



# Increasing Library Resources Through Cooperation

EDWARD B. STANFORD

ANYONE WHO HAS READ library periodicals regularly in recent years is undoubtedly aware that there is already an extensive literature on interlibrary cooperation of various kinds. For example, L. R. Wilson and M. F. Tauber list more than seventy-five such references in their chapter on "Cooperation and Specialization."<sup>1</sup> Much of the literature deals with arrangements for locating and providing improved access to the resources of various scholarly libraries. Because no single library can alone acquire and maintain all of the material its patrons may need at one time or another, such arrangements for sharing resources have become an integral and important aspect of twentieth century library administration, not only in academic libraries, but also in systems of public libraries both in America and abroad.

Other articles in this issue deal with the numerous examples of cooperation that have produced regional bibliographic files and have published various locating tools upon which libraries now depend regularly, for interlibrary lending of material. This paper will focus on various arrangements for cooperative planning in the actual acquisition of material by libraries, with particular emphasis upon college and research libraries.

At the turn of the century, most colleges and universities were building their libraries primarily in terms of meeting their own local needs, with little concern for each other's development. This was only natural, since none of the union lists, bibliographical centers, resources surveys, or even the organizations through which cooperative acquisitions programs now operate, were then in existence.

Gradually, this era of self-sufficiency gave way to a period of increasing cooperation among libraries, as rapid communication and

The author is Director of Libraries, University of Minnesota.

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transportation made it less necessary for a scholar to depend on a single collection in his own state or institution. College and university librarians, themselves, faced with faculty demands for developing collections of breadth and depth in more new subject fields than they could possibly afford individually, began to explore cooperative arrangements for dividing responsibilities for concentration, and for sharing their total holdings for the benefit of their respective groups of patrons. As interlibrary loan and the photo-reproduction of library resources became more speedy and economical, libraries began to depend more and more upon a concept of reasonable availability of material to be borrowed or microcopied as needed, in lieu of the costly local, independent acquisition, cataloging, and storage of infrequently used resources.

With these developments, librarians in various localities began to work more closely together to coordinate their individual acquisitions programs with those of neighboring institutions to build stronger holdings of mutual benefit, by agreements for specialization and the avoidance of unnecessary duplication. One example of this type of cooperative planning is the long-standing arrangement between the libraries of Duke University and the University of North Carolina. In this instance, a carefully worked out program of library cooperation was begun in 1933. An account of its operation, as reported by B. E. Powell in 1955, gives evidence as to its continued value and effectiveness.<sup>2</sup>

Briefly, this arrangement provided for joint library privileges and prompt interlibrary loan service for the patrons of the two cooperating libraries, exchange of current main entry cards to provide immediate information concerning the location of specific titles, and a statement as to specific categories of material in which major responsibility for collecting was assigned to one or the other library. The working agreement listed, for example, which state document series each library would collect and maintain for the benefit of both, which subject fields each would accept as fields of specialization, as well as certain areas in which both libraries would develop current strength because of continued need, but with close consultation before acquiring older or more expensive items. Coupled with an arrangement for the exchange of serial fragments to develop more nearly complete runs of specific sets, this cooperative program has for many years proved to be of great benefit to both libraries.

Recently, with the advent of the numerous expensive microcopy projects that have made large quantities of research material available

to libraries, Duke and North Carolina have been dividing responsibility for acquiring specific offerings, as each proposal comes up for consideration. In at least one case, the subscription has been a joint purchase, in which both libraries actually share ownership of the material, an example of cooperative acquisition in its most literal sense.

An extension of the Duke-North Carolina program, involving an arrangement for dividing responsibility for developing resources on a geographic basis is the 1940 Duke-North Carolina-Tulane agreement for the acquisition of Latin American library materials. In this case, a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation provided funds for the purchase of publications relating to Latin America, with the understanding that each institution would accept primary responsibility for developing collections relating to specific countries. With Tulane focusing on Middle America (Mexico, Central America, and the West Indies), with Duke emphasizing Brazil, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Columbia, and with North Carolina concentrating on Chile, Paraguay, Argentina, Venezuela, and Uruguay, each institution would be assured of access to strong Latin American holdings without the necessity of duplicating the resources of either of the other libraries.

