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Library Trends

Library Boards

J. Archer Eggen, Issue Editor

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Introduction

J. ARCHER EGGEN

After the smoke settles it will become apparent that there is a wide range of opinion regarding not only the powers and responsibilities of library boards, but also their worth or value as governing bodies. There are both librarians and trustees who feel that the library board is one of the finest examples of good government, and there are both librarians and trustees who feel that a library board is a necessary evil under which the librarian must suffer.

In any event it can undoubtedly be concluded that the founders and early trustees of libraries as well as their twentieth-century counterparts had and have as a goal their vision for the future of the United States—an enlightened citizenry. It can probably also be concluded that as trustees gained confidence in librarians as professional managers, not clerks, a general pattern has evolved of letting the librarian both make policy and administer it with the advice and consent of the board.

If library boards with competent librarians abdicate the policymaking function in favor of a more passive advisory function, their scope appears to become limited. However, if trustees have been imbued with a missionary zeal (by librarians) and with the ultimate goal of an enlightened citizenry, they will still have available a wide range of activity. Interested and dedicated trustees will fight for adequate financial support for an institution in which they believe; they will campaign for the potentially more efficient larger units of service; and they will be inspired to sell the library at the drop of a book. Once exposed to a competent librarian, they will also be more aware of the importance of their responsibility for the selection (and separation) of an administrative head.

Contributors to this issue range from seasoned veterans to the relatively inexperienced who still occupy seats below the salt. Content

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ranges from thoroughly documented research papers to so-called "think" pieces with frank expressions of the authors' editorial opinions. Since there exists such a disparity of both opinion and practice as to the composition, duties, responsibilities, and even the place of the library board in our society, it was the plan and is the hope that this issue will evoke both comment and discussion. However, it is not intended to be the definitive treatise on the subject of library boards; it will have fulfilled its function if it provides information or stimulates added interest in a subject which fosters such diverse conclusions and opinions as those expressed here.
Historical Background

LOIS K. SCHOCHET

The development of the status of the library trustee throughout history reflects the growth of the library as a significant cultural institution from ancient times to the present. It is difficult to discuss one without examining the other.

Trustees disseminated reading material, protected the staff, and fostered the growth of ancient libraries. Instances of the generosity and industriousness of the first trustees can be found in Greece and Rome. Sometime in the period between 200 and 175 B.C., the wealthy citizens of Cos subscribed to the erection of a library building and contributed to a book purchase fund or donated books. Public libraries in Rome in the second century were administered by a procurator bibliothecarum in the name of the emperor. This post was usually held by a recognized scholar. A group of libraries was governed by a director, and each bibliothecarius was responsible to him.¹

During the Middle Ages, monks were appointed by the abbot to supervise the books of the monastic libraries. St. Benedict, who founded the monastery of Mount Cassino, took special care that each newly established cloister had a library. The Benedictine monks managed these libraries and originated definite hours for their use. Libraries were also established by the Augustinian monks who wrote instructions for binding, repairing, cataloging, and shelving their volumes. The Carthusian brothers opened their libraries to the public and lent books to responsible citizens against security.²

The nobles of the court were most likely the trustees of the royal libraries of the Renaissance. France’s Bibliothèque Nationale had been founded by Charles V in 1365. During the next three centuries, the library was governed by the nobles of the court and head librarians. Gifts of books rather than funds were solicited, and in many instances, books were not requested but were seized from conquered countries. In 1623 Maximilian of Bavaria presented the Palatine collection to the
Pope for the Vatican's library. The old bindings were replaced by new vellum with the inscription, "I am from that library which Maximilian, Duke of Bavaria, took as a prize of war from captured Heidelberg and sent as a trophy to Gregory XV." A similar technique was employed by Napoleon, who enriched the holdings of the Bibliotheque Nationale by confiscating the choice contents of libraries in Germany, Italy, Spain, and Austria.

The most important developments in the history of libraries and trustees in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries took place in America. New England was the colonial leader in bookselling and publishing, and its citizens naturally turned to books to fill their leisure hours. Enjoying companionship, these New England men founded the social library. However, the social library was not an American innovation; rather, its idea derived from a number of different sources, the most important of which were the book clubs and gentlemen's societies known in Britain in the early eighteenth century.

Shera defines the social library as "a voluntary association of individuals who had contributed money toward a common fund to be used for the purchase of books." In these libraries acquisitions were financed by group investments or by annual dues paid by each member. Social libraries were either (a) proprietary or (b) subscription or association libraries. Proprietary libraries were common-law partnerships based upon the joint-stock principle, whereby members owned shares of the property. The subscription library was a common-law corporation. Members paid an annual fee for service but did not own the property of the library. Overlapping existed between the two types, for many of the proprietary libraries permitted yearly subscriptions by persons who were not share-owners.

While men of wealth and property were served by the proprietary and subscription libraries, less fortunate citizens were served by other association libraries. The mercantile libraries were used by the young merchants' clerks; the artisan class patronized the mechanics' or apprentices' libraries. In addition, there were even religious subscription libraries such as those of the Young Men's Christian Association and the Catholic Young Men's Association.

The members of the social libraries elected permanent boards of trustees or directors to manage these institutions. While the conferred powers varied from board to board, they usually included the appointment, dismissal, and payment of officers and employees; the purchase of books, equipment and supplies; and occasionally the renting of
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buildings. Often the actions of the board members were approved or rejected by the association.

As there were class differences between the men who belonged to the proprietary and subscription libraries and those who used the mechanics' and mercantile associations, sharp distinction can be found between the trustees of the two groups. The board members of the proprietary libraries were often prominent social and political figures. For example, Josiah Quincy, Jr., William H. Prescott, and Oliver Wendell Holmes served on the Boston Athenaeum Board around 1850. The trustees of the mechanics' and mercantile libraries were younger and less prominent than the board members of the proprietary libraries. Since many of the mechanics' group were minors, there was some skepticism as to their ability to manage important institutions. In some cases, partial control was given to other boards composed of older men.6

The proprietary and subscription libraries derived their governing power from the prevailing corporate form of organization.7 This form was not an American invention; by the seventeenth century, it was already an important aspect of English constitutional law. Corporations existed in many commercial and industrial ventures between England and her colonies; examples included the fishing, whaling, banking, trading, and manufacturing industries.

The corporation as an institutional form seemed to be ideally suited to the economic, geographic, and social environment of the colonies. Massachusetts and New England towns were at first corporations, with charters similar to the early medieval grants. Like free constitutions, they regulated the laws of the town's and state's citizens. Many private corporations performed public functions that later became the responsibility of governmental agencies, especially with regard to public utilities. Beyond the realm of public utilities, religious, charitable, and educational institutions such as Harvard and Yale were incorporated. Furthermore, the law of contract pervaded every aspect of colonial life: Puritans made covenants with God, and the Calvinists conceived of all aspects of life as being governed and controlled by legal contracts.

Thus, it was natural that when the colonists wanted to establish libraries, they did not search for a new system of government. Rather, they turned to familiar and established institutions, and modified the corporate form so that it would best serve their particular interests.8

Proprietary and subscription libraries were organized as legal corpo-
rations under special charters or statutes. Before the Revolution, libraries had received their charters from their colonial governors. After 1783, they were usually incorporated by special acts of the state legislatures. The statutes provided the corporation with definite powers and responsibilities: (1) perpetual succession, (2) ownership and disposal of real and personal property, (3) authority to receive donations, bequests, and subscriptions, (4) the right to sue and be sued, (5) a common seal, (6) the privilege of holding meetings at designated intervals, (7) election of officers and a board of control, and (8) formulation and execution of by-laws and rules and regulations. The Redwood Library Company of Newport was probably the first library to become a corporation.°

Library officials discovered in time that the powers granted in the original charters were not specific enough and needed clarification and expansion. Consequently, state legislatures enacted laws allowing the officers of libraries to formulate regulations for the management of their collections. New York in 1796 was the first state to pass such detailed legislation. Between 1798 and 1839, Massachusetts, Vermont, Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island passed library laws that ranged from the general to the specific. During this period of forty years, the corporate form as a tool of business enterprise and the social library as a part of the corporate pattern were becoming more prevalent in American society. As the corporate form increased in popularity, there was less need for long, specific regulations.10

While social libraries dominated the eighteenth and the first part of the nineteenth centuries, they were by no means the only form of library government; county, school-district, and municipal libraries were also established in this period of American history. According to the first constitution of the state of Indiana, adopted in 1816, as new counties were created, provisions were included whereby "library companies" might be established in the county seats. Under legislation passed in 1824, citizens of counties of that state in which libraries had been established were empowered to elect boards to manage their libraries.11

The New York state legislature passed the first state law providing for tax supported free library service in the school districts. The librarian was elected annually by the tax payers, and he was responsible to the trustees of the district, acting as trustees of the library.12

Just as the citizens of New England had established and fostered the growth of the social libraries, New Englanders again began the
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first municipal libraries. In 1803, Caleb Bingham, Boston bookseller, sent 150 books to his brother Daniel in Salisbury, Connecticut. He wrote Daniel that when he was younger, he had wanted to read but had had no access to a library. Thinking that many children also longed for reading material, he wanted to help them. Subsequently, the Bingham Library for Youth was founded and placed under the control of a self-perpetuating board of trustees. In 1810, the town's citizens voted that one hundred dollars should be paid to the trustees to purchase more books. The Bingham Library was the first example of a municipality actively contributing financial assistance to public library service.  

Eighteen years later the New Hampshire legislature declared that its Literary fund was to be distributed to its towns for educational purposes. Most towns used this money to improve their public schools, but the citizens of Peterborough decided to employ these funds to establish a free public library. Three trustees were placed in charge of the small collection. Peterborough was the first library supported from the beginning by public funds, and it was the first instance in which the use of books was free to all classes of the community.  

The first state law in America authorizing establishment of a municipal public library was passed in 1848 by the General Court of Massachusetts. However, no governmental machinery was created for the library, for the state law merely allowed Boston to establish an agency under the city council's regulations.  

Two possibilities existed: the first was to place the library directly under the control of the council, administered by a single officer; the second was to place the library under board control. The city government of Boston in 1848 contained both types of administration. While there were five appointed boards and an elected school committee, many of the city's activities were supervised by thirty-three committees under the direction of the council.  

At first a special committee of the city council managed the new public library. Later five citizens were added to form the first board of trustees. It should be noted that the trustees of the Boston Public Library were influenced by the existing structure of the Boston Athenaeum, for the mayor, four of the five citizen trustees, and five of the seven council members were proprietors of the Athenaeum. Obviously, these men modeled the government of the Boston Library after the board form of the Athenaeum.  

An ordinance passed in 1852 provided that the Library would be
controlled by a Board of Trustees made up of one alderman, one member of the Common Council, and five citizens chosen annually by both houses of the City Council. The 1852 ordinance committed Boston to the library board plan of management. This example was followed in many cities and towns as new public libraries were founded. Specific powers granted to the trustees by the ordinance included the control of library funds, the authority to prescribe rules and regulations for the use of the library, and the right to appoint subordinate officers. The one governmental check over the board was the city council's authority to appoint the librarian annually and to decide his salary. In later history this check proved to be troublesome.

The trustees were resolute and fought for complete independence from city council control. The board objected to the city council's authority to renew or reject the librarian's appointment each year. It was not until 1870 that the librarian's tenure was made permanent. The trustees also opposed the council's interference in regulating certain library salaries. In 1877, Justin Winsor, disgusted with this situation, resigned from the Boston Library to become librarian of Harvard University. Because of the pressures of the Examining Committee of the Library and the trustees, a special statute was passed the following year; the "Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston" were incorporated and were given full powers over the library and its property. Moreover, the trustees' term of office was increased to five years. In addition to establishing the management of its library by board control, Boston also confirmed the tradition of broad powers and almost complete independence of the board.

As these early boards instituted important reforms, the first trustees of the Boston Public Library may be regarded as social reformers. They aimed to elevate the educational level of the great masses of Boston who could not afford to buy books. The trustees thought of themselves as missionaries spreading the gospel of mental culture. While most of the trustees of the first public libraries were dedicated and humanitarian leaders, exceptions may be noted in the directors of the Astor and Lenox Libraries of New York. The members of the Astor Board of Directors were usually conservative aristocrats. Joseph Cogswell, for instance, tried to transcend his snobbish principles, but he insisted upon keeping the bookstacks closed to the readers, for he was afraid that a crowd would throw everything into confusion.

The Astor's self-perpetuating board always included a member of the Astor family. These wealthy men were not the most scholarly of
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gentlemen, nor were they always interested in a public library. It was no wonder, then, that changes in the library's policies were difficult and slow.21

James Lenox had founded a library for scholars; while the trustees may have wanted to make the library more popular, they were obligated to execute the founder's wishes. In addition, these trustees were New York professional or business men, friends of Lenox, or at least family connections. The public reacted to the arrogance of the Lenox trustees. A satirical dialogue which appeared in "Popular Science Catechism," one of the Life series, contained these lines:

But I thought you said it was a public library?
So I did.
Then how can they keep people out?
By locking the doors.
But why?
To keep the pretty books from being spoiled.
Gracious! What are all those brass things on the roof?
Cannon dear.
What are they for?
To blow the heads off students who want to get in.
Why! and see those gallows!
Yes dear.
And people hanging!
Certainly, sweet.
Who are they?
Students who got in.22

The directors of the Astor and Lenox libraries represent only two examples of aristocratic conservatism. During the first half of the nineteenth century, trustees and founders of American libraries were liberal and industrious in their attempts to establish good library service. Critics did condemn local government on charges of corruption, graft, and inefficiency; however, the spoils system did not usually affect libraries. For the most part, librarians and trustees were academicians and civic leaders.

Leading citizens had persuaded governments to authorize and finance the Bingham, Peterborough, and Boston libraries, three important institutions established during the first half of the nineteenth century. Between 1849 and 1890, the trend in state government
seemed to be enactment of special laws that provided for new services as they arose. Consequently, when a city decided it needed a library, special legislation established an institution, and a new board or commission was added to the city to administer the library. Two types of local law were enacted during this period. One type, first passed by New Hampshire in 1849, was known as the "short" law. It succinctly stated that the town meeting or city council had the authority to pass rules and regulations to establish a library. While the "short" law was so open-ended that any form of government could have been created, all local units chose the standardized plan of board control.23

The contrasting form of legislation was the "long" law type passed by Illinois in 1872. The unwritten plan of board control was put into legal form. This type of law made the appointment of trustees obligatory, gave them a three-year term of office, and enumerated their powers. The library was to be independent of the city council except in the area of taxation. This form of legislation was popular in many states during the third quarter of the nineteenth century.23

At the end of the nineteenth century, two new trends appeared in American local government: municipal home rule developed, and an attempt was made to establish a strong central administrative authority. Municipal governments were of three kinds: strong-mayor, commission, and council-manager.24

While the strong-mayor form of government had little effect upon the public library, the commission plan challenged its existing structure. Board members were concerned about their future status under the city commission plan; they did not know to whom they would be responsible or even if library boards would be retained. The varying solutions to these problems did not always work to the benefit of the boards. While Iowa and Illinois amended their commission government laws to reconcile them with library laws, Sacramento, California, abolished its library board altogether. The librarian there was placed under the authority of the commissioner of education.25

Because of the special legal character of many libraries, manager government after 1890 did not greatly alter the position of the library. Existing forms were not overthrown, but as Joeckel observes, "a steady pounding-away at the library defenses has produced noticeable results."26

While local governments affected the nature of the municipal libraries in the first decades of the twentieth century, they did not
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interfere with the structure of the association libraries. These institutions did not completely disappear after their great importance in the nineteenth century; in 1935, fifty-six association libraries still existed. At this time, their boards were very powerful, for they were responsible to no outside authority. The trustees received gifts, purchased all books, appointed employees and determined their salaries, and made rules and regulations for the library. Being separated from the municipal government, these trustees were free from civic controls and political influences.

In addition to the association libraries, school district public libraries could also be found in the early twentieth century. At this time about a third of the libraries in Ohio were survivals of the old district type. In the twenties, new libraries were established in districts where the promise of financial support seemed to be greater than it would have been in municipalities. In 1923 an amendment was passed to the Ohio district library law, making the appointment of a separate library board mandatory. Thus, the new libraries were part of the school district system, but were not under the board of education. While in many cases, the board of education appointed the library trustees, the former board had almost no power over the library. These boards, consequently, were very strong, for they had full responsibility over finances, property, and salaries.

From the Colonial beginnings of American public libraries to the present, boards have been instrumental in founding libraries and fostering their growth. If the trustees were liberal and industrious, as in the case of the Boston Library, the institutions prospered and were enthusiastically received by the public. However, if the trustees were conservative and indifferent, as in the examples of the Astor and Lenox libraries, the public also reacted and showed its scorn. Library boards in the rest of the world during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have not been as powerful nor as influential as their American counterparts.

