



## Associations in the United States

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THE AMERICAN Library Association, founded in 1876, was followed before the turn of the century by the National Association of State Libraries, 1889, and the Medical Library Association, 1898. Three associations came into existence in the first quarter of the twentieth century: the American Association of Law Libraries in 1906, the Special Libraries Association in 1909, and the Catholic Library Association in 1921. Since then the following have been formed: the Music Library Association in 1931, the Theatre Library Association in 1937, and the American Theological Library Association in 1947.

Major attention will be paid to these nine associations. The omission of a particular organization does not imply that it is without importance in library affairs in this country; mention of the Association of Research Libraries, the American Merchant Marine Library Association, the Association of American Library Schools, and the Council of National Library Associations suggests many activities of great importance. However, in order to establish a working limit this chapter concerns itself with those national library associations in the United States which meet in general the following criteria: provision for membership on the part of individual librarians, with policies and programs reflecting individual, not institutional, decision; the inclusion among objectives of the improvement and extension of libraries and the development of standards of librarianship; the rendering of professional services to members; and a concern with the development of professional literature. They will be considered chronologically by date of founding.

The American Library Association had its beginnings in 1853 when the first conference of librarians ever held convened in New York on September 15. "We meet," said Charles Coffin Jewett, president of the convention, "to provide for the diffusion of a knowledge of good books

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and for enlarging the means of public access to them." During the second day of the conference, resolutions were offered relative to a next meeting and to the formation of a permanent organization.<sup>1</sup> The group, as such, did not meet again. The panic of 1857 interfered, and the gathering war clouds finally broke and were followed by years of war and reconstruction. It was not until twenty-three years later that another national meeting of librarians was held and the spirit of the resolution on organization carried out. This was on October 6, 1876, when the 103 librarians and other interested persons then assembled in convention in Philadelphia, took the formal action which established the American Library Association.<sup>2</sup> It was Melvil Dewey who, with a characteristic display of initiative, took it upon himself to call the conference and make arrangements for it. He persuaded Justin Winsor, head of the Boston Public Library, L. P. Smith of the Philadelphia Library Company, and W. F. Poole, librarian of the Chicago Public Library, to serve on the committee.<sup>3</sup> The group declared that "For the purpose of promoting the library interests of the country, and of increasing reciprocity of intelligence and good-will among librarians and all interested in library economy and bibliographical studies, the undersigned form themselves into a body to be known as the American Library Association."<sup>4</sup> Winsor was unanimously chosen president while the energetic Dewey was made secretary and treasurer.

Three years later, on December 10, 1879, the A.L.A. was incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The charter states that the association was formed "for the purpose of promoting the library interests of the country by exchanging views, reaching conclusions, and inducing cooperation in all departments of bibliothecal science and economy; by disposing the public mind to the founding and improving of libraries; and by cultivating good will among its members. . . ." In February 1942, the charter was amended to include the promotion of "library interests throughout the world."<sup>5</sup>

The history of the A.L.A. parallels the history of the development of modern library service in this country. Its development has proceeded hand in hand with the spread of library service, the development of library science, and the emergence of a sense of professional unity among librarians. The formation of the A.L.A. came at a propitious time. Following the Civil War, the number of libraries increased greatly, 2,240 public libraries having been formed in the twenty-five year period ending in 1875, while the number of volumes in libraries of all types grew from about 1,600,000 to over 12,000,000.<sup>3</sup>

A professional association in any field has the responsibility to speak

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and act for the profession. Policies are decided through the democratic process and the agents of the association are empowered and directed to act. The evolution of policy is slow in a membership organization and the machinery for arriving at a group decision is often cumbersome, complex, and ponderous. Proposed activities, issues, and programs work their way through many units in which there exists a functional or substantive interest or a delegated authority. The conclusions, allowing that the questions have received the careful attention of intelligent and professionally conscious persons, are generally sound. In the A.L.A., as in other professional associations, many issues have been developed and crystallized through the deliberations of committees and boards, as in the case of federal aid to libraries and adult education. Other issues have been thrust upon it by rapidly moving forces, as in intellectual freedom while other activities have resulted from planned policy decision, as in the publishing program.

