



Cooperation Among Special Libraries

HERMAN H. HENKLE

A REVIEW OF THE BIBLIOGRAPHY of library cooperation does not disclose much formal discussion of "cooperation" among special libraries, in comparison with some other types of libraries; nor does a page by page perusal of the American periodicals in the special library field. The evidences of cooperation must, for the most part, be sought within the accounts of association activities. The climate for cooperation in special library associations is created by the fact that membership is not large and the associations can act as closely knit groups of professional librarians. This is especially true of the semi-autonomous divisions of the Special Libraries Association, and of the Medical Library Association, the Music Library Association, the American Association of Law Libraries and others. The spirit of these special organizations is well described by the words of Katharine Kinder, the retiring president of S.L.A., "It's Every Member's Business." ¹

R. L. Collison, British librarian, spoke on the subject, "Aspects of Cooperation in University and Special Libraries in the United States of America," at the annual conference of the Library Association in Llandudno on April 29, 1953. In a review of this address in *Special Libraries*, there are quoted the following paragraphs which illustrate the normality of cooperation:

Mr. Collison states: "The extent, however, to which practical cooperation between university and special libraries has already advanced in the United States is not generally realized in Britain . . . Moreover, much of the development in this field has been gradual and instinctive: so much so, that even many American librarians appear to be unaware of their full implications, or of the general pattern which is more easily apparent to the foreign observer."

"In this day-to-day mutual assistance routine which appears to be a feature of most areas containing both university and special libraries,"

The author is Librarian, John Crerar Library.

continues Mr. Collison, "there is no doubt that it is greatly stimulated by a community of interests which transcends whatever official barriers may exist. And this community of interest is stimulated in turn by the existence of local branches of national subject-group associations of libraries . . . Particularly active in this field is the Special Libraries Association which operates many subject groups . . ." ²

The various special library associations are associated with each other in a variety of ways, especially through the activities of the Council of National Library Associations. Such groups as the C.N.L.A.'s Joint Committee on Education for Librarianship and the Sub-Committee on Education for Special Librarianship, have sponsored special studies, panel discussions, and other activities which have recently brought to bear serious review of this phase of professional librarianship. And the leadership has been followed by such local efforts as a panel discussion on training for special librarians, jointly sponsored in Philadelphia by the Science-Technology group of S.L.A. and the Philadelphia regional group of the Medical Library Association.

Another example of inter-association activity is cooperation with the U. S. Book Exchange. And still another, of a different sort, is the cooperative work done by the Committee on Periodicals and Publications of the Medical Library Association and the Publishing Division of the Special Libraries Association in notifying periodical publishers of practices that make difficult the work of libraries in handling periodicals.

Another example of inter-association cooperation lies in the field of international relations. The 1956 report of the International Relations Committee of S.L.A. relates the following:

"The committee, in cooperation with the International Relations Board of the American Library Association and with the Department of State's International Educational Exchange Service, has initiated a project whereby qualified foreign librarians may work for 11 months as visiting members of American libraries. The participating American libraries are providing maintenance allowances and opportunities to do professional library work, while the Department of State is responsible for international travel and for a month of travel in the United States. The Washington Committee, representing the International Relations Committees of S.L.A. and of A.L.A. and of the Department of State, has received requests for visiting foreign staff members from a number of American libraries. It is expected that one or two foreign librarians will be in the United States under this

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jointly sponsored project by the late summer of 1956 with a few additional foreign librarians arriving early in 1957.”³

Evidence of the active cooperation between special libraries can be found summarized in the annual reports of the Division Relations Committee of S.L.A. For example, the report for 1956⁴ of the Committee Chairman, Lorraine Ciboch, referred to no fewer than thirty-five Division projects contemplated or in progress, most of which could be fully successful only with the cooperation of many libraries. These appeared under such headings as “Active Projects,” “Projects Planned or Under Consideration,” “Cooperation With Other Groups,” and “Bulletins.” A selection of these were:

Guide to Cartographical Research, as a selective, annotated bibliography of basic reference materials in cartography—Geography and Map Division.

