

C. C. Williamson: A Record of Service to American Librarianship

ON JUNE 30, 1943, Charles Clarence Williamson brought to a close his active professional career, including seventeen years of work as director of libraries and dean of the School of Library Service at Columbia University.

Dr. Williamson's life affords one of those examples, fortunately not rare among librarians, in which marked ability achieves expression along an avenue which is unusual and unforeseen. He appeared at one time to be destined for a life of college teaching, but his great contribution turned out to be the organizing and administering of libraries and of a library school.

Born at Salem, Ohio, in 1877, Dr. Williamson spent his boyhood in a rural environment and his earliest professional years as a public school teacher. He secured his college education at Ohio Wesleyan University and at Western Reserve University, where in 1904 he received his bachelor's degree. Upon graduation he entered the University of Wisconsin as a candidate for the doctorate and at the close of two years transferred to Columbia University, which granted him in 1907, the degree of doctor of philosophy in economics. He taught economics and politics for four years thereafter at Bryn Mawr College. In 1911 he moved to New York and served successively as head of the Economics Division and of the Municipal Reference Branch of the New York Public Library, as statistician for the Americanization study of the Carnegie Corporation, again as chief of the Eco-

nomics Division at the library, and finally as director of the Information Service of the Rockefeller Foundation. The last of these connections continued until 1926, when he assumed his responsibilities at Columbia University.

Important as were Dr. Williamson's activities in the New York Public Library and in the offices of the foundations after coming to New York, they were but one part of the prelude to his major work. The other part was his examination of library schools in the United States, which was authorized by the Carnegie Corporation in 1919 and reported upon in his *Training for Library Service* in 1923. This accomplished, on a scale appropriate to library schools, the kind of thing which the surveys by Flexner, Mann, and Reed had done in the fields of medicine, engineering, and law respectively. It brought into the open the merits and weaknesses of the schools; and, although many of these already were familiar to librarians and to faculties, the findings focused attention on what needed correcting and on what outsiders expected of the schools. As a consequence it opened a new channel for the interest of the Carnegie Corporation in library service, challenged the American Library Association to exert an effective influence upon library schools, and led to a renovation in education for librarianship. The gifts of the Carnegie Corporation and the work of the A.L.A. Board of Education for Librarianship were the active forces in the process, but the Williamson report was the fulcrum.

When Dr. Williamson took office at Columbia he faced two tasks. One was immediate and embodied his own further share in making over the scheme of professional preparation. It involved the transplanting and reorganizing of two library schools. The New York State Library School, stemming from the original enterprise of its kind begun at Columbia College in 1887, had been successful for three decades and more. Its position was anomalous, however, for although it operated under the Regents of the University of the State of New York, the policy of the regents is not to conduct teaching agencies. The Library School of the New York Public Library also had established a creditable record, but, being sponsored by a public library, it lacked contacts with higher education. The transfer of these institutions to Columbia University and their consolidation there had been proposed incident to the designation of a new director of libraries. To Dr. Williamson these constituted an attractive aspect of the post. His selection was the signal to go ahead with the new arrangement. He accordingly was called upon to begin at once the assembling of a faculty, the planning of a curriculum, and the acquiring of equipment. This he did, and in September of 1926 the School of Library Service initiated its classes.

The full record of the school under Dr. Williamson's direction would require more extended treatment than is possible here. From the outset it embraced features which by that time librarians were coming to consider essential, such as a large student body, an expanded faculty, a diversified program, a university connection, improved resources, and generous physical facilities. Moreover, it has sought throughout to keep responsive to

the demands and currents of thought in the library field. Evolution has been a keynote. The results have shown in various ways, but preeminently in the scheme of courses, syllabi, and examinations which were instituted at the close of the school's first decade and which liberalized markedly its already extensive offerings and rendered them more adaptable to the individual interests of students.

