

# Introducing "College and Research Libraries"

## *Why Another Library Journal?*

IN RECENT years there has developed a growing need for a professional periodical devoted to the interests of college and research libraries. The time has long passed when a single general library organization and its official journal were adequate to meet the professional needs of college, university, and reference librarians. The problems confronting these librarians are too numerous, too complex, and too specialized to be dealt with effectively either in a general convention or in a journal which seeks to address itself to the varied interests of all types of libraries. Moreover, a crisis confronts higher education and research and the libraries upon which they are dependent.

## *The Crisis in Higher Education and Research*

In the *Saturday Evening Post* of November 11, President Hutchins states that in higher education in America we have a host of unsolved problems: "It is no exaggeration to say that we do not yet know how to organize a university or how to manage it; we do not know whom to teach, what to teach, or how to teach; we do not know the relation of education and research; we do not know what kind of education will strengthen the foundations of democracy. We are unclear about our aims, and fumbling in our methods." Since educational and research libraries are, as a rule, integral parts of universities, these libraries are necessarily involved in their problems. The fact that they are

involved is brought home with force in Dr. Harvie Branscomb's recent study. After spending a year in investigating the educational effectiveness of the college library, he presents data showing that in many colleges the majority of students make practically no use of the college library, and that there seems to be a lack of correlation between the grades received and library usage on the part of the students.

If these two men were only half right, these facts should be of grave concern to those who are responsible for college and research libraries in America. The question is to what extent have their librarians perfected intellectual techniques or developed sound principles and a body of funded knowledge for coping with the library's side of the educational and research problems about which Hutchins and Branscomb are concerned. What have college and research librarians to offer as solutions of these problems after forty years of development? To what extent have they attained professional status, judged by Abraham Flexner's criteria of a profession?<sup>1</sup> And may we add, how essential is a professional journal in the building up of a profession?

## *Is a Special Journal a Professional Necessity?*

Flexner has given a convincing answer. He has laid down six criteria by which we

<sup>1</sup> Flexner, Abraham, "Is Social Work a Profession?" *Proceedings, National Conference of Charities and Corrections*. 1915, pp. 576-90.

can determine to what extent a service is professional. He maintains professions: (1) involve essentially intellectual operations accompanied by large individual responsibility; (2) are learned in character and require a steady stream of ideas and new guiding principles, emanating from research and experimentation; (3) derive their raw material from science and learning, but use it for practical purposes; (4) possess a technique capable of communication through a specialized educational discipline; (5) develop a group consciousness which expresses itself in an organization of the professional group, and (6) have as their fundamental purpose public service rather than personal profits.

Further, Flexner maintains that one essential to the development of these characteristics in a profession is a medium of communication, and that to some extent the evolution of an activity toward professional status can be measured by the quality of the publication put forth in its name:

A profession needs in these days a form of expression and record that is scientific. . . . A profession must find a dignified and critical means of expressing itself in the form of a periodical which shall describe in careful terms whatever work is in progress; and it must from time to time register its more impressive performances in a literature of growing solidity and variety.

It has been the absence of a professional journal devoted specifically to the interests of college, university, and reference libraries which no doubt accounts, to a large extent, for the lack of definitive literature dealing with these institutions. Despite the fact that we have a dozen university libraries with a million volumes or more, there is not a single definitive volume on university libraries. Such literature as is helpful with reference to these

libraries is scattered in numerous periodical publications, pamphlets, library reports, and books. In fact, much of the most useful material is to be found in related fields such as business, public and personnel administration, education, and research. One of the best services which this new journal can render is to integrate this literature and make it more accessible, for there is at present not a single periodical service concerned with ferreting out, reviewing, abstracting, and indexing the scattered material that would be especially helpful to college, university, and reference librarians.

Moreover, the absence of an effective professional journal, voicing the needs and interests of college, university, and reference librarians no doubt accounts in part for the lag in the development of a vigorous professional organization of the representatives of these libraries. It is significant that despite the fact that college librarians formed the first special section in the American Library Association forty years ago, they have not as yet achieved an adequate or influential professional organization. Less than half of the librarians and staff members engaged in college and university library work are now members of the A.L.A. and less than one-eighth are members of the Association of College and Reference Libraries.

