

how much it stimulates librarians to accept and to act on these recommendations.—*William Vernon Jackson, Graduate School of Library Science, University of Illinois.*

## Shelf Classification

*American Library Classification, with Special Reference to the Library of Congress.* By Leo E. LaMontagne. Hamden, Conn.: Shoe String Press, 1961. 443p. \$9.50.

This volume by Leo LaMontagne is as much biographical as it is historical. After an introductory section on Thomas Jefferson and the Library of Congress, a chapter is concerned with the work of Socrates, Plato, Callimachus, Thabanus Maurus, Avicenna, and others of the early period. LaMontagne notes the various ways in the approach to knowledge—the similarities and differences. "I have taken all knowledge to be my province," Bacon wrote to Lord Burghley in 1592 (p. 82). Knowledge has gone a long way since Bacon divided it into two parts: human knowledge (from the sense), and theology (from revelation). This section is interesting but adds little to the direct development of the basic theme, a discussion of the Library of Congress classification.

Duncan Campbell, a Boston bookseller, issued the first book classification in the United States—a sales catalog published in 1693—according to LaMontagne. The catalog dealt with the library of Samuel Lee, and the books were listed by language, size, and subject. The first classification used in American libraries was the arrangement of religious topics contained in *Bibliotheca Parochialis* of the Reverend Thomas Bray, issued in London in 1697. Bray's classification of religion contained ten main divisions and many subdivisions. The 1723 Harvard College arrangement (developed by Joshua Gee), the 1703 (?) classification of William Proctor for the William Byrd Collection, the 1731 essay of Samuel Johnson (of Guilford, Connecticut) on the classification of knowledge, and the 1743 classified catalog of Thomas Clap at Yale College are described by LaMontagne. In summary of these early arrangements, the author writes: "The classi-

fications thus far described reveal that American library classification, like the culture of which it forms a part, was both derivative and original."

How classification grew from simple to complex arrangements is shown in the development of the scheme (1764) for The Redwood Library, in Newport, Rhode Island, prepared by the Reverend Ezra Stiles, who later became president of Yale College. This arrangement was similar to the simple scheme of divisions in the catalog of Samuel Lee's library. Further steps in the road to complexity include the classified catalog of the Library Company of Philadelphia (1789), supposed to have been compiled by Zechariah Poulson, Jr.; the classification of T. M. Harris at Harvard College (1793); the 1816 classifications of A. E. B. Woodward (who developed the so-called "Catholepistemia") and of Jeremy Bentham (who developed his *Chrestomathia*). LaMontagne states that Woodward's system, destined for oblivion, contained much in the development of laws of classification—such "laws" as comprehensiveness, logical division, correlation of subjects, approach from the simple to the complex, clear definition of coverage by subjects, clear definition of relationship between subjects, appropriate terminology, and the absence of excessive subdivision. The 1821 Harvard College classification, the 1824 classification of the American Philosophical Society, the system of the Charleston Society Library (1826), the introduction of the Brunet system at Harvard in 1830, and the classifications used at the Library Company of Philadelphia, the New York Society Library, Cambridge (Massachusetts) High School, and the U.S. Military Academy at West Point are reviewed, as well as the contributions of Roswell Park, S. Hastings Grant, and Romain Merlin.

The major contribution of this work is the discussion of the development of the Library of Congress classification (chapters XIII–XVIII). The immediate usefulness of this volume, so long as there is not available a detailed guide to the Library of Congress classification, will be primarily the description of the various schedules. The development and suggestions for the future of this system are considered. However, there is limited analysis of the peculiarities of the separate classes. There appears still to be a need for a thorough and detailed manual on

the Library of Congress schedules. Outside of the scope of the study, apparently, was the development of more recent classifications, although attention is given to the work of Dewey, Cutter, and others. Classifications subsequent to the L.C. are not discussed, although Bliss and Ranganathan are mentioned. In respect to the future, it would appear that the law librarians of the country should be clamoring for the Library of Congress to complete the K classification, even though it may not be (and cannot be) perfect. Systematic arrangement of materials still appears to make sense in terms of economy of use by both staff and clientele. La-Montagne properly suggests that perfection in classification is hard to come by, and that "A rude shed provides better protection from the elements than the blueprints of a mansion." One point is clear; enough American libraries have committed themselves to the L.C. classification that they depend on the national library to keep it going and up-to-date.—*Maurice F. Tauber, Columbia University.*

## Library Surveys

*College and University Library Surveys 1938-1952.* By E. Walfred Erickson. Chicago: ALA, 1961. (ACRL Monograph Number 25). 115p. \$3.25.

This survey of surveys provides a brief statement of the history of the device, describes the scope and limitations of surveys in general, and provides some analysis of recommendations made in a dozen surveys conducted between 1938 and 1951 out of nineteen cited in *Library Literature* through 1952. The analysis covered 775 recommendations and attempted to "ascertain to what extent those recommendations have been carried out, when they were achieved, what the influence of the surveys was, and whether the librarians agreed upon the recommendations."

As far as the analysis went, it accomplished the limited objectives the author set for himself in his doctoral dissertation on which this monograph is based. In a sense this is the report of a post-mortem examination, with no attention paid to the animating spirit which inspired each of the surveys, infused it during its operation, and which was responsible in part for the successes and failures recorded. The concentration on tabulation of results led the author both to give a misleading appearance of precision in the results so carefully tabulated, and to understate the values of social and political pressures which lead to correction of deficiencies to which surveys are intended to call attention.

It is to be hoped that some imaginative colleague with a real interest in the value of surveys will take on where Mr. Erickson left off and will examine the twelve surveys covered by this monograph, as well as others, in the light of the unstated objectives of the surveys, of the methods of persuasion used to effect changes, and of the resulting changes in the library climate of the institutions affected. Admittedly this approach is difficult, but the results of such a study would constitute a valuable sociological document at least as persuasive as Mr. Erickson's tabulations.—*Marion A. Milczewski, University of Washington Libraries.*

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