The Leviathan:

How to Move 2.9 Million Government Documents Offsite

ABSTRACT

The concept of moving a university's historic, 2.9 million item government documents collection offsite was daunting. The actual move of the collection took 24 months. In this move, much was learned about developing a project management plan, including: consult the literature early, anticipate confusion points within the collection, discuss wear-and-tear issues, and understand the effect the move would have on service. The final move required 31 working days over five months of shifting. Afterward, it was found that the repercussions of a move – especially on staff and reference work – can often be more jarring than the move itself.

KEYWORDS

Shifting Collections, Government Documents, Moving Issues, Project Management

INTRODUCTION

Libraries continually acquire material as they do library administrators have always been concerned about space limitations. Many libraries have dealt with the lack of storage by creating offsite facilities. Harvard established their offsite depository as early as 1986 to balance the burgeoning need for space on campus with the growing collections of their library (Kondayen 2014). Their innovative method for high-density storage became known as the "Harvard Model," and began to be utilized across the world (Weeks and Chepesiuk 2002, 160).

With the late 1990's advent of the internet, libraries realized that it was no longer necessary to keep all of the books in-house. Many more libraries soon began establishing their own offsite storage facilities, including the Library of Congress, which opened its offsite storage facility in Fort Mead, Maryland, in 2002 (Library of Congress 2016). As this idea percolated through many major universities and institutions, the notion was eventually developed at the University of Oklahoma Libraries.

INSTITUTIONAL BACKGROUND

Settled upon the Great Plains in 1890, the University of Oklahoma has a long and distinguished history. With current holdings of more than six million volumes, the University of Oklahoma Libraries have grown into the largest research library in the state, as well as one of the premiere libraries in the United States (Wilhite 2015). At the millennium, the University of Oklahoma Libraries were composed of a massive main library with five branch libraries on campus. The libraries included a number of internationally famous special collections, including the Western History Collections and the History of Science Collections. The University of Oklahoma main library building is an amalgamation of construction. The current building has seven floors and seven decks; however, due to multiple additions through the years, not all of the floors are connected on the same level.

Founded within the main library in 1893, the University of Oklahoma Government Document Collection (GDC) grew exponentially to its pinnacle point in 2017, housing 2.9 million documents, including federal, State of Oklahoma, and international holdings. As a 90% selective depository, the GDC historically weeded only duplicates and supersedes. As of 2016, academic libraries constituted 72% of the 1,139 libraries in the Federal Depository Library

Program (FDLP) (Outsell 2016, 25), which still served a role in disseminating government information to the public.

The University of Oklahoma Libraries began utilizing offsite storage in summer 2005. The GDC was consulted about contributing to this new offsite storage, but the staff decided not to recommend any items move out of the collection out at the time. It was here, at the very beginning of the University of Oklahoma's offsite storage discussion, that the GDC staff should have consulted the literature, as it was already replete with case studies and examples of library moves.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are several useful publications on library moves, including many articles and books. The most useful books include *Moving Library Collections: a Management Handbook* by Elizabeth Chamberlain Habich, and *Moving your Library: Getting the Collection from Here to There* by Steven Carl. In examining the articles on the topic, a few factors resonated across the literature: the physical identity of libraries is shifting as library collections increasingly go virtual, and what was once a space for books is now a space for user collaboration (Sennyey, Ross, and Mills 2009, 253). Most of the moves in recent years have occurred to create this collaborative space, whether a new building has been built, or materials are simply moved offsite (Biemiller 2007; Haapanen et al. 2015, 687). Though the need to move collections to create more space is common across the board, the way in which organizations conduct such moves varies widely. For instance, there is no consensus on whether to hire professional movers, though this issue seems to be based on budget. Richard Snow insists that organizations must hire local movers, while others outline how to conduct a move with existing staff (Snow 2005, 56; Sharpe 2012,

67). One article, written over 30 years ago by faculty from the University of Oklahoma library, outlines the "committee approach" to making such decisions (Weaver-Myers and Wasowski 1985, 21).

