The Challenge of the 1930's to the 1940's

A summary of developments, proposals, and objectives concerning college and research libraries in the 1930's and 1940's, by the dean of the Graduate Library School, University of Chicago.

WHAT WERE the major developments in college, university, and research libraries during the 1930's? What were the principal proposals advanced for development in them during the decade? What goals may be set up as their major objectives during the 1940's? In this paper I shall undertake to answer these questions.

Major Developments in College Libraries in the 1930's

Seven developments in college libraries may be set down as having been of major importance in the decade just closed.

1. Book collections. First of all, the book collections of liberal arts, junior and teachers colleges were greatly strengthened to support effective teaching by grants from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Grants of from \$5000 to \$25,000 made to eighty-four liberal arts colleges and totaling \$1,011,000 were spent for this purpose. Ninety-two junior colleges received grants of from \$1500 to \$6000—a total of \$300,000—in 1937, and twenty-nine teachers colleges were awarded grants of from \$3000 to \$6000—a total of \$180,000—in 1939. Lists pre-

pared by Shaw and Mohrhardt served as purchasing guides for liberal arts and junior college libraries, and purchases are being made by the teachers colleges under the direction of W. W. Bishop, who has served as chairman of the three advisory committees which have had charge of these undertakings. As a result of this program a new consciousness concerning the larger role which the library plays in the teaching program was developed among some college presidents and faculties, and college library book collections at the end of the decade were much better adapted to teaching requirements than formerly.

- 2. Endowed librarianships. The importance of the library as one of the principal means of achieving the educational and administrative aims of the college was further emphasized by the Carnegie Corporation when it endowed the post of librarian at Lafayette, Oberlin, and Swarthmore colleges and Wesleyan University by giving \$150,000 to each of these institutions for this purpose.
- 3. Library standards. College library standards also received intelligent consideration in the period. The North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, by replacing quantitative with qualitative standards in its accrediting procedures, laid the foundation for the effective measurement of the college library as a teaching instrument. In these new

standards, as well as in those set up earlier by the advisory committees of the Carnegie Corporation, emphasis was shifted from number of volumes, per student expenditure for books, periodicals, and staff, and other quantitative measures to the adequacy of the book collections which support the course work of the college, the ability of the library and instructional staffs in integrating library use and instruction, and the actual significant use made of materials by students and faculty.

4. Experiments in teaching. A logical outgrowth of the changes in the conception of the role of the library in the college was the development of new plans of teaching. The University of Chicago and Stephens College may serve as illustrations. At Chicago, a number of carefully selected instructor-advisers are available to students for conference in offices just off the special college library reading rooms. At Stephens, the librarian is also dean of instruction, some members of the library staff are also members of the instructional staff, and class instruction is carried on in as close proximity and with as much reference to library materials as possible. Both institutions plan to provide buildings which will be designed to facilitate this type of integration.

5. Publications. Publications constituted the fifth activity of major importance. The functions of the college library had been defined in a paper entitled "The Emergence of the College Library" in 1931. Randall in his College Library, which grew out of his investigation of the libraries of 205 liberal arts colleges, gave convincing evidence that the library was in far too many instances the neglected stepchild of the college. Waples and his colleagues in the North Central Associa-

tion set forth in The Library what have proved to be rather sound criteria for judging the effectiveness of the performance of the library in terms of college objectives. Randall and Goodrich, in the Principles of College Library Administration, wrote significantly about the duties of the president and instructional staff of the college in aiding the library properly to perform its functions. Wriston² and Wilkins,3 writing from the point of view of the college president, contributed to the understanding of the role of the library in the college, and Johnson,4 Raney,5 and Kuhlman⁶ gave intimate case studies of the operation of the junior college library in instances in which librarians and instructors worked in close cooperation. An Estimate of Standards for a College Library by McCrum, Circulation Work in College and University Libraries by Brown and Bousfield, Carnegie Corporation and College Libraries, 1929-1938 by Bishop, books on library buildings by Gerould and Hanley, the volume of papers read before the groups now incorporated in the Association of College and Reference Libraries in 1938, edited by Kuhlman,9 and an occasional article by Branscomb from materials which are more extensively treated in his Teaching with Books, which appeared in January, 1940, rounded out a decade of fairly definitive writing in this field.

