Consulting for Large Geographic Areas

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Under the inspiration of such factors as the Library Services and Construction Act, increasing state aid for public and school libraries, various types of cooperative programs, federal legislation affecting libraries, and new trends in library architecture, library surveys have proliferated. The library surveyor is being called upon to advise and consult on building plans, development of collections, personnel problems, administrative organization, schemes for library cooperation, and applications of automation and mechanization to libraries.

Library surveys and consulting assignments are most commonly concerned with detailed studies of individual libraries related to specific local needs or problems. Examples are numerous. The present study, however, deals with more broadly based investigations, such as groups of libraries in a state, city, region, or nation. The primary focus will be on library resources, i.e., collections or holdings, and closely allied matters.

Published surveys of library resources vary widely in thoroughness, amount of detail, care in planning, form and arrangement of data, background of the surveyors, and other aspects. Because some have been sketchy, incomplete, and not well organized for use, doubts have been expressed about their value. Among the purposes that resource surveys are designed to serve are to aid the research worker in locating materials which might otherwise be overlooked or found with difficulty; to provide leads for interlibrary loan inquiries; and to furnish a basis for

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cooperative planning, such as divisions of fields of collecting and agreements for specialization.

The first comprehensive survey of the resources of a large region was undertaken under the sponsorship of the ALA Committee on Resources of Southern Libraries and published by the American Library Association in 1938 under the title Resources of Southern Libraries: A Survey of Facilities for Research.1 The committee was created in 1934 to coordinate and increase facilities available for advanced study in the region. Every proposal for carrying out the stated objectives, however, was handicapped by lack of information on library holdings. No intelligent division of collecting interests, development of union catalogs, or other cooperative enterprise could proceed without an adequate basis of fact on which to build. A systematic investigation of holdings in all relevant types of institutions appeared to be the logical requirement.

To eliminate individual differences, so far as practicable, and to insure a fairly uniform final result, since a team of some twenty persons was recruited to assist in the project, a guide was developed to be followed by the surveyors. Types of material to be examined and data to be obtained in each field were outlined. In general, correspondence, questionnaires, and similar long-distance methods were ruled out. Instead, investigators visited and made firsthand studies of libraries. On numerous occasions subject specialists were consulted for expert advice. Important individual titles were listed for illustrative purposes, but the chief aim was to prepare condensed descriptions of entire collections according to form or subject.

The specific objectives of the southern libraries survey were these: to provide a basis for interlibrary loans; to assist scholars and advanced students to find the best collections in their fields; to give a basis for planning, as in agreements to divide acquisition activities; to aid national and regional union catalogs; to locate and describe little-known collections of value for research; to discover particular weaknesses in libraries of the South; and to stimulate the development of research collections. Thirteen states, from Virginia to Texas, were included, and the gathering of data for each state was done by one or more librarians familiar with conditions and usually residing in the state.

Two supplementary reports were issued later dealing with southern libraries: Opportunities for Library Cooperation and Coordination in the Richmond Area: Report of a Survey, with Recommendations (1947);2 and Richard Harwell's Research Resources in the Georgia-
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Florida Libraries of SIRF: Emory University, Florida State University, Georgia Institute of Technology, the University of Florida, the University of Georgia, the University of Miami, published by the Southern Regional Education Board (1955).

Four years after the southern libraries survey, a comparable investigation was undertaken for a much smaller geographic area, but one far richer in library resources. Sponsored by the ALA Board on Resources of American Libraries, another publication was issued by the American Library Association in 1942: Resources of New York City Libraries: A Survey of Facilities for Advanced Study and Research. The procedure followed was substantially the same as for the study of southern libraries. By limiting the task to the five boroughs of New York City, it was practicable to see all the collections at first hand. The holdings of nearly 400 libraries were described. There was an immense variety in the types of institutions, ranging from great general collections, comprehensive of all subjects, to highly specialized libraries limited to a small segment of a research field. At the time of the survey, New York City’s libraries possessed about 16.5 million volumes, larger by several millions than any other city in the country (Washington, D.C., has since moved into first place). The richness of these collections was of a comparable nature. One of the aims of the New York survey, in addition to those mentioned for the South, was to relieve the burden on the largest libraries by spreading library use among a considerable number of institutions. The published guide revealed not only to New Yorkers but to scholars everywhere something of the wealth of opportunities for library research in the nation's largest city.

