

By RALPH T. ESTERQUEST

## Regional Library Centers, 1946-47

*Mr. Esterquest is head, Preparations Division, University of Denver Libraries.*

IN JANUARY and July 1947, *College and Research Libraries* published a summary of the reports presented at a symposium on bibliographical centers and union catalogs, held in Buffalo, June 1946. In effect, this collection of reports told the story of regional library centers as they had developed up to that date.

To keep this information current the A.L.A. Board on Resources of American Libraries appointed a subcommittee on union catalogs and bibliographical centers last year. One of its functions has been to assemble data on developments and progress. This committee reported at San Francisco on the year's work. The following summary is intended to bring the record down to June 1947.

### *Bibliographical Center For Research, Denver*

On Mar. 15, 1947, at the annual meeting of the Denver Bibliographical Center, a new set of officers was elected. They immediately undertook an informal study of center services and announced a long-term plan, calling for a survey by an outside expert, to define the center's objectives, determine its logical territory, recommend a program for financial support, and study its administration and operations. The long-term plan also called for increased publicity directed toward potential center users throughout the Mountain-Plains region, with a view to increasing the center's range of usefulness; the support of efforts being

made to found a regional library association; and the expansion of the union catalog to include libraries in the region not now participating.

Concrete evidence of progress includes the adding of four libraries to the center's list of sponsors, that is, institutions making substantial financial contributions. A federal agency has become one of the center's more generous sponsors, and a new contributor is the Colorado Fuel and Iron Corporation, whose \$300 annual contribution is a reflection of the kind of service this industrial firm has been receiving. An endowment fund was established when the Colorado Library Association voted \$75 from its treasury to the bibliographical center for this purpose.

A special committee has made a study of the center's union catalog and recommended the dividing of this important tool into active and dormant parts, with a view to reducing the amount of filing. This proposal has been tabled, pending the over-all survey recommended in the long-term plan.

The staff of the center remains the same as last year, but services have increased. Total number of items checked during 1946 rose to 39,000, an increase of about 11 per cent over 1945. During the 1946 calendar year, 133,000 cards were added to the union catalog, of which some 20,000 represented regional holdings.

### *Philadelphia Bibliographical Center*

The Philadelphia center reports that it has reached the end of its "wartime struggles" and "we have clearly entered a time

of greatly increased service and—temporarily at least—of increased financial support.” The location service alone increased 50 per cent during the last half of 1946 over the first half, and this increase has been sustained during the early months of 1947.

A year ago the Philadelphia center announced a plan to raise an endowment fund. It must now be reported that the executive board met with little success on this score and has decided to drop further efforts in this direction. At the same time, however, the concurrent attempt to raise funds from fresh sources for annual income has been highly rewarding, and the goal of a \$10,000 increase has been more than realized. The financial position and prospects are, therefore, much sounder than they were at this time last year.

The staff remains the same, except that a former half-time filer now devotes full-time to the union catalog. The catalog has been expanded by the addition of cards representing the holdings of some smaller specialized collections in the area: the Wyeth Institute of Applied Biochemistry, the Reformed Episcopal Seminary, the Hercules Powder Company, and the General Aniline and Film Company. During 1946, 68,400 cards were added to the union catalog.

Exchange activities, a feature unique with the Philadelphia center, has continued to be brisk, eleven regular and special lists having been issued.

From the point of view of the student of regional library centers, perhaps the most important event at the Philadelphia center was the publication of its historical report, *The Union Library Catalogue of the Philadelphia Metropolitan Area, 1936-1946: A Tenth Anniversary Report*. This publication is the first real history of a library center and will certainly provide guidance for future bibliographic centers and regional union catalogs.

The fifth supplement of the *Union List of Microfilms* is now in press, and three “News Letters” have appeared since last year’s report on the Philadelphia center.

#### *Pacific Northwest Bibliographic Center*

From Seattle we learn that increasing library budgets are proportionately increasing the bibliographic center’s annual income. This is because a library’s contribution to center support is based upon a percentage formula applied to its annual budget, and the same formula has been applied during the last three years. There has also been a number of new contributing libraries. During 1947 about 155 libraries have supported the center to the extent of more than \$9,000.

The interlibrary loan service continues to be a major activity, with the number of requests about the same as last year. The discards program, unique with the Pacific Northwest Bibliographic Center, continues to flourish. Books that are considered for discard and prove to be the only copies in the region, are sent for preservation to those repository libraries that have been designated to keep “last copies” in particular subject fields. Other services that are being maintained include: checking of buying lists, verifying of items for cataloging purposes, and filing of homemade bibliographies compiled by member libraries.

The work in specialization is still in its beginnings. Libraries that have agreed to develop special fields make an annual report to the center, and the December 1946 reports indicate a need for further discussion and agreements. Interest in specialization has been shown by college presidents in the Pacific Northwest, and this interest should give an impetus to work along this line, since administrative support is necessary to real accomplishment.

A poll on what role the center should

play in relation to microfilms, showed that at present most Pacific Northwest libraries feel that it should furnish information on, and aid in borrowing, but that any joint purchase with the center acting as custodian is not desirable at present.

