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Bulletin
of
THE RHODE ISLAND
LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

VOL. 45, NO. 4

JANUARY, 1973



the BULLETIN staff....

Janet C. Hampton, Editor
Helen DeJong
Dorothy A. Brown
Earleen P. McCarthy

The Bulletin staff thanks the three contributors to this month's issue who so graciously responded to our request for articles on Special Collections. They bring us a hint of what it's like to be a librarian in a special situation.

* * * *

RILA president, Richard A. Olsen, announces membership of the Long Range Planning Committee.

Dr. Daniel Bergan, Chairman
Ardis Moorehead
Sydney Wright
Barbara Higginbotham
Myra Blank
Roberta Cairns
Regina Bacon
Roberta Reeves
Donald Miller

* * * *

RILA Executive Board votes \$250. support for the establishment of a New England Library Board within NELA charged with developing projects meeting the objectives of interstate activity.

Swedish Broadcasting Corporation
(Sveriges Radio AB)

Newspaper Library
(Pressarkivet)

Four years ago quite by chance I happened to see in Dagens Nyheter, the Swedish daily newspaper in Stockholm an advertisement for a vacant situation that aroused my interest. It read more or less as follows:

LIBRARIAN WANTED

For classifying and reference work in the Newspaper Library (press archives) of Swedish Broadcasting & TV Co. Academic degree, thorough knowledge of English, French and German languages, good all-around education and interest in current events required.

Until that time I had worked in academic and public libraries and as there is not by any means a tremendous number of special libraries in Stockholm, I had not even considered such a job. I decided to apply and got the position.

The Broadcasting Co. in Sweden is a monopolized public service, not a preserve of private commercial interests. It has been feared that if privately owned broadcasting stations were allowed to compete with one another they would lower standards and try to appeal to the lowest popular tastes and furthermore it is believed that dependence on advertising revenue would make commercial broadcasting a tool of private enterprise. A publicly owned non-profit company was therefore formed and vested with a monopoly, first in 1925 over radiobroadcasting and later in 1957 over TV. Sixty per cent of the shares are owned by foundations and popular movements (such as labor, consumer, cooperative movements), twenty per cent by the press and twenty per cent by private business interests. The

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES...

Challenging position open for an Assistant Librarian in charge of Children's Services in a growing library. Bachelor's degree required with a Master's in Library Science and experience in children's library services preferred. Blue Cross and 15 days paid vacation. Salary \$6800. Please send letter of application and references to Mrs. Janet Simmons, Middletown Free Library, 1521 West Main Rd., Middletown, R.I. 02840.

Public Library Director for growing suburban community of 23,000. Near Providence. Excellent opportunity for person with imagination, initiative, and program development skills. Presently three branch libraries - actively working for a new central library. M.L.S. required, plus some administrative experience. Salary \$9,500 - \$10,000, plus usual benefits. Send resume to: Chairman of Board of Trustees, Coventry Public Library, 672 Washington Street, Coventry, R.I. 02816.

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Rare Books at Work and Play

There is no detective story I know that is as exciting as a bookseller's catalog for the collector who is trying to add to his collections. Each catalog renews the chase and offers another possibility for finding some elusive title long desired. The only villain in the piece is another collector whose order gets there first. Such competition can put a strain on long-standing relationships as I found out a few years ago.

The Providence Public Library has a good collection of primary source material relating to slavery and the Civil War which was formed by Caleb Fiske Harris and came to the library in 1882. It contains some fine 18th century imprints but the emphasis is on the 19th century and thus complements and extends the story told by the materials at the John Carter Brown Library up the hill, which deal for the most part with an earlier period. There is, however, a small area of overlap and it was this that caused the trouble.

My husband is the Librarian at the JCB and one afternoon I came home to find two catalogs from an English bookseller who had recently visited both of us. It can only have been fiendish glee that prompted John Lawson to send them air mail, one for each of us, to the house instead of our respective libraries. Or perhaps it was some misguided English notion of fair play. At first I wasn't alarmed but after glancing at the catalog I knew there was one item we might both want. Paul Cuffee was an 18th century black man living in New Bedford who prospered mightily and who was active in the early African colonization movement. Here was a pamphlet about him--a memoir published in York, England in 1811.