Coordinating University Libraries

The other undertaking before Dr. Williamson in 1926 was even larger and more intricate, if less pressing. The university libraries had functioned for years with varying degrees of effectiveness but without full coordination as regards the building of collections, the systematizing of service, and the administering of personnel. The physical facilities also were a handicap at some points. The applying of remedies here was a long-term task. Gradually and over a period of years procedures have been reorganized; a personnel scheme has been introduced; staff appointments have been made with a view to strengthening weak spots and stepping up efficiency; and a new building has been erected which typifies the workshop principle and assures adequate quarters both for a large section of the library activities and stock and for the School of Library Service. All of these, and especially the problems of staff and building, entailed major efforts and tested anew the director's powers of organization and administration.

While discharging his heavy official duties, Dr. Williamson has borne an ample share of work for other library organizations and interests. He has been the main-spring of the annual Thanksgiving-time conferences of eastern college librarians;

he was a prime mover in marshaling support in the United States for the completion of the printed catalog of the Bibliothèque nationale; he was president from 1929 to 1931 of the Association of American Library Schools; he has served a term on the Executive Board of the American Library Association; and he has been active in the Association of Research Libraries. Significant honors have come to him, particularly in the receipt from Columbia University of the honorary degree of Litt.D. in 1929 and his designation by the French government in the same year as Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur, this in recognition of his help on the catalog of Bibliothèque nationale.

Ingredients of Success

The ingredients of success often are complex or intangible but in Dr. Williamson's case some of them at least are easily discernible. His farm life gave him a contact with realities which many men miss. The time he devoted in college

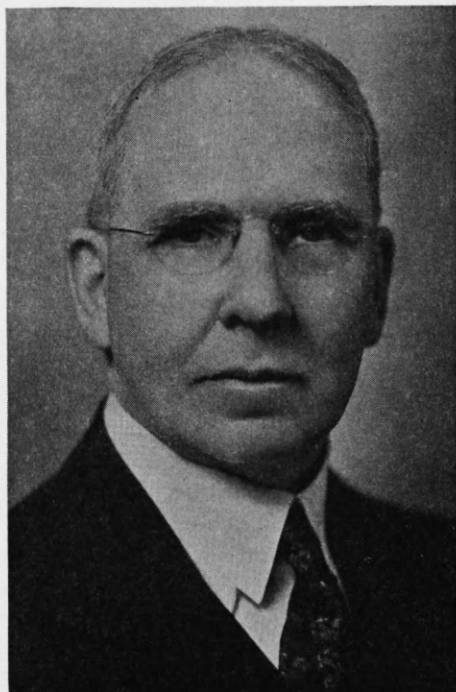
days as secretary to the president of Western Reserve University afforded him an insight into the management and financing of an educational institution. His graduate study assured for him a thorough academic equipment. Initiative and capacity for planning and execution are strong in him, as became evident when they demanded quicker and more complete fulfillment than seemed likely to be attained in a professor's field of activity. And behind all these are a keenness of mind, a clearness of vision, a quiet but dynamic enthusiasm, an ability to wait as well as to act, a persistence in pressing toward a goal, and a readiness to carry loads of work far beyond the powers of most men, which together could not fail to make him a leader and a builder.

Dr. Williamson leaves the scene of his labors after setting a record of extraordinary accomplishment and with the acclaim of a profession which recognizes his contributions to its progress.

ERNEST J. REECE

Frank K. Walter in Retrospect

THE RETIREMENT of Frank Keller Walter from active administrative work as librarian of the University of Minnesota revives my respectful compassion for several university presidents who have cast their nets for likely librarians within the last decade but have found none suitable. Their most frequent complaint has been that young and otherwise eligible men did not know literature or were ignorant of books. Candidates might dilate upon technical processes and mass applications but exhibited a serene ignorance of the world's great books and even had no special field in which they excelled. This presidential regret would seem justified by the fact that historically all academic enlightenment was based upon the book. Actually and at present the book, and the knowledge of books, is no exclusive criterion of a person's fitness for librarianship. Such gifts as educational interest, a talent for organization, and that instinctive academic ingenuity which makes men indispensable on the campus—such gifts are, after all, more to the purpose than profound bibliological attainments. An alert sensibility toward books requires a long development, and a profound bibliological experience is a flower of slow growth. No librarian can begin a career with these qualifications. But he would better not aspire to conduct the affairs of a university librarian, unless he possesses academic ingenuity and a sound philosophy of life. My conviction is that some presidents of universities and colleges now have become aware of these considerations and do not look for bibliologists first but seek out scientists or



FRANK KELLER WALTER

humanists who respect bibliology and know how to apply it to organized educational functions.

