Book Reviews

A Bibliography of Illinois Imprints, 1814-1858. By Cecil K. Byrd, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966. xxv, 601 p. $12.50 (65-24423).

This is a successful and important addition to the growing list of bibliographies of early state imprints which are essential to an understanding of the role played by the printing press. Mr. Byrd has chosen to follow the plan laid out by Douglas C. McMurtrie for recording post-1800 imprints by state rather than the wholesale approach used by Charles Evans for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. McMurtrie began by identifying the early press and imprints of each locality; out of this grew that great mass of raw material found in the mimeographed *American Imprint Inventory* lists. From these and other studies have been prepared a number of bibliographies of the imprints of individual states, the most recent of which was McCorison's *Vermont Imprints.* Thus far bibliographers have avoided the great printing centers of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia.

Using the conventional chronological arrangement, the author has endeavored to include all products of "native" Illinois presses, excepting certain state documents printed principally for the use of legislators, blank forms, and similar ephemera. The descriptions are a sensible compromise between short-title listings and detailed descriptions. Enough information is given to identify the item and determine the completeness of a copy in hand. However, Mr. Byrd's modest statement, "editorial comments occur when it was thought that the title, its subject matter, its author was important enough to merit historical or biographical elaboration," fails to warn the user to a significant contribution to this kind of bibliography. There are in fact only a few entries which do not receive the benefit of Byrd's editorial comments. Some run to as much as a half a page. The information he provides makes it possible to place each item in its time and place in the history of Illinois. The book becomes immensely more useful for both the casual user checking one imprint and for the historian who is surveying this period of the state's history. This is facilitated by the full index which contains not only names of people but also those of organizations. This is particularly important because so many of the items have corporate entries.

Mr. Byrd has followed the principle of recording only those imprints which he felt "reasonably certain still exist," and has omitted titles to which he found references but for which no copies could be located. He is quite frank about the collections which he was unable to inspect. Thus when one of those collections is given as a location, the user is alerted to the fact that the item was not actually seen. It is clear that Mr. Byrd's failure to see these items was not from want of effort on his part. The one, minor, bothersome point is the treatment of the location of copies. Although in many cases two or three locations are given, a large number of entries have only one. Are these items really as scarce as this would suggest at first glance?

In the Introduction is a useful breakdown of the number of items issued each year in each town. The largest number were either government publications or religious texts. One is tempted to make a comparison with the output of the first thirty-five years of the Massachusetts, New York, or Pennsylvania presses.

Although the "not in Byrd" game can now begin, the basis for the history of printing in this vital state is now firmly anchored.—*Thomas R. Adams, John Carter Brown library, Brown University.*

Library Statistics: A Handbook of Concepts, Definitions, and Terminology. Ed. by Joel Williams. Chicago, Illinois: ALA, 1966. 166p. $5.50 (66-22724).

"The principal objective of this handbook is the standardization of concepts, definitions, and terminology for the several basic types of libraries." How well this has been achieved can only be determined by the application and use of the content. There

can be no question of the need for such a volume, and the cooperative approach provided by the ALA Statistics Coordinating Project should encourage general acceptance and use. Hopefully, as noted by Frank Schick in the foreword, "it may well prove the basis for an international standard for library statistics. . . ."

The volume is organized with an opening chapter on General Concepts, followed by chapters on Statistics of College and University Libraries, Statistics of State Library Agencies, Statistics of School Libraries, Statistics of Special Libraries, and Statistics of Library Education. Each is written by a specialist in the field.

The chapter on Statistics of College and University Libraries was prepared by Marietta Chicorel, whose interest in this field is further represented by an article in *CRL* for January, 1966 (Marietta Chicorel, "Statistics and Standards for College and University Libraries," *CRL*, XXVII [January 1966], 19-22). It is suggested that a reading of this article will provide a background for understanding some of the recommendations made. While there may be some disagreement over decisions reached, for instance in the matter of using the physical volume rather than the bibliographical unit as the basis for count, we are at least provided with a clear statement on this and other items normally asked for in statistical reports. There also seems to be reasonable consistency in the definitions and principles among the chapters on Public Libraries, College and University Libraries, and Special Libraries.

A glossary of terms is provided and is generally based on the *ALA Glossary of Library Terms*.

In order that the volume be representative of a broad spectrum, arrangements were made for a series of four regional conferences involving more than one hundred and sixty librarians. My only quarrel with the accuracy of the volume came for obvious reasons on page 148 where I found Mildred C. Langner, medical librarian of the University of Miami, identified in a similar capacity with the University of Mississippi!

Joel Williams, director of the Statistics Coordinating Project, his staff and the Advisory Committee are to be congratulated upon the successful preparation of a very useful volume.—*Archie McNeal, University of Miami.*

Computer Filing of Index, Bibliographic, and Catalog Entries. By Theodore C. Hines and Jessica L. Harris. Newark: Bro-Dart Foundation, 1966. ix + 126 pp. (66-23484).

The purpose of this book is to develop a code for computer or hand filing of library, catalog, bibliographic, or index entries in a divided arrangement wherein authors, titles, and subjects are to be in separate alphabets. The authors assume "that filing should be a purely mechanical routine of handling entries whose written form actually determines their relative positions." In other words, the cataloger or indexer prepares the entry for filing, and the computer does a simple, mechanical sorting into alphabetical order.

However, the computer has far greater capabilities for filing than the mere ability to sort alphabetically catalog or index entries manually prepared for such a sorting. Use of a computer as a mere sorting machine wastes much of its power, for the computer can relieve the cataloger or indexer of most of the work involved in setting up the entry for filing. For instance, the authors recommend that catalogers and indexers omit initial articles in the nominative case from title entries, but it is perfectly feasible to have the computer ignore these articles in mechanically preparing entries for filing; the article appears in the printed product, but was ignored in the alphabeting procedure.

It is customary in sorting records with a computer to have the computer edit the category in the record under which the record is to be filed. The computer is instructed to edit appropriate characters and set them up in a special sort field. The sort program then operates on this field.

In setting up sort-field characters, the computer can alter original data in any way desired, providing that each character is always changed with the same algorithm. The algorithm may be quite complex and relate a given character with other elements so that in one circumstance it may be edited in one way and in another circumstance in