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BOOK REVIEWS

Bentinck-Smith, William. *Building a Great Library: the Coolidge Years at Harvard*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Library, 1976. 218p. \$17.50. (LC 75-27901) (ISBN 0-674-08578-7) ("Reprinted, with additions, from the *Harvard Library Bulletin*, volumes XXI (1973) and XXII (1974).")

When Archibald Cary Coolidge became the first director in 1910, the Harvard Library had 1,500,000 volumes crowded into Gore Hall and several storage areas, annual expenditures of \$31,500 and additions of 36,500 volumes, an antiquated classification system, no single catalog of the books available, and a number of determinedly autonomous departmental libraries and collections. By the end of his tenure in 1928, the collection had grown to 2,800,000 volumes, Widener Library was completed, annual expenditures were \$100,000 and forty-seven new book funds worth \$839,000 had been acquired, annual growth had reached 152,000 volumes, classification and cataloging were standardized to a degree, and a loose confederation if not a system of libraries was emerging.

It would surely be stretching the truth to think of Coolidge as one of our professional academic library colleagues. A paper on "The Objects of Cataloging" given at the 1921 ALA Conference was his only recorded appearance at a library meeting. "Don't call me libwaywian!" he once snapped to his nephew in an uncharacteristic outburst.

What was he, then? He was a Harvard man, A.B. 1887, *summa cum laude* and Phi Beta Kappa, a member of a Harvard family with many Harvard connections. He studied at l'École des Sciences Politiques, Paris, took his Ph.D. at Freiburg under von

Holst, and wrote *The United States as a World Power* (1908), *Origins of the Triple Alliance* (1917), and *Ten Years of War and Peace* (1927). He was professor of history at Harvard from 1893 to 1928, despite a vexing speech impediment. He was the first editor of *Foreign Affairs*, a member of "The Inquiry" (a study group of specialists organized in 1917-19 to prepare background information for the peace conference), Special Assistant to the Secretary of War and the War Trade Board in 1918, and chief of liaison for the American Relief Administration in Russia in 1921-22.

But his life was a "life of books," Bentinck-Smith notes, and the decision of President Lowell to give Coolidge full authority and responsibility for the library was a wise one for the university at that particular time. There were problems for the new director. The relationship with William Coolidge Lane, whose responsibilities as librarian since 1881 were sharply reduced, and with assistant librarian Alfred Claghorn Potter called for unusual tact and mutual respect. The selection of assistant librarians Thomas Franklin Currier for cataloging and Walter Benjamin Briggs for reference and circulation and of George Parker Winship to be responsible for the rare book collections provided his corps of senior staff members. Preparing a useful catalog of the collections called for heroic measures. The 5-by-2 inch catalog cards in use since 1861 were gradually replaced, complete sets of Library of Congress and John Crerar cards were acquired, and the task of comparing the Harvard catalogs against them was completed by November 1912. More than 85,000 books that were listed only in the official catalog and 25,000 more that were not listed anywhere had to be incorporated into a public catalog, and the remnants of Justin Winsor's fixed-shelf location had to

be converted to a relative classification. By 1914-15 cataloging was essentially up-to-date.

These tasks were spurred on by the impending gift from Eleanor Wilkins Widener of a building in memory of her son, Harry Elkins Widener. The development of the building through careful negotiations with Mrs. Widener, who President Lowell noted had "decided architectural opinions" and with her architect, Horace Trombauer, who was dedicated to the grandiose style, is told in excerpts from letters and other documents which are amusing in retrospect, although no doubt painful at the time.

Much of Coolidge's energies was spent in urging gifts from alumni and friends, but often the additional funds needed to buy a special collection, to support an agent in Europe or South America, or to underwrite unusual operating expenses came from his own pocket. Coolidge's role was more than that of a fund raiser; his view of collecting for a university library is given in a 1925 letter:

I have always believed in quality and quantity, accepting cheerfully everything that comes our way but doing my best to guide carefully the expenditure of whatever funds I control or when I have any influence on the purchases of others. . . . A collection of a single author, no matter how splendid, cannot be understood without knowledge of his sources, of the influences which surrounded him and affected him and the results he produced on the minds of others.

Bentnick-Smith's knowledge of the Harvard scene comes from his years as editor of the *Harvard Alumni Bulletin* and as assistant to the President of Harvard. I doubt that anyone else could have produced the same note of affection tempered by gently poking fun at the eccentricities of the period. The book has been handsomely printed by the Stinehour Press, composed by the Harvard University Printing Office, and bound in blue cloth with crimson endpapers and the Harvard crest in gold on the front cover.—Joe W. Kraus, *Illinois State University Library, Normal, Illinois*.

Brewster, Beverly J. *American Overseas Library Technical Assistance, 1940-1970*. Metuchen, N.J., Scarecrow, 1976. 434p.

\$17.50. (LC 75-23006) (ISBN 0-8108-0827-7)

In this book, based on her Ph.D. dissertation (University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Library and Information Sciences), the author discusses patterns of library technical assistance of public and private agencies in the U.S. to other nations. These contributions include visits of experts and technicians; receiving fellowship recipients; organizing courses and seminars; exchanging or disseminating information or documents; and supplying materials, equipment, and, occasionally, financial support.

The history of U.S. library technical assistance from 1940 to 1970 through its major sponsoring agencies is divided into three chapters.

The first examines the activities and contributions of the U.S. Government, begun in 1938 with the inauguration of the cultural relations program. Although the government has supposedly funded the largest number of projects involving library advisors until the 1960s, the analysis of these activities is not so detailed and informative as the treatment of the private sector. This imbalance may be explained by the author's statement that "there is no lack of primary documents in this area, although the majority of these reports are still publicly unavailable" (p.5). The references used in the first chapter clearly show the lack of primary material.

The second chapter on the activities of private voluntary agencies gives special emphasis to the activities of the Carnegie Corporation and the Rockefeller, Carnegie, and Asia Foundations. For each of these agencies the author describes program goals, geographical area of concern, support to university library developments, and support to library educators. Documents and reports from these foundations and interviews and private correspondence with responsible individuals result in a well-written, authenticated chapter.

The third chapter, equally well-written, describes the activities of the ALA during the same period, 1940-1970. The association's international relationships vis-à-vis the sponsoring agencies are examined to determine the role it has played in this area of international involvement.