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# Organized for Service: The Hicks Classification System and the Evolution of Law School Curriculum

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# Organized for Service: The Hicks Classification System and the Evolution of Law School Curriculum[*]

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*This article traces the origins and development of the Hicks Classification System, an in-house organizational scheme used by the Yale Law Library from the late 1930s to the 1990s. It explores the relationship between the Hicks Classification System and the changing pedagogical methods of the law school curriculum during the early part of the 20th century. It provides a brief biographical sketch of Frederick C. Hicks, creator of the scheme, the need for a legal classification system, a detailed analysis of Hicks's scheme, its finding aids, and a discussion of the inherent cultural biases in the system.*

> A law library is a collection of books, properly housed, and organized for service.
> —Yale Law Library's slogan

## Introduction

¶1 Beginning with Callimachus's *Pínakes* describing the holdings of the Library of Alexandria, there have been many attempts to organize and describe human knowledge

to make information more accessible.[1] In 1605, Francis Bacon created a taxonomy of learning, commonly known as *The Advancement of Learning*.[2] In 1876, Melvil Dewey, using Bacon's taxonomic structure, published the first modern classification scheme with his Dewey Decimal System.[3] In the early part of the 20th century, Librarian of Congress Herbert Putnam reclassified that collection, not adopting Dewey's popularly used decimal system but creating an ordinal system utilizing numbers and letters.[4] Although other organizational systems appeared throughout the previous century (e.g., the Bliss System[5] and Ranganathan's Colon Classification System[6]), today most academic libraries organize their materials using the Library of Congress (LC) Classification System.

¶2 However, the LC system was not without its faults. The primary criticism during its early years was that it was not as comprehensive as it should have been to meet the contemporary cataloguing needs, and as late as 1930, it still lacked classifications for languages and law.[7] Most glaring was its inadequacy in classifying legal materials at the breadth and depth needed to effectively organize U.S. law school collections, which were expanding rapidly in response to schools adopting the Langdell model of "library as laboratory" teaching method. Frederick Hicks attempted to fill this information need with his own classification system.

¶3 While more than a dozen articles have been written about Hicks,[8] no scholar has examined in detail the development of his classification system or its efficacy for the end user. This article fills that scholarly void by showing that as the Yale Law Library expanded its collections to include treatises, form books, legal encyclopedias, and other secondary sources, the Hicks Classification System organized these materials to effectively meet the curricular and research needs of law students, faculty, and librarians. By doing so, Hicks became a forerunner in supporting the changing pedagogical methods and needs of the contemporary law school.

## Frederick Charles Hicks

¶4 Born in Auburn, New York, on October 14, 1875, Frederick Charles Hicks was a giant in the development of modern-day law librarianship. Most notably, he was instrumental in developing and expanding the collections of both Yale's and Columbia's law

1. Francis J. Witty, *The Pínakes of Callimachus*, 28 Libr. Q.: Info., Cmty., Pol'y 132, 136 (1958).

2. Francis Bacon, The Two Books of Francis Bacon: Of the Proficience and Advancement of Learning, Divine and Human (1633).

3. Wayne A. Wiegand, Irrepressible Reformer: A Biography of Melvil Dewey 23 (1996).

4. Library of Congress, Herbert Putnam, 1861–1955: A Memorial Tribute 13 (1956).

5. Henry Evelyn Bliss, A System of Bibliographic Classification (1935).

6. S.R. Ranganathan, The Colon Classification (1933); S.R. Ranganathan, Prolegomena to Library Classification (1937).

7. Library of Congress, *Order of Publication of the Original Editions of the LC Classification Schedules*, *in* Historical Notes 3–4 (2020).

8. Douglas W. Lind & Stacia Stein, The Leaven of Sympathy: A Bio-Bibliography of Frederick C. Hicks app'x II (2020).

libraries. His magnum opus, *Material and Methods of Legal Research*, became a landmark in the field of Anglo-American legal bibliography and remains an indispensable supplement in today's law libraries.[9] While the Hicks Classification System came to fruition nearly 32 years into his career, the system itself did not appear in a vacuum. The trajectory of Hicks's professional life provides a glimpse into its creation and the abiding passion he had for organizing information for the service and use of others.

