



THE FLYLEAF

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THE EARLY YEARS OF THE RICE LIBRARY

Our anthropologist editor of The Flyleaf has asked me to share with our readers some memories of the early beginnings - the stone age, as he called it - of the Rice Library. I am very glad to comply with this request, for the topic I am to consider is unusually interesting. Few libraries can be mentioned that combine the youth of ours, a short half century, with its solid growth. Last summer in Italy I visited the library of Verona which, of course, is not as large as that in the Vatican, but is older, in fact the oldest in Europe. Our Rice Library is not as old as that of Verona, but it is much larger; it is not to be compared with the Vatican Library, but then, how much younger it is! We have memories of our very skimpy youth, when in fact we scarcely were at all.

Miss Alice Dean, our first Librarian, recalls the fine morning when she cataloged and put on one of our empty shelves the first book of our collection. Before long our half millionth volume will be cataloged. And while I am mentioning Miss Dean's name, I should right here pay her the tribute of deep gratitude which all of us owe. She was the first devoted director of our Library, and no one could have achieved more than she did with the limited resources of funds and staff available to her. She grasped the opportunity presented to us after the First World War to buy files of journals, proceedings of academies and learned societies, as well as collected works which had come into the book market at very low

prices. In those early years we acquired many valuable serials which later became unprocurable. Personally I should state here that Miss Dean never failed in her endeavor to order any book or any serial file in philosophy which I requested for our collection.

Our library books have had a nomadic career before settling down in the Fondren Library. They started on the second floor of the north side of Lovett Hall, or the Administration Building as we first called it, where the President's offices are now. The reading room was on the first floor, but before long the reading space was invaded by the spreading stacks. The Library rambled down into the basement of the Administration Building, then into several rooms of the Physics Laboratory and across the road into the Chemistry Laboratory. I remember one year when we had to stack books in the basement under the Chemistry auditorium. Being a librarian in those chaotic years was a choice job. Humidity and heat, without air-conditioning, made our book shelves a paradise for book worms, which have left their perforations on thousands of volumes. Those were some of the growing pains of the Rice Library, before Mrs. Fondren's generous gift enabled us to bring all the books together in the new beautiful Fondren Library.

The early collecting of books was itself a long enterprise of active collaboration. We were fortunate in the composition of our Library Committee. The chairman, Griffith Evans, one of America's best mathematicians, was a mind of fine versatility in both science and the humanities, and himself a bibliophile. The late Claude Heaps always gave us good advice, not only about his specialty, physics, but also about science generally. Alan McKillop from the outset showed his

broad knowledge of literature as well as his particular love for reading secondhand book catalogues. Early in our committee meetings we decided to divide the library budget into two parts. One part was allotted to the initial and current needs of the various departments, for both books and journals. The other very substantial part was to be used for desirable files or other large purchases in any field that might come within our reach. In choosing these major purchases I recall with satisfaction that our Committee members always subordinated their own departmental preferences to fair consideration of the general library growth. Thus one day Evans and Heaps would support the purchase of a rare but fortunately available English literature file, and at the next session McKillop would vote with me to buy a set of mathematical journals. The inflation of the 1920's brought some unexpected serials to our stacks. Some of them indicated the financial crisis in European institutions. One of our fine science files bears the bookplate of the Köln Gymnasium.

Another important policy of our Library Committee was to build the book collection on two levels. We sought to acquire, as a general reference library, the really outstanding works in any field, whether or not it was represented in our course of study. But on a different level we proposed to expand our collections in the various fields where research and scholarly study were being done at Rice: In those fields our definite purpose was, as soon as we possibly could, to procure every significant work. So we planned to collect at Rice a good working reference library in all fields and a really first-class special research collection in as many fields as our university programs included. Actually this policy has been reflected even in our special

collections. A careful inspection will show that in various departments we have certain areas of intensive cultivation, but again we have also poorly developed stretches where we can only hope for better days in the future.