These remarks, and let me say it frankly, reflect somewhat upon Frank K. Walter but not exclusively. They apply here and there, Mr. Walter's designated successor not excepted.

There always was an air of clear thought and wholesome balance about the Twin Cities. The University of Minnesota reflected this spirit. Old Mr. Pillsbury sounded the note by his very concentration of benevolent humanity. Northrup and Burton organized its aims and methods. Burton was great enough

to have become President of the United States. East and West met happily in the faculties they assembled: Puritan and Quaker influences combined with modern philosophies and a wholesome Anglo-American restraint ever kept chaos and extremes from the campus. Scandinavian calmness entered into this distinctly North-western synthesis, which still goes well with a pioneer reverence in spirit and mind. The influence is tonic.

In 1874 when Frank Keller Walter was born, much of Minnesota still was unexplored and unsettled. Its magnificent republic grew and was organized while he qualified as a teacher at the Normal School in West Chester, Pa., a place of literary fame and charm among the knowing. Haverford turned him into an M.A. in 1900, but then Walter gravitated into the macrocosm of New York and became a librarian. I believe some degree of predestination was active in this. Such librarians as he were born for our kind of service, even though the New York State Library School admirably organized their abilities in some cases and gave them the outlook that confirmed their choice. Mr. Walter impresses me as having always bent upon the world that straight, direct glance by which we know him, as if he asked: "What can I do for you?"

The library school refused to part with this young man; he served as its vice director until 1919 and accepted the Minnesota university librarianship in 1921, then nationally known, a flock of grateful students bearing witness to his skill all over the country. Mr. Walter's predecessor in office, Mr. Gerould, had prepared the Minnesota soil with marked ability, but we know that sometimes it is more difficult to continue than to begin.

Mr. Walter, however, step by step, lifted the library out of its initial academic modesty to a central place on the Minneapolis campus. In addition, he continued his teaching, and another accession of students grew along his side.

Mr. Walter's excellent method in all that he undertakes qualified him eminently as a teacher and as an administrator. He speaks well, his outlook always is constructive, his personal fund of knowledge deep and genuine. He belongs to that class of general librarians endowed with wide vision who, as Dr. Putnam says, still remain necessary in spite of all specialization. This necessity depends upon a serene and kindly view of mankind and an abundant experience with the use of books, not merely as a mass, but as individual factors in education.

This combination of personal qualifications in time won recognition for our friend in many places. Mr. Walter has served as lecturer in several of our library schools, and his presence at library conventions always indicated life and action. The A.L.A. recognized him on its Council and afterwards on its Executive Board as well as on its Editorial Committee. He served on the executive committee of the Association of Research Libraries in 1939 to 1940. We have read his papers here and there for many years. Probably his most lasting contribution was the work, *Bibliography: Practical, Enumerative, Historical*, which was accomplished (1928) in collaboration with that other great and good man Henry Bartlett Van Hoesen. This work deserves a new edition.

It has been my pleasure to take a bird's-eye view of Walter's numerous papers, addresses, and reviews in our library periodicals. His favorite topics are college and university library buildings, the con-

servation of books, the disposition of bindings and binding materials. To show the wide range of his interests and observations I have arranged the major part of his professional writings from short titles and in alphabetical order: binding, cataloging, certification for librarians, clippings (preservation), college library buildings, college library possibilities, community and library, conservation of printed materials, faculty cooperation, fugitive material, high school and the college student, hospital librarians, ideals of bookmaking, interlibrary loans, land-grant colleges, legislative reference work, librarian authors, librarian's own reading, libraries and business organization, library binding economy, library furniture, and library printing, library school growth, library training (basic courses), metal book stacks, Minnesota college libraries, periodicals (changes in), periodicals in library service, personality qualifications, reading for personal culture, religious periodicals, safeguarding rare books, schools with library-trained teachers, standardization, technical periodicals, university library binding, university library buildings, visual methods, visualizing the catalog.