The literature also revealed that many libraries had faced issues similar to the University of Oklahoma. Some institutions decided to weed materials leading up to their move (Marien and Mundt 2015, 76). Others found that they must merge and interfile collections during the move process (Lindsay 2017, 51). Some articles emphasized the importance of cleaning up catalog records during a move (Marien and Mundt 2015, 77). Finally, one article mentioned discovering that their measurements, those taken to estimate shelf space needed, were grossly miscalculated (Snow 2005, 60). These articles, in particular, may have benefitted the University of Oklahoma Libraries GDC staff, had they been read prior to the move.

Additionally, the literature has much to say about the use of offsite storage. David Block gives a thorough history, dating back to offsite storage used by the Alexandrian Library (Block 2000). Throughout history, most organizations use offsite storage as overflow space; however, Cornell University has made two of their branches virtual, moving all materials offsite or to the main library (Wilson, Cusker, and Dietrich 2015; Powell 2012). Most libraries have not taken this extreme step. Rather, they emphasize the need to create space without compromising access to materials. Charlotte Priddle and Laura McCann conducted a case study on the use and impact of offsite special collection materials. This study revealed that many people, undergraduates in particular, are accustomed to instant access to information, and were not pleased with the lag time required to retrieve materials stored offsite (Priddle and McCann 2015, 661). Automated Storage Retrieval Systems, like the one used at Eastern Michigan University's Halle Library, could solve this issue of lag time by allowing for high-density storage on site (Shirato 2001,

254). However, as Charles Eliot pointed out, it all comes down to economics (Eliot 1978, 75). Though he made this observation over four decades ago, it is more relevant than ever. As the literature reflects, offsite storage is becoming an imperative for many academic libraries, as they attempt to address the shifting priorities of libraries in the twenty-first century.

PLANNING

Fall 2008-2015: Move Discussions Begin

In fall 2008, the GDC was again approached by library administration about weeding the collection and beginning to move items to the library's first offsite storage facility, as space for student study was needed. The GDC staff were against weeding as the University of Oklahoma Libraries Government Documents Collection was one of three legacy collections in the state – including the Oklahoma Department of Libraries (the University of Oklahoma's regional) in Oklahoma City, and Oklahoma State University in Stillwater (also a regional). The GDC staff were initially against scattering the collection for reasons of access, security, and ensured perpetuity.

In the Government Documents world, each state would typically have one regional, which reports directly to the federal government, and then a number of selectives that report to the regional. In Oklahoma, there were two regionals, which had created a vibrant and engaged documents community. Per the FDLP, regional libraries must accept all items printed by the GPO, while selective libraries have the freedom to select what types of materials they receive. In 2008, besides the two regionals, Oklahoma also had eighteen selectives throughout the state.

After some internal discussion among GDC staff, they recommended that 52 cabinets of Department of Energy (DOE) non-depository microfiche (MF) could be moved to storage. The University of Oklahoma Government Documents was the state resource for DOE information

before 1984, but this information was now available full text online. Library administration considered this recommendation, but at this early juncture no titles from the GDC were weeded or moved to storage. This change did alert the GDC staff that more changes were indeed on the way, changes that other depositories around the U.S. were already contending with. In fall 2009, due to falling patron numbers, the hours of the GDC were cut by 38%. The GDC staff anticipated patron protests, but the change went unnoticed by everyone except for the GDC staff themselves.

During this time, the Government Printing Office (GPO) – who administered the FDLP out of D.C. – were dealing with a variety of library issues. The questions that emerged in this time period are some that the FDLP is still working on with member libraries today, including budget constraints, staff reductions/shortages, increased workloads, and access to depository materials (Outsell 2016, 46). The GPO had begun working with selectives about merging with their regionals, or withdrawing from the GPO system altogether, as many library administrations around the nation seriously began to review the possibility of moving collections, including government documents, to offsite facilities.

In the summer of 2010, the University of Oklahoma Libraries held their first meeting to introduce the topic of weeding the GDC. In this meeting there was discussion of merging depositories with Oklahoma Department of Libraries and Oklahoma State University. In discussion with Oklahoma Department of Libraries and Oklahoma State University, the idea of a joint regional Federal Depository Library was discussed, but the topic was dropped for a few years.