The recent tremendous increase in the cost of books demands a correspondingly increased library budget, if our Fondren Library is to attain and maintain its proper role in a university like Rice. This need and this opportunity have been clearly recognized by the administration and the trustees. We all hope that this wise policy will continue in the future. Our students are to be congratulated on having at Rice fine laboratory and library facilities so freely available to all.

May I include in my reminiscences a true little story which carries its own moral? After the First World War we ordered from a Leipzig bookseller a very large shipment of books. As postwar conditions of transport were still unsettled, Miss Dean indicated in her shipping directions that the books were to be sent in the cheapest and most convenient way. In due time some fifty heavy parcels arrived, all neatly addressed: "Rice Library, Cheapest and Most Convenient Way, Houston, Texas, U.S.A." To our lasting regret we did not see the humor of those wrappers. They should have been preserved, framed and hung in our various university offices.

I have been asked to write about our early years. But while I have been recalling the past I am not going to miss this chance of saying just one word about our greatest present need and our main hope for the future. As we all know, our Fondren Library has open shelves to which all readers can go freely. This is the only proper system for a university library; it brings everyone

in direct contact with the books. But every growing library acquires increasing numbers of old and even irreplaceable volumes which require particular care in a special collection. At present the rare treasures of our collection are preserved in our basement where they can not be used conveniently for research. And we also have on our shelves thousands of volumes which should be given special care.

What we need at Rice now, a top priority in fact, is a special research library in which all our rare volumes may be kept for study under proper supervision. That special research library should have exhibit cases of old rare volumes in every field of study. I recall the long exhibition hall at the Vatican Library, where we spent a good part of a day feasting our eyes and minds on incredible printed and manuscript treasures. That sort of experience is in itself a part of higher education. A beautifully furnished and competently supervised special research library would encourage bibliophiles to bring their choice volumes to Rice as to a safe and beautiful home. I can not think of anything that would help our Fondren Library more surely to enter into her next period of growth and eventually to join the small group of really great research libraries that are the treasuries as well as the laboratories of learning. Here is a wonderful opportunity for some generous friend of Rice to give something of superlative worth to our campus.

Radoslav A. Tsanoff

STUDENT BOOK COLLECTION CONTEST

To encourage on the campus an interest in good books, the Fondren this year has announced a competition for collections of books individually owned by students. Modest but monetary prizes will be awarded for the collections considered to be best, second best, and third best, as determined by a board of judges.

The judging will take place during National Library Week, 8 - 14 April, as a campus observance of that event, and the collections will be on display in the Fondren.

It has been suggested that this is a particularly appropriate activity for the Friends to sponsor and encourage, and it is hoped to form a fund from which prizes can be awarded annually. Contributions to this fund, however modest, will be most welcome. The amount needed is about \$75 annually.

O for a Booke and a shadie nooke,
 eyther in-a-doore or out;
 With the grene leaves whispering overhede,
 or the Streete cryes all about.
 Where I maie Reade all at my ease,
 both of the Newe and Olde;
 For a jollie goode Booke whereon to looke,
 is better to me than Golde.

Old English Song

FONDREN LIBRARY ACQUIRES
BISHOP MUSEUM PUBLICATIONS

An important recent addition to Fondren Library holdings is a complete set of all publications of the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum of Polynesian Ethnology and Natural History, Honolulu. Acquisition of these several hundred volumes is noteworthy because of the intrinsic value of the publications and also because the opportunity to purchase a complete set is extremely rare. The publications go back to 1892 and constitute by far the largest collections of writings in ethnology and biology on Polynesia and other island groups of the Pacific. A number of the works are regarded as "classics", and they have long been unobtainable. Many of these publications are of interest to the general reader as well as to the specialist.

Edward Norbeck

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It does not matter how many, but how good, books you have.

Seneca

FONDREN LIBRARY HOLDINGS IN

CLASSICS AND GERMAN

Classics

A Department of Classics is a liberal arts college in minuscule, combining the study of literature, history, philosophy, religion, and art (not to mention science, mathematics and social studies), to produce a unified understanding of the Greek and Roman civilizations. A classicist is normally a specialist in one branch, but he can not avoid use of complementary branches. Many libraries, acknowledging the coherence of the field, classify all works in classics together. Fondren Library follows the Library of Congress system, which distributes the works to their separate disciplines. The works of Hippocrates, for example, will be found among later and modern writings in biology rather than with the writings of his contemporaries. This practice is partly explained by the fact that classical studies did not become a part of the curriculum at Rice until 1960.

