



# Library Associations and Public Documents

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OF ALL THE LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS in the United States the American Library Association has the greatest interest in taking the lead in improving document bibliography, processing, and use. Its RSD-RTSD Interdivisional Committee on Public Documents, like its predecessors, has always had as its purpose: "To take cognizance of matters relating to public documents issued in the United States, whether federal, state, or local, and matters relating to the official publications of foreign governments and quasi-governmental international organizations; to study problems of documents relating to publication, processing, storage, bibliographic control, and reference use, and to cooperate with the appropriate committees of the divisions and their sections in dealing with them."<sup>1</sup>

During the past decade, this Committee, and its predecessors in the ALA before its reorganization, deliberated chiefly on one piece of legislation, a new depository library act to be got through the United States Congress. After this was accomplished, the Committee's major interest was the implementation of this Act, the Depository Act of 1962. This subject is covered in the paper by Carper W. Buckley, the Superintendent of Documents, in this issue. The Committee sponsored the publication of the bibliography by Jennings Wood, Chief of the Exchange and Gift Division, Library of Congress, entitled *United States Government Publications: A Partial List of Non-GPO Imprints*<sup>2</sup> in order to demonstrate the types of non-GPO imprints needed in the libraries of the country. The Council on Library Resources, Inc. financed the undertaking.

The next publication of the Committee will be a directory of documents librarians in the United States compiled by Thomas Shuler Shaw, and edited by Elizabeth Miller Shaw and members of the Committee.

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Other revisions or new works needed in this field which the Committee is trying to get under way include a revised edition of Anne Morris Boyd's *United States Government Publications*, the third edition of which, revised by Rae Elizabeth Rips, appeared in 1949.<sup>3</sup> Jerome K. Wilcox's *Manual on the Use of State Publications* (1940)<sup>4</sup> not only needs to be brought up-to-date but also editing to make it easier to use. All libraries and teachers of government publications would like to see a list of basic government publications, such as the Bonk list for basic reference books. Indexing of county and city documents in a publication similar to the *Checklist of State Publications* issued by the Library of Congress is high on the priority list. If this project is not taken on by local chapters of the Special Library Association, as suggested in the last pages of this paper, it might be possible to persuade the Library of Congress to combine such listings with the state checklist, or the U.S. Bureau of the Census to list the materials now being received there since its *City and County Data Book* has become a permanent publication of that agency. In the preparation of the editions of this work, the compilers examine hundreds of city and county publications which are of vital interest to libraries across the land.

It has been mentioned that the current lists supplementing Winchell's *Guide to Reference Books*,<sup>5</sup> which appear each year in *College and Research Libraries*, need to give more attention to government publications in the future. And an examination of the original work, published by the ALA, indicates that this weakness is carried over from that volume. Here, therefore, is an area where the Publishing Department of the ALA could do a great service to documents librarians by insisting that the new edition list important public documents at all levels.

Most documents librarians agree that the Committee should be working toward the printing of an index to *Checklist of United States Public Documents, 1789-1909*, and a supplement to this work that would bring it up-to-date, if there is to be no resumption of the old *Catalog of Public Documents, 1893-1940*, in order not only to have better bibliographic control, but to maintain better indexing.

Within the ALA there is another committee that has an important function, American Association of Law Libraries-American Library Association (RSD-RTSD)-Association of Research Libraries Joint Committee on Government Publications. This Committee's sole responsibility is the maintaining of the contract with the Library of

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Congress, and supervising the work of the Documents Expediting Project. As this Committee's work has a direct bearing on several projects described in other sections of this issue, and there is no description of its organization and function among these papers, a short account is given here.

In 1946 the Documents Expediting Project<sup>6</sup> began providing a centralized service to its subscribers for the acquisition of non-depository U.S. government publications, which were not available by purchase either from the U.S. Superintendent of Documents or the issuing agency. The project came into existence under the sponsorship of the Joint Committee on Government Documents (now the Joint Committee on Government Publications) of the American Library Association, the Association of Research Libraries, the Special Libraries Association and the American Association of Law Libraries in cooperation with the Library of Congress. The Chairman of the Committee at that time was Dr. Homer Halvorson, Librarian of Johns Hopkins University.

At the time of its establishment the project concentrated its efforts on obtaining documents issued during World War II by U.S. government agencies but not distributed through the usual channels. In September 1945 an inquiry was sent to 178 libraries regarding their willingness to support the above service. Thirty-two indicated support in varying amounts totaling \$5,000. Space, equipment and the handling of the funds was supplied by the Library of Congress, and official operation began on July 1, 1946, under the administrative supervision of the Chief of the Exchange and Gift Division, where it still remains.

