To present this new Division to reference librarians and others interested in reference services is an opportunity that this writer welcomes with the greatest enthusiasm. The Reference Services Division is the fulfillment of a dream which has been in the minds of many reference librarians for a very long time. It is hard to imagine any group of people more zealous in their interest in the library profession and what it can mean to the general public, particularly as applied to the reference function, or a group more talented; yet, until the new Division was formed, they had no over-all meeting place of minds, where they could pool their ideas, discuss mutual problems, and make genuine contributions in the field. Since the founding of the American Library Association in 1876, a period of eighty-one years, reference librarians have more or less gone their several ways, making wonderful contributions, to be sure, as individuals, through publications, professional papers and articles, editing and compiling reference tools, administering units of reference service, and above all, that day-by-day aid to the library's clientele, which can never be adequately assessed or measured. No one can look back over the achievements of reference librarians without feeling a glow of pride. The following names, to mention only a few of the many which readily come to mind, may illustrate this point--Isadore Gilbert Mudge, Winifred Gregory, James I. Wyer, Margaret Hutchins, Pierce Butler, Edith Guerrier, Mabel Conat. One could list many others who, by writing or other work in the field, have made noteworthy contributions. Surely now, however, a new day is dawning with the new Division which will serve as a framework for producing ideas and carrying them out.

The great potentials of this Division will be enlarged upon later; but perhaps at this point it will be useful to give a brief background history of past organizational attempts of reference librarians, which culminated in the new Division. With this
historical foundation as a starting point, the writer will then try to explain the present organization, its management and complexities, and then will enlarge upon its potentials with special reference to the organization of reference librarians at the local level—a project of deep personal interest.

The nucleus of the new Division was formed by merging the old Reference Librarians Section of the Association of College and Reference Libraries with the Reference Librarians Section of the Public Libraries Division. The former section has had quite a long history. A.C.R.L. traces its history back to the old College and Reference Section of the American Library Association, which, under a slightly different name, was established in 1889. It seems quite likely that the genesis of this early affiliation of college and reference was rooted in the idea that scholarly library activities were largely carried on in college and university libraries. The fine work of special libraries was probably little heard of at that time, being in its infancy, and the scholarly work of many public libraries as "universities of the people" had probably not developed to anything like the point it has since reached. The discussion of reference work in public libraries, however, early became one of the objectives of the section. From 1931 on, it conducted general and round table meetings at the A.L.A. annual conferences, and one of these sub-sections or round tables was the Reference Librarians group. In 1938 the section was reorganized as A.C.R.L., and the reference librarians group continued as a section of that body, though many of the members had felt for a number of years and continued to feel, that it was an anomaly to have a type-of-activity group in a type-of-library division, since the membership embraced reference librarians from all kinds of libraries. Of the 756 members in March, 1948, 74 were from college libraries, 122 from university libraries, 242 from public libraries, 66 from reference libraries such as the Library of Congress and the Peabody Library, and 221 from special libraries. College and university librarians made up only about 25 per cent of the total. In other words, from the beginning this was a functional group, drawn from many types of libraries, but all interested in reference service as well as in all the bibliographical and scholarly activities of libraries. In January, 1949, at the A.L.A. Midwinter meeting, the section formally adopted a statement of function very similar to that of the new division which is given below. Because of this anomaly of a type-of-work section in a type-of-library division, there were recurrent demands for divisional status. Others proposed multiplying reference sections by setting up such

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groups under the various type-of-library divisions, and one such additional group was organized in July, 1952, as the Reference Section of P.L.D. During the period July, 1952-December, 1955, the membership of both sections included librarians from various types of libraries and many reference librarians belonged to both. The sections worked together, through joint committees, on some matters.

At best this arrangement was a makeshift one, and a number of librarians felt that a happy solution would be a reorganization of A.L.A. in such a way that every member could belong, without payment of additional dues, to his type-of-library group and to his type-of-activity group, thus obviating any fear of division of loyalty and any sense of rivalry. When the A.L.A. Management Survey was published and accepted in principle by the Council, this hope became a reality. Before the Midwinter meeting in January, 1956, both sections worked out statements of area of responsibility, and a joint committee studied the two statements, which in spirit and in broad outline were almost identical, and drafted a statement which was accepted at a joint meeting of the two sections on February 2, 1956, and which later, with certain modifications, was accepted by the A.L.A. Council in June, 1957.

