

Book Reviews



Africanist Librarianship in an Era of Change. Eds. Victoria K. Evalds and David Henige. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow, 2005. 242p. \$35 (ISBN 0810852012). LC 2005925546.

Vicki Evalds deserves a lot of credit. It is difficult to admit, but I was among the skeptics when Vicki first presented the idea of producing a book to honor Daniel Britz's many contributions to African studies librarianship. We suggested online publishing and all manner of alternatives to a full-blown book. But she persevered, and now I am very happy to report on yet another shining example of an Africanist librarians' spirit of cooperation. The book is a multifaceted snapshot of issues confronting today's African studies librarian. It might well serve as an introduction to this particular brand of area studies librarianship for library school students or African studies scholars entering the library profession. It is a reminder of an earlier collaboration, *Africana Resources and Collections* (Scarecrow, 1989), the festschrift for Hans Panofsky upon his retirement as curator of the Herskovits Library of African Studies at Northwestern University. Several articles in the Evalds' book follow up on articles first published in the 1989 festschrift.

Africanist Librarianship starts with a chronology of Daniel Britz's career and professional accomplishments by David Easterbrook, current curator of the Herskovits Library where Britz spent all thirty years of his career. Nancy Lawler and Ivor Wilks close the book with a touching and often humorous remembrance of their lifelong friend. Thirteen articles, mostly authored by African Studies librarians at U.S. research libraries, comprise the substance of the book. All articles are related to Africana librarianship: some are quite practical; others provide an overview or tell a story.

The thoughtful introduction titled "Coping with an Information World

Measured in Terabytes" by coeditor David Henige discusses the profound changes librarianship in general, and Africana librarianship in particular, has undergone in the past few decades. Some of the changes are endemic to librarianship (e.g., the Google syndrome, or the difficulties of embracing the new while retaining the old ways of providing information to our researchers). Others are uniquely Africa related, such as the worsening of the book and journal "famine" on the African continent and the many frustrations inherent in acquiring materials published in Africa.

Among the articles most useful to teaching library school students is Miki Goral's "Africana Reference for the Generalist," detailing which databases are most relevant for providing service to undergraduates and describing several of the best compilations of Web sites for the study of Africa. Similarly, Alfred Kagan's and Gretchen Walsh's articles contribute to our understanding of the teaching of bibliographic skills to students. David Westley's bibliography of African lexicography since 1980 will be of use to librarians building a collection of African-language dictionaries.

Two fascinating articles are by Joseph Lauer and Hans Zell. Lauer's "Trends in North American Theses Production" uses statistics to trace the tremendous growth of African Studies as a discipline in the United States and Canada. A few examples from the United States: in 1960, there were 80 Africa-related dissertations per year. This number had grown to 274 by 1970 and to 475 by 1980. Since then, the number of annual dissertations completed has held steady at above 450. Zell recounts the trials and tribulations of the Hans Zell imprint in "The Perilous Business of Reference Publishing in African Studies." His view is certainly from the

inside and is sometimes quite wistful, while analyzing the particular situation of the small, high-quality publisher in today's multinational climate of mega publishers with a clear eye. We will want to remember that a number of his reference books won the prestigious Conover Porter Award for "excellence in Africana bibliography or reference work."

Jill Coelho provides a survey of the Africana acquisitions literature and reviews Africana acquisitions at Harvard. She details the sometimes-formidable challenges faced by libraries attempting to acquire research materials from the African continent, especially the parts not covered by the Library of Congress's Cooperative Acquisitions Program. Obviously, the process has recently become easier with e-mail and credit cards, but challenges remain. Peter Limb discusses the problems and progress in African journal publishing and acquisitions.

The articles by Marion Frank-Wilson, Patricia Ogedengbe, and Patricia Kuntz explore the connections between Africa and North America. They discuss issues of outreach, the formation of partnerships between individual universities and organizations on the two continents, and digitization as a means to help African researchers with accessing research materials. Frank-Wilson's article, "A Way to Bridge the Information Gap," adds descriptions of a number of current digital projects.

Gregory Finnegan traces the story of the Africana Librarians Council (ALC) and the Cooperative Africana Microform Project (CAMP) since 1989. The earlier period, 1958–1988, was covered by David Easterbrook's article in *Africana Resources and Collections*, mentioned above. Finnegan's article illustrates the many cooperative projects undertaken by enterprising Africana librarians. Similarly, Robert Lesh traces developments in Africana cataloging since 1980, following an earlier article by Elizabeth Widenmann in the 1989 festschrift.

Africanist Librarianship in an Era of Change should be held by libraries with

significant African Studies collections or library schools.—*Helene Baumann, Duke University.*

Higher Education for the Public Good: Emerging Voices from a National Movement. Eds. Adrianna J. Kezar, Tony C. Chambers, and John C. Burkhardt. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass (Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series), 2005. 345p. alk. paper, \$40 (ISBN 0787973823). LC 2005-00719.

Repeated with slight variations in several chapters of *Higher Education for the Public Good* is a quick and dirty summary of two key conceptions of a university's proper role. On the one hand, there is the "academic cloister" of John Henry Newman, in which the intellect is cultivated for its own sake and useful knowledge is of secondary importance. On the other hand is the "research organism" described by Abraham Flexner, in which science replaces moral philosophy and influences present and future society. According to this narrative, the clash and interaction between the two traditions, as well as their responses to social forces of the twentieth century, led to what Clark Kerr labeled the "multiversity," a contemporary ivory tower in which scientists, without external pressures or influences, conduct basic research to be developed into something practical by government and private industry. Although this summary does not even attempt to fully account for today's many different American postsecondary institutional types (a fact acknowledged by the contributors to this volume), it is employed to demonstrate how the charter between higher education and American society has evolved in response to societal needs. The basic premise behind this collection of essays is that charter needs to be renegotiated once more in order to counteract the growing devaluation of higher education's public service mission.

The early chapters attempt to justify the premise by showing how service to the public good is being eroded in favor of business values and economic goals.