

Challenges and Constraints for History Selectors [\[1\]](#)

James P. Niessen, Texas Tech University Libraries
Susanne F. Roberts, Yale University Library

Collection development librarians for history in research libraries enjoy many opportunities for cooperative action due to the breadth of their collections and responsibilities. However, they also face special challenges for historical materials that may not be fully appreciated by advocates of cooperative collection development. Library support for history must encompass a broader range of specialized, foreign-language, and retrospective material than many disciplines; this is what makes cooperative collection development for history unique. These requirements may place extraordinary demands on local funds that are then unavailable for cooperative projects, but the needs of historians may in the end be met only by resorting to a distributed collection. History is more wedded to the monograph in codex format than many other disciplines, both because of the importance of synthesis and narrative in the discipline and because most earlier specialized monographs will never be digitized. By virtue of mission and money, history selectors in research institutions are perhaps the most motivated and best situated to share in cooperative efforts. Yet job responsibilities, budgetary pressures, organizational structures, and the expectations of their constituents may constrain them as much as their colleagues in smaller libraries.

The authors of this paper have selection responsibility for all or part of history at libraries ranked in the first and the third quartile of the Association of Research Libraries. Our thoughts about this topic received stimulus from the online discussions with colleagues on *H-HistBibl*, a mailing list within *H-Net: Humanities & Social Sciences OnLine* dedicated, as its official mission states, to "the practice and study of bibliographic and library services in support of historical study and teaching." [\[2\]](#) Our presentation draws partly on our own experiences and partly on those of colleagues as described in their messages to *H-HistBibl* and elsewhere.

We have identified six topical areas that we will address in turn; James Niessen speaks from the perspective of an academic research library in the third quartile of the ARL, and Susanne Roberts from that of one in the first quartile.

1. What are the responsibilities and demands on the time of the history selector?

The bibliographer or curator working exclusively in collection development is becoming less common in research libraries. The subject librarian exercises reference, outreach, and instruction as well as selection functions, perhaps having less time and energy than traditional bibliographers for outside activities as a result.

Niessen

In my five-year library career I cannot report fundamental changes in my formal responsibilities. Throughout this period the official title of the selector has been subject librarian, and the emphasis has been on the complementarity of our activity on the service desks, in user instruction, in the selection of resources, and in interaction with students and faculty in one's academic departments. The library's Information Services Department includes units for Reference, Government Documents, Liaison & Collection Development, and User Instruction whose boundaries are extremely permeable. Many years ago, I am told, the library employed some people without library degrees who bore the title of bibliographer and worked in acquisitions, not reference. As recently as last year, some academic faculty members were designated by their departments to coordinate book orders for sending to the library. As I will describe in a later section, members of the faculty rather than library staff formerly did most of the actual selection of material bought with the history allocation. Our current system sought to rectify the inadequacies of that model.

The job description of the subject librarian at Texas Tech presumes autonomy and unpredictability in the demands on the selector's time. Not only are the disciplines and their information needs distinctive, but also the departments' traditions and expectations in relation to the library. In effect, the subject or liaison librarian model is an ongoing experiment, with no consistent standards in the balancing of functions (such as desk duty and reference selection against the firm ordering for the circulating collection) traditionally carried out by Tech librarians. In some academic departments, the library committee, its chair, or individual professors are unusually active in collection development and the librarian makes no claim to subject expertise. In such cases, collection development is less time consuming because it consists primarily of processing faculty recommendations. Three areas are making increasing demands on selectors' time: website development, library instruction, and the consideration of electronic products. These also develop unevenly across the program due to culture (some departments are more likely to request instruction than others) and discipline (electronic products, especially indexes and e-journals, are demanded more in the hard sciences, less in the humanities). It is difficult to address all these responsibilities adequately, but they provide the selector with a unique fund of knowledge about the information needs and local collection of his primary clientele.

Comparing my funds to those of colleagues at larger libraries, I must ask whether the budget of a selector at this size of library can even permit collecting for non-local needs. I would argue that, presuming an adequate focus, it is possible. It has been fairly easy to arrange with some colleagues in the Big Twelve Plus consortium about some narrow areas of local emphasis. However, the many claims on one's time make it difficult to conduct the collection analysis and consultation of reviews that would be necessary for cooperative selection in broad targeted areas. (Mosher & Pankake, 418, 427-8)

Roberts

As one of those formerly full-time collection development librarians or bibliographers whose basic responsibilities have recently multiplied, I bear witness to this trend and its possibly negative effects on cooperative collection development. In the spring of 1996, Yale's small Bibliography Department merged with the Reference Department, creating the Research

Services and Collections department staffed by ten librarians. All the librarians now have subject and departmental liaison responsibilities, perform advanced subject reference and general reference, and offer general as well as subject specific instruction. Except for general reference, all of these (departmental liaison, advanced reference, and some instruction) had been the bibliographers' responsibilities on a smaller scale. Now, while my collecting areas have diminished slightly, these other responsibilities have dramatically increased, in part due to a new institutional emphasis on instruction and liaison functions. General reference has not become an institutional priority and yet requires a heavy staffing commitment from the librarians who develop the collections and provide liaison and instructional services; it draws hours of my time away from my primary collection development concerns. In addition, the structure of our department is now more complex; the collection development activities of a larger group of selectors, many of whom lack knowledge, skills, and experience in this field, require more coordinating effort—another of my responsibilities.

