THE FARMINGTON PLAN

An Informative Study

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Basic information about the Farmington Plan may be found in two editions of the Farmington Plan Handbook, the first published in 1953, the second in 1961, as well as in the Farmington Plan Newsletter, issued at least annually and obtainable free of charge from Lloyd Griffin of the University of Wisconsin Library.

Except for the plan's background and early history and the bibliography in part four of the original edition, the second edition now supersedes the first. It is to the second edition that this paper will henceforth refer.

The Handbook is divided into twelve chapters, each of which is here briefly summarized.

I. WHAT THE PLAN IS AND HOW IT WORKS.

"The Farmington Plan is a voluntary agreement under which some sixty American libraries as a means of increasing the nation's total resources for research have accepted special responsibility for collecting. Ideally --- if the plan could be extended to all countries and all types of publication, and if it could be made more fully

effective --- it would make sure that one copy at least of each new foreign publication that might reasonably be expected to interest a research
worker in the United States would be acquired by an American library,
promptly listed in the National Union Catalog, and made available by
inter-library loan or photographic reproduction."

Two different patterns of acquisition have been followed --subject responsibilities and country responsibilities, and all libraries
which have accepted either or both assignments are expected to acquire
periodicals, documents of research value, and some representative newspapers. The plan includes microfilms as well as books.

The Farmington Plan agent, sometimes with the assistance of a librarian-adviser, must select books, classify them and be responsible for seeing that they reach member libraries at frequent intervals. These libraries in turn are expected to pay their bills to the Library of Congress within one month after the receipt of each volume and make books they receive available either on inter-library loan or microfilm.

Members of the Association of Research Libraries are institutions, not individuals. All policies are decided by vote or the Association, but not all members of the Association are participants in the Farmington Plan, nor are all participants in the plan members of the Association. The Association's Farmington Plan Committee has general responsibility for the development and implementation of the plan.

II. AN OUTLINE OF FARMINGTON PLAN HISTORY, 1953-1961.

The second edition of the Handbook does not repeat the thirtysix page account of the background and history of the plan, but it sums
up the highlights of the meeting on October 4, 1942 of the Executive Committee of the Librarian's Council of the Library of Congress held at
Farmington, Connecticut. A committee of three distinguished members --Weyes Metcalf, Julian Boyd and Archibald MacLeish --- was asked to prepare
a plan for the specialization of books.

In 1944 the Association of Research Libraries officially took over the committee and authorized it to continue its work. During 1947 subject allocations were agreed upon and publications were covered for France, Sweden and Switzerland. In 1948 the Carnegie Corporation of New York approved a grant for support of an office and payment of travel expenses. The first edition of the Handbook came out in 1953. In 1957 the Association decided to seek funds so that the plan could be reexamined and reevaluated. During 1958 Robert Vosper and Robert L. Talmadge, both then connected with the University of Kansas Library, agreed to undertake the project. Coincidentally both the Committee on Slavic and Eastern European Studies of the Association of Research Libraries and the Near and Middle East Resources Committee of the Social Science Research Council were engaged in making surveys of library needs and resources. The Report of the Vosper-Talmadge survey was ready for consideration at the January 1959 meeting of the Association of Research Libraries.

Here the Farmington Plan Committee was reconstituted with a

Chairman, two members-at-large, the Executive Secretary of the Association of Research Libraries, and the Association's chairman or representative on each of the specialized area committees: Far Eastern, Middle Eastern, Slavic, African, Latin American, South Asian, and Western European Resources. Each was given responsibility for development of plans for the selection, acquisition and distribution of materials of its own area, subject to review and approval of the Farmington Plan Committee.

1960 witnessed two important developments. Columbia University Press published the Ruggles-Mostecky survey of Russian and Eastern European publications in American libraries, and Dale L. Barker reported that reasonably good coverage was being achieved by American libraries in the acquisition of foreign periodicals on the social sciences.

III. THE VOSPER-TALMADGE SURVEY.

The Final Report of the survey consists of twenty-two parts running to more than 280 pages; it may be procured in microphotography from the University of Kansas Library. While Williams suggests that no abstract can serve as a satisfactory substitute for the whole report, he mentions nine of its salient points.