In summer 2013, the University of Oklahoma Libraries procured their second storage facility, a former book publishing warehouse. This structure – referred to as Saxon – had minimal heating

and no air conditioning, so climate control in Oklahoma's hot summers would be an issue. This new facility was south of town, approximately four miles from the university. It was fitted to house 126,000 volumes. The GDC was asked to move the 52 DOE cabinets to the new Saxon storage facility. The space left in GDC reference was then filled with shelving and the international collections were moved out of the closed stacks for easier patron access.

Although the GDC staff were against moving the remainder of the collection to storage, they could not deny the lack of requests for DOE items. To ascertain the usage of this moved collection, the GDC staff ran a study of the items, one year after the DOE items were moved. The 52 cabinets out at Saxon Storage contained about 800,000 fiche titles, or 3 million actual fiche. The GDC staff found that over the previous year, only one item had been pulled from the collection. This translated to a usage of 1000th of 1% of the DOE MF collections in Saxon Storage. This informed the GDC staff that the move of the DOE items was, indeed, an accurate step.

By spring 2014, the University of Oklahoma Regents announced support for the purchase of a new - third - storage facility for the library. This was appropriate, as all departments of University Libraries were growing tighter on space. Also in spring 2014, library administration had the GDC run a usage survey of their existing collection. Looking at circulation numbers, the GDC staff found that the height of usage of the collection was in 1993, with 1% utilization of the 1.8 million item collection (at the time). In spring 2014, they realized that, on average, only 10 items were used per week in the GDC - or about 500 a year - which meant that only 200th of 1% of the 2.9 million items in the collection were used that year. To the GDC staff, keeping the collection in the main library suddenly seemed pointless, and a move was, in fact, inevitable.

With this 2014 data, it became not a question of "if" the entire collection was going to be moved, but "when." This survey helped to make clear that moving the GDC was a logical step.

As the literature has shown and the Dean of the University of Oklahoma stated, the annual cost to store a book in the open stacks was cited as $4.26. The same annual cost for high-density, offsite storage was cited as $.86, and the cost for the digital version in Hathi Trust was cited even lower at $.22 annually. Armed with these numbers, University Libraries began to focus more on moving select print items to offsite storage – mainly periodicals – and relying on the electronic versions. This allowed library space to be transformed into student collaborative study space, in keeping with the current need in libraries. By 2015, University Libraries established its procedures and began to seriously move bulk serials to storage. With massive rounds of items now being moved, it was evident that the remaining 1.9 million paper documents in the GDC would soon follow.

2016 Move Planning

Early in 2016 year it was decided that the GDC would be relocated to offsite storage and a weeding program would be instituted. To organize this and develop in effect an informal project management plan, a committee was formed composed of GDC staff, the head of offsite storage, the building manager, and two library administrators. In planning meetings the GDC staff quoted GPO policy to ensure all necessary, federally-mandated rules were followed for the upcoming move and weeding project.

It was in the 2016 planning phase, that the GDC staff began to revisit the ideas from the initial 2010 weeding meeting: could the University of Oklahoma Government Documents work with Oklahoma Department of Libraries and Oklahoma State University on merging strategies? Since those 2010 meetings, the GPO was now offering the title of 'Preservation Steward' to

collections who would pledge to preserve their paper collections intact. Could the University of Oklahoma Libraries become one of these GPO-sanctioned preservation steward? Unfortunately, it was too late in the planning to invest in a new trajectory for the collection. In fact, since the initial talks, Oklahoma Department of Libraries dropped their regional status – limiting Oklahoma to only one regional now. Also, Oklahoma State University (the University of Oklahoma Libraries' new regional) had its own issues with space limitations and had already moved a number of documents to their own offsite storage. GDC staff wondered if these venues had initially been thoroughly investigated in 2010, would the resolution to move all of the GDC documents out have occurred.

Later in spring 2016, administration announced that the departments in the lowest level of the library – the heavily-staffed Acquisitions and Cataloging Departments – would be moved to the newly purchased, offsite Library Service Center (LSC), which was currently being retrofitted for the library. This new, temperature-controlled facility would be able to house a multitude of books, with a paging system instituted at the main library.