In December, 1956, the A.L.A. Executive Secretary, at the request of the President, called together an organizing committee composed of the chairmen of both the P.L.D. and the A.C.R.L. committees on divisional status, and several others from both groups, and a representative from the A.L.A. Bibliography Committee which was to become a part of the new Division. The organizing committee worked hard for two days, drawing up a constitution and by-laws for the new Division, planning for the interim organization, deciding on necessary committees, and the like. During the difficult seven-month interim period from December, 1956-June, 1957, Louis Shores served as chairman. During this time many minor points had to be ironed out, since every effort was being made by the A.L.A. and all those concerned, to make sure that the divisions were all as mutually exclusive as it was possible to be. Various committees and functions were shifted around so as to fall into the most logical division. R.S.D. took over not only the work of the two reference sections and all of the committees of each, but also several other A.L.A. and A.C.R.L. committees. During this period the organizing committee served the Division in place of a board of directors under the enthusiastic and forceful leadership of Mr. Shores. In Kansas City on June 26, 1957, the first officers of the new Division were installed.
Following this outline of the events which led up to the establishment of the Division, and before proceeding to what seems to be a most exciting vista—a look into present and future possibilities—a brief word about the organization as it now stands. Since it is a very new Division the members have had little opportunity for knowing about the structure of the Division. Because all of the activities, all of the future plans, all of the committees, must necessarily fall into the pattern of the new A.L.A. and must fall within the limits of the stated function, this statement, as approved by Council, June 25, 1957, will help to explain the Division's position:

The Reference Services Division is interested in the improvement and extension of informational, bibliographical, and research activities in all types of libraries, at all levels and in every subject field; reference materials—their production, listing and evaluation; inquiries and inquirers—their identification, classification, and appraisal; indexes and indexing—their extension and improvement; bibliographies and bibliographic method—their place and development in scholarly investigations. R.S.D. has specific responsibility for:

1. Continuous study and review of reference performance in the different types of libraries
2. Conduct and sponsorship of activities and projects in reference services
3. Synthesis of reference activities of all units within A.L.A. and in the various types of libraries so as to produce a unified professional concept of the reference function
4. Representation and interpretation of reference services both within and without the library profession
5. Stimulation of the development of librarians engaged in reference services to more distinguished performance, and stimulation of librarians engaged in reference services to participation in appropriate type-of-library divisions
6. Planning and development of programs of study and research in reference services for the total profession.

To reach a full understanding of the potentials of the new Division, this statement bears reading and rereading. Before
looking into these alluring possibilities, however, a few more facts about the organizational pattern are necessary. It is one of the twelve divisions of the A.L.A. and falls into the functional or type-of-activity group. The officers consist of a president, first vice-president, and president-elect, second vice-president, and a secretary-treasurer, the latter elected for a two-year term. The membership as of August 26, 1957, was 2,668, which makes it one of the major divisions and bears testimony to the need for such a group. This membership has arisen spontaneously because there has been no active membership drive. As the other divisions, it is hoped to have soon a leaflet telling something about the Division for the benefit of new members.

Much of the work necessarily has to be carried on by committees, of which there are seventeen to date; and one of these includes an active sub-committee. The committees fall into two groups: those concerned with the day-by-day management and running of the Division--the housekeeping end; and those concerned with the far-flung activities. In the first group are included the committees on Constitution and By-Laws; on Organization and Activities; on Local, State, and Regional Chapters; on Membership; and the Nominating and Election Committee. The committees concerned with the program of activities are the following: Bibliography (and this has a sub-committee on Hospital Library Bibliography), New Reference Tools, Inter-Library Loan, Recording and Evaluating Reference Materials, Wilson Indexes (appointed at the request of the H.W. Wilson Co.), a committee to plan and administer an appropriate annual award in memory of Isadore Gilbert Mudge, the Oberly Memorial Award Committee, Reference Work in Business and Technology, and the Public Library Reference Survey Committee. Finally, there are two committees which might classify in either category--the new Publication Committee which will attend to the placing for publication of papers presented at meetings, and other relevant contributions of the members, in journals or elsewhere, and the Conference Program Committee. This latter committee has a tremendous job and is reappointed for each annual conference. Some of the committees are ad hoc, having been set up to do a particular job and will be dismissed when the assignment is completed. Others, the majority, are standing committees. Unfortunately, space does not permit a detailed description of their duties but in some cases the title is self-explanatory. Some of these committees were inherited by the Division, two from A.L.A., two from A.C.R.L., two from P.L.D., and one was an A.C.R.L. and P.L.D. joint
committee. The remaining ten were set up to meet the present needs of R.S.D. Several committees are just getting their activities under way after the inevitable inactivity during the period of reorganization, but all have a useful and productive future ahead. It is much to be hoped that any members who have special interest in a particular committee will file their names, as vacancies frequently occur.