The following quotation from Mr. Walter's article on the need of an introductory manual in bibliography (1927) deserves special attention:

In our zeal we, or rather our professional forbears, gave to the very word "bibliography" such limited meaning that to many library workers today it means virtually nothing but a list of book titles or references to printed material of some sort. We have enlarged the professional doorway and reception hall while we have closed many of the rooms to which the doorway and hall should lead. In our feeling of responsibility for utilizing books for the social welfare through wider use of them, we sometimes

forget the importance of getting our public interested enough in books to own at least some for themselves and, at least, to know enough about them to borrow them intelligently.

In another paper I find Mr. Walter emphasizing the importance of a well-organized reference service and warning against directing our chief efforts exclusively toward physical expansion and to the extension of collections and of apparatus.

Throughout this librarian's writings I find very few exhortations about what others ought to do but many very clear indications of his own observation and thought, always indicative of good method and well-considered experience.

The University of Minnesota, for the sake of a wholesome historical library continuity, deserves a new edition of Mr. Walter himself; it also has merited for some time a new library building. And Frank Keller Walter, man and librarian, has earned a period of rest, punctuated by the visible evidence of admiration and gratitude from everybody upon whom he ever bent his straight glance and his winning smile. Let us hope that he now will find time to analyze our American humor, the literature of which he has assembled under his hand and studied for many years. His contemporaries and his students all are aware that he never will retire from that seat on our little Parnassus which he fills with that natural dignity by which we know him. And may the young people whom his teaching inspires keep alive and in bloom that symbol of felicitous survival, the perpetual rose (*Rosa hybrida bifera*), the *sera rosa* of our old friend Horace. It blooms in youth and it blooms in old age.

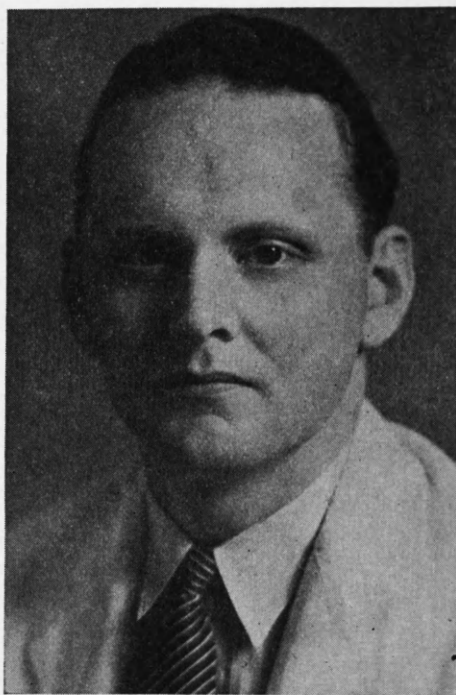
J. CHRISTIAN BAY

R. B. Downs to Illinois

ROBERT BINGHAM DOWNS has been appointed director of the University of Illinois Library and Library School, effective September 1.

This appointment brings to Illinois a man who has demonstrated his ability to carry large responsibilities. After serving as librarian of Colby College, 1929-31, Mr. Downs was brought to the University of North Carolina, his alma mater, as assistant librarian. When Louis R. Wilson left North Carolina to become dean of the Graduate Library School of the University of Chicago in 1932, Mr. Downs was selected as his successor. After serving as university librarian from 1932 to 1938 and as chairman of the administrative board of the library and the School of Library Science from 1933 to 1938, he went to his present position as director of the libraries of New York University. In view of this background of experience in library administration, of his teaching experience at North Carolina and Columbia, and in view, also, of the fact that he is just turning forty, when a man's most productive years often are just beginning, the University of Illinois has reason to feel confident of the steady progress of the library and the library school under his leadership.