“Foreign Alloy Data, a compilation of recent data and references on foreign alloys, has been published with the recent issue of *Metals Division News*. At present 11 contributors are scanning 29 publications.”—Metals Division.

“The duplicate exchange project continues each year.”—Science-Technology Division, Petroleum Section.

“The Division has a representative on the Interassociation Hospital Libraries Committee. Six projects have been discussed and recommendations have been made.”—Hospital Division.

“Five members of the Division have served on the committee of the Library of Congress to prepare the draft of *Rules for Cataloging Prints and Photographs*.”—Picture Division.

The projects often result in publications of important reference value in many libraries. A type of publication especially well represented is the directory of resources in special libraries. The most ambitious of such publishing ventures was the four volume *Special Libraries Resources* published between 1941 and 1947. A project of this magnitude would have been impossible without the cooperation of the libraries of the United States and Canada—not only special libraries but also public, college and university libraries containing special subject collections of research value. Directories of lesser proportions are published locally by many S.L.A. Chapters. Some of these directories are:

Directory of Special Libraries in Boston, Vicinity and Member Libraries in New England. (S.L.A. Boston Chapter, 5th ed., 1948)

Directory of Libraries and Information Sources in the Philadelphia

Area. (Special Libraries Council of Philadelphia and Vicinity, 5th ed., 1951)

Directory of Special Libraries in the Southeast. (South Eastern Library Association, Special Libraries Committee, 1953)

Directory of Special Libraries in Montreal. (S.L.A. Montreal Chapter, 1955)

Special Libraries Directory of Greater New York. (S.L.A. New York Chapter, 7th ed., 1956)

One of the general professional services of S.L.A. is the loan collection of classification systems and subject heading lists, which is maintained in Cleveland for the Association by the School of Library Science of Western Reserve University.⁵ Many of these special systems have resulted from group effort, for example, the *A.S.M.-S.L.A. Classification for Metallurgical Literature* developed by a joint committee of S.L.A. and the American Society of Metals.

One of the most ambitious, cooperative programs undertaken by the S.L.A. was the organization of a loan collection of translations from foreign scientific and technical literature. After several years experimentation with voluntary management of this project, the Association entered into a contract with the John Crerar Library of Chicago to develop, maintain, and service a collection of translations.

From an initial deposit of 932 translations from languages other than Russian, deposited in Crerar Library in July, 1953, the project has developed rapidly. Under guidance of a committee of the Association, the S.L.A. Translation Center has gained the cooperation of a large number of companies, government agencies, and other organizations in depositing translations with permission to lend or copy. In 1956, the S.L.A. Translation Center was able to develop a greatly expanded program with grants to the Association from the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health.

By arrangement between the National Science Foundation, the Library of Congress, and the Special Libraries Association, a collection of more than 4,600 translations from Russian scientific and technical literature was transferred in January, 1957, from the Library of Congress to the S.L.A. Center at Crerar Library. By this action, there was created one national center for scientific and technical translations from all languages which may be drawn upon by research agencies in all parts of the country. By June, 1957, the collection had grown

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to well over 16,000 translations with indications of growth at the rate of some 5,000 or more translations per year.

From the beginning it was recognized that an important function of the center would be to report its holdings and current acquisitions. In October, 1953, the first *List of Translations* was issued, with a supplement appearing in September, 1954. In 1955, the Center began publication of *Translation Monthly* to issue current reports of translations available in the Center. The first issue appeared in October, 1955, as a combined issue for January-October, with monthly issues following on the fifth of each month. Initially, this was an eight-page list arranged by author, with semi-annual and annual author indexes. In January, 1957, with the transfer of the Russian translations from the Library of Congress, *Translation Monthly* was expanded to thirty-six pages each month, classified in broad subject groups and including translations from all languages represented in the collection. The journal was expanded again in April, 1957, to fifty-six page issues. Its acceptance has been demonstrated by the continued deposit of translations from many sources and by a gradual increase in the number of copies distributed each month to more than one thousand subscribers.

