

# Library Cooperation in the North Texas Region

*A preliminary aspect of the recent study of North Texas library conditions and possibilities is described in this article by a participant.*

THE NEED for cooperation among the libraries of North Texas has long been felt. Here, at the three points of a thirty-odd-mile triangle, are the cities of Dallas, Fort Worth, and Denton, with a combined urban population of seven hundred thousand. Within a radius of fifty miles, which includes Dallas, Tarrant, and Denton counties, live more than one million people—approximately one sixth the entire population of the State of Texas. While Dallas and Fort Worth are generally known as metropolitan centers, Denton is perhaps best described as a college town.

The three cities contain seven major libraries with a combined total of 810,000 volumes, including 79,000 bound government documents. (See below.)

Not until late in 1942 was there any concerted effort toward cooperation among the several libraries. At that time the presidents of Southern Methodist University, Texas Christian University, Texas State College for Women, and North Texas State Teachers College met to discuss the possibilities of a joint program of library acquisition and usage. Since the first step called for an examination of the existing collections, they engaged the writer to make a preliminary survey of the holdings of the four libraries. As soon as this was completed, the presidents invited A. F. Kuhlman, director of the Joint University Librar-

	Dallas		
	<i>Volumes</i>	<i>Government Documents</i>	<i>Total</i>
Southern Methodist University	140,000	20,000	160,000
Dallas Public Library	146,000	15,000	161,000
	Fort Worth		
Texas Christian University	61,500	30,000	91,500
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary	27,500		27,500
Fort Worth Public Library	137,500	9,000	146,500
	Denton		
Texas State College for Women	82,000	3,500	85,500
North Texas State Teachers College	136,500	1,500	138,000
<i>Totals</i>	731,000	79,500 <sup>1</sup>	810,000

<sup>1</sup> Bound government documents are of course "volumes" but, inasmuch as they were excluded from the *North Texas Regional Union List of Serials*, it seems appropriate to enter them separately here.

ies, Nashville, Tenn., to visit the area, make a detailed survey of the whole library situation, and present in a final report the possibilities of cooperation.

Dr. Kuhlman's study, which was completed early in 1943, revealed, among many other data, the desirability of including in the regional project three libraries which had not been covered in the preliminary survey—the public libraries of Dallas and Fort Worth and the library of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. These institutions, the survey proved, hold collections which strongly supplement those of the four colleges.

On April 16 a meeting of administrators, librarians, trustees, and faculty members of the seven institutions was held in Fort Worth and a temporary organization, North Texas Regional Libraries, was formed.

The conferees agreed that the most urgent need for cooperation among the several libraries would be filled by the compilation of a master union catalog of serial holdings, including newspapers. From this catalog mimeographed lists could be made and distributed to the participating libraries, to faculty members, and to other interested patrons. The catalog could be perpetuated, it was decided, by weekly or fortnightly "returns." Furthermore, if so desired, each library's list could be maintained by a common interchange of future serial acquisitions. Unanimously, the preparation of the North Texas Regional Master Catalog of Serials and the subsequent publishing in mimeographed form of the *North Texas Regional Union List of Serials* were authorized.

North Texas State Teachers College was selected as the most suitable place for

TABLE I  
Titles in the Region<sup>2</sup>

Held by	1 Complete Closed Files	2 In- complete Files	3 Complete and Current Files	4 Total Columns 1-3	5 Titles Received Currently
7 libraries		<u>11</u>		11	<u>4<sup>4</sup></u>
6 libraries		<u>51</u>	<u>3<sup>3</sup></u>	54	<u>58</u>
5 libraries	<u>3</u>	113	7	123	70
4 libraries	7	222	19	248	131
3 libraries	14	418	46	478	181
2 libraries	68	773	92	933	295
1 library	385	2406	395	3186	834
Totals	606*	7042*	846*	8494*	3217*

\* Obtained by multiplying the figures in each separate bracket by the number of institutions opposite and totaling.

<sup>2</sup> Using the above underlined figures for examples, column 1 indicates that complete files of 3 different serials (which are no longer published) are held by five libraries; column 2, that incomplete files of 11 serials (which may or may not be current) are held by seven libraries; column 3, that complete files of 3 serials are held and are being currently received by six libraries; and column 5, that 4 serials (the back files of which may or may not be complete) are being currently received by all the libraries.

<sup>3</sup> The three complete and current titles held by six libraries are *Atlantic Monthly*, *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, and *Survey Midmonthly*.

<sup>4</sup> The four titles received currently by all seven libraries are *Etude*, *National Geographic*, *Time*, and *Wilson Library Bulletin*.