Library boards in other nations have often decreased in power and influence. New Zealand's Public Libraries Act of 1869 provided that management of libraries be vested in the local governing body of the district. A subsequent act in 1908 gave power to either local authorities or trustees to formulate and control public libraries. However, the trend of administration has been towards the local government; trustee-controlled libraries have often been replaced by local authority control.
Certain libraries, such as those in Czechoslovakia, had library boards whose policies were approved or rejected by a higher governmental authority. This nation, in 1919, passed a special law for public communal libraries; boards were created independent of the communal administration. Citizens of the community elected four to eight members of the board; those elected and the secretary of the local commission for adult education chose the remainder of the members from regular borrowers. The trustees served for two years, and their powers included appointing the librarian and his citizens, deciding upon the librarian's suggestions for the purchase of new books, adopting regulations for the borrowing of books and using the reading room, and presenting a written report of its activities to the representatives of the community.29

While the librarian had an advisory vote on the board, the Ministry of Education and library instructors controlled the administration of the library. Instructors and inspectors confirmed the appointment of the librarian, and the ministry had the power to dissolve the board and to appoint a temporary directing body. For sufficient reasons, the Ministry could remove certain members of the board and appoint new ones.30

Independent library boards in Argentina have been supervised by the National Commission. Domingo F. Sarmiento, an Argentine educational leader, visited the United States and was impressed with Ticknor's idea of the popular library. Under his presidency in 1870, a law was passed creating a National Commission entrusted with the foundation, organization, and aid of popular libraries throughout the country. By 1876, one-hundred and fifty-six libraries were founded under the Commission's trusteeship. Caught up in civil wars and revolutions, Argentinians lost interest in public libraries. The Commission ceased to exist, but in the early years of the twentieth century, it was recreated. The National Commission has visited villages and persuaded the citizens to elect committees to establish and administer book centers. This valuable institution has also helped to finance libraries and has even distributed free books to the village libraries.31

Library boards in many European countries are called committees or inspecting bodies. Bulgaria's Library Act of 1927 provided for the maintenance of public libraries. The affairs of a book center were governed by an elected library committee and were usually confirmed by the Ministry of Public Education. According to the provisions of Belgium's Library Act of 1921, inspecting bodies were
created to supervise and administer the work of libraries. These bodies aided the librarian in the selection of books.²²

In Scandanavia, the library board's decisions are approved by the city council. The council organizes the library and appropriates money for building and operating expenses. It also appoints a library committee to act as an intermediary between the librarian and the proper municipal administration. In addition, the city council fixes salaries and makes all important appointments acting upon suggestions of the librarian and the committee. Matters pertaining to bylaws, salaries, appointments, and distribution of funds must come before the mayor and council for final action.³³

Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Scandanavian boards consisted of prominent citizens who had been selected for their literary and social interests or financial influences. Today city legislators select members of their own political parties. Consequently, a board member's personal interest in the library and its work may be secondary to his political beliefs.³⁴

While the composition of Scandanavian library boards has changed significantly in the past sixty years, the functions of American library boards have been altered just as markedly. Advocates of the American library board system of government, at this time, do not usually think of management by the board. Rather, they think in terms of general oversight, policy regulation, public relations, and appraisal of management. However, the men responsible for framing library laws had a different concept of the responsibilities of the board.³⁵

Early library laws did not distinguish between the policy-regulating functions of the board and the management functions of the executive. One U.S. statute empowered the trustees to purchase books, magazines, and periodicals. A California law authorized trustees to borrow, lend, and exchange books with other libraries. On the other hand, the librarian or executive officer was rarely mentioned in early library legislation.³⁵

Thus, the library of the nineteenth century was completely under trustee control, and the librarian was merely the instrument of the board. As has been shown, the trustees were legally responsible for the library building, the furniture and equipment, books and periodicals, and the investment of all finances. The townspeople looked to the trustees to perform all of these duties, as well as to direct the operating activities of the library. The librarian, then, was only the custodian of the library, for he did nothing "professional." Rather, he
saw to it that books were circulated, fines were collected, and the library's rules were enforced.

While nineteenth-century trustees were well educated and distinguished citizens, there was a lack of adequately trained librarians at that time. Salaries were low, and in most communities the vocation was only a local consideration, for librarianship was not yet a profession of national stature. The trustees were naturally reluctant to give too much power to the untrained librarians available in those days.

By the second decade of this century, librarianship was recognized as a very important profession. In the thirties, more laws enumerated the functions of the librarian. At the same time, libraries had been expanding their resources and services. Close trustee direction was no longer possible. Trustees stopped managing and started creating policy.

Today the library board's main purpose is to serve as a lay check on professional knowledge. Its main responsibilities are to determine the policy of the library and to select a competent librarian. The boards of libraries, schools, and business corporations decide policy, while the appointed librarians, superintendents, and presidents execute policy. While results differ, today all types of boards share the same goals and responsibilities. The same relationship between trustees and executives also exists in all of these boards.

It has been shown that library boards of the nineteenth century had more authority than the librarian. The same type of situation existed in early school board history. The first education boards performed many of the duties of the present-day superintendent and principal. School trustees selected and supervised the teacher, chose text books, decided curricula, and looked after the school facilities. As the schools grew, the superintendent was permitted to help select teachers, supervise their work, and discipline students. Finally, with much reluctance on the part of the board, the superintendent was given the financial responsibilities. The board of education assigned more and more duties to the superintendent, and he became a professional person, trained for his job.

Parallels may also be found in early business history. When most companies were small, directors, executives, and stockholders were one group. One individual often held all three positions. As the companies grew in size and distributed more stockholdings, stockholders elected directors to represent them. Since the separation of manage-
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ment from ownership, the role of the business board has changed greatly. Now stockholdings are widely distributed, and the trustees are responsible for the whole enterprise and are no longer merely concerned with the interests of a special group of administrators.39

Of course, library, education, and business boards differ because of the nature of the institutions they represent. However, all trustees share the same goals: to maintain a competent staff and to develop the highest possible degree of operating efficiency. All are responsible to the general public.

As Sorenson has pointed out, “Citizen boards keep democracy green at its roots. They are an important index of our national vitality. Boards of directors and committees are evidence that American social-service policy is not in the hands of professional experts alone, that cross-sections of homefolks are in control.”40 Finally, Sorenson has emphasized the great importance of all trustees by stating that “Exercising power vested in them by charters and popular votes of their constituencies, the boards of directors in the United States have become our guidance, our leadership, and our control in almost every phase of our human activities.”41

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The Legal Basis of Library Boards

ALEX LADENSON

The broad pattern of library board government is fairly uniform throughout this country despite the fact that federal law has no application in this area. However, the general and special state library laws, city charters and municipal ordinances upon which board authority is based vary considerably. There is also great diversity in the detailed provisions of library laws affecting board organization and management in the fifty state jurisdictions.

Library boards derive their governmental power from a variety of legal instruments. These take the form of general state library laws, city charters under the home-rule principle, municipal ordinances, special acts of the legislature, state corporation statutes including laws establishing educational corporations, and the state school code.¹

Insofar as municipalities are concerned, which include cities, towns, villages and townships, the largest number of library boards today owe their legal existence to what are commonly referred to as general state library laws. Historically the first general library law enacted by the New Hampshire legislature in 1849, as well as the more famous Massachusetts law of 1851, made no provisions for the governmental machinery of the library. The latter, for example, merely provides that any city or town is authorized to establish a public library under such regulations as the city council or the inhabitants of the town may prescribe.² The earliest general state library law which contained detailed provisions covering the library board was the Illinois act of 1872.³ This statute was widely copied with the result that more than thirty states have this type of legal enactment on their books.

In this brief survey, it will not be possible to refer to the general library laws of each state. What can be done is to identify and describe the major common provisions as they relate to library boards.

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A typical general library law contains sections dealing with the organization, powers, and duties of the library board.

Regarding the legal organization of the board, all of the statutes, for example, designate the appointing authority. Most jurisdictions provide that the mayor shall appoint the library board with the approval of the city council. In a number of instances, the board is selected by the city council acting without the mayor. In the case of towns, townships, and villages, several state laws provide that the board shall be elected directly by the people. The general library law designates, too, the number of members to be appointed to the board. It appears that the largest number of states prefer five directors. Next in preference is a board of nine trustees. The term of office of board members is also prescribed in the general library law, the most usual being three years.

There are other common provisions relating to the organization of the board. A typical general library law provides that the board, immediately upon its establishment, shall elect its officers, which customarily include the president, secretary, and treasurer. Another fairly universal provision is that the appointing authority shall have the power to remove board members for misconduct and neglect of duty, also that vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as original appointments. A provision that is contained in most of the statutes is that no library trustee shall receive any compensation.

Interesting variations are to be found in the laws. Some states provide that the mayor, superintendent of schools, or other designated official shall be an ex officio member of the board. A considerable number of the laws provide that not more than one alderman shall be appointed to the board. South Dakota requires that two of the trustees must be women. An illustration of an undesirable provision is one in the Arizona statute which prescribes that the board must meet on the first Tuesday of each month. This is a matter that should rather be reserved for the bylaws. In cities of Missouri of over 300,000, not more than five of the nine directors can be members of the same political party. Finally, in Oregon no board member is permitted to have any financial interest in any contract to which the library is a party.

Turning now to an examination of the powers of the board, one will find provisions that are similar in most of the general state library laws. Most common are the following: The board, for example, has the power to adopt rules and regulations for the government of the
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library as well as bylaws for its own guidance. It has exclusive control over all expenditures. It has the power to acquire and purchase real estate and to construct and rent buildings. It has the power to select the librarian and all necessary personnel, prescribe their duties, and fix their compensation. It has the power to accept property by gift, devise, or trust on behalf of the library.

No municipal library board has full power to levy taxes. This is delegated by statute to the governing authority of the municipality. The legal right to hold the actual title to real property in some jurisdictions is retained by the municipality rather than granted to the library board. This is true also of the right of eminent domain. A curious deviation appears in the Florida law, which makes the rules and regulations adopted by the library board subject to the supervision and control of the city or town council.

Almost every general library law requires the board to make an annual report of its finances and activities to the municipal authorities. Many of the states also provide that an annual report must be filed with the official state library agency.

Next to be considered are the library boards whose legal foundation rests on a city charter. In connection with the home-rule movement, many states through constitutional amendments have granted cities, usually of a certain size, the privilege of adopting city charters. The latter is a legal instrument in the nature of an organic law which defines the power of the municipality and prescribes in considerable detail its form of government.

In a number of cities, the city charter does not contain provisions covering the legal organization of the library. This is reserved for a city ordinance; the charter merely declares that the city may operate a public library. In other cities a clause is inserted in the charter to the effect that the public library shall be organized and managed in accordance with the provisions of the general state library law. Some municipalities employ a slight variation of this legal device by providing that the library board shall have the powers enumerated in the state library law except as otherwise specified in the charter. In most city charters, however, the article governing public libraries has been redrafted. But in broad form and substance, it is essentially the same as the general state library law.

An important legal question raised by the adoption of a city charter is whether the existing general state library law continues to be in effect or whether it is in fact superseded by the charter. This was the
point at issue in the Missouri case of Carpenter v. St. Louis. In that case the city of St. Louis failed to levy a tax for library purposes. A mandamus suit was instituted against officials of the city to compel the proper authorities to levy the tax. Counsel for the city argued that the state library act of 1885 was invalid because it was superseded by the home-rule charter adopted in 1914. The court, however, rejected the argument and upheld the validity of the library act on the basis that the public library is a matter of state concern over which the General Assembly may exercise control. In view of conflicting decisions in other cases, it has been proposed by Carleton B. Joeckel that "it would seem desirable to have the application of state library laws in home-rule cities tested in the courts."

There are a small number of states, chiefly in the south, where the legal basis of the library board is grounded on a city ordinance. In these jurisdictions the state library law generally does not deal with the legal machinery of the library, but merely provides that it shall be organized under regulations prescribed by the city council. The position of the library board organized under a city ordinance is not nearly as secure as one established under a statute or city charter. It is relatively simple to repeal an existing ordinance and pass a new one. It is far more difficult to change a general state law or city charter.

In an earlier period, it was not unusual for a single library to be organized under a special act of the legislature. A number of large public libraries (New York, Brooklyn, Queens, Boston, Detroit, and Buffalo) and many smaller institutions are governed by such laws, and board authority is derived from this type of legal enactment. Often these special laws were tailored to meet specific conditions contained in a benefaction which was responsible for the establishment of the library. The practice of special legislation, however, has been discontinued, and it is used very seldom today.

At this point it is germane to call attention to the fact that many other state laws regarding municipalities impinge on and affect, either directly or indirectly, the authority of the library board. Such, for example, is a general civil service law for cities, which, in effect, deprives the library board of much of its power over personnel. Another is the case of a central purchasing law which requires that all purchases for city departments must be handled by a central purchasing agency, and thus interferes with the library board's exclusive power over purchasing. Still another illustration is a state law pre-
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scribing across-the-board limitations on the tax levies of cities, towns, and villages, which thus serve to reduce the amount of money available to the board for library purposes. A final example is a state law dealing with the budgetary and auditing procedures of municipalities, which has a bearing on the financial administration of the library board. It is clear, therefore, that to discover the actual legal authority of the library board, one must consult not merely the library act, but also examine closely an extensive and complex body of related municipal law.

Reference should also be made here to the position of the library board in cities that have adopted the city manager plan or commission form of municipal government. Although approximately 1800 cities have adopted the manager plan and over 250 cities have turned to the commission form, only a small handful of these cities have made any significant changes in the legal structure of the library board. In city manager jurisdictions, as of 1935 only six cities of over 30,000 population abolished the library board and placed governmental supervision of the library under the city manager. Similarly in commission form jurisdictions, at that time only six cities of over 30,000 population, with St. Paul as the most important example, had placed the governmental control of the library under an elected commissioner instead of a library board. But in the case of by far the greatest number of these municipalities, library board organization has remained unchanged. In Illinois, for example, the act authorizing the commission form of government merely contains a provision that the public library shall continue to be governed by the general state library law.

Before leaving the field of municipal public libraries, we must give some consideration to "corporation" and "association" libraries. This group of libraries, a not-inconsiderable number, is unique because the control of the institution is vested in a corporation or association which is not an integral part of the municipal government. It should be noted, however, that in many instances, the corporation or association library is joined by contract with the municipality and a portion of its income is derived from public taxation. The form of legal organization of these institutions is quite complicated, impelling Joeckel, the outstanding authority on this subject, to write: "Often the laws, charters, and accompanying documents affecting the foundation and maintenance of a particular library are like some obscure Magna Carta, whose exact provisions are almost forgotten but none
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the less treasured and triumphantly brought to light in case of need." 14

Broadly speaking the board of trustees of a corporation or association library can trace its legal origin either to a special act of the legislature or to a corporate charter. Corporation libraries enjoy the usual corporate powers of perpetual succession, the right to sue and be sued, and a corporate seal in addition to the enumerated powers contained in the charter. In the corporation library the board of directors is a self-perpetuating body with its members selected by co-optation. In the case of the association library, which is also usually a corporation, the corporate powers are exercised by a board elected by the members of the association.

Libraries that operate under this type of board management are free from political influence of any kind. The boards possess wide powers and are not legally answerable to any authority higher than themselves.

In certain jurisdictions, particularly Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Pennsylvania, New York, and West Virginia, are to be found school-district public libraries whose governmental machinery is somewhat unique. To begin with, the unit of library service in this instance is the school-district which is a distinct governmental body created by the legislature. Moreover, the school-district is separate and apart from the city or other type of local government existing within its political boundaries. The legal basis of the school-district public library generally rests on the school code which is also the legal foundation of the educational system of the state. Historically the school-district public library was the first tax-supported library in the United States.

The government of the school-district public library falls into two broad categories: one which is governed by a separate library board and the other in which the governing authority is the school board. The Ohio law on this subject provides for a separate library board. In fact it expressly excludes any person "who is or has been for a year previous to his appointment a member of a board of education." 15 Under the Ohio system, library board members are appointed by the board of education, but except for the act of appointment, the school authorities exercise little or no control over the library board. The latter is an extremely independent agency and enjoys broad powers. In certain respects this type of library board has wider powers than its municipal prototype. In the field of fiscal administration, for example, the library has sole charge over its financial and business transactions instead of being processed through some other agency in
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the municipal hierarchy. This provision avoids delay, and the library board has full knowledge of the condition of its funds at all times.

Under the Pennsylvania statute, provision is also made for a separate library board which is composed of five members appointed by the board of education together with the superintendent of schools and the president of the school board serving as ex officio members. Here, however, the library board is not as independent as in the Ohio situation, for the school board retains greater control over library management.

A considerable number of school-district public libraries do not have separate library boards, but are governed directly by boards of education. Two notable examples of this method are Indianapolis and Kansas City, Missouri. In this type of library organization, it is not uncommon for the board of education to establish a library committee which considers matters relating to the administration of the public library. But this in no way can be considered as a substitute for a separate library board. Under this scheme a question has arisen as to whether the librarian reports to the superintendent of schools or whether he is directly responsible to the school board. In the larger cities it has become the practice for the librarian to report directly to the school board.

Turning now to the larger unit of library service, our attention is first directed to the county library. Some thirty-five states have general laws governing the establishment of county libraries. In a few jurisdictions, a single law covers both county and municipal libraries. In its provisions relating to board management, the county library law is quite similar to the enactments dealing with municipal libraries. In the case of county libraries, the board of trustees is generally appointed by the county commission or other governing body of the county. Several state laws designate the county judge or other judicial officer as the appointing authority. In Florida the county library board is appointed by the governor. The Indiana law provides that the board of county commissioners, the county superintendent of schools, and the judge of the circuit court shall each appoint three members of the county library board.

As far as the powers of the library board are concerned, the county law follows closely the statutes covering municipal libraries. In addition to enumerating the usual powers, many of the state laws authorize the county board to enter into contracts with existing libraries for library service.
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In California and a few other states, county libraries are administered directly by the boards of county supervisors. The county library is therefore a department of the county government. In these jurisdictions, however, the county library is generally tied in with the state library commission which is given by law certain supervisory control over county libraries.

