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The Selection, Processing, and Storage of

Non-Print Materials: A Critique of the

Anglo-American Cataloging Rules as They

Relate to Newer Media

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THERE IS GENERAL agreement among librarians that, despite the etymology of words which describe their profession, librarians now are responsible for collecting information resources regardless of form. Unfortunately for the exercise of this expanded responsibility, non-book materials are not controlled nearly so well for selection purposes as are books; they should not be treated (as they so frequently are) as a kind of sub-book for cataloging purposes; nor can they be stored and preserved as easily as printed materials in the traditional library building. Thus, non-book materials, especially those in non-print form, have come to represent a special concern in most libraries and must be given extra consideration.

It is the main purpose of this article to consider problems of processing non-book materials and, in particular, to comment on the adequacy of the new *Anglo-American Cataloging Rules* [1] from the viewpoint of larger public and university library collections.

One clear indication of the growing importance which non-print media have attained in libraries may be seen in the new *Anglo-American Cataloging Rules*. All of Part III, from pages 258 to 342, is concerned with non-book materials and provides detailed rules for both entry and description.

Whatever criticisms may be leveled at the new rules, one must concede at the outset that, when they are viewed retrospectively as a

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summary, they are superior. Unfortunately, they do not yet look forward to what must be done as libraries utilize automation techniques in more and more of their technical processing. For instance, the recent work completed by Theodore Hines [2] points up the need for a radically different approach to the whole cataloging function from basic bibliographic description to arrangement of entries in a file.

A major question concerning non-book materials is whether card files should be maintained as guides to such materials, with the possible exception of phonorecordings of literary works. Non-book materials, regardless of kind, are usually housed in locations separate from book collections. In the author's opinion, even long-playing records will fare badly when placed together on shelves with books. And no one is likely to advocate that reels of motion picture film should be stored with books even though their specific content may, on occasion, relate directly to the subject of a given play, short story or novel. The best solution then seems to lie in the creation of one or more special new media catalogs which should be revised frequently as collections change. Another solution sometimes proposed is to file cards describing non-book materials directly in the public catalog. But the problem here is that in a large file such cards will be found only by accident or after training in where to look, unless printed on colored stock or otherwise specially marked.

The rules for cataloging motion pictures, set forth in the *Anglo-American Code* on pages 282 to 293, do take into account the special character of film collections by providing for entries under title (Rule 220) and even go to the point of supplying a title when one is lacking (Rule 220-B). Provision is made for cataloging two parts of a whole work (Rule 220-E), two separate works on a single reel (Rule 220-D), and also for the interesting case of cataloging films in a series. Series are to be cataloged under the latest title (Rule 220-C) if the title changes while the series is being issued, or during the life of a continuing series such as newsreels. Added entries can be made freely by following Rule 221.

Title frames are considered the source of a title. But, if this is lacking, any descriptive materials available may be used (Rule 222), and separate entries can be made "relating to production, release, and date of the film." The entry is also supposed to contain descriptive information (which the rules call "physical description" about the film) including its length (or running time), whether the film has been produced in black and white or in color, and whether it is a

sound or silent film. Even filmstrips are so described, especially when they are accompanied by a phonorecording or audio tape. Series notes are to be made as well as additional notes prepared to indicate whether special equipment is required in order to project the material. Rule 226 provides for notes showing related materials, change of title, other versions, and source material.

Thus, a fairly elaborate description follows the physical description but precedes what is the most characteristic and necessary difference between catalog information developed for films and that prepared to introduce books. Because of the difficulty in obtaining information about a film, it is sometimes necessary to write a summary of its contents. This summary can be as brief or as long as needed when it is to be published in a book catalog, though it should, as a matter of convenience, always be explicit and concise. On cards, however, any lengthy description is likely to get lost or be scanted to fit the card or, on the other hand, expanded because another whole card is available.

Finally, in larger libraries films are not yet used as books are used. Generally speaking, they are lent for group or class presentation, and program chairmen, teachers and others who arrange film loans need convenient means of selecting films but little more. The same automated typewriters which produce punched cards (usually edge-punched) can be employed for making entries, and any simple indexing method can be used to cut mimeograph stencils or prepare multilith masters. A significant part of the smaller film collection is usually rented, and a continuing descriptive list of films on loan is handy. In any case, there is no need to anticipate more difficulty in preparing a booklet than in preparing a card, possibly less.

Library of Congress cards do not represent any appreciable convenience, even though it is no great chore to obtain a film card order number. The Library of Congress is no swifter in cataloging films than it is in completing other forms of cataloging and, in any case, the information would have to be copied in preparing it for a book catalog.

The *Anglo-American Cataloging Rules* do not treat phonorecordings as extensively as films. Problems of entry are dismissed cavalierly as being handled by the rules provided for entering the visible form of a work. This assumes the work has a visible form. But not all phonorecordings do, nor should characteristics of phonorecordings be confused with those of books. The rules for entering music are serviceable for printed compositions. But phonorecordings may well re-

quire important new elements such as information about a performer or performers, and often about an occasion as well. To omit consideration of these is to omit vital data concerning the usefulness of a recording.

In addition, phonorecordings do not exist necessarily because there is a prior form of the work in print. The growing use of phonorecordings to record history as it flies past sometimes gives the form an importance beyond that of print. In the case of music, jazz cannot be said properly to exist in any printed form. Most jazz musicians are constitutionally incapable of playing a work the same way twice. They are in the position of artist-craftsmen whose etchings may exist in numberless variations without ever constituting an edition.