¶5 After earning a Ph.B. from Colgate University in 1898, Hicks worked as a librarian in the Map Division at the Library of Congress. Simultaneously, he attended law school at Georgetown University, receiving his LL.B. in 1901. Three years later, he returned to his hometown to take up the practice of law but quickly realized that this particular line of work did not suit him.[10] In 1905, Hicks once again left Auburn and accepted a position as the first professionally trained librarian at the U.S. Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island. Furthermore, while serving as librarian in Newport, Hicks earned his A.M. in political science and international law from Brown University.[11]

¶6 During his tenure at the War College, he wrote an article for the *Library Journal* describing that school's library and its "distressing problem," lamenting the fact that "[u]ntil July of last year the care of these books had devolved upon naval officers connected with the War College, who had little time or training to devote to such a task."[12] Moreover, the cataloging system that Hicks inherited had been designed for a singular fixed location, so upon the collection's relocation to a new building the previous year, the card catalog suddenly had outlived its usefulness. Hicks immediately went to work recataloging and reclassifying the library's books. In doing so, he partnered with the Library of Congress to revise its classification system and adapt it to the educational and scholarly needs of the War College.[13] It was here, then, that Hicks's zeal for classification began to take root.

¶7 In 1909, after three years at the Naval War College and a brief nonacademic interlude at the Brooklyn Public Library, Hicks became the superintendent of reading rooms at Columbia University's Low Memorial Library. He was quickly promoted to assistant librarian in 1911. Over the course of his employment at the university's main library, Hicks interacted with the law school on a frequent basis and, on February 1, 1915, was appointed as law librarian.[14] Columbia's collection possessed sufficient Anglo-American legal materials but was significantly deficient in foreign and international resources. Hicks's development and expansion of the collection was astounding. When he was appointed Columbia University's first law librarian in 1915, the law

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9. *Id.* at 76.

10. Stacy Etheredge, *Frederick C. Hicks: The Dean of Law Librarians*, 98 Law Libr. J. 349, 350, 2006 Law Libr. J. 18, ¶ 4.

11. Lind & Stein, *supra* note 8, at 5–6.

12. Frederick C. Hicks, *The Library of Congress Classification and Its Printed Catalog Cards*, 31 Libr. J. 255, 255 (1906).

13. *Id.*

14. Etheredge, *supra* note 10, at 350, ¶ 5.

library housed 56,427 volumes. By the time Hicks left Columbia, thirteen years later in 1928, the collection had grown to 142,268 volumes. Hicks had expanded the law library collection at an average rate of more than 6,000 volumes per year.[15] While on a 1924 trip to Europe, Hicks acquired 10,000 books for Columbia, and the excursion was such a success that, in 1925, Columbia sent him again to Europe to acquire 10,000 more.[16]

¶8 Despite this accomplishment, Hicks was refused a law faculty position. Due to this unfortunate development, he subsequently resigned from Columbia University in 1928 and joined the law faculty at Yale Law School with the title of Professor of Legal Bibliography and Law Librarian.[17] It was here that Hicks created the Hicks Classification System in the late 1920s. As Hicks explained, "Since no generally accepted scheme for law libraries exists, it was necessary to make our own scheme. This was done by the librarian, assisted by the chief of the cataloguing department, members of the department, and the assistant librarian."[18] The extent of a law library's holdings were largely case reporters and codified statutes, which were typically organized alphabetically by state or jurisdiction.[19] To fully understand the development of the Hicks Classification System and its completeness, adequacy, functionality, and fairness, a brief background in the evolution of law school education is warranted.

¶9 Before going any further, however, it is imperative to discuss the role that Yale Chief Catalog and Classification Librarian Katherine Warren played in the genesis and construction of the Hicks Classification System. Warren was hired by Hicks in 1930 to replace Yale cataloger Agnes Spencer.[20] In creating his system, Hicks was extensively assisted by Warren, who was later appointed chair of the committee to create the classification manual.[21] After Hicks retired in 1945, Warren continued to revise and update the classification system until her less-than-amicable resignation in 1953.[22] Additionally, Hicks successfully advocated for her faculty status at a time when female professors were few.[23] After Hicks's retirement and a subsequent debilitating stroke, Warren became his closest companion. Whether their relationship was purely platonic or more intimate is unknown. However, when Hicks died in 1956, he left his estate, including his two houses in Hamden, Connecticut, and Cape Cod, to Warren.[24]

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15.  Butler Hays, *Frederick Hicks' Strategic Vision for Law Librarianship*, 98 Law Libr. J. 367, 368, 2006 Law Libr. J. 19, ¶ 4.

