

Review Articles

Wills of the Justices

The Wills of the Justices; a Collection of the Wills and Testaments of Twenty-Three Justices of the United States Supreme Court. Ed. by John C. Hogan. Los Angeles: Ray Fielding Productions, 1956. Distributed by Oceana Publications, New York. \$20. (Microfilm.)

This collection, which I am informed is the first installment of what is to be a complete publication of the wills (or of information concerning interstate administration of the estates) of all justices of the Supreme Court of the United States about whom such information is obtainable, is extremely interesting. I do not know how great will be its practical value. However, I should think that, at least when it is completed, the collection could be a mine of information to biographers, historians, and commentators on the social scene in past years. In the present selection, attention has been focused on the Chief Justices, ending with William Howard Taft, on the members of the court participating in the Dred Scott decision, and on a group of other Associate Justices—David J. Brewer, John M. Harlan (the first), Horace H. Lurton, Stanley Matthews, Joseph McKenna, John McKinley, Samuel F. Miller, William Strong, and William B. Woods.

The first two wills, those of John Jay and Oliver Ellsworth, offer an interesting contrast. Jay's is verbose and detailed, with an elaborate introduction giving thanks to the Deity for numerous specific benefits to John Jay as well as for His general care of mankind. Ellsworth, to the contrary, put his entire will on a single pithy page, with no exordium whatever. These two types of draftsmanship we still have with us. The other wills afford examples of various styles of composition, as well as of variant states of fortune, and concern or unconcern with affairs of business and of domestic property.

After reading this microfilmed collection, I infer that the function of microfilming is the reproduction of material which, for one reason or another, cannot be published

profitably in conventional form. However, at the end of the reading process, my eyes were much more tired than would have been the case after reading ordinary material in good light for a like period. Certainly, despite the amount of space which could be saved, I shall not advocate putting all our libraries into microfilm. Where the material consisted of photostatic reproduction of handwritten documents, particularly if the writing was either obscure or unique, it was almost impossible to decipher. This must be considered a defect of the microfilm device at present, though obviously one would be foolish to predict that it never will be overcome. However, even though the reproduction were perfect, I believe that there would be less strain in reading a conventionally manufactured book. Nevertheless, as to rare and otherwise unobtainable matter, let us, by all means, have it on microfilm.—*Maurice H. Merrill, University of Oklahoma.*

Filing Rules And Practice

Filing Rules for the Dictionary Catalogs of the Library of Congress. By Processing Department, U. S. Library of Congress. Washington, 1956. 274p. \$2.25. (Available from the U. S. Superintendent of Documents.)

In a foreword, John Cronin, Director of the Processing Department, explains that this printed and bound book of rules originated in a loose-leaf edition for the Library staff, begun by James K. Boyland, revised by several committees, and compiled into a comprehensive code by the late Linn R. Blanchard. Others at the Library of Congress have assisted in gathering examples, editing the final copy, and preparing the index. The work truly exemplifies corporate authorship, and if anyone deserves the major credit, it is Charles A. Cutter, the fourth edition of whose classed rules (1904)

are, *au fond*, the beginning of all further effort.

The work is divided into two parts: the rules in use and the ones the Library of Congress proposes to adopt as time and staff make possible. It is very likely the most complete and painstaking book of filing rules ever published, and the copious examples in conspicuous bold-face type explain in detail whatever the text of the rules may have left in doubt. The introduction sets forth the basic rules in four pages, about half of which is in bold-face type. The remainder of the book, and nine-tenths of its index, is made up of amplifications, clarifications, excellent examples, and very many curious exceptions—the reason that large catalogs require an elaborate manual for the filers.

Where Cutter's *Rules* cover the problems in ten pages, his rules "grown up" take 161 larger pages, though happily in larger print. But one idea has not grown up with the problems. Both the parent and its offspring presume to arrange things largely as the public is said to want them. Cutter proposed to teach the user, when necessary, and his explanation of the "person, place," rule is rather characteristic: "The arrangement is arbitrary." The first paragraph of the Introduction to the LC Rules contains this apologetic, if not prayerful, sentence: "If an arrangement seems arbitrary, there is usually a reason for it; for it should be assumed that it is always the aim to arrange entries in such a way that they may be found as quickly and easily as possible by the users of the catalog."