This fact also helps to explain the current state of holdings in the classics at Rice. The Departments of History and Philosophy have maintained a laudable interest in the Greco-Roman aspects of their fields, and the library has respectable holdings in these areas. The great gap is in the actual Greek and Latin texts of the ancient authors themselves. Rice's first president, the physicist and astronomer Edgar Odell Lovett, was an ardent classicist himself, and left his library to the university. It forms the nucleus of the existing collection; many classical

texts bear his bookplate. Unfortunately, Lovett's books go only a small way toward providing a complete collection.

Filling this gap constitutes the most urgent need, as well as the most difficult problem at the moment. A major obstacle is the long history of classical scholarship. In many cases books printed a century or more ago are still indispensable, but they are often unavailable. It is possible, however, to buy photographic reproductions of some works. By this expedient we may be able to build a representative collection, although it will be haphazard, determined by publisher's predictions of works in demand. This course of action will also be expensive.

Another major obstacle is that the United States is a poor place to fill our deficiencies. The last decade has seen a modest resurgence of classical studies from their nadir in the thirties and forties. Colleges seeking to make up their deficits in the field are forced to apply to Europe for their needs. The publishing of books on classical subjects is almost exclusively a European business. Several publishing plants were destroyed by the war and have either vanished or are making a slow recovery. For example, B. G. Teubner of Leipzig, established 150 years ago and the producer of the standard series of classical authors, suffered a direct hit in the war, and, in addition, found itself lodged in East Germany by the peace settlement. Professor Norbeck's comments on the difficulties and disappointments of ordering from abroad (Flyleaf XI, No. 3, p. 3) are only too valid here. Good private collections in this country are often committed to buyers long before their owners die. Despite these difficulties, it will be possible to compile a fair working library in the central

discipline of classics, the study of literature itself.

Classical linguistics, the study of inscriptions, manuscripts, papyri, and coins, as well as classical art and archaeology, are all ancillary but integral disciplines, each with a flourishing bibliography. Since research in these fields is normally restricted to specialists, and since the writings are usually highly technical, we do not plan to build comprehensive collections in these areas. Very few universities in the United States maintain such collections, and these are only for graduate study and the use of experts. In the foreseeable future there will be no graduate study in classics at Rice, and library holdings for teaching will be correspondingly limited.

For faculty research a fairly large general collection is anticipated, covering the various classical disciplines without great depth except in classical literature. It is hoped that specialized collections in such fields as are actually being explored may be acquired to facilitate personal research. Classical publication sometimes demands long bibliographic search before an idea can be guaranteed to be new. For some time to come it will probably be necessary for research of this kind to have recourse to the handful of universities in this country that have comprehensive classical collections.

Fondren Library is particularly weak in holdings of scholarly journals in the classics. At present it has only a few journals in English, some of them incomplete. European journals are particularly important, but acquiring them will probably be slow, as complete secondhand sets come on the market or as photographic reprints are

published. Many important French, German, and Italian periodicals began in the mid-nineteenth century, and complete sets are therefore large, rare, and expensive.

The situation may be summarized by saying that with fairly heavy expenditures in the next few years we can acquire the solid core of a departmental collection adequate for teaching and for research. We will doubtless often be faced with the dilemma of whether to make a moderately important purchase early in the year or to wait for a chance of a "must" later on, perhaps missing both. Elaborate collections for intensive research will be made only in areas actually being studied. Indeed, even with the wealth of Midas, it is probably impossible to acquire in a few years a comprehensive and deep classical collection in the United States today.

J. M. Heath

German

German was the first foreign language taught at Rice and without interruption has been part of its curriculum. This is quite understandable if one thinks of the influence of German scholarship on the American university in the nineteenth century. The existence of German-speaking communities in Texas at the time of the foundation of the Institute may also have had influence. The continuing importance of German for various types of research is evidenced by the fact that a considerable percentage of our library holdings consists of books written in the German language. A glance at the newest book display each week suggests that this percentage will not decrease in the future. Exact figures are not available.

