



The American Association of Law Libraries

J. S. ELLENBERGER

THIS YEAR, THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION of Law Libraries is 57 years old. In light of this fact, if age alone could be used as a criterion for durability and accomplishment, then the AALL holds a seniority among the major professional library associations in this country, second only to that of the American Library Association from which it originally emerged. That the AALL has been durable is the object of this writing. With its accomplishments to date for both law librarianship and lawyers, there is no sign that it is growing old.

Sometime prior to the 1906 annual conference of the American Library Association, a small group of men trained chiefly as lawyers and managing the libraries of a variety of political units decided among themselves that their work in a highly specialized research discipline called for the formation of an association which could more effectively represent their problems and the solutions to them than could a general library organization concerned primarily with public library administration. More practically speaking, there was also the matter of a needed compilation similar to the *Jones Index to Legal Periodical Literature*, which had last been supplemented in 1899. In addition, although there had been law libraries since the time that a collection of books could call itself that, there was nothing in print concerning their organization or management, nor was there any means of regularly exchanging the lessons of personal experience or training. In each instance, the AALL was to stimulate a solution to these problems, first with the start of publication in 1908 of the *Index to Legal Periodicals* and the *Law Library Journal*. Within the next few years, a noteworthy amount of writing by various members of the Association was to be done in an attempt to come to terms with the problems of organization and management.

Thus, the American Association of Law Libraries was given life in

Mr. Ellenberger is Librarian, The Bar Association of the District of Columbia.

1906, and its 24 subscribing founders chose A. J. Small, then Iowa State Law Librarian, as their first president—a man who was to remain active in the association for over 30 years. In adopting a constitution for the Association, these men had the object of creating an association of educational and scientific nature, which was to be conducted to promote librarianship, to develop and increase the usefulness of law libraries, to cultivate the science of law librarianship, and to foster a spirit of cooperation among its members.¹ Although few of these founders were to live to see their Association approach its total present membership of nearly 1,000 law librarians in the United States and abroad, they were to remain the principal source of its accomplishments well into the third decade of this century.

Two elements essential to the continued existence of any professional organization are those of leadership and cooperation. The AALL has been richly endowed with both since its inception. Historically speaking, the development of the Association falls more or less into three distinct periods, each marked by the tangible accomplishments of men and women who have reached high office in it because they were unselfishly devoted to an ideal of working together to provide better libraries and library facilities for the lawyers and law students working in them. Each of these periods of growth will be examined along with the landmark achievements which have contributed to the development of the AALL.

I

The beginning years, spanning approximately the period from 1906 to 1929, were characterized by an attempt to solve the practical problems of law librarianship which had moved the founders to organization. As a primary accomplishment, the *Law Library Journal* and the *Index to Legal Periodicals* began their careers in 1908 as official organs of the AALL. This latter publication remained and still remains probably the most important single contribution which the Association has made to legal scholarship and legal research. Originally and until 1936, for obvious reasons of economy these two publications appeared together in various sequences. Printed continuously by the H. W. Wilson Company from 1912 to the present, the *Index to Legal Periodicals* has enjoyed gifted editorial work from members of the Association who have given it untold hours of energy and attention to keep it alive. At first receiving its direction from the Executive Board of the Association, in 1917 the *Index* was finally given a standing committee

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of its own under the chairmanship of Franklin O. Poole, Librarian of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York, who remained until his death in 1943 the constant champion and genius of its success. Over the years, Mr. Poole made the *Index* a self-supporting publication, which was eventually able to bring its index coverage of 39 periodicals in 1908 to its present treatment of over 200 law reviews and related serial publications.

Of substantial importance to the early development of the *Index* was the decision by the Harvard Law School in 1925 to make an annual contribution from a special fund for compensating indexing personnel as well as to furnish quarters in which the indexing could be done. This generous and fortunate arrangement continued for many years, largely as the result of the inspired editorship of Eldon R. James, at that time law librarian for the Harvard Law School. To Mr. James are owed many of the important cumulations made of the *Index* during its formative years.