This multi-faceted model has become increasingly common in research libraries. Collection development responsibilities have, according to history selectors' reports, been treated by administrators as a kind of staff development opportunity rather than as functions requiring training, skill, and experience. Though it has some benefits, the model is remarkably inefficient and not particularly conducive to cooperative collection development. It carries, as colleagues experience it, very high overhead. Many more people must spend their time developing and maintaining awareness of the same array of reference tools rather than on building particular collections, and the same number must toil over budget requests instead of information requests. Spread thin, librarians' expertise in a subject or function becomes diluted, as does their attention; it is not possible to focus long or deeply on anything. Some history selectors report spending only about 25% of their time on collection development. Not only are collection development functions fragmented and split among numerous librarians with competing demands on their time, but also many of those librarians do not report directly—if at all—to administrators in charge of collection development and management.

Can effective cooperative programs thrive in such a milieu? When collection development librarians have multiple functions, and particularly when some of these are strongly oriented towards serving local users, the prospects for cooperative collection development may be less than optimal. Not only do fragmentation of time and multiplication of responsibilities take a toll on selectors' ability to initiate or participate in labor-intensive cooperative ventures—however much they might favor them—but service activities also subtly affect their point of view. General reference service, intense instruction, and liaison work tend to focus attention on local needs and local collections rather than cooperative collections or the national collection.^[3] These public services functions heighten a selector's awareness of local research, teaching, and programmatic needs and enhance her ability to build collections to meet them and to anticipate future needs. This is true especially in larger research libraries with comprehensive collections and adequate budgets. What public service activities teach selectors about how historians work will be discussed below.

2. How are budgetary allocations for collection development administered?

Separate budgetary lines may exist for individual formats and means of acquisition or for groups of disciplines; alternatively, selectors may control funds for all formats in a discipline. Sharing responsibility for a discipline with other library units may reduce the selector's capacity for outside collaboration.

Niessen

In his article on "Budgetary Methods for Collection Management," Eugene Wiemers, Jr. notes that the way budgets are organized has a major impact on selectors' autonomy and accountability. (Wiemers, 108) At Texas Tech, the history selector has direct control over one part of history acquisitions, the formula-based firm order allocation for that subject. There is shared responsibility for the funds for approval plans, continuations, reference, and electronic publications, and selectors exercise only mediated influence over the portions of these budgets corresponding to their subjects. We are encouraged to return unwanted approval plan books, cancel subscriptions that have outlived their usefulness, and terminate reference titles that are now duplicated in electronic format. The selector's economic incentive to do so would be far stronger with selector-based budgeting where we can use the money saved thereby for the ordering of other titles. Approval plan books do not come in on our personal fund, although the dollar value of shipments accepted on each selector's portion of the approval plan does influence the next year's firm order money through the allocation formula. Standing orders instituted in wealthier days or under the influence of a long-departed faculty member are likely to go unexamined. These funding arrangements lead to variation in the rigorousness of the selection criteria: firm orders must be actively selected, approval plan titles may be returned if outrageously out of scope but we tend to keep them if they have any redeeming features, whereas the standing order titles are often very specialized works at steep prices. All of which is not to deny the efficacy of well-managed, well-monitored approval plans and standing orders. The spread of history acquisitions across several funds also makes it difficult for the selector to place a dollar value on acquisitions in his subject or to account for the future disposition of shared funds. This makes it harder to understand what you are currently doing and could do in cooperative projects with selectors in other libraries.

Outside the Texas Tech University Library (the main building of "the libraries"), we strive for a comprehensive collection on the history of the American Southwest and outstanding retrospective holdings on the history of the Vietnam War in our Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library. Once again budgetary separateness makes it difficult for me to get an overview of current collecting. Because the Southwest and Vietnam are also major curricular foci in our history department, the acquisition of archival, non-circulating copies of new monographs may not be sufficient on our commuting campus. To some extent I can factor in these special collections as I decide how to apportion my funds among historical fields, but knowing the demand for circulating copies I must see that the approval plan still covers titles in southwestern history and the Vietnam War fairly well. Thus the influence of our special collections on my own ordering is a complex one.

Roberts

The administration of budgetary allocations for collection development librarians at Yale is not per se an impediment to cooperative collection development. Allocations are made on a subject or regional basis and thus selectors control funds for all formats in a discipline. Some of our numerous approval plans are funded from central collection development funds, while some are paid from subject funds. In all cases, the shaping and monitoring of approval plan profiles and receipts rests in the hands of the subject librarians.

