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Keeping America Informed: The United States Government Printing Office 150 Years of Service to the Nation

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From Brand: US Government Printing Office : Keeping America Informed: The United States Government Printing Office 150 Years of Service to the Nation before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Keeping America Informed: The United States Government Printing Office 150 Years of Service to the Nation:

For 150 years, U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) has produced the digital documents of democracy crucial to an informed citizenry. Keeping America Informed: the U.S. Government Printing Office, 150 Years of Service to the Nation, published to mark GPO's 150th anniversary as a Federal agency, tells the story of this unique organization through a readable and concise narrative and numerous historic photographs, many of them never before published. This handsome new volume provides a panoramic view of GPO, which opened its doors for business on March 4, 1861, as Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated as the 16th president of the United States. After a description of the previous history of public printing and the founding of GPO, Keeping America Informed covers the agency's physical and technological growth in the Gilded Age, its reform during the Progressive Era, and its crucial role in supporting the Government's efforts to grapple with the Great Depression and two world wars. Post-World War II, the book describes GPO's transition from traditional printing to the digital technology of today. It also highlights the hugely significant role the agency has played in the dissemination of federal Government information through its publications sales and Federal depository library programs. Much of the information in Keeping America Informed is new, the product of the latest research into GPO's history. Above all, its authoritative text and unique images depict the

enormous contribution of its employees, past and present, to the well-being of the American people and nation.

from Goodreads: Bill Sleeman rated it 3 stars and had this to say, "Yes I have spent my time on the MARC train with another work related read but as a documents librarian I found GPO's new history to be excellent. Overall this is a great administrative history of an often overlooked agency, the Government Printing Office (GPO). It is well designed with an admirable use of new photographs and images from GPO's own collection. The text moves along briskly and touches on many of the highlights of the agency's history. Particularly noteworthy are the chapters devoted to how the agency responded to war time needs during both World Wars. Interestingly the history fails to mention that the agency played a key role in disseminating the Pentagon Papers (recently in the news with the full release and declassification of the documents on May 11, 2011) by printing and distributing the first official but heavily redacted version of the documents in 1971. I was surprised that this was not mentioned. I was also impressed with the attention paid to the work environment at the agency. That several early Public Printers (Donnelly, Ford) were noted for their commitment to improving conditions for staff in the early years of the GPO's operations was very interesting. One area that might have been explored in greater detail though were the many labor negotiations and struggles between the managers and workers on the floor. If you accept the history presented here things have always been copasetic between management and the shop floor or other agency employees but that was rarely the case; with GPO experiencing strikes and protests in the 1930s, the 1950s and again in the early seventies. The latter between labor and management and between African American and white employees were noted in some extended detail in the Washington Post at the time. One downside is that the work - being a congratulatory type of effort is that gives short shrift to the shortcomings of the agency. Most notably (and this is an area where many librarians will disagree) has been the failure of GPO leadership in recent administrations to get out in front of changes in customer (and client) expectations. Still, GPO is to be congratulated for the changes they have made (albeit kicking and screaming all the way) once forced to do so either by GAO, Congress or the library community. As I wrote above this is an excellent history and, even with some minor shortcomings, it is a worthwhile read. A freely accessible web version in PDF but not as an e-book can be found at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/GPO-KEEP...>"