Treatment of Nonbook Materials

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While the cataloging and classification of books have followed more or less standard procedures in libraries, the treatment of nonbook materials has only recently received systematic consideration. The pressure for organizing has come with the development of large collections of such materials. When a catalog is needed, rules for it inevitably are developed. The formulation of rules by individual libraries is the first step, and gradually uniform or commonly acceptable operations are incorporated into codes. This evolution is observable in tracing the history, growth, and trends in the cataloging and classification of nonbook items, and specifically of archives, manuscripts, and audio-visual materials. The last-named are considered as including maps, pictures, phonorecords, and motion pictures. Excluded from this discussion are microreproductions of printed matter, since, with relatively minor additions to provide for physical form, the rules for cataloging books can be applied to them.

Archives and Manuscripts. The terms “archives” and “manuscripts” mean different things to different people. Some maintain that “archives” should refer only to records of government agencies, and others that it should comprise those of societies, churches, universities, business firms, and even individuals, thus limiting the term “manuscripts” to one or more unrelated documents, historical or modern. A broader concept of “manuscript” is included in the Historical Records Survey’s definition of it as “a handwritten or typed document (including letterpress and carbon copies) or a photographic reproduction of such a document.”

In the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth, responsibility for preservation of archives and manuscripts in this country was largely assumed by historical societies and a few state and large research libraries. During this period greater emphasis was placed upon collecting and protecting them than upon organizing...
them for use. The Public Archives Commission of the American Historical Association, established in 1899, was instrumental in bringing about significant legislation leading to the preservation and custody of state archival collections. The work of the Historical Records Survey stimulated interest in the guarding of public and private records.

Whether collections of private records are categorized as archives or manuscripts, the technique of cataloging them is similar to that for public records. In both cases, it treats the files of an agency as a group and employs such finding media as check lists, inventories, indexes, calendars, and to a lesser extent card catalogs, and maintains the integrity of the original arrangement whenever possible. The chief difference is that certain additions are necessary for public records, because they are interrelated and complex, whereas private ones are made up of unrelated series. The cataloging of single documents, such as letters, or the analyzing of isolated documents, likewise is similar. Where possible the cataloging of a single manuscript follows the rules and principles for printed books. This paper does not consider the cataloging of medieval and renaissance manuscripts, other than to note that American Library Association rule 9 for entry of manuscripts is “based on the cataloging of manuscripts occurring most frequently in the average library in the form of facsimiles.”

Although the fourth edition of C. A. Cutter’s *Rules for a Dictionary Catalog* (1904) contains a section on the cataloging of both private and public manuscripts, prepared by Worthington Ford, the first systematic handbook was J. C. Fitzpatrick’s *Notes on the Care, Cataloguing, Calendarizing and Arranging of Manuscripts*, issued by the Library of Congress in 1913 and appearing in a third edition in 1928. In this work the author warns that the first handling of a mass of manuscripts is often crucial, since it reveals hints of value in the final archival plan and the dating and identifying of the miscellany of the collection. Chronological arrangement within groups is recommended.

In 1936 a useful handbook on the care of manuscripts was issued by the Minnesota Historical Society, setting forth the treatment of materials in its collection. In that library manuscripts are divided into nine main groups, as follows: (1) personal papers; (2) records of organizations; (3) miscellaneous records; (4) transcripts and photostatic copies; (5) calendars and field reports; (6) secondary material; (7) broadsides; (8) autographs; and (9) manuscript maps. The arrangement of each group varies. Catalog cards are made for each col-
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lection, and calendar cards for personal papers. Later accounts of this collection have appeared in professional literature.

About the same time, the Historical Records Survey, originally established in 1935 to survey local public records, produced manuals of instruction on the preparation of guides, inventories, and calendars which also serve as helpful aids to the cataloging and classifying of manuscripts. When the H.R.S. was abolished, in 1942, more than 1,200 inventories, calendars, transcripts, and other publications had been issued.6

The opinions concerning the treatment of manuscripts differ considerably. Calendars, for example, are thought by some to be desirable only in exceptional cases. Certain librarians have preferred printed guides, rather than detailed card catalogs or calendars. Chronological arrangement within a collection appears essential for easy use.