R.S.D. hopes to meet the needs of reference librarians not only through the work of the committees outlined above, but also through chapters and sections, and provision for both has been made in the Constitution and By-Laws. Chapters or groups of members in a certain area--local, state, or regional--will be covered later. Sections may be set up from time to time, and presumably would be based on specialized interests of reference librarians, such as reference work in a certain subject area. The Division also plans to meet the needs of members for professional growth and development through participation in skillfully planned conference programs.

No picture of the organization would be complete without reference to A.L.A. Headquarters services. A part-time executive secretary is now available to the Division. When the organizing committee first met, Samray Smith guided the work most helpfully, but almost immediately he became the new editor of the ALA Bulletin, and Cora Beatty, Chief of Membership Services, was assigned to the Division on a part-time basis. Miss Beatty's efficiency, intimate knowledge of the A.L.A. organization, and her enthusiasm for reference services and activities have made her a wonderful help to the Division, and already an indispensable part of the organization. Certainly the new President would have had a rough road to travel these first few months without her ready help and advice all along the way. One of the many advantages of this Headquarters help is the achievement of continuity, since officers come and go.

So much for the history and structure of the Division, which it must be remembered, is very young and has scarcely had time to tap the surface of its potentials. It is, however, as someone expressed it, a very lusty baby, and has a wonderfully productive future ahead. This hope is based not only on the fact that there is so much to be done in this area, but also on the quality of the membership. Perhaps one of the most obvious faults of reference librarians is a tendency to become so immersed in their individual tasks that they have not developed an esprit de corps. Now surely with this over-all organization they can develop just that. Many things can be achieved working together that could not be accomplished as individuals.

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What then are some of the potentials of R.S.D.? The collections of materials range from those in the smallest libraries to the great research collections, from the general collection, large or small, to the most minutely specialized one, and the clientele from the relative homogeneity of those served by the special library or the small college library, to the heterogeneity of those who use the facilities of the public library, serving as it does all ages and those of every degree of education, including graduate and undergraduate students and instructors. Despite this range and diversity of needs, services, and materials, there are many facets of the reference function that are common to all, many others that touch several if not all types of libraries. The Reference Services Division, recognizing the great value to be gained from a pooling of knowledge and discussion of mutual problems, should serve as a clearinghouse and coordinating agency in matters of reference service. Its influence and usefulness should reach out to every library in the country regardless of type or size—wherever staff members, whether designated reference librarians or not, are trying to bring together inquirers and the materials best fitted to meet their needs.

It should serve these librarians not only through its central office facilities at A.L.A. Headquarters but also through regional and local chapters, bringing programs and activities of a very practical nature within the reach of all those who have a part in the reference services of libraries. Through committee work it should carry on projects and serve in an advisory way in the many aspects of its field of responsibility. It should accommodate and plan for, both in meetings and in activities, those engaged in highly specialized reference service, those engaged in various scholarly and bibliographical pursuits, those interested particularly in reference work with certain age groups, such as reference work with students in school and public libraries, and for those engaged in the teaching of reference materials and techniques. All of these groups should be of concern to the Division on the local as well as the national level.

The Division's concern for an adequate reference apparatus should be reflected in its encouragement, through various channels including its own New Reference Tools Committee, of the publication of needed reference materials. This would also be evident in its interest in the evaluating and listing of reference materials for various purposes and on various levels.

