

The Program of the Joint University Libraries

This paper was presented at the dedication of the Joint University Library, Nashville, Tennessee, December 6, 1941, by Dr. Kuhlman, director.

THE JOINT UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES represent a new pattern in higher education, research, and library service. They are a cooperative enterprise for the development of more adequate library resources primarily for three neighboring institutions—Peabody College, Scarritt College, and Vanderbilt University—and secondarily for the scholars of the South Central region.

This cooperative library enterprise was launched as the next step toward the realization of a university center of first rank in Nashville. The plan for such a cooperative regional university center in Nashville, supported by adequate library resources and services, was the direct outgrowth of a comprehensive self-survey in 1935-36 of the educational and research programs and the library facilities and needs of the three institutions. That survey culminated in dual action: to coordinate and extend the curricula for advanced education and research in this educational center, and to develop a joint or cooperative university library system. A preliminary plan providing for the Joint University Libraries was developed as a part of the survey report, and it was

agreed to and signed by the chief administrative heads of these neighboring schools on March 25, 1936.

This preliminary plan immediately became the basis for a two-fold approach to the library project. One, an interim organization was set up in June 1936, under which a director of libraries was appointed, and two, the General Education Board made two appropriations—one of four annual grants to help finance the interim joint library organization and to acquire basic reference tools and important periodicals, and a second appropriation to prepare a union catalog of Nashville libraries and to acquire a Library of Congress depository catalog.

Thus the stage was set for action. First, a permanent plan had to be worked out for a cooperative or joint library system which was acceptable to the three cooperating institutions and the educational foundations. Such a plan had to cover ownership, financing, control, and general policies of administration of the libraries. Second, the requirements or functions of a central joint library building had to be determined and agreed upon, and third, the current administration of the library services on the three campuses, including a series of special cooperative projects, was to be carried forward.

The problems of ownership, control, and management of the Joint University

Library were difficult, for there was no existing precedent for such a cooperative enterprise. A solution was found by following through the same principles of organization that are the basis of the ownership, control, and administration of an efficiently organized library in a single institution of higher learning.

Plan of Ownership

The plan, developed and adopted in 1937 and 1938, provides that the ownership of the Joint University Libraries and their endowment and operating funds shall be vested in the corporate bodies, specifically for the benefit of the three schools. A board of library trustees, selected from and representing the boards of control of the three institutions, is responsible for the control of the libraries. This board of library trustees includes the chief administrative officers of the three institutions, who constitute the executive committee to which the general supervision of the libraries is delegated. This executive committee selects and appoints the director of libraries who is directly responsible to it for the administration of the libraries. It also names the joint faculty library committee.

On the financial side, the program of the Joint University Libraries was made possible through substantial gifts of the General Education Board and the Carnegie Corporation and the generous contributions of more than five thousand students, faculty members, alumni, employees, and other friends of these three institutions in the campaign of 1938.

In addition, the three schools each agreed to contribute (for the current support of the libraries) at least the equivalent of twenty-five dollars per student registered per academic year.

Cooperative Bibliographical Projects

Thus the Joint University Libraries got under way. One of the first cooperative projects undertaken was the preparation of a union catalog of the principal libraries of Nashville: the public library, the state library of Tennessee, the libraries of Fisk University, Meharry Medical College, Peabody College, Scarritt College, and all of the libraries of Vanderbilt University except the school of law. The initial project of reproducing the main entry cards for all books in these libraries as of September 1, 1936, was financed by the General Education Board, and since then this catalog has been serviced and kept up by the Joint University Libraries.

This union catalog is basic to the whole cooperative scheme represented by the Joint University Libraries. In fact, it carries cooperation through all of the large libraries of Nashville and places them in a position to play a regional role in the larger library cooperation that is now being developed on a nationwide scale. This catalog makes it possible to avoid wasteful duplication and to establish a real division of labor by function among the libraries. It also serves as a basic reference and research tool for locating books now in Nashville.