Several libraries in our system have overlapping responsibilities; for example, collections in religion (an important field for historians) are held in both the Sterling Memorial and Divinity libraries, and the history of science is collected in Sterling Memorial Library, the Kline Science Library, and the Medical Historical Library. Librarians at Yale increasingly try to cooperate internally to avoid duplication, develop important strengths, and take advantage of expertise in processing and cataloguing staff. This high level of internal cooperation, brought about at Yale in the past two decades by growing budgetary concerns, is not a necessary feature of large academic research libraries. Where it operates, however, it inculcates in selectors attitudes or orientations and experience with potential for cooperative efforts outside the library.

The substantial budgets of large research libraries like Yale do not, however, necessarily foster cooperative collection development, but this has more to do with relative abundance than the structure of allocations. Selectors in such institutions are not necessarily complacent, but they may be under less pressure to look for collection resources elsewhere. With a large and prominent history department, collecting mandates at Yale are traditionally and necessarily broad, and budgetary allocations have supported comprehensive collecting in many areas as well as new departures. Purchase of large expensive items may be deferred for another fiscal year, or the cost may be spread out over several years, but for the most part we are still able to acquire material that supports local research and programs and builds on the library's considerable long-term strengths.

Selectors at Yale constantly adapt their budgets to changing programs and expectations. With adequate pressures, even long-standing reliance on other collections' strengths can break down in the face of changing research interests in a prestigious department and increasing demands, often from undergraduates. For decades, for example, Yale determinedly maintained a conspectus level three collection on South Asia, deferring to stronger collections at Columbia and Cornell. In recent years, the expanding horizons of historians and students have encouraged somewhat more active collecting of research materials in this field.

3. Growing expenditures for electronic data are likely to reduce the significance of local collection building.

At many institutions, the selector's budget may decline in relative terms and be dedicated to general-use, high demand items. The CRL and certain regional centers may take on a greater role in specialized collection development. Participating libraries must then decide whether subject librarians should be involved in representing their institutions' needs to these consortia.

Niessen

In good times, the library budget can be a rising tide that lifts even the history selector's boat. This has been the case at Texas Tech, although the book budget has declined as a relative portion of the materials budget. Electronic publications rightly enjoy administrative favor at this time. For example, *JSTOR* and science e-journals facilitate immediate access to resources more cost-effectively than would be possible through traditional methods, while public access bibliographic utilities and online indexes do the same through interlibrary loan.

There are some troubling implications for history collecting because of the current budgetary preference for electronic publications, however. The importance of monographs and other retrospective materials and the doubtfulness that most of them will be digitized have already been mentioned. Even among indexes and journals, the benefits for historians are undermined by the eclecticism of the discipline. Moving historical indexes online involves investments for implementation by the vendors and technical support by libraries that may be prohibitive. Even *Historical Abstracts*, a recognized standby in paper, has come online only in the past year and has been difficult to sell to colleagues in my library. Part of the problem (this is my observation and reported by colleagues in other libraries) is that historians use *Historical Abstracts* in paper very little. The benefits of electronic databases should not be minimized, though. Through our membership in the LEIAN consortium (Llano Estacado Information Access Network, for West Texas and Eastern New Mexico) we have gained access to a very large package of FirstSearch databases, including some of special interest to historians, such as *WorldCat*, *Arts & Humanities Search* (the *FirstSearch* version of the *Arts and Humanities Citation Index*) and *Humanities Abstracts*.

Electronic formats, and libraries' increasing expenditure for them, have even greater potential for mischief in the economics of journal publishing. As part of a survey of historians' use of information sources in 1997, I asked our sampling which historical journals they consulted at least once every three months. Only two titles, *American Historical Review* and *Journal of American History*, were designated by more than ten percent of respondents. (*Use of Historical Information Study*, table 62) Apart from a very few journals of record, historians prefer specialized journals whose conversion into e-journals will come late, if at all. Many electronic journals require plugins on users' computers. In January 1998 the Council of the American Historical Association endorsed a statement of concern about electronic journal publishing that had grown out of a conference at Indiana University on the future of historical journals. The *Statement on Intellectual Diversity* by the Coalition of History Editors for Publishing in the Future deplored the tendency of publishers and journal aggregators to select for electronic publication only those titles for electronic publication with a sufficiently broad readership base. The editors warned that if the content of all existing history journals were not brought into the electronic medium "the current orphaning process of journals in area studies and in specialized themes will soon diminish the historical profession at large." ("Statement," 36)

Texas Tech's ventures into cooperative collection development have been almost exclusively in the electronic arena. Our recent membership in the Center for Research Libraries (CRL) is the principal exception. The study evaluating the benefits of CRL membership by Rutledge and Swindler argues that promotion and staff participation contribute significantly to making

membership worthwhile for dues-paying libraries. In its one year as a member, Texas Tech has yet to participate in acquisitions balloting. Not that this is unusual: Donald Simpson, President of the CRL, reported in 1987 that only slightly more than half of members had participated in balloting the previous year. (Rutledge & Swindler, 415-16)

Roberts

In Robert J. Wood's "paradigm shift" individual selectors are increasingly constrained by consortial arrangements concerning the choices and offerings of electronic products (Wood, 233-4); this shift has not occurred at Yale. In the selection, for example, of large general undergraduate article-index and full-text databases, initially at least selectors were steered in the direction of *ProQuest* as one of the choices of the NorthEast Research Libraries (NERL) consortium. However, for a variety of reasons, we elected to add *WilsonWeb* databases, and eventually because of the dissatisfaction of local users, we recently switched to EBSCOHost's *Academic Search*. In this case, the decisions were made with broad input from selectors and other librarians, and reference and general funds, not subject funds, assumed the costs.

