

Library historians regularly bemoan the lack of historical consciousness in our profession. They lament that their work is neither recognized nor read by the vast majority of librarians. And they often bemoan the fact that they have difficulty getting their material published. Complaining that "nobody loves us" and "we don't get no respect" often seems endemic among our colleagues. In the opinion of this writer, we chastise ourselves unduly.

As I look back at the period since I published my first book, *Charles Evans, American Bibliographer*, I am amazed at how much substantive book and library history has been published. One has only to look at the record to see that not only university presses but also the Greenwood Press, Beta Phi Mu with its chapbook and monograph series, and ACRL monographs have added significant historical publications to our literature. Other publishers also occasionally publish library/information science history.

If a person wishes to find an outlet for a well-researched article, then she or he does not have to consider only *Library Quarterly* or *College and Research Libraries* as possibilities. *Libraries and Culture* (formerly the *Journal of Library History*) and the quinquennial *Library History*

Seminars welcome one and all: faculty members, practicing librarians, book persons, or independent scholars. And ALA divisional publications, as well as journals of related associations, have encouraged publication, especially as they invite submissions on some significant occasion in their history.

State associations are also becoming aware of the need to preserve the past of their respective states, e.g., the Texas Library Association's recently launched oral history project. When they celebrate their various anniversaries, as NCLA does for *North Carolina Libraries* with this issue, there will no doubt be other substantive articles including, as is appropriate at such times, the laudatory speeches and reminiscences.

Therefore I commend NCLA for devoting this issue to the fiftieth anniversary of *North Carolina Libraries* by publishing articles on the state's library history. The

range is wide, but what pleases me most is that the authors have mined archives and private papers, as well as official records, to document their story. This is indicative of the maturation of our profession.

Bob Martin, who has written the definitive study of that dominant figure, Louis Round Wilson, notes the connection between his religious beliefs and education in service to his native state. The impact of that religious background has often been overlooked in biographical and historical study.

Margaretta Yarborough, having checked the National Archives, has written a fascinating account of books provided to lighthouses and ships of the Coast Guard — a real example of outreach where trunks of books were regularly dispatched to these sites.

Maury York continues his work in nineteenth-century North Carolina libraries with an interesting account of the State Library before the Civil War, especially noting the purchases made for the legislature by Joseph Green Cogswell.

Other authors include Cora Paul Bomar, herself a major figure in development of school library media centers, on those libraries; Eileen McGrath on the Hayes Plantation library; Sheila A. Bumgarner on Charlotte's first public librarian, Annie Smith Ross; Jim Carmichael on North Carolina libraries, regionalism, and the Great Depression (we always capitalize this one!); and Frances Bradburn on *North Carolina Libraries* itself.

With genuine appreciation for all the good work found in this issue, I cannot help but note some other topics that need to be treated historically: library service to African Americans, and especially people such as Mollie Huston Lee and Annette Phinazee, who were so significant in providing this service; biographical studies of two major figures whose work was important nationally, Marjorie Beal, State Librarian, who was active in promoting the original Library Services Act, and Mary Peacock Douglas, whose work on national standards for school libraries was so important; and the economic and social forces which either prompted or delayed the establishment of adequate libraries. And we need to expand Bob Anthony's bibliography of North Carolina library history by including master's papers, doctoral dissertations, books, and articles from other sources besides *North Carolina Libraries*.

In closing, let me encourage librarians both young and old to preserve the records of our profession's past, to conduct oral history interviews, and to research and even rewrite the story of our library history. There are articles and books yet to be written. Let us get on with this important task.

Introduction ...

The Status of Our Past

by Edward G. Holley