What to do? I occurred to me that Tom's copy of the catalog could easily drop to the floor and then by walking by I might unwittingly kick it under the radiator. Standards of housecleaning being what they

as possible, yesterday's fact must be on record and available for consultation and comparison. The need to have all this up-to-date material makes the work in such a special library exciting and rewarding, but also at times very hectic.

Usually the newspaper library's material consists of clippings, but the Broadcasting Co. has as a micro-film system (in operation since 1960) and finds this method much superior. Six librarians (or documentalists, or information specialists or whatever else one chooses to call them) read and classify about one hundred newspapers and magazines from Sweden and abroad. Among those received from the U. S. are for instance: the New York Times Sunday issue, Newsweek, Time, U. S. News and World Report, Current History, American Scholar, Atlantic Monthly, Books Abroad, Commentary, Facts on File, Foreign Affairs, Keesings Archives, Ramparts, Saturday Review. The readers are not specialized in certain subject areas or languages, everybody is expected to have an all-around ability to read that which is most urgent at the time. A good knowledge in political science, economics and the social sciences, however, is most helpful. All material that arrives during the day is theoretically supposed to be read by the end of the day, but when there has been much reference work to be done during the day or when someone is away, heaps of unread items pile up amazingly fast.

The classification of the articles has to be done with good judgement and the chosen call number areas and subject headings must of course correspond with the exact contents of the article. Sometimes the decision making can be complicated, for instance when an article deals with many different problems. Such an article may get several subject headings if this is preferable, but the tendency is to try not to overstuff the catalogue with the same articles. When using an already existing heading, it must be checked with the catalogue for its exactness and the new ones must be logically constructed, otherwise the whole system would collapse. The number of articles one reader classifies during one day varies according

to the topic, kind and maybe the length of the article, but on a day when no reference work is done it can amount to two hundred. One weekday everybody has to read the Scandinavian (Swedish, Danish, Norwegian and Finnish) daily newspapers and these days are considered to be the most strenuous ones, because the many new topics need a careful choice of lots of new headings. As the Newspaper Library is located together with the Reference and Music Libraries in a "landscape" office, these days the reading is done in a special soundproof carrel to make intense concentration possible. The other days reading and reference work are done alternatively according to a schedule. After the classification is done, the supervisor checks the new headings of all the readers in order to coordinate them and to avoid catalogue errors in general.

Now the two photographers of the library take care of the classified materials and prepare a microfilm of every page that contains a classified article. In case several articles have been taken from the same page, the page has to be photographed as many times. The size of the microfilms is about one by one and a half inches, and they are put between a plastic folder, just a little bigger than a usual catalogue card, and that has the call number and the subject heading typed on its upper margin. Ten or twelve microfilms can be stored in the folder that is later filed in the catalogue like a usual library catalogue card. When these microfilms have to be used they are read in Xerox readers that also make copies when required.

The reference work performed for the producers can vary considerably. Sometimes a few microcopies are sufficient and sometimes it can take hours to gather together all the needed material; a producer who prepares a series of programs on a serious topic might need his material from very different areas. Let us say someone prepares five programs on the woman's actual situation in Scandinavia. Here the historical, psychological, medical, legal aspects etc. and from different countries besides, must be taken into consideration; and the amount of microcopies can

reach over a hundred items. The copies are not returned to the library after use - it would be impossible to reuse them, as every program is so very different, and new copies are made for every patron. Some of the producers know exactly what kind of material they need, others are thankful for suggestions.

There exists also a collaboration between the Reference Library and the Newspaper Library, and often it is necessary to contact outside institutions, such as municipal and government agencies, news centers and some other institutions.

The work at this special library offers much variety and is stimulating, but sometimes when the unread newspapers and magazines have piled up to a considerable amount, one really wishes a general press strike would occur and take care of this never-ending inundation of periodicals for a certain period of time.

...If anyone is curious to know more about the Swedish Broadcasting Co. and its libraries, call me at the John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library Reference Room.



