

Newspaper Indexes: A Location and Subject Guide for Researchers, by Anita Cheek Milner. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1977. pp. xii, 198. \$8.50.

Anita Cheek Milner's book is a significant new reference work, drawing together information on newspaper indexes in 300 institutions across the country. It is the product of questionnaires sent to 800 libraries, large newspapers, historical and genealogical societies, and selected individuals, and it is of primary interest to genealogical researchers, as most of the indexes concentrate on biographical data. The book is divided into two parts. The first lists the newspapers indexed—arranged by state, county, and town of publication—the years covered, and the indexes' holding institutions. The second section lists the names and addresses of the 300 institutions and individuals, along with the topical coverage of their indexes and their policies and fees for research, copying, and interlibrary loan of microfilmed newspapers. This work will no doubt be a valuable tool for newspaper research.

A survey of the entries, however, points up the scarcity of thoroughly indexed newspapers available to researchers. In Iowa, for example, there are entries for only seven towns, distributed among five counties. Only Sioux City is represented by a fairly thorough coverage, through the Northwest Regional Library's card index of Sioux City newspapers. Of Iowa's nearly 700 college libraries, public libraries, and state and local historical and genealogical societies, only three institutions and one individual are included in the work. Mrs. Milner may have missed some useful indexes in her mailing list; she does request additions and corrections for a future volume. But the same scarcity exists across the country. In Ohio, where so much of Iowans' genealogical interest is focused, only eleven of the State's eighty-eight counties have any indexed newspapers, and more than half of the titles are from the two major cities, Cleveland and Cincinnati.

This scarcity of indexed newspapers no doubt reflects the time-consuming and laborious nature of newspaper indexing, even if the indexer excludes the numerous advertisements and the standardized "ready-print" pages common to nineteenth and early twentieth-century newspapers. Still, the rapidly expanding body of microfilm newspapers and the possibilities for purchasing or borrowing the film, the existence of comprehensive bibliographies (like the Library of Congress' *Newspapers in Microform* and the State Historical Society of Iowa's newspaper bibliography project data), and the increasing availability of microfilm readers make the creation of indexes of a representative sample of Iowa's newspaper record an intriguing prospect. Local historical and genealogical societies in search of a project that will make a serious contribution to research might give the idea some thought.

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