While he was at the University of North Carolina, Mr. Downs took an active interest in library service to undergraduate students. The present general college library was created while he was university librarian. He also took considerable initiative in developing, with his colleagues, closer cooperation between Duke University and North Carolina. By



ROBERT BINGHAM DOWNS

the time he left for New York University, he had succeeded to the chairmanship of the Committee on Intellectual Cooperation, a committee created in 1934 and made up of faculty representatives of these two neighboring universities.

At New York University

At New York University Mr. Downs has continued to devote himself to problems of broad significance from the standpoint of university administration. During his incumbency the machinery for centralized purchasing and cataloging for the New York University Libraries has been perfected and the plan expanded. Now,

at Washington Square, the hub of the university library system, buying and cataloging is done for the University Heights library, the home of the Hall of Fame, located some ten miles to the north; for the Medical College library, on the east side of Manhattan Island, closely allied to Bellevue, the great city hospital; for the dental library, also in East Manhattan; for the School of Commerce library, located at Washington Square but organized as a separate entity; and for the Wall Street library in the heart of New York's commercial district on Trinity Place.

Closely related to centralized buying and cataloging is the maintenance of a union catalog, consisting of main entry, for all libraries not under the jurisdiction of Washington Square.

Washington Square Library

A physical reorganization of stacks, reading rooms, and service desks was effected recently at the Washington Square library. To appreciate this accomplishment, the former rather unique situation must be described. There is no separate library building. The main part of the library is in an eleven-story building and a fairly new adjoining wing. The main circulation desk was on the tenth floor with the stacks on the floor below. Some years ago, when the stacks overflowed, a large portion of the basement was taken over for books and serials. This provided more space but also provided the problem of transporting material to the tenth-floor desk and of returning books for shelving. Less-used books were shelved in the basement, but as the collection increased in size, the transportation problem became acute and service costs rose out of all proportion to circulation or the quality of service.

The law collection was similarly scattered between the tenth-floor reading room, ninth-floor stacks, and the basement. Thus, in both large stacks were legal material and general nonlegal material.

Reorganization

A large circulation, added to the complexity of the shelving arrangement, made the situation so critical that reorganization became imperative. Plans were formulated and carried out during the past winter. Simplification included: (a) placing all general books in the extensive basement stacks; (b) concentrating all legal material on the ninth and tenth floors, as the School of Law is on the ninth floor; (c) building a loan desk in a large room, which had been employed for no useful purpose, directly over the basement stacks; and (d) installing a book lift between the latter room and the basement.

The reorganization was actually more involved than the foregoing summary would indicate. Many offices were relocated. The catalog department was moved to another floor, bringing it closer to the acquisition department. Sixty thousand books were moved down eleven floors and nearly this number were moved in the opposite direction simultaneously. All books were available and service was not discontinued during the reorganization.

Mr. Downs' activities and achievements of profession-wide significance have been somewhat varied. He was the third president of the Association of College and Reference Libraries, 1940-41. He is now a member of the A.L.A. Advisory Board for the Study of Special Projects. But it would be appropriate to characterize his professional activities as stressing description of resources for research and library

specialization. His first work in this field was in collaboration with Louis R. Wilson in the preparation of *Special Collections for the Study of History and Literature in the Southeast*, published by the Bibliographical Society of America in 1934. As chairman of a subcommittee of the A.L.A. Board on Resources of American Libraries he edited *Resources of Southern Libraries, A Survey of Facilities for Research* in 1938, and, as chairman of the same board, edited *Library Specialization* in 1941 and *Union Catalogs in the United States* in 1942. Under the sponsorship of the Board on Resources of American Libraries he also wrote the *Resources of New York City Libraries* in 1942, three annual reports on "Notable Materials Added to American Libraries," published in the *Library Quarterly*, 1940-42, and "Leading American Library Collections" in the same journal, 1942. In 1940-41 Mr. Downs served as chairman of a special committee of the American Library Association and the Special Libraries Association charged with the responsibility of describing the resources of American libraries useful for war purposes, an undertaking which resulted in publication of the *Guide to Library Facilities for National Defense* in 1941.