This era of initial growth for the *Index* was not without interest in terms of professional representation for the Association as a whole. In 1921, after some 13 years of publication, it was learned that the American Bar Association was unaware of the existence of the *Index*, probably because it was produced as an appendix to the *Law Library Journal*. A conference with the American Bar Association resulted in an offer from that organization to acquire the rights to publish the *Index* as a part of the *American Bar Association Journal*, with the added stipulation that the AALL affiliate with ABA rather than the American Library Association. Although the ABA's offer was declined, down to the present this issue of representation and professional direction continues to assume some importance at every annual meeting chiefly in relation to a national headquarters, but it is interesting to note that the *Index* was the first major accomplishment of the AALL to draw the attention of the organized bar to its importance as a viable force in the practice of law today.

In 1961, principally because of the difficulty of maintaining a continuity of editorial quality, the Association voted to sell the publishing rights of the *Index* to the H. W. Wilson Company, which had been its printer and business manager for many years. However, the Association retained a voice in the editorial policy of the *Index* amounting generally to a control over its contents, format, indexing technique, and other matters related to its future development.

Another product of the early years was the *Law Library Journal*,

now in its 55th year as a quarterly publication of the Association. To see a full run of the *Journal* in those few law libraries in this country which have it, is a telling barometer of the financial, if not the spiritual, health of a voluntary association as it moves from one stage of its development into another. Because the first concern of the Association was directed toward the production of an index to legal periodicals, the *Journal* remained for almost 25 years of its life as little more than an adjunct to the *Index*, which shared its publication. At the mercy of an ever-changing editorial direction as well as a subscription list chiefly dependent upon the existence of the *Index*, the *Journal* could not in any way be considered an important forum for law librarianship until Helen Newman, presently Librarian of the Supreme Court of the United States, became its editor in 1934. Realizing that the continued existence of the *Journal* was dependent upon its work as a bibliographic aid to the law librarian, Miss Newman introduced most of the important departments which it contains today: "Questions and Answers," a type of clearing-house for questions involving law library administration; "Current Legal Publications," a regular cumulation by subject of new law books in print; and the useful "Check List of Statutes and Reports," listing twice-yearly such official publications of the various federal and state courts and political agencies.

Today the *Law Library Journal* is managed by an editor responsible to a committee which determines its content and policy. In turn, each of its departments is written by members who contribute the material for its regular features. Except for the November issue, which reports the proceedings of the Association's annual conference, the opening pages of the *Journal* are usually occupied by a leading article of special concern to the profession. Most recently, these have often taken the form of a symposium discussing an issue of general importance such as professional certification by the Association, recruitment of law librarians, or as contained in the issue of last August, a series of articles by members on the problem of education for law librarianship entailing all of the complexities of identifying the law librarian and defining a curriculum for his training.

Aside from its annual conventions, which have been held regularly in almost every part of this country since 1906, there is certainly no other more effective means of publicizing the work of the Association or its membership than through the cohesive influence of the *Law Library Journal*. Although it remains today essentially a spokesman for and to the law librarian, it is now beginning to achieve recognition

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among other librarians and members of the legal profession, whose own interests are often reflected in the official viewpoints of the AALL.

As a conclusion to these notes on the formative years of the AALL, it is proper to mention the development of its relationship with various other professional groups which have contributed to its evolution.

By the very nature of its representation, and in the combined interests of those who go to make it up, the American Association of Law Libraries stands squarely between the larger American Library Association and the American Bar Association, and in fact was born from the former group. The relationship with these two groups would in itself compose a long history, but it is sufficient to say here that it has been continuous and generally cordial. Not infrequently, the relationship has come close to alliance from the viewpoint of one organization or the other, but this issue now chiefly relates to the still unsolved problem of establishing a national executive headquarters for the AALL. The logical place for such a headquarters would be Chicago where both ALA and ABA are located, but so far the financial problems involved with such a plan have not been overcome by AALL.