When, in 1950, the distribution of more than two million examples of wartime publications was completed, the project concentrated its efforts on the procurement and distribution of processed U.S. government publications. The so-called all-depository libraries receive at present only a part of the total publication production of government agencies, and it is this vast quantity of nondistributed publications which the Project attempts to obtain for libraries before the supply is exhausted.

In fiscal year 1964<sup>7</sup> the project sent some 89,000 items to ninety-seven subscribers, and an additional 41,000 pieces were sent to them on individual request. Of these requests 84 percent were filled by supplying the wanted material and 4 percent by providing information as to the source of supply. The remaining 12 percent were requests for items which could not be immediately located and were

placed on file for further search. Receipts for the year were \$28,575.

The first major service of the Project is the identification, procurement, and distribution of documents which are not ordinarily available through the mailing lists, sales distribution or blanket requests. DocEx, as the project is popularly called, is able to acquire these items for its members only through title-by-title solicitation and by undertaking distribution through its own facilities. They are identified through personal visits to the issuing agencies, constant scrutiny of government bibliographies, and review of advance bibliographic information available at the Library of Congress. The project also arranges, of course, to place its members' names on various agency mailing lists for non-sale items.

DocEx is frequently able to distribute copies of materials to its subscribers even before publication is generally announced. Congressional committee prints are an important category of publications for which speedy identification and acquisition is nearly always essential, and special care is taken by DocEx staff in the procurement of these items.

There are many publications for which the Documents Expeditor has made arrangements with the issuing agencies for regular automatic delivery to DocEx as soon as they are published. DocEx is always ready to make as many such automatic arrangements as possible, so that the staff can devote more of its time to obtaining the publications that are more difficult to acquire, and that take a little searching and prying to find out about and obtain.

Some of the publications for which automatic procedures are set up are items which libraries can obtain regularly only through the Documents Expediting Project. These include the publications of the International Cooperative Administration issued for overseas use, the "Daily Report" of the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, the reports of the Personnel Research Branch of the Adjutant General's Office, and the final reports of the Cooperative Research and Language Development Section of the Office of Education.

The project receives all available publication lists of all government agencies and advance proof sheets of the *Monthly Catalog*. All the lists are carefully checked for publications falling within the scope of the project and which are not already acquired for distribution. Special priority is given to the proof sheets of the *Monthly Catalog* which arrive at DocEx much before the published versions reach libraries, enabling the project to request items new to it, often by telephone order when stocks are plentiful.

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A second DocEx service is the filling of special requests for items which either come within the categories of materials regularly handled by the project, or which are out of print in regular agency or GPO channels. Strategically located in Washington, the DocEx staff can pursue an elusive item through many channels not easily available to a library attempting to obtain it through correspondence with the issuing agency.

Subscribers are kept currently informed of new government serials through the distribution of sample issues procured and sent out by DocEx with order slips enclosed. By this method documents librarians not only have new publications called to their attention, but they have the advantage of examining sample issues in making their selection decisions. The return of the DocEx order slip then insures continued receipt of the wanted title. With the use of the simple request forms supplied by the project, a member library can place through DocEx almost all its subscriptions to unpriced agency serials.

Financial support for the project, aside from the housing and financial control of the budget provided by the Library of Congress is furnished entirely by annual subscriptions of the participating libraries. These range from \$150 to \$500 per year, plus a flat rate of \$25 per year for postage. Each library determines the amount of its contribution. That amount and the length of membership in the project determine the subscriber's priority in the distribution of materials that are in short supply.

The Document Expediting Project provides the U.S. Superintendent of Documents with a copy of each publication it distributes, to be considered for listing in the *Monthly Catalog*. These publications are then made available to the Readex Microprint Corporation for inclusion in its microprint edition of U.S. government (non-depository) publications, and it supplies the University Microfilms with a complete set of committee prints for each Congress. For these services the former contributes \$1,500 annually and the latter, \$150.

The Project participates in one microfilm project, collecting and collating the basic English scripts of the "Daily Report" of the Foreign Broadcast Information Service for the Photo-Duplication Service of the Library of Congress.

In February of 1960, the Project, for administrative purposes, became a part of the American and British Exchange Section of the Exchange and Gift Division of the Library of Congress; but it has continued under the sponsorship of the above-mentioned Joint Com-

mittee on Government Publications. The present members of the Committee are Richard R. Chapin, Michigan State University, Chairman, representing ARL; Frank J. Bertalan, University of Oklahoma, SLA; Vincent E. Fiordalisi, Rutgers University, AALL; and Joseph Rosenthal, New York Public Library, ALA.