To solve the problem of unserved and inadequately served regions as well as to meet the challenge of the metropolitan areas, a number of states have taken important steps to develop larger units of library service. New York has been a pioneer in this exciting movement, and on its statute books is a law providing for the establishment of cooperative library systems. A “cooperative library system,” as defined in the statute, means a library established by one or more counties, a group of libraries serving an area including one or more counties in whole or in part, or a library of a city containing one or more counties. These library systems by law are under the management and control of a board of trustees which has all the powers of trustees of other educational institutions. The trustees are elected annually at a meeting of the trustees of the participating libraries in the cooperative library system.

Pennsylvania has recently adopted a new library Code which provides for the organization of four Regional Library Resource Centers and up to thirty District Library Centers. Regional Library Resource Centers have the responsibility and power to acquire major research collections and under rules and regulations promulgated by a board consisting of the head librarians of all Regional Library Resource Centers and under the chairmanship of the State Librarian to make them available to the residents of the commonwealth on a statewide basis.

District Library Centers have the power to contract with any city, borough, town, township, school-district, county, or board of trustees or managers of any local library which wishes thereby to become part of the District Library Center system of such district. No provision, however, for the government of District Library Centers appears to have been made in the law.

In 1959 New Jersey adopted a law which permits two or more municipalities to unite in the support, maintenance, and control of a joint free public library. It is also provided that the library board of the joint library shall consist of the mayor or other chief executive officer of each participating municipality, the superintendent of schools

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or the president of the board of education of the local school-district of each municipality, and three citizens appointed by the mayor of each of the municipalities.

Massachusetts has passed a law providing for the establishment of regional public library systems. For each regional area, an advisory council is established which consists of the chief librarian of each city or town in the regional area.

Spurred on by state aid, this movement of enlarging the unit of library service is bound to spread to other jurisdictions. This appears to be inevitable. Although it may bring some changes in library board government, the basic pattern of the board concept will remain intact because it is so deeply rooted in the historical development of the public library.

References

5. Arizona Revised Statutes, sec. 9-415.
7. Oregon Revised Statutes, sec. 357.460.
8. By law, Indiana public libraries with independent boards may set their own tax rates up to a specified maximum; see Annotated Indiana Statutes, sec. 41-918. In fact, such tax rates are reviewed by the County Tax Adjustment Board, as are all other local government tax rates.
10. 318 Mo. 870.
12. Ibid., p. 152.
16. Florida, op. cit., sec. 150.03.
17. Annotated Indiana Statutes, sec. 41-510.
20. New Jersey Statutes Annotated, sec. 40:54-29.3.
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The government of the public library should be an agency for determining, and then satisfying, the library needs and desires of the community. Its means of doing so is the transformation of public funds and facilities into administrative action and service. Historically, the authoritative library board has been the overwhelmingly dominant form of government for the American public library. Today the authoritative board still governs the majority of our public libraries, but it is getting an increasing amount of competition from other governmental forms, namely from the city manager in council-manager cities.

In almost all of our fifty states, municipalities and counties are granted statutory permission to create public libraries and to appoint library boards to govern them. Those states in which statutory permission is not granted have an implied permission. In most cases, the statutes spell out the methods by which the library board is to be appointed or elected, the number of members the board is to have, and the length of their terms. Many statutes also have stipulations that provide for certain local officials to be ex officio library board members, and a few set a minimum or maximum for the number of board members of a particular sex or political affiliation.

It is impossible to get a precise picture of library boards by merely reading statutes. Most library statutes are permissive rather than mandatory, and many of them are vague. Then, too, home rule charters in many cities negate the statutory provisions. Nonetheless, the general image of the American public library board can be fairly accurately drawn from the statutes.

There seems to be a considerable amount of disagreement between the statutes of various states as to what constitutes the most desirable size for a library board. The majority of states set the number of

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board members between five and nine, although some cities have as few as three or as many as twenty-five. In 1935 the average authoritative library board had eight members. Since 1935 a number of states have given cities permission to decrease their board size, and the professional opinions of both librarians and political scientists generally favor small boards. These factors indicate that the size of the average library board today is probably a bit smaller than in 1935.

The overwhelming majority of public library trustees are appointed by local government officials. In only a few cities are trustees elected. They are usually appointed by the mayor or by the legislative body. In some cities they are appointed by the school board or the city manager. In a very small number of cities, library boards are legally self-perpetuating, although a large number of boards are self-perpetuating in practice, by means of recommending candidates for appointment to the appointing power. When trustees are appointed by the chief executive of a city, the approval of the legislative body is usually required by law.

The term of office for trustees also varies widely from state to state. In most states it is set by statute, but in some it is left to the discretion of the appointing power. Statutes vary in setting the length of term from one to ten years. Most commonly, trustees serve terms of three to six years, with the five year term appearing most often. Almost always, the terms of trustees are staggered in order to promote continuity in library government. Rarely does a state or city limit the number of terms a trustee may serve. This generalization is well proved by the large number of library board members in America who have served twenty, thirty, or even forty or more years.

Another set of stipulations for library boards to be found in many states and cities pertains to individual board members. It is a widely held maxim of library government that it is undesirable for the library to be dominated by, or even closely connected with, the local government. Many states stipulate that neither the mayor nor any member of the legislative body may be a member of the board. Many more states provide that no more than one councilman be on the board at any one time. A few states, however, take the opposing view, and fix the mayor, or one councilman, as an ex officio board member. In some states other local officials, such as a school board member, the school superintendent, or the county judge, are made ex officio board members. A final type of regulation that a few states
make is to insure some measure of diversification on the board, usually in the form of preventing the board from being unduly dominated by a single sex or political party.

It is desirable that individual trustees be appointed rather than elected, except in the rare cases in which library boards have power to levy taxes. Although an elected library board would clearly be a violation of the short-ballot principle, an even greater disadvantage is that the elected board is completely separated from the revenue-appropropriating body. Through the power of appointment and removal, a city council has a small measure of control over the library, and an appointed board is in a better position to communicate with the council. Both of these conditions are conducive to a library’s budget request being considered more thoughtfully and favorably by the appropriating body.

The size of library boards in America tends to be too large, but it is encouraging to note the number of libraries that are having the size of their board decreased. There is no reason that a library could not be governed well by a five-man board. Certainly a board of over nine members is apt to be unwieldy as an instrument of government. Individual trustees in large boards are apt to lose their sense of involvement and importance.

Cities would do well to limit the number of terms an individual board member could serve. The extremely long tenure that is so common among library trustees has sometimes served to deprive whole generations in a community of the opportunity to govern their public library. Besides promoting rigid and inflexible policies, overlong tenure keeps libraries from being infused with fresh ideas, and can be responsible for community apathy. If a citizen has the capacity and desire to be a valuable contribution to the library and the community, ten years as a library trustee would give him ample opportunity.

It is axiomatic that the quality of library service in an area is not going to be determined as much by the size of the library board or the number of years its members serve as it will be by the skill, enthusiasm, and amount of influence possessed by the individual trustees. It is here, rather than on the mechanics of the board, that any evaluation of a particular board or the entire authoritative board form of library government must be based.

Who are the people serving on our library boards? What are their backgrounds? To what extent are they capable of determining the needs of their community and formulating the policy of their library?
How well are they able to gain the necessary financial support for their institution? These questions are, in large part, impossible to answer. Even if the answers were known, the composite picture of the typical American library board would not adequately describe many existing boards. The relatively few facts about library trustees that are known, however, can be useful in judging the effectiveness of the authoritative board form of government as a whole.

The best recent survey of library trustees was done by the Pacific Northwest Library Association, and reported in their Library Development Project Reports. Their findings on library board members in their area are probably very close to what a nationwide survey might bring out.

The educational level of trustees in the Pacific Northwest was found to be quite high—considerably higher than the general population. Of all trustees, 23 per cent were high school graduates, 58 per cent were college graduates, and 17 per cent had some graduate training. Of those that were college graduates, 68 per cent had majored in the liberal arts or social sciences, 7 per cent had majored in the sciences or engineering, and 24 per cent had professional training.

The vocational and professional background of trustees as brought out in the PNLA survey is especially interesting. Housewives comprised 45 per cent of the total number of trustees. Nineteen per cent were in business, either as owners or in an executive capacity; 11 per cent were in education; 7 per cent in law; 6 per cent were clerical or blue-collar workers; and 12 per cent were classified as “other.” The latter classification included those who were retired. The occupations of these trustees are not representative of the population as a whole, nor do they correspond very closely with the occupational status of library users.

Many public libraries in the United States originated as women’s club libraries, and the influence of women is still strongly felt in their government. This is especially true of smaller communities where books, libraries, and all other types of cultural endeavors tend to be thought of as women’s activities. Many smaller communities have library boards composed entirely of women. As a general rule, not until communities reach the 10,000 population size is the influence of men significantly felt. It can be generally stated that the larger the library, the greater the percentage of male members on its library board. In cities of over 50,000 inhabitants, library boards are predominantly male.
Persons of middle and advanced age are a majority group on library boards. Again, this phenomenon is more often found in smaller communities. Joeckel notes that in 1935 the median age of library trustees was fifty-six years. There were more trustees over seventy years old than there were under forty.\(^6\) Undoubtedly, the average age of board members is closely related to the exceedingly long tenure they often enjoy. There are a number of indications that as the status and backgrounds of trustees have slowly broadened to be more representative of the community, the average age of board members has decreased four or five years.\(^7\)

The reasons that certain individuals are chosen to serve on library boards are many and diverse. In all fairness it must be said that a great many are selected because the appointing power feels that they are well qualified to regulate the library’s policies and are able to make their library an effective and influential institution. Many trustees receive their appointments as minor political rewards, or because they or a member of their family has given land or money to the library. Often a trustee is appointed to represent a particular community group such as the clergy, organized labor, the Chamber of Commerce, or a service club or fraternal organization. Others are chosen solely because they have an interest in and love for books, education, or culture. Some trustees are appointed for their special interest or ability in a specific aspect of library management, e.g., finance, law, buildings and equipment, literature, or public relations.

To a person seeking a high status in his community, membership on the library board is not a particularly attractive “plum,” except in the very largest cities. The job carries good tenure, but there is little glamour or publicity, and library trustees are not responsible for supervising the expenditure of very large amounts of money. Since they receive no salaries, their only satisfaction is that of rendering service to the community. Trustees are usually well educated, fairly well informed, and “very middle class in their social status and identification . . . [but] Rarely are they members of whatever groups may be said to ‘run’ the community.”\(^3\)

In cities where the library is governed by an authoritative board, the relationship between the library board and the rest of the city government is a distant one. With the exception of the power to levy taxes, the board is practically an independent government. Within the framework of state and local law, it has almost complete control over the library. The one area in which the city usually retains control
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is finance. Funds are appropriated by a legislative body, and their financial officer (city clerk or treasurer) is invested with responsibility for the safe handling and legal expenditure of these funds. The result is that city hall usually controls the financial procedures and accounting for the library, but in no way controls the expenditure of funds as long as they are legal and honest. Governing boards have the power to engage and disengage personnel (often subject to civil service regulations), purchase materials and supplies, and regulate the policies of the library.

The greatest revolution in twentieth-century local government is the widespread adoption of the council-manager form of city government. This form is also found in a few counties. The city manager plan was first used in the United States in 1908, and by 1934 it had been adopted by 418 cities. In only a small number of these 418 cities did the city manager control the library. In 1934, of the 69 cities with populations over 30,000 that had a city manager, only six libraries were administered by the manager, and five were administered by boards appointed by him. This practice was consistent with the concept that the public library should be separated from the local government as much as possible.

The number of cities that have the council-manager plan has grown rapidly since 1934. In 1961, of the 3,047 cities in the United States with populations of 5,000 or over, 1,114, or 37.5 per cent, were governed by this form. The number of libraries controlled by city managers today is not known, but the International City Managers' Association has recently taken a survey of libraries in council-manager cities, and is in the process of incorporating the results into a book on municipal library administration. A 1959 survey of Texas municipalities found that 46 Texas council-manager cities operated municipal libraries; and 20 of these 46 libraries were administered by a city manager. Some of the larger libraries that are governed by a city manager are those of Austin, Amarillo, Wichita Falls, and Abilene, Texas; San Diego, California; Miami, Florida; Norfolk, Virginia; Phoenix, Arizona, and Worcester, Massachusetts.

Librarians are usually wary of interference from other professional administrators, and recent writers have almost unanimously agreed that city manager control of libraries should be avoided. Karl Burg recognizes that the number of manager-controlled libraries is increasing, but he is skeptical about it. He is especially afraid that the manager will usurp a few of the librarian's sacrosanct duties such as
personnel selection and equipment selection, and that he will rob the library's budget for purposes which he considers more important.\(^7\)

To be sure, there are many city managers who will interfere with their librarian's duties, but there are also many library boards that do the same. Two extremely important trends in the city manager profession will result in the gradual disappearance of this type of manager and the type of manager who ignores his library's budgetary needs. One of these trends is that the typical city manager is gradually being thought of less often as an engineer, and more often as a specialist in government and administration. At their professional meetings, managers are less concerned with sewage treatment methods, street maintenance and the like, and are more concerned with their roles as community leaders and with the total welfare of the city and its inhabitants.

The second trend is the rapidly growing professionalism of the city manager. More than ever before, city councils prefer their city managers to meet specified educational requirements. City managers' increasing professionalism will have two major effects upon their relations with libraries. One effect is that the city manager himself will be more likely to be a reader and to have an interest in books and education. The other is that he will be likely to have more respect for the librarian as a professional administrator.

When libraries are governed by city managers, library boards usually retain their existence, but they become advisory boards instead of authoritative boards. These boards may be appointed by the mayor or council, but they often are appointed by the city manager. Their function is to advise the city council, manager, and/or the librarian on matters pertaining to the library. Since the city manager has taken over many of the duties normally performed by an authoritative board, many advisory boards are characterized by a dwindling interest in the library. There is no reason, however, that these advisory boards could not fully apply themselves to the tasks of broadly determining the library needs of the community, recommending plans of action to fulfill these needs, and working to influence the city council and the community to adopt them. These tasks are often the very ones neglected by authoritative boards which are immersed in the overseeing of the librarian's administrative action.

Advisory boards in two other governmental situations deserve brief attention. A few of the 261 cities with populations over 5,000 which operate under the commission form of government have their libraries
directly administered by a commissioner. Also, librarians in a few cities are appointed by and report directly to the city council. In cities such as these the function of the library board is substantially the same as it is in cities where the city manager controls the library.

The advantages and disadvantages of city manager control of the library can also be applied to commissioner control—with two exceptions. A commissioner, unlike a city manager, is an amateur administrator and is a politician. The fact that he is also a member of the appropriating body could conceivably be a tremendous advantage to the library controlled by him. In practice, however, commissioners are not usually elected for their administrative competence or interest in books and libraries. Moreover, the commissioner who is assigned the library, or to the group of departments that includes the library, is often the one who garnered the least number of votes, or who belongs to the minority party—even though the election may be nonpartisan. The commission plan has come into general disfavor since its heyday, and there is no really good reason that libraries would benefit from coming under its wing.

A development of the advisory board is the Friends of the Library group. Although this type of group enjoys no formal government status, it can act as an advisory board and do a good deal to influence the appropriating body and to publicize the library. Since neither advisory boards nor Friends govern the library, they need not be limited in size as is the authoritative board. Indeed, it is an advantage to have them large, because more elements of the community can be represented, and they can exert greater influence as a pressure group.

A final form of library government that should be mentioned, although it is not truly a library board, is the school board that operates the public library. A number of cities have libraries of this type, the most notable of which is Kansas City, Missouri. In some cases, the school board also serves as the library board, with the librarian responsible directly to it. In other cases the librarian is a subordinate of the school superintendent. In some situations of this type the public library tends to be neglected, especially with regard to its service to adults. In other cases, public libraries have been well supported financially as a result of the fact that school boards deal with larger budgets than do independent library boards.

With the exception of the relatively few school-district libraries, municipal and county legislative bodies are the ultimate controllers of public libraries. Even in the strongest of board-governed institu-
tions, the city council has the power of the purse and, except where boards are elected, has the authority to appoint and remove individual trustees. In cities that have governing boards, the legislative body has merely delegated its authority over the library to the library board. In cities in which the city manager controls the library, the city council has delegated its administrative authority to him and has retained the broad policy-making power for itself. In cities where individual commissioners administer libraries, the board of commissioners has still retained the broad policy-making power.

There is little agreement, of course, as to the dividing line between administration and policy making. In a small library governed by an authoritative board, the decision of whether or not to buy a typewriter might be construed as a policy decision, whereas in a library governed by a city manager it would probably be an administrative decision. In situations where the city manager or a commissioner governs the library, the legislative body might reserve for itself as policy decisions only those of a certain magnitude—e.g., the placement of a branch library, the amount of paid vacation for staff members, or the setting of a non-resident fee.

It has been an almost universal concept in library circles that the public library should be shielded from politics by a strong library board—the board to act as a buffer between the library and city hall. If we can assume that the major weakness of the American public library is its poverty, it is surely its separation from the appropriating body that has been an important contributor to this weakness. Appropriating bodies are often more concerned with the total amount of the city budget and tax levy than they are with the amounts allotted to individual departments. The very aloofness of the library places it at a great disadvantage when other departments that are competing for the same dollar are frequently in contact with the appropriating body. Too often, the only time a city council is in contact with the library is when the budget request is sent in or when a board member is reappointed. If public libraries are truly worthy of adequate public support, then repeated contact with the appropriating body, and an opportunity to have its purposes and policies aired, would be a tremendous advantage. At the very least, it would make the legislators aware that a public library exists in the community and that it is engaged in a number of worthwhile activities.