6. An association established. A sixth and very significant event of the decade was the establishment of the Association of College and Reference Libraries in 1938 and the launching of the new journal, College and Research Libraries, in December, 1939. This double action contemplated the bringing together of college and university librarians into a united, working organization and providing for them a

clearly defined program of action and an official organ of communication and criticism.

7. Professional status. Librarianship in the college field became perceptibly more professional in the decade. dences of this fact are clear and cumulative: (a) The two associations formed provide for the professional consideration of a common body of knowledge and principles; (b) the new journal supplies a medium of criticism; (c) the body of professional literature is increasingly significant; (d) a definite personnel and salary scheme is being formulated for college and university libraries by the A.L.A., and (e) college administrators in making appointments are seeking librarians who, in their personality, scholarship, professional knowledge, and administrative experience are qualified to direct the library in an educationally and professionally efficient manner.

Major Developments in the University Library Field in the 1930's

The list of activities in the university and research library field during the decade was extensive and notable. The following merit consideration:

r. Buildings and gifts. In spite of the fact that the period was one of profound financial depression, of slashed maintenance budgets, and of painful readjustment, it was none the less one in which the erection of library buildings, the provision of gifts for library purposes, and the development of the Friends of the Library movement were unusually noteworthy. The Sterling Library at Yale, South Hall at Columbia, the Deering Library at Northwestern, and the Annex of the Library of Congress stand at the head of a long and imposing list of build-

ings for college and research libraries. The new building at the University of Colorado received considerable attention because it was planned on a functional basis. The gift of \$1,000,000 for the library building in Nashville, which is to jointly Vanderbilt University, George Peabody College, and Scarritt College, was likewise notable because it represented a new type of cooperation in the field of higher education in which the library assumed the role of leadership. An amount equal to the building fund was also secured for endowment. The library building completed at Atlanta University in 1932 likewise not only serves that institution but four or five Negro colleges associated with it. Library buildings were also completed during the decade at Howard and Fisk universities which greatly increased the effectiveness of those universities for Negroes. Another factor which contributed to the increase in number of buildings was the financial aid furnished through the Public Works Administration of the federal government. The fine new \$1,000,000 building at the University of Virginia is an example of this type of building.

2. Friends of the Library. The 1930's likewise witnessed a considerable extension of the Friends of the Library movement begun by Harvard, Yale, and Columbia in the 1920's. Chicago, Princeton, North Carolina, Duke, New York University, Johns Hopkins, Wellesley, Colby, Knox, and other universities and colleges increased the total organization of this character from three to fifty during the ten-year period. Their development is significant not only on account of the contributions which they have already made to the libraries concerned, but because of the recognition which they give

to the functions of the library in the field of higher education.

3. Surveys. Several surveys of university libraries may next be noted. In University Libraries, Raney presented the results of the survey made by himself, the staff of the library, and the faculty of the University of Chicago. The publication is notable in that it indicated the extent of the holdings of the library by subject fields and estimated, with equal thoroughness, the materials required to bring the collection up to the point where it could adequately support the program of research carried on by the various departments and schools of the university. Carlson¹⁰ dealt realistically with the financial support of the libraries of seven western state universities, and Wilson, Branscomb, Dunbar, and Lyle11 outlined a program of development for the library of the University of Georgia which would enable it to support graduate study and research as well as undergraduate instruction. A self-survey of the curriculums of Vanderbilt and George Peabody, as well as of the library, disclosed opportunities for avoiding duplication of courses at the college level, and of greater specialization in library resources in the graduate field. The survey of the libraries of the land grant colleges by Brown¹² also appeared early in the decade and revealed their general inadequacy.