There often comes a time when events and the concern of its members require that the profession speak for or that it accept responsibility for, a line of action. The vehicle by which the concern or interests of the majority is translated into action or program is the professional association. The articles which follow deal with several major issues and programs which have concerned and continue to concern the A.L.A. and other national library associations in this country and in the British Commonwealth. This section on the A.L.A. will deal largely with certain phases of the association's progress through organizational changes.

There has never existed any complete agreement among the members on what should be the programs of the A.L.A. Certainly there has never been any unanimity of feeling on how well the association conducts its affairs. The headquarters staff has been berated on occasions for moving too slowly, and on other occasions, for moving too fast. The Executive Board has not always been considered representative of geographical and subject interests and has been criticized by special groups when its individual members transcended such interests. It is sometimes said that the Council does not give sufficient consideration to the matters brought before it; again that it takes the Council too long to decide its course. All of these viewpoints represent the concern of the individual member over the programs of the association; a concern that most often seeks a solution through reorganization of the association. The most extensive and far-reaching of these associational soul searchings have been expressed in the work of the four

### Activities Committees and in the studies of the present Committee on Divisional Relations.

The first Committee on A.L.A. Activities was born of the trenchant pen of John Cotton Dana. In December 1927, Dana addressed a letter of criticism to the Executive Board concerning certain activities of the association, especially those relating to the Board of Education for Librarianship, adult education, and the library curriculum series of textbooks.<sup>6</sup> The letter was read before the Council which appointed a special committee to study and report upon the matters. This committee recommended a scrutiny of A.L.A. activities every three years. The recommendation was approved and the first of four Activities Committees went to work. Its report appeared in the *A.L.A. Bulletin* for December 1930. The committee early recognized that it was dealing with human, personal, and psychological factors, inherent in the group characteristics peculiar to the library profession, and that these were just as important if not more so than the statistical, financial, and administrative factors involved. The committee's report expressed a high regard for the personnel and organization of A.L.A. headquarters. The sources and the handling of finances were scrutinized. A surprising amount was being accomplished, the committee felt, in library extension. The committee uncovered many differences of opinion among A.L.A. members on the role of the library and of the A.L.A. in adult education. The committee could not agree with those who would have the association discontinue its work in adult education but it did recommend close and frequent observation of this activity. Education for librarianship provided the committee with its most difficult problem. The committee concluded that the Board of Education for Librarianship had made wise use of its powers but it hoped for better relationships with other training agencies. The Personnel Division was found to be inadequately supported and the report expressed doubt that it would succeed. The need for a more adequate headquarters library was established as a matter of first importance. The report praised the work of committees and recommended funds for the more important ones.

The Second Activities Committee was appointed in 1933. It did not attempt an exhaustive report.<sup>7</sup> Criticism, it felt, of the activities of the association was less widespread and less acute than in 1928; also, the report of the First Activities Committee had covered the ground very thoroughly. The Second Activities Committee noted, too, that the executive boards of the association were showing an increasing tendency to act as survey agents and thus review, systematically, the work of

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the association. The committee surveyed finances, membership promotion, foundation support, unemployment and salaries, A.L.A. headquarters operations, committees, and the nominating process. It made important recommendations relating to the selection and composition of committees and of the Executive Board, urged three new major activities at A.L.A. headquarters—a statistical research bureau, a department for college libraries, and a department for library work with children and youth in and out of school, and recommended that the periodic scrutiny of the association be made every six instead of every three years.

The Third Activities Committee reported to the Council at the 1939 midwinter meeting.<sup>8</sup> The areas of study undertaken by this committee were most important ones. It searched for a more democratic government and its recommendations brought about a completely elective Council. Its efforts to place responsibility for the promotion of particular fields of library service on those actively concerned with those fields led to the present divisional structure and financial support. Its recommendations for a dues scale based on ability to pay were approved. It urged establishment of adequate association machinery for the solution of professional problems of the individual member; this stimulated intensive work, particularly on problems of salary and tenure. Less improvement was effected in two other areas in which action was recommended by the committee: broader and more effective policies on affiliation and closer relationships between state and national library organizations.