The real danger is, of course, that expensive general reference tools as well as increasing numbers of online journals and subject specific databases will drain funds from the budgets formerly devoted to the print and microform sources of a field like history. Historical materials are finally beginning to appear in electronic formats in appreciable quantities; meanwhile the number and importance of "traditional" materials show no signs of diminishing. So far, large academic libraries can still afford both traditional and electronic resources. In fact, electronic offerings in history—while growing in number—consumed only 1% to 3% of history budgets at Yale in recent years. But somehow budgetary resources for electronic resources must be created, and these will come either "off the top" or from individual selectors' budgets. To create such budget lines as well as to simplify the payment process, selectors at Yale give over into central coffers subject funds for subscriptions to general electronic resources that they support; these then become centrally funded. Depending on how a library creates budgets for electronic resources, even selectors in large research libraries may in the end see a relative diminution of their purchasing power and be forced to cut back on exactly those marginal materials that no one else is collecting. The process may be so slow and unconscious that the results will be invisible for years. The challenge for history selectors in large research libraries is to be aware of decisions to diminish the scope of collecting and to collaborate usefully to mitigate the consequences for the national collection.

Many electronic resources are purchased or leased through inter-institutional cooperation, but these represent a special kind of cooperative collection development. Libraries don't share electronic resources in the same way that print or microform resources are shared: a single copy or subscription meeting the needs of several institutions. Instead, libraries pool staff and budgetary resources to negotiate favorable pricing and license terms. This pooling does happen at the administrative level, but it is possible—at least in large research libraries—to involve selectors in decisions about what products to acquire and how much of their funds to contribute. Selectors must always weigh alternatives. In some cases, these electronic resources (for example, *Periodical Contents Index* or *Arts and Humanities Citation Index*) enhance the value and utility

of existing collections, and the spending of funds on this sort of collection enhancement is acceptable and indeed desirable.

If the CRL and other regional centers assume a larger role in specialized collecting, it is still possible and indeed advisable to involve subject librarians in the process of recommending purchases to CRL and voting their preferences on the ballots. I have had some success using this way of getting CRL to purchase microform collections necessary for the research of Yale graduate students. The democratic balloting process can, however, be at odds with individual member libraries' interests; the first two parts of a desired collection passed the balloting process and were purchased, but subsequent parts did not win enough votes to be purchased with available funds and were deferred for consideration the following year.

4. How much influence does the selector have in the organization over processing and access priorities?

Successful cooperative collecting requires not only shared acquisition of materials but also shared information via catalog records and ILL policies that make works usable.

Niessen

Alongside economies of collecting, the selector must wrestle with economies in the processing of material. Calculations about the dollar cost of cataloging, catalog records, and even title tracings can lead to decisions of great interest to the selector and to potential borrowers. Does the set or series have a parent record in the catalog so that the selector can identify gaps in the holdings in order to address them? Can the local or remote user determine whether we own a particular item by author or title, or only by volume number? The Bibliographic Services Department rightly has decisive say in such decisions, since these departments dispose of their staff time and can judge the monetary cost of various options, but selectors need to be aware of their implications. Gift collections also raise a quandary: even in the case of rare and nationally significant titles, does the expense of cataloging or providing them with the necessary preservation treatment stand in a satisfactory relation to the item's expected use value? Three years ago we acquired a six hundred volume collection of Russian books. I'm still struggling with these questions as the borderline remnants of the collection await disposition.

The Achilles' heel of reliance on a special non-circulating collection for part of collection development is the fact that it may not provide satisfactory access for local students and faculty. Even more evidently, non-circulating volumes are of limited value for the distributed national collection we are discussing. Granting physical access by a mobile researcher to a stationary collection is admittedly one form of resource sharing. Our library recognizes this through its support of modest research grants to our faculty for the support of travel to out-of-town collections. However, cooperative collection development presumes that resources themselves should be mobile or at least nearby. The more geographically remote a library is, as in the case of Texas Tech in West Texas, the more important the role of interlibrary loan for cooperative collection development.

Interlibrary loan is another area of library operations where the selector's preference for resource sharing may encounter countervailing arguments aimed at maximizing efficiency. OCLC is the hands-down favorite of ILL staff in seeking resources outside the local collection, because of the convenience of patron-initiated requests through *WorldCat*, ease in locating holding libraries, messaging, and a streamlined fee management system. (Jackson) If staff concede any fall-back option at all, it may be the expensive but almost equally convenient British Document Supply Centre. Staff may be reluctant to add RLIN, CRL, or even more specialized sources to the search routine of the paraprofessionals and student assistants who do most of the searching.