Finally, no larger library which maintains a phonorecording collection should follow rules so wide of the mark as those advocated in the *Anglo-American Code*. A library would do very much better to arrange a book catalog on the basis of the Schwann or the Harrison catalog listings. Entries should be kept brief, yet identify each recording precisely. The prime concern should simply be that of making a sufficient number of entries to identify the work for a user whose interest may lie in the performer, the medium, the work, its composer and/or the composer of words which accompany the piece, or even in the composer of incidental music which accompanies a spoken piece.

The tangled concept of main entry, confused as it is with unit entry and author entry, is of least service in cataloging phonorecordings. The peculiar rule which insists that music have a uniform title and that preparation for such an entry be made even if it is not supplied is of little service in music and of even less for phonorecordings. There is no reason why the entry should not be just as straightforward as possible, preferring the composer of serious music for a unit entry, the performer in the case of several works by different composers or for jazz and popular music, and the title of the recording for works by several composers played by several performers. Furthermore, while the performer is more important than the title of a work in folk music, putting the entry under title is important for all phonorecordings which tend to be identified most often by title.

Excepting literary presentations, there is little reason to clutter the main catalog of a library with the contents of a phonorecording collection. A separate catalog, most easily produced and kept in book form, utilizing automated typewriter equipment for its preparation,

can serve both to notify the public of new acquisitions and to prepare temporary cards. By keeping catalog entries simple, on edge-punched cards produced as a part of the accession process, the public can find the desired materials without having to fight its way through a maze of rules which assume that, in the words of the old George Price cartoon, "If it isn't Bach, to hell with it."

Special collections of phonorecordings reproduced on wire or magnetic tape and perhaps even stored in plastic cartridges (though the latter offer one solution to the problem of damage to phonorecordings) should also be stored and cataloged separately, as, for example, are collections of piano rolls and special collections of "non-processed" phonorecordings made for a particular collection. It is far easier to create a new book catalog for each special collection and to put one general card for the collection in the main catalog than to attempt to enter all the different forms of material following rules designed originally for books. As many subject headings as are required can be made for a special book catalog and copies of the catalog can even be produced and placed on sale if the library is unable to afford to give its copies away. Equipment to reproduce information is now too inexpensive and easily used to justify putting the community which a library serves to greater trouble than it already suffers. Certainly a library intending to set up a collection of phonorecordings should look elsewhere than in Chapters 13 and 14 of the *Anglo-American Cataloging Rules.*

Nor is much more help furnished by any subsequent sections. Chapter 15 is devoted to pictures and other two-dimensional representations. It begins with a statement that libraries which contain such collections may elect to treat them in various ways. Unless the painter or photographer of the picture is extremely important, it is always best to list a picture collection strictly by subject, working out those headings which would be most descriptive of the precise matter illustrated by the picture. The same holds true for picture collections which are utilized primarily for illustrating natural life or furniture or whatever may be built up from periodicals and retained in manila folders without mounting. Each picture should be chosen as much for illustrating a single item in the subject heading list as for any other feature. If any kind of cross indexing is made, a dummy picture can be placed in the folder or, in the case of a larger collection, each picture can be labelled on the reverse with an accession number. It is a very simple task to work out a coordinate indexing system using original

accession numbers. Pictures which are lent are best handled in this fashion and use of the accession number will provide an easy means of maintaining *ad hoc* circulation records. Copies of famous paintings are controlled best by listing them under the name of the artist, and each can be treated as a kind of "one-page" book, if so desired.

The goal in processing non-book materials ought to be ease and swiftness of handling without regard to "standard practice" as exemplified by arbitrary books of rules. This has always been the case from the time the first collection of recordings was begun in 1914 by the St. Paul, Minnesota, Library. Although the *Anglo-American Cataloging Rules* specify otherwise, those libraries which process non-book materials most successfully do so on a basis which serves a local public at least cost. Certainly the new rules do not constitute a code of law which must be followed simply because it has been issued. And, in the author's opinion, it is most unlikely that there will ever be a means of dealing with non-book collections of any real size or importance without first developing a special means of control beyond what the *Anglo-American Rules* suggest. This was the case with manuscripts and with atlases, and the librarian is referred for help to the not-overlarge literature on the theory of classification ("theory" not "history" for much of what is pretentiously called the "theory of classification" is, in fact, mere history).

In conclusion, there are no books which tell a librarian precisely how best to process non-book materials nor which provide a better rule of thumb than the general one of treating each collection of non-book materials as a separate and special entity, the use of which is inevitably governed by the nature of the material itself. Nearly all large public and university libraries which have dealt with such special materials have "made do" with the combinations of systems for both processing and identifying which best serve local library needs. One thing is clear—the new rules of cataloging give no more help than did the old and should not be followed. What is needed urgently is the development and valid testing of improved methods, approaches one might reasonably have expected the new *Anglo-American Cataloging Rules* to propose but which are absent.

References

1. American Library Association. *Anglo-American Cataloging Rules.* Prepared by the American Library Association (and others). Chicago, ALA, 1967.

Selection, Processing, Storage of Non-Print Materials: A Critique

2. Hines, Theodore C., and Harris, Jessica L. *Computer Filing of Index, Bibliographic, and Catalog Entries.* Newark, N.J., Bro-Dart Foundation, 1966.

<div align="center">ADDITIONAL REFERENCE</div>

Oyler, Patricia. "The Concept of Main Entry as Applied to Musical Phonograph Records." Unpublished seminar paper for the Graduate School of Library and Information Sciences, University of Pittsburgh, 1967. [The author investigated the practices at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, Cleveland Public Library, the Free Library of Philadelphia, and New York Public Library. She found that practices differed at each of these libraries, not only from the recommendations of the *Anglo-American Cataloging Rules* but from each other.]