At approximately the same time as the New York City survey, John Van Male, Director of the Pacific Northwest Bibliographic Center, was undertaking a project quite similar in plan to the southern study. This resulted in publication of Resources of Pacific Northwest Libraries: A Survey of Facilities for Study and Research (1943). The holdings of libraries in British Columbia, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington were investigated. The principal libraries were visited. The surveyor's findings were described under several major categories: general works, humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and technology.

In 1937, Harry Miller Lydenberg, Director of the New York Public Library, proposed publication of an annual report on distinctive collections acquired by libraries in the United States. Such an enterprise was inaugurated by the ALA Board on Resources of American Libraries, and continued for an 11-year period in a series of articles appearing in The Library Quarterly under the title “Notable Materials Added to Ameri-
can Libraries, 1938-49. The information compiled was classified by broad subjects with no attempt to keep information for an individual library or for a region together. Inquiries were sent to about 150 institutions, chiefly university, reference, and large public libraries.

During the 1930s, in the midst of the Great Depression, there was a large-scale movement to establish local, state, and regional union catalogs, as well as to build up the National Union Catalog in the Library of Congress, because of the sudden availability of a mass of free labor from federal government relief agencies. The result was the creation within the span of a decade of a variety of city, county, state, regional, exchange, and subject union catalogs, widely distributed over the nation. Out of the numerous problems which inevitably arose from this rapid growth came the need for a comprehensive study of the current state of the art, techniques, policies, the nature of existing catalogs, and plans for the future. Out of discussions in the Joint Committee on Materials for Research of the American Council of Learned Societies and the Social Science Research Council came a proposal for a national survey of union catalogs. In cooperation with the ALA Board on Resources of American Libraries, a successful application was submitted to the Carnegie Corporation for financial support for the investigation. To demonstrate the potential value and importance of a union catalog study, the following considerations were outlined:

1. experience had shown that through the use of microcopying methods and relief labor, it was possible to construct union catalogs;
2. ideally, it should be possible for a scholar to learn quickly whether a given book is available in the United States;
3. many books not recorded in the National Union Catalog, primarily based on the holdings of large libraries, are available in smaller libraries;
4. the relative value of regional catalogs as against one all-inclusive national catalog should be weighed;
5. by sampling and statistical procedures, it should be possible to estimate the probable total number of titles in the country; and
6. a further investigation should reveal total American library resources as compared with total world library resources.

In brief, the survey would be concerned essentially with inspecting by statistical and sampling methods the contents of union catalogs in order to determine how rapidly new findings of titles diminish as union catalogs multiply, and to discover the distribution of titles among
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libraries, the percentage of the world's literature available somewhere in
the United States, the effect of union catalogs on the selection of books
in libraries, the uses of union catalogs, and the best form for a union
catalog. The foregoing were the principal phases selected for study by
the surveyors.

A decision was made to divide the investigation among four indi-
viduals working under the direction of the chairman of the Board on
Resources. The persons selected were George A. Schwegmann, Jr.,
Director of the Library of Congress Union Catalog; Arthur B. Berthold,
Associate Director of the Philadelphia Union Catalogue; John Paul
Stone, Librarian of the California State College at San Diego; and
LeRoy C. Merritt. Among them, these four investigators visited and
inspected nearly every union catalog, large or small, in the United
States. Schwegmann's contribution considered the National Union
Catalog's historical background, its composition, administration,
methods of compilation, various uses, and the outlook for its future
expansion. Merritt studied the extent of duplication among libraries,
holdings of foreign books, the probable number of book titles in the
United States and in the world, problems of regionalism as they relate to
libraries and union catalogs, and problems of union catalog compila-
tion and maintenance costs. Stone's assignment was to study the actual
and potential uses of union catalogs. Berthold added two sections: a
manual of union catalog administration, and a directory recording
every union catalog of any type in the United States about which
information could be obtained—a total of ninety-two. These several
studies were brought together, edited, and published by the American
Library Association, in 1942, under the title Union Catalogs in the
United States.