The second bibliographical project carried through by the Joint University Libraries was the acquisition and maintenance of a Library of Congress depository catalog. It now includes 1,750,000 entries—the most important bibliographical tool America has produced. It is especially useful in establishing correct entries in ordering and cataloging books as well as in scholarly research. It also expedites interlibrary loans.

To these two bibliographical tools—the union and Library of Congress catalogs—

many published bibliographical and reference works have been added by means of the special grants of the General Education Board.

Provisions in the Joint Library Building

The larger program and objectives of Joint University Libraries are further expressed in the functions provided for in the new library building. In planning its location, arrangements, and facilities, an effort has been made to adapt it primarily to the institutional and research requirements of this university center.

Central Site

Ever since the inception of the idea of a great cooperative library to serve Peabody, Scarritt, and Vanderbilt, it has been clear that a site as central as possible to the classrooms of the three institutions was essential to its success. Such a site, within a five-minute walk of the farthest classroom of the three schools, was found at the intersection of their campuses. This plot of ground on Hillsboro Road is adjacent to the northwest portion of the Peabody campus and to the southwest portion of the Scarritt campus. It was deeded to the joint library project by Vanderbilt University.

Collegiate Gothic Architecture

The building is designed in collegiate Gothic architecture which blends with the style of the nearby buildings and is the type in which Henry C. Hibbs of Nashville, the resident architect, has won great distinction in designing buildings for several American colleges and universities. The joint library building has two fronts. The principal and most imposing front, four stories in height, faces Hillsboro Road and will be the easiest approach to the

building for students from Peabody and Scarritt, and for the public. The front of the building on the west will be the logical approach for Vanderbilt students and faculty.

Functions Provided for in Building

In the planning and arrangement of the new building provision has been made for the following basic library functions:

- (1) Housing of books for ready access and efficient preservation.
- (2) Suitable reading room space.
- (3) Reference and advanced study for students.
- (4) Faculty research.
- (5) Acquisition and processing of books.
- (6) Reproduction of materials.

In planning these functions for the new Joint University Library, due consideration was given to a functional organization of library materials and educational programs of the three schools. Under this plan the new building serves as the central or general library for this university center. Its chief resources and services will be in the humanities, social sciences, general science, religion, engineering, and library science. The general library and the libraries in engineering and religion of Vanderbilt University are completely absorbed in this new building. Their identity as Vanderbilt library agencies are wiped out and they become the core of holdings in the new building.

The Peabody library will be continued, and an effort will be made to make it an outstanding special library in education, psychology, and in those subjects that are taught at Peabody only, such as art, home economics, library science, music, and physical education. Much of the general material now in the Peabody library will

be transferred to the central building.

In like manner the library of the Vanderbilt School of Medicine will remain in the building which accommodates that school and hospital, but it is expected that some of the general biological material will be transferred from that building to the new library building.

Specialized departmental libraries in biology, chemistry, geology, and physics will be continued in the buildings containing the laboratories in those subjects on the Vanderbilt campus. It is planned that the contents of those libraries can be limited to the specialized scientific and technical literature in those respective subjects and that the general science material bearing on those subjects, will be housed centrally.

The library of the School of Law of Vanderbilt University will continue to be housed in the building with the faculty, classrooms, and other facilities of the school, because the American Law School Association requires that this be done.

Finally, the library of Scarritt College will be continued, but its emphasis will be on missions and those subjects that in the future will be taught in this center only at Scarritt College.

Housing of Books

The first requirement of any library building is convenient and adequate space for arranging, housing, and preserving books. By adopting an H-shaped building, the stacks have been placed at the center, leaving the wings on the north and south as reading and work rooms. The book stacks are built from the ground to the full height of the center of the building, eight tiers in height. They are designed to accommodate approximately five hundred thousand volumes now, but are so

constructed that the capacity can be increased to more than a million volumes by extending the center of the building vertically.

The book stacks installed are the flexible type (made by Snead and Company) in which columns and shelving can be removed and spaces cleared and used for study or work areas as the need arises. The entire building has been made as flexible as possible, without bearing walls, so that it can be expanded and so that its functions in various spaces and rooms can be altered at a minimum cost without destroying the unity and efficiency of the building.