Prior to 1937, the AALL frequently held its annual meetings in conjunction with the ALA, but the expanding size of the latter group has militated against such an arrangement since then. However, cooperation with the ALA has still remained at a high level through the non-voting representation of AALL on its Council. This representation has been enhanced and complemented by the numerous joint ALA-AALL committees on such matters as government publications, cataloging, completion of a union list of serials, and more recently on combined activity concerning the general problem of library work as a career, fair use of photocopying as related to the revision of the Copyright Law, and the development of standards for state library services, which often use large collections of legal materials. In connection with this last, the AALL has also enjoyed a long history of cooperation with the National Association of State Libraries, and some of the Association's earliest members, who were at one time state librarians and later law librarians, came from the NASL.

From its primary place in this discussion, it can be seen that the inter-associational relationships of the AALL have been largely library oriented. This orientation is reasonable because from its beginning, the Association was concerned first with problems peculiar to all library work, and even though its membership included many persons trained both as librarians and lawyers, they learned, in practice, that

their first obligation to an employer was in the capacity of a librarian. For these reasons, until a few years ago, the Association's relationship with the American Bar Association was less close and less effective than with national library associations. A singular example of this former lack of concern by ABA for mutual problems has already been mentioned in relation to the early history of the *Index to Legal Periodicals*. However, since the recent establishment of the excellent Cronwell Law Library in the American Bar Foundation, the ABA has seen that law library problems can frequently involve its own destiny and that of the majority of lawyers in this country whom it represents.

Tangible results of this overdue recognition have now taken the form of combined activity on such projects as the ABA "Package Plan" and the newly organized ABA-AALL Joint Committee on Electronic Data Retrieval, which is presently surveying the manifold complexities of this newest development in legal research. The ABA "Package Plan" was originally an idea of the AALL whereby all ABA publications could be made systematically available to law libraries on the basis of an annual subscription payment. The concept of a law library acting as a local depository of ABA publications was one slow to mature, with the ABA, but it has today furnished a means of preserving the valuable data annually produced in large quantities by that Association.

Although joint AALL-ABA participation on mutual problems has had a relatively brief history, the AALL has for many years cooperated with the national organization most concerned with the training of lawyers: the Association of American Law Schools. Again, a principal interest is involved since many of the members of AALL are associated with law school libraries, and as members of the faculties of these schools, they have good reason to participate in the work of AALS. This happy union of interests has produced important results in the name of the AALL; foremost among them is the standardization of law school library contents and the requirement that the administration of the law library be in the hands of a qualified librarian.

In recent years, the inter-associational representation of the AALL has taken on an international dimension through its activities in the International Association of Law Libraries and the International Federation of Library Associations. Organized in 1959, the IALL is chiefly concerned with attaining greater control over the growing output of legal publishing across the world, and in this context it held its first international meeting in conjunction with the AALL annual confer-

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ence in Boston in 1961. The role of the AALL in the affairs of the International Federation of Library Associations is so far embryonic, but the first two reports of its representative to the Federation indicate that it may be instrumental in conducting international exchange programs for library school professors and students concerned with the development of law libraries abroad, standardization of teaching methods, and arrangements for scholarship study in this country for persons whose interests specifically relate to law libraries.

All of this new activity in AALL seems to be a good example of its concern for problems affecting law libraries wherever they may be and denotes an awareness of its responsibility to the common law practitioner as he attempts to resolve questions involving international law, the European Common Market, and international organization in general.

II

Presaging the end of what may be called the beginning years of the AALL, President Hicks in 1921 sounded the call for future development when he recommended that the membership of the Association be increased by dividing the country into districts with a district chairman over each, that the Association take an active interest in the training of law librarians, and that it check any tendencies toward withdrawal into a splendid, specialized isolation.

Although it was to be some time before these proposals achieved the status of a plan of action, by 1930 they had found a champion in William R. Roalfe, presently Law Librarian for the Northwestern University School of Law. Known as the "Roalfe Plan," a concerted effort was made by the Association to increase its membership and broaden its professional horizons at a time when similar organizations were, if anything, considering a reduction in professional activity. Working with Mr. Hicks and others, Mr. Roalfe proposed the establishment of a national executive headquarters, enlargement of the *Law Library Journal*, increased coverage of current legal bibliography through the various publishing media of the Association, expansion of membership, and a plan for seeking financial assistance for these objectives from a philanthropic foundation.