Somewhat similar arrangements for library cooperation through sharing of resources and division of responsibility now exist between the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University. Another cooperative arrangement, recently described in the *A.L.A. Bulletin*, has been developing among four private colleges and the James Jerome Hill Reference Library in St. Paul, Minnesota.<sup>3</sup>

Still another example of interlibrary cooperation among neighboring institutions is in effective operation in New England, in the Hampshire Inter-Library Center, involving Amherst, Smith, and Mount Holyoke colleges.<sup>4</sup> This development has been successfully coordinating the resources of these three libraries for several years through the interchange of catalog cards, serials, and service privileges to the benefit of all three institutions. By eliminating unnecessary duplication of periodicals, and by sharing the cost of new titles needed by the member libraries, the total collections available to the cooperating colleges have been substantially strengthened.

While accessibility considerations, in terms of distance, will limit the extent to which other institutions could successfully undertake such arrangements, there are many other groups of colleges in close proximity to one another that would do well to explore seriously the benefits to be derived from even a modest program of coordinated

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acquisitions. Most large metropolitan areas have several such colleges, and apparently favorable conditions for such cooperation also exist in many smaller communities, where neighboring institutions are located in nearby college towns.

Where a strong state historical society exists it is not uncommon for close cooperation to exist between its library and the other major library or libraries in the state. In Minnesota, for example, there has long been effective coordination in the development of collections between the University of Minnesota Library, in Minneapolis, and the Minnesota Historical Society, in St. Paul. In spite of the fact that University departments such as history and journalism, as well as other units in the Graduate School, have a real interest in and need for "Minnesota material," the University Library, by agreement, depends almost entirely on the Historical Society for the maintenance of strong holdings in such categories as local histories, Minnesota manuscript collections, and Minnesota newspapers. Only in the case of the large, metropolitan dailies has the University developed its own files.

The Historical Society has accepted full responsibility for these categories, assuring the availability of rich resources for the area without need for costly duplication, particularly in collecting rural weeklies and even the daily papers of outlying cities and towns. The Historical Society is currently filming all of these local papers except for the Twin City titles now available on film from the publishers.

Through the close cooperation of the publisher, the local public library, the Historical Society, and the University Library, a project to microfilm a complete file of one of the largest Twin City metropolitan dailies was begun in 1956, using bound volumes contributed by the libraries with original holdings. It is hoped that before long similar cooperative arrangements can be worked out, with private financial help, to preserve the other Twin City newspapers, while existing files are still in suitable condition for filming.

Concerning manuscripts and archives, the Archives Division of the University Library collects and maintains materials directly pertaining to the University, as well as personal files and letters relating to individuals who have been primarily associated with the institution. The Historical Society collects resources on all other Minnesota figures, organizations, and communities. In the case of persons whose careers have embraced both University and non-University activities, there is a continuing interchange of information between

the Historical Society and the University as to the contents of their respective manuscript collections. Occasionally this results in an actual transfer of items to strengthen the stronger holdings of a particular person's papers. In other cases descriptions of holdings are exchanged so that a scholar working in either collection can identify quickly what supplementary material he may expect to find in the other collection. Since the two institutions are ten miles apart, with problems of heavy traffic, parking, and transportation time to be considered in any back-and-forth use of both collections, this cooperative arrangement is much appreciated by the institutions and their patrons alike.