Probably the main reason that the control of libraries by the city manager should be more fully explored is to effect a closer proximity
between the library and the appropriating body. In situations of this type, an advisory board or Friends of the Library group can be invaluable in recommending book selection policies to the council and in studying and recommending plans for increasing services and the use of services.

With the myriad of local governmental customs and preferences, no single form of library government will ever be universally recognized in practice, nor will any single form be a panacea for all library ills. The authoritative board has been the dominant governing force in American public libraries for many decades. While there are many truly outstanding library systems that have been created and governed by these boards, it must be admitted that the public library has lagged considerably behind other American institutions in growth, financial support, and public acceptance. Authoritative boards have not, on the whole, been very effective in supplying their communities with the quality of library service they need. In many situations, perhaps some other form of library government would do better.

Reprinted below are three recommendations of the Library Development Project sponsored by the Pacific Northwest Library Association:

1. State and provincial legislation should be enacted to permit, on a local option, the transfer of the library board’s jurisdiction over policy to the city council (county court, in the case of county libraries).

2. In the place of boards of trustees, legally constituted Friends of the Library groups should be formed, with advisory prerogatives. These should be large groups generally representative of the community and, more specifically, the library users.

3. The professional competence of the librarian should be recognized in the law, and, where constitutionally possible, full administrative powers should be given to him.¹¹

The above recommendations, if adopted, would not mean the end of the authoritative board as an instrument of library government. It would, however, give citizens in every community, no matter what their form of local government, an opportunity to evaluate different governmental forms for their public library and to adopt any one of them. The board system for many governmental units has often been the first step in an evolutionary process leading to full integration with the central local government. This is especially true of municipally-owned utilities. There is no reason that public libraries could not be-
come a more integral part of their local governments, and benefit by doing so.

The authoritative library board has deep roots in statutory law. Most of these statutes were adopted in a period of time when public libraries were in their infancy and when local governments were noted for their incompetence and corruption. Both libraries and local governments have made considerable progress since this early period. At one time it might have been wise to shield the library and the librarian from politics, but it is unwise to do so today. The modern public library is definitely a part of the political process, and its increased participation in this process will work to its advantage.

References

Responsibilities of Trustees: Collective And Individual

VIRGINIA G. YOUNG

THE CONCEPT OF TRUSTEESHIP is an ancient one, reaching far back into the history of mankind. Closely allied with the tutelary, regency, and guardianship principles, trusteeship is recognized as the agency of a person or persons designated to act as governors or protectors over property belonging to another.

The history of libraries very nearly parallels the history of civilization itself. From the 21st century B.C., we are able to trace libraries from their beginnings as royal or temple collections, to the universally available public institutions of education and recreation of today.

It is not definitely known whether or not boards of governors or trustees shared the responsibilities of administration of the ancient collections, the public libraries of Greece and Rome, and the monastic, royal, and university libraries of later centuries. Ironically, few written records survive to give us the detailed history of these treasuries of the written record. But about the middle of the nineteenth century, the public library, as a tax-supported institution operated under the control of a board of trustees, began to appear throughout the United States. Swelling demands for broader and better library service were matched by the growth of the public library movement into today's urban, county, and multicounty library systems all over the country.

The past century has seen a corresponding growth in the responsibilities of the library trustee. What was once a minimal listing of simple responsibilities has grown until today's public library trustee finds himself in charge of a complex public facility, presenting an analogous complexity of responsibilities for its trustees. These responsibilities divide themselves into two categories: collective, or the responsibilities of the library board as governing body; and individual,
or the responsibilities involving the trustee's personal undertaking in his discharge of the duties of a board member. In some areas these responsibilities are, of course, identical. In other fields a distinction may be drawn between the collective duties of the board of trustees and the individual's commitment to effective service as a member of the board.

First among the collective responsibilities of library trustees, and carrying the strongest impact upon the library's operation, is that of policy making. Every public library should have a written statement of policy which governs rules, regulations, and operations. Written policy should also be on record showing the library's objectives and embodying its criteria of selection of books and materials.

Policies should therefore be worked out and recorded by library boards governing such important matters as (1) days and hours open, holidays, duty hours of staff; (2) vacation and sick leave benefits of librarian and staff; (3) salary schedule, setting out qualifications required, tenure benefits, in-service training leading toward promotion; (4) standards of selection of books and other materials; (5) fines on overdue books, charges for lost books; (6) services to school pupils and school libraries, services to other specialized groups; (7) special services (to nonresidents, use of auditorium, etc.); (8) acceptance of gifts and memorials; (9) extension of services (through branches, bookmobiles, system participation, etc.); (10) public relations; (11) payment of expenses for trustees and staff to attend library conferences, workshops, and professional meetings; and (12) payment of state and national association dues for board members and librarian.

Since the librarian is charged with the responsibility of carrying out policies established by the board, policy should be worked out in close cooperation between board and librarian. Often the librarian, fortified by close daily contact with patrons and by professional experience, can suggest needed new or changed policy to the trustees for their consideration.

Written library policy has been well likened to a road map, and no library can progress without such a guiding chart.

The responsibility of the board which is second only to policy making in force of impact is selection of a librarian. It is not necessary to point out to readers of Library Trends that there are no cut-rate bargain days in good librarianship. Public library boards should, therefore, be prepared to offer to a qualified candidate the best in salary that the finances of the library can afford, together with promotional
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incentive and fringe benefits. The librarian chosen will be the single most important factor in the library’s progress, and pains should be taken to fill the post with the best talent available.

The word “talent” is used advisedly, since nothing less leads to librarianship that is inspired and inspiring. Thus, when the question of selection of a librarian is before the board, it is the board’s inescapable responsibility to act as talent scout as well as prospective employer.

The fiscal responsibility of the board toward the library calls for thorough grounding in knowledge of the library’s resources, its financial needs, and its estimated expenditure for any projected expansion. The library board must therefore be informed as to tax monies available and the library’s fair share of the tax dollar, as well as the amount of income essential to provide adequate library service to the community. Acting as an advisory committee, the board should assist the librarian in preparing the budget, and the chairman and the librarian, together with other board members acting as consultants, should jointly present the budget to the appropriating body.

When additional expenditures become necessary, it is the responsibility of the board to make such request, pointing out sources for such funds (such as larger appropriation, increased tax levy, or bond issue). Since the library board, by statute, is responsible for the use made of the library’s funds, it is the duty of the board to be conversant with tax laws affecting the library and with the provisions of any bond issue proposed for the benefit of the library. It is the board’s duty as well to justify and interpret not only appropriations requested, but also the suggested means through which the funds are to be made available.

Preparation of the budget, reflecting not only costs of daily operation but also projected expansion of the library’s services from year to year, is properly the duty of the librarian. But fiscal responsibility for the library is fixed by law in the library board and cannot be delegated. To be carried out well, this responsibility must be carried out wisely.

The trustees’ collective responsibility in the field of public relations is primarily that of sounding board to interpret distinctly the echoes of public opinion and public demand related to the library’s program and the library’s needs. In their position as board of control over the library which belongs to the public, trustees must act as liaison between the public and the institution. The board, in consultation with
the librarian, must form and direct the public relations program of
the library, since a favorable climate of public acceptance is essential
to the library’s welfare and progress.

Every public contact is a form of public relations. Actions and atti-
tudes of the staff in this respect come under the head of library ad-
ministration and are properly left to the supervision of the librarian.
But board members, in social contacts and business, professional, and
civic interests, have constant opportunities to “talk library,” and conse-
quently, to “sell library.” In this liaison work, the board may call
favorable attention to the library’s services and thereby gain accept-
ance for planned expansion. At the same time, the board learns public
reaction to the library program and gains valuable information as to
public needs and desires.

Avenues of public relations are numerous, and all should be ex-
plored. Newspaper releases reach the entire community and give
publicity to changes in policy, new services offered, or new programs
planned. Radio and television time, often donated as a public service,
can be utilized for book reviews and other items of interest presented
by the librarian or a staff member. The library’s annual report should
be well publicized.

National Library Week and Children’s Book Week provide two
well advertised occasions to focus public attention on the library.
Local or regional authors and their works may be honored by special
observances. Book fairs may be planned to sharpen public interest.
These are all means which the librarian and the board should con-
sider as channels of public relations for the library.

Friends of the Library groups offer an ever-widening circle of excel-
Ient public contacts. Such groups should be welcomed by board and
librarian alike, and the objectives of the Friends should be planned
in consultation with the librarian and members of the board. The work
of the Friends should be pointed toward supplying a need of the
library not otherwise attainable or toward supplementing certain
programs suggested by the librarian and board. It is the responsibility
of the board to work closely with these well-wishers of the library,
both to give direction to their generous efforts and to cooperate with
them in their plans.

A board responsibility often overlooked governs gifts, endowments,
and memorials proposed for the library. Most of the public relations
work inviting gifts and endowments is doubtless done by individual
trustees through personal contacts, but the board must at all times
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present a receptive and appreciative attitude toward such benefactions. Equally, the board must be prepared to avoid entanglements resulting from "the gift with strings attached" which would hamper any benefits accruing to the library. A practical and tactful policy should be worked out by the board touching these matters, and the policy should provide that the library is not to be restricted in making the best use of such gifts.

The board has a collective responsibility to participate in library and trustee organizations at state, regional, and national levels. Membership of every trustee in such associations and provision for payment of dues and travel expenses to the meetings should be as much a part of the board's policy of record as similar and corresponding expenses for the librarian. Benefits of membership in professional organizations for librarian and staff and attendance at meetings and workshops are obvious and should be considered essential in preparation of the library's budget.

But many trustees are seemingly less aware of their own responsibilities toward library and trustee organizations. Individual rewards of such membership, in the form of education and growth, will be treated later in this article. It is the board's collective participation which gives support to the organizations, both in financing and in broad-range programs. The work of these associations will be found invaluable in creating favorable public relations for libraries as a whole, and the backing of such associations, particularly at the state and national level, is indispensable in the political process of obtaining legislation helpful to libraries.

And it is in the political process that one of the heaviest responsibilities of the library board falls. Public libraries, as tax supported institutions, are dependent upon public tax resources for support. Distasteful as many trustees profess to find the idea, this means that the library must compete with other tax supported institutions and facilities for a share of the public monies. Too often the public library with an unaggressive board finds itself shunted into a corner and given only a token, or bare-maintenance appropriation, while more aggressive or more novel public works bear off the lion's share.

It is in the creation of a receptive public climate of thought toward the library, built by skillful public relations, that the board must take the lead. Presentation to the governing body of the library's budget, justification for the amount sought, and request for increased income—all should emanate from the library board through its chairman. While
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the librarian is an essential member of the team as coworker and consultant, it is an injustice to look to the librarian to carry the ball as a substitute for the board.

Similarly, when expansion or improvement of the library's services necessitates a tax or a bond issue, the board should constitute itself sponsor of the political campaign which is called for. Through speeches, public and private contacts, organized campaign work with civic, social, educational, and service clubs, the library trustees have an opportunity and an obligation to mold public opinion toward a vote favorable to the library's progress. Since America's public business is transacted democratically through the ballot box, the forward movement of America's libraries depends upon the political process. Trustees of those libraries must, therefore, bear the responsibility of representing the library in politics.

Narrower in scope, but of equal importance to the library's well-being, are relations between the board and the librarian and staff. After the board has employed the best librarian available, it is the collective responsibility of the board members to stand solidly behind him. Here, perhaps, the limitation of the board's responsibility is its most important aspect, for while the board is responsible for the overall control of the library, internal administration of the library is the librarian's responsibility, and never the twain should meet. To avoid collision or overlapping, sharp definition of the two separate responsibilities should be recognized by the board. In a recent publication of the Small Libraries Project of the American Library Association, the writer has expressed the situation in these words: "As the happy ship is not the ship where all discipline is relaxed, but the ship whose captain and crew work together in common cause, the smoothly-running library has its own recognized chain of command."¹

Once the board has established policy leading to the best possible operating conditions for the library, its responsibility is to maintain cordial cooperation with the librarian and friendly interest in the staff members. The perils of confusion, partisanship, or divided authority can be avoided by bearing in mind that the librarian supervises the internal management of the library.

In-service training and further educational opportunities should be encouraged by the board and made available to staff members. With recruitment to the profession of librarianship an acute problem of the present day, library boards may well assume the responsibility of encouragement and assistance to staff members.

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Responsibilities of Trustees: Collective and Individual

A library board responsibility of first magnitude, but one that frequently fades into invisibility, is that of attendance at board meetings. Library boards, like other boards of directors, operate only through meeting for the purpose of acting upon agenda. A quorum is a legal necessity—attendance and interested participation by all members are much more effective. An attitude of “Oh, they can get along without me,” registered by one trustee, can multiply throughout the board until even a bare quorum is difficult to obtain.

Board meetings should be called regularly and should be attended by all members. The chairman and the librarian (who is often the secretary of the board) should be prepared with a carefully worked out agenda. Handbooks of many state trustee associations and much of the library literature indicate that the following order of business is the accepted one for meetings of library boards:

- Roll call
- Reading of minutes of previous meeting
- Communications
- Report of librarian
- Financial report and approval of expenditures
- Report of standing committees
- Report of special committees
- Unfinished business
- New business
- Adjournment

With the introduction of a new board member, much of the new appointee’s first board meeting may well be devoted to orientation in the duties of trusteeship. Available for distribution to library boards is the Trustee Orientation Program of the American Library Trustee Association, which should be part of every board’s reference shelf. Although the orientation process may be mainly a trio between chairman, librarian, and new trustee, all members of the board should be present and participating, since this is an occasion when precept and example carry equal weight. Assignment of the new trustee to an immediate committee or other duties additionally insures his interest from the very beginning of his service.

Meetings, besides being the means for transaction of library business, afford an opportunity for close and candid consultation between librarian and board members. This intercommunication is essential to the library’s operation, and the only proper channel is through the
board meetings. Part of this communication should be periodic evaluations by the board of the librarian’s work and program, in order that revisions or adjustments may be made if needed. This evaluation process is helpful to the librarian both in conduct of current programs and in framing plans for the future.

Since the library board is also the overall planning body of the library, time should be reserved at all meetings for creative discussion and projection of such plans. Board meetings are the ideal occasion for planning sessions, for with a survey of current business and conditions before them, in close consultation with the librarian, and with all board members participating, the trustees are in position for informed discussion. No library ever struggles out of the doldrums without a creative, forward-looking board, and the board meetings should invite and expect plans and suggestions at every session. Cyril O. Houle has written that the ultimate test of a board’s success is the success of its program.

Above all, it is the responsibility of the board that meetings should be neither perfunctory gatherings attended in a spirit of “Let’s get it over with”, nor merely social get-togethers. Board meetings have a strongly active function to perform, and it is the collective responsibility of the board’s members to insure vital performance of that function.

Duties and responsibilities of county, system, and state boards are essentially the same, embracing the same fundamentals, as those of the local library boards. State and county library laws are often broader in framework, since the political subdivision is a larger unit, and programs are necessarily somewhat more diffused over the larger area than the concentration possible to local operations. In the main, however, all library boards have as their first responsibility the supplying of library services to the citizens of the area in question. The second responsibility is constantly to improve the library services offered. All other duties and responsibilities of library boards stem from these primary obligations.

“Obligations” is none too strong a word. To preserve a literate society, and to strengthen an advancing civilization, public libraries are a stark necessity. The library board, whether elected or appointed to trusteeship, exists as agent or deputy of the public which owns the library. The purpose of the library board is therefore the carrying out of a public trust. Indeed, it is the recognition of library trusteeship as a public trust that establishes values for the individual trustee. In
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many states, the trustee is required to take an oath of office upon entering his term of service—an excellent thing, since the taking of such an oath stresses the public service involved.

Individual trustee duties and responsibilities are of course identical with those of the collective board, related to individual capacities and interpretation. Involved in the individual's interpretation of service in terms of his own potentials are certain subjective responsibilities which determine the worth of his trusteeship.

Probably the most fundamental of these is the individual's attitude toward trusteeship. If the trustee has an animating interest in the library and a recognition of its importance to the community, he will work for its welfare and progress. The fact that such work often entails sacrifice of time, effort, and personal convenience will be secondary. Every exercise of the duties of citizenship requires such sacrifice in some degree, and if the trustee is convinced that the library ranks high in importance to the welfare of the community, its service will rank high in importance to him.

An individual with such an attitude willingly devotes time and effort to trusteeship. Too many cases have been known where trustees were appointed out of friendship with the governing official or body or to repay political debts. Trustees who campaigned purely for the prestige of the office have come onto library boards through election. But even trusteeship originating in such motives can, through the individual's awareness of the value of the library to society, take on an attitude of dedicated public service.

The trustee who is genuinely interested in carrying out his public trust, and who recognizes the importance of the library to the community, will taste the rewards of a deep personal involvement in his trusteeship. Recognizing that neither facile lip service nor perfunctory routine motions of performance meet the demands of his pledge, he will give the library his best in thought and effort. Nothing less, he knows, will be good enough.

It is as the result of this attitude that the trustee will then hold himself in readiness to take time to attend all board meetings, since the board crippled by nonattendance cannot properly function. Meetings of the board offer the individual trustee an opportunity to acquaint himself with the library's programs, plans, and problems. Alert to learn, the trustee must also be alert to his obligation to use what he learns in working out answers to the questions that arise in the board room. Writing in North Country Libraries, Evan Hill titles his
article "Can We Afford Bashful Trustees?" and answers his own question: "There is little room on a library board for a trustee who either is too bashful to implement the responsibilities of his trusteeship or who is satisfied with a board that is a social club of pleasant, socially acceptable, safe people."  

