

ume should be on the reading list of library science students, recent graduates, or early-career librarians and archivists who want to work in special collections, as it provides an informed, concise overview that would benefit those just starting out.

Joel Silver observes, “special collections have never been more active or more visible” (64). While there is no shortage of grim stuff to read about the future of books, libraries, and cultural heritage in popular media, *Forging the Future* offers a nuanced portrait of a field during an exciting, fairly optimistic moment in its history, one with challenges but also great accomplishments and potential.—*Jolie Braun, Curator of American Literature, Rare Books and Manuscripts Library, The Ohio State University*

G. Thomas Tanselle. *Portraits and Reviews*. Charlottesville: The Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia, 2015 (Distributed by Oak Knoll Press for The Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia). xiv, 485p. Cloth, with illustrated dust jacket, \$55. ISBN: 978-1-883631-16-1.

G. Thomas Tanselle is a highly regarded bibliographer, textual editor, critic, and book collector. Following his undergraduate degree from Yale, he received his PhD in 1959 from the Department of English at Northwestern University with a dissertation on the twentieth-century American author Floyd Dell. Between 1960 and 1978, he taught at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, after which he served as vice president of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation from 1978 until 2006. He has also served as an adjunct professor of English at Columbia University and coeditor of the Northwestern-Newberry Edition of the Writings of Herman Melville as well as president of the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia, the Bibliographical Society of America, the Grolier Club, and the Society for Textual Scholarship. In recognition of his scholarly contributions in the field of bibliography, Tanselle has delivered numerous prestigious lectures including the Hanes Foundation Lecture at the University of North Carolina, Robert L. Nikirk Lecture at the Grolier Club, the A.S.W. Rosenbach Lectures in Bibliography at the University of Pennsylvania, the Sandars Lectures at Cambridge University, and the George Parker Winship Lecture at Harvard University.

A remarkably prolific author, Tanselle’s earlier books include *Selected Studies in Bibliography* (1979), *A Rationale of Textual Criticism* (1989), *Textual Criticism and Scholarly Editing* (1990), *Literature and Artifacts* (1998), *Textual Criticism since Greg* (2005), and *Essays in Bibliographical History* (2013). In his writings and presentations, he has strongly and persuasively asserted the importance of collecting and preserving original materials; discrediting the practice of replacing primary sources with reproductions; understanding the role of artifacts in textual transmission; delineating the importance of book production in understanding the history of the book; and developing and employing exacting standards for textual criticism as well as the physical

analysis and description of printed works. Tanselle recently presented these essential tenets in an accessible and concise form in his 2014 Winship Lecture, “A Bibliographer’s Creed,” published in the *Harvard Library Bulletin* (volume 25, number 1) and as a separate keepsake issued by the Houghton Library. Several of these primary tenets are also detailed and explored in various pieces in *Portraits and Reviews*.

Complementing Tanselle’s earlier collections, the present volume is a welcome gathering of biographical sketches and reviews written between 1959 and 2015. In his preface, the author notes, “These two genres of writing fit naturally together because they both focus on individuals; and they overlap in their treatment, since the portraits sometime analyze their subjects’ writings, and the reviews sometimes survey entire careers.... Because the pieces gathered here deal with major figures and landmark works, and also with representative (if less famous) ones, covering the wide spectrum of bibliography, the collection provides a window into the scholarly book world of the past half-century or so” (xi). The twenty-eight “Portraits” include biographical sketches of authors, bibliographers, booksellers, collectors, scholarly editors, librarians, publishers, and literary and historical scholars. The “Reviews” portion of the volume includes thirty-one book reviews comprising critiques of bibliographical works, broadly defined to include bibliographic studies, the history of the book, reference works, book collecting guides, and textual editions of English and American authors. The remaining eleven items in the section include responses to other authors, introductions to anthologies, and other assessments. All but one of the seventy pieces in the volume were previously published, appearing in forty-two different publications including *The Book Collector*, *The Library*, *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, *Printing History*, and the *Times Literary Supplement*. Although prepared for a variety of venues and purposes, the writing throughout is formal, clear and exact, analytical and logical, and informative.