The final report of the Fourth Activities Committee was presented in the *A.L.A. Bulletin* for January 1949. The last of the recommendations accepted by Council became effective with By-law revisions approved by the membership at the Minneapolis annual conference in 1954. The committee presented its conclusions and recommendations in two parts: Part 1 dealt with the management of headquarters, and Part 2 with membership structure, professional services, and geographic organization. Part 1 went rather fully into the duties of headquarters staff and the costs of headquarters operations. Economies, which the committee thought possible and desirable, were described and recommended. The Council has approved the recommendations spelling out the responsibilities of the executive secretary in the execution of policy, and those relating to the separation of publishing operations from headquarters. The latter has not yet been effected, due largely to continuing study by the headquarters staff.

The 1949 recommendations relating to the organizational structure

of the association provided for decentralization of responsibility and authority. Geographic representation was to be strengthened through changes in the relationships of its chapters to the A.L.A. Except for those points dealing with the operation of the membership campaign and the payment of a portion of the A.L.A. dues to chapters, the recommendations (which Council referred to a Committee on Geographic Organization) have been accepted by the Council and the membership. The committee further recommended organizational units within the A.L.A. by type of work and by type of library, thus providing, in the entire recommendations, for geographic, functional, and substantive organization. Three departments, a department of library administration, a department of services to readers, and a department of technical services, were recommended as the functional units; and four associations, college and research libraries, public libraries, school libraries, and special libraries, were to be the substantive units. Each unit in functional and substantive groupings was to have an executive staff at A.L.A. headquarters and representation on the Council. These recommendations did not meet with approval; the association continues to have some functional and some substantive units but not the degree and kind urged by the report. Of the recommendations relating to the government of the association, two of the approved ones require special mention. These provide for approval of the budget by the Council, which has been effected by giving the Finance Committee of the Council the deciding vote in the Budget Committee, and for the appointment by the Council of special review committees to replace the Activities Committees.

This outline of examination and change suggests the kind of an evolutionary process that characterizes the organization of the A.L.A. The various forces within the association produce continual change. Because of this, rather than in spite of it, the association appears today to be in the best condition of its existence. Membership stands around 21,000—the highest point yet reached. The headquarters staff has had to be increased in order to keep pace with growing demands. Foundation grants, particularly in adult education, provide new and needed programs. The divisions grow stronger and add their important consultative and publishing services. About ninety per cent of the membership takes advantage of the opportunity for divisional membership, available without extra cost. A considerable number pay the small additional dues necessary to acquire multiple divisional membership. Five of the seven divisions maintain executive offices at headquarters. The substantial financial support given the divisions, roughly fifty

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per cent of the membership dollar is allotted to them, allows field work on a satisfactory scale. A present concern is that growth may be bringing about a growing lack of program coordination.

The last mentioned recommendation of the Fourth Activities Committee had its first implementation at the 1953 Midwinter Conference when the Council established the Committee on Divisional Relations to study the relations of the A.L.A. and its divisions as a whole, and of the divisions to each other.<sup>9</sup> The reports of this committee, made to each meeting of the Council since its appointment, have been in the nature of progress reports. These indicate that the committee has concerned itself with the composition of the Executive Board, the management of headquarters, and the financial support of divisions.

The National Association of State Libraries had its beginnings in 1887. The A.L.A. had, since its establishment in 1876, served as the one association which brought together the librarians of the country. Eleven years after its founding came the first instance of a specialized group within the A.L.A. deciding that its needs and interests might be advanced by a somewhat separate existence. However, actual formation of a completely separate group for state librarians did not take place for another eleven years.