One type of cooperation, now commonly practiced in the public library field may have merit for greater future consideration by college and university libraries than it has apparently received in the past. This is the arrangement by which smaller libraries may contract with larger libraries for the use of materials which the smaller library could not afford (and probably should not purchase, even if it had sufficient resources). Some counties in the United States have long provided area-wide library service without incurring the heavy expense of developing and maintaining their own costly reference and lending collections, by contracting with the principal municipal library in the county to extend its resources and facilities to all county residents for an agreed-upon service charge.

In spite of difficulties which would arise in attempting to apply this practice generally to the college and university libraries (as for example with respect to frequently used publications needed for course reserves), there may well be as yet unexplored possibilities for contract service among academic libraries that would have valuable acquisitions implications for all participating parties.

Perhaps the greatest single deterrent to such arrangements would be the fact that, to a liberal degree, small college libraries already have essentially free access to the stronger holdings of sister institutions through the interlibrary loan privilege. It is true that the lending library may refuse any given request, and occasionally does, if it involves non-circulating material or a large quantity for a single borrower. Also, the borrowing library incurs some expense for each loan, in the form of postage. However, such refusals to lend, or at least to provide photo-copies, are believed to be relatively rare; and of course postage, while it pays for transportation, provides no reimbursement whatever to the lending library for its considerable overhead in verifying citations, locating, charging, wrapping, and shipping books, and

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maintaining the correspondence files and records for such off-campus loans.

Staff time alone, required to handle interlibrary loans at one university, now costs over \$10,000 annually. Since this present system of liberal interlibrary lending obviously relieves many libraries of the necessity for costly acquisition of resources they can borrow, some form of financial arrangement for a more equitable sharing in the actual cost to the lending library may become necessary in the future. This might mean simply an overhead or transaction charge, or it might involve major service to one or more colleges, on an extension basis, by contract with a larger library.

At the national level, the enrichment of the holdings of scholarly libraries by cooperative acquisitions arrangements has been exemplified by a number of programs undertaken successfully since World War II. The most notable efforts to increase the "coverage" of material available in U. S. scholarly libraries have been described by T. R. Barcus and V. W. Clapp in 1955, in an article entitled "Collecting in the National Interest."<sup>5</sup> This article cited the early efforts of Justin Winsor, E. C. Richardson, and Andrew Keogh to encourage scholarly libraries to avoid costly duplication of acquisitions by means of specialization agreements. It also told of the later activity of Archibald MacLeish, R. B. Downs and K. D. Metcalf in implementing these objectives through concrete and far-reaching programs for cooperation in acquiring, and locating in appropriate collections in the United States, at least one copy of the important scholarly works of other lands.

These efforts were carried forward, with varying degrees of success, in such undertakings as the War Emergency Program for Microcopying Research Materials in Britain, the work of the Joint Committee on Importations, the post-war Cooperative Acquisitions Project,<sup>6</sup> and the currently operating Farmington Plan. Still another effective example of cooperative procurement by research libraries is the Documents Expediting Service for locating and obtaining for its subscribing members copies of various U. S. government publications not included in the regular depository library distribution.

Because both the origins and the achievements of the Farmington Plan project are already so well known, as they have been described by E. E. Williams in the *Farmington Plan Handbook*,<sup>7</sup> it would be redundant to discuss the plan in detail here. Suffice it to say that in spite of its various limitations and drawbacks, the Farmington Plan

illustrates the extent to which research libraries have progressed from their early stages of merely talking about coordinated acquisitions, toward a genuine on-going program of increased coverage of current foreign publications through cooperation and specialization.

Like most successful cooperative undertakings, the Farmington Plan has been able to work out modifications in procedures to meet special situations. It has changed its subject allocations, dropped ineffective dealers in favor of more dependable agents, and in some cases substituted all-subject geographical assignments for the standard pattern of allocation based on subject classification, where realistic consideration of the total interest suggested such exceptions. Thus, the element of flexibility to permit change and growth to meet special circumstances has been an important contributing factor to the success and continued operation of this unique program.