- (1) Leadership in the development and coordination of major scholarly acquisition programs of national scope and importance should be accepted as a major and continuing Association of Research Libraries responsibility.
- (2) The coordinated effort to assure adequate coverage of currently published foreign library materials of scholarly importance should be

extended and strengthened, on a world-wide basis.

- (3) The Farmington Plan Committee should be chartered and supported as the responsible, central committee for the Association of Research Libraries in this whole field. Toward this end, the Committee should be adequately staffed, and should be authorized to proceed as may be necessary through subcommittees and co-opted members. It should be responsible for continuous liason with all appropriate library, scholarly, educational, and governmental bodies, as well as with appropriate joint committees. The Committee's activities should encompass continuous study and assessment of needs, operation of programs, and review and analysis of programs in action.
- (4) The Association of Research Libraries should continue to seek, or itself provide, funds for secretarial and research assistance for the Committee and its office. If possible, the Committee chairman and the office should be located together.
- (5) Certain operating patterns of the Farmington Plan, as they have developed particularly in Western Europe, should be modified along lines mentioned in the Survey Report: looking toward a more flexible and decentralized selection and procurement pattern, while still assuring that adequate records are maintained for purposes of study and review. In accomplishing this, a subcommittee on procurement from Western Europe may be in order.
- (6) The strengthened Farmington Plan Committee should give high priority to fostering and experimenting with flexible, coordinated procurement

efforts in other parts of the world, along lines recommended in the area working papers; in pursuing this task the Committee will need to develop effective relationships, as noted in (3) above, with the appropriate working committees in the several areas, in order to be certain of receiving adequate specialized advice.

- (7) Prior to the development of a systematic procurement program for better coverage of foreign periodicals, the Farmington Plan Committee should institute some sample studies, along lines proposed in working paper III, to ascertain the adequacy of holdings, especially in the humanities and social sciences, as well as in engineering. In the meantime, steps should be taken to tighten up procedures for securing, selecting and recording sample issues of new periodicals.
- (8) Attention should be given to the need for more extensive duplication among American libraries of the important, currently published foreign books. Multiple use of assigned Farmington Plan agents, in important fields, offers one ready-made procedure toward this end.
- (9) The Association of Research Libraries should continue to bring forcefully to the attention of appropriate governmental agencies, educational
 bodies, and foundations that the national pool of research books and
 journals is of high national importance, that an effectively coordinated
 national program for world-wide coverage is an expensive but urgent
 undertaking, and that adequate assistance through direct, long-term financing and through staff aid is in the national interest.

Williams ends his discussion of the Vosper-Talmadge Survey by

cautioning that it did not settle everything but also by adding that it did stimulate further debate and effort. In his own words, "The plan, as it was eight years ago, is still an experiment and still controversial."

IV. A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE FARMINGTON PLAN, 1953-1961.

The original edition of the Handbook lists eighty-nine items in its bibliography, the second thirty-three. Together with some additional minor sources listed in <u>Library Literature</u> and occasional references in the Newsletter, they constitute a general coverage of the plan to date.

V. STATISTICS OF RECEIPTS.

The number of volumes received from fifteen countries, eleven of them Western European, and their total prices, are tabulated for the years 1953-1960. 1960 statistics are also given for over fifty American libraries participating in the plan with the number of volumes (and the attendant costs) ordered by each institution.

VI. COUNTRIES, AGENTS AND ADVISERS.

All countries included in the Farmington Plan coverage are listed. The year in which the coverage began, the library responsible, and the name of an agent, when there is one, follow each country.

VII. MATERIALS EXCLUDED FROM THE PLAN.

Twenty-eight categories are mentioned, including almanacs, annuals, Bibles, books costing more than twenty-five dollars, dissertations

for academic degrees, sheet music, textbooks, and United Nations publications, to point out only a representative sample.

VIII. A NOTE ON PRINCIPLES OF CLASSIFICATION.

Farmington Plan allocations are based on the Library of Congress Classification, which was divided in 804 segments at the time assignments were negotiated. The chapter, although brief, offers a few general principles to help in easing classification but warns that classification cannot be reduced to a purely mechanical sorting for at least three obvious reasons: choices have to be made where alternative numbers are offered by the printed Library of Congress tables; expert classifiers disagree on individual books; and no agent should be expected to spend more time in classifying a volume than is economically practicable.