The National Association of State Libraries came into existence with the encouragement and blessing of a state legislature. The call for a conference of all state librarians was issued in 1887 by T. H. Wallis, state librarian of California. This followed a strong endorsement of the California legislature which the Governor caused to be transmitted to all the states. The accomplishments of the A.L.A. were referred to in the resolution and it was suggested that a similar organization of state librarians would result in benefits to state libraries.<sup>10</sup> Appreciative note can be taken of the hope expressed in the resolution that the expenses of those attending the proposed conference would be borne by the states.

The conference was held in Washington, D.C., in April 1889, and in May of that year Wallis reported establishment of the new organization to the St. Louis A.L.A. meeting and asked its admission as a section of the A.L.A. This was unanimously granted and the new association, earlier called the Association of State Librarians and renamed the Association of State Libraries, at St. Louis, became the State Library Section of the A.L.A. As such it remained until 1898 when it became a separate entity under its present name.<sup>11</sup>

The objectives of the National Association of State Libraries are

stated in its constitution: "The object shall be to develop and increase the usefulness and efficiency of the state libraries and other agencies performing library functions at the state level." "State" has been interpreted as "national," "territorial," "provincial," and "insular."

The National Association of State Libraries generally holds its meetings at the time and place of the A.L.A. or the American Association of Law Libraries. Its several publications include *Proceedings and Papers*, from 1902 to the present, which chronicle the activities of the association. An important activity is the operation of a clearinghouse for the exchange of out-of-print public documents among libraries.<sup>12</sup> At the Minneapolis Conference in 1954, The National Association of State Libraries approved in principle a statement on the role and functions of the state library.<sup>13</sup>

Nine years were to pass before another national library association came into existence. This was the Medical Library Association organized at Philadelphia in 1898. As in the founding of The National Association of State Libraries, the organizers called attention to the A.L.A., but in a different vein this time. It was felt that the problems of A.L.A. "are not our problems."<sup>14</sup> Voting to organize under the name of the Association of Medical Librarians, the group of eight persons chose Dr. G. M. Gould, editor of the *Philadelphia Medical Journal*, for president while Margaret R. Charlton, librarian of the McGill University Medical School, who originally advanced the idea of the organizing meeting, became secretary. Other officers included Dr. J. L. Rothrock, vice-president, and Dr. William Browning, treasurer. It seemed to the group that the problems and needs of the 120 medical libraries in the country, as well as those of the 165 medical colleges, justified the formal organization which they brought into existence. The founders considered and rejected affiliation with the A.L.A. and with the American Medical Association. In 1923 a proposal to affiliate with the Special Libraries Association did not meet with the approval of the membership. The name was changed in 1907 to the Medical Library Association; a proposal to change this to the Medical Library Association of America was defeated on the ground that the association should retain its international character.<sup>15</sup>

Primary membership was at first provided for individual librarians representing medical libraries having 500 or more volumes; this was changed in 1904 to a primary membership of medical and allied libraries with two classes of membership, one for libraries and one for individuals. The field of membership was again broadened in 1929 to

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permit the admission of allied scientific libraries such as dental, veterinary, biological, and psychological, and for the establishment of a new class of professional membership for library workers. Voting power rested solely in the library members until 1950 when this was extended also to the professional members, classified at that time as active members.<sup>14</sup>

Although librarians have served as president since 1933, the office before that time had always been held by a physician. This is not strange since the infant association leaned heavily in its early years upon those men of medicine with an interest in the literature of medicine.<sup>16</sup> Amendments considered by the membership at the annual meeting in 1929 included one requiring that all officers be librarians, an action described as a first step toward a professional association. The amendment was defeated. However, in 1946 the constitution was amended to provide for a physician as honorary vice-president with the office of president and all other offices to be filled by professional librarians in active library work.<sup>15</sup>

Among the programs of the Medical Library Association, much interest centers in the publications program and in the Exchange. The latter has been called "the soul and heart of the Association . . . our Rock of Gibraltar, the life-line of our existence."<sup>15</sup> The exchange of medical literature among its members was stated as an objective at the second annual meeting in 1899 and has continued to be a very important service. This successful program was studied and evaluated by the Exchange Committee in 1948 and 1949 and a new plan for assigning and distributing materials was approved in 1949.<sup>17</sup>