Reserve Reading

In planning the reading rooms of the library, an attempt has been made to adapt them to the varied requirements of this educational center. This necessitated a reserve reading room with a seating capacity of 160. It was placed on the first floor, north wing, so that heavy traffic to it would not disturb students in other reading rooms. In purpose and arrangement this room reflects one of the significant changes in the methods of teaching that have come into prominence within the past two decades—the centering of the courses primarily in the use of prescribed library materials rather than in student-bought textbooks. Few college subjects can now be taught satisfactorily with student-bought textbooks. Access must be given to a great variety of books and periodicals. This can be achieved by assembling the required reading in one place, permitting it to circulate for limited periods only.

This reserve reading room is a memorial to Joel O. Cheek—a gift of his children.

Adjacent to the large reading room for reserve materials two small conference rooms have been provided: one where

students can gather who wish to work on their assignments in groups, and another where students can meet instructors to discuss reading requirements.

Reference Service

Provision has been made for a second type of study, namely, reference work, which falls midway between reading and research. The entire second floor of the north wing, seating 135, is devoted to this work. Here are made available on open shelves, under the direction of a skilled reference librarian, general reference works and the current numbers of periodicals. The importance of this division in this South Central region deserves special stress in view of the large amount of graduate work, including the training of librarians, that is centered here.

This reference room is a memorial to James H. Kirkland, the late chancellor of Vanderbilt University, made possible by his friends, members of the Board of Trust, students, faculty, and alumni of Vanderbilt University.

Two special reading rooms—one in religion and one in engineering—are provided in the south wing. Separate reading rooms are provided in these two subjects to give status to and to further the work of the professional schools in these subjects. There is not at present a competent library in either of these subjects in the entire South.

Browsing Room

Another type of reading has been provided for in a room off the main book delivery hall on the second floor—namely, browsing or recreational reading. Such a room has been included because it is recognized that one of the objects of a liberal arts college and of its library is to

develop in students a permanent interest in reading and in the enjoyment of good literature.

There is general agreement that one means of encouraging cultural or recreational reading is through such a browsing room, comfortably and attractively furnished, which contains interesting, readable books and periodicals, giving the student direct contact with material on the shelves.

Provisions for Graduate Work and for Research

While undergraduate work concerns itself primarily with the diffusion of funded knowledge on the part of the teacher and its acquisition and mastery on the part of the student through intensive prescribed reading, the purpose of graduate work at its best, especially on the doctoral level, is the discovery of new knowledge through original research.

To enable the graduate student to work to the best advantage it has been found desirable to provide him with his own assigned space where he can leave his working equipment. The entire third floor of the north wing, accommodating 150 persons, is planned for graduate study. Here individual table space with a book rack is assigned to students who are working on dissertations or important research projects. Bookcases on the walls of this room contain scholarly periodicals and fundamental works through which students can keep in touch with the progress of thought in their special field of concentration.

This room is a memorial to Bruce R. Payne, late president of Peabody College. It was made possible by his friends, members of the Board of Trustees, students, and the faculty of Peabody College.

Additional facilities have been provided for graduate students, especially on the Ph.D. level, in the bookstacks in the form of ninety individual working spaces or carrels, equipped with a desk and bookshelves.

In order that the Joint University Library may be of further assistance in the graduate work of the three schools, provision has also been made for five seminar rooms seating from twelve to eighteen students each and a bibliographical laboratory seating sixty. They are designed as meeting places for advanced classes for seminar periods requiring the use of library materials as a basis for discussion and research that is in progress.

As a further aid to research forty-two faculty research studies have been provided for scholars on the campuses of the three schools as well as scholars from the South Central region, who will find it convenient to come here for their work. These rooms are not offices and no permanent assignments are contemplated. They are to be assigned to men who are working on research projects for the duration of the project and then are to be reassigned.