IX. LIBRARIES AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES.

Thirty-four pages are devoted to an alphabetical listing of libraries participating in the plan and the subject or country areas which have been assigned to them. A few examples are illustrative:

BRANDEIS

Brandeis University Library Waltham 54, Mass.

----- Responsible for all publications issued in Israel BM----- Judaism (but not Jewish history)

JOHNS HOPKINS

Johns Hopkins University Libraries (Order Department) Baltimore 18, Md.

DQ----- History of Switzerland

TORONTO

University of Toronto Libraries Toronto 5, Canada

----- Responsible for French-language publications issued in Canada.

X. ALLOCATIONS INDEXED BY CLASSIFICATION SYMBOLS.

Fourteen pages are allocated to this index which is divided into broad, general areas of knowledge, each of which is then subdivided by LC symbol with descriptive caption and responsible institution. Three illustrations follow:

GENERAL WORKS

AE General Encyclopedias

Illinois

SOCIOLOGY

HS Social Clubs and Societies; Secret Societies

L. Congress

TECHNOLOGY

TK:4660 Electric Welding

Ohio State

XI. FORMER ALLOCATIONS.

Three and a half pages list LC symbol, subject, participating institution and dates of responsibility, now no longer operative. For example,

DT:1-39

160-729

History of Africa in General and All Subdivisions except Basutoland, Egypt, Nyasaland, Rhodesia, Sudan, Swaziland, and Union of South Africa. Pennsylvania:

1948-52

XII. ALPHABETICAL SUBJECT-LIST OF ALLOCATIONS.

Covering forty-seven pages, Chapter Twelve is the largest in the Handbook. It resembles a list of subject headings and is actually indebted to the LC list and its supplements. But Williams emphasizes that "It is not an index to any collection, but a tool for the use of those who must try to assign to the right library any book that may be published. ...Dealers fortunately need classify only closely enough to get a book to the right library (not to the right shelf)." With each subject heading are given a definition, LC symbol and responsible institution. Three entries selected at random are illustrative:

Antarctic Regions: Exploration and History (G) Dartmouth.

Canon Law: Catholic (BX) Catholic U
: General and Protestant (BX) Harvard-And.

Guilds and Guild Socialism (HD) N.Y. Univ.

Donald Coney has described the task of the librarian as three-fold: (1) the <u>fractionating</u> of the corpus of books by dividing it, as in the Farmington Plan, by borrowing from one another's collections and by joint warehousing; (2) the <u>compressing</u> of the bulk of the corpus by microtechniques; and (3) the <u>rejection</u> of it partially through selection. Modern communication has created a great tide of world literature dashing against the walls of libraries and has also created an intense desire in certain kinds of human beings to have this literature available. 1

The dividing aspect of the librarian's task is already clear to anyone studying the Farmington Plan Handbook outlined above. What Coney makes clear are the implications of borrowing in the plan. He points out, for instance, that while in the pre-Farmington period inter-library lending had been primarily a matter of courtesy, it has now become for the participating institutions a matter of both agreement and obligation. Committed to a national pool of books, they have taken a long step toward a new definition of a research library: "a research library consists of a collection of bibliographical apparatus describing and locating the world's stock of books; of a staff skillfully employing this apparatus to determine users' needs in terms of specific books, which the library borrows, photographs, buys --- or sometimes supplies out of its own stock."2 The Farmington Plan, union catalogues, interlibrary loans and all other such paraphernalia are simply tools for the achievement of such a goal. Despite unfavorable reaction in some quarters, Coney firmly believes that the United States is well on the

road to the socialization of library holdings. 3

Metcalf warns the profession that, based on growth at the present, research libraries will expand geometrically, and he is not afraid to say publicly that to him this prospect is "frightening." He maintains that librarians and university administrators have so far failed to comprehend fully the large part played in their total library budgets by expenses involved not only in the acquisition but also in the recording and storage of material. The Farmington Plan was created, in part at least, to resolve the dilemma of overwhelming costs of materials and their increased demand in research. The sponsors were not perfectionists, but they believed that their proposal would result in economies of expenditures and also in the number of foreign scholarly works available to Americans.