16.  Lind & Stein, *supra* note 8, at 10.

17.  *Id.* at 9.

18.  Frederick C. Hicks, *Remarks on Law Library Classification*, 30 Law Libr. J. 402, 402 (1937).

19.  Yale Law Library Manual: The Building, the Books, and their Availability for Use 46 (1937) [hereinafter Manual].

20.  Lind & Stein, *supra* note 8, at 5.

21.  Manual, *supra* note 19, at ii.

22.  Following an outburst by Warren, she left the library taking armfuls of files with her. *Membership News* (compiled by Frances Farmer), 47 Law Libr. J. 45, 47 (1954).

23.  In 1934, Warren was promoted to research assistant in bibliography with the rank of assistant professor. *Report of the Librarian of the School of Law, 1934–1935*, Bulletin of Yale University, Supplement. Report of the Dean and of the Librarian of the School of Law for the Academic Year 1934–1935, at 24.

24.  Lind & Stein, *supra* note 8, at 15.

## Contemporary Need for Legal Classification

¶10 Prior to the turn of the 20th century, the American law school curriculum was centered around the lecture-based Blackstone method, wherein faculty taught from the 18th century English jurist's writings and students then committed these lectures to memory. Starting in the 1890s, legal education began to experience a shift toward the case method, originally developed by Christopher Columbus Langdell, Professor of Law, at Harvard Law School in 1870.[25] Although the case method is the primary method of teaching law today, the migration of legal education from lecture-based classes to the case method did not happen overnight. In fact, by the beginning of World War I, almost 45 years after Langdell's first contracts case method class, only 40 percent of American law schools had adopted the case method.[26]

¶11 Langdell's case method called for the professor to assign several cases to read, and students were then asked questions about the assigned cases in class to determine whether they identified and understood the principles of law from each case. Through this Socratic-style method of asking and answering questions to stimulate critical thinking and to draw out theories and underlying ideas, the students learned how to think like a lawyer. Langdell's case method also led to several academic reforms, including "transforming the library from a textbook repository into a scholarly resource..."[27] As more law schools adopted this new pedagogical method, law libraries expanded their scope and depth to supplement classroom teaching, and by necessity, a new information organizational and retrieval system was required.

¶12 In a 1915 annual report for Columbia University's alumni newsletter, Hicks noted this shift to the case method for teaching law, writing that "the library is to a law student what a laboratory is to a chemistry student."[28] For Hicks, the law library was central to the law school curriculum and the changing teaching methods of the day:

> The modern law school library, then, is a working institution in which law students learn how to use law books. Its function is equally important with that of the class room and, just as instructors teach legal principles in the class room, so the law librarian must teach the mechanics of book-use in the library. This fact has been recognized in the curricula of many law schools where lectures on legal bibliography and the use of law books are given by the librarian with practice work in the library.[29]

¶13 Hicks was among those first law librarians who also taught legal bibliography in addition to their administrative duties. Starting in the fall semester of 1915, Hicks delivered six lectures on the practical use of case reports, statutes, digests, citators, indexes, tables of cases, and complications.[30] The series was an immense success, as about 129

25. *See* Bruce A. Kimball, *The Proliferation of Case Method Teaching in American Law Schools: Mr. Langdell's Emblematic "Abomination," 1890–1915*, 46 Hist. Educ. Q. 192 (2006).

26. *Id.* at 192.

27. Kimball, *supra* note 25, at 194–95.

28. Frederick C. Hicks, *The Columbia Law Library and Its Work* (pts. 1–4), 5 Colum. Alumni News 295 (1914).

29. *Id*. at 296.

30. Frederick C. Hicks, *Instruction in Legal Bibliography at Columbia University Law School*, 9 Law

students attended each lecture over the course of one week.[31] These lectures were highly approved by the dean and future U.S. Supreme Court Justice Harlan Stone and continued to be offered as elective courses until they eventually became required in 1921.[32]

## Yale Law Library Manual

¶14 Yale Law School was one such American law school that adopted Langdell's case method. In response to the changing pedagogical practices and an increasing reliance by students on the library, Hicks expanded the collection greatly and created his own classification system to meet the organizational and retrieval needs of the growing Yale Law School collection. To assist library patrons, Hicks created the *Yale Law Library Manual* in 1937, which was designed to describe the law library's physical space and equipment, the collection of books, the catalog and classification system, and the location of books in the library.[33]

