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Wayne J. Urban. *More than the Facts: The Research Division of the National Education Association, 1922-1997.* Lanham, Md: University Press of America, 1998. xv + 153 pp. $38.50 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-7618-0930-2.

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The NEA Research Division

Wayne Urban, an historian interested in the National Eduation Association (NEA) and at the beginning stages of research on the NEA, was contacted in 1997 to write an institutional history. Urban expanded his efforts, to write a rich description of a little-known department: the Research Division within the NEA. Created in 1922, the Research Division's activities were to meet the concerns of education administrators and teachers, as well as "educational bookkeeping"–the idea of gathering information and disseminating the data by publishing the research. Urban organizes the work chronologically, roughly giving each decade its own chapter and dividing the Research Division's history into three periods: "1) the years from the beginning of the Research Division in 1922 up to the early 1970s; 2) the period from 1972 to 1990 which might be described as the collective bargaining era; and 3) the 1990s when the NEA began to struggle with some sort of return to an orientation not unlike the pre-1972 period" (p. xiii).

Urban explains that "the NEA had set up the Research Division in 1922 at least partially to substitute for a woefully inadequate research effort within the federal education agency and to support the association's campaign for a much more vigorous federal educational effort" (p. 72). By the 1990s, the Research Division was a "constituent unit ... that [went] from a position of prominence in a larger organization to one of struggling to find its role and function in a new structure and set of priorities ..." (p. 141).

The Research Division's functions included establishing a "reference library of information" made up of state and city school reports, study courses, research reports, and similar educational material. It was also responsible "for gathering information and formulating statements of current and future problems ... in education work" (p. 4). Urban describes topics covered by the Research Division in detail. He discusses their statistics they created through surveys and questionnaires which were mailed to members and compiled by the Research Division. Many of these statistics were used to increase teacher salaries and the equalize salaries for women in rural and urban school districts.

The Research Division's development and projects are tied to important historical events, such as the Great Depression and World War II. In its publication, *The Research Bulletin*, the Research Division discussed school finance and teacher salaries and retirement. As the Great Depression deepened, they reported on the deteriorating conditions for children, and on the need for teacher associations to generate funding for the schools. During World War II, the public school system became a financial challenge to local communities and to educators. Based on a 1943 teacher survey, the Research Division argued "that teacher pay was too low to maintain life at a professional standard, ... teachers' salaries could be raised substantially without running afoul of the federal wage ceilings, ... that because of the situation thousands of teachers had left the schools, that the number of teachers being trained in the teachers' colleges was down substantially ..., that this lack of trained teachers directly threatened the national welfare..., increased taxation was not an obstacle to better salaries since state and local tax revenues had risen substantially as a result of the war, that the amount of federal money that was necessary to aid teachers' salaries was infinitesimal compared to the amount spent on the war itself, and that local action by teachers was needed in pursuit of increased salaries" (p. 43). Women teachers left education for higher paying jobs in industry, leaving many schools without grade school educators. The Research Division became a voice for teachers on important and sensitive topics. By discussing minimum salaries and state legislation, the Division made important contributions to education and the thousands of teachers through its research and publications. In post World War II, the Division monitored any possible changes in income tax codes and Social Security

benefits.

By the 1960s, technology had made an impact. The Division was now making its data available to state and local teacher organizations across the country, via the microcomputer. Now, at the local level, administrators and teachers could analyze the Division's research data themselves.

A recurring theme in Urban's book is that the Research Division seems to straddle the fence between research and practice: on one side it collects, analyzes, and disseminates information for its publications; and on the other side, through its publications, it is a voice for teachers and administrators. And yet prior to the 1970s, the Research Division had great autonomy and control over what topics were being researched. In the period after the 1970s, research became more applied and less theoretical.

The author includes comprehensible introductions and conclusive points and arguments in each chapter, leaving the reader without unanswered questions. Urban explains the Division's different interests clearly, without bogging the reader down with data and statistics. Urban states his opinions, provides well-argued explanations, and clarifies his statements with numerical and anecdotal accounts. Through stories, Urban explains different goals and motives of the Research Division staff and the NEA as an institution. He sets up his arguments in a historical context by describing NEA's important role in education. Throughout the book, Urban does not lose sight of his arguments.

Unfortunately, Urban does not expand his research to include the role of the Library and Archives. The Library, which was created after the Research Division, was approved "to serve as a repository for a vast amount of information in school finance, but also in other areas" (p. 4). In the 1970s, the Library and Archives functions were downgraded during a turbulant time. The Library was not seen as a contribution to NEAs goals. By the mid-1970s, the Library and its archives were closed to all except NEA staff and officers. Urban discusses the facts about NEA's evolvement in national agendas and projects but stays close to his thesis: the evolving Research Division and its contributions.

In his concluding chapter, Urban reasserts the purpose of the Research Division: its autonomous research projects had led, by the mid-1970s, the Division's staff and writings had become enourmously influencial. *More than the Facts* is an excellent addition in an academic library supporting an education curriculum.

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