

each four-month's period, the student will have quick, convenient access to the published surveys of opinion on any subject from the beginning of systematic sample surveys of citizens down to the present. As the span of years lengthens during which surveys are reported, the historian or social analyst will have for his use an increasingly reliable index of the complexion, direction, ebb and flow of conscious, expressed opinion on public issues and social interests.

The reliability of the results of the polls themselves is a matter of continued, intensive study by experts in the field as well as by informed and uninformed critics from the outside. The editors of *Public Opinion 1935-1946* do not discuss the methodology employed in the surveys they report, except to indicate the usual sample size employed by each of the polling organizations represented in the volume. For the rest, we are obliged to take on faith the zeal of the pollsters in perfecting their techniques for drawing representative samples of the population, in designing their questions and in their skill and objectivity in conducting their interviews. Whatever may be lacking in the techniques of the poll results reported, the volume contains, as the editors state, "more reliable data than is elsewhere available" for public opinion research. It is truly "an indispensable storehouse of information" on opinion. Every social science reference collection should include a copy.—Robert D. Leigh, *Columbia University*.

## Unusual Reference Manual

*General Reference Department Staff Manual.*

Prepared by Mary N. Barton and Ellen F. Watson. Baltimore, Md., Enoch Pratt Free Library, 1950, 230p. \$1.75.

A library's staff manual ordinarily makes rather dull reading for an outsider. Desirable as such a tool always is for the orientation of the new staff member in a particular library, and beneficial as may be the results of the necessarily careful re-examination (and often revision!), of procedures and routines that are called for in order to get them down in black and white, the ordinary manual of another library is likely to be riffled through casually and then filed and forgotten in the box marked:

"Manuals of other libraries—to be examined for ideas when making our own."

The present staff manual, however, can hardly be called an "ordinary" manual, and there seem to be reasons for supposing that it may not share the fate of those that are. Certainly no harm would result if parts of this document came to be considered as "required reading" for reference assistants in any library. It would be nice to think that in the preparation of reference manuals for other libraries this one will be less "examined for ideas," than deliberately "used as a model."

Its unusualness lies not primarily in its size, even though (to the best of this reviewer's knowledge) no other library has come near to equalling the more than 200 offset-printed (8½" x 11") pages in a manual for the Reference Department alone. The more usual thing is to find the department's procedures and routines presented on a half-dozen pages in a manual, much smaller than this, covering the work of all departments.

Of much more importance than mere size is the careful thought that quite obviously has been given to this work during its dozen years of preparation—thought that has resulted in a manual not only admirably fulfilling its chief purpose of helpfulness within a single institution, but also one that has led to the inclusion of much material that will be of interest to reference workers anywhere. Some of the book, it is true, is concerned with such characteristically "staff manual" kinds of information as the fact that the revolving date stamp is kept in the drawer below the telephone. Still more of the manual necessarily describes procedures, arrangements, practices and rules which would apply is their entirety to no other library. But along with these things there are sections such as "Attitude toward the reader" (p. 36-38), and the whole of Part VI "Reference work: Techniques and Procedures" (p.63-86), which are not only so applicable to reference work in general, but also which are so well done that these parts alone might easily justify shelving this manual on the "Professional Shelf" of almost any reference department. Beyond this, it is possible that some of the nearly 40 clearly-reproduced "forms," and some of the well thought-out and fully described routines may suggest to

reference librarians in other places that their own forms and routines are about due for re-examination and possible improvement.

The Enoch Pratt Free Library provides reference service in nine locations—in eight subject departments and in the General Reference Department. It is with the latter only that this manual is concerned, a fact that is unlikely to detract much from its interest for other libraries since “general reference” at Enoch Pratt seems to include the major part of the activities called simply “reference” in libraries not so completely departmentalized.

The manual starts with two sections of introductory material, describing for the benefit of new assistants the function of the General Reference Department and its relationships with the rest of the library, identifying its clientele and giving a brief summary of the department's history.

Part III, “Organization of the General Reference Department,” though still directed primarily toward the new assistant, is likely to be worth the attention of others interested in some of the administrative aspects of reference departments. One feature is an interesting listing of 111 “activities” of the department, ranging from the department head's responsibility for planning and directing the work of the group, to the page's daily chore of sharpening and replacing pencils at the public catalog. This may not be a complete listing of the duties of all reference departments, but it is a good beginning! This list supplements a large folded chart in which the hundred-odd activities are grouped to show which are administrative, which pertain directly to services and materials in the General Reference Department, which have to do with services to and relations with other library units, and which are regarded as professional contributions in the field of reference work. The other side of this folded chart presents an organization diagram identifying, by title, the 10 members of the department (including a clerk and a page), and enumerating the duties and responsibilities of each member. After having pointed out the kinds of work to be done, it is logical that a discussion should follow of the qualities and skills needed by staff members, and that some suggestions should be given of ways reference assistants can be helped

to grow and develop on the job.

The next section, on “Physical Layout,” includes floor plans of the library, the general reference room, and of appropriate stack areas, with descriptions of the location of certain reference tools and collections.