The literature on the Farmington Plan shows its political and its military implications. In an ALA meeting in Milwaukie in June 1942, Archibald MacLeish told a group of research librarians that he was firmly convinced that a key problem in the reconstruction of the postwar world was the control of materials of scholarship and furthermore that just as great progress in the war effort had come from consolidated procurement, so a board of strategy was needed for libraries. Hintz later wrote that the need of securing complete coverage of publications from all parts of the world came into sharp focus during World War II when it was realized that many publications of military and research value were not to be found in any American library. Ellsworth and

Kilpatrick expressed fear that in a future war the Library of Congress would undoubtedly be demolished in an atomic bomb attack on Washington, D. C., and thereby advocated decentralization of national holdings on a regional rather than on a centralized basis. In 1959 Jerrold Orne of the Library of the University of North Carolina made a study of the relationship of the Farmington Plan to the Central Intelligence Agency's procurement program and concluded that, although both agencies overlap, their scope and purpose are so entirely different that their efforts should not be amalgamated. 9

The plan has certainly not escaped criticism. It has been pointed out that its origin was from librarians, not from readers although one is surely hard-pressed to see anything significant in this observation. 10

Talmadge reported that in his field visits he discovered uneasiness over the lack of definition of such concepts as "research value" and "scholarly utility." He cited the experiment held in 1952 in which four eminent librarians set out to check the items they thought would meet the requirements in the Swiss National Bibliography for 1949. Excluding fiction, drama and poetry, they reviewed somewhat over a thousand items and agreed unanimously on only 110 of them. On 369 they voted 3 to 1 (for or against); on 396 and on 516 items, just over half of the total, two voted yes and two voted no. 11

David and Hirsch undertook a study to determine how thoroughly Farmington purchases actually met the needs of research scholars. Using

numbers 3, 5, and 7 of Series A of Das Schweizer Buch, which appeared on February 15, March 15 and April 15 of 1948, they extracted a list of titles, totaling 473 items, from three issues. After having excluded those which fell outside the scope of the Farmington Plan, they kept 113, or $2lac{1}{2}\%$ of all titles produced in the Swiss Book Trade. These they checked against the Union Catalogue of the Library of Congress which presumably receives within one month from participating libraries cards for all Farmington Plan receipts. Out of the 113 items, 92, or 81.4% were located. Of these 92, 52 has been brought into American research libraries as a direct result of their being in the Farmington Plan; however, the Union Catalog found 33 titles, or 35.8%, not brought in by the plan. The study further revealed that out of the total 92 titles, one was reported in 7 copies and one in 6. There were 4 titles in 4 copies, 5 in 3, and 7 in 2. However, there were 74, or 80% of all those located, which were in one institution only. David and Hirsch use these statistics to remind those who worry about excessive duplication to allay their fears and to reinforce the concern of those who believe that important foreign materials should find their way into several American libraries. When the 92 books were broken down into subject fields and analyzed, the Farmington Plan came out accounting for one half or more of titles in music, law, economics, religion, fine arts and political science but for less than one half in belles-lettres, history, natural sciences, philosophy and medicine. 12

Cook makes the intriguing suggestion that the results of this

the efficiency and competency of the Swiss dealer selected as the plan's agent. Cook himself checked the Select List of Unlocated Research

Books ("a selection of the books needed by research workers in the United States...but which were not found in the sixty four leading reference libraries") against the Farmington Plan and found that between 1948 and 1951 the plan succeeded in catching more and more titles. 14

Rogers subjects the plan to criticism on two accounts. He questions the sense of acquiring everything without regard to the inherent worth of the material, and he maintains that library specialization on a national scale is a practical impossibility. On the latter point, for example, he asks which library of three specializing in British history, twentieth century history and German history should receive a history of World War I or II. 15

The Harvard University Bulletin holds that "Coverage will always be a basic problem; some libraries have complained that they are not receiving as many publications as ought to come to them while others object to the quantity of worthless material they receive". In spite of vast quantities of ephemera deposited by law in national libraries, after his visits to Europe Keyes Metcalf, the University Librarian, was convinced that there is more danger of over-selectivity than the reverse. 16