Other recent work by Mr. Downs in the general field of resources includes the chairmanship of a joint committee of the American Library Association and the

Association of Research Libraries for developing the National Union Catalog in the Library of Congress and chairmanship of an Association of Research Libraries committee to plan for postwar book acquisition in Europe.

Asked for his estimate of Mr. Downs, Chancellor Chase writes of him as follows:

The position of director of the libraries at New York University was created to integrate our library resources, scattered through various centers of the institution in the city, and to make of this disjointed service an effective library system. It was too new to have established itself when Mr. Downs came to the university in 1938. He started at scratch and the system has come into being under his patient, persistent, and skilful hand. Central buying and processing of books, for example, developed here by him in the face of natural barriers and understandable antipathies, have accomplished fully the gains in efficiency and economy expected, and he has been no less successful in the integration and upgrading of the library staff and infusing the personnel with a quickened sense of their professional responsibility in the university program. Not only is he a careful, experienced, and solicitous curator, but a man who regularly puts the circulation of books ahead of their conservation. In that respect he is an astute protagonist of the library as an interdependent working adjunct of classroom and laboratory. He has plenty of steam, Downs has, and he knows how to put it in traction with a remarkable minimum of waste in whistle-tooting.

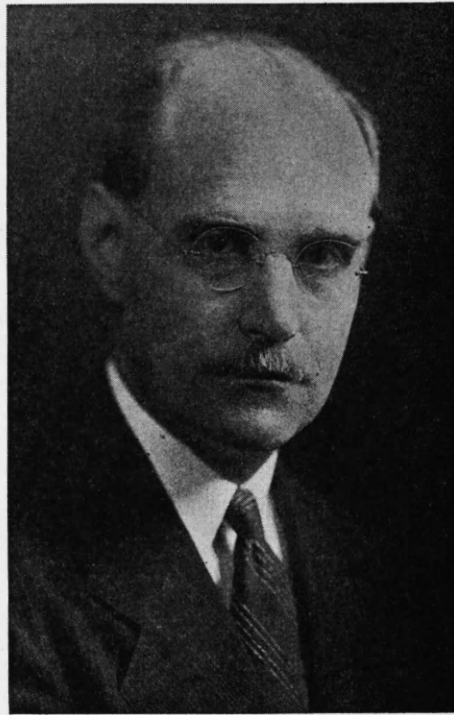
CARL M. WHITE AND H. G. BOUSFIELD

John C. French of Johns Hopkins

JOHN C. FRENCH, retiring in September 1943 as librarian of the Johns Hopkins University, entered the profession from the Department of English in that university when he was appointed librarian in October 1927. Born in Warren County, Ill., in 1875, he was educated in the public schools of Illinois and of Baltimore and at the Deichmann School in Baltimore and received his A.B. degree with first honors at Johns Hopkins in 1899. After a year of graduate study in English at Harvard, 1899-1900, he returned to Hopkins as a student assistant in English and candidate for the Ph.D. degree. He was made instructor in English in 1904 and secured his doctorate in 1905, publishing a dissertation on the "Problem of the Two Prologs of Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*."

In the Johns Hopkins faculty his special interests were English composition, written and oral, and American literature. He is author of several textbooks in English, the most widely used having been his *Writing*, published by Harcourt Brace in 1924, and *English in Business*, in collaboration with John E. Uhler, published by McGraw-Hill in 1925. He was founder and first president of the Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore in 1923 and is now its honorary president.