The useful advice, already mentioned, on “Attitude toward the reader” comes in Part V on “General Policies and Procedures.” Here also is a description of the statistics that are kept, an explanation of the uses to which the statistical records are put, and a list of six activities considered by the Enoch Pratt Library as qualifying, for statistical purposes, as “professional aid to readers.” There is also a reproduction of the form sheet on which daily statistics are recorded. This material makes an interesting contribution to the perennial questions of what reference statistics to keep, how to keep them and what to do with them after they have been compiled.

The same section of the manual reproduces several other “forms” used by the department. Among the more novel of these are the printed sheets designed to be handed to readers who request kinds of help with which the library can give only limited service—contests and radio quizzes, genealogical research and biographical information about authors. Each form states the library's policy and explains why and in what ways service must be restricted. As a device for helping maintain good public relations, such printed explanations should go far toward assuring the disappointed reader that the refusal of help has official sanction and is not simply the whim of an individual desk attendant.

The value of Part VI to reference assistants in general has been suggested already. This part of the manual, indeed, would not be out of place as a chapter in a textbook on reference work. A few pages discussing search techniques (the advice given is excellent) are followed by a list of suggested readings (including some designed “to give the beginner the ‘feel’ of reference work and a taste for its stimulating possibilities”). The remainder of this part of the book is given over to describing and listing sources, procedures and techniques involved in handling certain common kinds of questions: advice about encyclopedias for home purchase, book

prices, values of old and rare books (including another printed form describing the limits of service in this connection), bibliographical data about books, quotations, biographical reference questions, addresses of persons and organizations, and book review questions. The pattern followed with most of these is to give some general advice about handling such questions, and then to provide a selected bibliography of useful tools for starting the search.

Subsequent parts of the manual concern service to readers, work at the information desk (staffed by, but physically separate from the General Reference Department), work of the clerical assistant and the page, and a final section on routines connected with certain special kinds of materials. Generously illustrated with reproductions of form cards and form sheets, these later chapters of the manual give even an outsider quite a clear picture of the department's work. In spite of their specific application to the work of an individual library, these final sections are worth at least perusal by other reference librarians both for ideas on ways of handling such common problems as interlibrary loans, photographic copying, special indexes, clippings, maps, documents and the like, as well as for presenting an example of a way these activities can be clearly described.

Eight double-column pages of index provide quick access to all topics discussed or described in the manual.

Without more familiarity than this reviewer has with the library this manual is intended to serve, it is impossible for an outsider to point to omissions of coverage, though in view of the careful planning shown throughout the work it seems unlikely that there can be serious ones. The reviewer's attention, in passing, was caught by the absence of reference to Parker Worley's lists of "Current National Bibliographies" which began appearing in the August 1949 issue of the *Library of Congress Journal of Current Acquisitions*. On page 68 where the Heyl list of "Current National Bibliographies" is cited, some mention of the newer list would have seemed appropriate, but this is a minor matter indeed.

Because of its inclusion of material that should prove of interest to reference workers in many libraries, and as an excellent ex-

ample of what a reference staff manual can be, it is a pleasure to call the attention of C.R.L. readers to this new publication.—*Oliver L. Lilley, School of Library Service, Co'umbia University.*

## German Publications, 1939-50

*Bibliographien zum Deutschen Schrifttum der Jahre 1939-1950*, von Hans Widmann. Tübingen, Max Niemeyer, c 1951, 284p. 33.00 DM.

Joris Vorstius, in his lucid and comprehensive *Ergebnisse und Fortschritte der Bibliographie in Deutschland seit dem ersten Weltkrieg* (Beiheft 74 of *Zeitschrift für Biblioteksvesen*, 1948) produced an excellent and adequate summarization of German bibliography and documentation, from both a theoretical and a practical viewpoint. He succeeded in going beyond Georg Schneider in either way, not only quantitatively but also deliberately clearing the ground for detailed descriptive publication later. Only two years after this valiant effort we are presented by Hans Widmann, one of the able men from Tübingen, with just such a record of bibliographical titles. Though there is no reference, in the volume under discussion, to cooperation between Vorstius and Widmann, one can only express the wish that the author of this new, painstaking, difficult and in many ways thankless, albeit so necessary work may have been enabled to benefit by the unpublished manuscript of a *Study of Bibliography and Librarianship in Germany since 1933*, already prepared by his colleague in Berlin (Vorstius, *op. cit.* p.1).

At any rate Widmann builds upon Vorstius's *Ergebnisse* in at least two important ways: his starting point was determined as well as the scope of his compilation, which later leads both Vorstius and Widmann beyond Georg Schneider, who excluded special subject bibliography from his *Handbuch*. Both men thus endorse the aims of inclusiveness, though on a national or cultural basis, applied on a much more comprehensive scale by Bestermann and Bohatta-Hodes (see Vorstius's article on "Petzholdt Redivivus" in *ZfB* 1950:413-37).

Widmann has defined his geographic scope in much the same way as had Vorstius, but the latter limited himself to "bibliographies