Without being overaggressive or overactive to the detriment of the polity of the board, the trustee must expect to be articulate and informed in board meetings. Personal disagreements with other board members or the librarian, such as are inevitable in any free exchange of opinion, need to remain in the privacy of the board room. Publicly, the individual attitude of the trustee must in justice support the majority vote of the board, preserving a unified backing of policy and of the librarian's administration. Along with strong personal convictions, the trustee must maintain receptiveness toward the opinions of others with whom he serves.

The closed mind learns nothing, and a library trustee must be prepared to learn much if he is to have any value at all to the board and to the library. Much he will learn through receptiveness, and a great deal more of what he learns comes through practical experience in service. Trusteeship has in common with the Dodo's instructions on holding a caucus-race, the fact that the best way to explain it is to do it. Library trusteeship may involve a sum-total of trial and error before best results are obtained, but even the errors represent activity rather than apathy.

For a know-nothing board is a do-nothing board and calls uncomfortably to mind the strange image of a library board encountered here and there in the library literature: a group of puppets (amiable or otherwise), shepherded paternally by the librarian in and out of board meetings, and sent home. If there ever was a place for such a board of trustees, it is not in today's libraries.

"Decisions, decisions," laments the old joke. Yet decisions are precisely what the library board must make, in fields of finance, real estate, employment practices, tax legislation, and a very complex of similar technical areas. Naturally the board collectively will make use of competent professional advice in considering these problems, just as the members would do in conducting their personal business. But the decisions are solely the responsibility of the trustees.

In this era of rising costs and inflated real estate prices, the population explosion has forced many established libraries out of their old quarters. During this period of heavy taxation, the library—a tax
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supported institution—faces greater demands than ever before in history for increased services. Once-rural areas are becoming suburban; urban areas wither from overcrowding and die, and their population moves away. For economic reasons, smaller libraries, whose budgets can no longer bring ever-widening ends to meet, begin seriously to explore the advantages of joining a library system. County and regional libraries study maintenance costs of bookmobiles in comparison with other outlets for library services.

These and other library problems present no quick and easy solutions. Yet every one of these problems must be solved in some fashion by the decision of a library board. No: the board-room of a modern library offers no snug retreat for the bashful or ignorant Milquetoast trustee!

The attitude of the individual trustee, outside the board room, is one of relationships—internal relations with the librarian and staff members, and external or public relations with the community. The relationship of the individual with the librarian should reflect the collective attitude of the board in cordiality and cooperation, friendly consultation, and a respect for the librarian's authority in administration. The prestige of librarianship implicit in both position and person should be supported at all times.

Relationships with members of the staff should also be genial, friendly, and impersonal, recognizing that personnel problems are under the supervision of the librarian. Too-personal relationships are an intrusion into the library's administration, and the wise trustee steers wide of favoritism, hostility, and nepotism—three jagged rocks which have foundered many a bark of library harmony.

In public relations, the library trustee should remember that in the eyes of the community, he embodies the library's image, and it is his obligation to make that image favorably received. Particularly when the question of tax revenue or bond issue is before the community—in other words, when the library inevitably becomes involved in the political process—the library trustee individually becomes a public relations specialist working for the library's needs. Individual talents and contacts should be usefully brought into play. Speeches before organizations and clubs, appearances on radio and television, telephone calls to prospective voters—all form a part of the trustee's contribution to the success of the library program. In his article on bashful trustees, Evan Hill also says, "Generally, if trustees have a good case, and make a good case for their requests, they will get what
they request. We cannot get what we do not ask for. Good manners or bashfulness cannot get us what the community genuinely needs. But a hard-driving library board, devoted individually and collectively to the library’s welfare, can!

Attitude alone, however, cannot be effective unless the individual has knowledge to back it up. For this reason, the second of the subjective responsibilities falling upon the library trustee is education—self-education in the duties of trusteeship. If the individual’s attitude toward the library is one of dedicated service, he will be eager to learn all he can in order to serve as well as he can.

Before the new trustee attends his first meeting and receives his orientation, he should at least have glanced through A Handbook for Library Trustees, edited by Marian Manley Winser. This handy reference manual on all aspects of trusteeship should be another part of every library board’s reference shelf. Better still, a well-thumbed copy should be in the personal possession of every library trustee! As varying aspects of the problems confronting the library board occur, the trustee will want to refer to books on specific subjects of library policy, the library and the political process, Friends of the Library, and the like. A brief reading list appended to this article suggests titles of value in these and other fields.

Each trustee should be entirely familiar with the trustee handbook issued by his own state association, containing library laws of the state, qualifications for trustees, and valuable reference material on the operation of public libraries. If his state association has not published such a handbook, the alert trustee should make such a proposal the first order of business at the next annual meeting.

Although trustees, who are busy persons in their own right, cannot be expected to absorb all the current library literature, selective reading in periodicals will be very helpful. The ALA Bulletin, monthly publication of the American Library Association, goes to all ALA members, and nearly every issue contains one or more articles of particular interest to trustees. The American Library Trustee Association, a division of ALA, publishes quarterly The Public Library Trustee, a newsletter of the activities of the trustee division of the national association. Other periodicals of the library field should be on the subscription list of every library and should circulate briskly among board members.

One of the broadest fields of trustee education is membership and participation in trustee and library associations at all levels—state,
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regional, and national. If the trustee has a tendency toward a parochial viewpoint, fixed on his own library, he will find his horizons widened by activity in such organizations. He will find, moreover, that his state association is a tower of strength when support of state legislation affecting libraries is needed. Membership in regional associations is particularly valuable since trends in public institutions have a tendency to manifest themselves on a regional basis. Discussion panels, trustee workshops, and trustee-oriented programs at state and regional meetings are invaluable sources of trustee education.

Governors' Conferences of Library Trustees have proved another effective channel of trustee education. Oriented in a current aspect of the problems confronting trustees, these one-day statewide conferences of library trustees have been found to fill a definite need in states where they have been held—so much so, that many states have repeated the Conferences from year to year.

The American Library Trustee Association each year conducts a pre-Conference workshop for trustees just prior to the opening of the annual ALA Conference. These workshops present an intensive day-and-a-half or two-day program of discussion and participation on subjects of current trustee interest. Membership in ALTA, affording this and other programs of trustee education, offers the trustee contact with techniques and tools of trusteeship geared to the national picture.

Is it possible for the trustee to become overeducated in the technical and professional aspects of the library world? Surely not, since everything the trustee learns will enrich and strengthen his trusteeship. Yet, speaking before the Library Institute at the University of Chicago in August 1938, Clarence E. Sherman referred to "semiprofessionalizing trustees." Carried further his words imply that the trustee who loses his freshness of viewpoint along with his layman's approach is apt to lose at the same time his effectiveness in trusteeship.

It is as a citizen board of control that library trustees serve. Dwelling, so to speak, in two worlds at once, the trustee as layman serves as liaison between the community and the library world. His value as interpreter of the community's needs and desires is diminished if he attempts to range himself within the professional library world.

The trustee has another liaison responsibility toward the community and the library. Every librarian must be free to move on at any time toward improved professional and financial status. But the trustee, always a local resident, is rooted in the community. His business, professional, and social contacts, his experience, and his citizenship
activities are bound up in the community's life. The trustee is therefore an unparalleled interpreter between librarian and library and the community.

Indeed, the wise trustee always maintains his relationship with the librarian and the library on a parallel or complementary basis—never steering a collision course against either. Trustees and librarians cannot possibly supplant one another, and competition between them is, in Euclid's terse expression, "therefore absurd." Trustee-librarian relationships are not a game of one-upmanship. Rather, they should together engage in one-goalmanship—with their mutual goal the library's present good and future progress.

A third subjective responsibility presents itself to certain trustees—those whose term of service is not limited by law. Briefly, it is this: Shall I resign? Or shall I stay on the board, giving the library the benefit of my long experience, my knowledge of library affairs, and my practiced trusteeship? In many states, tenure is strictly limited by statute, as is the interval before reappointment or reelection is permissible. In other states, a trustee may be reappointed indefinitely or may run for the office, if elective, as often as he chooses. Each procedure has its adherents.

Continuity in office, it is felt, makes up in valuable experience and knowledge what may be lost in lack of new faces and fresh ideas. Certainly the trustee who has sincerely dedicated himself to learning as much as possible about his responsibilities and who has carried them out to the best of his capability may modestly but honestly assess himself as valuable to the library. On the other hand, proponents of the limited term of office argue that even when a valuable trustee's service is thus terminated, the library has still a staunch friend in the former trustee, at the same time absorbing new blood into the board.

Both of these arguments have a large measure of truth. But laws, operating impartially across human relationships, may produce the reverse of the effect desired. It is entirely possible that the limited term evicts the most valuable and knowledgeable trustee, leaving behind disorganization on the board. It is also entirely possible that the permissive tenure of service produces the stagnant thought so likely to result from a self-perpetuating board. In discussing this question Oliver Garceau has written: "The indefinite reappointment of board members leads to dry rot so frequently that it should be forbidden." And Carleton B. Joeckel wrote: "Of the value of continuity in library-board membership there can be little reasonable doubt. . . .
Responsibilities of Trustees: Collective and Individual

But there is real difficulty in securing a nice balance between a reasonable amount of continuity and stagnation. It is quite possible that too long extended tenure of office may be fully as dangerous as terms which are too short.10

There are many arguments both for and against limitation of trustee terms of service. Experience in many libraries, however, has proved that loss of valuable trustees from the board by legal limitation of tenure is offset by the absorption of new talent. When dates of expiration are staggered by overlapping terms, the board is never left wholly without experienced trustees, while it benefits at the same time from the lively thoughts and energies of new members.

When a library trustee's tenure has been extremely long, the question of his voluntary termination by resignation or refusal of reappointment is one for his individual conscience to decide. Certainly, in justice to his public trust, he should make this the occasion for self-examination and for objective appraisal of his present service. Regardless of how much and how good was his service twenty years ago, or last year, his most reliable yardstick is the honestly answered question: "How valuable am I to the library now?" If the trustee's character and attainments are such that he has been valuable to the board, they can be trusted to guide him to act rightly.

Many of the responsibilities of the trustee and the board are written into the statutes. Others are no less binding because unwritten. Speaking to the Pre-Conference Trustee Institute of ALTA in Cleveland, Ohio, July 8, 1961, Dr. Lowell A. Martin said: "We do have great human ability now on boards. The task is to release the power that exists. HOW? By all trustees—no, by each trustee, individually—coming first to know and then to act."11

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**ADDITIONAL REFERENCES**


No sensible husband or wife would discourse upon the husband-wife relationship in public and with the spouse present. The relationship between a library administrator and the board of trustees which employs him and governs the library he operates, is sufficiently like marriage that there must have been few occasions when a dispassionate consideration of the functions, obligations, and responsibilities of the two parties has been enjoyed together.

In trying to indicate how a board of trustees and the administrator can work together harmoniously I have drawn my observations and examples not only from personal experience with boards and individual trustees of libraries where I have worked, but also from colleagues elsewhere, from library literature, and from hypothetical situations.

A library board of trustees may often be made up of persons who themselves serve as employees of corporate boards of directors or who serve as board directors in business enterprises, banks, or other private institutions. Public libraries are community-wide service institutions, and so much unlike businesses that are operated necessarily for profit that trustees should be on guard against automatically carrying analogies from their other corporate experiences into the library board’s proceedings. They are trustees, not company directors. Sometimes these business experiences can illuminate and guide the library board’s acts and provide helpful suggestions, but a commercial corporation director is not at all the same as a library trustee, nor is the administrator of a library at all the same as the managing head of a business enterprise. The natural tendency of trustees to be guided by personal experience in their businesses can be a serious problem if false analogies are applied to decisions regarding staff relations, salaries, fringe benefits, and public relations. The remedy: ask a board to define its special identity as a library board.

The author is Director of the Toledo (Ohio) Public Library.
The board and the administrator may agree that the board’s province is policy and the administrator’s is execution and management, yet run into difficulties from failure to perceive where policy stops and management begins. The most effective board-librarian teams are certainly those where the board follows a strict construction of policy in its highest sense, losing no ultimate control, but keeping hands off administrative detail, personnel, book selection, equipment, and processes. And while boards fix policies, it is proper and usual for the administrator as a professional librarian to initiate discussion of changes or of new policies and to offer recommendations.

The administrator must take care that he does not make or change policy by administrative decision or practice. For example, a practice of lending books freely to nonresidents, or some policy in relation to the schools, may grow up from little beginnings without a board ruling. A situation could develop that could embarrass the board in changing the practice as a considered policy.

It is easy enough to say, as the manuals do, that a board should carefully select and employ its executive administrator, then let him run the library without interference, removing him if he is proved incompetent or unsatisfactory. A board’s care not to interfere does not lessen its responsibility to inform itself, to observe, to help when help is needed and correct when correction is needed, to question, and to suggest.

It is advisable, and not uncommon, for the library administrator himself to serve as a trustee of some institution or organization which employs managerial help and which is sufficiently akin to the librarian-trustee relationship to provide him the trustee’s point of view. As he listens to reports as a trustee, say, of a private nursery school at its monthly or annual board meeting, he can see himself in the role of the school principal or superintendent, as well as in his actual role as trustee, and thus gain insight helpful in his relations with his own trustees.

A new board that comes into being, as for a newly created library district, could well consider all aspects of its relations with the library administrator and become a model board. But most library boards already exist and change only slightly in membership from year to year, a state which tends to perpetuate both good and bad procedures and attitudes.

Some of the practices and amenities that may smooth the working relationship can be indicated briefly as recommended procedures:
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All contacts about library business or personnel between staff and board or staff and individual trustees should always channel through the administrator. Neither the board nor any trustee should press the administrator to employ any individual, and if a trustee refers a job-seeker to the administrator, it should always be with a word to both the candidate and the librarian that "selection for hiring is entirely in hands of the administrator." Generally speaking, it will be not an asset but a liability for a candidate to be related in any way to a trustee, or to have approached a trustee before applying to the librarian.

Minutes of the previous board meeting, written carefully and briefly to meet the requirements of a legal record, should be given to the trustees in writing well before each meeting, to obviate tiresome reading aloud. Likewise, the administrator's written report, agendas for the whole body, and detailed matters in the jurisdiction of each board committee should be in the trustees' hands long enough before a board meeting that a committee meeting can be held. Some boards like to have matters presented with the prior consideration and recommendation of the appropriate committee, while other boards like "committee of the whole" first consideration. There are advantages either way, and disadvantages, but once these procedures are adopted, the administrator must cooperate. It is within propriety, however, for him to recommend that the board study its own procedural setup for possible improvement and to suggest changes to ways that he may have observed to be successful in other bodies. A tabulated form for recording motions, seconds, and votes on agenda items can save time.

The board president and the administrator should be pre-informed of, and invited to, all committee meetings. The trustees as individuals should conscientiously avoid caucuses and clique consultations because they will undermine the administrator's morale by any off-the-record consultations that touch upon policy or the administrator's activity. If a correction or rebuke or critical action seems needed, it should be undertaken in the regular way and with the administrator's knowledge.

Trustees do like to get the facts and the problem well in advance. They like to be kept informed, and the president should be included in every communication to a committee. Trustees are expected by their associates and acquaintances in the community to know what is going on in the library, and this news should be provided by the
ROBERT D. FRANKLIN

administrator. He has a special duty to draw the board's attention to trends and long-range effects of policies and services.

Individual trustees should not be given and will generally not ask for special privileges as library users; nevertheless the wise librarian should see that members of his staff recognize trustees and give them no cause for complaint!

The administrator's relations with individual trustees should be guided by the fact that the board is a corporate body. Sometimes it is indeed a legal entity or "person" which can sue and be sued and possess other legal rights that persons possess. No trustee has any legal authority except when a board meeting is in session and then only as part of a majority of the board unless board action delegates some decision or responsibility to a committee of one or more trustees. All of the administrator's authority, however, derives from the board's "pleasure," and while the board is primarily a "legislative" body, it also possesses the final executive and some judicial power, if it chooses to exert it.

The administrator should avoid asking individual trustees for guidance in such a way that the answer becomes a directive. For example, if the administrator is wondering whether or not he ought to join a Chamber of Commerce, he may ask a trustee or the board president's advice in such a way as to indicate that, of course, if it is a matter of library policy, it would have to be decided by the board at its meeting.

On the other hand, it is desirable that a free and easy, mutually respectful relationship exist between the administrator and his board members, and he should be able to ask their advice frequently on any point where he feels the need of such advice. The presence on library boards of persons selected for their competence in business, law, engineering, and the arts, rather than for geographical or group representation, will be of great value to the administrator and to the community.

In a situation in which a woman administrator works with a board made up entirely or predominantly of men, the board should not operate differently from the way it would for a male librarian. However, in actual practice boards in this situation sometimes do work differently in the exercise of administrative decision and authority, although the situation itself may not arise frequently because board membership usually includes both men and women.

Personal friendships, within limits that both the administrator and
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the trustee will tacitly recognize, are likely to develop between congenial and able trustees and library directors, and can be a help in communicating feelings, troubles, and ideas and in securing support for proposals that might have hard going in a completely cold situation. Such friendships should not reach the point of maneuvering, however.

In small towns and sometimes elsewhere, when the library administrator is long established and influential, there may exist situations where in practice the administrator, an employee, virtually selects the trustees, who are to be his employers. This situation is improper and becomes aggravated with an increase in the size of the library and its budget. The wise librarian, except possibly in very special town situations, should avoid offering suggestions, appraisals or in any way maneuvering to get anyone appointed, reappointed, or not appointed to the board of his library, however tempted he may be.

