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RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS

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II. THE REGIONAL PICTURE

Thirteen years ago when I was a fledgling Library School student at George Peabody College, I signed up for a course called "Resources of Southern Libraries" under that Dean of Reference teachers Frances Neel Cheney. Miss Fanny just prior to this course had finished what she facetiously called her "journey through the seaboard slave states." Armed with a grant from the Carnegie Corporation, she had visited a number of university libraries from Houston to Charlottesville to study the emerging pattern of reference service, a pattern then only dimly seen despite Ellsworth's pioneering at Colorado and, incidentally, a pattern, for which Rice Institute was then one of the leading examples. She visited Rice on her trip and remarked about the new Fondren Library as an expression of the stirring going on in higher education in the South. I remember studying the various brochures issued in connection with this Library's dedication and hearing of this new divisional concept in operation. The opening of the Fondren Library heralded a new day for Rice, for its graduate program, and for Southern education. It is entirely appropriate on this semi-centennial occasion that we pay tribute in passing to the rapid growth of the Rice library during the past decade.

Thanks to Mrs. Cheney's course I developed a strong interest in Southern libraries which I have subsequently maintained, even though in most of the years that followed I served in one of the large Midwestern universities, "Yankee land" if you please. Upon returning to the South this past year I have been impressed with the progress that has been made in the intervening years, as well as occasionally depressed by how far we still have to go. Yet it is worthwhile to keep things in some kind of perspective, and it is within the framework of the developments in the South during the last decade that I want to direct most of my remarks tonight.

It is hard to believe today that the strides which have been made in higher education in the South, more particularly in graduate education, have come largely since the end of the Second World War. In the late forties the South was just waking up to its real potential, hoping to break away from a debt-ridden past which enabled Franklin Roosevelt to call it the "nation's number one economic problem," recognizing that somehow the postwar world would not be fashioned with the same tools, and that higher education would play a critical role in the "New South." Our Peabody class in "Southern Library Resources" heard a number of visiting lecturers from various subject departments, including an Odum disciple from sociology, who deplored the fact that the South sent its best brains north for an education, and the attractions there were so strong that they seldom returned. It was with genuine concern that Southern librarians, in league with their counterparts among the faculty, made surveys, pushed for stronger legislative appropriations, revitalized their regional association, and were instrumental in raising the accrediting association's quantitative standards, all within a half dozen years in the late forties and early fifties.

To be sure Howard Washington Odum and a number of other faculty members in the social sciences had been working hard on these problems at the university of North Carolina during the thirties and early forties, and some of their work had contributed immeasurably to the planning then going on. But it is well to remember that North Carolina was one of the bright exceptions. There was really no graduate school worthy of the name between Chapel Hill and Austin, and indeed, according to a National Research Council study, only the universities of Texas and North Carolina ranked among the top 30 universities in terms of the total number of doctorates awarded in the nation during the 21 years between 1936-1956. During the period 1936-1949 only four Southern universities awarded an average of as many as 20 doctorates a year: Duke, North Carolina, Virginia, and Texas. Rice Institute during this period awarded a total of 53 doctorates, or about 4 per year.

Since the graduate schools were small and weak, the university libraries could scarcely be considered equal to the new tasks without substantial increases in their yearly budgets. Emphasis had been placed largely upon materials in the classics, in other areas of the humanities, and in the social sciences, particularly history and law, and more particularly Southern history. Library resources were poor, and the staffs poorer still. In 1946-47 the six largest university libraries in the South were Duke, Texas, North Carolina, Joint University Libraries, Virginia, and Kentucky, and only the first two had more than half a million volumes. Significantly, those Southern institutions with the largest libraries were the ones providing most of the graduate training. Some institutions were beginning to stir, but the three Florida universities whose growth was to be little short of phenomenal in the next decade, were still slumbering.

If the repetition of statistics seems somewhat boring, it does at least give us a sense of how far the region has come in a little over a decade. There are, according to a recent report of Southern university libraries, now five Southern universities (Duke, Texas, Virginia, North Carolina, LSU) with more than one million volumes, plus another 16 with more than 500,000, generally considered a minimal number for graduate work of any substantial quality. In 1959-60, the last year for which I have figures, Southern universities awarded 1,189 doctorates, or just over 12% of the total given, up from the 7% of 1949-50. Leading the parade, of course, were those universities with the largest libraries and the most comprehensive programs: Texas, LSU, North Carolina, Florida, Duke, and Virginia.

