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LIBRARY 21

Century 21 Exposition, more commonly known as the Seattle World's Fair, contains one exhibit which takes many visitors by surprise. This is Library 21, the exhibit of the American Library Association. The mere inclusion of a library display at a world's fair is surprising. The only precedent is a modest show of books occupying seventy square feet at the San Francisco Panama-Pacific Exposition in 1915. Library 21 covers 9,000 square feet.

The setting and appearance of Library 21 are unexpected. The exhibit is in a prominent corner of the Washington State Coliseum, the largest structure at the Fair, which also houses the exhibits of such organizations as General Motors, Radio Corporation of America, Pan American Airways, and the French government. The presence of the American Library Association in such eminent company might seem anomalous, but the design and contents of Library 21 and the impact it makes on the public clearly establish the exhibit as one of the most successful attractions at the Fair.

Library 21 occupies two adjoining circular enclosures which appear to float in the water of reflecting pools and are entered by means of an inviting walkway bridging the water. Visitors are greeted with a dynamic atmosphere, totally unexpected for a library. Electronic equipment, including the handsome units of the Sperry-Rand

computer system, operates alongside books and librarians. For the first time, machines and electronic devices are displayed in an integrated way in a library setting, showing the adaptation to library service of advanced techniques for storing and retrieving information and for instantaneous communication in graphic and recorded form.

The exhibit represents a model of a core-libraries system proposed for the servicing of local libraries, a library for libraries on the principle of the Federal Reserve Bank. The proposed system will provide six or seven such regional libraries in the United States. They will serve as information centers and will be linked in a communications network that includes contact with foreign libraries, thus making available to any library user every important document, book, or other source of information stored by libraries.

It has been predicted that by the late 1970's technological advances will allow the establishment of a vast transmission network for calling upon global resources to locate information and transfer it quickly where it is needed. Aware of the imminence of this development, the American Library Association planned Library 21 to educate the American public in contemporary library technology, to stimulate the thinking of librarians, and to dramatize the Association's leadership in the planning of future libraries.

There are several important lessons in Library 21 for any existing library. First, automated techniques (or at least mechanical techniques) are becoming more and more essential in libraries. Second, knowledge of these techniques is becoming more vital for librarians. And finally, the planning

of new facilities must take into consideration the changing nature of library service, the effect upon libraries of instantaneous global communication, and the probable relation of the library to the proposed core-libraries system.

Richard H. Perrine

Richard Perrine, a graduate of Yale in Architecture and a Master of Library Science from Texas, was selected as one of seventy-two American librarians to operate Library 21. Divided into teams of twelve, each group visits Seattle for a week's intensive training and a month of demonstration. Mr. Perrine is the Reference Librarian of the Fondren Library and one of two librarians from Texas chosen for the Library 21 project.

H. C.

WINNERS IN STUDENT BOOK COLLECTOR'S CONTEST

Twenty students entered the book collector's contest sponsored by the Fondren Library last spring. Judging took place during National Library Week, April 8-14. Judges for the contest were Mrs. Charles W. Hamilton, Gifts and Exchanges Librarian; Dr. Jack Conner, Associate Professor of English; and Dr. Franz Brotzen, Professor of Mechanical Engineering.

First prize of $40 was won by Mary Margaret Shaw, a Freshman from Bethesda, Maryland, for her collection of mathematics books.

Second prize, $25, went to Russell Brown, a Junior English major from Houston, for his collection of books on literary criticism.

Third prize, $10, was given to John Vesecky, a Senior engineering student, for his collection of philosophy books.

FONDREN LIBRARY HOLDINGS IN ECONOMICS

The last few years have seen rapid growth in the Fondren collection in economics. Although undergraduate instruction in economics dates from the founding of Rice, a graduate program was instituted only a few years ago with the establishment of the Hargrove Chair. Considerable expansion of library resources, especially in holdings of journals, was crucial for the success of the graduate program. Had it not been for the excellent if limited resources already present, there would have been little prospect of quickly raising Fondren holdings in economics to the levels demanded for graduate study and research.

The foundations, however, were well laid and present users of the economics collection are indebted to those who chose wisely at the first. Even in the lean years of low book budgets, modest additions to library holdings by members of the Economics and Business Administration Department were always possible. The collection also benefited steadily from the ordering of other departments such as History and Philosophy, and from the foresight of individuals such as Griffith Evans, distinguished mathematician, whose interest in the mathematical economics of the 1920's led to additions in a field neglected at the time by many larger libraries.