Professionally the field of college, university, and large reference library work has not attained an adequate status:

1. The literature lacks definition, is widely scattered and undeveloped.
2. Curriculums for training college and university librarians, departmental heads, and other specialists are only beginning to take shape and there is no general agreement on what should be their content.
3. These librarians do not have a pro-

professionally influential brotherhood or group organization among themselves.

4. Nor have they, as Dr. Branscomb has pointed out, developed adequate working relations with their faculties and research workers. In fact, they have divorced themselves from their faculties by being too concerned with technical rather than educational and research requirements.

5. We need more research and experimentation in the problems that confront college and research libraries.

There is reason to believe that the new organization, the Association of College and Reference Libraries, will remedy this situation, especially when the report of the third Activities Committee of the American Library Association is adopted.

#### *College and Research Libraries Organize for Action*

The movement, started in 1936 to integrate the efforts of librarians devoted to higher education and research, culminated in 1938 in the reorganization of the College and Reference Section of the American Library Association and the formation of the Association of College and Reference Libraries—a section of the American Library Association. In this new association provision has been made for five subsections: college libraries, junior college libraries, reference librarians, libraries of teacher-training institutions, and university libraries.

The object of this reorganization by types of libraries is to bring about greater specialization and an organization of activities within homogeneous groups possessing certain common problems and professional interests. It is hoped that these related specialized groups will advance the standards of service in these li-

braries, and will promote more effectively, the professional growth of those engaged in them.

It is recognized by those who have been most concerned with the organization of the Association of College and Reference Libraries, as well as in the report of the third Activities Committee of the A.L.A., that one of the prime necessities of this new association is a professional journal.

#### *Purposes of the Journal*

If the new journal of the association is to fulfil its mission as a professional periodical, what should be its purposes? Tentatively it should: (1) serve as the official medium of communication between the association and its subsections and their members; (2) make available selected articles presented at conventions at which college and research librarians gather, and publish other professionally significant articles; (3) serve as a clearing house for educational, research, and library news of interest to college, university, and reference librarians; (4) seek to bridge the gap between these librarians and the faculties, college administrators, and research workers whom they serve; (5) integrate efforts of college, university, and reference librarians with those of kindred groups such as educational and research agencies and learned societies; (6) review and abstract such books, pamphlets, and current periodical literature as would be of interest to the personnel of the A.C.R.L.; (7) seek to stimulate research and experimentation for the improvement of the service and publish the results, and (8) help to develop the A.C.R.L. into a strong and mature professional organization.

It is too early to lay down fixed policies and procedures. Time and experience must guide the Publications Committee.

Nevertheless, in seeking to serve the purposes set forth above, the Publications Committee desires to make the journal a great cooperative enterprise—an integrating agency. Members of the A.C.R.L. are urged to join in this enterprise, for at present, on the editorial side, the journal is entirely dependent upon voluntary help.

Plans of cooperation with kindred groups and agencies and related journals are being worked out and will be announced in future issues of the journal.

### *Title*

The title *College and Research Libraries* was selected after considerable deliberation. More than sixty leaders of the A.C.R.L. were consulted in circular letters. Of six titles considered by this group, this title seemed most appropriate, for it is short and accurately describes the types of libraries with which the A.C.R.L. is concerned. Three of the constituent subsections of the Association are college libraries. As for the other two, in the strict sense of the word "university" stands for research, hence the logic of using the term "research libraries" in the title. This phase of the title is equally inclusive of the interests of the Reference Librarians Subsection, for the large reference libraries

and the reference departments of the large public libraries are primarily devoted to research.

### *Subscriptions*

It is planned that the subscription price of the new journal will be \$2 to A.C.R.L. members and \$3 to nonmembers, libraries, and other agencies. Subscriptions can and should be placed now for the question as to how good a journal we shall have will hinge largely upon means with which to meet the publication costs. Address subscriptions to the American Library Association, 520 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

In this connection it is appropriate to emphasize that the time has now come when heads of college, university, and reference libraries can and should take a vigorous stand urging members of their staffs, who aspire to work on the professional level, to become members of the A.L.A. and the A.C.R.L. The A.C.R.L. can become the hope of our profession, i.e., speaking from the standpoint of college, university, and reference libraries, *but only if we have a vital and a vigorous program in which a large membership participates.*

A. F. KUHLMAN