Selectors can play a role in interlibrary cooperation even where their budget, status within their library, or the overall size of a library collection and its budget would not seem to justify it. I am referring to the AAU/ARL German Resources Project <http://lcweb.loc.gov/loc/german/>, in which I have participated as a Texas Tech representative and working group member although "only" as a selector, and one from a library with relatively modest means, at that. Though my library is the smallest of those represented in the Project's Collection Development Working Group, my situation is not unique because the head of the Document Delivery Working Group is a selector and the head of the Bibliographic Control Working group comes from an arts and letters college. As we have worked to put in place various initiatives over the past year, it has been interesting to note the low profile or lack of official participation of some major libraries whose collections and information needs would make them logical partners. As the results of our work have become better known, it is good to see that many additional libraries have joined us in recent months. The professional leave and travel money that facilitated my participation should be seen above all as an institutional contribution to this cooperative project. The participation of selectors in functional working groups outside their job descriptions highlights the interest of selectors in the collaboration of all functional units of their libraries in cooperation. Finally, when smaller libraries make their staff available for such projects it shows that these libraries can participate in this way, as well as through formal operational commitments.

Roberts

Individual selectors in large research libraries have varying levels of influence over institutional priorities for processing and access. Area studies specialists at Yale, who often control their own cataloguing units, are better placed to enter into and bring to fruition cooperative collecting programs than are selectors whose acquisitions flow through large general processing units that serve many units and whose priorities are set by others. The need to devote cataloguing resources to internal projects such as retrospective conversion can mitigate—at least temporarily—the success of cooperative ventures.

Selectors sometimes advocate, strenuously though not always successfully, access strategies that would exploit existing cooperative arrangements or foster awareness and use of new ones. Making library users and staff aware of the CRL's resources is an excellent case in point. As the selector for history, a discipline whose practitioners stand to benefit from CRL's holdings, I spent some years and more dollars trying to get tapes of the CRL catalog loaded into our OPAC so that users could see immediately the full range of available resources. The tape load was immanent for several years, but in the end it ran afoul of the more urgent priorities of our systems office and a host of probably excellent database-maintenance reasons for not loading them. Our current

solution, as we wait for the capability of broadcast searching of Z39.50 databases, is to put a prominent link to the CRL catalog in the Web pages where we list the catalogs considered integral to Yale's bibliographic resources.

Selectors, as most of the literature emphasizes, cannot single-handedly achieve inter-institutional collaboration. Whether they initiate cooperative collecting projects or join in existing ones, broad local administrative commitment is vital. Between their clear traditional responsibilities and demanding new duties in reference and outreach, selectors need support to accommodate additional external activities that have local consequences and whose payoff is distant and unpredictable. Much energy in research libraries these days is directed towards developing digital libraries and cooperative purchasing of electronic resources; much less is devoted to cooperative collection development for more traditional materials.^[4] Gaining support for engaging in cooperative collection development is one of the challenges.

5. What is the constituency for whom the collection is being built?

Due to budgetary scarcity or local tradition, faculty may control expenditures and prioritize material according to pedagogical relevance or their research, leading to the neglect of broader needs. The library can better build collections serving a wider community if selection decisions reside with the librarian.

Niessen

I referred in an earlier section to the evolution of the procedures for history selection at Texas Tech. The library at one time turned over the task of selection, and the disposition of the history fund, to the history department. This had the political benefit for the library that the history department could know that the fund was at its disposal and its decisions were final. In theory, nobody is a better judge of what is needed than the professors who know the literature, conduct research, and are frustrated in their teaching if their students can't get what they need. But academic departments are very political entities, with a strict hierarchy of various ranks of students and faculty. An ostensibly equitable system at Texas Tech provided that the history fund be divided up into equal allocations for each of the Americanists and larger amounts for each of the non-Americanists, the rationale being that the fields of the latter were less well served by the library's approval plan. A departmental committee determined the size of the individual allocations, and a grad student paid by the department collected the faculty's orders and forwarded them to the library.

One problem with our system of faculty entitlements was that the distribution was not truly equitable because the publishing universe and the approval plan profile were stronger in some fields than in others. A bigger problem was the inequality of faculty information needs and demands, because some were more active researchers than others and some designed their courses in such a way that their students made greater demands on the library. This led in turn to the greatest problem, namely that some professors never used their entitlements, which were returned to the departmental pot for the purchase of big-ticket items. In some years, a significant

portion of the fund would go for specialized monographic sets or microform collections that would be used only occasionally or by only one professor, while the librarian lacked resources to address shortages of circulating materials that were encountered at the reference desk.