Particular reader’s interest in these selections will vary, of course, depending on professional responsibilities and personal pursuits. In the “Portraits” section, special collections librarians will find the 1994 tribute to Ruth Mortimer engaging and inspiring. The compiler of *French 16th Century Books* (1964) and *Italian 16th Century Books* (1974), two magnificent Houghton Library bibliographies still consulted and cited today, Mortimer served multiple roles with great success at Harvard (1957–1975) and at Smith (1975–1994) as scholar and bibliographer, curator and rare book librarian, teacher and mentor. The 2012 account of William Matheson, former Chief of the Rare Book and Special Collections Division of the Library Congress, also portrays a highly regarded librarian whose work and professional ethos was exemplary. “He was reserved by nature and disliked public speaking, but his firm convictions were effectively conveyed in many other ways—in publications, conversations, consultancies, and committee meetings and in his responses to the large number of inquiries

that came his way from the general public. In all these venues taken together, his calm and dignified expression of the basic humanistic values of bibliography and bibliophilic formed an unobtrusive but pervasive thread running through the book world of his time" (143). Pieces such as these provide librarians an opportunity to reflect on their own contributions to their institutions and the profession.

The portraits of esteemed private collectors Gordon Ray (1988), Mary Hyde (1990), William H. Scheide (1994), and Harrison D. Horblit (1997) are recommended for librarians as well as dealers and collectors of all types of materials. All four individuals developed significant collections in different areas, pursued and supported scholarship, and served as benefactors to institutions that could continue to promote the use of their collections. Tanselle describes the scholarly roles played by these and other collectors in *Portraits and Reviews*; he also discusses this theme autobiographically in his separately published 2005 Nikirk Lecture entitled *The Pleasures of Being a Scholar-Collector*. On the other side of the commercial aisle, four members of the antiquarian trade are also profiled. The most substantive is Tanselle's 2009 memoir of John Carter, who worked at Scribner's and then at Sotheby's but is perhaps most well known today as the author of *ABC for Book-Collectors* and *Taste and Technique in Book-Collecting*, and coauthor with Graham Pollard of *An Enquiry into the Nature of Certain Nineteenth-Century Pamphlets*.

The "Reviews" section includes discussions of works by renowned bibliographic figures Fredson Bowers, Philip Gaskell, Paul Needham, and Allan Stevenson and major scholars Roger Chartier, Robert Darnton, Anthony Grafton, D.F. McKenzie, and David McKittrick. As mentioned above, Tanselle's views on certain core principles regarding textual and artifactual integrity are expounded in numerous pieces, particularly in this section. He writes that some of the reviews "contain what are perhaps my primary discussions of certain matters. For example, my [2000] review of Ralph Franklin's edition of Emily Dickinson may be my most thorough account of the problems involved in editing manuscripts; the [2002] review of Nicholson Baker's *Double Fold* I regard as the most forceful of my longer statements on the importance of book preservation" (xii). While the latter review is recommended, Baker's history and expose itself, subtitled "Libraries and the Assault on Paper," should be required for all readers interested in the preservation of printed sources. Published fifteen years ago, the issues Baker details are still extremely relevant to the librarians and administrators who are responsible for special collections.

An enlightening account of a different type of library history is found in the review of the 1980 Rare Books and Manuscripts Section Preconference "Books and Society in History." Published in 1983 as the introduction to the conference's published papers edited by Kenneth E. Carpenter, Tanselle's summation will be highly useful for

all readers interested in the history of the book. Commenting on theories and methods as conceptualized and practiced more than three decades ago, contemporary librarians, researchers, dealers, and collectors will still find the piece valuable when considering their own approaches to engaging with primary sources. This conference review, as is true for many of the accounts of people and publications in *Portraits and Reviews*, will inspire readers to investigate further a variety of sources that will inform and enrich their bibliographical interests.—*Daniel J. Slive, Head of Special Collections, Bridwell Library, Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas*



IOWA CITY, IOWA.

RBMS

The Stories We Tell

JUNE 20 - 23

2017

RBMS 2017 CONFERENCE
THE STORIES WE TELL
IOWA CITY, IOWA

Tuesday, June 20, 2017 – Friday, June 23, 2017

Conference housing, tours and workshops are filling fast for what is sure to be an exciting program in Iowa City. If you have yet to register, join us for all of the engaging plenary speakers, fantastic seminars and panel sessions, as well as interactive participatory, poster and experience sessions.

[HTTP://CONFERENCE.RBMS.INFO/2017/](http://CONFERENCE.RBMS.INFO/2017/)

R | B) M) S

ACRL

Advancing learning
Transforming scholarship