4. Cooperative agreements. Cooperative agreements of an informal character have been characteristic of college, university, and reference libraries for many years. Frequently cited examples are those of the New York Public Library and the library of Columbia University with respect to the purchase and binding of newspapers, and of the major libraries of Chicago concerning the acquisition of ma-

terials in their special fields. The decade witnessed extension of these agreements in three forms of organization: (a) the gentleman's agreement type of cooperation, as represented by North Carolina and Duke, by which the two libraries exchanged copies of their main author cards, provided for an extensive inter-university loan service, and undertook to avoid duplication in purchase of materials in certain fields; (b) the contractual type as represented by Vanderbilt, Peabody, and Scarritt by which three institutions were by a thoroughgoing legal obligated. instrument, to pool their interests in providing a central library building, quiring materials for instruction and research, and maintaining adequate library service; and (c) legislative enactments such as those in effect in Georgia and Oregon, as a result of which the libraries of the various state institutions of higher education are united in one library system. The first and second types of agreement have been especially notable in the south, with examples of unusual importance at Chapel Hill-Durham, in North Carolina, and at Atlanta, Nashville, and New Or-The libraries of Oregon furnish the most highly developed example of the third type. An extensive thesis describing the various types of cooperation was written by Mrs. M. H. Lowell at the University of Chicago in 1939 and is available from the university on interlibrary loan.

Cooperation has taken other forms of which at least five should be mentioned.

a) Document centers. The first of these, and one of the most important, has been the nation-wide understanding reached with regard to libraries which serve as centers for collecting and preserving municipal, state, and federal docu-

- This movement was begun by a committee of the Social Science Research Council, but was carried forward by a committee of the A.L.A. of which A. F. Kuhlman and J. K. Wilcox, respectively, have been chairmen. A list of the libraries which are serving in this capacity has been published, and since 1933 six annual publications dealing with various phases of documents, archives, and microphotography have been issued by the A.L.A. under the editorship of the chairmen. A part of this program has been the liberalization of state laws relating to the allocation and exchange of state documents and the revision of federal laws governing the distribution of federal documents.
- b) Union catalogs. The development of union catalogs and bibliographical apparatus was closely related to the development of document centers. Notable examples of this character are to be found in Chapel Hill, Nashville, Denver, Lincoln, Cleveland, and Philadelphia. idea of service to scholars on a regional basis has been emphasized in these undertakings, and the foundation has been laid for the easier and quicker location of materials, especially in areas more or less remote from the Library of Congress and the major libraries of the northeastern and north central states. Altogether, some sixty union catalogs of varying scope are now in existence. These catalogs not only serve local scholars directly, but, by supplying cards for unusual items to the Union Catalog of the Library of Congress, they have increased its service as the major finding list for the nation.
- c) Resources for research. Cooperation in the description of the resources for research found expression in the south through the publication of Resources of Southern Libraries by a subcommittee of

- the A.L.A. Board on Resources of American Libraries. This study, made possible by a grant from the General Education Board and carried out cooperatively by southern librarians under the chairmanship of R. B. Downs, indicates the nature and location in the south of some 10,000,000 titles available for the use of scholars. It supplements information contained in the Union Catalog of the Library of Congress and the *Union List of Serials*.
- d) Cooperative cataloging. Participation of university libraries in cooperative cataloging made significant progress during the decade. Entries for new foreign books not in the Library of Congress and analytical entries for monographs in series not cataloged analytically by it were prepared by a number of cooperating libraries under the auspices of the Cooperative Committee of the A. L. A., the cards being printed by the Card Division of the Library of Congress. Cards for 23,841 different titles were reported at the time of the last published report in June, 1938. Inclusion of decimal classification numbers on printed cards of the Library of Congress was also a development of the last decade.
- e) Union lists. The importance of the record of cooperative enterprises during the decade was also increased by the publication of a number of union lists in special fields and by the tremendous amount of bibliographical assistance given libraries through the Work Projects Administration and National Youth Administration. Among the former lists were: American Newspapers, 1821-1936; a Union List of Files Available in the United States and Canada, edited by Winifred Gregory; Census of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the United States and Canada, edited by Seymour

de Ricci; International Congresses and Conferences, 1840-1937; Union List of Publications Available in Libraries in the United States and Canada, edited by Winifred Gregory; and the List of Serial Publications of Foreign Governments, 1851-1931, also edited by Miss Gregory. The aid rendered by W.P.A. and N.Y.A. took a wide variety of forms, but was particularly notable in the compilation of union catalogs and in the preparation of innumerable local lists of newspapers, municipal and state documents, indexes to local historical collections, etc.