Another aspect of cooperation among academic libraries in the acquisition of important materials involves the actual cooperative compilation, production, or publication of various books, indexes, journals, and guides, and in some cases the reproduction of library materials in various forms, for preservation and wider use.

In these categories there are the various union lists, resources surveys, and dissertation indexes and specialized bibliographies upon which libraries now depend, as a matter of course, as aids to regular reference and acquisitions operations. Groups such as the American Library Association Board on Resources, the A.L.A. Committee on Cooperative Microfilm Projects, and committees concerned with the development of needed reference tools, and the re-issue of scarce and physically deteriorating monographic works, bibliographies, and indexes are all contributing to this phase of cooperative acquisitions among libraries.

The various large microcopying projects that have developed since World War II appear to offer a particularly appropriate area for cooperative acquisitions among colleges. From the early days of the Harvard Foreign Newspaper Filming project and the various Library of Congress microfilm undertakings of the 1930's and 1940's we have seen the rise of a veritable flood of microfilm, microcard, and microprint projects now being offered to libraries on a subscription basis. These many projects, summarized recently in *College and Research Libraries*,<sup>8</sup> are themselves becoming so costly, in the aggregate, that only the large and wealthy libraries can afford to subscribe to more than a few of them. It is certain that if college libraries gener-

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ally want or need to obtain ready access to these vast resources now being microcopied, they will somehow have to join together in various groups, to share the cost of some of these subscriptions, purchased jointly, or else divide responsibilities selectively among themselves, for complete coverage.

Some of these projects, like the Association of Research Libraries and Midwest Inter-Library Center newspaper filming programs, represent genuinely cooperative undertakings that have been library-initiated and developed by groups interested in preserving and obtaining access to, through shared purchase, far greater resources than they could afford individually. In the case of the A.R.L. Foreign Newspaper Microfilm Project<sup>9</sup> more than fifty libraries now have access to the currently filmed files of nearly 150 carefully selected foreign papers, at no more than an individual library would have to pay to obtain only three or four titles independently. Unlike most microcopy projects which manufacture and supply a separate copy of the filmed material to each subscriber, the A.R.L. project simply purchases or produces a central, microfilm file of the selected papers, which subscribers may then borrow for local use as needed, with the privilege of purchasing, at cost, a positive film copy of any specific titles a member library may wish to own itself. In this respect, it is possibly the most notable example to date of genuine cooperative acquisitions among a sizable group of libraries for joint purchase and shared ownership of selected materials without costly duplication of copies.

In a statement to the A.R.L. on the various proposals for microcopying publications listed in the Evans bibliography, Lawrence Wroth, in 1955, viewed with concern the sudden rash of gigantic projects that were then being proposed or offered for purchase by libraries.<sup>10</sup> He suggested that some of these massive undertakings do not appear to arise from any expressed needs of libraries for copies of the material, that some of the projects seem not to have been thought through carefully, and that they may well discourage intelligent selective collecting, by diverting book funds increasingly for the costly purchases of such "package offers." Judging from the character of the several new package proposals that have been offered to libraries since 1955, it would seem that more library participation is called for in the formulation of future microcopy projects, if the fullest potentialities of these methods of acquiring research materials are to be realized. Without some such library sponsorship libraries may well fritter away their book funds increasingly in acquiring costly



duplicate collections of copied material which most libraries probably do not need to own and maintain individually. More of the A.R.L.-M.I.L.C. pattern of cooperative acquisition and ownership of such material is clearly indicated for the future.

In recent years, groups of college and university libraries in the Southeastern section of the United States have been exploring various means of working together to coordinate their respective acquisitions programs for mutual benefit. These efforts, which have resulted in the establishment of the Southeastern Interlibrary Research Facility, have developed slowly, focusing primarily on surveys of resources and the interchange of holdings information. Whether S.I.R.F., as described in *College and Research Libraries*,<sup>11</sup> will ultimately bring about effective coordination of acquisitions among its members, remains to be seen.

