

Book Reviews

Magazines in the Twentieth Century. By Theodore Peterson. 2d ed. Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1964. vi, 484 p. \$7.50. (64-18668).

An extensive volume about American magazines is of significance because these publications' mass audiences compare in size with those of TV, radio, and the films. General newspapers still depend primarily on a local, or at best, regional coverage.

The pioneer work in the magazine field is Frank Luther Mott's *A History of American Magazines* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1938-57) which covers the period from 1741 to 1905 in four volumes. An approach with primarily social and economic emphasis was provided by James P. Wood's *Magazines in the United States* (2 ed.; New York: Ronald Press, 1956). In this one-volume work the magazine impact on public opinion, such as the crusades for political reform, and economic effects of greater coverage are well described. Other books of note are Hoffman, Allen and Ulrich's *The Little Magazine* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1946) and Mary Noel's "Villain's Galore; the Heyday of the Popular Story Weekly" (New York: Macmillan, 1954). To round out the picture, the January 1962 *Library Trends* on "Current Trends in U.S. Periodical Publishing" with Helen M. Welch and Maurice F. Tauber as issue editors must be mentioned.

Peterson's book had its beginnings as a 1955 University of Illinois dissertation, "Consumer Magazines in the United States, 1900-1950: A Social and Economic History." The following year this study appeared in its first edition. Since 1957 Dr. Peterson has been dean of the University of Illinois college of journalism and communications.

Why should there be a second edition of *Magazines in the Twentieth Century* in a period of some eight years? In addition to newcomers, there have been mergers and disappearances of magazines with more than a million circulation. In response to suggestions, treatment of the "exposé" magazines is included which, on the basis of circulation, would be hard to overlook.

Unfortunately, the extensive bibliography of the first edition has been omitted in the second.

Chapter headlines include: "The Birth of the Modern Magazine" (treats the shift from agrarian to an industrial economy, advances in printing, the effects of low prices, mass production, and mass distribution); "Advertising: Its Growth and Effects"; "The Expanding Magazine Market"; "The Economic Structure of the Industry"; "The Logistics of Magazine Publishing" (includes the economic plight of the freelance author); "The Old Leaders That Died"; "The Troubled Giant" (Curtis Publishing Co.); "The Old Leaders That Survived"; "New Leaders: The Missionaries"; "New Leaders: The Merchants" (Condé Nast Publications, Inc.; Esquire, Inc.; Cowles Magazines and Broadcasting, Inc.; Fawcett Publications, Inc.; and the Dell Publishing Company); "Success by Imitation"; "Expansion by Compression"; (includes treatment of *Time* and *Life* as well as the comic books); "Magazines for Everybody"; "Magazines for Cultural Minorities" (two broad types: literary and political); and finally, "Magazines, 1900-64: An Assessment."

There is a great temptation to place a comprehensive study such as this on the reference shelves where it is never read as a whole, but a large proportion of the general public would find this book absorbing.

Librarians have a very definite stake in periodicals. According to the latest United States Office of Education statistics, college and university libraries subscribed to 1,600,000 periodicals in the academic year 1962/63. Following the analysis of book-periodical-binding figures in the budgets from the *American Library Directory* (24th ed.; New York: R. R. Bowker Co. 1964), the acquisition of periodicals accounted for 20 per cent of the totals for college and university libraries. General periodicals are also of great interest in public and school libraries.

This publication will give librarians and journalists facts they need and general readers background material which will fascinate many.—Frank L. Schick and Herbert A. Carl, Washington, D.C.