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Review of *The Evolution of the American Academic Library Building* by David Kaser

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my own memories of what I think was a period of incredible change in our field and our society.

I got what I wanted from Eshelman—and more. It was more interesting and more accessible than other memoirs with which I have struggled. Indeed, this one was fun. I again was exhilarated by the battles: for racially integrated libraries and library service (there were still segregated libraries in our lifetime!), for a more open and democratic ALA, for principle tempered and hardened by ideological unity. I found the victories and defeats, plus a more mellow Bill Eshelman, still standing firm, still cranky, and still perturbed, still seeing every event of a lifetime through the lens of his stalwart, unswerving adherence to a humane pacifism and progressive politics, but it is a quieter, more circumspect view than I expected.

Insights are abundant. Get the true inside view of the struggle of academic libraries, those institutions within institutions, to deal with campus activism, dissent, and downright revolutionary upheaval in the now revised-beyond-recognition 1960s. Review that earlier struggle between the then young turks of ALA's social responsibility movement and the older purists of the intellectual freedom establishment over that nasty piece of work, the ALA film *The Speaker*. Read the story of the decline and tragic death of the *Wilson Library Bulletin* from its most angry editor, who was refused an editorial page in what may have been the worst compromise in his career (it was restored for all three of his successors, but no one knows the rules by which they were forced to abide). Then ponder the inside look at the workings of the H. W. Wilson Company during the long period when it was run by benevolent despots.

Equally revealing are the characters when viewed through the old editor's eyes. See the young and mature Bob

Wedgeworth, the mentors Eric Moon, Larry Powell and Bob Vosper. Enjoy, too, the friends—from the Drinnons to Ward Ritchie to Ben Bagdikian, Zoia Horn, and many more. You get a new look, an insider's closeup of many of the people who shaped modern librarianship, and you can tell the good guys from the bad, though sometimes even their absence is an obvious comment.

There is rich historic ore to be mined in Eshelman's memoir. He tells it modestly, albeit with an occasional boast, and more quietly than I would have expected. He tells it truthfully too, and that makes the memoir a must read for any library historian of the period. Despite the shallow review you may have seen in the June 15 *Library Journal*, Eshelman's book deserves a far better critique than to be written off as "nostalgic." It gives you a living view of the people and events of the last half century of librarianship, a period in which, as Eric Moon puts it in the work's foreword, the "principles and philosophies of the profession" were tempered and hardened. Eshelman, who was a major participant in that work, provides a unique memoir of that work, and the people who made it happen.—*John Berry*, *Library Journal*.

Kaser, David. *The Evolution of the American Academic Library Building*. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow, 1997. 208p. \$36 alk. paper (ISBN 0-8108-3219-4). LC 96-36032.

One of the foremost authorities on planning and building academic libraries has provided us with a concise, lucid, and well-researched history of the way that American academic libraries have evolved from the one-room facilities of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to the large and complex structures characteristic of the twentieth century. In doing so, he offers a useful antidote to the nostalgia for certain styles by reminding us why they are less practical than contemporary modu-

lar designs.

Drawing on a wealth of sources, Kaser begins with some background information about the earliest means of housing college library collections (a bedroom in the house of the University of North Carolina's president is one of the more intriguing) and then traces the development of academic library buildings from 1840, when the first academic library building was opened at South Carolina College (now the University of South Carolina), to the present. He divides the evolution of academic library buildings into four periods: 1840–1875 (single-function book halls), 1875–1910 (multipartitioned structures), 1910–1945 (fixed-function buildings with multitier stacks), and 1945–present (modular integration of book and reader spaces). This analysis offers an interesting and more detailed division than previous ones by Helen Reynolds and Jerrold Orne. Writing in *College & Research Libraries* in April 1953, Reynolds identified three periods based on campuswide architectural planning: the Romanesque period, the eclectic, and the modern. Her survey did not include anything after 1939. Orne's division appeared in *College & Research Libraries* in July 1976 and was based on library planning alone. He referred to the period before 1900 as "primitive" and that of 1900–1945 as "evolutionary." Orne did not attach a label to the post-1945 era but stated that "most developments in library planning have resulted more from increased numbers and size, than from changes in function." For Kaser, however, what is most important in the contemporary period is the development of the modular academic library building design, a design that has proven admirably suited to dealing with both increasing size and changing functions. Thus, for Kaser, the modular library building is the high-water mark of American academic library building design.