The Midwest Inter-Library Center<sup>12</sup> in Chicago is perhaps the best example of action among scholarly libraries in extending, through cooperation, the total resources of a given geographical region. M.I.L.C. has been written about so often that it would be repetitious to outline its purposes and program here. Through its deposit program and its various arrangements for the joint acquisition of new, centrally located resources, it is unique in the extent to which it has succeeded in enriching the total reservoir of material available to its eighteen member libraries, and also in the extent of the resulting savings it has made possible.

In addition to the thousands of dollars worth of valuable shelf space M.I.L.C. members have gained in their own libraries by depositing quantities of less-used publications at the Center, in selected categories, M.I.L.C. has also relieved each library of the expense of acquiring and maintaining independent, duplicate holdings of such material in the future. Members may now acquire selectively, in these categories, only what they need for current use, with assurance that more extensive holdings will be available at M.I.L.C.

Included in the program are such broad groups of publications as foreign dissertations, state documents, college catalogs, textbooks, and processed U. S. government documents. In these and numerous other cooperatively selected categories, M.I.L.C. as an organization has accepted full responsibility for maintaining strong holdings on behalf of its members. It acquires currently, not only specific serials recommended by vote of its constituent libraries, but also some costly unit collections of material not needed to be duplicated in the region. It

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collects the briefs and records of U. S. Courts of Appeals, corporation reports, foreign government information bulletins and monitored reports of foreign radio broadcasts, Rand Corporation reports, O.S.R.D. reports, and foreign documents from more than one hundred selected nations, as well as files of foreign language newspapers published in the United States.

The M.I.L.C. foreign newspaper project, initiated for its members, has now been superseded by the more comprehensive A.R.L. project which is administered by the Center under contract. M.I.L.C. still maintains its original program for the joint acquisition of a selection of domestic papers on film, for its membership, although this, too, may eventually lead to an expanded project open to all libraries.

With the aid of the National Science Foundation, M.I.L.C. is now collecting regularly all periodicals indexed in *Chemical Abstracts* which are not available in one or more member libraries, thus assuring access, somewhere in the Midwest region, to every item indexed in this valuable tool.<sup>13</sup>

Recently M.I.L.C. has been exploring the possibility of shared subscriptions to certain microcopy projects among its members, in the interest of reducing unnecessary duplication of this material. As in the case of the Evans proposals, it is clear that each member library will not need its own copy of such contemplated projects, for example, as all of the publications listed in the Wing bibliography, if by a joint purchase ready access to the material can be assured. Some members believe that M.I.L.C. itself might well ultimately sponsor the microcopying of needed materials under an arrangement whereby libraries could, by sharing in the initial production cost, develop a central file of desired microcopies available for loan rather than widespread purchase. Such a development would provide for the sale of positive duplicates only if requested. The intent would be to depend increasingly on loans from the central file rather than the building of duplicate collections of such materials in the various libraries.

Whether such arrangements materialize or not, it is evident that future microcopying projects will be useful to libraries, only to the extent that the producers of microfilm, microcard, and microprint consider realistically the needs of various types of libraries in relation to contemplated copying programs. More selectivity, it would seem, may be indicated in some mass copying projects; and in some instances the principle of selling "access" to material, in lieu of selling many

individually owned copies, might be worth exploring, even by some of the commercial producers, as they formulate new proposals.

In conclusion, it may be said that as both the quantity of material needed by libraries has increased and the cost of publications has continued to rise, especially in recent years, the era of self-sufficiency among scholarly libraries (which never was fully achieved, even in earlier days) has given way to increased cooperation. Much has been written about interlibrary cooperation, and a goodly number of efforts at coordinated acquisitions have been undertaken. It is fair to hazard a guess that, in the future, more and more formerly independent college and research libraries will develop various programs of coordinated acquisitions, including, where feasible, joint purchase and actual joint ownership of material.

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