TABLE II  
Titles in the Separate Libraries

Held by	1 Complete Closed Files	2 In- complete Files	3 Complete and Current Files	4 Total Columns 1-3	5 Titles Received Currently
T.S.C.W.	62	1242	77	1381	588
Dallas Public	56	661	87	804	267
S.M.U.	191	1466	344	2001	838
N.T.S.T.C.	246	1758	225	2229	807
Ft. Worth Public	11	516	40	567	354
T.C.U.	32	1280	64	1376	307
S.B.T.S.	8	119	9	136	56
Totals	606	7042	846	8494*	3217

\* This figure is the total of all titles held in the region, including duplication of both complete and incomplete files.

the catalog, and the staff of that library, under the direction of the writer, was asked to assume the responsibility of compiling and editing the catalog and of mimeographing the *List*.

On November 15, after seven months of work (which was done, it must be added, as a labor of love and in addition to regular duties), the *North Texas Regional Union List of Serials* was issued.<sup>5</sup> This is a 550-page volume, with a preface by Kuhlman. It will be referred to in this article as *NTRULS*.

An analysis of the *NTRULS*, which contains 4526 unique titles (exclusive of 260 Texas Baptist annuals), presents some interesting and significant facts. Table I summarizes the holdings in terms of the region.

Table II shows summaries of holdings by separate institutions.

Doubtless the most significant figures in the two tables are those in columns 2 and 4. That there should be so many incomplete serial files in the seven libraries is startling—yet not so startling,

<sup>5</sup> In general the *List* is modeled after Winifred Gregory, *Union List of Serials in the Libraries of the United States and Canada*. New York City, 1943.

perhaps, when one considers that, comparatively speaking, the region is young and the libraries new, the average age of the seven being only forty-one years.<sup>6</sup> Column 4 is more revealing. Whereas the *List* contains only 4526 different titles (again, exclusive of the 260 Texas Baptist annuals), there are actually 8494 files in the region—a duplication of 87.7 per cent. Here again one might say that the region is young, prosperous, and rapidly developing, and the several institutions well to do. But one may also imagine the scope the *NTRULS* would have covered had a cooperative requisitional plan been put into effect twenty-five years ago!

The *NTRULS* was in a measure a trial project. Especially is this true when one takes into consideration the facts that the libraries included are of at least three different types and are considerably set apart from each other and that three of the institutions are church controlled, two state controlled, and two municipally controlled.

<sup>6</sup> S.M.U. was chartered in 1911; T.S.C.W., 1901; N.T.S.T.C., 1890; S.B.T.S., 1908; and T.C.U., 1869, although that library was destroyed by fire in 1910. The Dallas and Fort Worth public libraries were begun in 1900 and 1901, respectively.

It is hoped that the success of this initial venture will encourage further coordination in the serial field and eventually lead to a cooperative union catalog of all holdings. For the time being, however, the librarians realize there is yet much to be done with serials. Work may now begin on allocating broken files to those libraries that need them most; draw-

ing proper lines of demarcation for future purchasing; eliminating unnecessary duplications of both subscription and binding; building up adequate collections of titles which are not now available in the region; and of generally perfecting plans for smoothly coordinated systems of acquisitions interchange and interlibrary loans.

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## Local War History Materials

(Continued from page 300)

often were collected only to be stored haphazardly in cartons. But if a college library is so understaffed that it can do nothing except store its war materials at present, it would be advisable, nevertheless, to continue collecting them, hoping that they may be processed after the war.

The importance of continuing the task in the postwar period should be emphasized. A very real danger is that after the war there will be a sudden letdown. The disintegration of the whole war machinery after the armistice in World War I has been compared to the dispersion of a crowd after a football game. The excitement is over and everyone is eager to get home. Yet it is only after the war that many of the most important records can be obtained, such as war diaries, letters, and files of wartime service organizations. One should remember, too, that it is a long-range program, "The collection of research materials is a continuous task. . . . We should avoid the narrow viewpoint that generally prevailed . . . (during World War I) of dissociating materials of the war years from those before or afterward."<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Cappon, Lester J. "A Plan for the Collection and Preservation of World War II Records." Social Science Research Council, October 1942. 9p.

The day-after-day assembling of war history materials often may seem unimportant and burdensome to the small college library, "bound to be hit harder than any other library by this war and its aftermath."<sup>22</sup> But the events which are recorded in these materials are not unimportant. Certainly no more active or interesting local history period is likely to occur for many generations. Historians of the future will draw heavily on local war history collections, particularly for the human and personal side of the conflict.

<sup>22</sup> Hirsch, Felix E. "Smaller College Libraries and the War." *Library Journal* 68:192, Mar. 1, 1943.

### References

The following additional references, not included in the footnotes, have been found helpful:

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