- 5. Microphotography. Possibly the most rapid and spectacular development of the decade took place in the field of the photographic reproduction of library materials, especially reproduction on film. This development expressed itself in a number of ways. The following require special mention:
- a) Bibliofilm Service. In 1934 Bibliofilm Service was inaugurated in connection with Science Service and the Library of the Department of Agriculture in Washington. Through this service it became possible to secure the reproduction on film of articles or materials which previously had been supplied through interlibrary loan, or to secure copies on film of any manuscript deposited with the service. The cost per page for such reproduction has been kept low—approximately one cent per page-and as devices for reading film have been developed and installed in libraries, the amount of material which can be made available to scholars has been greatly increased.
- b) Equipment. The perfection of cameras for use in making films and of machines for reading them received constant attention throughout the latter part of the decade, and newer types of

apparatus largely supplanted earlier cameras and projectors of an amateur charac-The interest in these devices was so great that extensive exhibits of them were made under the direction of M. L. Raney at several of the midwinter meetings of the A.L.A. at Chicago, and at the annual meetings at Richmond, New York, and San Francisco. A committee on the Photographic Reproduction of Library Materials was appointed by the A.L.A. in 1936 to consider various matters in this field and to serve as a clearing house for information on this subject. An exhibit of cameras and reading machines was maintained at the Paris International Exposition in 1937 under the auspices of this committee through a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation. Dr. Raney and Herman Fussler, of the University of Chicago, were in charge of the demonstration.

- c) Film laboratories. The availability of suitable equipment and the demand for low priced reproduction offered by microfilming made possible the establishment of major and minor laboratories in many libraries throughout the country. largest and most fully equipped laboratories are those of the National Archives, the University of Chicago, the Library of Congress, and Bibliofilm Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture Library. Moreover, the major universities have installed filming facilities or made arrangements for filming by commercial organizations within their libraries. Capacity production, experimentation in the development of better apparatus and filming processes, the formulation of specifications for installations in other libraries, and information concerning the use and storage of films can now be provided.
 - d) Materials filmed. The availability

of reading equipment in libraries and the astonishingly low cost of reproductions that are made possible by microfilming resulted in a series of major filming projects, some purely commercial, others of a cooperative noncommercial nature. Among the latter were the filming of the Agricultural Adjustment Act and the National Recovery Act hearings, the filming of foreign current newspapers (sponsored by Harvard University), the filming of books in English printed before 1550 by University Microfilms, and the filming of French Revolutionary journals by A.L.A.-University of Chicago Demonstration of Microphotography at the Paris International Exposition in 1937. The widespread reproduction of current and back newspaper files either through Public Works Administration projects or projects sponsored by the publishers was carried out during the decade, so that approximately one hundred and forty of the major American newspapers are now available in film form.

e) Professional organizations. To facilitate the work of librarians, archivists, and others interested in greater use of film, the A.L.A. Committee on the Photographic Reproduction of Library Materials was formed in 1936, American Documentation Institute was formed in 1937, and the Journal of Documentary Reproduction, a quarterly issued by the American Library Association, began publication in the winter of 1938. Further assistance in this field has been provided through the Committee on Scientific Aids established by the Carnegie Corporation and the active participation of other foundations.

6. New library associations. Reference has been made earlier to the organization of the Association of College and Refer-

ence Libraries in 1938. This association was preceded by the organization in 1932 of the Association of Research Libraries, which has held meetings regularly since its establishment and has given consideration to a number of questions relating to research libraries. It has assumed responsibility for the publication of the annual list of doctoral theses formerly published by the American Council of Learned Societies, has dealt with the acquisition of foreign periodicals, and has considered other subjects of interest to major research libraries. It sponsored the publication of the Union List of Newspapers, published by the Bibliographical Society of America, and has cooperated with other associations and organizations in library matters affecting inter-association and international interests. As soon as war was declared in September, 1939, it joined other library organizations in a concerted effort to secure uninterrupted receipt of German periodicals.

The activities mentioned above have been connected directly with university and research libraries. A number of activities affecting libraries which have been carried on largely by organizations of the federal government and have added to the significance of library service may now be mentioned.