The James Henry Davenport Collection,
Library of the Rhode Island
Medical Society

Doctor James Henry Davenport's collection of extra-professional writings of physicians was given to our Library in 1927. We received 1,200 volumes covering art, autobiography, fiction, essays, travel books, poetry, plays, biography, and other fields of interest to the authors. David Livingstone's Journals, Keat's poetry, Arthur Conan Doyle's Memoirs and Adventures of Sherlock Holmes, Smiles on Bundling, Mungo Park's Travels, and books by Oliver Goldsmith, Somerset Maugham, Warwick Deeping, Rabelais, Smollett, and Chekhov were among the many titles gathered by Doctor Davenport.

He left funds to support his Collection so we have been able to add to it each year. The volumes added, except for reference texts and special gifts, are available for circulation to members and through interlibrary loan. Original items must be used in the Library.

We have broadened the scope of the Collection to include writings about physicians and medicine written by laymen and thus have been able to add several books by Jürgen Thorwald, Hearts by Thomas Thompson, The Rod and Serpent of Asklepios by J. Schouten, Medicine in Art, edited by Jean Rousset, and other titles in that category.

For an appreciation of James Henry Davenport and the reasons for his collection, we quote from an article by Doctor Robert V. Lewis (Rhode Island Medical Journal 48:520, October 1965. Reprinted by permission of the Publisher):

"This extraordinary collection was made by an extraordinary person. Davenport received an M.D. degree not only from the University of Vermont, but also from Harvard. ...his interest in literary subjects was first aroused in graduate school by the stimulus of Doctor Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Davenport was further impelled to bring together the literary works of physicians because of his conviction that physicians, more than any other class of individuals, were in a position because of their intense interest in the study of man himself to make notable additions to the world's knowledge of man. It was his contention that doctors who had contacts with humanity everywhere had a unique opportunity to give back to humanity not only in a technical way, but also in a literary way, the fruits of their observations.

Historically, from the days of Hippocrates and Galen, the medical profession has always identified itself prominently with the affairs of the world, not only in literature, but in art, philosophy, religion, statecraft, and politics. The field of literature permits communication of these extra-professional activities to the life and times in which the physician plays a definite role.

...James H. Davenport gave a unique collection, one of the finest and one of the first of its kind in America. The likes of Doctor Davenport and the men whose works he has catalogued I have no fear will be seen again and again. That same impetus which drives a man to seek an education in medical science will ever be found in men of high intellectual endeavor, men of balanced mind, men who clearly know that there are not 'two cultures' in medicine. Lord Brain considered that man has two worlds, the 'private world,' which expressed and was encompassed only by the humanities, and the 'public world,' that is measured by science. But we maintain that in medicine these are inseparable, even if distinct. The Davenport Collection reminds us that the best of our medical heritage and tradition is in 'both worlds.' "

Doctor Davenport was born in Fall River in 1862 and died October 15, 1928 in Providence. He was one of the first specialists in obstetrics and gynecology in this area and "soon attained phenomenal success in his chosen field..." "He was a lover of letters and of art, making true companions of his books. He was a friend of institutions that make for culture."

(Obituary. Rhode Island Medical Journal 12:45, March 1929) Our Library was the appreciative institution to which he was a most generous friend.

Helen E. DeJong
Librarian
Library of the Rhode
Island Medical
Society

WELCOME TO RHODE ISLAND...

Mr. L.S. Strohl....Technical Services Librarian, Roger Williams College Library, in August, 1972. Mr. Strohl holds a B.A. from Hanover College and both an M.S. in Library Science and an M.A. in English from the University of Kentucky. His most recent position was that of Acquisitions Librarian at Kentucky State University.

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State has no financial interests in the company. The finances of the company are based on licence fees, the name of the company is Sveriges Radio AB (Swedish Broadcasting Co.). The chairman and half of its board of governors are appointed by the State, the other members by the annual meeting of shareholders. The board appoints the corporation chief executive officer (radiochefen). The government does not interfere with programming although programs must conform to certain rules stipulated in an agreement between the State and the Broadcasting Co., which says that programming must be done impartially and objectively. Public criticism has an important role in checking and controlling this arrangement. The opinion of the public is expressed principally through the press, but also by direct mail and complaints may further be lodged with the Radio Council, an organization appointed by the Government. There is no beforehand censorship in existence, but the Radio Council has to decide whether a certain program that has already been broadcast conforms to the agreement with the State and if not, to condemn it. The Broadcasting Company's program policy is the subject of a lively and continuous debate.