A trustee may indeed ask the administrator's advice about accepting reappointment after years of board membership, but the librarian had better not respond. An ironic case in one library occurred when an excellent trustee, wise, sympathetic, interested, and conscientious, was asked to give a talk at a regional conference on the duties of a trustee. To help her prepare for the talk, the librarian gave her a Manual for Library Trustees, in which it was stated that one reason for terms of a stated number of years was to pass this duty around the community and to allow more people to become closely acquainted with library operations and needs. The manual said that a trustee should, therefore, not accept reappointment, which the appointive body may feel obliged to offer. Thus when this excellent trustee's term was completed, she conscientiously declined reappointment, and cost the library a good, experienced trustee. The principle, however, does seem sound, if appropriate selections are made by the appointive body or mayor.

There is not much an administrator can do if a board is dominated by one person, or if the presidency remains with one individual so long that it becomes almost impossible to change. In instances where this situation does not yet exist, but might in the future, it is quite proper, I think, for the administrator to suggest, privately or at a meeting, that the board consider such questions as how a "rotating presidency" can help the library. If conference-corridor talk and other informal exchanges of experience among librarians were recorded, they would be replete with cases of how a library can be adversely
affected by a long-continuing presidency of its board, and yet there are exceptional cases where it appears to have helped the library to grow steadily.

How far an administrator should go and with what approach, in acquainting trustees with the inner workings of the library administration, processes, and personnel, is another delicate matter. How can an administrator expect a trustee not to form opinions and make judgments if he is presented with problems within the librarian's province and discretion? Trustees are human and may be all too quick to form a fixed opinion of whether or not, for example, a branch library needs a children's worker on duty, or which charging system looks best, or whether or not or how long to have coffee breaks or even paid attendance at refresher courses, what displays to put on, how many paperbacks to buy, etc. If the librarian can seek and obtain their views on these matters without jeopardizing his discretionary powers, and without "starting something," fine—although he could seek the opinions of nontrustees who may well be even more competent or informed, and whose opinions are not riskily accompanied by corporate authority!

When the administrator, perhaps so required by law or by the board's own bylaws or customs, brings in salary or promotion recommendations for individual staff members, the ideal situation would be for these persons to be virtually unknown to the trustees, unaffected by any personal feelings. Indeed, one could make a good case for presenting such matters with numbers or pseudonyms instead of real names, underlining the fact that except for his or her own salary, and within the salary framework and budget approved by the board, the administrator should have complete authority for fixing salaries and for recommending promotions and raises. This authority should not be arbitrary, but exercised within a salary and promotion schedule known to staff and trustees.

The administrator should not only be guided by a well planned salary schedule but also have the advice of supervisory heads or staff committees. Sometimes raises have to be granted individually, not because of their merit, but because of a complex situation in the staff, or when all salaries are being adjusted to new levels. The trustees in board meeting have the right and duty to satisfy themselves that there are reasoning and good judgment behind salary proposals and that the proposals fit within the existing budget or within a new budget that the board is prepared to seek and obtain. However, the recom-
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Recommendations must come from the administrator. Boards of trustees that never question or take issue with an administrator's recommendations, if there be any such boards, may be called "rubber stamp" boards and are an extreme to be avoided. A good administrator does not mind being challenged to prove his point.

The administrator's delegated discretionary powers should be very broad and well established. A suitable amount for expenditure which may be made without board action should be agreed upon, perhaps at the figure of one thousand dollars, depending upon the size of the budget or library. This provision fixes responsibility, speeds action, and serves the public interest. Limiting the executive's discretion too narrowly will give the trustees a great many interesting problems, an abundance of committee discussions, long board meetings, and detailed minutes, but it will slow down progress and service. Responsibility—answerability—must be accompanied by authority, the right to make decisions.

A board can enjoy its trusteeship more fully, and have fruitful philosophical discussions of policy, if it will leave managerial decisions to its employed manager, giving him or her help as needed. (Some library heads are, of course, not really cut out to be managers or executives, yet are good librarians in other ways.)

For example, a new library building will usually contain an attractive auditorium, seldom needed by the staff, and offered to civic groups as a free or nearly free meeting place. The administrator consults other libraries and draws up a set of rules about the booking and use of the room—hours, refreshments, etc.—which are later adopted by the board. But it may not occur to anyone that denominational religious groups or partisan political groups may pose a problem, until all of a sudden such a request comes along and is dangerously precedent-setting or embarrassing. Obviously both administrator and trustees have failed in foresight, and the trustees' combined wisdom should have dealt with this problem in advance. It was the librarian's responsibility to pose the question in advance and the board's responsibility to discuss the public policy involved and adopt a rule. On the other hand, it would be wrong, in normal circumstances, for the librarian to put on the board's agenda for each meeting requests by local groups who might wish to use the library auditorium.

A notoriously indecent book may be widely talked about, and the situation arises in which the librarian must decide whether or not to put it in the library. Even though a board has a "Books Committee,"
the question of whether or not a certain book should be in a library ordinarily ought not to come before the trustees. It may, however, be passed to them by a librarian unwilling or unable to decide, or who feels that an explosive situation can be more firmly handled by the trustees. If the librarian has decided to order the book, the board’s obligation is to support his decision, if not his appraisal. If the librarian rejects a book and citizens protest, the trustees have, I think, an obligation to become a court, trying the book, not the administrator, and making a recommendation as a result, while affirming the librarian’s authority to decide.

Let us suppose that the librarian feels that books on hypnotism are dangerous for a library to disseminate. Has he the discretionary authority to remove or reject this subject? I should expect him to ask advice, both of mental health experts and of the board, and if a policy is adopted, it requires board action. In this connection, however, both trustees and librarians may need to reflect that a library cannot begin to take responsibility for the uses to which books and knowledge may be put. Yet, common sense may overrule the we-cannot-be-responsible policy. Should a library blithely fill demands of teenage and younger boys for manuals of combat wrestling, judo, or karate, on the grounds of noninvolvement in consequences? It would be the librarian’s responsibility, based upon close acquaintance with the demand, to be alert to such a problem, and it does not seem necessary that it specifically involve a board policy action, as hypnotism or medical books might.

On the other hand, a board, with the help of its Books Committee and with the advice but not the authority of the administrator, may decide what part of a budget to spend on books or on films, how much to emphasize reference books needed by students, what attitude to take toward the demands of a local college faculty and student body, whether to buy technical, legal, or medical books, and such broad policies. Some statement on book selection policies, such as the Library Bill of Rights, should be adopted by the board.

A board, and its individual trustees, as long as an administrator continues in their employment, have an obligation to support him publicly in any controversy related to his administrative decisions, however much the trustees may differ with or rebuke him in private. This is not to say that the executive may not be reprimanded as an official action of the board, if this action, and not dismissal, is thought the proper corrective. And a corollary is that a library administrator must
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give up a little of his civic freedom when he becomes a symbol and spokesman for that citadel of impartiality, the public library. Although free to take part in some aspects of politics and in civic and other "causes," he should not embarrass his board and jeopardize the library or his connection with it by taking too prominent a part in partisan politics, especially local, or in movements that deeply divide the community.

A library administrator has a very difficult and lonely role, a dual role, as middleman or advocate, representing the staff's interests honestly to the trustees and carrying the board's attitudes and policies to the staff. Although he is bound to act as the staff's advocate in bringing matters concerning its welfare to the attention of the trustees, he should not, of course, become a member of a staff association as a "union" nor jeopardize the board's confidence in his managerial firmness and economy by espousing every demand or request the staff makes. If trustees are inured to business and industrial relationships where hard bargaining and some duplicity may be practiced by both labor and management, it will be difficult for them to see library workers as a different kind of labor group, characterized by that overworked and sometimes misplaced word "dedicated."

Yet as all librarians know, library workers are, in many libraries, self-denying, long-suffering, sometimes underpaid, but relatively happy persons gaining much satisfaction from the ideals of service and the congenial surroundings and from the appreciation of their public. To the degree that a library staff is not "organized" and demanding, it is necessary that the administrator cause trustees to realize that the ordinary industrial rules of bargaining do not fit, that there is a public trust obligation on the part of the trustees not only to spend the public funds wisely for full value, but also to represent the perhaps unspoken needs of the staff to the appropriating authorities or to the general public. Library boards are entrusted not merely with books and buildings, but they are also trustees of the welfare of those persons, who as loyal librarians and library clerks, devote themselves to this idealistic service. The administrator may have to stress this point if it seems to be overlooked by his board.

It is a pleasant duty of the administrator to help secure the public's proper recognition and appreciation for the unpaid services of library trustees, since they will usually not want to seek any publicity themselves. Such recognition is good for everybody concerned. There are library-association-sponsored "trustee citations" in various States,
drawing attention to the long and fruitful work of some outstanding trustee. However, some trustees feel that this practice should not be followed, because it singles out one individual on a board, instead of emphasizing the results of teamwork, and may lead to a trustee's becoming a prima donna. It is felt that such citations and publicity might better honor a whole board which has accomplished some notable piece of library progress.

Everyone needs to be appreciated. It is the duty of an administrator to commend and notice good work of the staff under him, especially the quiet, steady, and less-conspicuous examples. And the administrator must look to his own employers, the board, for the vitamins of appreciation and praise. A little can go a long way, and just as a nutritional deficiency results in noticeable symptoms, compliment-hunger can cause one long deprived to behave peculiarly. Anniversaries of employment and report-making occasions provide reminders to board and administrator alike of these obligations.

An administrator will so often be quoted in news stories about library events that he or she is likely to become "Mr. Library" as far as the news media and public are concerned. Much of this is inevitable; some of it may be fitting for a career person who is devoting his lifetime to the library. But the wise administrator will try to be sure that publicity on policy decisions cites the board or its president as the source.

The obtaining of adequate funds is a well recognized prime responsibility of the trustees, whereas showing what funds would be adequate and why is the administrator's function. If there is a campaign for a bond issue, a tax levy, or a new building, the administrator needs to place the burden of organizing and conducting it squarely upon the trustees—who may shift it to an auxiliary Friends of the Library group if one exists or can be created. The librarian and staff will help in any such campaign, but they are, after all, hired employees, and they were hired to give book service, not to raise money or solicit votes. If the administrator is careful not to take on the campaigning burden, a wider group in the community will carry it to a more certain success.

Sometimes a situation regarding public opinion, such as the appropriation or the availability of funds, may look simple to the relatively unsophisticated administrator. But the board may include trustees of great political acumen and shrewdness who can reveal the true situation as a wondrously intricate complex of local political and
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social factors. Such knowledge and "connections" are of great value on a board, and the wise administrator will make good use of them. As all experienced administrators know, much of their time and attention is devoted to business matters—relations with all sorts of suppliers, craftsmen, city and state departments, banks, insurance agencies, and many other business or institutional contacts. There may have been little in the administrator's education or experience to prepare him for these obligations. On the other hand, some of his trustees are likely to be wise in the ways of business, of winning public acceptance and support, and of avoiding offense in competitive business dealings. The trustees may be smarter than the administrator in dealing with business, labor, and political organizations. He should get all the benefit he can for the library from these special wisdoms of the board members.

The progress of public library service in America and the coordination of resources and services with other types of libraries, such as school and college libraries, have too long been sought by librarians, associated together, with only a little help from a small number of library trustees. This activity is not really the province of librarians. I would like to see all present and past trustees of libraries enrolled in a very active and aggressive national association of their own, quite separate from librarians, although cooperating in any joint goals. At present, many administrators do encourage trustees, especially new trustees, to join the state and national associations and if possible to attend conferences, meet other trustees, hear talks and reports.

However, even this kind of encouragement can backfire badly. Attendance at some library meetings can be a disillusioning experience as well as a boring or a bewildering one for a trustee, although experiences at his own vocational association meetings may be no better. The conscientious trustee, subscribing to national library publications, and trying, in a busy life, to gain inspiration and illumination from them, takes a risk of becoming discouraged, misinformed or partially informed, or stirred up about details of library operation which are not really a trustee's concern.

Thus, we come to the question of an administrator's proper attitude in introducing his trustees to the professional literature and to the state and national associations and their subdivisions. Some trustees thrive on this material and become evangelists for good library service, better salaries, newer buildings, more books. Others may acquire prejudices based on unfavorable reaction to what they run across in the publica-
tions or at meetings. Yet the consensus is obviously that library administrators have a duty to guide trustees into activities on a state, regional, and national scale, for the good of the "library cause" and also to improve local conditions where a library is substandard by applying the standards observed in state and national movements and in exemplary library systems comparable in size and situation with their own. Such improvements could best be effected by an association run by the trustees themselves, not steered by librarians.

A systematic schedule of library inspection tours by the trustees should be recommended by the administrator. There are trustees who may have used libraries in earlier years, but who now see libraries rarely except on board business. If they are to represent the public's interest, they need to be frequent visitors and users, and in addition to these reasons, the librarian can best describe needs (for which funds are required) by physically pointing them out. These inspections are good discipline for him and for the staff, too.

The library administrator's job is more often one of "human relations" than of traditional "librarianship." These relations require tact and other qualities usually gained only by years of experience and tribulation. The young librarian perhaps only recently from library school may look forward to being in charge of a library, but he should realize that the trustees, who will generally have had more years in which to gather worldly wisdom, will sometimes know best what to do in trying situations. It is unlikely that among whatever readership this chapter will have, there will be many library trustees, present or future. In any case, librarians can scarcely tell trustees how to be trustees. It is to be hoped that these comments and suggestions may help those librarians, students, and perhaps some trustees, who want better to understand the authority structure of public libraries.
Responsibility to the Profession

ROBERT H. ROHLF

To whom are public library boards really responsible? To librarians? To city councils? To the voters? To bibliophiles? To the general public? Or to all of these people in some way or another? The obvious answer is that the library board’s responsibilities are to all of these groups, and to more besides, but in greatly varying degrees. Assuming this general responsibility to diverse groups and individuals, let us then concentrate upon only one aspect of a library board’s responsibility, and one that is seldom discussed, that of responsibility to the library profession in general. This paper will discuss the responsibilities of a library board not to its specific local situation, but to other librarians, libraries, and library boards throughout the country.

One of the first responsibilities of a library board to the profession in general is that of a realistic approach to the provision of library service to people outside the legal service area of a particular library. This responsibility is twofold, that of a service responsibility to people who directly use the library, and that of encouraging library service where it does not exist and of cooperating with neighboring libraries in improving service programs.

A library board has a direct responsibility not only to its own taxpayers, but to the profession in general, to charge a service fee for non-resident use of library facilities. The scope of this paper does not cover exactly what constitutes the term “non-resident” as regards students, business owners, employees, and the many other “exemptions” which are often found listed within library rules, and which are often debated at library meetings. This question, plus the question of what services if any should be granted to non-residents, constitutes a whole subject for discussion in itself. However, a line must be drawn somewhere beyond which point a library user who is not a direct or indirect taxpayer or resident of the library service area must pay a fee for library service.

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How many areas of the country, particularly areas surrounding major cities, have delayed securing or establishing library service either alone or in cooperation with other libraries simply because a neighboring library has allowed free library service to the surrounding residents? Or perhaps even more damaging to library development, how many libraries have set their non-resident fee so low that neighboring appropriating bodies have thought in effect “why should we establish library service and tax ourselves an average of two dollars, three dollars, or more per capita when we can receive library service nearby by paying only one dollar per year for the whole family?” A city councilman or a county commissioner would, by establishing his own library service, pay an added tax on his home or business of three or four dollars or more per year. Even when this is actually a low rate for the value received, he would think twice before establishing a library tax when he could obtain library service for less money as a non-resident user of a neighboring library system.

Fortunately more and more library boards today are acknowledging this situation by the realistic application of non-resident library fees. A colleague reported that one of his board members cynically remarked upon hearing of a nearby library which charged only one dollar per year as a non-resident fee, “They know what their service is worth.” One of the responsibilities of a library board to the library profession then is to make certain that their library has a definite non-resident service charge, and that this service charge is an amount which adequately reflects the value and worth of their library service as it has been developed over a period of years and through a large investment of public funds.

In connection with this library board responsibility not to retard the growth of library service in new areas by either charging no fee or by charging too low a non-resident fee is the other responsibility of actively investigating the possibilities of library cooperation and even more important, taking advantage of them when they are found. Far too often cooperative library ventures, regional library development, and the formation of efficient, economical, and really useful library service units are retarded if not actually stymied by the parochial attitudes of library boards. The fear of loss of control, loss of autonomy, or loss of prestige as a member of a local library board has led many library trustees to hinder the development of larger and more efficient units of library service.

In feeling a sense of responsibility to their localities, some library
board members interpret this responsibility as a duty to protect the status quo to the bitter and often uneconomical end. In reality, a trustee's obligation to his community goes hand in hand here with an obligation to the library profession. This obligation is to provide the most useful unit of library service which can be made available to his own constituents. For in this provision it is axiomatic that the larger modern library service unit of today is the foundation upon which the library profession must build for the push-button, micro-material library of tomorrow. The library of the nineteenth century cannot be the bridge into the twenty-first century.

In this aspect of interlibrary cooperation, it is the concurrent responsibility of the library administrator and staff to prepare the library board for future growth and cooperative enterprises. It is the responsibility of the library board to lead the way in the community towards library cooperation and to assuage local fears of the loss of non-resident library users who may shop on the way to or from the library or of the loss of local library autonomy or control.

What responsibility has a library board to its own administrator and staff as compared with its responsibilities to the library profession in general? In the history of almost every library board and/or library administrator is at least one instance of complete disagreement or disillusionment over the ability or performance of each other. Stated in another way, what are the responsibilities of a library board to the profession when it no longer has faith in the librarian-administrator?

