



Library of Congress Cards at Harvard

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the unrestricted general funds come \$250 for binding and \$200 for lantern slides. For blueprints and photographs special appropriations are made when necessary. In 1900 the situation was very different, for that was the period when all successful architects had fine libraries of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century architectural books. It was felt that the Architectural Library should have these publications for the proper education of students. Accordingly, an appropriation of \$3,500 was made for books, periodicals, and binding, and, even so, at the end of the year the fund went in the red \$516!

However, the question of funds, as far as the acquisition of books is concerned, is not as unsatisfactory as it appears, for Widener Library has always made available for the purchase of titles in architecture a part of its Fine Arts funds, and the librarian of the Department of Architecture and

faculty members may recommend for purchase important publications for which there is not immediate use in the working collection in Robinson Hall. Houghton Library now acquires rare books in the general field. This cooperation between component parts of the greatly diversified Harvard University Library is one of its notable features, resulting in a breadth and depth of coverage that would be very difficult, if not impossible, to realize in a highly centralized system.

In regard to the administration of the architectural collection the librarian feels much as did one of the lecturers in architectural history, C. Howard Walker, in regard to the architectural profession. Each year he told his students, 'The profession of architecture is one of the first seven rows of the orchestra. If you can't be in the front row you can have a damn' good time in the seventh.'

RUTH V. COOK

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WHEN the Harvard College Library moved into the Widener building in 1915, the Official or Union Catalogue was placed on the first floor near the staff workrooms, and the Public Catalogue was established on the second floor near the main reading room and the circulation desk. The latter lists books in the College Library (but not, for the most part, those in other Harvard collections) by author, subject, and title; the official Catalogue has attempted to list, by author only, all books in the University Library.

The Library of Congress had issued more than half a million printed cards by the time Widener opened; these were filed into the Official Catalogue, and new Library of Congress cards were filed there as soon as possible after their receipt. In recent years these have numbered 80,000 or more annually. Call-numbers were added to those printed cards that described books in the main collection, and the holdings of other Harvard libraries were indicated by the addition of names or symbols. The remaining cards, representing books owned by

the Library of Congress that were not to be found anywhere at Harvard, were known as 'unused' L. C. cards.

It was convenient for both staff and public to have these 'unused' cards in the catalogue — just as it would have been convenient if holdings of the British Museum and the Bibliothèque Nationale could have been incorporated in it — for one could often identify a non-Harvard book in the process of ascertaining that it was not at Harvard, and without turning to other bibliographical compilations. After the Library of Congress reproduced its printed cards in book form a few years ago, the 'unused' cards at Harvard could hardly be considered indispensable; maintenance of the file as a part of the Official Catalogue might be called a luxury when the same information was also available in a set of books that could be shelved near by.

It was not an inexpensive luxury, because the Library was spending \$1,500 per year to file new printed Library of Congress cards in the Official Catalogue, the trays and cases occupied by each year's additions cost \$1,000, and those filled by 'unused' cards already there were worth something like \$15,000 (at present prices).

The Official Catalogue was so crowded by 1949 that additional cases and a card-shifting project would have been required almost at once if there had been no change in policy. The Library Committee of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences voted, instead,

to authorize the withdrawal of the 'unused' cards. They were removed from only the most seriously crowded trays during the next few months, but it was agreed early in 1952 that all of them ought to be withdrawn systematically, and the work is now in process. It has been found that they constitute approximately one third of the Official Catalogue, which will be reduced to about three million cards by their withdrawal. It should be noted that there are a few printed cards from institutions other than the Library of Congress; cards are being retained for books that are in other libraries of the Boston area but not at Harvard.

The cards that are withdrawn are not being discarded. For the present, at least, those printed before 1948, which are reproduced in the main set and first supplement of the book-form Library of Congress catalogue, are being stored on the basement level in inexpensive pasteboard boxes, and those printed since 1948 are being retained on the main floor. There will be an opportunity to observe how much both groups of cards are used before any final decision is made on what to do with them.

One cannot expect those who are deprived of a convenience or luxury to be pleased, but officers of the Library who recommended this step believe that most users of the catalogue will agree that the 'unused' cards were not worth as much as they were costing.

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