With the exception of the first item, which has not yet been achieved, all of these proposals can be cited as accomplishments by the Association during its middle, and in many respects, its most difficult years.

Specifically, in 1935, attendant with various tax benefits, the Asso-

ciation was incorporated in the District of Columbia. Probably as a result of this move and certainly as a result of the Roalfe Plan the last of the proposals (and at the time certainly the one which seemed most remote from success) came to fruition when the Carnegie Corporation of New York appropriated \$5,000 to the Association in 1937 to sustain its program. This grant enabled the partial realization of the second and third of Mr. Roalfe's proposals—the expansion of the *Journal* by its separation from the *Index to Legal Periodicals* and its inclusion of the type of material which would allow the *Journal* to become a useful tool in the management of legal bibliography by the law librarian.

Essentially, the work of the special committee appointed to administer the development of the Roalfe Plan from 1932 to 1937 was culminated by receipt of the Carnegie Foundation grant. However, the plan continued as the inspiration for a number of other accomplishments which were to have a long-range permanent effect upon the growth of the AALL. Two of these achievements relate again to the efforts of the Association to concern itself intimately with the literature of its field and that of the profession it serves.

The first was the establishment of a book exchange in 1937. This work is still actively carried on by a standing committee of the Association which regularly issues, for a small fee, lists of materials available for exchange among law libraries. The second development concerned the microfilming of records and briefs of cases brought before the Supreme Court of the United States. Beginning with the 1938 term, the records of the High Court were filmed for general distribution by the University of Chicago, with the advisory assistance of the AALL, and this arrangement continued until 1950, when Matthew Bender and Company started producing a microcard edition of these records.

Thus, the AALL was one of the first major national associations to devote its attention to the microcopying of library material, and it has remained a leader in this respect. Today, a variety of Association committees are charged with keeping a watch on developments occurring constantly in the allied fields of microprinting, audio-visual aids, and the scientific and mechanical retrieval of the vast amount of law now in print. Notable here has been its recent supervisory role in the development of "Project Law Search," made possible by a grant from the Council on Library Resources and discussed at length elsewhere in this issue of *Library Trends*. Also, for the past seven years

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the Association has sponsored the microfilming of federal legislative histories contained, for the most part, in the offices of members working in the Washington, D.C., area. This service is produced and sold by the Matthew Bender Company and has enabled law libraries, wherever located, to collect these valuable materials for research in problems concerning statutory interpretation and legislative intent.

Finally, among the most important continuing results of the Roalfe Plan was the growth in the membership of the Association during the 1930's and 1940's. The two most important factors in this growth were the establishment of institutional memberships and the organization of local chapters of the Association.

Based upon the number of persons doing full-time work of a professional nature in large law libraries, such as those belonging to law schools, bar associations, and state governments, the institutional membership plan extended the advantages of active membership in the AALL to subordinate staff personnel working in these libraries without charging them personally for its cost. Under this plan, the institutional employer is billed for the number of active memberships he designates, through the supervising librarian, who then remits payment up to a maximum amount fixed in the by laws of the Association. When it was established, this arrangement incidentally worked a considerable benefit to the treasury of the Association at a time when it was most in need of it.

In 1939, when the recommendations of the Committee on the Roalfe Plan were adopted by the Association, its by laws were amended to provide for the chartered organization of local chapters by ten or more Association members. Chiefly aimed at stimulating interest in law librarianship among those persons who, for various reasons, were remote from the national activities of the Association, this device furnished a means for dealing with local problems and coincidentally allowing for organizational continuity from one annual meeting to the next.