A glance at *Library Literature* will indicate that the divisions of the American Library Association and others have supported the document librarian by ready publication when he had something to say; but, as Rae Rips has said in many a meeting of the ALA committee, "How do you get them to write?" Many of the papers included in this issue of *Library Trends* have pointed to new bibliographies and publications needed in this field. Both Darling and Mahler have noted that really good lists are needed for various age groups, and for the average public library patron respectively. And a glance at any Winchell list in *College and Research Libraries*, intended for the college and university group, will point up the need for better coverage in that area. The solution would appear to be cooperative effort among the divisions of ALA. The American Association of School Librarians, the Public Library Division, and the Association of College and Research Libraries should each have a joint project with the Interdivisional Committee whereby plans could be worked out regarding the regular compilation of such lists, and their publication.

As early as 1932 the ALA, in a joint public meeting of the Committee on Resources and the Public Documents Committee, presented a report to the Social Science Research Council regarding the importance of collecting state and local materials both official and unofficial.<sup>8</sup> It noted that the official documents of many states were not centralized, and that in nearly all states there were special agencies set up with their own printing funds. Certain reports were issued in very limited editions; or occasionally important reports were suppressed shortly after issue. It urged a state conference or survey to determine existing resources, and to develop interest in preserving the essential research materials. It also urged the establishment of state documents centers in those states that had not already made provision for such an agency by which distribution would be made to depository libraries, and checklists prepared, in addition to preserving a collection of the documents themselves. Since then, New York, California, Louisiana and perhaps a few other states have moved far ahead. But, as a whole, the vision of this report over a thirty-year span has badly faded.

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Since one would obviously think that a proposal of that nature would have been well received for serious consideration by state and regional library associations, a questionnaire was sent to each regarding the current documents activities in these organizations. Thirty-three replied that they had no documents committee, and no documents program of any kind. Of the sixteen who had some public documents activity, only four reported the existence of a documents committee, but cognizance was taken of document matters in other ways. An analysis of the sixteen which had some kind of documents program is as follows:

**ALABAMA:** Sponsors workshops with competent speakers; is presently examining the difficulty of obtaining state publications.

**CALIFORNIA:** Has an active documents committee that sponsors speakers of distinction on documents problems at annual program meetings; sponsors workshops in all parts of the state in order that all documents librarians will have an opportunity to attend; considered a survey of the depository library system of the state; sponsors the monthly list of state documents *California State Publications*; issued a *Manual of State Publications*, as well as a basic list and a minimum list; compiled *California State Publications; Manual for Acquisition, Processing Use*; <sup>9</sup> and is now considering drafting a brief manual on U.S. government publications for small public libraries, and sponsoring a workshop on U.S. government publications, especially for newer depositories.

**COLORADO:** Sponsored a workshop on state, federal, and international documents.

**CONNECTICUT:** Reference Section and College and University Section had meeting at annual conference on the effects of the new Depository Library Act on document collections in the state.

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA:** Compiles *Library and Reference Facilities in the Area of the District of Columbia*, which describes many documents collections.

**GEORGIA:** Has appointed a committee to study the distribution, preservation, and bibliographic control of official publications of the state of Georgia.

**HAWAII:** Members contribute to *Current Hawaiiana*, a quarterly bibliography of publications from and about Hawaii, with both government and non-government publications included; produced a list of publications of the government of the Territory of Hawaii, 1900-1959, in June 1962; worked for years toward the establishment of the state

documents deposit and distribution system, finally authorized in 1965 in Act 175.

**IDAHO:** Publishes an annual checklist of publications issued by the state of Idaho for the previous year.

**ILLINOIS:** Is considering promoting a program to develop a depository approach to Illinois documents.

**LOUISIANA:** Documents Committee recently adopted a classification system for Louisiana state documents.

**MARYLAND:** *Maryland Libraries*, the quarterly journal of the state association and the Association of School Libraries of Maryland, includes a selected list of state documents in each issue.

**MONTANA:** Has a Committee for Central Distribution of State Documents.

**NORTH DAKOTA:** Has been studying state publications, especially the lack of any person or department specifically designated to keep track of, or distribute, the publications of the state, and the pooling of little-used state documents.

**TEXAS:** For several years documents librarians have met immediately preceding the annual conference of the Texas Library Association as an embryonic round table, there not being a sufficient number as yet to form a round table within the structure of the association.

**UTAH:** A committee has been appointed to draw up a resolution to be presented to the U.S. Superintendent of Documents asking that the Government Printing Office devise a better indexing system for its publications drawing heavily on the format of the Wilson indexes.

**WASHINGTON:** Endorsed the Depository Library Act of 1962; is working on a form of depository library arrangement for publications of the state whereby certain libraries around the state will have full runs of all materials issued by most state agencies.

