BOOK REVIEWS

one-man effort that may well rank Cordasco with Ploucquet and Callisen. Even so, the question of completeness and accuracy is of primary importance in an enumerative bibliography, and I admit to being a little surprised at the extent of the material that escaped Cordasco’s bibliographic notice. In a comparison of titles published in each decade from 1820 to 1910 in the Washington University School of Medicine Library collections against the entries in Cordasco, I found matches ranging from 88% for 1820–29 imprints to 74% for 1900–10 imprints. Surprisingly, 42% of the 1840–49 imprints randomly selected from our collections were not in Cordasco. Based upon the average percentage in this survey, are we correct in assuming that American Medical Imprints, 1820–1910 represents approximately 76% of the medical works published in the United States between 1820 and 1910?

One wonders, for example, why the 1st (1826), 2d (1828), 4th (1833) and 9th (1847) editions of William Potts Dewees’ A Treatise on the Diseases of Females are included in Cordasco, but not the 3d (1831), 5th (1835), 6th (1837), 7th (1840) and 8th (1843) editions. Such omissions for titles in multiple editions appear to be common. Already one can imagine “Not in Cordasco” appearing in innumerable booksellers’ catalogs as the rationale for an artificial scarcity and consequent rise in price.

Whatever its omissions—both the inevitable and the regrettable—American Medical Imprints, 1820–1910 will remain a monument of historical medical bibliography and an essential part of the working libraries of historians, librarians, and booksellers for generations to come. As Dr. Cordasco intended, it affords easy access to a multifarious literature; and beyond its obvious bibliographic utility, it provides a remarkable chronological portrait of the progress and direction of 19th-century American medicine and the parallel growth of American medical publishing. In the compiler’s words, it “affords limitless opportunities to explore, in its thousands of entries, the evolution and formation of the profession.”

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Library Overdues is a collection of articles discussing the various aspects of the library overdues dilemma. The book has fourteen chapters, broadly sectioned into five areas: (1) research studies on overdues; (2) methods of collecting overdues, including legal proceedings; (3) overdues in different kinds of libraries; (4) the use of automation, including microcomputers, for collection of overdues; and (5) fines for overdues.

The lead chapter, “More hard facts on overdues,” by Burgin and Hansel, discusses two surveys of public libraries. The next four chapters describe the how-to’s of dealing with the overdue problem in public libraries. These are essentially “How I done good in my library” articles. The “In search of excellence” chapter reproduces several forms, including handwritten fine slips. The reproductions are poor and difficult to read, but the interested reader will find the detailed descriptions of processes and forms useful. For those contemplating involvement with the legal system as a solution to their overdues problems, there is much useful information.

Three chapters deal with overdues in nonpublic libraries; specifically, there are articles on academic, hospital, and school libraries. These are the weakest chapters in the book, probably because the conclusions are obvious. They offer no innovative ideas or suggestions.

The next two chapters present some basic ideas on the usefulness of automation and computers as solutions to the overdue dilemma. Some helpful hints concerning the use of a microcomputer as a circulation tool are discussed. Mc Clintock’s chapter on “Library automation and overdues” compares manual and automated overdue procedures. Special features of automated systems and minimum requirements for automation of overdues are discussed. Cursory discussions of the use of automation for complex circulation policies are included.

Barbara Anderson’s final chapters on “The fines—no fines debate” and “Overdues and the library’s image” are two of the best. They delineate both sides of the fine question and raise several important issues. For example, although fines are a library tradition, both sides of the fines—no fines debate have strong advocates. Advocates of fines see them as an incentive for patrons to return materials on time, as a display of the library’s seriousness about its rules, and as an income generator. Libraries that have reported success with fines are discussed. Those advocating the elimination of fines argue that fines do not make a significant difference in a library’s overdues, that they are a hardship to children, that they cost more to
inflexible guardians of library ages inspires them to charging fines for overdues should be reassessed periodically to determine whether it is accomplishing enough of its intended purpose to warrant its negative effects on the library's image. All policies of the library should be consistent with attempts to encourage library use, she feels.

The book concludes with an apparently comprehensive bibliography. Eight of the chapters also give reference lists that will be useful to students of their particular subjects. A short index is included.

Library Overdues should be useful to librarians who have large collections or those who find that substantial portions of their collections are often overdue. In libraries where overdues are a problem, this book can provide useful hints, valuable tools, and thought-provoking rationales on all sides of this persistent and seldom-discussed problem. Whether a library is large or small, charges fines or not, is automated or not, this book can be helpful if overdues consume a sizable portion of staff time. It would not be useful for smaller libraries with minimal circulation.

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BOOKS AND SERIALS RECEIVED

The following books and serials received are listed as a guide for library acquisitions. The list is divided into library and information science, reference sources, general health-related publications, and new serials. Selections for review are made according to the interests of readers of the Bulletin and as space permits.

Library and Information Science


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