Studies and investigations in the field of reference service are surely needed and the carrying out of such studies or the referral of such needs to library school faculty members or
other agencies, may well be fostered by the Division. Reference librarians are faced by innumerable problems, some of which should be feasible as subjects for study. A few such problems, chosen at random, may illustrate this point. How to make the clientele more fully aware of reference sources is something many reference librarians ask. Surely much more could be done to make these gold mines of knowledge known to the general public. Standards of reference service would be another field for study. Maintaining the quality of reference service in the libraries, in the face of rapid staff turnover and the necessary and worthy emphasis on new and equally important functions of today's libraries, is a problem that has caused concern to many. Reference librarians are well aware of the priceless build-up in the knowledge of a collection, whether it be specialized, general, or for a certain age group, which comes from long use by one of alert mind. How can anyone be expected to know any collection well when he leaves for another field or to work with a different kind of collection, after perhaps a year or less? Another problem which is certainly receiving study now is the better utilization of new techniques and new machines.

Articles and books on reference services are needed, of course, if the approach is fresh and the topic is now inadequately covered. To encourage such contributions is certainly a concern of R.S.D. It is a dream of some of the members that eventually there may be a journal of high caliber devoted specifically to articles in this field of interest, with a section for reviews of reference materials, and possibly a question and answer column, where librarians may ask for help on all kinds of problems connected with reference services as well as on specific inquiries from patrons.

This indicates only a few vistas of what the Division may be able to do now and in the future. In order to accomplish anything worth-while, it needs the talents and work of all those interested in reference services, and the best way for R.S.D. to find these librarians and for these librarians to find R.S.D. is through local groups. For this reason it is hoped that local groups of persons interested in reference service will spring up all over the country. It is hoped also that such groups, newly formed or already existing, will petition to become chapters of R.S.D. The requirements are simple and a committee has been set up to aid and advise local groups. Doris Wells, Head of the History and Literature Department of the Denver Public Library, is chairman. Letters of inquiry on this matter sent to the executive secretary or directly to Miss Wells
will receive immediate attention. According to the by-laws, state, regional, or local chapters may be established by the board of directors on the petition of a sufficient number of members of the R.S. D. resident in the territory within which the chapter is desired and according to the following regulations:

a. Each chapter may establish its own constitution and by-laws
b. Chapters may be discontinued by action of the board of directors of R.S. D.
c. At least one meeting shall be held each year, or every two years in the case of regional or other groups which normally hold biennial meetings.
d. Each chapter shall send a report of its meeting to the secretary-treasurer of the R.S. D. at least two months before the annual conference of the American Library Association.

In any case, local groups of librarians interested in reference services can be wonderfully stimulating and productive. Here are the ideal conditions for a profitable meeting of minds --the distances are small enough to make frequent attendance at meetings possible and to make it possible really to know one another. After all, a very small per cent of the librarians in a community are able to attend A.L.A. annual conventions. In these smaller areas, it is possible to pool one's knowledge, discuss mutual problems, work out solutions, put these solutions into immediate practice, encourage and interest young librarians and newcomers to the region, undertake cooperative projects, and develop talents. And what better place to discover unknown talents! Some A.L.A. divisions which have had regional groups have become aware of much unsuspected talent and ability this way. Local meetings can be stimulating, educational, and thoroughly enjoyable. They can broaden the outlook of the members and help each to understand the problems that confront the others. What a wonderful opportunity lies ahead in a community with school librarians, college and university librarians, public librarians, and special librarians, meeting together this way, with minds focused on this particular type of service and its many facets and complexities. There need be only two or three or four such meetings a year, but some of the papers presented before such groups have received national recognition through later publication. Also local scholars,
or other persons who are not librarians, may make notable contributions at such meetings and become thereby much more interested in the problems confronting reference librarians. Lastly, and this only skims the surface of possibilities, these groups can do a wonderful service to posterity by doing cooperative work on needed reference tools--e.g., compiling an index or a bibliography of some sort.

Regardless of affiliation with A.L.A. and R.S.D., these local groups of librarians interested in reference services can be fruitful to a high degree and can accomplish much, but there are distinct and overwhelming advantages to belonging to A.L.A. and R.S.D. When a group becomes a chapter, its members will be in touch with other groups organized locally and will know what these are doing. They will have all the advantages of A.L.A. and R.S.D. membership, including the Headquarters facilities, and will be in touch with all the other projects undertaken by the Division. R.S.D. in turn will profit greatly by this unearthing of talent and abilities all across the country, by finding worth-while papers and contributions for publication for the benefit of others, and in many other ways.

In conclusion, a great future lies ahead for this new Division and the potentials for practical and even scholarly attainments are high. Reference librarians can make significant contributions to the theory and practice of the reference function of libraries, and to the materials and apparatus which are their stock-in-trade.