The present objectives of the Medical Library Association are stated as follows in a current folder sent to prospective members and others interested in the organization: "(a) The fostering of medical and allied scientific libraries and the exchange of medical literature among its institutional members and improving the professional qualifications and status of medical librarians; (b) the organization of efforts and resources for the furtherance of the purposes of the Association." The membership in June 1953, stood at 1,073.<sup>18</sup>

An interval of nine years followed the formation of the Medical Library Association before the advent of another national library association. The law librarians of the country, noting the services rendered to general libraries by the A.L.A. and to special groups by the National Association of State Libraries and the Medical Library Association, felt that they, too, had different problems which could

best be served by the formation of an organization of law librarians. Twenty-four law librarians responded to a letter of invitation from A. J. Small of the Iowa State Law Library, and it is probable that ten of them attended the organization meeting held at Naragansett, Rhode Island, early in July 1906 during the annual conference of the A.L.A.<sup>19</sup> The twenty-four libraries, which had responded to the call, became charter members of the American Association of Law Libraries.

The early meetings of this association stressed intentions to work for better libraries and better librarianship, for cooperation, and for stability in organization.<sup>19</sup> The need for an index of legal periodicals and for a membership journal of communication had consideration almost at once. Thus principal early ventures were the *Index to Legal Periodicals* and *The Law Library Journal*, both of which are still published.<sup>20</sup>

Credit for the expansion of The American Association of Law Libraries since 1931 is attributed to the Roalfe Plan. This plan grew out of proposals advanced in 1931 by W. R. Roalfe, then law librarian of Duke University.<sup>21</sup> Roalfe's proposals, contained in a letter published in the *Law Library Journal* for April 1931, urged action in several areas including the establishment of a permanent headquarters for the American Association of Law Libraries with staff, the preparation of bibliographies, indexes to bar association reports, more frequent publication of the *Law Library Journal*, and additions to the *Index to Legal Periodicals*. Considered and debated by various committees and round tables, the plan was approved in 1934.<sup>22</sup> Partial implementation of the plan followed and many current objectives still proceed from it. The American Association of Law Libraries still seeks a permanent headquarters and further improvement and expansion of its serial publications. It is also concerned with an absence of cooperation between library groups in the legal field and the bar associations.<sup>20</sup> A continuing important objective is the improvement of law libraries and standards of law librarianship.

Established for educational and scientific purposes, the American Association of Law Libraries seeks to cultivate the art and science of law librarianship, develop and increase the usefulness of law libraries, promote understanding and joint projects with like associations, and encourage and implement cooperation among members of the profession. Its personal and institutional membership in 1954 was just over six hundred.

The Special Libraries Association constitution states "The object of

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this Association shall be to encourage and promote the collection, organization and dissemination of information, to develop the usefulness and efficiency of special libraries and other research organizations and to encourage the professional welfare of its members.”<sup>23</sup>

The S.L.A. was organized in 1909. The impetus for the new organization came from a few librarians who were interested in the potentialities of library service to, as John Cotton Dana, the first president of the S.L.A. put it, “the practical man of affairs.”<sup>24</sup> The organizing meeting, with twenty members, was held on July 2, 1909, during the A.L.A. Conference at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire. The first annual conference was held in New York on November 5, 1909. By the time of the conference, S.L.A. had fifty-seven members.<sup>25</sup>

S.L.A.’s growth has been an indication of its effectiveness in meeting the needs of members and in living up to the conception of its founders to develop library service in the interest of the businessman. Its membership grew to 354 in five years, to eight hundred in fifteen years, to 1,129 in twenty years, while on June 30, 1954, its membership stood at almost five thousand. In the course of growth, it has necessarily broadened its fields of interest in order to better meet its objectives, as in the area of international relations. “Putting knowledge to work,” an apt phrase uttered by J. A. Lapp, editor of *Special Libraries*, at the 1916 Conference, well expresses the association’s guiding principle.