The S.L.A. Translation Center is evidence of the potential success of a well conceived program for cooperation among special libraries and the research community which depends upon them for service.

As might be expected, there is a strong tendency for cooperative programs among special libraries to revolve within the circles of special subject field interests. Several examples of such cooperation are described below.

The potentialities of cooperation between special libraries are illustrated by W. A. Southern in a program for cooperation between pharmaceutical libraries.⁶ Following an analysis of a large number of services offered by pharmaceutical libraries as a group, he lists twenty-one areas in which interlibrary cooperation should be possible. A few of these are: "A classification system for pharmaceutical libraries . . .," "Cooperative periodical indexing and abstracting service . . .," "System for more direct exchange of duplicate materials," "Index to *Drug Topics* and *Drug Trade News*," "Index to *Modern Drug Encyclopedia* by chief chemical ingredient," and "A study of the value of microcard and microfilm copies of periodicals in pharmaceutical libraries . . ." "Through inter-library cooperation," he concludes, "we can save ourselves duplicating much work which most pharmaceutical

libraries are now doing on an individual basis. As a result we will be able to offer our companies more and better services with no increase in staff and no increase in library budget."

That pharmaceutical libraries take seriously this admonition to cooperate, one can see by turning to the following publications, *Unlisted Drugs* or the *Union List of Periodicals in Pharmaceutical Libraries*. *Unlisted Drugs*, published monthly since 1949 is a cooperative enterprise of a number of pharmaceutical libraries under sponsorship of the Pharmaceutical Section, Science-Technology Division, of the Special Libraries Association. *Union List of Periodicals in Pharmaceutical Libraries*, started in 1952, contains the holdings of twenty-five pharmaceutical libraries, recording locations of approximately 1,500 periodicals of pharmaceutical interest.

In a paper on "The Future of the Law Library,"⁷ R. W. Wienpahl opens his concluding paragraph with the following: "In summation, it should be pointed out that the future of all types of libraries lies in cooperative measures, both national and international, in order to reduce operating expenses and in microeditions, to reduce the incredible storage problems, not only of the future but of the present as well." This follows a proposal that the American Association of Law Libraries sponsor a project for cooperative acquisition of foreign legal periodicals and a plan to reproduce them in microeditions for the member libraries. This demonstrates that law librarians, in common with other special library groups, are currently alert to the potentialities of cooperative effort in the improvement of collections and services.

An example of a cooperative project, firmly established and functioning, is the union catalog of law libraries in Chicago. Initiated about 1940 it has grown to approximately 175,000 cards, recording holdings of the libraries in the Chicago Bar Association, the Chicago Law Institute, and the law schools at the University of Chicago and Northwestern University, plus some legal holdings in other Chicago libraries. In this instance, cooperation is not limited to maintenance of a union catalog. The librarians of the four law libraries meet frequently to discuss acquisitions policy. A *Guide to the Legal Collections in Chicago*, published by Northwestern University School of Law in 1955, is being examined to identify gaps in the law collections and to work out distribution of responsibility for filling these gaps.

In a survey of law libraries,⁸ W. R. Roalfe devotes two chapters to "Cooperation Between Libraries," and "Cooperation Through Or-

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ganized Groups." He reports that "Eighty-eight out of a total of 160 libraries reported that they do not cooperate with other libraries in any way." The above example, therefore, cannot be considered typical, and this is borne out by the content of the two chapters. On the other hand, a number of forms of cooperation between law libraries and other organizations are described. The forms of cooperation most commonly practiced are interlibrary lending and reciprocal use of collections.