Reconfigured from a prebuilt warehouse call center, this facility was designed to hold 550,000 volumes in compact Harvard shelving. It also housed numerous offices and open cubical areas for department staff members. Low-use materials were to be moved to the LSC and shelved in the high-density shelving by size. The Sooner Express feature of the library's website was enabled to allow patrons to request items, which could be delivered to the main library, to a campus office, or mailed through the post. The goal was a 24-hour delivery turnaround time (University of Oklahoma Libraries 2018). With full temperature control, wide windows, and handsome furnishings, the LSC has the appearance of a modern office complex.

With the future directive laid out, the GDC staff began to plan for the big move. As was the case with many large, historic document collections around the US, the GDC housed many uncataloged items. This is one of the unique issues in moving government document collections – having to deal with a huge number of uncataloged documents in multiple formats. The documents were often uncataloged as they were issued to the libraries with a GPO-assigned Superintendent of Documents (SuDocs) call number, and many libraries would then simply shelve their items with no additional cataloging done in-house by the receiving library.

The new LSC had Harvard shelving, which organized items by size, not call number. The benefit of compact shelving was the space it saved by shelving items by size, not call number, with the items then locatable with an online barcode system accessed by a purchased Zazio database. The GDC would not be able to be merged compactly in the LSC since upwards of 60% of the collection were not cataloged, and thus did not have records to which this location information could be assigned. This meant GDC documents would have to be shelved in SuDocs number order; this difficulty meant that they would not be part of the initial move of materials to the LSC.

In summer 2016, the GDC staff were asked to begin compiling weeding lists. These list would be used to weed the 123-year-old collection. The weed lists would be sent to the regional, Oklahoma State University, to see if any titles were needed elsewhere. If not, the materials would be discarded.

Fall 2016 was a whirlwind of change for the GDC. In August, working with the GPO, GDC changed their selection to electronic-only and dropped all tangible items from their selection profile. The GDC went from a 90% to a 67% depository, now only 'receiving' electronic documents. Following suit, the University of Oklahoma Libraries also dropped their

Oklahoma depository status, as well as cancelled the international receipts. Finally, on December 19, 2016, the GDC service point closed after 58 years of individualized service to patrons. This was the next logical step after the reduction of collection hours which had occurred in 2009. This GDC service point included two reference rooms with a help desk, quiet study area, patron computers, microfiche scanning station, and a teaching classroom.

There were many reasons to move the 2.9 million item GDC out of the main library. The primary reason for the move was space – the GDC took up almost an entire floor in the seven-story main library, and its resources were simply not being utilized any longer. The space was needed for different uses. The GDC's 2014 usage study proved the collection was no longer being used in an appropriate or active way. The possibility of student study space was considered, or housing of a different, main library collection.

The secondary reason given was that special collections needed growth room, so there was a plan to move portions of the impressive Western History Collections into the old GDC space while important upgrades were made to their facilities. A move of special collections into the space would not only benefit the library, but the university, the state, and researchers worldwide. By the close of the fall 2016 semester, the University of Oklahoma Libraries had three storage facilities with a total capacity of 3,210,202 volumes.

2017: THE MOVE BEGINS

Much of spring 2017 was spent compiling and reviewing the initial weeding lists, as well as debating the organization of the move overall. In the ongoing move meetings, there was talk about who should do the move: student employees, a moving company, or a combination of the two? Many factors contributed to this discussion, the main being that 1.9 million items – 20,000

linear feet of GDC materials – were being moved to the LSC. Cost and time were the major factors considered—student labor was cheaper but would take considerably longer. Other, ongoing construction in the building was another factor – as all of these other moving trucks would already be out on the loading dock. It was decided that interviews with moving companies would be arranged, to get an idea of pricing and time frame.

The next big issue debated in the planning process was GDC reference. The GDC was divided into two main divisions: the closed stacks (97% of the collection), and the 30,000 or so reference volumes. The documents in closed stacks were all in SuDoc call number order, whereas reference was all in subject order (all congressional together, GPO indices grouped together by date, etc). If all of the GDC was going into the LSC in SuDocs order, it was decided all 30,000 reference items (a majority of which were Census 1790-2010) would have to be merged into the stacks collection in call number order since a separate GDC reference area was not being provided. The problem was that there was neither time nor space to merge these items prior to the move.