The development of library service in the interest of businessmen has remained the dominant force in the organization.<sup>24</sup> The responsibilities of the S.L.A. to this concept have multiplied with the growth of special libraries, brought about in part by the development of new businesses and industries, and by the increase in government and research agencies.

The S.L.A. has, from the beginning, made a marked effort to involve all of its members in its programs. The forces of geography and communication, which offer the greatest opposition to this desirable objective, are no different in S.L.A. than in the other national library associations. S.L.A.’s three-in-one membership strikes one as having been unusually successful in striving with these forces. One membership fee brings membership in the association, membership in one of the geographic chapters (which evolved from the Responsibility Districts inaugurated in 1912), and membership in one subject division. The reports of various presidents indicate that it has been no easy matter to weld together these groups in a way that keeps the parent association’s program foremost and avoids a multiplication of ill-defined and amorphous units. In this respect, as in the financing

of the activities of its several units, it is likely that the S.L.A. has achieved a measure of success and practicability not yet reached by the A.L.A. perennially concerned with the same problems. In 1954 the S.L.A. had twenty-nine chapters and fifteen divisions.

The cooperative efforts of chapters and divisions (formerly termed groups) in the development of bibliographies, indexes, directories, and special tools designed to facilitate service to special libraries, have been of prime importance in the developing programs of the S.L.A. Many of these efforts have aided library service outside the field of special libraries proper as in the case of *Special Library Resources*.

Chapter and divisional organizations have given a large proportion of S.L.A. members the opportunity for frequent contact with members of similar interests. This has been one of the greatest sources of S.L.A.'s strength. Two other programs which have contributed greatly to its growth and well-being are a good publications program designed to meet the needs of special librarians, and a placement service which operates out of the office of the executive secretary.

The S.L.A. has maintained liaison with other library and allied associations in the country and some of its members participated actively in the formation of the Council of National Library Associations. Affiliation, or some closer relationship, with A.L.A. has often had thoughtful consideration. Such affiliation was voted at the second annual conference and effected in January of 1911. The sixteenth annual conference in 1924 discussed a proposal that the S.L.A. become a section in the A.L.A. but it was defeated by a large majority. Affiliation was dropped in 1950 but the matter is again under study by a special committee which will consider ideal conditions for reaffiliation.<sup>26</sup> Such a proposal might very well result in more workable and more effective provision by the A.L.A. for affiliation on the part of other national library associations.

The Catholic Library Association was founded in 1921 as the Library Section of the Department of Colleges and Secondary Schools of the National Catholic Educational Association.<sup>27</sup> It seeks to initiate, foster, and encourage any movement directed toward the progress of Catholic literature and Catholic library work. It was reorganized independently as the Catholic Library Association in 1931.<sup>27</sup>

The Catholic Library Association attributes its expansion in program activities to the growth, since 1921, of Catholic educational institutions in America, especially on the secondary and college level. This resulted in, among other things, a growing concern over the training

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of librarians and the need to stimulate the intelligent planning of libraries in Catholic institutions. The Catholic Library Association considers itself complementary, not supplementary, to other library groups and attempts to provide specialized services not elsewhere available. These specialized services have included selected book lists of special interest to Catholic readers, and supplements to existing bibliographical tools to aid in the cataloging of the voluminous and technical Catholic literature.<sup>28</sup> A contribution of especial importance is the *Catholic Periodical Index*. Termed the Catholic Library Association's greatest achievement, this is a quarterly index to over one hundred Catholic periodicals in all languages which was started in 1930.

The 1953 membership of approximately two thousand represents libraries of all types.

This chronological summary will be concluded with mention of the Music Library Association, the Theatre Library Association, and the American Theological Library Association. The Music Library Association, established at New Haven, Connecticut, during the A.L.A. annual conference of 1931<sup>29</sup> fosters the development of music libraries, the encouragement of studies in the organization and administration of music libraries and the use of music in libraries.<sup>30</sup> Its periodical publication, *Notes*, has been enlarged during the past few years and contains important contributions to American music history. The Music Library Association currently has about one thousand members.