In 1949, at the invitation of the Librarian of Congress, the present
writer was invited to serve as Acting Chief of the Union Catalog Div-
ision to review the problems and to make recommendations concerning
the future development of the union catalog. A "Report and Supple-
mentary Report on the National Union Catalog and Related Matters"8
was issued. In the thirty years since the report was submitted, some of the
principal recommendations have been effected: selected libraries are
now reporting their acquisitions regularly to the National Union
Catalog, and their holdings are included in the published National
Union Catalog; a separate subject catalog began in 1950; the National
Union Catalog, Pre-1956 Imprints in published form is near comple-
tion in more than 600 volumes; and a Union Catalog of Manuscript
Collections has been published periodically since 1959.
Inspiration for a continuing national project relating to library resources came from a work published in 1930: Constance M. Winchell’s *Locating Books for Interlibrary Loan; With a Bibliography of Printed Aids Which Show Location of Books in American Libraries,* a subject list of bibliographies which locate copies. This work had been found useful by reference librarians, but a more complete record was needed. Consequently, the ALA Board on Resources of American Libraries came to the rescue with publication of *American Library Resources; A Bibliographical Guide* (1951), listing 5578 handbooks, checklists, bibliographies, calendars, surveys, union lists, union catalogs, and similar guides to American library resources. A first supplement, for 1950-61, added 2818 items; the second supplement, 1961-70, listed 3421 titles; and a third supplement for 1971-80, is in process. The three published volumes are arranged by broad categories of the Dewey Decimal Classification system and include detailed indexes of authors, compilers, editors, libraries and other organizations, subjects, types of material, and occasional titles. The data for these several volumes were compiled from information supplied by libraries throughout the country and from a search of published sources.

The pattern adopted for the American list was followed in preparing *British Library Resources: A Bibliographical Guide* (1973), which recorded 5039 items that describe library holdings in England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. There was a slight variation in arrangement of the latter work: individual bibliography, biography, and criticism were separated and placed at the end under personal names. The mass of material listed in the British guide was obtained chiefly by visits to the British Museum, the National Libraries, university and college libraries, large public libraries, and society, association, and government department libraries throughout the British Isles.

A different approach was used in national surveys of libraries in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, over a period of about eighteen years.

A document which had great influence on administrators, faculty members and librarians in Canada was Edwin E. Williams’s *Resources of Canadian University Libraries for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences: Report of a Survey for the National Conference of Canadian Universities and Colleges* (1962). A principal division of the report is devoted to “Research Collections” in the humanities and social sciences, consisting of a comparative summary of the holdings for research purposes of fourteen college and university libraries. The basis was a test list of periodicals in twenty-four fields and of monographic
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material in thirty-four areas.

A few years later, the Canadian Association of College and University Libraries and the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada agreed that a comprehensive national investigation was needed. Financial support was obtained for the project from the Canada Council and the Council on Library Resources. A survey staff of three Canadian librarians, with special assistance from others, undertook the main task of collecting the necessary data. In carrying out its assignment, the staff visited every university library in Canada, as well as many college, public, government, and special libraries. The final report, Resources of Canadian Academic and Research Libraries, appeared in 1967 in both English and French.13

The Canadian survey is broadly inclusive of every phase of library operations. Following descriptions in profile form of the universities and colleges of Canada are separate chapters on administrative organization, technical services, readers' services and use, physical facilities, personnel, faculty and student views on library service, library automation and mechanization, financial support, resources for study and research, standards for book collections, and a listing of some specialized collections in Canadian libraries. An appendix contains “Bibliographical References to Canadian Library Resources.” A pair of coauthors reviewing the report as a whole stated: “Given this assessment as a basis on which to build and with the recommendations throughout the report, the Canadian university library community is fully supplied with the information needed to increase, substantially, its strength and usefulness.”14