In place of the old system, I have maintained control of the allocation within the library and seen the percentage of orders based on faculty recommendations decline in these five years from nearly 100% to 60%. There was some opposition to the new system, but it is generally accepted today, for several reasons. I determine my spending priorities in consultation with the departmental library committee, invite faculty recommendations and distribute vendor slips to facilitate them, and deliver a spreadsheet with my history orders (identifying requesters for each title that had one) at the end of each year.

I have neglected two additional arguments for a predominant role of the faculty in selection: with small budgets the local ordering must be very selective, and small libraries are less likely to have librarians with the requisite skills and expertise. Where book budgets have stagnated, even very large libraries feel the need to address the most strongly expressed local needs rather than attempt to build a balanced collection or one that fills a function in a national collection. The librarian is more likely than the faculty to select with a national collection in mind. The stronger the degree of faculty control, the weaker a library's commitment will be to cooperative collection development.

Roberts

Collection development librarians in large academic institutions build collections for a broad constituency, one that they themselves help to define. The local constituents are, of course, among the most important. In the Yale Library system, faculty members neither directly select library materials, control expenditures, nor prioritize purchases according to their criteria of relevance. Departments as well as individual professors have a variety of ways of approaching library acquisitions: participating in library committees; making several requests/suggestions per week; sending shopping bags of review copies, or simply taking rich holdings for granted. Subject librarians assume the responsibility of maintaining awareness of research, teaching, and programmatic needs as well as breadth of coverage in general. They consult history department and other faculty members routinely about programmatic directions (new hires, new courses, new majors) as well as on the appropriateness of serials subscriptions/cancellations and the purchase of expensive microform as well as —increasingly—electronic resources.

Collection development for a large academic research library has a kind of built-in corrective to narrowly local preoccupations. Selectors for a major research collection are expected to consider other constituencies; traditional missions and adequate budgets afford the possibility of thinking broadly and comprehensively about collection development—and acting on the dictum that "there is no access without ownership." The collections themselves resemble constituents. I continue, for example, strong collecting in British history, one of Yale's traditional strengths, despite the fluctuations of the program and teaching strengths and despite worries of some that British history is declining as an academic field. The notion of being a library of record carries an almost automatic concern for the national collection. This kind of broad thinking goes beyond mere pride in some worn-out notion of a comprehensive collection.

The national collection thus holds a place in the collection development and management strategies of selectors at large research libraries. My colleagues and I are still dutifully and comprehensively collecting in certain fields, like Rhaeto-Romanic literature, sigillography, and etiquette, that are remnants of older RLG assignments of "primary collecting responsibilities." With adequate funds, one can afford to subscribe to an obscure local European history journal for its relevance to the collection and because no other library reports holdings in the bibliographic utilities. An instance of major research libraries' responsibility for the national collection is evident in the large cooperative and federally funded preservation microfilming projects of the late 1980s and early 1990s. In an NEH-funded, RLG-sponsored filming project, Yale and Berkeley divided the field of American history at the Mississippi for the purpose of filming brittle books. These programs may not fully qualify as cooperative collection development, but they surely embodied cooperating at the national level. At Yale, subject selectors/bibliographers were closely involved in the genesis of and item-level decision-making for these programs. The experience of making reformatting decisions about brittle books in NEH-funded European, French, and British microfilming projects at Yale early in the 1990s altered permanently my preservation strategies. The national interest now figures in deciding whether to film a brittle book or simply photocopy it for the stacks.

Geography can be an important factor in cooperative collecting. Where consortia flourish in states or large urban areas, other research libraries are important regional constituents. Compared to some major academic libraries, Yale is somewhat isolated geographically from the cooperative arrangements in cities like Boston and New York. While there are certain specialties I rely on Harvard or New York Public to support, there are few actual agreements that figure prominently in collection development for history.

6. Does the model of distributed and digital collections suit the way historians work?

Today's historians are trained in a traditional research library to browse in a physical collection of books and journals. Can they adjust to new working conditions, waiting for interlibrary loan or working with digital files? Cooperative collection development increases the need for user instruction.

Roberts

From the point of view of historians accustomed to working in major libraries, relying on other collections can limit the horizons of research at various stages in various ways. Historians work in many different ways, depending often on the kind of documentation they use for their research. Intellectual historians who focus on close reading of small numbers of individual texts might be content with the analytical power of digital resources; social and economic historians often need to go directly to the sources, spending months in foreign archives or at least poring over microfilms of archival documents. Their primary concern is with primary and secondary sources. For nearly all historians, retrospective materials are vital. Recent studies indicate—and my observations in recent years bear it out—that historians will change only slowly their ways of working and their relationship to libraries. (Delgado & Lynch, 245-59)

In addition, different phases of historians' work require different levels of access to documents. Exploring topics for research often requires ready access to a broad range of materials and a mastery or at least survey of a large number of documents. Historians, for example, shaping a topic on attitudes towards imperial possessions or towards health and disease in the nineteenth century, may need to range over many volumes of numerous nineteenth century periodicals. For this reason, faculty at large research libraries are loathe even to have such materials transferred to off-site shelving facilities, much less get them on ILL or use them elsewhere. Scholars at smaller institutions must travel to major collections to do such work.