The Broadcasting Co. has a staff of around four thousand employees. One unit in its administrative system is the Library-Archives Section, whose head responds directly to the chief executive (radiochefen). The primary function of this unit is to serve the producers' need for different kinds of information and materials (such as microcopies, records, music scores). It has about eighty employees and consists of seven different sections with a chief supervisor in each section: the Newspaper Library, the Reference Library, the Music Library, the Records Archives, the Document Archives, the Photo Archives and the Production Archives.

The primary purpose of the Newspaper Library is to collect information about persons, places and subjects in fields as broad as the daily news in all subject areas and to have these available to meet the deadline requirements of the broadcasting producers, so that today's news may be a complete and accurate

are at home it might not be discovered for weeks. I finally rejected that plan though as it could easily backfire and leave me husbandless. Burying it under the pile of bills and third class mail which usually lies undisturbed for days seemed to be a safer yet ingenious approach. "What's this?" said Tom getting to the bottom of things as soon as he walked in the front door. The outcome still hung in the balance though, for if I had to face the frustration of a switchboard that didn't open until 9, he has a much larger operation where it takes time to get the machinery cranked up. My cable went off at 9:01 the next morning and I treasure John Lawson's letter which arrived even before Paul Cuffee's Memoir and said in part, "I was delighted to have your cable, more delighted that yours was the first received, and even more delighted to have your letter. I am now pretty delighted. For years now Tom's has always been the first cable to arrive--you came on the scene and beat him into second place!"

Now, unfortunately, the budget situation at PPL has forced a severe curtailment of operations and there is at present no Special Collections Department; but the books themselves continue to offer both delight and practical help to those who come to use them. David Henderson of California spent almost two months here recently working with the logbooks in our Nicholson Collection and the resulting book which has just come out is a fascinating account of the gray whale and its pursuers.¹ Currently we suspect that another book is gestating in the Harris Collection. And of course the collections will always provide pleasure for those with a genuine but not necessarily professional interest in these areas.

I suppose the excitement comes from the realization that these books are not just links with the past, they are the past--or at least such bits and pieces as are still around and can be used to try to reconstruct what really happened.

Recently I had brought home to me upon what a slim thread of chance often depends our knowledge and understanding of events, and how essential our rare book and special collections are in preserving small

scraps of evidence from which to develop the story of the past each generation writes anew. In a collection of this sort the entire bibliographical entity is important as a physical object--not just the text. Bookplates, covers, manuscript notes, etc. all play their part in the story. Well, to get on with mine--

I was checking our copies of 19th century British type specimens for James Mosley at the St. Bride Printing Library in London and came upon a manuscript note on the cover of a specimen by James Moyes, printer, of 1826. Then it was time for a coffee break so I reached for something to take along to read and picked up an issue of the Journal of the Printing Historical Society which I had been discussing with the Periodical Department only the day before. The first issue didn't appeal so I picked up another and there, on page one, began an article entitled "James Moyes and his Temple Printing Office" --just the thing!² Later I nearly choked on the coffee as I read that no one had been able to discover what had happened to the building in Bouverie St. after Moyes' bankruptcy forced him to vacate. For the manuscript note on our copy of the type specimen says "The premises, types, etc., etc., were very soon purchased and are still used by my dear friends Bradbury & Evans (signed) R.B. 1858." At the moment I am waiting to hear more from Mr. Mosley. I trust he was glad to hear from me.

¹Henderson, David A. Men & Whales at Scammon's Lagoon. Los Angeles, Calif., Dawson's Bookshop, 1972.

²Bain, Ian. "James Moyes and his Temple Printing Office." Journal of the Printing Historical Society, No. 4, 1968, pp. (1)-10.

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