Although references to individual library procedures have been largely omitted from this review, since they are available in Library Literature, mention should be made of Harvard's recent approach. When the Manuscripts Department was created there in 1948 it was found that manuscripts cataloged before 1940 were treated according to a variety of methods, while those acquired after 1940 were listed but not cataloged. Since the old catalogs could not be consolidated, it was decided to start a new one. In it descriptions of the collections are expressed in simplest terms, in the belief that the reader will prefer to be guided to, not told all about, the materials. The original arrangement by linguistic and geographic areas has been retained, but some new categories, such as music and graphic arts, have been added. Within each class, arrangement is by serial number.7

The Library of Congress has been currently engaged in drafting tentative rules for the cataloging of single manuscripts and manuscript collections. These have been sent out for criticism, and when in final form will be submitted to the A.L.A. Division of Cataloging and Classification for its approval. In England, J. L. Hobbs8 has recommended that manuscript cataloging conform as closely as possible to the Anglo-American code.

European interest in archival control is older than American. In the discussion of classification and arrangement of archives at the first meeting of the Conference of Archivists called by the Public Archives Commission in 1909, it was advocated that the principle of respect des fonds, or principe de la provenance, be observed.9 Prior to the nineteenth century the materials in European archives were arranged in

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accordance with some predetermined scheme of subject matter. When the principle of *respect des fonds* was adopted in France in 1841, the records of each political unit or *fond* were thereafter to be segregated, but those of the agencies within each political unit were to be arranged by subject. In 1874 the Prussians went further, providing that not only records of each political division but also those of each subordinate one were to be kept separate. The extension of *respect des fonds* has come to be known as *Provenienzprinzip*, or principle of provenance. Within each agency the “original organization” given to its records in the registry office is to be maintained, under the principle known as *Registratorprinzip*. Such methods were immediately accepted in the Netherlands and given theoretical justification in a manual issued by three Dutch archivists—Muller, Feith, and Fruin—which became the modern archivists’ bible. A translation into English of the second edition was published in 1940. The principle developed by the Prussian and Dutch archivists appears to have mainly an academic interest for American archivists, since public records in the United States are not organized by registry offices before being transferred to the National Archives.10

In 1936 tentative catalog rules of the Archives Division of the Illinois State Library, representing the result of several years’ experimentation in adapting Library of Congress rules to the cataloging of archives, were issued. The types of records made were an inventory shelf list on sheets, a dictionary catalog on cards, and a name index. Calendars were made for each volume or unit but not for each piece. In actual practice, however, it was found that subject reference to classification groups was more useful.11

Perhaps the most important single event in American archival history was the establishment of the National Archives in 1934. This created problems in archival organization on a large scale. In a paper on cataloging at the National Archives, J. R. Russell12 described the card catalog, which was planned as a guide to groups of records and not to single pieces, and made with main entry under the name of the agency whose archives were listed. According to him the catalog card resembled in form that for printed books, and a card list of subject headings was started. Accession cataloging was the first step; division cataloging or series cataloging, the second. Division cataloging grouped all records of a government subdivision together. The items were given series cataloging rather than division cataloging if the division contained documents on a variety of subjects.
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R. R. Hill, writing about classification at the National Archives, observed that it was still in the experimental stage, there being no precedents of sufficiently universal application to offer guidance. He indicated that the practice for European archives was kept in mind and its limitations recognized. The classification reflects the government organization, though the picture cannot be complete because of governmental changes. The steps in classifying archives are an examination of the materials, a study of the history of the agency and of its records, and a determination and analysis of each unit. The basic unit of classification is a group or series of records.

It was decided at the National Archives in 1940 that the card catalog was not a useful finding medium and it was therefore discontinued. The Catalog Division then devoted its time to the preparation of indexes to records. In 1941 a new program of finding media was begun. The work of preparing them was transferred to the custodial divisions, and the divisions of cataloging and classification were abolished.

The Committee on Archives and Libraries established by the A.L.A. in 1937 arranged programs on archives at annual conferences from 1937 to 1940. Papers on cataloging and classification were presented, and are available in the published proceedings of the sessions. It was brought out that a manual of cataloging and classification for archives was needed, but that more experience in the handling of such records was necessary before a standard handbook could be compiled.

A recent development in archival work is concern for records management, with a view to eliminating unnecessary record-making and filing of papers. Articles on this subject by E. T. Leahy and Helen Chatfield appeared in 1949 and 1950. A comprehensive program for the management of federal records was authorized by the Federal Property and Administration Services Act of 1949. It established the National Archives and Records Service under the newly created General Services Administration to administer the National Archives and a Records Management Division.

Another recent development is the inauguration of training courses for archives administration. The first of these was given at Columbia University in 1938/39. Courses have been offered since at other institutions.

Audio-Visual Materials. In the field of audio-visual materials, the growing emphasis upon their applications to education has brought establishment of audio-visual centers and increased attention to cataloging and classifying such items. Margaret Rufsvold includes a
chapter on the indexing and processing of all types of nonbook materials in her Audio-Visual School Library Service. Problems such as selection of a classification scheme (Dewey decimal, accession order, etc.), decision as to consolidating the cards for books and nonbooks in one file or maintaining separate catalogs, and the inclusion of subject entries, require consideration. Apparently separate catalogs are most common where the collections of audio-visual materials are extensive. Certain items, such as pictures, lend themselves to a self-indexing arrangement which may not require a catalog.