The Theatre Library Association, with a present membership of about two hundred, was established in 1937. It early concerned itself with the preservation of theatrical archives.<sup>31</sup> Its present interests appeal to librarians, curators, and private collectors interested in the theatre and materials relating to the theatre.

The American Theological Library Association has its antecedents in the Round Table of Theological Librarians, established at the A.L.A. annual conference in Ashbury Park in 1916. By 1920, the interests of the Round Table shifted to the needs of the religious sections of public libraries with a consequent diminishing interest in the needs and problems of seminary libraries. The shift in interest of the Round Table plus encouragement from the American Association of Theological Schools, established in 1938, resulted in formation of the American Theological Library Association in 1942.<sup>32</sup> Present purposes include bringing its members into closer working relationships with each other and with the American Association of Theological Schools, studying the distinctive problems of theological seminary libraries, and improv-

ing the professional competence of its members and the quality of library service in theological education.<sup>33</sup> It had a membership in 1953 of 223. The American Theological Library Association publishes a *Summary of Proceedings* of its annual conferences including a detailed record of its programs and activities.

The national library associations dealt with in this chapter have many features in common. In whatever ways some of them may seek the furtherance of special types of library work or may aim their programs at different audiences, all are bound by two common and overall purposes: the improvement and extension of library service, and the well-being and growth of the library profession.

To help accomplish their objectives, all of the associations encourage a variety of memberships. Thus, for the individual, the memberships in the various associations are divided into personal, individual, associate, active, life, and student. Institutional memberships are provided by all. Contributors, both individual and corporate, are offered memberships and titles, sustaining, supporting, subscribing, and contributing memberships. The definitions employed do not establish the wide variety suggested by the different titles. It is significant that none of the associations has a professional membership class with admission depending upon formal qualifications of education or experience. From available figures, one can safely estimate that the nine associations considered in this chapter have a total membership in all classes of around 31,000.

The income of the associations results mainly from membership dues, publishing activities, journal subscriptions and advertising, grants, and contributions. Figures from a variety of sources indicate that the nine associations made expenditures in the neighborhood of a million and a half dollars in 1953-54. There seems no question to this writer that this expenditure, which came to a considerable extent from the pockets of members, was wisely and carefully spent.

There is, perhaps naturally enough, some concern among librarians over the number of library associations. One can belong to a local library club, a state library association, a regional library association, and to one or more national library associations. Within these there are often sections and divisions. All bring meeting and program responsibilities to many members. These questions can be asked: Why all this multiplication and splintering? Has it been for the good of the profession?

The main reason behind the formation of the substantial number of national library associations which we have in this country becomes

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apparent from their history. Each felt, to some degree, that needs and problems, peculiar to the group, were not met satisfactorily through existing associations. There is no conclusive evidence to support this, for the alternative has not been sufficiently tested. Nor can we say that the ills have been cured through the multiplicity of organizations. Since they did come into existence and since each continues to grow, the supposition must be that the case for multiplicity wins. One authority, speaking from experience, felt that "a reasonable diversity and multiplicity of library associations is logical, healthy, and inevitable."<sup>34</sup>

The greatest fear that one can feel over the number of associations lies in the possible dispersion of effort. Is the whole well-being of the library profession weakened by too many scattered efforts, by too many unrelated attempts in similar program areas? One cannot believe, from a study of accomplishments, that such is the case. Nevertheless, considering this period in American history when libraries and librarianship are so vital and when the support of library service is at such a critical stage it is interesting to speculate on the probable impact of a coordinated program on the part of all the national library associations. The effect upon the public regard in which libraries and librarians are held might be considerable. Given an agreed upon set of objectives, certain means of implementation come quickly to mind. The several journals of the associations, presenting common themes, might arouse the profession. The combined public relations services of the associations might command a respectable share of space and time in the various media of communication. A national library conference, in which all the library associations joined, might be of significant national and professional importance. The possibilities are exciting; it might be that a happy measure of jet propulsion would be added to libraries and to librarianship.

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