Centralization of Chief Functions

The chief functions of the library are centralized on the second building floor, which is at the level of the fourth stack tier. On this floor in the south wing the receiving room opens directly into a staff work room sufficiently large to accommodate all of the preparatory processes. The main reference room, containing the current periodicals and basic reference tools, occupies the north wing of this same floor. In the central portion of the building on this floor and connecting directly with the reference room and the staff work room, as well as with the stacks, is the

central book delivery hall, containing all of the public catalogs including the union catalog of Nashville libraries and the Library of Congress catalog. In addition, the library office and a browsing room are on this floor.

Reproduction of Materials

Another significant aid to research has been provided for in the department of microphotography. In fact, the most important new aid to science and scholarship since the invention of printing is the application of photography to the reproduction and preservation of materials for research.

Microphotography makes it possible for the Joint University Libraries: (1) To save library materials printed on perishable wood pulp paper, such as newspapers. (2) To use film copies as a substitute for bulky materials, such as government documents and newspapers, thus reducing two costly items—binding and housing space. A filmed volume of a newspaper occupies only one fiftieth of the space of the original. (3) To carry on interlibrary loans with other libraries. (4) To duplicate manuscripts and other records of which only one copy exists. (5) To obtain at nominal cost indispensable materials that are rare and out of print.

In view of the role that will be played by microphotography in the research of the future in the South, the area in the north wing, fourth floor, will be devoted to a microphotographic laboratory. It is being equipped with a large camera. Portable cameras will also be provided for graduate students and members of the faculty to use in the field to gather source materials.

Another essential phase in microphotography is the use of reading machines

by means of which the content of films can be enlarged to the original size or larger, making the reading of the film comparatively easy.

The microphotographic laboratory is a gift of Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Leech and Dr. and Mrs. George Mayhew in memory of Isaac Franklin McLean, father of Mrs. Leech.

Treasure Room

Another important division of the library is the treasure room or rare book room. It is located on the fourth floor, south wing, and is nearing completion. This room is intended as the center for the collection, preservation, and use of three important types of materials. First, papers, letters, diaries, and other human documents dealing with Nashville and the South Central region. Second, in this room will be collected specimens of the outstanding monuments of the book arts, both as to printing and as to bookbinding. Here it should be possible to trace the history of printing. Third, the rare and costly materials that are acquired in this university center are to be protected, exhibited, and used in this room.

The treasure room is a memorial to John Sevier, the first governor of Tennessee, noted pioneer, soldier, and statesman. It is a gift of Colonel Granville Sevier.

Important Features in the Building

Among the important features in this new building are the following: (1) The entire building is equipped for air conditioning. This will be a great aid to the preservation of paper and print and will add greatly to the comfort of the users of the library. (2) To make reading and research work rooms as quiet as pos-

sible, all ceilings in reading rooms and corridors are acoustically treated with celotex, and the floors in the reserve reading room and the reference room, where traffic is heavy, are of rubber tile. (3) The lighting in most of the reading rooms is fluorescent. The standard of illumination set was an average of twenty-five to thirty foot-candles. (4) The reading room chairs incorporate basic posture principles, and the table tops are sloped to add to the comfort of the reader and to break the angle of reflection. All table tops are of masonite, which provides a hard surface for writing and a full finish to prevent glare. (5) To improve the light in reading rooms, a glass window area equal to 20 per cent of the floor area was adopted. Also the wood trim throughout the building is of red gum left in its natural color to hold down the absorption of light. It is treated with wax. (6) An audio-visual department is provided. It contains three rooms for the enjoyment of victrola records with facilities for the use of sound films and possibly radio reception. It is hoped that a central joint collection of audio-visual materials, especially of educational films, can be added as aids to instruction.

So much for the program of the Joint University Libraries insofar as it has been translated into (1) an operating plan covering ownership and an executive and administrative organization; and (2) a beautiful new building adapted, we hope, to the future needs of this educational center. But let me remind you that those represent only two of the essentials in providing adequate library service for higher education and research. There are others which are equally important. These are (1) such resources of books and periodicals as will support the teach-

ing, research, and public service program of this university center; (2) a staff made competent through appropriate academic and technical training and experience; (3) an effective organization of materials for ready and intelligent use, and (4) such an integration of library resources and services with teaching, research, and public service efforts as will make of the library an implement and not a mere adjunct in this university center. The attainment of these essentials obviously implies stable and adequate financial support.