The theoretical answer to the above question is easy: the librarian resigns, or in some cases is released. In practice what usually happens? Some library boards write a glowing letter of recommendation and push the librarian to an even better position elsewhere. The trustees then sit back, heave a collective sigh of relief, interview applicants, and perhaps appoint some other board's problem. This is certainly not the typical situation, but it does happen, and it reflects a complete disregard by a library board of its obligation to the library profession in general.

This situation is not peculiar to library boards. A review of school board operations, city manager appointments, and park and recreation boards would reveal similar circumstances and experiences. The problem in libraries is often one of an excellent reference librarian's not being a good administrator, or of an excellent cataloger's not being able to cope with a public board made up of many faceted personalities. Perhaps the problem is one of a questionable view held by far
too many in the profession that to be a success one has to be an administrator. Library boards would sometimes do a great service to the profession by admitting that a person is not an administrator even if he is a good order librarian. In the long run both the individual and the library would often profit from such a decision.

Library boards must remember, however, that they have another obligation to the profession and concurrently to their staffs: the obligation of acting as boards, not as administrators. Far too often board-administrator conflicts are caused not by a lack of ability or understanding on the part of the librarian-administrator, but by a lack of understanding by the library board member as to the rightful purpose and function of the board.

There is still another obligation to the profession which library boards have, that of an obligation to support local, state, and national library associations. However, there is a question raised by many people in connection with this obligation, the question as to exactly what should constitute library board participation in these organizations or associations. Do trustees have an obligation to participate personally in these associations, and if so, at what level or in what manner? The American Library Association and the state library associations have long emphasized their desire for membership and participation in their organizations by library board members. This is, however, not a view held universally by all members of the profession.

Not all professional organizations or associations admit nonprofessionals to full membership. The American College of Hospital Administrators admits as members only practicing hospital administrators, and they are admitted only after meeting a specific set of standards and a five-year tenure requirement. The member of a hospital board of directors, or even a board president, is not eligible simply because he is a member of a hospital board, despite any long-term interest he may have shown in the problem of hospitals. School board members may not belong to most of the professional educational associations unless they are also teachers or school personnel. State educational association relationships and membership qualifications as regards the National Education Association vary from state to state, and there are too many patterns to list here, but there are often restrictions upon membership. In Minnesota, for example, the teacher, principal, or superintendent may belong to the Minnesota Education Association because he holds an educational certificate of one type
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or another. The school board members, however, may not belong to the M.E.A. and have a separate association, the Minnesota School Board Association. The reason for this exclusion is what the Association terms a "possible conflict of interest." The National Recreation Association describes its membership of volunteer and professional recreation leaders as Associates, and government and private recreation agencies and parks departments as Affiliates. Returning to the hospital field again, we find that in the case of the American Hospital Association, the Institution is a member, but not the board member, and that its meetings and conferences are devoted to workshops for staff members. Thus, in some other professional fields we find distinctions made as to memberships, or to types of membership, in associations that the professional personnel belong to or that the institution belongs to, or that board members or "interested people" may belong to.

What obligation then do library board members have to the American Library Association? Or what obligations do they have to the Michigan Library Association or the Music Library Association? Their obligation is perhaps that they should see that such Associations as are needed are financially strong and professionally growing, and that they contain within their membership staff members of the libraries upon whose boards they serve. But what of the question of membership of library board members themselves in associations?

The point questioned by many with regard to the membership of the library trustee himself in associations which also have professional librarians as members is the question of the proper influence such trustee members should have in the state and national associations. They ask whether or not it is inherent in such an organizational structure that the trustees either dominate the associations completely—after all they are the employer—or else that by the sheer weight of numbers and professional jargon the librarians dominate the associations and make the trustees feel relatively useless. If this domination by one or the other is the case, then is this not a danger to the health of such organizations?

Some librarians raise another point here, that of professional prestige. They question the professional standing of an organization that admits anyone to membership, no matter what side of the hiring table he sits on. (Another point raised here is that of architects, freelance building consultants, booksellers, and others who are admitted to library association memberships and who may gain direct financial
ROBERT H. ROHLF

benefit from such membership.) An interesting discussion on this question of board-employee membership would be the attitude of City Managers and City Councils regarding their joint membership in a professional association of city managers and employees.

On the other hand, many people believe that the librarians have an answer that some other professional groups are looking for, single state associations and a single national association in the professional interest to which all interested parties may belong. The arrangement of our associations by activities, divisions, and sections does have merit. It allows all persons interested in the growth of a professional service to work together in one group to improve and increase such service, and it does so in a way impossible within the structure of the City Managers’ Association or of the National School Board Association, for example.

Conclusions

There are many ways in which a library board has a responsibility to the library profession. It has a responsibility to aid in the development of library service in those places outside established library service areas. Merely charging a “non-resident” use fee is only part of the answer. The fee must be one which is realistic and which will not allow appropriating boards to find it more desirable to suggest non-resident fee cards to constituents requesting library service than to levy a tax themselves.

A library board has another obligation to the library profession in the imaginative promotion and development of interlibrary cooperation with neighboring libraries and with regional libraries which already exist.

A library board has an obligation to the library profession to exercise fairness, honesty, and integrity in its dealings with the librarian-administrator and with the library staff. This obligation is most apparent in regard to personnel changes and recommendations of personnel as they may affect other libraries.

And, finally, the library board has an obligation to the library profession to promote the strength, usefulness, and value of professional associations. There may exist some disagreement as to the extent of board member participation in professional associations, but the library board must nevertheless participate in some manner and to some degree in the promotion of the usefulness and strengthening of these associations.
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References


EVERY ARGUMENT has at least two sides. Any discussion of library committees or boards in the “non-public library” field will quickly bring the Pros and the Cons running to the dais to speak their views.

In public library administration the board of trustees or library board is an accepted, traditional, conventional fact. The only problem may be how to get along with them. For libraries in colleges, universities, governmental organizations, eleemosynary institutions, and other quasi-public organizations, the place and operation of the library are quite formalized, and the question “Should there be a library committee?” seldom provokes much contention.

But “non-public libraries” (which for the purpose of this paper shall hereinafter be restricted to industrial research libraries) are a different breed. Most of the great growth in numbers of industrial research libraries has come since World War II, and most of these libraries are small. (In the 1960 Special Libraries Association survey, of the 1,137 that reported, 721, almost 63 per cent, had only one professional staff member.) And private industry is not consistent in the paths of organization and administration which it uses to reach its goals.

Thus, it is not surprising that industrial research librarians differ in their reaction to the question, “What do you think of having a library committee?” It is slightly surprising, however, to find comparatively little in print on the subject, whereas there is an almost endless supply of printed advice, opinion, experience, and conjecture on the many other problems of organizing, administering, and operating industrial research libraries. Perhaps this paper may stimulate a thorough survey and review of the library committee problem.

To state the two main sides of the question, we invited advocates

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of Pro and Con to face each other across the table while we sat nearby making notes. What follows is a fairly accurate transcription of their debate.

Pro: On the basis of communications alone, the library committee is worthwhile. The committee can receive and pass along suggestions and complaints to the librarian which individuals may be reluctant to make directly. One of the librarian’s greatest responsibilities is constantly to keep alert to deficiencies in his library’s services and to correct them. This is never an easy job. People tend either to be too kind or too shy in making complaints, even when the librarian tries to invite them. But an objective, impartial board, understanding the library’s problems, but not a part of the library staff, can induce both complaints and positive suggestions for improving the performance of the library.

At the same time, the library committee can interpret the services of the library to the users and to management better than the librarian whose opinions and suggestions are bound to be colored and discounted because of his entrenched interest. The committee can also serve as a sounding board for the librarian’s complaints, problems, and ideas. He can try them out on the committee members and get their reactions.

It has often been said that ‘Your horn sounds better when someone else is blowing it.’ The librarian who has an active, vigorous, alert, and interested committee to help him can do a much better job of telling his and his library’s story of service to the users and to management. If the library committee members feel that the library is doing a good job, they can have a great influence in carrying this conviction to their coworkers and to management.

Most librarians—even industrial research librarians—are a shy, modest lot, and they need all the help they can get to promote and advertise their library’s fine services. And there is an added dividend when past members of the library committee return to their regular status as library users. They carry with them the knowledge of and insight into the library’s ways and problems which they achieved while they served on the committee. Through the years, this ‘education’ and sending out of library disciples is bound to have its effect in stimulating greater appreciation of what the research library is, how it works and why—not only with these former members, but with all the people they work with every day. Furthermore, these people, having seen the library’s side of the fence, often become valuable
contributors of ideas and suggestions to the library for improving its service.

Finally, every librarian knows the problem of keeping up with what is new in his organization. The library committee, through its many contacts with the various divisions and with top management, can help the librarian to know in advance about new directions or shifts of emphasis in research or new plans, new projects, new programs which are being considered. The librarian, thus forewarned, can better prepare his library for the new demands that will be made upon it in the future.

**Con:** I am glad you used those words 'active, vigorous, alert and interested committee.' You apparently haven't heard from the librarians whose advisory committees never met, or irregularly, and even when they met, seldom took action on the ideas and proposals suggested by the librarian. And what makes you think they will just automatically devote their time and energy and talent to promoting your library? Most of them have problems of their own which are a lot more important to them, and many of them look upon this committee service as a drag and a nuisance. It makes a difference who appoints them to the committee (top management, their immediate superior, the library supervisor) in how seriously they take their responsibility.

You've got a fine story there, but 'that ain't the way I heard it.' The time the librarian spends trying to educate and generate enthusiasm in the members of his committee he could better spend either doing his job or stirring up his immediate boss, who has the authority to take real action. The same goes for public relations. The library's best public relations is a good job well done. Every satisfied user then becomes a booster.

And I am not convinced the librarian will hear about what is new any faster through his committee than he will via the good old grape-vine or from his boss. How often does the committee meet, anyway?

**Pro:** An industrial research library has one major reason for its existence: service. The more creative this service can be, the more valuable the library will be to its organization. Part of the creativity function in library service is in the librarian's ability to develop policies which add to, strengthen, and create new means for providing better service. With the help of a committee of people who represent a cross section of the organization's activities and interests, the li-
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The librarian finds it easier to decide upon and make these policy changes. Once the new policy is decided, the committee can help by advertising, promoting, and interpreting that policy to the library users and to top management. I suggest that you read how Rose Boots at McGraw-Hill found that 'the committee was blamed for the establishment of some new policies, which were unpopular at first but were gradually accepted.'

CON: Here we are using the committee for public relations again. Who decides the new policies? The librarian? Why can’t the committee decide? Because they don’t know enough about the technical side of running the library. And how much time does the librarian spend explaining the reasons behind new policy to the committee?

The idea sounds good. And I am sure it worked in this particular instance. But suppose you have an apathetic committee? Or suppose you have a nosey, aggressive group that wants to have a lot to say about what new policies are decided and wants to have a hand in deciding them? The typical research librarian has enough problems without the additional burden of professional policy-making by an amateur committee. I suggest you read Herb White’s comment: ‘Few laymen would dare to offer advice to a doctor on how to treat a rare disease, and even fewer would want to overrule an engineer on how much weight a bridge span can support, but it’s amazing how many people think they know how to improve the running of a library.’

Every time you set up a committee to help you enforce library policy, you run the great risk of getting a committee which wants to establish policy. Then the very job you were hired as a professional to do is taken away from you, by nonprofessionals.

Every one has his own individual axe to grind. The librarian’s only concern should be better library service. If every policy is carefully thought out to promote better service, and if it is a sensible, realistic policy, he will have no great problem either promoting it or enforcing it. After all, he is dealing with mature human beings; he shouldn’t have to trick them or baby them.

PRO: I think you will have to agree that no librarian, even the smartest one, knows enough about all the special fields his library may cover to be an authority in judging the quality and value of new published materials. The library committee can be of great service in helping review new publications, in evaluating them, in helping to decide which are worth adding to the collection. Many libraries report that
specialists in various fields do much of their reviewing and recommending for purchase. These specialists also are usually well acquainted with new trends in their special fields and can advise the librarian about new publications to watch for and even about new areas which may be developing. Such advisors become an active part of the 'library team' and, again, give added weight to the validity of the library's recommendations when it comes time to buy new publications.

**CON:** I will agree—that most librarians need help. But I don't think they have to get that help through a committee. Most librarians are smart enough to keep up with book review sources in many fields. They acquire through experience an awareness of who the reliable publishers are, who are the outstanding authors in various fields, and which reviewers can be relied upon. This is one spot where even the gifted specialist can be misled.

And no intelligent librarian is going to buy an expensive new book in a strange new field without checking first with someone who he knows can evaluate the book for his organization. But suppose that person doesn't happen to be on the library committee? The librarian has much more freedom if he can go to the expert, no matter where he may be. This is what most industrial research librarians do.

But the librarian, in the final analysis, is responsible for the quality and value of the books in his library. Only he can finally decide if the book should be bought. An expert may tell him the new book is good, but the librarian has to decide if the money should go into that new title or into some other (assuming that he does have some limit to his budget and to his shelf space). This is a decision no committee can make for him. It is possible that no matter how good the new title is, it may still duplicate material already on the shelves or add so little more that is worthwhile as to make its acquisition less nearly necessary than that of another title, not quite as good, but filling a vital gap in the library's collection.

Finally, almost every expert, if he had his way, would want to buy all the new books in his specialty. Should a metallurgist decide between buying a book on metals or one on aerodynamics? The librarian has to keep the big picture in mind. He has to represent all interests of his organization and know their relative value, their relative needs, and his library's ability to answer those needs with the materials on its shelves.
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Few management people in industry claim to understand why an industrial research library has to spend so much money for books and magazines. Most librarians in industry fight the battle of the budget every year. It is the businessman's instinct to ask, 'What am I getting in return for my money spent on the library?' And unless he is convinced that the money is better invested in library service than in some other area, he is apt to put his cash into a more profitable activity.

The librarian needs every bit of help he can muster to convince management that money invested in accurate, up-to-date information, is bread cast upon profitable waters that will return manyfold.

The library committee, if it properly represents a cross section of the organization's interest and activities, can help maintain an adequate library budget by reviewing the needs of all departments and groups for library service and by constantly reminding management that books are as necessary as beakers to efficient research.

With its understanding of what the librarian is up to and up against, the library committee can help establish throughout the organization a better appreciation of the truly professional aspects of the librarian's job. Such appreciation, especially among top management, inevitably increases the respect with which the librarian's suggestions and recommendations are received, and—hopefully!—will also increase the size of his paycheck. This latter reason alone should be enough to make any librarian welcome the establishment of a library committee.

Because every library is a constantly growing thing, the library committee should be the agency for reviewing periodically the needs of the library for more space, more major equipment, new or added personnel. Who, for instance, and on what basis, can best decide if the library should be moved to a different location, to larger quarters, perhaps be split (or combined) to serve two areas better? And who has the experience, the judgment, the responsibility for deciding matters of personnel administration in the library? The head librarian, of course, which is the way it should be. But can he use help in screening, interviewing and selecting professional assistants? Most librarians would admit that they could. And even more important, if the head librarian should leave, die, be promoted, or move to another position, who is competent to find his successor (remember, our 'typical' library has only one or two professionals on its staff)? The library committee should be the logical agency to do this job.
CON: We've got a lot of ground to cover here, but most of our former rebuttals still hold. Yes, the librarian does need help with his budget requirements. And here again you are using the library committee to run interference, when perhaps its members need someone to run interference for them in their own department budgets. But let it pass. Just note that first the librarian has to convince the members of the committee that his budget is adequate, or else they are buying a pig in a poke and serving neither the library nor their organization as they should. If the librarian can convince them (they must not be a rubber stamp), why couldn't he just as well be convincing his own boss or top management? He could. In fact, it is one of his major responsibilities, and he cannot abdicate it.

Every boost helps. But again, we are using a committee of valuable people to do something which only the librarian can truly do—that is, establish himself as a person of professional caliber. If the librarian acts like a professional, if he maintains professional standards, if he performs like a professional, he will be accepted as a professional. Nothing else will do this for him. He can have three Ph.D.'s after his name, but in industry he will be finally accepted only on the basis of his performance. And industry will pay him accordingly. If not his present employer, then another one, because there is a great shortage of truly professional industrial research librarians.

Library committees are often set up to consider and decide upon the establishment of a library for an industrial firm; sometimes they may be set up to decide upon major library movements, divisions, and consolidations. Business likes to operate through committees. But most of them are special committees, named for a particular purpose and for a limited period of time. Quoting Herb White again, "Industry does not have committees of mathematicians, metallurgists and chemists who tell the chief aerodynamicist how his section should be run. I see no reason for the necessity of a committee of mathematicians, metallurgists, chemists and aerodynamicists to tell the librarian how the library should be run."

Here the debate ends. When we offered time for rebuttal, our two antagonists declined, referring us instead to the list of references appended and each contending that a good, thorough survey of the actual library committee situation in the industrial research libraries of America will prove them right. We will wait for the results of that survey.
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References

3. Ibid., p. 43.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

The Library Committee in the United Kingdom

J. CLEMENT HARRISON

It is doubtful that there is any area of public library administration in which British and American traditions and practices differ as widely as that of library government. On the main objectives of the modern public library and the organizational methods appropriate for their attainment there is little, if any, real divergence of opinion in the Anglo-American public library world, and indeed there is a remarkable measure of professional agreement on such matters as the need for reorganization of units of service on more rational lines, for supra-local sources of financial support, and for more effective application of minimum standards of service. The most recently issued statements on these and other matters by the national professional associations on both sides of the Atlantic show this: the American Library Association's Public Library Service (1956) and the Library Association's Memorandum of Evidence to be laid before the Committee appointed by the Minister of Education . . . (1958).

