

namely: Bantus, Nilotes and Cushites"? The reports make suggestions such as the need for the camel service to provide more material in local languages. This is a valid point, but the frame of reference is too narrow. There are no linkages to the history of mobile library service in Africa, or indeed to book and library development in general. The need for relevant material in African languages, for example, was a guiding principle of the East African Literature Bureau, set up in Nairobi as far back as 1948. In North Eastern Province, many of the residents are Kenyan Somalis, and many of those living in the refugee camps are Somalis from across the border. Somalis have a fine oral tradition, but their language was only written down in the early 1970s. The disintegration of the Somali state in the late 1980s and the 1990s did nothing to help the development of printed material in the language.

Accepting that both camels and donkeys bring books to communities that received none before, the sad fact is that neither, as yet, do more than serve very small parts of very large areas. This is something that could have been made more obvious to readers. Another issue deserves more extensive probing: why camels and donkeys at all? For example, the author of the reports was accompanied on her visit to North Eastern Province by staff from the Kenya National Library Service. Did they all leave their Garissa hotel before dawn and trek with the camels and herdsmen for up to twenty kilometers until their destination was reached? One suspects not. If they were able to go by motor vehicle, could not the library books and tents be transported in the same way? Of course, motor vehicles are expensive. They have to be imported. They break down. But none of these factors is a concern when something is rated sufficiently important. Countries under military rule in Africa, the Middle East, or elsewhere want the latest aircraft and tanks for their troops. They do not start donkey brigades.

This is not to say that there is no place for camel and donkey library services. They are interesting initiatives, especially the lat-

ter. But are they likely to be ever more than peripheral? One advantage for their providers is that people in the West see them as appropriate for Africa's current stage of development. They attract publicity, and then the donor money follows. These two IFLA reports provide useful information but ask no uncomfortable questions.—*Anthony Olden, Thames Valley University.*

**Wagner, Ralph D.** *A History of the Farmington Plan.* Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow, 2002. 441p. alk. paper, \$69.50 (ISBN 0810842599). LC 2002-17624.

Cooperative efforts by libraries, especially in collection development, have a rich history in theory, but variable results in practice. Most librarians would say that cooperation is good but in the same breath question its achievability. The Farmington Plan stands as a prime example of this ambivalence. One might consider Farmington of minimal relevance to current issues in librarianship given a general understanding of its purposes and failures, but Dr. Wagner, through illuminating exposition, exhaustive coverage of source materials, and a fresh interpretive perspective, shows how a fair analysis of the development and life of the Farmington Plan is instructive in the twenty-first century. Those who are actively engaged in cooperative work will see their own challenges reflected and may even see elements of a solution.

Wagner accomplishes two primary historical tasks in the book. The first is to place the Farmington Plan within an overall context of precursor cooperative efforts by libraries that had an impact on Farmington and subsequent cooperative efforts that were influenced by Farmington. The second is to show the breadth and span of programs encompassed by the plan during its thirty-year active life span. In this, of course, individual librarians and libraries are essential protagonists. Chapters 1 through 4 explore early efforts toward nationwide library cooperation, including calls for a national library, cooperative indexing, union catalogs, exchanges, and interlibrary loan programs that span the period from 1842 to 1942. Whether these are direct precursors

of Farmington, they clearly show a general environment of cooperative work. Chapters 5 through 10 cover the developmental stages of Farmington, from the recognition of information needs during World War II, through various (re)workings of appropriate means to address these needs (including input from the Library of Congress, various other large libraries, the Association of Research Libraries, and the ALA), to actual implementation of subject responsibility in 1948. Chapters 11 through 15 map the various stages of Farmington implementation in its first decade: assignment of subject responsibility, expansion to country responsibility, and the emergence of new challenges and issues; and changes that were implemented in its second decade—questions of evaluation, efforts at planning, issues of management control, and the formation of other cooperative programs (chapters 16 through 19). Finally, chapters 20 and 21 deal with the “demise” of the plan and its lasting reputation.

What emerges from even a simple reading of this book is that the Farmington Plan must be seen within historical context, influenced by prior cooperative work such as the National Union Catalog and itself influencing later cooperative initiatives such as the RLG Conspectus. It also must be understood as an evolving set of operations and programs implemented over time (which many tend not to see) that had more or less success depending on location, perspective, expectation, and choice of measures. Wagner’s argument, that the plan is misunderstood if it is seen primarily as a failure, seems correct given Farmington’s scope and successes amid numerous and varied challenges.

Throughout the book, Wagner adds a layer of insight through his interpretive use of current nonprofit marketing and organization theory to suggest flaws in Farmington planning that are common to attempts to promote altruistic goals in a

practical world. Although this might seem an artificial layer, over the course of the book Wagner establishes these theories as relevant through their explanatory power. I would go further to suggest that this historical example illuminated by nonprofit marketing and organizational theory can shed light on current attempts at cooperation. Attempts in any era to share costs or reduce duplication, whether among branches at the same institution, among close partners such as the Triangle Research Libraries Network, or nationally (e.g., DLF, CRL), are going to be problematic unless benefits to constituents and their constituencies are clearly defined and marketed, the program is appropriately sized to the problem to be addressed and the internal demands of the partners, and a system of ongoing evaluation is in place to balance costs and utility to each partner organization. It also may be useful to compare the challenges that faced Farmington participants to current consortial negotiating strategies for expensive electronic resources. Libraries ultimately lose if they do not stand together, yet their failure to stand together on some deals likely stems from many of the same underlying issues that afflicted Farmington Plan partnerships. Now, as then, self-interest and jockeying for competitive advantage among partners interferes with efforts to engage in fruitful cooperation. More than useful as an explanatory device, nonprofit marketing and organizational theory offers a realistic model for mitigating the challenges of altruistic action.

Wagner has provided an interesting (re)read on the Farmington Plan. Historians of librarianship will be well rewarded by his careful compilation of material; academic librarians will be startled by the similarities to cooperative attempts in our day and in the electronic environment.—*William J. Wheeler, North Carolina State University.*