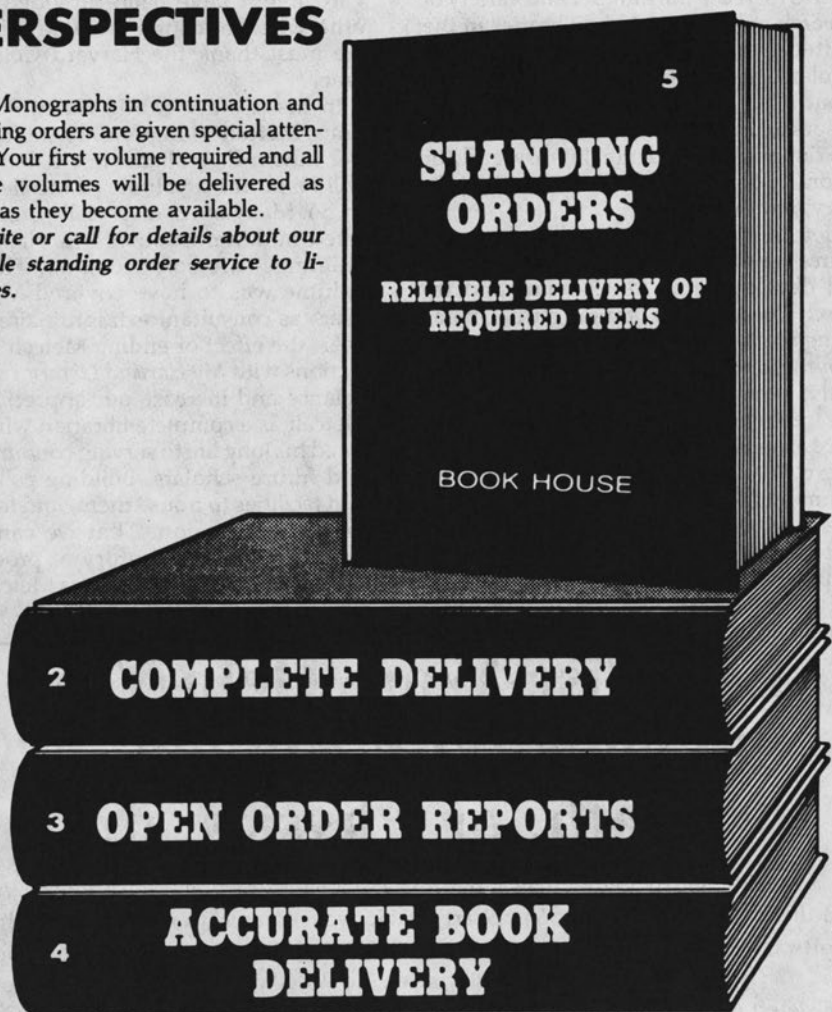
Metcalfe had strong views about library administration. He believed that—all things being equal—a librarian in most cases better administers a library (p.267), and he tried to advance the preparation of librarians for administration. In explaining his interactions with "Three Librarians of Congress" (Archibald MacLeish, Luther Evans, and L. Quincy Mumford) and his own successor at Harvard, Paul Buck (former provost and dean of the faculty of arts and sciences), Metcalfe makes clear that for him, the correct test is that of *effectiveness* in particular circumstances: the right things have to be done at the right time and sometimes the person to do them is not a trained librarian. This issue still exercises us and Metcalfe's admonitions should be considered seriously.

Metcalfe himself began his administration by learning and then using the academic context of the Harvard libraries at both personal and structural levels, and then, of course, by assembling an exceptional staff. To meet increasing demands by users and make the most of limited finances and space, Metcalfe sought solutions chiefly through cooperation with other libraries. The theme of cooperation pervades this volume, in fact. At Harvard he felicitously labeled this "coordinated decentralization" (p.112), a philosophy and mode of action he extended to the region and nation (first by creating the New

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England Deposit Library), always trying to reduce unnecessary duplication and thereby saving money which could be used to increase the number and variety of research materials held by libraries in the United States and thus accessible to scholars. He sweated the details and cared about users, from world-renowned professors to undergraduates unable to see in the dimness of Widener Library and for whom he developed the undergraduate library, Lamont.