The concept of modular library space

dates back to the pioneering work of stack manufacturer Angus Snead Macdonald in the 1930s. Kaser argues that despite the success of modular libraries, after about 1960 many architects and university administrators began turning away from the boxlike structures that had proven to be so cost-effective and efficient in function: Contorted shapes, unusual textures, artistic license, emphasis on effect, revulsion against constraint and discipline, return to tradition (or what was perceived as traditional) or to nature (or what was perceived as natural) all began showing up with increasing frequency in new library buildings. As a result, the simple modular planning so consistent with classic theories of design, and so much appreciated by librarians, became unfashionable. These romantic elements also were partially responsible for the rapid increase in building costs during the period. Boxes were, and are, simply cheaper to build than more complex containers. Modular buildings may be boring, but they also are functionally flexible and better suited to adapting to unforeseen new services, technologies and user expectations than are their more imaginative counterparts. Perhaps the modular design will therefore be the dominant approach to creating new academic libraries in the twenty-first century. Although Kaser does not draw such an unequivocal conclusion, it is clear that he sees nothing on the horizon likely to be more suitable. In his concluding chapter, he touches on various means by which institutions have tried to address library storage challenges besides erecting new buildings, such as adding to existing libraries, compaction of materials, cooperative collecting and lending agreements, and the use of non-Codex formats such as microforms and electronic texts. For the most part, this section is descriptive and in keeping with the overall approach of the book—it is

only in Kaser's discussion of modular versus other academic library building designs that he adopts a prescriptive stance. In an appendix, he has listed chronologically all the American academic library buildings constructed since 1840 that he has been able to identify. Several plates and drawings illustrate various typical internal and external designs. There is a good index, and because Kaser's use of technical architectural terms is rare and always in a context enabling the reader to discern their meaning, the lack of a glossary is not a problem. Recommended for libraries with architecture or library history collections.—*W. Bede Mitchell, Appalachian State University, Boone, North Carolina.*

Libraries & Philanthropy: Proceedings of Library History Seminar IX. Ed. Donald G. Davis Jr. Austin, Tex.: Graduate School of Library and Information Science, Univ. of Texas, 1996. 548p. \$27.50 acid-free paper (ISBN 0-938729-03-09). LC 96-078192.

This work contains a collection of papers presented at the Library History Seminar IX, "Libraries and Philanthropy," held at the University of Alabama in the spring of 1995. This comprehensive collection covers topics on library philanthropy from the times of Ancient Greece and Rome to modern Europe, India, and the United States. Greatest emphasis is given to the individuals, communities, and organizations responsible for the birth and evolution of library philanthropy. The authors of the papers presented during the plenary sessions provide a historical overview of public libraries as playing a key role in the development of American civil society. They also explore the origins and implications of public funding in which nonprofit, nongovernmental, and philanthropic agencies played a significant part in the development of libraries.

In addition to funding library buildings and library collections, many benefactors offered funding for library services and research. Groups committed to addressing the problems of libraries, such as the Council on Library Resources, were funded by the Ford Foundation. In the 1950s, the Ford Foundation became the sponsor of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Project INTREX. Even though INTREX became a project for developing applied technology rather than focusing on information research to help libraries, it produced motivated staff and students who influenced trends in the library world. A majority of authors such as Mary B. Haskell, Ann Curry, Paula D. Watson, Maxine K. Rochester, Nicoletta M. Hary, Wayne A. Wiegand, Nancy Becker Johnson, Peggy Sullivan, Robert Sidney Martin, and Orvin Lee Shiflett focused on private benefactors.

The philosophical issues that motivated private benefactors to donate money to libraries varied: Andrew Carnegie saw his library program as a gift to all society for improvement and enlightenment; Phoebe Hearst, on the other hand, considered her library philanthropies as gifts returned to the communities; and the Rockefellers were able to see "the big picture" of which libraries were a part along with other institutions and museums. They also contributed to library buildings and collections abroad such as in Japan and Switzerland with the incentive to promote better relations between the United States and these countries. Although many of the women philanthropists were unlikely to have had formal education, their strong interests in reading and literature motivated them to contribute to libraries. Their commitment to library philanthropy also was related to those other aspects of their lives that contributed to their progress toward financial, political, and social independence. In her essay "ALA Youth Services Librar-