While Williams was in Canada exploring the strength of university libraries in the humanistic and social science fields, another American librarian, Maurice F. Tauber, was traveling in Australia upon the invitation of the Australian Advisory Council on Bibliographical Services (AACOBS), for an even more ambitious investigation. The stated objectives for which Tauber was brought to Australia under a Fulbright grant were as follows: to describe and evaluate the major collections in the country; to make known the strength of general libraries in special subjects; to discover unsuspected or little-known collections of real importance; to reveal weaknesses which may be important to individual research workers or to the national interest; to acquaint scholars and other research workers, including those from overseas, with the collections likely to be most useful to them; to assist in spreading library use, with possible relief to some large libraries; to assist universities, governments and other bodies in planning, teaching and research programs; to
stimulate the strengthening of library resources generally; to provide a sound basis for cooperation between libraries in policies and programs for the sharing of resources; to facilitate interlibrary lending; to supplement a national union catalog; and to assist in the compilation of bibliographies.

The Tauber report, prepared after a stay of six months in Australia and visits to more than 160 libraries in all the Australian states and the Australian Capital Territory, was never published in full. The complete report, in three volumes, was given very limited distribution in typescript form. A summary, forty-two pages in length, was prepared by Tauber and published in 1963 by the sponsoring organization, AACOBS, under the title *Resources of Australian Libraries: Summary Report of a Survey Conducted in 1961 for the Australian Advisory Council on Bibliographical Services.* The Tauber survey was done immediately prior to the Australian libraries' taking off on their greatest period of growth and development. Its statistics are outdated, but many of its findings are still relevant.

A follow-up survey, with the addition of New Zealand, was undertaken in 1978 by Robert B. Downs. The procedure followed in this instance was to visit all except a few of the newest university libraries in both countries, plus national, state, large public, and a limited number of special libraries. The published report, *Australian and New Zealand Library Resources,* is divided into three principal sections: descriptions of collections relating to specific subjects or types of material (112 headings), collections relating to individuals, and a bibliography of 566 items listing further sources of information. There is also a detailed index. The study, done under a grant from the Council on Library Resources, was devoted entirely to an evaluation of library holdings, disregarding such matters as administration, organization, finances, personnel, and physical facilities.

Less ambitious in geographical scope have been a number of library surveys of single states. In 1964, under the auspices of the North Carolina Governor's Commission on Library Resources, a comprehensive investigation was undertaken of all types of libraries in North Carolina. The commission's report, *Resources of North Carolina Libraries,* was issued in 1965. Detailed data were assembled by librarians representing the principal groups of libraries in the state: public, school, junior college, senior college, university and special. There was a chapter also on library education. The commission itself, consisting of thirty-nine members representing all areas of the state, took responsibility for conducting a public opinion poll in which a cross section of
citizens expressed their views on the existing state of public library service and offered suggestions for improvement. Another group of citizens, faculty members representing all the senior colleges in the state, cooperated in supplying critical analyses of the adequacy of library service in their institutions.

The governor’s commission was guided by the belief that a review of North Carolina’s library resources should take into account the needs of the entire population, for every age level and at every stage of educational attainment. It recognized that all libraries, regardless of type, should be seen as a whole and fitted into a common pattern. The published report begins with a study of the people of the state—rural and urban, white and black, rate of increase, migration in and out, age distribution, economic status, and educational status. There follow separate chapters on the state’s official library agencies; public libraries; the major universities (Duke and University of North Carolina); senior colleges; community colleges, junior colleges, technical institutes, and industrial education centers; school libraries; and special libraries. Appendices describe special collections, archives and manuscript collections, standards for libraries, library education, and the status of cooperative undertakings.