¶15 As stated previously, Hicks created his classification system to fill a void in the LC scheme that had not yet addressed law. The schedules for the classification system were first outlined in January 1930 and were nearly completed by August 1937.[34] Over the course of several years, pieces of the LC scheme were published section by section, until by 1939 it was thought by many to be complete.[35] This was not the case, however. As of 1939, there was yet to be a classification for law. It would not be until March 1968 that the first draft copy of the first section, Class KF, the law of the United States, became available.[36]

¶16 There were a variety of reasons why Class K (law) was intentionally ignored for so long. Some officials at the Law Library of Congress felt that a fully developed subject classification for law was neither necessary nor desirable because early generations of catalogers thought of the law as simply an aspect of other areas of knowledge.[37] Lack of funding, personnel, and space also consistently delayed progress. The American Association of Law Libraries, however, was genuinely concerned about the classification of law. At its first meeting in 1906, classification was discussed extensively. At the second AALL meeting in 1907, four papers on classification for law libraries were presented, debating whether to use author classification or subject classification for law.[38]

¶17 By 1914, preparation for a law classification scheme was finally initiated at the Library of Congress. As noted above, however, lack of space, staff, and funds drastically slowed the process, in addition to America's intervention in World War I. For the next

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Libr. J. 121, 121 (1916).
   31.  *Id.* at 122.
   32.  Etheredge, *supra* note 10, at 361, ¶ 33.
   33.  Manual, *supra* note 19, at vi.
   34.  *Id.* at 46.
   35.  Martha M. Evans, *A History of the Development of Classification K (Law) at the Library of Congress*, 62 Law Libr. J. 25, 25 (1969).
   36.  *Id.*
   37.  *Id.* at 26.
   38.  *Id.*

decade and a half, the Law Library of Congress was also preoccupied with its acquisitions program and not so much the organization of those acquisitions. It was not until 1941 that the law librarian of Congress appointed a committee to investigate the problems of classifying Anglo-American, European, and Roman law. World War II again brought funding and staffing issues to Congress, and progress on law's classification came to a halt.[39]

¶18 World War II became a force of change for Class K, however. Rapid growth in adminstrative law and demand for foreign materials increased the overall size of law collections, thus making a classification system for law even more necessary. In May 1949, AALL and the Library of Congress held a joint meeting where the scope and general outline for Class K was agreed on.[40] Unfortunately, within a year, lack of adequate staff once again halted any further progress on the development of a classification for law. In January 1952, law librarian Werner B. Ellinger was given the task of drafting working papers for developing the classification for law. Eleven years and nine working papers later, the first of the K numbers appeared on the printed Library of Congress cards in March 1967.[41]

¶19 It is important to note that as other law schools adopted the LC system, the Hicks system was used by Yale for its entire law collection until the 1990s when the collection was reclassed according to the Library of Congress K class for law materials, in part, to make cataloging more efficient.[42] Despite Yale joining the rest of the academic law library community in shifting to the LC system, the Hicks Classification System continues to be used in the rare books collection at the Yale Law School where today over 50,000 books and manuscripts are held.[43]

## Hicks's Tiered System

¶20 The collection development goals of the Yale Law Library of the 1930s and 1940s were to have in its collection all of the statutes, law reports, legal periodicals, and important treaties published in every English-speaking jurisdiction, and the same groups of legal publications for foreign jurisdictions.[44] This was commensurate with the changing nature of content of academic law libraries and teaching methods, in that Yale law students were able to use these materials to expand on the legal knowledge they received in class as envisioned under Langdell's case method.

¶21 Although Hicks's classification system filled a vacant niche in the LC classification scheme, Hicks modeled it after Library of Congress's overall scheme. Organizationally, Hicks looks more like LC than Dewey in that it has a tiered system of letters and

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39. *Id.* at 27.

40. *Id.* at 29.

41. *Id.* at 62.

42. A Guide to the Lillian Goldman Law Library 1998–1999, at 16 [hereinafter Guide].

43. *Rare Book Collection*, Yale L. Sch. Lillian Goldman L. Libr., https://library.law.yale.edu/rare books [https://perma.cc/ZV9H-QCAH].