In 1942, again largely through the efforts of Miss Helen Newman, the Law Librarians' Society of Washington, D.C., was chartered as the first local affiliate of the national Association, and within ten years, four other local groups in Chicago, New England, New York City, and Southern California were accorded chapter status. More recently, chapters in the southeast, southwest, New York State, and Minnesota have successfully achieved national recognition from the AALL. A Canadian chapter is now in the process of formation. Although many

of these chapters have existed in an informal way for several years before being chartered, the national affiliation has served to emphasize local problems and at the same time to supply grass-roots interest in the work of the AALL for law librarians unable to attend its annual meetings.

Among the most important of the Association's projects have been the various educational institutes conducted by the chapter affiliates, as, for example, the conference on classification and cataloging recently sponsored by the Chicago chapter and the several professional workshops held by the Law Library Association of Greater New York over the past five years. Soon after it was chartered the Chicago chapter made a successful effort to compile a *Union Law Catalog* for its area. The Washington, D.C., chapter has likewise gained renown for its *Union List of Legislative Histories* in the Washington, D.C., area. In addition, the chapters have promoted accredited course work in legal bibliography at local schools or as extensions of regular college-level programs. Foremost, in this respect, is the course in law librarianship which has been given successfully for a number of years as a part of the night-school extension program at the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C.

Even though the American Association of Law Libraries was able to effect changes in its size and structure during these middle years, there was still much to be done in shaping the character of the profession it represented to both the legal and library world which surrounded it. However, important first steps were taken in this direction as long ago as 1936, when the Association of American Law Schools Special Committee to Cooperate with the AALL recommended that each member school have ". . . a librarian whose major interest is the library itself and whose principal activities are devoted to management and operation of the law library."² The AALS adopted this recommendation^{3,4} as part of its Articles of Association, which also outlined other requirements for the libraries of member schools. Furthermore, in 1939 the AALS at its annual meeting in Chicago recommended that the assistance of AALL be accepted for inspecting libraries of prospective members as well as in lending assistance to member schools concerning their library problems.⁵ This was an important point in the growth of the professional influence of the AALL, and it has continued to play some part, down to the present, in developing high standards for legal education in this country.

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III

Just as the beginning years of the AALL were chiefly devoted to the solution of crucial problems of practical significance to the founders and the middle years devoted to internal reorganization, survival and growth, the most recent history of the Association since World War II has been marked by an outward extension of its influence upon education for law librarianship and certification by the Association for those intending to work as law librarians. As an important development incidental to both of these concerns, a start has finally been made toward recruiting law librarians for the profession at large. In addition, the Association enlarged its reputation as a publisher in 1960, when it produced the first volume of the greatly needed *Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals*—a current listing of articles covering every aspect of law, both private and public, which appear in the legal periodicals of countries outside the common law jurisdictions. Made possible almost entirely through the receipt of a sizeable grant from the Ford Foundation, this publication is now in its fourth year as a cooperative effort of the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, University of London, and the AALL through its Committee on Foreign Law Indexing.

Also in 1960 the AALL Publications series made its debut. Written by members of the Association and published for it by the Fred B. Rothman Company, these monographs treat a variety of special problems which have arisen in law libraries. The authorship is often cooperative. A recent example is the fifth of this series, which is devoted to the special problems of a specialty within a specialty: *Manual of Procedure for Private Law Libraries*. It is written chiefly for those law libraries maintained throughout this country by private law firms, banks, and large corporations.

In the diverse but professionally related areas of education for librarianship, recruitment of able people into the specialty, and their certification when employed by a law library, the AALL has had an abiding influence over the past 25 years. There is every reason to believe that it will continue to sponsor important changes in these fields and it may, indeed, eventually set the standards. It is too early to talk of standards, however, since the Association itself is still in many respects divided on the correct approach to their establishment.

With regard to education for law librarianship, there was little concerted effort by the Association until the mid 1930's, when the need

for special programs became apparent. In 1937, the first all-day institute on law library administration was held as an adjunct to the annual conference in New York City. Something has already been said of the special programs and institutes sponsored by the chapters on a local level, and the Association has for a number of years sponsored biennial week-long institutes devoted to major problems in legal bibliography and law library administration. The most recent of these institutes was held at Harvard Law School before the 1961 Association conference in Boston.