Metcalf's recollections constitute a resource for further study of many aspects and developments in academic and research librarianship, ranging from mentoring and the academic context to photocopying and building design. Conveniently, some of these issues receive separate treatment in distinct chapters such as "Acquisitions," "The Lamont Library," "Peru," and "Library Association Assignments." One sometimes loses the thread of chronology, but this is no real obstacle. Appropriate cross-references to chapters in this volume and *Random Recol-*

lections prove helpful and an adequate index is provided. The lack of illustrations is a disappointment; at least a map of Harvard might have been provided in this otherwise handsome volume for which we must thank the Harvard College Library.

In his preface to *My Harvard Library Years*, Metcalf's longtime assistant and editor Edwin E. Williams notes that "there will be no third volume of recollections" (p.iv). Many of us—especially those interested in administration and planning of buildings—are sorry for that. The third volume was to have covered Metcalf's years as consultant extraordinaire. However, the effect of ending Metcalf's recollections with *My Harvard Library Years* is to balance and increase our appreciation of Metcalf as a complete librarian who dedicated his long life to serving contemporary and future scholars, building collections and facilities to house them, and forwarding the profession. That we can all be proud of the past century of progress is due in no small part to Keyes Metcalf's ef-

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forts and leadership. His example is one to carry with us as we build the future.—*Jonathan LeBreton, Albin O. Kuhn Library and Gallery, University of Maryland, Baltimore County.*

Special Collections in College and University Libraries. Comp. by Modoc Press, Inc.; with an introduction by Leona Rostenberg and Madeleine B. Stern. New York: Macmillan, 1989. 639p. \$90 to 12/15/89; \$100 after (ISBN 0-02-921651-6). LC 88-36849.

The special collections department of any academic library is not unlike that of other divisions in its search for new ways to make its holdings better known to all readers. This is so basic a rule that it comes as somewhat of a shock to read the banal justifications and hyperbolic claims by the Macmillan editors who brought *Special Collections in College and University Libraries* into print.

No one should deny the good purpose of such a work as this one. One suspects, however, that had the compilers been better informed of the field they were tilling, of indeed a genre of such literature previously established, they would have created a basic, even classic tool, not merely the useful, if disappointing, effort in hand.

In its scope statement, the claim is made that "This volume differs from others that sail similar waters." How? Continuing, "It is not a directory of special libraries" [one would venture, however, it is], "Nor is it a listing by subject of a library's holdings" [although, it does just that], ". . . rather, it is a compilation of detailed, descriptive information concerning special collections, rare books, and manuscripts to be found in the libraries of colleges and universities throughout the United States." The book, in spite of its relative length, is neither detailed, nor comprehensive.

The truly disappointing thing about this production is not so much that its claimed intentions do not hold up to scrutiny; rather, it is that the work missed a fine opportunity in building on similar works in its area. Lee Ash's *Subject Collections* has now gone through many editions over a

generation, each more comprehensive than the last. Alice Schreyer's *Rare Books, 1983-84, Trends, Collections, Sources* is essential after five years. Are the *National Union Catalogue*, RLIN, OCLC, and the *National Union Catalogue of Manuscript Collections* so unknown to conscientious "collectors, booksellers, designers, typographers" to say nothing of the reference librarians and researchers, all for whom *Special Collections* was intended, as to render them inefficient in locating institutional strengths? I think not.

What the rare book world of "special collections" needs today is a frequently updated—preferably annual—source of information on all libraries capable of supporting sustained research in the subject fields such institutions have chosen to link themselves with. The sheer size of the book world must be seriously reckoned with—it is arbitrary to consider simply college and university libraries without taking into account independent research libraries such as the Newberry or the Huntington, museum library collections, natural history, technology, art, or early American historical society collections, great and humble.

All of these "public" collections along with academic library collections form a stronger framework on which truly detailed, thorough scholarship necessarily depends. It is not reasonable to believe otherwise. A single volume which makes the effort to accommodate the deeper range of institutional collections will be, accordingly, a prized book.

Special Collections is not without its pluses. When Macmillan creates a reference source, the standard of readability is almost certainly assured. This book is no exception. One suspects that the most oft-consulted section will be the subject index, and many of the descriptions are indeed quite detailed.

The fact that institutions are allowed to hold forth for pages, such as the Houghton Library at Harvard or the Beinecke at Yale, should be encouraged, but a maximum length should be established to give the work a better flow. Other institutions such as the University of Michigan in future editions should be