1. The National Archives. The establishment of the National Archives, the appointment of R. D. W. Connor as the first national archivist, the organization of the Association of American Archivists, and the founding and publication of the American Archivist may be placed at the head of this list. All of these movements have affected librarianship in the United States, and, as the work of the national and state archives develops, the extent of the influence of these organizations upon

research libraries will be increased. Several courses for the training of archivists have been provided by the library schools of the University of Chicago and Columbia University, and many university and research libraries have been involved in various archival enterprises undertaken by the national and state organizations. The Historical Records Survey has been of national scope and has involved libraries in every section of the country. The task of locating, cleaning, mending, and describing records of local, state, and national importance and of making inventories of early imprints has been undertaken on a large scale, and a tremendous amount of material has in this way been made available to scholars.

- 2. The Library of Congress. The Library of Congress engaged in two activities during the decade which further increased the value of its services to libraries. It inaugurated a nation-wide cooperative service for the location of materials not to be found in its Union Catalog and helped implement a plan of cooperative cataloging by means of which extensive series of monographs and transactions of learned societies are being analyzed and cataloged.
- 3. Other federal agencies. Two federal agencies established during the decade gave evidence of their interest in library development. The National Resources Committee, in its study of the resources for research in the United States, devoted a chapter to the description of the resources and services of the Library of Congress in the field of research, and the Library Service Division of the U. S. Office of Education prepared, with the A.L.A., a new form for the collection of data concerning college and university libraries. The division also held a special

conference of librarians and directors of library schools in 1939 to consider a concerted program of research in a number of phases of librarianship, some of which lie specifically in the college and university library field.

4. International relations. The International Federation of Library Associations held its second conference in Spain in May, 1935, and the U. S. Department of State held a special conference on cultural relations with Hispanic America at the Library of Congress in November, 1939. Major research libraries of the United States were represented at both conferences as they have been at other conferences concerned with libraries and documentation, and the role which American libraries could play in the affairs of world scholarship was clearly evidenced.

Major Proposals for the Development of College and University Libraries in the 1930's

Numerous proposals for the development of the libraries under consideration were made during the decade. Many of them have already been carried into effect, others are in the process of being carried out, and still others are receiving consideration. Eight of these seem to justify inclusion here. Five were related to matters not connected with federal agencies. Three, on the contrary, involved federal action. All were concerned primarily with the multiplication of resources for research and the extension of facilities for their use.

I. Union catalog costs. The decade witnessed the rapid multiplication of union catalogs. Altogether, some sixty odd were in existence at the end of the decade, a description of which is now being prepared by Arthur Berthold of the Phila-

delphia union catalog. As a result of this rapid growth, representatives of the A.L.A. and the American Council of Learned Societies named a committee late in 1939 to seek funds for a study of the cost of developing and maintaining such catalogs and the character and amount of service rendered by them. Several students at the Graduate Library School of the University of Chicago have also been engaged in the study of the potential users of such catalogs and the cost to contributing libraries in maintaining them.

- 2. The Philadelphia bibliographical center. Closely related to this proposal is that of the Bibliographical Planning Committee of Philadelphia for which the University of Pennsylvania received a grant of \$20,000 in 1939 from the Carnegie Corporation, to study the role of union catalogs and other bibliographical apparatus in serving scholars, libraries, and the business and industrial interests of a metropolitan area. This study was started in 1939, and a preliminary report concerning it is to be made early in 1940.
- 3. Resources for research. As indicated earlier, a subcommittee of the A.L.A. Board on Resources of American Libraries published the Resources of Southern Libraries in 1938. This board proposes the extension of this type of description to the resources of scholarly libraries throughout the nation. The suggestion has been made to the board that this is a matter which might well be brought to the attention of the National Resources Committee and to those organizations which have been responsible for the activities embraced in the Historical Records Survey.
- 4. Libraries for little used books. As far back as 1902, President Eliot of Harvard University advocated the estab-

lishment of libraries for little used books. The matter has received little consideration in the United States in recent years, but such storage has been provided in several instances, notably by the Bibliothèque Nationale, which built an extensive annex at Versailles to house materials not frequently in demand. Storage for newspapers has been provided for a number of years by the British Museum, and the London School of Economics has for some time maintained a section of its building for infrequently used volumes.

The proposal has recently been made anew by President Hutchins of the University of Chicago, who advocates the provision of such a building which would serve not only the University of Chicago, but other universities and libraries of the middle west. The Bibliographical Planning Committee of Philadelphia is also considering certain aspects of the question in relation to the libraries of the Philadelphia area. The fact that the American Council on Education has a committee exploring the possibilities of more extensive cooperation in the field of higher education and that the Southern Conference on Education devoted its 1939 meeting to a consideration of cooperative enterprises add importance to the proposal.