Now there are still weak Southern universities, and weak Southern university libraries, but by way of contrast one can point with pride to the six or seven among our elite which are no longer institutions with primarily a Southern but rather with a national orientation. While no Southern university yet makes the grade in terms of the top two dozen in the recent Berelson study of graduate education, there is some comfort in the fact that Southern universities are well represented among those which are to emerge as strong centers of university graduate work during the next decade. And one might point out, too, that there are other regions with weak universities and weak university libraries, e.g. the Rocky Mountain-Plains states, the Pacific Northwest, and upper New England, particularly where publicly-supported education is concerned. These institutions, also, have seen notable progress during the last decade, and some of them will also emerge as strong centers, according to Berelson.

Regionally, then, what are the problems which

we face in the South today in terms of our university libraries and the broadening fields of knowledge? One of the first problems, it seems to me, is the act of relating ourselves to the national picture instead of the regional picture. Undoubtedly the concept of regionalism has been part of our salvation, but it is time to ask if it provides adequate guidelines for the future. The problems which Dr. Dix mentions and those which concern the nation's largest research libraries are still not ours and perhaps cannot be for another ten years. In our poverty we are still concerned with basic research materials in Western European languages whereas the Association of Research Libraries is trying to map responsibility for global coverage. How and where do we come together? Must we forever be behind and must we forever be overwhelmed by the increasing mass of material of which we, at best, can absorb only a small fraction?

When I was on the staff of the University of Illinois, we used to complain of a book budget of \$800,000 a year, saying that this simply would not cover all the demands of a university with research programs in many subject areas and with world-wide distinction. How do universities with one-eighth, or one-fourth, or even one-half the amount of money accomplish anywhere near a comparable task? And, incidentally, I remind you that last year four universities in this country spent more than one million dollars each for books, periodicals, and binding.

I wish that I were a prophet and could propose some of the answers to these questions. Since I am not, perhaps it is best to rely on one of our transplanted Southerners, Dr. Robert B. Downs of the University of Illinois, for some of the possible solutions. In a recent monograph issued by the

Southern Regional Education Board, a cooperative agency and creature of Southern state legislatures, Dean Downs suggests a number of steps which must be taken to achieve the excellence in Southern university libraries which all of us must surely seek; but his primary emphasis is upon the following six points:

1. Increased financial support, not only for library resources, but for salaries and services as well.
2. Increased cooperation and coordination, including division of responsibility within the area for acquisitions of periodicals, newspapers, and foreign books.
3. Specialization of collections and fields of study.
4. Increased attention to microreproduction.
5. Increased attention to material in science and technology.
6. Building regional centers of excellence, recognizing that such complexes as Duke-North Carolina and Georgia Tech-Emory are regional resources.

Dean Downs presents us with a large order, in which cooperation seems to be the key to it all. Yet cooperation is sometimes a slow and painful process. It is often more talked about in library circles than achieved. On the local scene the recent production of The Houston List, about which Mr. O'Keefe will undoubtedly have more to say, is one aspect of cooperation which Dean Downs would heartily approve.

My own personal view is that our stress must be on the first point of Down's program: strong financial support not only for library resources but for salaries and services as well. When our university libraries receive the attention and support which they deserve, then we will be able to meet the research demands of our campus constituency as well as that of the local community. The South, and Texas especially, still lags behind other areas of the country in library resources and in support for libraries. As I see it, our task is not to denigrate the achievements of the past, often made in spite of general apathy, but to keep forever before the responsible public the goal of strong and vigorous library developments at all levels. This is our professional responsibility, and we will not serve our various publics well if we neglect this important task.

Edward G. Holley, Director of Libraries

University of Houston

(This is the second of four papers presented in a panel discussion on the subject of research requirements and the university library, at the Fondren, 19 February 1963, as a part of Rice's semi-centennial celebration.)

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