Two world wars created, for a time, unfavorable conditions for the pursuit of advanced German studies. Naturally, the importation of books was interrupted during the war periods. Gaps in our holdings thus created are still noticeable. But this is not surprising when one considers that although the degree of Master of Arts in German has been offered for many years, a doctoral program in German was not initiated until 1961.

Credit should be given to the German faculty of former years for laying the foundation for a research library, sometimes under adverse circumstances, and with a relatively small budget. Besides Professor Max Freund, the chairman of the German Department for many years, Professor Heinrich Meyer should also be mentioned. This scholar not only helped in building up the German section in the library by selecting acquisitions,

but his name also appears as donor in a number of very valuable books.

As a consequence of these early efforts, most handbooks for the study of German philology and the history of German literature are available. There is at least one edition of practically all writers of significance and a well-chosen sampling of critical studies. Special treasures include the complete Deutsches Wörterbuch which was begun by the Grimm brothers in 1837, continued by generations of scholars, and finished in 1960, and the complete Weimar edition of Goethe's works. It is very difficult to find complete sets of either work in the second-hand book market now.

After the last war a plan of expansion began, from the needs of a small department teaching only undergraduate students to a collection of books in Germanic philology permitting research in all aspects of the discipline. This development was hampered for some years by a small budget. Recently, however, the budget has been increased and extra allotments have been made. A true research library is taking shape.

Dean Masterson and the Library Committee have been most welcome supporters of our efforts. The permanent members of the faculty in German have cooperated in the attempt to fill the gaps. Unfortunately, much time is wasted because only a small percentage of books ordered on the second-hand book market ever reach the library. This is mainly due to our geographical situation and to the competition from other libraries, especially European ones, which are recovering their losses from the last war.

As in the case generally in Fondren Library, holdings in German are particularly

strong in scholarly series. Practically all important periodicals which deal with German literature and philology are on standing order. Gaps in back files are gradually being filled, partly through microfilm. Among the acquisitions of the last few years are an almost complete set of the Bibliothek des Stuttgarter Litterarischen Vereins, a series containing indispensable editions of Baroque and Renaissance literature, and a complete set of Die Fackel, a Vienna periodical edited and mostly written by Karl Kraus from 1899 to 1936. Die Fackel had considerable influence on Austrian literature and is more and more considered an important part of the German literature of the period. Unfortunately, we are rather weak in the periodicals and original editions of the writings of Kraus's opponents, the Expressionists, except for a recent reprint of Die Aktion. There are, of course, many gaps to be filled. In many cases new editions are needed because the annotation of a certain editor is very important or his arrangement of the material represents an interpretation, as in the case of Friedrich von Hardenberg. This is an example of the difference between what is needed for teaching undergraduates and for research. Critical literature will continue to be added. In some cases our holdings are comparable even now with those of much larger libraries. Examples are: Nibelungenlied, Walther, Lessing, Goethe, Schiller, Hölderlin, Hardenberg (Novalis), Hauptmann, Hofmannsthal, Rilke, Mann. It should be noted that we have built up a small but efficient collection dealing with Scandinavian philology.

Naturally, the interest of faculty members continues to make itself felt in the way holdings are built-up. Since completeness is impossible, acquisitions depend on the evaluation of writers by faculty members. Problems arise to the point of friendly arguments on such issues as

the relative importance of Friedrich Halm in German literature or whether the sake of historical integrity requires us to have a better sampling of the Munich circle of poets, although their poetry is dead.

In conclusion, one can say that our library holdings permit research in German and that the faculty members of the German section in the Department of Foreign Languages will continue to complement our holdings in aiming for a research library which, given the necessary financial support, will eventually equal those of Princeton, Yale, or Berkeley.

If I am permitted to end on a personal note, I should like to express a word of appreciation to the library staff, particularly the order department, without whose strong and friendly support we would not have been able to make any progress.

Herbert Lehnert

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