However, by no means have these scattered efforts really solved the problem of educating law librarians even though the Association has been actively interested in the problem for some time. Since another section of this issue is devoted to education, there is no need for further detail, but it is important to recognize it as a problem for the Association in its efforts to become a certifying authority for law librarianship and a center for recruiting students to work in the profession.

At this writing, the AALL has just approached the issue of certifying its members for work in law libraries. The first interim report of the recently established AALL Committee on Certification,⁶ reflects the outcome of two discussions on the subject during the 1959⁷ and 1960⁸ annual conferences, preceded by years of informal debate, and even yet the response by the membership to a suggested plan is anything but encouraging. There is good reason for this hesitancy because there lurks behind any plan the vastly complicated problems of what constitutes a law librarian (the definition is constantly variable), how he should be trained once the job is defined, and what if any standards can be used by the Certification or Placement Committees of the Association to determine whether a certain job rates the Class A, Class B, or Class C law librarian it is looking for.

However, the Association now has before its Certification Committee a plan scheduled to begin in 1965 whereby a member, upon application, will be given a number of points based upon experience, education, or both according to a graduated table of professional standards attained. It is then assumed that the member will be eligible for placement in any position calling for the points he holds in regard to his training, and AALL will be prepared to certify that he is able to do the job. For members in good standing prior to the beginning of this program, a "grandfather clause" is available under which a certification statement attests to the professional competence of the member, simply stating that he is qualified in the eyes of the Association as

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a law librarian by virtue of his past training and/or experience, whatever these may be.

Regardless of present feeling about this plan, a more crucial issue now faces the Association, and it alone will determine the success or failure of certification by AALL: Whence will come the members to be certified? The issue is one of recruitment, and it affects every aspect of work in the library profession, no matter how general or special it may be.

In this respect, it can only be said that the AALL has entered last into the field of recruiting, now so generally well explored by every other major library association in this country. Inertia is not the sole reason for this late entry, because the issue has consumed some time at every meeting of the Association over the past twenty years. However, it should be remembered that the beginnings of the AALL were found in law libraries with political sponsorship. The founders worked hard to remove the law librarian from the "spoils system" and succeeded in many cases through the efforts of their Association. This being accomplished, it is well to point out further that the growth of law libraries remained at a fairly constant low level from 1910 to 1940, achieving its present giddy pace only within the last twenty years. At the end of a national depression and upon the completion of World War II, the demand for qualified lawyers, increased litigation in the courts, and the rapidly developing specialties of law practice brought upon the law libraries of this country a requirement for service and a need for trained personnel such as they had never before experienced. The somewhat insular character of the AALL did not allow it to prepare for a "crash" recruiting program; nor is it yet prepared for one in spite of the various educational programs recently undertaken. Potential trainees simply are not there even though the crisis has been reached, and the end of the shortage is not in sight.

However, in 1961 under the administration of Miss Elizabeth Finley, Law Librarian for Covington and Burling in Washington, D.C., the AALL launched a two-phase recruitment program. The first phase, now accomplished, was to produce a recruitment brochure for the Association and as much information about the prospects and requirements for entering this profession as could be contained in a recruitment "package."⁹ The second phase of the recruitment plan involves the distribution of this new literature primarily to library school administrators since the greatest need is for the person trained as a librarian regardless of his past or future grounding in law. Al-

though the Association has made a late start in attracting new talent to its cause, the importance of getting its message to all potential law librarians cannot be overestimated. Certainly, one of the first things it must do is to dispel the impression that law librarianship is a vastly complicated specialty requiring years of training and unrelenting enterprise before success in it can be achieved.

The Association's work today is firmly based upon the idea that action speaks louder than words, even in its relations with a profession where words count for much. The momentum generated 57 years ago by the founders of AALL can be continued only by rededicating its membership and its potential membership to the constant ideal of providing the highest quality of library service to the legal profession. To attain this ideal implies no lofty concept but simply means that, more than ever before, the problems of both the lawyer and the law librarian must be the problems of the AALL. Within this unity of purpose lies the future of the American Association of Law Libraries.

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