The union catalog has been adding between 20,000 and 30,000 cards a month, with the total number of cards as of June 1, 1947, being 2,876,646.

The administrative organization of the Seattle center is the same as last year, but there have been changes in personnel affecting the post of director and that of the union catalog editor. Loeta Lois Johns is the present director.

#### *Union Catalog of the Library of Congress*

During the first eleven months of the fiscal year 1947, the Union Catalog of the Library of Congress received 308,940 cards from American libraries, including the Library of Congress. In the same period, 531,419 Cleveland union catalog entires and 554,602 entries from the Philadelphia union library catalog were checked against the national union catalog. As a result of these checking operations, some 200,000 cards were typed for titles or editions not found in the union catalog, while over 800,000 additional locations in the Philadelphia and Cleveland areas were recorded for books already represented in the union catalog.

The number of cards received from libraries checking the *Catalog of Books Represented by Library of Congress Printed Cards* remained about the same as the preceding year, namely, 40,000 as compared with an average of about 100,000 for earlier years. This decline is understandable in view of the chronic labor shortage in all libraries but it is to be hoped that this project will be resumed soon with renewed vigor.

Requests for locations handled by the union catalog staff resulted in the searching of approximately 12,000 items, an increase of about 25 per cent over last year's figure. It should be noted that this number does not include the use made of the union catalog by the various departments of the Library of Congress or by the public.

The Library of Congress Union Catalog Division had continued maintenance of the *Checklist of Certain Periodicals* which records the reports of some 300 libraries concerning their holdings of over 3,000 scientific and technical serials published in continental Europe and the warring countries of Asia, 1939 through 1946. During the past year 5,500 entries sent by libraries and research laboratories for new holdings were added to the checklist. Conversely, an expanded use of it was made by these institutions for the location of scarce foreign serials.

An increase in the 1947 Congressional appropriation enabled the establishment of a small staff to begin preliminary editorial work on the estimated 15,000,000 slips of the *American Imprints Inventory*. The immediate task is that of eliminating duplicate entries and the consolidation of locations. If the availability of funds is continued the file finally will be reduced to less than two million slips. When this is accomplished a complete editorial program can be undertaken.

Copies of all inventory entries for Virginia imprints were supplied to John Cook Wyllie, editor, Virginia Imprint Series, which is being sponsored by the Library of Congress, the University of Virginia, the Virginia State Library, the College of William and Mary, and the Virginia Historical Society.

At its convention in May 1947, the Florida Library Association voted its sponsorship of a project for the completion of the

Florida imprints inventory under the supervision of the Florida State Library Board and under the editorial direction of the state archivist, using as a basis the *American Imprints Inventory* records to be made available by the union catalog.

#### *Regional Cooperation in the South*

Through its members in Louisiana, the committee has made extensive inquiries throughout the South to learn what has been accomplished. Six states report as follows:

*Tennessee.* Dr. Kuhlman reports that the cooperating libraries have continued to send cards to the union catalog of Nashville libraries established in 1936. They plan to continue this catalog for all of the libraries in Nashville and possibly to expand it to include some of the larger libraries of the South central region. A study is now being projected to determine what other libraries should be invited, on the basis of their unique holdings, to participate.

*North Carolina.* Mr. Rush reports that the North Carolina union catalog at Chapel Hill continues effectively, with seven libraries cooperating. The Woman's College Library at Duke will soon add a record of its special holdings.

*Texas.* The North Texas regional catalog of serials, begun in 1943, is being kept up by supplementary publications.

*Georgia.* The University of Georgia reports that it is still a cooperating member of the union catalog of the Atlanta-Athens area. No new programs have been undertaken.

*Virginia.* The situation in Virginia is of special interest to us because of the survey just completed of libraries in the Richmond area. Upon the invitation of George B. Zelmer, administrator, Richmond area university center, Robert D. Downs visited Richmond libraries this spring. His survey

report has just been mimeographed and constitutes an outstanding statement on the possibilities of a bibliographic center in the Richmond area. Students of regional library cooperation will certainly need to read the full report, and for our present purposes, it seems pertinent to note *nine* of the seventeen points that make up Mr. Downs' summary of recommendations:

1. For the purposes of the university center, the library resources of the entire area should be regarded as a whole, with each library making its materials freely available to any qualified students, faculty members, and research workers.

4. A consolidation or union of several of the small college libraries would enable them to pool their resources and to develop research facilities of genuine value to their clientele.

6. There should be established in Richmond a regional bibliographical center, on the pattern of those in Denver and Seattle. This center would be built around a union catalog, supplemented by a comprehensive collection of other bibliographical tools, and maintained by a full-time staff, who would be responsible for promoting all types of library cooperation in the region. On the basis of the present situation, the state library would be the logical location, though the University of Richmond might be considered later if it succeeds in obtaining an adequate library building, and if there is a grouping of colleges around the university.

7. Agreements should be reached for specialization of fields among libraries in the Richmond area.

8. A detailed survey of library resources, followed by issuance of a guide or handbook, should be undertaken.

9. There should be compiled and published a union list of serials for Richmond area libraries, showing holdings and current subscriptions.