There were additional issues as well, including a massive mold outbreak in the State Department items and *Serial Set* volumes. So severe was the outbreak that HEPA vacuuming became a basic, bi-monthly student duty in the GDC. Only clean books would be moved, so those problem moldy books had to be monitored and vacuumed appropriately before they were moved out.

The first items weeded from the GDC collection were the 800,000 DOE MF titles that had been moved to Saxon storage in 2013. In summer 2017, it was decided that these non-depository items could be withdrawn, as their usage had been almost nil since they were moved five years previously. As these were not GPO disseminated items, they did not have to be sent to

the University of Oklahoma's regional on lists. Instead they were simply weeded, and the GDC grand total went from 2.9 million to 2.1 million items, a drop of 28% of the collection.

As part of planning the GDC staff devising a way to merge reference and the closed stacks without actually moving them. This reference merge project involved compiling lists of call numbers in reference and noting where they were to be merged into the closed stack collection. Then a series of red wands were inserted to alert the movers (still not selected) when and what was to be merged. In other words, a red wand would be put in the closed stack collections, to alert the movers to go over to reference - with a shelf number, title, and estimated range - for them to pack before moving any further in the shift. It was a solid plan, which made the most daunting part of this proposed move doable.

Additional projects involved cancelling all current paper, non-document subscriptions still arriving into the GDC (*CIS Indexing, UN Yearbook,* etc.) and the "Big Binder Project." Because the documents were going into high-density shelving, all materials had to fit into boxes that were standardized to fit on the shelves. Many documents include loose-leaf items and these had been put into large three-ring binders in the GDC. These binders would not fit into the storage boxes. Therefore, the entire GDC had to be quickly shelf-read and loose-leave documents were pulled from the binders and bound with string before they could be re-shelved. The big binders were then discarded. This project took three months of dedicated work by the one remaining GDC student and a series of borrowed main library student employees.

The 'Big Binders' were just the first of the odd format worries in the move. There were still 1 million microfiche (19 cases) remaining, an entire area of oversize items (encompassing about 3,000 items), thousands of maps and posters contained in twelve flat-file cabinets, and a myriad of electronic items, including thousands of CDs, DVDs, VHS tapes, cassette tapes, 3.5

disks, and floppy disks. In addition, the documents reference area had many non-GPO books cataloged in the Library of Congress classification system, rather than in SuDocs. GDC also had a substantial Oklahoma documents collection (cataloged under a unique Oklahoma documents call number), as well as a few international collections, all cataloged in their own unique call number system. Each of these collections posed its own problems that instructions were drawn up for, above and beyond the move of the 1.5 million paper GPO items.

In late summer 2017, after a series of interviews and tours with various moving companies, bids began coming in. To move the 2.1 million items from the Main Library GDC to the LSC (four miles, or about ten minutes away), the bids ranged from five figures (if we did it completely with our students) to $250,000. Debates on these choices engaged the committee for a number of sessions.

By the end of summer 2017, a local moving company with experience in relocating office files was selected. They had large, wooden trucks and many movers. This company was given a trial run; if it was deemed successful, they would be allowed to complete the job. It was about this time one OUDGC employee began referring to the move process as "The Leviathan," referencing the biblical sea monster of enormous size and tremendous danger. The title stuck.

The Test Run Move

The fall 2017 semester brought about the first official meeting with the selected moving company. The 19 remaining microfiche cabinets would be moved to the LSC first, followed by test run of A-C call numbers. Additional details were worked out, and issues dealt with that had not been considered thus far: GDC needed to immediately stop circulation and interlibrary loan of all books so they would be on the shelves for the move, otherwise those books would lose

their spot forever, as everything was being compacted at the LSC. In addition, there was a flurry of last-minute issues that needed to be attended to before the move began. One of these issues was that of GDC displays, which had to be taken down and the items merged back into the collection to ensure they too would have a spot in storage.

A rather last-minute decision was to provide the movers with wooden paint sticks to insert into the stacks when they accidentally dropped materials. The idea was that the movers should not attempt to reorganize materials, and it was not time effective to ask a staff member to do so on the fly. The workers would insert the wooden sticks to insert where there was a problem so, once the materials were out at the LSC, library employees could review and fix these problem areas. In anticipation of many drops, 1000 paint stirrers were purchased. After the move, it was discovered that only about 20 of the paint stirrers were utilized, so either the movers were that good, or problems were not marked as requested. GDC staff will not know the answer until the relocated 1.9 million item collection is shelf-read completely, which as of this writing in early 2019, is in process, and will be for some time to come.