The processing in schools of nonbook materials is also covered briefly in Mary P. Douglas' The Teacher-Librarian's Handbook; in special libraries, in Hobbs' Libraries and the Materials of Local History and R. L. Collison's The Cataloguing, Arranging and Filing of Special Materials in Special Libraries; and in colleges, in G. R. Lyle's The Administration of the College Library. A committee on audio-visual work recently appointed by the Association of College and Reference Libraries has undertaken as its first project a survey of the audio-visual programs in colleges and universities.

In addition to the increased emphasis growing from the educational use of audio-visual materials, the movement to preserve those of historical importance has also focused attention on cataloging and classification. Separate divisions have been set up in the National Archives for motion pictures and sound recordings, maps and charts, and photographic records in the form of prints and slides. The movement for the preservation of films of lasting importance began in 1927, with a proposal by the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America to President Coolidge that the government allot space in the new archives building in Washington not only for government films but for great feature pictures as well.

Films.—The Film Library of the Museum of Modern Art was established in 1935 with the aid of a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation. Methods of cataloging in this library were described by J. E. Abbott in 1938. They resulted in a master or inventory file on 4 x 6-inch cards, and a card catalog on 5 x 7 cards with main entry under title.

J. G. Bradley in 1945 reported on the cataloging of films at the National Archives. He stated that at first each film received was reviewed and a summary was prepared on sheets and filed in a case history folder. In later years this was typed on cards. Bradley recommended that the language and form of the entry be kept simple.

The classification of film undoubtedly has been influenced by that
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in the *Educational Film Catalog*, which first appeared in 1936. Since the Dewey Decimal Classification is used in this compilation, many librarians have found it adaptable in arranging films.

In September 1951 the Library of Congress began to issue printed cards for motion pictures and filmstrips cataloged by it and by cooperating libraries and institutions. Among such other agencies issuing cards for motion pictures in the United States are the Educational Film Library Association, Coronet, and Ver Halen Publishing Company. In 1952 the Library of Congress published its rules for the descriptive cataloging of motion pictures and filmstrips in a preliminary edition. A revised edition appeared in April 1953. These rules were designed for cataloging theatrical and nontheatrical films of the most common kind. They provide for main entry under title, and for recording information which will reduce to a minimum the occasions for handling the films, since access to them necessarily must be limited.

International standards for film cataloging, evaluation, and data as to availability were discussed at a series of meetings held by the United Kingdom National Commission for UNESCO in England in February 1953 and at a Conference on International Standards for Film Cataloguing convened by the United States National Commission for UNESCO in Washington, May 11–12, 1953. The conference in Washington recommended that the rules of the Library of Congress and the British Film Institute form the basis for world-wide standards for descriptive catalog entries. The UNESCO Secretariat is to study the recommendations of both conferences, and attempt to develop standards that will be internationally acceptable.

Phonorecords.—A survey of the literature on cataloging phonorecords reveals great diversity of treatment. Four arrangements are found to be in use, viz., by composer, form or medium, record number, and accession number. The advantages and disadvantages of each were noted by the Music Library Association in its *Code for Cataloging Phonographic Records*. Margaret Dean-Smith, cataloger for the British Broadcasting Company's Gramophone Library, observed that "Many record-libraries in their infancy, including the B.B.C., disregarded 'make, prefix and number' and tried place-numbers, accession-numbers, or even classification by Dewey and other systems; the B.B.C. abandoned an impractical first-thought some time before the library began to be built up on its present scale, and though the suggestion of 'make, prefix and number' met with polite mistrust at a Library Association conference in 1944 it is now almost a commonplace." Ar-
rangement by accession number is considered by some to be most satisfactory, since it eliminates shifting.

The literature contains references to varying practices of individual libraries. A summary as of 1945 appears in an article by Inez Haskell. In 1946 the Music Library Association and the A.L.A. Division of Cataloging and Classification established a joint committee to revise the Association's Code for Cataloging Music. When the Library of Congress began the preparation of rules for cataloging records the joint committee's tentative draft was made available to L.C. A preliminary form of the Rules for Descriptive Cataloging in the Library of Congress; Phonorecords was issued in 1952. "The rules are designed to cover the several physical types of recordings and are regarded as applicable to all kinds of recorded sound, i.e., speech, music, etc." Included are regulations for the cataloging of cylinders, wire and tape recordings, sound film, and music rolls, the term "phonorecord" having been coined to fill the need for something to comprehend these various types. The rules have been accepted by the joint committee for incorporation in the revised edition of the M.L.A. code.