The American Association of Law Libraries has several special committees on cooperation with other associations and agencies. Roalfe points the way to much wider cooperation in law libraries in a recent paper on: "Relations of the American Association of Law Libraries With Other Professional Organizations,"⁹ and refers to adoption by the executive board of A.A.L.L. of a recommendation by a special policy committee that the Association sponsor a study of the role of the Association in development of law libraries.

A group of theological libraries in the Boston area organized a program of cooperation in 1948 which was designed to include a variety of activities: exchange of duplicates, some division of fields of responsibility in acquisitions and free interlibrary loan and telephone reference service. In an account of this program there appears one statement which can be said to characterize much of the cooperation between special libraries. "A good deal of pressure is relieved from the smaller seminary libraries through free loan to students by all libraries in the area. Bibliographic services and aid in cataloging problems are given by the larger to the smaller libraries, but this is almost a matter of course and will be found in any metropolitan area, association or no association."¹⁰

The duplicate exchange program of the Medical Library Association is a cooperative effort of long standing. Currently, it continues very actively. According to the report of its manager for 1955,¹¹ 153 libraries reported statistics of 111,615 single items and 5,597 bound volumes shipped. Some 205 lists of duplicates had been published at the time of the report.

Cooperative cataloging has received little attention among special libraries; the only formal discussion of the subject in recent years was a brief account of an experiment in this field conducted by the medical libraries at Columbia and Yale Universities and the University of California at Los Angeles. Single copies of every medical unit card were sent by each of the cooperating libraries to the other two. Each

library found that it was able to utilize the cataloging of the others and it was anticipated that the project would continue to be advantageous.¹²

An example of a union catalog is to be found in the medical union catalog maintained at the John Crerar Library in Chicago. Originally sponsored by the Institute of Medicine of Chicago, this catalog contains a record of the holdings of the five medical school libraries in Chicago. Cooperating libraries send their catalog cards to Crerar Library, which maintains the catalog and answers daily inquiries on the location of titles. The union catalog is located adjacent to the public catalog in the Medical Department of Crerar Library, so the holdings of this library are not filed in it. The cooperating libraries are located in the medical schools of the University of Chicago, Northwestern University, University of Illinois, Loyola University, and Chicago Medical College.

It is evident from many notes and minutes of meetings of special librarians that a strong spirit of cooperation is abroad, but much, if not most, cooperation is of incidental character. This is illustrated by statements made by a panel of law librarians at the Golden Jubilee Meeting of the American Association of Law Libraries. J. W. Heckel stated that, "The regional chapters are a means of cooperation among public law libraries and practitioners' libraries. Ideas and information on resources and gadgets are exchanged at meetings." Commenting on cooperation between businesses, Beatrice S. McDermott said:

Most of us in the downtown section of New York City are on a first-name-calling relationship and we are pretty familiar with the special collections of the other firm libraries. Our firm lawyers use the facilities of libraries of other firms. With us, a wonderful spirit of helpfulness exists which can only be explained by a mutual understanding among us of the exigency of every situation the firm librarian must meet. . . .

We borrow not only among ourselves but from law school, government, and institutional law libraries; yes, even oil company, newspaper, chamber of commerce, financial, medical, railroad, accounting, and engineering libraries are besieged with requests from the firm library. Thus, we are continually putting to the test, and probably at times straining to the limit, the cooperative spirit of other libraries.¹³

These quotations could be turned to a description of the informal nature of cooperation among special libraries of all types. But here

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and there, as illustrated by this paper, there are some very substantial cooperative programs supported by special librarians.

Finally, and in a lighter vein, it may be pointed out that special librarians are ready to cooperate in activities that are both useful and fun. Two chapters of S.L.A. have "cooperated" with Shirley Booth, leading lady of *The Desk Set*, who plays the dramatic role of a special librarian. Miss Booth was a guest of honor at two chapter parties which resulted in good public relations for both special libraries and the play.

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