5. Library studies in translation. A proposal was made in 1938 by Dr. Pierce Butler to the A.L.A. and the American Library Institute for the translation into English of important papers in foreign languages dealing with scholarly libraries in other countries. Many of the problems with which American libraries are now dealing have been seriously considered by European libraries and careful studies bearing upon them are to be found in foreign publications, but are not easily available on account of the difficulties of

language. A joint committee of American and European libraries has been appointed to carry out the undertaking.

6. Regional libraries. The first of the proposals involving federal agencies was submitted by the Honorable Ross Collins of Mississippi. It was embodied in a bill, introduced in the House of Representatives in 1937 (H. R. 3699, 1st Session, 75th Congress), which provided for the establishment and maintenance of five regional libraries at New York, Memphis, Chicago, Denver, and San Francisco, the libraries to be the property of the United States and supplementary to the public library system of the United States. These libraries were to receive most of the books copyrighted in the United States, and they were to be regional depositories for United States documents. was not acted upon and the proposal has not been widely discussed. It served the purpose, however, of centering thought upon the idea of regional library service and the development of resources of research at places other than Washington.

7. Federal Library Council. In Library Service, Carleton B. Joeckel proposed in 1938 that a Federal Library Council, composed of representatives of federal libraries, should be established to coordinate the policies and procedures of the libraries of the federal government. It was suggested that it maintain close relationship with the National Resources Committee and that through grants-in-aid and the services of its own libraries, the federal government "should aid in the development of regional library centers for library service and in a general program of cooperation and coordination of library resources on a regional and national scale."

8. Foreign materials threatened by war.

A final composite proposal which assumed fairly clear form in the last months of 1939 relates to acquisition of materials in Europe and other countries which are essential to American scholarship. The proposal involved the cooperation of libraries, foundations, and federal agencies, especially the Library of Congress and the U. S. Department of State, and was emphasized by the conflagration of war now raging in Europe and other parts of the world. Recent events have made it only too clear that the libraries of the United States must assume the responsibility for securing and preserving for scholars much of the material previously available in other countries but now seriously threatened with injury or destruction.

The proposal or proposals under this rubric came from a number of sourcesthe Library of Congress, various national and local associations, and individual libraries and librarians-and they all emphasize the necessity of speeding up the acquisition of such materials. Three methods of acquiring them are suggested: (a) acquisition of foreign governmental documents through exchange arranged by the appropriate agencies of the federal government; (b) purchase of materials through individual libraries and the Library of Congress; and (c) acquisition of film through libraries and federal agencies. The emergency is such that all of these methods, including grants-in-aid from the federal government, may be necessary to secure materials if they are to be available to scholars in this part of the world where they may be preserved and considered in an atmosphere which makes objective study still possible and fruitful.

Objectives for the 1940's

With two strong associations of college

and research librarians recently organized, with additional organizations in the fields of archives and documentation, with new journals established in both fields, with so much solid achievement on the part of libraries recorded in the past decade, and with the determination of libraries to go forward in the 1940's, American college, university, and research libraries should find a forceful challenge in the decade ahead. A program which would point the way to certain major ends and could be pursued with enthusiasm would include: (1) the development of regional bibliographical centers; (2) the description on a national basis of resources for research; (3) the provision of regional libraries for infrequently used books; (4) the organization of a Federal Council on Libraries; (5) the cooperation of libraries, foundations, and agencies of the federal government in the acquisition through exchange and purchase of documents, books, periodicals, manuscripts, films, and other foreign materials essential to the promotion of American scholarship; and (6) the development of a program of research and publication in the field of college, university, and research libraries which will enable these institutions more effectively to play their important role in higher education in America.

If any one aspect of this program should be singled out for special emphasis, it should be that of cooperation in the provision of resources for scholarship on a scale hitherto unknown. The frontier in higher education and the day of institutional rugged individualism, like the physical frontier, have passed. If the scholarly libraries of America have sufficient imagination, it is within their power to supply the leadership necessary in this new form of educational statesmanship.

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