With the issue of the phonorecord rules, uniformity in the descriptive cataloging of sound recordings is much nearer to being achieved. Classification, however, probably will continue to vary among libraries according to their needs.

Maps.—Because of their physical format and the difficulty of applying established classification systems and cataloging rules to them, maps have been regarded as "step-children" by some librarians. S. W. Boggs and Dorothy C. Lewis, who prepared a manual on map processing, did not consider maps simply as books in another form. However, they observed that the general objectives in the classification of books and maps were the same, and in their manual they tried to restrict divergency from the practices for books to cases in which it is necessary.

The idea that the same rules can be applied to books and maps, which so long influenced map cataloging, springs from the statement by Lee Phillips in 1904 that "The cataloging of maps and atlases differs very little from the cataloging of ordinary books." A number of librarians regarded this as satisfactory, and it was not surprising that when the Boggs and Lewis manual was submitted to the A.L.A. Cataloging and Classification Committee in 1939 it was rejected because in the committee's opinion it did not conform to standard cataloging practices, especially with respect to entry.
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Articles on the processing of maps published since 1900 show a wide variation in the treatment of such materials among libraries, particularly with regard to classification. The methods include arrangement by using the Dewey decimal history numbers preceded by M, the Cutter geographic system, index maps, and other notational schemes developed for particular libraries. The plan developed by Boggs and Lewis is set forth in their manual. The Library of Congress issued its map schedules (Class G) first in 1946, and at the time of writing a second edition is in press. It may be noted that there has been some question as to the effectiveness of classifying maps.

Main entry is another phase of map cataloging about which there is a difference of opinion. Rule 10 of the A.L.A. code provides for entry under the name of the cartographer, editor, publisher, government bureau, society, or institution. Main entry under area is recommended by Boggs and Lewis because the section portrayed is the most obvious and significant characteristic of maps. Main entry, however, does not imply a unit card, since the unit card for maps is "only the base to which must be added the headings for the different entries. For most maps the unit card does not appear in the catalog in unaltered form..." Here there appears a concept of the main entry different from that in the A.L.A. code.

The number and kinds of catalogs or indexes also vary among libraries, as does the form of card. Some libraries use a printed form card. The number of catalogs runs from none, arrangement being on a geographical basis, to the nine separate catalogs maintained at the Army Map Service Library. An extensive bibliographical summary of literature relating to maps was made by W. R. Ristow in 1946.

To remedy the lack of well-organized map collections made apparent during World War II, the Army Map Service in 1945 invited a number of libraries to become depositories for 25,000 maps to be supplied in duplicate. This depository program was suspended in 1951. On May 15, 1946, the Library of Congress announced a plan to print catalog cards for the A.M.S. maps. According to the Manual of the L.C. Map Division, only selected categories of other maps are cataloged in full and have printed cards. At one time the Division hoped that a uniform system might be developed, and anticipated cooperative cataloging and a union catalog. When this did not seem immediately attainable, it proceeded to revise its classification. In 1949, it issued a handbook on the care of maps.

Picture Collections.—As with maps and phonorecords, the literature
on picture collections provides a variety of processing practices. Norma O. Ireland has discussed picture collections in different types of libraries, and Marcelle Frebault, in a revised edition of J. C. Dana's monograph, has described in detail the well-organized picture collection of the Art Department in the Newark, New Jersey, Free Public Library. This collection includes postcards, lantern slides, framed pictures, and fine prints.

Generally, picture collections are arranged by subject. In her 1942 survey of fourteen representative photographic collections in colleges, universities, and museums, Eleanor Mitchell found that several organized their materials according to the methods used by the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

As in their treatment of other stock, libraries vary in their approach to the cataloging of picture collections. Some allow systematic arrangement to answer requests of users, while there are several instances of full-scale cataloging. Collison expressed the opinion that such material is usually "too ephemeral to warrant the expense and delay of catalogue entries."

This would not be true, however, of a collection of fine prints. The Library of Congress has introduced a useful feature in its catalog of prints, a microfilm contact copy of the original being mounted on the catalog card. This facilitates the search for a given picture, and in many cases eliminates the need to examine the original. It probably would be feasible or economically possible only in a large library.

With the increase in the number and size of collections of nonbook materials and the attention being paid to their organization for use, the development of adequate rules will soon catch up with those for book cataloging. There is need, however, for sound manuals for each of the special types of material, covering not only cataloging and classification, but physical handling and servicing as well.

References


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37. Boggs and Lewis, op. cit., p. 27.