

# CHAPTER ONE

## HISTORIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES

Publications devoted to the writing of library history in the United States date from the 1950s but did not begin to appear with regularity until the latter stages of the 1970s. Articles on the "value of library history" have been produced by Jesse H. Shera (1952, **1.12**), Haynes McMullen (1952, **1.11**), Raymond Irwin (1958, **1.17**), Louis Shores (1961, **1.26**), and John C. Colson (1969, **1.44**) and collectively constitute a genre in their own right.

More traditional contributions reviewing and evaluating the literature stem from classic essays by Felix Reichmann ("Historical Research and Library Science," 1964, **1.29**) and Sidney L. Jackson ("Materials for Teaching Library History in the U.S.A.," 1972, **1.76**). These were followed by two fine articles on public library historiographye64,sakg(29)]t3j0on T

textual criticism in library history (1971, **1.60**). The American Library Association's (ALA) American Library History Round Table meeting of 1977 included papers by Holley on historiography and questions of evidence (1977, **1.113**); Harris, who examined the interpretive approaches of library historians (1978, **1.119**); and Phyllis Dain, who responded to Harris, deriving observations from her research into the history of the New York Public Library (1978, **1.116**). The 1978 meeting of the Association of American Library Schools' Research Interest Group featured McMullen on matters of writing style and interpretation (1978, **1.123**) with responses by Betty Milum (1978, **1.124**), Joe W. Kraus (1978, **1.122**), and Donald C. Dickinson (1978, **1.118**). Library History Seminar VI opened with Neil Harris's observations on the historiography of cultural institutions and the theme of modernization (1981,

historiography. Still, their value to the profession is widely recognized, they have appeared with some consistency in the past decade, and they have emerged as essential sources for ongoing research. Perhaps the most significant work in recent years is the *Dictionary of American Library Biography (DALB)*, edited by Bohdan S.

The library historian has long suffered from an absence of sources that identify and describe manuscript collections, a circumstance partially remedied by the appearance of *The National Catalog of Sources for the History of Librarianship*, a list of archive collections described on three sheets of microfiche with an introductory essay by Marion Casey on the use of primary materials in historical research (1982, 1.137). Publication of the *National Catalog* grew naturally from the experiences of Maynard Brichford and the staff of the University of Illinois Archives which, in 1973, acquired and began making accessible the extensive archival records of the American Library Association. Brichford and Anne Gilliland describe the ALA record groups and how scholars may obtain access to them in *Guide to the American Library Association Archives* (2d ed., Chicago: American Library Association, 1987), a micropublication revised from the first edition issued in 1979.

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