The end of September 2017 saw the moving company move the 19 MF cabinets out. The cabinets had been meticulously labeled and were moved to the LSC, where they were placed out of order for no apparent reason. The GDC staff would not realize this until considerably later.

On Monday, September 25, 2017, the A-C test run of the GDC move commenced. This test run was to move approximately 4,000 linear feet of materials, or 1/5 of the entire collection. This move included the C's, merging all of the red-wanded Census materials from reference, which was clearly to be the hardest part of the entre shift. The test run was planned to take four days, with a crew chief on premises as well as three-four movers. The GDC staff were also on site to answer questions and assist as necessary. The movers had twenty large, numbered carts

they would pack and then wrap in plastic wrap before making the circuitous trek through the building and out to their truck on the loading dock. The movers were asked to be quiet so as not to disturb all of the studying students throughout the building.

The test run ended on Tuesday, October 3rd, 2017, taking seven working days, not four as planned. It was deemed a success and the company was offered the remaining job. There had been a few problems with the movers' carts – when loaded, they weighed nearly 1000 pounds. These carts began to ruin the carpet on their path to the service elevator, one struck the entrance door of the GDC so hard it snapped the knob off (so the door could not be opened or closed until it was fixed, and an emergency service call had to be placed), and – more significantly - the carts begin to crack the glass floors in the collection.

The original the University of Oklahoma Library from 1929 had been built with glass floors, and the GDC staff had not initially realized that they would be a problem during the move. Glass floors had been built into libraries in the 1880's -1920's as a "modern" fire-preventive measure. However, the 88-year-old glass floors could not withstand 1000-pound carts, so the glass began to crack. After this, the moving company decided to lay large segments of plywood down over the glass floors and carpeted areas where they needed to roll their carts. In addition, the cracked glass tiles had to be inspected by the University of Oklahoma safety officers, and those areas cordoned off for everyone's protection, which limited access.

One aspect of the move, originally perceived as the most challenging part, went perfectly well in this test run move: the red-wand project, merging all the items still in reference. The GDC staff assisted the movers through this most difficult part, helping them locate and insert the reference items when they came to each of the 120 red wands.

With the A-C test run over, there was a brief pause before the remaining, D-Z call number move was to begin. In this respite, another problem was realized: GDC had a number of books on a different floor, and there was no reasonable way to get the giant carts down there. Therefore, a 'bucket brigade' of borrowed library students was established to move all of the documents. The books to be moved included 540 shelves of original *Serial Set* from 1813-1890 and 156 shelves of original *Congressional Record* from 1873-2015. The old volumes were carried up a floor and into the now emptied A-C call number area. More red wands were added to the stack area, so that the movers could merge them while packing.

During this break between moves, library administration also encouraged the GDC staff to do whatever was possible to speed up the move when it resumed. It was determined that it would be easiest if the GDC staff moved small sections (4 shelves or fewer) of red-wanded reference items that were classed with the Library of Congress system into the remaining, now vacated, A-C section. The more that the GDC staff moved the less time would be wasted with the movers moving back and forth between reference and the closed stacks.

The final D-Z move was to start Tuesday, November 2nd, 2017, and be a 25-day move with a planned end date of December 8, 2017. The move would involve five movers with two trucks, working seven hours per day. Ideally, library administration was hoping for a 16-day move, so that it would be completed by Thanksgiving break. Library administration made it clear that the move would have to stop by Monday December 11th – the beginning of finals week. They did not want movers bustling about with thousand-pound carts while the students were studying for finals. If the move went beyond this date, the project would have to be put off until January 2nd, 2018, because of a scheduled power outage planned for the building in mid-December, when the entire facility would have to be vacated. With the winter break right after

that, there was no other choice than to postpone completion of the move to January 2018. This option was dubbed 'worst case scenario' by library administration.