In other words, the Anglo-American public library world shows increasing signs of becoming one world, and this is perhaps not surprising in view of ever-increasing professional contact and the cross-fertilizing effect of transatlantic professional opinion over the past quarter of a century, of which the pioneering work of men like Carleton B. Joeckel and Lionel R. McColvin provides a striking example.

In at least one respect, however, this considerable measure of agreement is surprising. In the area of government of the public library, the British and American systems (if either can be so described) are poles apart. The library “committee” in the United Kingdom does correspond functionally to the library “board” in the United States; however, little but confusion would result in the mind of the American

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observer of the British scene if he were to conclude from this similarity in function that they are very much the same thing. They are not, and in order to understand why this is so, something must first be said about the committee system in British local government and the place of the public library committee within that system.

Although the local authorities throughout the United Kingdom now display a fair measure of uniformity as far as their functions are concerned, there are still important differences in legal origins and constitution between the authorities in England and Wales on the one hand and in Scotland on the other, with those of Northern Ireland also displaying local characteristics, resulting largely from their statutory powers' being derived from the Parliament of Northern Ireland rather than from the United Kingdom Parliament at Westminster. The differences between the local authorities in England and Wales and in Scotland are explained by the fact that "in these countries local government had different origins and has developed independently and along different lines." Local government, in the sense of local self-government, has had a long and vigorous history in the United Kingdom, particularly in England, and some evidence of this can be seen in the early creation and subsequent longevity of institutions of local government in the English colonies in North America in the seventeenth century. Yet, as Warren explains in his excellent introduction to English local government, The English Local Government System, "Except in a sense so narrow as to be negligible, Local Authorities are not legislative bodies. They are executive bodies exercising powers, or discharging duties, given to them by Parliament, as the sovereign legislative assembly; and the rule is virtually absolute that they may exercise no powers at all except such as Parliament has given." British local authorities are then, in the lawyers' phrase, "creatures of statute" and insofar as their present-day constitution and status are concerned they have been created by Parliament (by the Parliament of Northern Ireland in the cases of the local authorities in that part of the United Kingdom), and have had placed upon their shoulders by Parliament certain powers by which they may meet their responsibilities in the provision of local services. Some of these services they must provide; others are optional. The public library service, as in almost every other part of the world, outside the Scandinavian countries, is among the latter. It is not the least of the achievements of British local government over the past hundred years that, despite this optional nature of the service, less than one per cent of the popu-
lation of the United Kingdom is living in local government areas not provided with a tax-supported public library.

The Local Government (England and Wales) Act, 1933, "provides that a local authority may appoint a committee for any general or special purpose as in its opinion would be better regulated and managed by means of a committee" and, as far as public libraries and most other optional services are concerned, this is still the main governing statute. In the case of committees which the local authority is compelled to set up, usually in connection with the regulation and management of a service which the authorities must provide, such as education and certain welfare services, special provision is made in statutes dealing with those particular services. Thus a distinction has been established between "permissive" and "statutory" (compulsory) committees in British local government, but this is of little significance in considering actual committee operations. Whether the service concerned is one that the authority may provide or one that it must provide, it is generally valid to say that "the Local Authorities have been thus free to manage their own households." In the case of the local government of the public library service, some form of local committee has been set up by every authority concerned. There is, indeed, the rather peculiar circumstance that in Scotland, under an Act dating back to 1887 which is still in force, the burghs (cities and towns) must appoint a library committee, if they provide a public library service, and in Northern Ireland also, under an Act of 1924, county councils adopting the Public Libraries Acts, "are obliged to appoint a county library committee for the purpose of carrying the Acts into execution." It has been said that committees "are in fact an important part of what is referred to with reasonable pride as 'the British way of life'" and that "in a moment of exasperation during the war, Mr. Churchill exclaimed: 'We are overrun by them, like the Australians were by the rabbits.'" Certainly British local government, like British central government from the Cabinet level downwards, is very much government by committee.

So far nothing has been said to indicate the considerable differences that exist between the library committee in the United Kingdom and the typical library board in the United States. It is when we look a little more closely at the conditions of appointment and nature of the membership of the typical library committee in the United Kingdom that these differences begin to reveal themselves. In the first place, it must be borne in mind that the body responsible for the operation of
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the public library service in the area of any local authority is the "authority" itself—that is to say, the council of the county, county borough (larger cities and towns), non-county or municipal borough (generally medium-sized towns), metropolitan borough (the London boroughs), or urban district (generally the smaller towns)—which has decided at some time in the past that it will provide such a service and support it out of its own tax income. (It might be noted, for the sake of clarity, that the rural areas are, with few exceptions, served entirely by the county library services. The exceptions are represented by the twenty-odd parish public libraries in England and Wales, surviving as independent library authorities from earlier days when the parish could still adopt the Public Libraries Acts. The rural parish, the smallest local government unit in England and Wales, is not to be confused with the ecclesiastical parish.)

This does not mean that the county library service is wholly rural; it is, indeed, largely urban in some parts of the country, as the Act (1919), which deprived parishes in England and Wales of the right to become library authorities in the future, took similar action with regard to the non-county boroughs and urban districts. In other words, since 1919 only the "larger" authorities, the counties and county boroughs in England and Wales, have been allowed to initiate a public library service; many of the "smaller" authorities, non-county boroughs, urban districts and parishes, provide an independent service, however, but only because they were doing so prior to the passing of the Act. In addition, a number of the "smaller" authorities have relinquished their library powers to the counties since 1919, and the result of all this has been that, although there is almost universal agreement on the need for the creation of larger units of service, the situation in this respect is far less serious in England and Wales, with approximately 480 independent library authorities, than in the United States, where the present total is apparently approaching the 8,000 mark.

In the case of all these services (and the same is true in Scotland and Northern Ireland) the "authority," deriving its powers and responsibilities from Parliamentary statute, is the local council, nowadays elected almost everywhere on political lines, with the two major parties dominating the local scene in very much the same way as at Westminster. Furthermore, it is to the local council that the power to appoint a committee "for any general or special purpose" is granted by statute, and it is from the membership of the local council

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that the majority of members of those committees, including the library committee, will come. This is, indeed, ensured in England and Wales by the provision made in the Local Government (England and Wales) Act, 1933, under which it is laid down that a "committee may include persons who are not members of the local authority (council), provided that at least two-thirds of the members are members of the local authority." Most library committees do not include any "persons who are not members of the local authority," and if and when they do, as the Act of 1933 makes clear, they will never exceed in number one-third of the whole membership. In other words, the typical city or town library committee in England and Wales is very much an integral part of municipal government, with its membership consisting wholly or mainly of men and women elected to the council of the authority by the local electorate, inevitably reflecting the political complexion of the council. This is a very different governing body from the typical American library board, deliberately separated from the municipal or county government and, to use Garceau's words, "relatively aloof from active and effective power groups in the community." 

One of the more interesting contributions to the 1949 Conference at the University of Chicago Graduate Library School on the Public Library Inquiry was made by Goldhor in his discussion of the Garceau volume. In this he reminded us that in the United States "The board form of government is also expected to insulate the library from the rest of local government, and traditionally the public library has been a semi-independent institution." He, like Garceau, was generally unhappy about the library board situation as he saw it in this country and suggested, among other things, that "if our public libraries have been protected from municipal corruption they have also been insulated from municipal progress." Any comparison here may well prove, as in other instances, to be odious; in any case there are one or two other legal aspects of the British situation that call for clarification at this point.

Statutory provision for county libraries came comparatively late in the United Kingdom: to Scotland in 1918, to England and Wales in 1919, and to Northern Ireland in 1924. A little provision had been made earlier in some rural parts of the country, usually based upon the quite inadequate unit of the rural parish, but nowhere was there anything approaching an adequate service. By 1918/1919, pressure on the part of the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust and the Library Asso-
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ciation (with the former body playing the major role), eventually succeeded in persuading the government that the county councils, initiated as local government authorities in England and Wales in 1888, must be given powers to provide a library service if anything approaching national coverage were ever to be achieved. This provision was made in the Education (Scotland) Act, 1918, the Public Libraries (England and Wales) Act, 1919, and, somewhat later, in the Public Libraries (Northern Ireland) Act, 1924. In the case of each of these Acts, however, a somewhat surprising provision was made in respect of the appointment of the county library committee.

The Scottish Act, 1918, placed the new county library service squarely under the control of the county council, in its capacity as an education authority, with the library clearly regarded as part of the public education service, and the appropriate governing committee of the library the education committee (which could, if it wished, appoint a county library subcommittee). One result of this rather surprising enactment has been that in Scotland the county library service has been operated, for better or worse, as part of the public education service of the county council; the burgh services are governed, under the burgh council, by a library committee, which, as has already been noted, must be appointed by the council.17 In the following year, the Act for England and Wales, although authorizing the county councils to adopt the Libraries Acts and thus allowing them to become library authorities, imposed upon them the obligation of referring “all matters relating to the exercise of their powers and duties under the Libraries Acts . . . to the county education committee.”18 In this instance also, further provision was made that the county education committee could appoint a library subcommittee. In Northern Ireland in 1924, on the other hand, no mention was made of the county education committee as an appropriate body to which library government might be delegated. There the county councils were indeed “obliged to appoint a county library committee. . . .”19

These surprising and unprecedented provisions for county library government in both Scotland and England and Wales to be one of the functions, under the council, of a committee primarily concerned with the education service, inevitably created a controversial situation, in which spokesmen on both sides have expressed themselves vigorously and almost ceaselessly. An impartial observer might find it difficult to align himself on one side or the other, if only for the reason that neither has been able to produce any valid body of evidence to
show that things would have been better had the form of government been different! Too much of the discussion has been at the purely emotional level, dictated unduly by the personal experiences of a number of county librarians in their own situations. Briefly, it can be said that in both Scotland and England one can find library services, ranging from the excellent to the appalling, in both the municipalities, with their "independent" library committees, and the counties, with their "subordinate" library subcommittees. It must be admitted that the inevitable subordination of the county librarian to the chief education officer of the county must be taken into account. The American observer of the situation may be reminded of the battles long ago fought in this country over school district control of public libraries and, if he takes the view that the general rejection of school district control was a step in the right direction, he will be gratified to learn that, in the case of England and Wales at least, the present official view, as expressed in the "Roberts Report" (1959) is as follows:

In a broad sense libraries are, of course, part of the educational system of the country and there are very close connections between the work of the public libraries and the formal education service. None the less, we think that the further development of the public library service may, in many areas, be more effectively carried out with a library committee staking its claim for financial resources as an independent service and with a chief librarian having direct access to such a committee, than if the service remains as a small part of a far greater education service. Such an arrangement is not possible at present in the counties; and we were impressed by the evidence submitted to us as to the harmful effects on the status of the public library service generally and on the work of some counties resulting from the present position.20

This probably represents the present majority view among the members of the Library Association who are directly concerned, but there is a minority view in favor of the "present position" and some who would go further and support the "subordination" of the whole public library service to the education service. The American observer, who might find it difficult to appreciate the motivation of this minority point of view, should perhaps be reminded that the 180 local education authorities in Great Britain are very different governmental units from the vast majority of the "happy confusion of 35,300 independent school systems"21 to be found in the United States. The effectiveness of the Ministry of Education (England and Wales) and the Scottish Educa-
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tion Department in helping to maintain minimum national standards of public education might also be borne in mind. If all this and considerable central government grants in aid of education represent some kind of bandwagon, then a number of British librarians are of the opinion that the time has come for the public libraries of the country to jump on it.

Although the typical library committee will be made up of members of the elected council of the authority, provision is made in all cases for the appointment of co-opted members, i.e., non-members of the council; only in the case of the Scottish burghs, however, is this compulsory (one half of the membership of the burgh library committee of "not less than ten nor more than twenty members" must be non-members of the council. A somewhat similar legal provision is made in West Germany). Elsewhere co-option to the library committee is entirely at the discretion of the local authority and in most instances it has not found favor. Even where it has, the co-opted members will never be in the majority. The Local Government Act, 1933, granted to local authorities in England and Wales a general enabling power to co-opt non-members to their committees, but at the same time insisted that a least two-thirds of the members must be members of the council. Co-option is, however, compulsory in the case of the county education committee and, for this reason, non-members of the council may be found serving on the library subcommittee of the county education committee in both England and Wales and Scotland. Again only in the case of the county library subcommittees in Scotland is co-option obligatory.

It is suggested that the continued appointment of non-members of the council to library committees in Britain may be of special interest to the American student of the position. In some respects the co-opted member is not dissimilar from many of the members of the library board in the United States; in most cases he is aloof from local politics, and frequently he has been appointed by reason of either his special interest in the work of the library or his expert knowledge and experience or possibly as a representative of a significant group within the community. There can be no doubt that there have been many instances of individual public libraries deriving considerable benefit from the presence on their committees of able and conscientious co-opted members; Savage indeed claimed many advantages for the practice in his The Librarian and His Committee, which, incidentally, still represents the one serious attempt by a British librarian to study
librarian-committee relations. But Savage's study was published twenty years ago, and much of it was based upon his own experience in Edinburgh, a Scottish city in which co-option to the library committee is compulsory to the extent of half the total membership. Today it generally finds less favor and, outside Scotland, its use is declining. Within the profession it is increasingly regarded as a relic of the early days of the public library movement, when the librarian was in most cases unqualified, underpaid, and almost certainly lacking in both administrative and bibliographical ability. Among the elected members of the committee there appears to be an increasing resentment towards the appointment of those who have not entered "through the gateway of popular election." In Warren's words:

The new enabling powers of the Act of 1933 have not been extensively used; and there seems little doubt that the practice of co-option does not find favour with the Local Authorities. The intention was obviously to enable persons who have special knowledge or experience, and who may have neither the time nor the inclination for the full responsibilities of a Councillor, to give their services in a limited field. The feeling of the average Councillor is that members of the Council are not expected to have special capacities; that it would be best if Committees did not pretend to be any more than they were, namely, bodies of lay-men exercising the functions expected of lay-men, and which it is of special value for lay-men to perform; and that in these days special knowledge and experience are best looked for in the proper quarter, i.e. among the officers. ["Officers" here means the professional staff who administer the service under the committee and council.] 25

This increasing emphasis upon the full and proper use of the professional expert has been characteristic of almost all recent studies of British local government. Harold Laski pointed out in his A Grammar of Politics, first published in 1925, that "anyone who has seen an English municipal body at work will have realised that the whole difference between efficient and inefficient administration lies in the creative use of officials by elected persons." Few public librarians on either side of the Atlantic would hesitate to echo such sentiments, and clearly any possible comparison of the relative effectiveness of the American library board and the British library committee will largely turn upon this aspect of their roles. At the same time let us remind ourselves that the day is still some way off when one will be able to assert with a clear conscience that all, or even a
considerable majority, of the public librarians of the two countries are themselves adequately prepared for such creative use. The position is perhaps a happier one in the United Kingdom, simply because there are many fewer small public libraries with inadequate staffs, but even there too many librarians are "woefully lacking in administrative training and capacity," if one may apply in his own words Garceau's criticism of many of the public librarians of the United States.

One quite striking result of some of these differences between the British library committee and the American library board is to be seen in the area of what has been described as the "sponsoring function" of the governing body. Both Garceau and Leigh stressed the potentialities of the library board in this respect, and few board members would deny that this is not one of their more important responsibilities. Nor can there be any doubt of the outstanding contributions that have been made to American public librarianship as a result of such sponsorship of the movement in many communities by the board and other lay bodies. Here, it is suggested, the somewhat isolated and aloof nature of the board may have been advantageous. Operating from its "semi-independent" point of vantage, it has frequently been in a position to appeal directly to the community over the head of a reactionary or parsimonious council. In the United Kingdom, however, where the library committee is a part of the city or county government, with its membership largely or wholly made up of members of the council, action of this kind is unusual, if not impossible. The propaganda directed at the public library trustees of the United States by the professional associations and individual librarians appears somewhat bizarre to the British observer, whether he is from the professional ranks or a committee member. The Library Association makes no provision for any section similar to the American Library Trustee Association and has indeed now removed its "institutional" members from full membership (their new and reduced status is that of "affiliated" member). This is not to say that the British committee member would not have benefited from one or two small doses of professional education, over and above his slight exposure to it, resulting from attendance at professional conferences. It is simply that the hardheaded local politician, who is the typical member of the British library committee, does not fit into this kind of picture. At the National Assembly of Library Trustees in Cleveland in 1961 it was announced that "Thirty-seven states reported an increase in trustee attendance at institutes and workshops. . . ."; it would probably be no exaggeration.
to say that this sort of attendance would be incomprehensible to the
typical library committee member in the United Kingdom. The real
significance of this may well prove to be the major clue to an under-
standing of the basic differences between the governing bodies of the
public libraries of the two countries.

Both the American and British public library movements have
achieved a great deal over the past hundred years to which a finger
of pride can be pointed; they have also both failed badly in a number
of respects. In both countries we can find examples of the best and
almost the worst public libraries in the world. Some, though by no
means all, of the differences between public library government in the
United States and the United Kingdom have been raised in this chap-
ter. Even if, however, there had been space to consider them all, it is
just possible that the conclusion would still have been that Alexander
Pope knew the answer more than two hundred years ago, when he
wrote in his Essay on Man:

"For forms of government let fools contest;
Whate'er is best administered is best."

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