The rules on which the structure of the whole book rests seem straightforward enough. The first is the familiar "File word by word and letter by letter," as uttered to all new filers by all old catalogers. The second rule provides for the order of punctuation which is, in effect, a subdivision mark—comma after surnames, comma after forenames; for subjects: dash, parenthesis, comma, in that order; for place names, the period after the entry word. The third rule is the equally familiar "person, place, thing, and title."

But with rule four, one feels that he has pressed his luck too far. The order is generally main entry, added entry, and subject entry. An important exception is made for *place arrangement*, the Library of Congress

term for its major development away from its own rules, and the other exceptions follow, demanding a great deal of knowledge on the part of the filer. Of course, peculiarities of language, abbreviations, letters, signs, etc., must have a place, but one notes immediately that such visual signals as italicized words have no correspondence to a special exception. "Religious denominations" constitute a spectacular exception to the rules for filing of corporate authors. This requires the filer to know what a "religious denomination" is and presumes that such bodies have distinctive names and keep them all the time. What is done with the Theosophical Society, with the First Zen Society of New York, with the Ramakrishna Society? Someone, cataloger or filer, needs rich experience to be able to tell when the alphabetic order must be replaced, without visual indication, by a classed order.

Significantly, the alternate rules provide that main and added entry be interfiled and that religious denominations be treated mostly by alphabetic procedures. The tendency of the alternate rules is away from the classed procedures that Cutter instituted, away from alphabetic procedures in the filing of numerals, and generally toward adherence to a rule of the sequential signal over unindicated knowledge which the filer is supposed to have. In the alternate rules, subject headings are to be filed dash, comma, parenthesis as in the *ALA Filing Code*, which is called a better arrangement (cf. p.145). In the body of the rules, the requirement for Literature Headings that (Collections) and (Selections, Extracts, etc.) precede even the dash, not to mention (Comedy) and (Tragedy), is an annoying exception, however desirable it may seem to have the whole before any of its parts.

Throughout the section on subject headings one has the apprehension that catalogers may use several criteria for the choice of punctuation, and filers may decide that punctuation indicates entirely different decisions. On p.144, the *Filing Rules* explain that a mistake has occurred, from time to time, and the filer is to call for the Senior Filer so that "the correction can be made." This is for the distinction between racial and linguistic adjective, which is signaled by a comma between it and the preceding

word, which it modifies, as opposed to geographical subdivisions, which are signaled by a dash. The distinction can be preserved so long as racial and linguistic adjectives differ in shape from the geographical name. But the trend of the language seems to be otherwise. Granted that we have Portuguese for Portugal, French for France, but what do we have as the linguistic or racial adjective for London, Antwerp, Boston? What will we need for Seoul, Laos, and Utah? We speak of a "New York dialect," a "Pusan accent," and the use of a noun adjunct seems always to gain ground. Once the distinction disappears, how will the filer be sure that, if one can imagine it, the dash between *Art-Seoul* is not really meant to be *Art, Seoul*, and, more important, what user can comprehend the really delicate inference of the punctuation? Who will decide whether the error is the cataloger's or the filer's? How will the obviously necessary *see* references be filed?

The problems of filing originate with the choice of entry, and the logic of the arrangement ought not to be independent of the visual signals given. When one signal, such as parenthesis, indicates several different logical or grammatical categories, the filer must undo what the cataloger has done. This requires a degree of skill and judgment which can be achieved, not by in-service training, but by professional education. Carried to its ultimate fulfillment, the education necessary will give us a new branch of librarianship, to join the documentalists and archivists. What they will call themselves, I don't know—perhaps sequentialists.

Consider the attainments required of a filer, as the rules presuppose them, and imagine fifty years' growth in libraries. Though we may expect the average informed filer to know that 10 in French is *dix*, even that 89 is *quatre-vingt-neuf*, though we may supply the spelling in brackets after the numerals for unusual languages, who is to decide what spelling is proper for languages like Japanese, which distinguish between round objects, flat objects, numbers of men, and so on? Will not either the cataloger or the filer need to have a working knowledge of Japanese to know whether a Romanized book title employs the correct form of the

number in the spelling supplied? Either the revisers in the catalog room or the Senior Filer will have to be accomplished linguists. Though the articles (*a*, *and*, *the*) and cardinal numerals are listed for 28 languages, the Asian and African languages must be dealt with as they reach prominence. Even now the distinction between articles in the nominative case and those in other cases requires a knowledge of gender in German: *Der* is also feminine genitive singular and dative singular. *Die* is also accusative plural and makes a knowledge of number necessary, and *das* is not only nominative but also accusative for neuter nouns, and a knowledge of case, dependent as it is on syntax, is also necessary.