Book and Periodical Resources

With reference to book and periodical resources, the Joint University Libraries now have four hundred and eight thousand volumes. That means they rank twenty-eighth measured by volumes among the college and university library centers of America. But due to the lack of coordination in the acquisition programs of the three institutions prior to the arrival of the Joint University Libraries there was considerable duplication among the libraries of the three schools.

One of our great difficulties in the matter of book resources is that we are getting a late start. Of the dozen American university centers with more than a million volumes, none is in the South. In fact, Harvard alone, which has been at the building of a library for more than three centuries, with four and a quarter million volumes, has more books than the fifteen largest Southern university libraries combined.

In the matter of developing a suitable library staff the problems of Southern university centers are much like those in other centers—although more acute. Personnel requirements in large college and university libraries are definitely in transi-

tion. Everywhere there is greater emphasis upon having a staff with better academic and technical training than was required in the past. It is a pleasure to report progress in the development of a suitable staff by making it possible for a part of the staff to take additional academic and technical training, but more needs to be done to develop a personnel policy.

In the matter of a more efficient organization of materials, progress has been made in the improvement of the cataloging and classification of collections that have been transferred to the new building. A collection of almost thirty thousand volumes in religion that was only partially cataloged has been completely processed. But our efforts thus far are only a beginning. Our problems in achieving a more effective organization of materials are how to hold processing costs down and how best to organize materials for effective use.

Integration of Resources and Services

The integration of library resources and services with the teaching, research, and public service programs of a university center is primarily a faculty problem. On the library side there needs to be a staff in acquisition to obtain those materials that have teaching and research value and in circulation, reference, and cataloging there must be a staff, not merely concerned with good housekeeping and the technical aspects of handling books but concerned with making books and periodicals count in teaching and research. Ultimately, however, integration depends upon the faculties. Only insofar as they keep abreast of new books issued in their specialty and recommend them for purchase can a university library build the most worth-while collections. Only insofar as

they choose to teach with library materials rather than student-bought textbooks will progress be made in teaching with books. Moreover, only insofar as they use the collections for research and public service can those collections become useful in the solution of baffling educational, social, economic, and political problems.

In conclusion, may I personally and on behalf of the board of library trustees

and the staff of the Joint University Libraries express our deep appreciation to those who have helped with their moral and financial support to make the Joint University Library a reality. You have enabled us to take the first important step to provide an adequate library and with your further assistance and encouragement we hope we may take the other essential steps.

Librarians and the War

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enabling the decisions of the American people to be based on the intellect rather than on the emotions. We don't want to repeat the mistakes of the last world war and the peace which followed it.

Let us then as a united group devote our attention for the duration to the education and enlightenment of the American people, first for victory and then for world-wide understanding with no thought of destruction or revenge.

Let us all work for victory and perma-

nent security for all nations. This is something more than a fight for you first, or me first, or America first. It must be for the well-being of all peoples of the world. This is indeed the basic doctrine of democracy and of the Christian religion as opposed to the philosophy that one nation or one race must dominate. In the world of tomorrow no nation can secure the well-being of its own people without regard for the needs of other peoples.

Libraries and the Long Haul

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edge is not to flicker and burn dim for decades, institutions of higher learning and their libraries must be prepared to carry on activities of basic research by continuing to an appropriate degree their normal functions.

Problems of both kinds must be met by libraries under conditions of peculiar difficulty. Library personnel is diminishing by induction into the armed services, by attraction to defense work, and through the current reduction and future extinction of N.Y.A. and W.P.A., and, more seriously, by the lowering of income. The avail-

ability of essential library supplies is becoming increasingly less. Humble examples are the increasing costs and ultimate shortage of catalog card stock and shortages in the essential materials for binding. Important publications for research published in foreign countries are generally unavailable in this country for many reasons. Only by hard work and ingenuity can we meet the current and pressing demands and at the same time keep our houses in order for the future. It will be a long haul but we are going to make it!