

Introduction

Andrew B. Wertheimer and Donald G. Davis, Jr

Anniversaries have been the occasion of some of the finest and also the poorest historical writings. Unfortunately, library history is no exception. We hope that you will find these writings on the state of historical research on librarianship to fall closer to the former category, bearing in mind that the variety of topics and approaches has resulted in a diversity of styles. The anniversary this issue belatedly celebrates is the fiftieth anniversary of the American Library Association's Library History Round Table (LHRT), the oldest organization dedicated to the promotion of historical research in librarianship.

The anniversary itself—commemorated at the American Library Association conference in Washington, D.C., at the Center for the Book at the Library of Congress on June 27, 1998—suggested many of the themes for this collection, such as the two studies of the LHRT, while others are a reflection of our interest in reconnecting library history with the larger profession and other historians of print culture. In cognate fields we feature essays by Richard J. Cox from the perspective of an archival historian and by scholar of the book and library history D. W. Krummel. We tried to include some additional scholarly bridge with the emerging group of historians of information science, but publication schedules and other details meant that we could not include the commissioned essay on this topic.

Our volume is anchored by an excellent examination by Wayne A. Wiegand, who has done so much to raise the standards of historical research in library history. This new essay is a reflection of some of his recent concerns and opinions.

Much of the history of the LHRT and library history research remains to be written; however, we are pleased to include essays by Lee Shiflett, who draws upon his biographical research on LHRT founder Louis Shores, and John David Marshall, who writes as an early pioneer of the round table. These essays point out that two very important by-products of the LHRT are the Library History Seminars and this journal, *Libraries & Culture*. These are the foci of essays by Edward A.

Goedeken and by Jon Arvid Aho and Donald G. Davis, Jr. We also feature an essay by John Mark Tucker on reference tools in library history research, which should be extremely useful for students and publishers, among others.

We tried to find some of the best-established and forthcoming library historians and asked them to reflect on different questions related to their own research area. As a result, some of the essay titles may sound like literature reviews, but most actually are groundbreaking examinations of key questions that have received comparatively little scholarly attention to date. Professors Suzanne Hildenbrand, Mary Niles Maack, Cheryl Knott Malone, James V. Carmichael, Jr., and Christine Jenkins each raise some important questions on gender, international aspects, ethnicity, sexuality, and children that will be of interest to other scholars of the history of the professions.

We owe a deep gratitude to the LHRT 50th Anniversary Committee: Donald G. Davis, Jr. (chair), Michele V. Cloonan, David B. Hovde, Joy A. Kingsolver, John Mark Tucker, and Andrew B. Wertheimer. The committee, along with John Y. Cole of the Center for the Book, Library of Congress, oversaw an excellent program on the fiftieth anniversary of the round table that provided initial drafts of some of the essays collected here. These presentations were reactions to papers read at the first meeting of the Library History Round Table by Stanley Pargellis and Louis Shores, published as "Long Life to the Library History Round Table" (*Wilson Library Bulletin* 22 [April 1948]: 601-3, 607) and "The Importance of Library History" (in John David Marshall, ed., *American Library History Reader* [Hamden, Conn.: Shoe String Press, 1961], 3-7). Phyllis Dain's current comments, selected from the commemoration's papers, provide a fitting meditation on historiography.

Other features in this collection enhance the appeal of this unique work. The extensive chronology of LHRT, from 1947 to 1997, compiled by Andrew B. Wertheimer and John David Marshall, consists of as complete a record as possible of programs, awards, and officers of the round table. Liz Cardman's essay on the bookplate, which goes well beyond the usual *L&C* cover essay, also adds to this work.

We would also like to thank the chairs of the LHRT who secured financial and other support while this volume took shape: Louise S. Robbins, David B. Hovde, and Sybil E. Moses. Because of their support, this volume also is being published as a monograph under the imprint of the LHRT and the University of Texas at Austin Graduate School of Library and Information Science. An additional thanks goes to David Hovde's family, whose contribution made an index to the hard-cover volume a reality. The index itself is the fine work of Hermina G. B. Anghelescu

and is of great benefit, as it is our hope that this work will be used as a reference tool.

Our final thank you goes out to the contributors of the individual essays. They have been a pleasure to work with, and, more importantly, without them we would not have the rich scholarly offerings that now await you.