If Cutter's ten pages of rules had doubled each decade, they would in 1954 have required 160 pages. Apparently the Library of Congress is keeping up quite well with its 161 pages of rules this year. But carry this process on, and how will anyone make his way through the 5,000-odd pages which will be required at the end of this century? As world communication broadens and expands and the great social changes among the once primitive peoples of the world continue, is it too unreasonable to suppose that something like this would happen?

There is no quibbling over the compactness, the printing, and the arrangement of these rules. The book is of unquestionable value to any library using Library of Congress cards, whatever filing rules that library may follow. Though it leaves out some fascinating exceptions and distinctions (such as the difference between Portuguese *á* and *a*, the treatment of the ampersand "&" as a sign—alphabetized *and*, except when it occurs as a part of a conventional title for music, where it is a comma) which occur in the finest print, the index is as inclusive as it can be. The arrangement of the book by catchword titles, all in alphabetic order, and the indexing of specific entries, with references using a code equivalent of the catchword title and a Roman numeral as chapter and verse of the rules, presupposing some familiarizing, is doubtless most practical.

Still, one cannot help wondering if this excellent book is not much more a guide to a complicated practice rather than a set

of rules for the strategy in which both cataloger and user are engaged. We cannot say that we *know* how users prefer items filed in a catalog, whether a certain user really expects identical items to be together or believes that the alphabetic order has, naturally, scattered them. We have always guessed that we are doing what a mythical majority of the users want, but we have never really known how many of the users even have a preference, let alone know that some variation is possible. One wonders why the new filer, eager to show his knowledge of the alphabet, does not represent the untrained user. If a rule is hard for him, it is almost certain to be hard for those like him.

Would we be playing this game of strategy with more skill if we established a rule and stuck to it, regardless of where the card landed? If so, the rule would have to be devised by catalogers themselves, and it would have to ordain, once and for all, the choice of entry, whether main or added, whether subject or series, according to some objective analysis of which signs and symbols are going to equal what. We would have to presume that our object is not to give the user the exceptions we guess he wants, but in every case we would have to show him that we are honestly adhering to the rule which we insist that he must learn if he wants to play at all.

One wishes that the *Filing Rules* could be made a standard part of a high-school course in the use of a library. But, actually, as the alternate rules indicate, they are not quite standardized even for the Library of Congress itself, and, in any case, no high-school student could read that there is usually a reason for a seemingly arbitrary arrangement without thinking that the unreasonable arrangements predominate, and that the word usually is an outright misapprehension, if not a lie. He is quite free to assume that the aim of the cataloger has been to play a fierce game of hide-and-seek with him, though he has neither the disposition nor the time, nor—to tell the truth, as he might not—does he have the knowledge to win, even many years later when he is working on his dissertation.—*Jay E. Daily, Paula K. Lazarus Memorial Library, National Conference of Christians and Jews, New York.*

Documentation in Action

Documentation in Action; Based on 1956 Conference on Documentation at Western Reserve University. By Jesse H. Shera, Allen Kent, [and] James W. Perry. New York: Reinhold; London: Chapman & Hall, 1956.

The conference recorded in this book (referred to throughout the text as the Conference on the Practical Utilization of Recorded Knowledge—Present and Future) was held on January 16 to 18, 1956. Some 670 persons attended, including librarians, documentalists, scientists, lawyers, and experts on machine computing, operations research, information theory, and language. The object of the conference was "the promotion of understanding and cooperation among organizations and individuals representing a wide variety of interests, with four particular foci:

- a. The use of information and its relation to the structure of recorded information and the patterns of recourse to it.
- b. The contribution which certain specialized fields of knowledge, e.g., operations research, information theory, etc., might make to improving the utilization of graphic records.
- c. The development and improvement of methods, systems, and equipment for the organization and correlation of information.
- d. The training of personnel."

The book is made up of five parts. Part one consists of seven "state of the art" chapters" on fields chosen as basic. These were prepared by committees and distributed before the conference. Part two sketches out what machines, systems, education, cooperation, and language study might contribute to better documentation. Parts three, four, and five respectively "summarize the panel meetings," report discussions on possible cooperation in documentation of various subjects, and assess desirable future research.

This is a review of the book, not the conference, which the reviewer did not attend. The book is disappointing in matter and