Whether meaning it as an objection or simply as a criticism, one writer expressed the thought that, although acquisitions under the Farmington Plan are supposedly universal in scope, from the point of view

of the division of responsibility and the use of materials the plan is ${\sf national.}^{17}$

Midwestern university representatives have made their voices Their two strongest arguments are that previous commitments made in terms of special collections would limit an institution's freedom to act and that the curricular implications might be harmful. If a university were to stress special collecting fields, in time they would become so strong that they would fix the research focal points of that university and become white elephants to it. Ellsworth and Kilpatrick suggest, for example, that, if Iowa is to have the one complete collection of psychology, then it should make this the strongest psychology department in the Midwest, and everyone should accept this as a responsibility to be met no matter what the effect is upon the research programs of Iowa's other departments. Two implications follow --- the first, that the other departments in the university will narrow their scope, even though they stay at the Ph. D. level; the second, that the other universities will keep their psychology departments limited in favor of subjects they are to pursue on an unlimited basis.

The other possibility is that no Midwestern university build an exhaustive collection in any field on any campus, except in special libraries, and instead concentrate on the Midwest Library Center. All foreign importations coming from the Farmington Plan would be placed in the common depository. "In Chicago we shall have a great research library that will dwarf all our campus libraries in importance."

Those libraries given Farmington priorities conforming to their major research programs would have no difficulty, but smaller institutions do not wish to build diversified specialized collections when they know that all the universities are going to follow the same basic curricular patterns in research and when those universities will not differ so much in diversity of effort but in level of attainment. 19

Lockwood seems to be impressed with neither the national nor the regional research center idea and poses the question whether it would be surer and cheaper in today's compressed world to send the American scholar to the books rather than to try to bring all the books in the world to him before he needs them. 20

Many scholars express regret that Russia and the other Moscow-dominated countries cannot be included in the plan, but Williams gives as the reason the restrictions that their governments impose on exports. ²¹

The noticeable exclusion of publications in non-Latin alphabets, the Cyrillic, for instance, has also elicited negative comment on the plan, but Metcalf, while admitting their importance, maintains that they would make the plan unmanageable. 22

It is Lockwood, as has been indicated, who does not even hold with the basic philosophy of the Farmington Plan. Pointing out that it requires that books be distributed all over the United States from San Francisco to Boston, he proposes not a single national location, which he admits would be "far more sensible," but a "logical" answer: a United Nations Library. Because costs are so high in America he suggests that

it be situated in Europe, Asia or Africa. "I envisage not a single library but a city of libraries. Each country will keep its national library but will send one duplicate of every piece of printed matter to the international center." 23

In his study of American library holdings of Social Science Periodicals, as was pointed out in the outline of the <u>Farmington Plan Handbook</u>, Barker found that ninety five percent of those in UNESCO's World List are available. ²⁴ In Wisdom's study for the Farmington Plan he concluded that the collections of foreign government publication in this country are inadequate and that even in the Library of Congress collection, on which there is well-nigh universal dependence, certain areas have serious gaps. ²⁵ Talmadge uncovered evidence that many serial titles are not being picked up by any library and counselled: "In sciences and technology, serials are much more important than the monographs the Farmington Plan so painstakingly acquires." ²⁶

Rogers reported in 1949 that more than a dozen directors of research libraries knew that America was woefully weak in many subjects, especially in Near Eastern and Asiatic materials. At that time they estimated that American holdings of world book production were as low as thirty-three percent and as high as sixty-six percent. In some aspects of it they hazarded the opinion that the Library of Congress might be eighty-eight percent incomplete. ²⁷ Four years earlier William's study indicated that a large percentage of material in foreign languages could

not be found anywhere in the United States --- well over one half. During the year studied all large research libraries in America acquired less than one fifth of all books published in Belgium and Italy; one third of Swedish books; two fifths of the Spanish, and slightly more than one half of the French. To indicate the extent of the plan's contribution, during its first ten years on the subject basis alone, it brought into the United States some 150,000 volumes at a purchase cost of \$275,000. But how many lacunae still remain is a matter for further inquiry. 29