Some phases of actual research are best done with unimpeded access to research materials fundamental to the topic, whether these be printed sources, archival documents, or microforms of the latter. Interlibrary loan (except from CRL) is often inadequate for this purpose because of restrictions on quantity and time. Most libraries will only lend five microfiche or reels of film for a limited time and require that those borrowed be returned before more can be sent. When a collection contains hundreds of fiche or reels, such rules produce inefficiency and frustration for historians. Historians do, of course, find ILL useful in the advanced stages of their research; ILL brings them highly specialized monographs, articles, small numbers of microforms. General reference work, however, makes one acutely aware of how many faculty and students do not plan or simply do not have time for the two-to-three week ILL turn-around time. It is often not really a question of planning: the final stages of editing and proofreading a manuscript, despite the best planning, frequently end in an anxious last-minute scramble.

At the undergraduate level, ILL as currently administered is not an acceptable means of access even for infrequently used primary research materials like texts and documents sets in print or on microform. Instructional activities make abundantly clear that, especially for undergraduates, the rhythms of the academic calendar and assignments and restrictive due dates render ILL useless for providing primary materials for many research projects (Dannelly 253). At Yale, undergraduates are encouraged to do real research in primary sources. The materials need to be on hand to be explored for potential topics and then to be used at the rhythm of undergraduate life, that is, sandwiched in with other course assignments. Senior essay or thesis writers rarely have the option of focussing their entire time for two weeks on the films that have just arrived on ILL. The culture of history research at Yale is such that undergraduates are encouraged to follow their own interests, often whether or not there are sources to work with. Faculty do not always try to steer them to materials we own. Thus we sometimes acquire microform collections in core fields even if they are held at CRL or elsewhere.

Library collections support not only research and teaching but also the work of history departments. One of my functions as subject liaison is to help sell the institution to candidates for faculty positions. Closer liaison ties with history departments reveal how heavily departments rely on the strength of library collections as a recruiting tool; in a certain sense these ties render selectors complicit in the larger system—noted in the literature—of recruitment and measurement, excellence and prestige, that drives research universities today. It is not only a question of competition and library pride in self-sufficiency (Wood, 235), but also of institutional success and all that hangs on it. Successful faculty hires maintain successful programs; both draw good students and graduate students and sustain institutional prestige. The quality of library collections and allocations are tightly entwined with this cyclical process.

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Historians place large amounts of data into a large context of related data. Concepts and subject terms are often themselves the object of interpretation, so that historians are frustrated with controlled vocabulary headings. While document surrogates presume to capture the "aboutness" of remote resources, historians value serendipity and may think spatially rather than conceptually about their information resources. (Gilmore & Case, Tibbo) For all these reasons, the traditional historian's ideal "laboratory" environment is an eclectic and above all large collection in which one can physically browse the publications. Relying to a large extent on metadata in local catalogs, bibliographic utilities, and indexes to identify much of the material for request from a remote location is considered unsatisfactory. It is likely that many senior historians are accustomed to work this way and encourage their graduate students to do the same. Many of you have experienced the political sensitivity of talk about remote storage! Young faculty likely join the department at smaller schools directly from large Ph.D.-granting institutions that afford the luxury of magnificent collections, and they may be in for a shock.

The younger faculty have the advantage of greater familiarity with computers, the Internet, and databases. Accustomed to using these tools in other aspects of their lives, they are ready to experiment with their efficacy for their professional work. Institutional incentives for distance education and web teaching, Ethernet connections to faculty offices, and the conversion of many tools to online access with a site license for all local users regardless of location, reinforce the faculty's electronic skills. A big question, as Susanne Roberts also notes, is whether the tempo of student and faculty research can be reconciled to periodic waits for material that must be ordered from offsite. I would argue that historians who must learn to accommodate this reality will do so and will appreciate library instruction that helps their students do it, too. Library instruction for history alerts professors as well as students to the superiority of database searching over browsing for many research needs and demonstrates the use of bibliographic utilities and archival databases to locate remote resources. Through newsletters and classes we can also highlight digital treasure troves such as *American Memory* and *JSTOR* whose use is transforming historical teaching and research. We tell our faculty recruits not only about our traditional resources, but also about our strong commitment to service and our electronic offerings.

Historians are not collaborative in their work in precisely the way that natural scientists are; historical research and synthesis are more typically solitary and individual activities. However, the invisible college of historians has never been more important for professional life. I sit on the Executive Committee of *H-Net: Humanities & Social Sciences OnLine*. H-Net is a virtual organization of more than one hundred moderated Internet mailing lists, mostly in fields of history, with 100,000 subscribers worldwide. Roughly one third of historians in American higher education subscribe to one or more of our lists, and somewhat less than one third of all subscribers reside outside the United States. These historians come from a higher percentage of modestly endowed institutions than the leadership of the profession would lead one to suspect. Recently the Executive Committee held a retreat at Michigan State University, which provides much financial support for H-Net and houses its primary computer hosts. At our meeting with the Dean who is responsible for much of our financial support, it was striking to realize that Michigan State was the largest institution represented on our Executive Committee, and Texas

Tech is the third largest. Their constrained financial circumstances may make H-Netters more open to networking and new models of research and teaching.