The Big Move Begins

The D-Z move of the GDC began on Tuesday, November 2, 2017. One of the first issues encountered was keys. Keys had actually been an issue from the beginning. Only security had a key to the loading dock and select staff had a key to the service elevator. Only GDC staff had a key to the GDC collection. These keys had been carried and presented with care during the test run. Once the actual move began, GDC staff gave keys to the crew chief, asking him to "use your best judgement, and please return them." This simple step presented no problems and made the entire process go much easier. The movers worked at a solid rate, moving an average of 34.5 bays (1 bay = 8 shelves) per day. Every day the movers were monitored by the GDC staff, with the movers' advancement charted, and then the project timeline adjusted dependent on their work.

Day by day of the move, more issues arose. After much debate, library administration decided that a second shift could begin concurrent with the first shift, this one to move the end of the collection out to the LSC at the same time the front of the collection was going out. The GDC staff was skeptical, but the head of offsite storage did the math and calculated where this latter part would need to be shelved at the LSC and made assurances that, in the end, the collection would all flow together with no gaps. After this, the move did go faster, with movers now packing from two separate areas of the GDC.

One of the most challenging aspect occurred in the building's 1929 deck when the asbestos tile floors started to crumble. These tiles were laid all though the 1950's addition, and

into the 1929 decks where there were no glass floors. The GDC staff had learned over the years to simply be careful with them. The tiles, which contained less than 2% asbestos, were harmless unless severely scraped allowing a hazardous dust into the air.

Like with the issues with glass floors, the GDC staff were not prepared for the damage that rolling, thousand-pound carts could do to these tiles. Over a period of a few days, the the heavy carts ground the floor tiles into dust\. As soon as GDC staff noticed this, the University of Oklahoma HazMat was called, and they closed the place down. Suddenly, everything stopped. This was late November 2017 – past the Thanksgiving break – and there were still hundreds of thousands of documents left unmoved. The December 8th end day was looming quickly, but when HazMat closes a facility, it must close down immediately.

The HazMat team came in, put up plastic walling and vacuumed all the broken tiles and dust. They cleared the air with purifiers and then, when the air had settled, they put down more plywood walkways, in addition to the wood already covering the glass floors and carpeted areas. Three days later HazMat gave the green light to open the area back up.

Back on the job the workers moved quickly to regain lost time, and promptly made their one great mistake of the project. Part of the T-TDs began in one room on the old deck and then curved around a strange, dog-legged bookcased wall, to begin anew in a second room. It was confusing – like most historic, closed stack library. In one afternoon, the workers jumped from the first room to the dog-leg, but then approached the following room from the wrong side.. Checking their work that afternoon, GDC realized what had happened – materials had been loaded onto the carts backwards, the carts wrapped, and then shipped out to the LSC. Doing the math staff realized that 50,000 items would have to be carefully shelfread and completely reordered in order to fix this mistake. But as this reorganization project would take days, and

since stopping the move to fix the problem now was not an option, the GDC staff decided to go ahead and have the incorrectly-arranged books shelved at the LSC, to be dealt with later. The error was noted as the first major project for the GDC staff to work on out at the LSC, once the shift was complete.

On Thursday, December 7th, 2017, the unfinished move was halted with many more documents still left to be moved. With finals the next week, and then the three-day planned power outage right before the holiday, the move would have to continue in the new year. The move resumed on January 2nd, 2018 and was completed the following day, Wednesday January 3, 2018. The relocation of 2.1 million government documents to offsite storage was complete. The entire move, including the test run, took the moving company 31 days, covering five months of on-again, off-again moving.

THE LSC

With the GDC stacks now empty the focus now turned to the LSC, which now held all of the collection. To save money during the move, library student employees had unpacked and shelved the items as they arrived at the LSC – not the professional movers. This was not a problem, as the LSC student employees had library training and could identify call number order. These students were also trained on the picker, a machine that had to be utilized to reach the tallest shelves.

At the LSC, the moving process had involved sequentially removing the books from the wooden carts and loading them into 18" long cardboard boxes. These boxes were then shelved on ten-foot-high, double-deep shelving. All-in-all, the GDC would be comprised of 14,440 boxes, over 13 long aisles, filling ¼ of the entirety of the LSC shelving area.