From the foregoing it would seem that all state library associations should take California as a model and establish a strong documents committee that would work towards the goal of getting federal, state and local documents into the hands of those children, teen-agers, college students, and adults who could greatly profit by their use. Furthermore, those states that do not have adequate lists of state publications, either current or retrospective, or both, could well be served by a documents committee dedicated to the achievement of such a goal.

A survey was also taken regarding the activities of special libraries in the field of public documents. Letters were sent to the national

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office and all regional chapters of the SLA. Thirteen responses were received, eight of which were negative. For those who did reply, the interest lay with government reports in the majority of cases. The results were as follows:

**NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK CITY:** Bill M. Woods, Executive Director, states, "Without a doubt I feel SLA's strength and contribution is in the area of technical reports. We have had a long-time interest in them, as many of our members have the problem of trying to cope with this form of literature. The problem, incidentally, is gargantuan compared with ordinary government documents. Military security and inconsistent corporate headings also contribute to the problem. SLA published in 1962, the *Dictionary of Report Series Codes* . . . . The pages of *Special Libraries* regularly describe new government publications of general interest. A newly instituted monthly feature will carry news to our members of U.S., State and Canadian governmental activities relating to libraries. I imagine some publications will be noted."

**CLEVELAND (OHIO) CHAPTER:** In 1964 held a meeting on "Government Resources of Information in the Cleveland Area."

**RIO GRANDE CHAPTER:** Regional workshop on report literature held October 31-November 2, 1965. Issued *Dictionary of Report Series Codes*.<sup>10</sup>

**UPSTATE NEW YORK CHAPTER:** Is publishing in 1966 a survey of specialized information sources in New York State outside New York City and its immediate environs. Its four hundred entries will describe many documents collections, federal, state, and local.

As Bertalan's paper in this issue indicates that special libraries collect heavily in local as well as report literature, local document listing might well be a project for the chapters of SLA, as Childs (in this issue) and others have pointed out the weaknesses in the bibliographic control in that area.

The Association of American Law Libraries had a panel discussion on the subject of "Government Documents and Publications" at its Minneapolis meeting in 1960 which took up the distribution, cataloging, and arrangement of government publications. Also the current bibliographies in the *Law Library Journal* often contain information about government publications.

James E. Skipper, Executive Secretary of the Association of Research Libraries, has always taken a deep interest in the work of the RSD-RTSD Interdivisional Committee on Public Documents, and has

brought many of the problems of the committee before the ARL, thus strengthening the support that the committee has had on many important issues. In recent years the Association has supported the Depository Library Act of 1962; it has been active in its support of the *National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections*; the book form reproduction of the Library of Congress' printed cards; the publication of the third edition of the *Union List of Serials*, and the establishment of *New Serial Titles* as the extension of that work; the stimulation of interest, through the State Department, of other governments in producing national bibliographies where none now exist; and the reproduction of Great Britain's Public Records Office indexes because of deterioration of the paper in the original edition. It has had representatives call on government agencies, and request, with good results, that ARL members be placed on their mailing lists for important non-GPO materials; and at the ALA Conference in Detroit in 1965, Clifton Brock presented a paper to the membership concerning the problems of obtaining distribution of the above-mentioned non-GPO publications. In addition, for many years the ARL has been interested in making the National Union Catalog at the Library of Congress available to research libraries, and its committees have spent many hours in trying to devise methods by which the cost of the project could be made feasible. From recent reports, all this endeavor has not been in vain as the Library of Congress now feels that there is a solution to the problem, and it will not be long before research libraries will have a copy of this great bibliographic tool in their reference collections.<sup>11</sup>

In conclusion, the RSD-RTSD Interdivisional Committee on Public Documents, and many of the other organizations mentioned in this paper, depend heavily on the Washington Office of the American Library Association when any legislation is needed to improve the bibliographic control, the acquisition and distribution, and the availability of federal documents. Miss Germaine Krettek, Director, and Miss Howard Hubbard, then Assistant Director, worked long hours with influential people on Capitol Hill, and with interested members of the ALA such as Benjamin Powell, Roger McDonough, Edmon Low, the author, and many others to get the Depository Library Act of 1962 on the books; and now that it is a law, Miss Krettek and her present Assistant Director, Eileen Cooke, have labored just as hard to implement such sections of the law as the distribution of non-GPO prints, and the improvement of the *Monthly Catalog*.

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With such cooperation from the ALA through its Executive Director, David H. Clift, and the Washington Office, the committees of that organization, and the joint efforts of other library associations, the future looks bright for the attainment of such goals as complete bibliographic controls, at all levels; quick and adequate distribution of both government and non-government prints; promotion of the use of government publications to all groups of people who can profit by their contents, from the school child to the adult; and the training of documents librarians not only to service documents collections, but to take an active part in adding to the literature of the field so that others can profit by their experience.

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