In the Johns Hopkins Library he was instrumental in creating a memorial to Sidney Lanier, a member of the Hopkins faculty, 1879-81, and in the assembling of the fullest collection of Lanier letters, manuscripts, and other memorabilia in existence. Since 1930 he has served as curator and, on the announcement of his



JOHN C. FRENCH

retirement, was made president of the Tudor and Stuart Club, endowed by Sir William and Lady Osler and well known for its collection of first editions of Edmund Spenser and for other rare books. He was also the prime mover in the organization of the Friends of the Library, formed at Johns Hopkins in March 1931 as one of the first three or four societies of its kind in this country, and served as its secretary-treasurer and as editor of its quarterly leaflet *Ex Libris*. The society has been and continues to be one of the most successful of such organizations. It

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his master's degree in librarianship, which he obtained the following year. The next three years he spent in the graduate school of Harvard University where he was granted an A.M. degree in English in 1936 and the Ph.D. degree in 1937.

With the conviction that teaching experience should also be included in the background for future library work, Dr. Halvorson accepted the offer of an instructorship in English at the College of William and Mary for the year 1937-38. When an opportunity to return to Harvard as reference assistant presented itself, he again took up professional library duties. He remained at Harvard until the fall of 1941 when he was appointed to the associate librarianship at the University of Illinois. While at Harvard, the English department invited him to teach a graduate introductory course in bibliography. During the summer of 1941 he taught a course in bibliography and reference materials at the University of California.

Dr. Halvorson's experience has been broadened by foreign travel, the year 1923-24 having been spent in various parts of Europe. In the summer of 1937 he returned to Europe on a traveling fellowship from Harvard for study in European libraries and further research in Old English onomatology.

Dr. Halvorson holds membership in a number of professional and learned societies: the American Library Association, the Illinois Library Association, the Bibliographical Society of America, the English Place-Name Society, and the Norwegian-American Historical Association. He has contributed the papers "The Reference Function in the University and Research Library" in Pierce Butler, editor, *The Reference Function of the Library*, Chicago, 1943, and "Library Cooperation in Illinois," *Illinois Libraries*, January 1943, and the article on bibliography in Joseph T. Shipley, editor, *Dictionary of World Literature*, N.Y., 1943.

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Dr. French while librarian has lectured occasionally at the university on educa-

tional subjects and at the request of the trustees has undertaken a history of the university which is now in progress. He will continue to reside in Baltimore.

J. LOUIS KUETHE

Homer Halvorson to Johns Hopkins

H. G. HOMER HALVORSON has been appointed to succeed John C. French as librarian of the Johns Hopkins University. Dr. Halvorson was the first to hold the office of associate university librarian at the University of Illinois. This post was created in the summer of 1941. It involves two sets of duties: direct supervision of the public service departments, including college and departmental libraries on the Urbana campus, and general assistance in administering the library system as a whole. The qualifications sought in filling the position were scholarship, firsthand knowledge of the service functions of a university library, and the personal traits which qualify one to work pleasantly and effectively with others.

The search ended with the choice of Dr. Halvorson. He began residence in September 1941. Among the accomplishments in his two years of service at Illinois which deserve mention are his constructive work in improving, with the cooperation of the staff, the work of the loan department, supervision of extensive remodeling of the Natural History Library, a reputation for close cooperation with the faculty in solving their library needs, and the opening of various graduate reading rooms to undergraduate students majoring in the field. By way of further improving library service to undergraduate students, a beginning was made on what was planned as an open-shelf undergraduate reading room. Due to changes brought by the war, this project is in an unfinished state; the large room chosen for the experiment houses work for civilian students formerly done in two reserve book rooms.



HOMER HALVORSON

It is, therefore, best described at present as an undergraduate reserved book room in which approximately half of the books are on open shelves.

Born in Clifton, Ariz., in 1908 Dr. Halvorson early in life moved, with the family, to Los Angeles, where he later attended the public schools. In 1930 he was granted the A.B. degree from Whittier College and in 1931 a certificate in librarianship from the University of California. Returning to Whittier College, he served as assistant librarian from 1931 to 1933. In 1933 he received a scholarship from the University of California and returned then to Berkeley to work on

his master's degree in librarianship, which he obtained the following year. The next three years he spent in the graduate school of Harvard University where he was granted an A.M. degree in English in 1936 and the Ph.D. degree in 1937.

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