The first issue noted at the LSC was the gap. Whereas GDC staff had been assured that the two concurrent moves would not be a problem, there indeed was a gap. In fact, there was a 13-range gap. The head of offsite storage did not seem to mind, saying different non-documents could be added into this gap. Another issue was the microfiche. The 19 cabinets had been the first items delivered to the LSC as part of this move, and now were noticed to have been unloaded out of SuDocs order, even though they had been labeled numerically to prevent confusion. These collection management issues were the hardest on the GDC staff, as the former administrators and sole employees of the GDC.

After the move, part of the GDC staff was relocated to the LSC, to work on projects involving the collection. Once trained on the proper use of the order picker, the GDC staff began work on the new LSC projects. The first project involved conducting a review of the collection to determine where immediate shelf reading would need to occur. The movers' T-TD call number mistake involved 426 linear feet (284 boxes) of materials packed backwards. An additional area of disruption was noticed, as apparently the LSC students had misfiled three carts while unpacking. This translated to 72 linear feet (48 boxes) of PRs mistakenly filed in the PREXs.

As these two mistakes were the only major misshelves noted from the move review, the GDC staff considered the move a near success. Of course, those were the only major problems noted after a general overview. All of the actual problems will not be known until a complete shelf read of the 1.9 million item collection is completed.

As these additional wrap-up projects continued piecemeal, problems working with the actual documents in their new home became apparent. The first difficulty was reference work. Whereas after years in the GDC, the staff could walk to most titles instinctively, that was no

longer the case. The staff's learned location memory for sources and titles was suddenly of no use, as everything had changed. Due to the new tall bays and double-deep shelving, it was impossible now to even go to the LSC and just pull an item on your own. Items now had to be paged, and the picker utilized, all of which took time.

The GDC staff quickly realized that easy ready reference was no longer possible. The decision to ship all of reference to the LSC, and not pull out some important key titles (*Cumulative Title Index*, the most current *Statistical Abstract*), became an obvious misstep was something that unfortunately was not anticipated by GDC staff. The LSC was set up as a paging collection, and that was what it was useful for, certainly not for ready reference.

Four months after the end of move, the GPO sent a representative to tour and review the changes to the collection. It was a good visit, with the GPO offering excellent advice. Afterward, the GDC staff did wonder if this official government visit had come earlier, could it have changed the decision to move the collection off site.

WHAT WE LEARNED

While there were some missteps and frustrations throughout the move, the GDC staff learned a great deal in the process.

First: Read the literature! Moving a collection is a huge undertaking, especially a large government documents collection. The literature is there so that one may learn from the steps and missteps of others.

Second: Do your data analysis so you know what is being used and what is not being used.

Third: Anticipate physical areas in the collection that may be confusing to outsiders, and be a hands-on participant in observing and assisting the movers through these areas. When the call

number order of the collection is not abundantly clear, as when the collection shifts to a new section of a room, do not assume that the movers will recall previous instructions. Understand Document collections are strange and will require extra attention to move accurately, especially when merging closed stacks with a reference collection.

Forth: Discuss wear-and-tear issues with management and library facilities, particularly when using very large, heavy book carts per your library's décor (carpet) or unusual architectural elements (glass floors, asbestos tiles).

Fifth: Carefully weigh whether to pack two areas simultaneously; this may be necessary due to time and budget constraints, but can be problematic later.

Sixth: Remember to factor in that reference service is going to be deeply affected, and try to plan for this by ensuring access to key titles.

Finally: Plan for delays. The GDC staff knew that these projects generally take longer than predicted, but did not anticipate the problems with dock access or asbestos.

All in all, we could have benefitted from developing a formal project management plan, but the informal plan that we developed ended up working well for this project.

CONCLUSION

After 24 months of planning and then 31 working days over five months of moving 2.1 million items – while contending with mold, crumbling asbestos floors, power outages, and mathematical miscalculations – The Leviathan was completed. In the end, there was a solid reason for the GDC to move to offsite storage – special collections was going to be moved into the empty space, something that would benefit the library as well as the university as a whole. As this article is written – spring 2019 – that has yet to occur for a number of administrative and

university reasons, but something will surely fill the space soon. But for now, the new normal for the GDC is now four miles outside of town in a new, environmentally-controlled facility.

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