44. Manual, *supra* note 19 at 7–9.

numbers. The first important aspect of the Hicks Classification System was its scope and breadth. Unlike the Dewey Decimal Classification System, which was created in 1876 to broadly classify the entire universe of knowledge, the Hicks system was designed to classify the specific categories in Yale's law library only. Furthermore, because it was designed solely to serve the organizational and retrieval needs of Yale Law School users, no thought was given to whether other libraries would use it.[45] It is unknown whether any other school actually adopted the Hicks Classification System. It is interesting that despite this isolationist view and the stated intention, several law libraries currently record holding the Hicks *Manual* in their collections.[46]

¶22 As mentioned earlier, the Yale scheme is not wholly different in structure from the LC classification scheme. Hicks's breaking down of a single subject into many sub-parts, which in turn are subdivided, is similar to that of the LC Classification System. The enumerative taxonomy of Hicks's system consists of about 60 main classes with an alphabetical base, designating each class by a single capital letter, a combination of two or three capital letters, an abbreviation, or simply the name of the class. For example:

AG . . . Attorney Generals' Reports
Bibl . . . Bibliography
Blackstone . . . Blackstone
D . . . Dictionaries[47]

¶23 Arabic numbers are then used to denote subdivisions of these upper-tier classes, running from 01–581. The following example is taken from the R class, which represents *United States Court Reports*:

11      United States Supreme Court Reporter (Official edition).
111     Lawyer's Edition.
112     Supreme Court Reporter.
113     Curtis Edition.
114     Miller Edition.[48]

¶24 Some of these subdivisions are further divided, depending on the depth of Yale's collection on that class. For example:

ANCIENT, PRIMITIVE AND MEDIEVAL LAW-"AL"
       12    Primitive Law.
             British Isles.
       13    General.

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45. *Id.* at 46.

46. A search on WorldCat revealed that 29 law libraries in the United States possess a copy of Hicks's manual.

47. Frederick C. Hicks, Yale Law Library Classification 1 (1939).

48. *Id.* at 124.

131   Special.
A5    Anglo-Saxon.
C3    Celtic.
C31   Irish.
C32   Scotch.[49]

¶25 The above examples illustrate the multitier enumerative classification nature of the Hicks system. It makes use of a hierarchy of classes in successive subordination according to certain characteristics and thus enumerates complex subjects, such as "Primitive Irish Law" (AL 131 C31), which comprises an area of law (Primitive Law) and an ethnicity (Irish).

¶26 Unlike the LC scheme, which breaks down knowledge A through Z, the Hicks classification scheme utilizes a mnemonic device for the classes. In other words, Hicks uses a memory aid in which the notational symbol is the same as the first letter of the concept.[50] For example, Social Science books are marked "SS," Roman Law "RL," Jewish Law "JL," History "H," Business Documents "BD," Mohammedan Law "MohamL," and general works of Foreign Law "FLG." FLG applies only to general works on jurisprudence and to works not limited to the law of a single country. The symbols for individual foreign countries are the names of the countries (e.g., Ireland, Germany, or France); but for long or cumbersome names, an obvious and easily understood abbreviation is used, such as "Neth" or "Switz." An abbreviated symbol is also used for the British Colonies (BrCol) and Latin America (LA). Within these classes, an additional symbol is used to indicate any one of the various states included in the larger group. Haitian law books would be marked "LA Haiti" and those for Cyprus would be marked "BrCol Cyprus."[51]

¶27 Another tier of classification uses the type of legal material, such as dictionaries, reports, statutes, periodicals, form books, and treatises. In the case of Anglo-American works, these classes are given the symbols D, R, S, P, Forms, and T, respectively. This works well for statutes and codes, which are then arranged by jurisdiction, but not so well for treatises, which are arranged solely by author.[52] LC classes dictionaries, reports, statutes, and treatises under K and then gives a general number by jurisdiction. Periodicals are given a general number under each country, while form books are classified by topic.

¶28 With any classification scheme, whether it be Dewey, LC, or Hicks, all suffer from the fact that the ways to organize information are limited. The ways of doing so can only be by (1) category, (2) time, (3) location, (4) alphabet, or (5) continuum.[53] In

49. *Id.* at 39.

50. Eric J. Hunter, Classification Made Simple: An Introduction to Knowledge Organization and Information Retrieval 20 (2009).