It may be pertinent here to refer to the judgment of visiting scholars on the quality of Fondren's holdings in economics before the expansion occasioned by the graduate program. Leslie Wright, a Visiting Professor from the University of Edinburgh, was pleasantly surprised at the depth and variety of Fondren's holdings in economics

of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Other visiting scholars echoed Wright's judgment that the holdings in economics, although limited in scope, were of high quality and provided an ample foundation upon which to build. Professor Wright's opinion was particularly valued because a semester's stay allowed him the leisurely appraisal not possible in a short visit.

The position of the collection just prior to the expansion might be summarized as follows: Most of the standard works in general economics were present although some were incomplete. Eighteenth and nineteenth century English writers were well represented and constituted the library's chief source of strength. Mathematical economics and statistics had been strengthened by Evans' interest and by the high quality of the mathematics collection. One the whole, the economics library at this time was well above expectations at an institution not noted for research in the social sciences.

The collection was not adequate, however, for a graduate program. The chief deficiency requiring immediate attention was in the professional journals. Although full runs of such standard periodicals as the American Economic Review, Quarterly Journal of Economics, Journal of Political Economy, Economic Journal, Econometrica, and Journal of the Royal Statistical Society were available, more specialized journals were incomplete or entirely lacking. Holdings in foreign serials were meager.

In general, periodical holdings tended to reflect the interests and fields of specialization of the members of the department. Since the department was small, the range of interest was limited,

with resulting gaps in specialized serials. Many of these gaps have been filled in the past few years, although some still remain because it has become almost impossible to obtain complete runs of certain journals, particularly those in foreign languages. Present journal holdings are quite adequate to meet the immediate demands of graduate study; further additions will be made as time and resources permit.

Deficiencies in secondary works in the various fields of applied economics, in foreign language books and periodicals, and in government publications also required attention. Since the number of books published each year in applied economics is very large, selective ordering must be the rule of ordinary prudence except for those few libraries which, as a matter of policy, purchase a copy of every new publication in the field. The main concern of the Economics Department at Rice is less a matter of purchasing new books than of making good the deficiencies of the past. The first effort was to correct the more obvious omissions. As new members have joined the department, the range of interest in applied fields has widened, allowing a more informed discrimination in ordering, but also revealing inadequacies in present holdings. Although holdings in applied economics may always be limited, a realizable goal is that these will be of high quality and will represent the major applied fields of labor economics, international trade, population theory, comparative economic systems, industrial economics, and finance.

Foreign language books and periodicals constitute a special problem. Over the years, Fondren accumulated a respectable body of foreign language works in general economics, but according to no systematic plan and with no particular

research orientation. Recent expansion in the department has required a frontal attack in this area. For example, since serious work in comparative systems and economic history cannot proceed unless certain minimum requirements in foreign language books and periodicals are available, an effort was made quickly to provide the needed minimum. In planning for the future only those areas in which members of the staff or graduate students have active research interests can be expanded. Even this limitation will strain the departmental budget and enforce selectivity in ordering. The marked increase in scholarly activity in economics in Western Europe in the past decade and the growing volume of statistical and descriptive material from Russia and China make it clear that a larger proportion of the budget must be spent for foreign language items. This will not allow expansion in other fields, such as Latin American studies, which is sure to be required in the future.

Government publications are essential for economic research in applied fields. Committee hearings, reports of governmental departments, and judgments of regulatory commissions often contain data that are not available elsewhere and are especially valuable for undergraduate research for a junior or senior thesis. Students gain from these publications an appreciation of the complexity of current policy issues that is rarely possible by reading secondary sources.

A good research library in economics should have complete holdings of a wide range of government publications. Advances in techniques of duplicating documents now make it possible to obtain in microtext at reasonable expense all those government publications that go to depository

libraries as well as a large amount of non-depository government material of great value for economic research. Shelf space and the time of library personnel are scarce and microtexts can reduce the demands placed upon both. Although the Fondren Library is not a depository for U. S. government publications, it now purchases in microtext, as of the first of January, 1962, the complete range of depository and non-depository materials.

It would not be appropriate to close without a special statement of appreciation to the library staff for their unfailing cooperation and good humor. Without their active and continuing assistance, the economics collection could never have been built to its present position.

John Auten

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