A year after the North Carolina survey report appeared, a similar document, *Resources of Missouri Libraries*, was published by the Missouri State Library. The original inspiration for the project came from the Missouri Association of College and Research Libraries, a division of the Missouri Library Association. A team of ten public, college, and university librarians was appointed to gather data required for the investigation. Among them, they visited personally all the approximately 125 university, college, state, research, public, and special libraries selected for inclusion, in order to make firsthand observations and to verify data submitted by individual institutions.

After a background review of Missouri’s population, economic status, educational outlook, and other factors, the published report devotes seven chapters to the state’s principal universities, senior colleges, junior colleges, public libraries, special libraries, library cooperation and interrelationships, and special collections in Missouri libraries. Appendices contain standard lists of periodicals and reference works, a list of standard guides for collection development, a statement of the functions of the state library commission, and a listing of the principal business centers in Missouri as related to library resources.

Quite different patterns from those followed in Missouri and North Carolina were adopted for two Illinois surveys. The first, under the
The sponsorship of the Illinois Board of Higher Education, was undertaken for the board’s use in developing a master plan for higher education in Illinois. The board assigned to its Library Committee the task of examining in breadth and depth the college and university libraries in Illinois at all levels, public and nonpublic. A total of eighty-nine institutions were surveyed by the committee, including eight state-supported colleges and universities (on eleven campuses), thirty-two public junior colleges, six nonpublic universities, and forty-three nonpublic senior colleges, junior colleges, and independent professional schools. The *Report of the Library Committee* (1969) dealt with six principal areas: library education and manpower, physical facilities, book resources and collection development, library cooperation, library automation, and financial support. Ten statistical appendices presented data on such basic relationships as total library expenditures to total college expenditures for general education; total library expenditures to salaries and wages, books, periodicals and binding, and general expense; enrollment to number of volumes and current periodicals; number of seats to total student enrollment; area of shelving for books to total volumes in library; total net assignable square feet in library to area assigned to staff members; number of professional staff members to enrollment; percentage of professional library staff to total library staff; and student per capita expenditures. The report found that the resources of the group as a whole were extensive, but unevenly distributed, and that there were numerous problems of inadequate book collections, shortages of space and staff, and poor financial support.

A second Illinois survey, done for the Illinois State Library, was published in 1974 by the American Library Association under the title *Guide to Illinois Library Resources*. It grew out of a recommendation contained in the report of its Library Committee to the Illinois Board of Higher Education in 1969: “It is recommended that there be compiled and published a guide for library users to libraries and library resources in Illinois, describing special and notable collections, locations, regulations governing use, and such data as hours, photocopying facilities, and interlibrary loan practices.”

It was determined at the outset that chief attention in the Illinois study should be concentrated on describing resources in every type of library that held collections of potential importance for students, scholars, and general research workers—general reference, college, university, public, and special. Further, there was no limitation as to subject fields or types of material covered. The published guide has three principal divisions: (1) descriptions of collections, alphabetically
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arranged, by subject areas and of types of materials; (2) descriptions of collections, also alphabetical, of biography, bibliography, and criticism relating to individuals; and (3) a bibliography of references to books, pamphlets, articles, and other items listing or describing library collections in Illinois. Four subject fields were surveyed by specialists: American literature, medical sciences, law and music. There was considerable reliance upon a detailed questionnaire for gathering information in other areas.

Looked at from a national point of view, a state-by-state inventory of library resources would vastly increase our knowledge of the country's libraries, including their problems and needs, and provide a solid foundation for moving ahead with a national plan for libraries.

Library surveys may often be designed for a special purpose. An example is a study prepared for the Kansas Higher Education Facilities Commission in 1965 and published under the title Survey of Library Space Needs of Colleges and Universities in Kansas. A survey team of twelve, made up principally of Kansas college and university librarians, paid personal visits to the various campuses to supplement information obtained from a questionnaire form, "Criteria for Determining Library Space Needs."

Another example of a specialized survey was sponsored by the Association of Research Libraries in 1969, and subsequently published by ARL: University Library Statistics; Assembled for the Joint Committee on University Library Standards of the Association of Research Libraries and the Association of College and Research Libraries. The report presents a wide variety of statistical data collected from some fifty of the principal American university libraries on finances, resources, personnel, space, etc.