Coney feels that the scene which the Farmington Plan confronts requires bibliothecal statesmanship. He is not hopeful that library schools will produce many of these statesmen, and he writes frankly that education "can induct, or prepare, or polish; it cannot create". The future of library leadership belongs to those young men and women who must be of "inherent capacity --- a capacity belonging to the person himself, acquired from his forebearers and won from his surroundings. Our task then it not, at first, education. It is, rather, recognition of this imperative capacity in people, and the creation of career situations which will attract and hold those who possess it."³⁰

Metcalf believes that one of the most important factors in the development of American research libraries, and hence of the Farmington Plan, has been the spirit of rivalry between institutions. Without the desire on the part of many librarians to make their own libraries grow more rapidly than others, progress of many kinds throughout the world might well have been permanently held back or seriously delayed.31

Metcalf further adds that a good librarian must be an omniverous collector, encouraged by his own instincts, goaded on by the faculty who are often collectors themselves, and inspired by research workers using the library who are always looking for new fields to conquer. 32

Ellsworth and Kilpatrick write, "We cannot or will not agree among ourselves in the large libraries on a division of collecting policies, because at heart we are all bibliographic empire builders.

Therefore, we turn to Farmington, because we sincerely hope it will permit us to eat our cake and have it too."

In the complicated web of the plan one must not neglect the agent. During the first year of Farmington all receipts were forwarded by an agent to a single point in the United States, where they were classified and sent to the appropriate libraries. Later the agents sent the books directly to the libraries. 34

Talmedge has declared publicly that he intends to send the Farmington Plan agents questionnaires. On their side of the world they have to guess whether the Americans will like a book or not while in America their patrons complain that they were sent junk last year or that they failed to receive thirty percent of the significant publications of their countries. 35

A small group of the very largest libraries prefer their own subject specialists who do a better job of selection than the agents.

But most institutions are not staffed for such a task, neither do they like to use blank orders. Experience is proving that the library constantly

modifies its original instructions, and each load of books may result in further refinement. Talmadge calls this development significant, because "in essence the Farmington Plan is actually a gigantic, complex, inflexible blanket order."

In what have become known as critical areas, language problems or inadequacies of the book trade can loom as genuine obstacles. Oftentimes personal contact, rather than correspondence, is required. In some Caribbean bookstores nothing is sold except on a cash-over-the-counter basis.

Because many libraries cannot afford to hire and support procurement officers, Talmadge suggests the use of American governmental officials already abroad. Uncovered areas may again loom very significant in the near future, as many of them did during World War II.

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FOOTNOTES

- 1. Coney, p. 330
- 2. Ibid.
- 3. Ibid.
- 4. Metcalf, p. 297
- 5. Ibid., p. 300
- 6. Ibid.
- 7. Hintz, p. 405
- 8. Ellsworth and Kilpatrick, p. 144
- 9. Downs, p. 143
- 10. Metcalf and Williams, p. 13
- 11. Talmadge, p. 379
- 12. David and Hirsch, pp. 102-104
- 13. Cook, p. 281
- 14. Ibid
- 15. Rogers, p. 250
- 16. 'Farmington Plan After Three Years,' p. 123
- 17. Rogers, op. cit., p. 251
- 18. Metcalf, op. cit., p. 302
- 19. Ellsworth and Kilpatrick, op. cit., p. 143
- 20. Lockwood, p. 111
- 21. Williams, p. 370
- 22. Metcalf, op. cit., p. 304

- 23. Lockwood, op. cit., p. 112
- 24. Downs, op. cit., p. 143
- 25. Ibid.
- 26. Talmadge, op. cit., p. 382
- 27. Rogers, op. cit., p. 250
- 28. Metcalf, op. cit., p. 300
- 29. Talmadge, op. cit., p. 377
- 30. Coney, op. cit., p. 331
- 31. Metcalf, op. cit., p. 296
- 32. Ibid.
- 33. Ellsworth and Kilpatrick, op. cit., p. 137
- 34. Talmadge, op. cit., p. 376
- 35. Ibid., p. 379
- 36. Ibid., p. 380