10. A central storage warehouse for duplicates is recommended, possibly to become later a depository for bulky, infrequently used collections from the cooperating libraries.

11. A central bindery, perhaps located in the Virginia State Library, should be established to serve all libraries in the area.

16. A study should be made of the practicability of starting a special delivery service among Richmond libraries.

The fact that a Richmond area university center has been established and a fortunate choice of Mr. Downs as library consultant has been made are omens of real progress in Virginia. The student of regional cooperation will be well advised to watch this state where so promising a beginning has been made.

*California.* In the Golden State, library cooperation has gained new impetus by activities of two California Library Association committees and the new Interlibrary Service Division of the University of California Library.

In Southern California the labors of several years are bearing fruit as a long-term project nears completion. It is the *Union List of Bibliographies in Libraries of Southern California*, which appears to be ready for publication soon.

The Northern Division of the California Library Association Committee on Regional Cooperation has started experimentally on its long-term survey of the resources of libraries in the Bay area and Northern California. Two small libraries have acted as guinea pigs in a trial survey intended to perfect the survey technique, and preliminary outlines of the survey area were used in the creation of a map and directory of libraries in the Bay area, Sacramento, Stockton, Palo Alto, San Rafael, and San Jose. This is the map which was distributed in the registration envelopes given to delegates to the A.L.A. conference in June. Giving an outline of special resources, hours, location, lending policies, etc., it was a helpful form of welcome presented to the visiting librarians by the C.L.A.

Since January 1947 a subcommittee of the northern division committee has been working on a *Checklist of California*

*County Histories.* A first list of titles has been sent out. Fifteen libraries have checked it and added items from their holdings. A supplementary list is being compiled for further checking, and librarians in the southern part of the state are now participating in an effort to achieve completeness. It is hoped that the checklist will be ready by January 1948, as an appropriate California centennial publication.

The University of California Library's Interlibrary Service Department, established as a kind of "bibliographic center without a union catalog," is making progress with one of its chief projects—the compilation of a subject index to libraries and special collection in the San Francisco Bay area. It is intended that this should be an active index for the region, giving direct guidance to library resources.

The interlibrary service department was inaugurated with the university library's decision to cancel its former service charge on interlibrary loans to Western libraries. It was done as a contribution to the mobilization of library resources in the West for cooperative use. This step alone has provided considerable impetus to regional cooperation in the state.

### *Summary*

The quick trip around the country leads to the following conclusions concerning progress during the last twelve months in regional library centers and regional cooperation:

1. No bibliographic center has been forced to retrench because of reduced income, but each has made some progress in financial support.
2. Bibliographic centers have experienced a significant increase in the use made of established services, but no new services have been added.
3. The center in Denver is making a critical examination of its organization and its

purposes, with a view to increasing its usefulness and perhaps enlarging its territory.

4. Our national union catalog is as strong as ever and is resuming work on certain projects suspended during the war.

5. Regional union catalogs, from which we have had reports, are being maintained.

6. Real thought is being given to a regional center in the Richmond, Va., area.

7. Renewed interest in regional coopera-

tion in California has resulted from the establishment of an Interlibrary Service Department in the University of California Library, and the creation of an active Committee on Regional Cooperation in the state association. Progress is being made toward a survey of the resources of libraries of northern California, and a *Union List of Bibliographies in Libraries of Southern California* is nearing completion.

## Teachers and Libraries

(Continued from page 214)

some kind of instruction." According to Miss Harris,

The study also indicates that no complete and thoroughly thought-out plan for bibliographic instruction in teachers colleges has yet been made, but that the subject is worthy of serious attention with a view to defining the objectives more clearly and improving the organization of the work.

Attention to the problem has increased in the last fifteen years, but much remains to be done. More has been accomplished, probably, in teaching college students to use the library and in preparing teacher-librarians than in educating prospective teachers concerning library materials and methods to be used in their professional work. We need more leaders with the vision and energy of Louis Round Wilson, who, as early as 1911, pleaded for libraries in every school, training of teachers in the use of books and children's literature, instruction of pupils in the use of books and libraries, and extension of cooperation

between public libraries and schools.

We librarians of institutions educating teachers must take the lead in promoting the development of special library education for teachers. We must clarify worthy objectives and formulate practical course outlines and problems. We must bring the importance of this kind of library education convincingly to the attention of teachers, college administrators, professors, and curriculum-makers, of school superintendents, principals, and supervisors, and of teachers and prospective teachers. We must make the program so helpful that it will have a deserved place in the budget of the college as well as in the curriculum. We must study and discuss, plan and experiment, and strive for continuing improvement in preparing young people to become teachers who know and appreciate libraries and who will do their part in making libraries play the part they can and should in the life-long education of children, young people, and adults.

## Change of Address

It is important for subscribers ordering a change of address to give three weeks' notice, to provide both their old and new addresses, and to send the information to *College and Research Libraries*, Subscriptions Department, American Library Association, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago 11, Ill.