Cooperative programs sometimes invite critical inspections from the outside. In 1956 the Arkansas Foundation of Associated Colleges applied for and received a grant from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund for financial support of a plan to enrich library resources through the purchase of materials in certain assigned fields. After a trial period of about two years, the cooperative program, in which seven private colleges in Arkansas were participating, was the subject of a comprehensive study undertaken in 1958 by A.F. Kuhlman and published under the title The Libraries of the Arkansas Foundation of Associated Colleges; Being an Evaluation of Their Collections and the Effort to Improve Them on a Cooperative Basis, Including a Statement of the Most Urgent Needs for Improvement. A few years later, a further assessment of the success of the program was made by Robert B. Downs, who visited all
seven campuses. His report was published by the Arkansas Foundation in 1963, under the title *Report on a Survey of the Libraries of the Arkansas Foundation of Associated Colleges.*

A year later, a report affecting libraries in several adjacent states was published by the Kansas City Regional Council for Higher Education, entitled *A Survey of Cooperating Libraries for the Kansas City Regional Council for Higher Education.* The council had been chartered in 1962 as a nonprofit corporation devoted to cooperative programming in higher education for the greater Kansas City area. Early in its deliberations and planning, the council recognized that library development was a key element in any program for building strong educational institutions. Before proceeding with plans for library cooperation, growth, and improvement, the council obtained a grant from the Fund for the Advancement of Education for a study of existing conditions and future potentialities. Specifically, the consultant appointed was asked to do the following:

1. To survey present library holdings and policies in the [fourteen] institutions affiliated with the Council [located in Missouri and Kansas].
2. Develop general criteria for library holdings, acquisitions, discards, and policies for possible adoption by the schools.
3. Develop recommendations for cooperative action among the colleges participating.
4. Develop recommendations for cooperative action between the colleges participating in the study and library resources elsewhere in the area, such as in other institutions of higher education, Kansas City Public Library, and Linda Hall Science Library.
5. Develop recommendations concerning a central depository library at the Kansas City Public Library for area higher education.

The council membership comprised representatives of a campus of the University of Missouri (formerly the University of Kansas City), two four-year Catholic men's colleges, a four-year Catholic women's college, a city-supported junior college, a specialized art institute offering a four-year bachelor's degree, a graduate theological seminary, and seven four-year, coeducational Protestant church-related colleges and universities. In addition, it was obvious that the resources of certain other institutions were of basic importance and would be drawn upon extensively by council members, e.g., the Kansas City Public Library, Linda Hall Science Library, Nelson Art Gallery in Kansas City, the Truman Library at Independence, Missouri, a number of specialized libraries in
the area, and possibly the University of Kansas at Lawrence and the University of Missouri at Columbia.

Based on visits to the individual libraries, conferences with college administrative officers and librarians, and broad sampling of faculty opinion, the library survey report included a series of recommendations on collection development, centralized processing, cooperative storage, means of expediting bibliographical access and facilitating use, finances, and establishment of a regional library authority.

The most exhaustive study of the influence of library surveys was done by Ernest W. Erickson in his work *College and University Library Surveys, 1938-1952*. Erickson found that 60 percent of approximately 775 recommendations contained in 12 surveys had been carried out completely or in large part, and another 10 percent had been achieved to some extent. In only 15 percent of the cases were the surveys considered to have exerted no influence. Erickson concluded that in most cases following a survey, organization had been improved, budgets increased, technical processes made more efficient, readers' services bettered, and other improvements made.

An article on "Library Surveys" by Stephen A. McCarthy and Murray L. Howder predicted that in the future general library surveys will give way to "more specific and limited studies of particular facets or problems of libraries...as libraries grow in size and complexity." The authors apparently found no reason, however, to believe that the survey as one technique for improving libraries will cease to exist.

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27. Ibid., p. 1.
29. McCarthy and Howder, op. cit., p. 139.