The face of the historical profession presented by H-Net is different from that of the American Historical Association: less tied to large institutions and traditional measures of excellence, and above all more reliant upon networking and resource sharing. This face is supportive of the role of second tier institutions in cooperative collection development.

Conclusion

Subject librarians contribute to the quality of cooperative collection development through their knowledge of the literature, their methodology, understanding of working historians, and their concern for balance and quality in the local and distributed collection. Cooperative collecting ventures, while not yet appropriate for all subject areas, should not fail to integrate subject specialists and their valuable expertise. Selectors in small and medium sized research libraries can contribute to cooperative ventures in well defined areas where local interests mandate strong collections, and they can contribute staff time to organizational efforts such as the German Resources Project that do not have implications for local expenditures.

Libraries can maximize the contributions of subject librarians to cooperative collection development in several ways. Administrators must create environments that allow subject specialists time to analyze collections, to develop expertise and breadth of vision about collections and constituencies, and to focus on collaboration with other libraries. Administrators should foster structures and consultative practices that encourage and support collaboration. They can align institutional access and processing priorities with cooperative enterprises. Budgeting strategies can further enable subject librarians to collaborate in collection building if budgets are subject or selector-based and if approval plan profiling is under their control. Selectors with adequate control over budgetary resources are able to maintain collection breadth and develop depth as appropriate. And administrators can support cooperative endeavors such as the CRL and the German Resources Project in support of interlibrary goals that transcend cost-benefit analysis.

Growing expenditures for electronic resources should be monitored with sensitivity to the impact on subject-related budgets and to the continuing need in some disciplines for strong support of traditional resources. History selectors themselves need not only to be vigilant about the consequences of choosing electronic resources over others lest the marginal materials that serve a far-ranging and eclectic discipline disappear from the national collection, but also to monitor their print collections to avoid needless redundancy of specialized material. While remaining attuned to the work habits of their constituents, history librarians need to seize every opportunity to educate their readers about the long-term benefits to the discipline of cooperative collection development.

Both libraries and historians pursue their goals in a variety of institutions. Most libraries rely to a greater or lesser extent on cooperative arrangements to meet their needs. The prestige of size,

wealth, and tradition at the largest research universities offer great benefits, both for faculty and for the national collection. At the same time, library writers have warned of the implications of these positive traits for the readiness of the library to respond flexibly to change. Libraries with smaller, less comprehensive collections may need to collaborate more energetically to make research materials available. Models of cooperative collection development must be developed for different disciplines and types of libraries.

The success of cooperative collection development for electronic publications has primarily benefited the sciences, because they are journal-based disciplines. As we noted at the beginning, historians are unusually reliant on monographs. Even if improvements in ergonomics, video display, and desktop publishing make electronic monographs more feasible in the future, historians' need for diverse retrospective and foreign-language materials will preserve their predominant demand for physical books. From 1986 to 1997, ARL libraries' monographic expenditures rose only half as fast as monographic unit costs, 30% to 62%. Consequently, monographic purchases declined 14%. (*Monograph and Serial Costs in ARL Libraries, 1986-1997*). United Nations statistics for the corresponding period indicate an increase in the annual number of new titles published worldwide. (*Statistical Yearbook*) Historians are therefore increasingly reliant on resource sharing. Library budgets have to date permitted a spontaneous, undirected sort of cooperative collection development that has helped this system work. The continuation of current trends will increase the pressure on libraries, especially smaller ones, to overcome the obstacles we have described in this paper to active cooperation in the building of history collections.

Notes

1. The authors both hold Ph.D.s in European history. James Niessen is Librarian for History & Foreign Languages in the Texas Tech University Libraries, and Susanne Roberts is Librarian for European History and Coordinator of Humanities Collections in the Sterling Memorial Library at Yale University. We would like to thank the following individuals for their comments on drafts of this paper: Suzan McGinnis, Ann Okerson, and Louis Pitschmann. The arguments advanced in this paper are of course those of the two authors.
2. The discussion logs of the list may be reached from its Internet site at <http://www.h-net.msu.edu/~histbib/>.
3. By the "national collection" we mean the aggregate of circulating—and thus available to practicing historians—holdings for history in North American libraries as measured by the North American title count. The "distributed national collection" has roughly the same meaning, but has a slightly more active, cooperative connotation.
4. One interesting exception to this statement is the user-initiated borrowing arrangement currently being developed by the Yale, Columbia and University of Pennsylvania libraries, which enjoys library and university support at the highest levels. Although it is a resource-sharing reader service rather than cooperative collection development enterprise, if it manages to reduce the interlibrary borrowing time it could have implications for the latter.

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