51. Manual, *supra* note 19, at 47.

52. *Id.*

53. Richard S. Wurman, Information Anxiety: What to Do When Information Doesn't Tell You What You Need to Know 59 (1989).

addition to its categorical organization, the Hicks Classification System employs geographical location. Specifically, there are 148 country symbols for the Foreign Law section, one for each of the foreign states and political divisions, and for each of the British colonies whose law is represented in the Yale Law Library.[54] Foreign countries and subdivisions are indicated by numerical symbols. The latter usually appear either alone or in combination with letters on the second lines of call numbers in which they are used. Some of these same numbers indicate subdivisions of the classes S (American and British statute law) and RL (Roman Law).[55] The rules to guide the catalogers in constructing call numbers, as set forth in the classification schedule known as the Black Book, specify how these numbers are to be employed. For example:

> France—Symbol for France
> 222—Codes of civil procedure
> 1918—Date of publication[56]

¶29 Efficacious classification systems have the ability to accommodate new items and their subjects. Ideally, there is enough space in a notational scheme to incorporate subordinate and coordinate subjects as well as emerging areas. This was the biggest problem associated with Dewey. It was successful at describing broad collections but not deep collections. For example, subordinate subjects can be served by decimal numbers, while coordinate subjects can be provided for by leaving gaps in the subject entries. However, the gaps may not be in appropriate places and could interfere with the required order.[57] The Hicks Classification System makes use of the latter as illustrated by the following:

> ROMAN LAW—"RL"
> 01 . . . Bibliography
> 05 . . . Periodicals
> 10 . . . Collected Works
> 14 . . . Collected Texts[58]

¶30 The same level of hospitality can be said of the system's superordinate letter scheme, in that it provides space for future additions to the classification system. For example, sources on congressional hearings are given the class symbol "CH," Ancient Law is classified as "AncientL," and Blackstone is classified simply as "Blackstone." This flexibility of assigning letter symbols or an entire name allows new items and even whole classes to be added to the system at any time. Over time, however, one of the failures of the Hicks Classification System began to emerge. It became unwieldy and

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54. MANUAL, *supra* note 19, at 46.
55. *Id.* at 60.
56. *Id.* at 50.
57. HUNTER, *supra* note 50 at 74–75.
58. HICKS, *supra* note 47, at 130.

unable to adequately accommodate the growing size and breadth of legal literature, especially in treatises, international law, and jurisprudence, and in the collection's increasingly interdisciplinary character (e.g., social science).[59]

## Cultural Biases Inherent in the System

¶31 Because classification systems are created by humans, hidden biases and prejudices naturally become part of these systems. The emphasis attributed to words, subject headings, and indexes within what is considered "normal" demonstrates how the limits of categories reflect our own biases and prejudices. Classification, as a power structure, becomes a tool of oppression among those users who are not represented in the library's organization of information.[60] For example, Geoffrey Bowker and Susan Leigh Star note, "Classifications are powerful technologies. Embedded in working infrastructures they become relatively invisible without losing any of that power."[61]

¶32 To understand the biases in the Hicks Classification System, we must analyze it within the cultural context from which it was created. Through this lens, we can begin to see that the Hicks Classification System was created at a time in which both the United States and Great Britain were nearly at the height of their superpower status. This fact, and the biases that it nonetheless produced, was well represented in the system. First, there was no separate class symbol for U.S. legal sources. If a cataloger were classifying a book on Anglo-American treatises, the assigned symbol would have simply been "T," whereas if the cataloger was classifying a book on German legal dictionaries, the assigned symbol would have been "Germany 50."[62] In other words, by not having a separate class symbol for U.S. legal sources, the system assumed that any given source was American. However, this representational failure is best explained by the fact that the system was designed for a single collection, whose users were American and did not require a separate "American" designation.

¶33 Bias in the Hicks Classification System can also be viewed from Britain's particular cultural context of the era. At the time Hicks created this classification system, Britain was still an expansive colonial power.[63] Many of the countries listed under "British Colonies" in the scheme are now independent states, such as Cyprus, Kenya, and Zanzibar. More benign, but no less culturally contextual, many of the foreign jurisdictions classified in the Hicks system simply no longer exist, such as the Czechoslovak Republic, Yugoslavia, and French Indochina.[64] As it stands today, the system does not

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59.  Guide, *supra* note 42, at 16.
60.  Melissa Adler, Cruising the Library: Perversities in the Organization of Knowledge 5 (2017).
61.  Geoffrey Bowker & Susan Leigh Star, Sorting Things Out: Classification and Its Consequences 319 (1999).
62.  Hicks, *supra* note 47, at 2, 4, 15.
63.  John Darwin, The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System 1830–1970, at 474–75 (2009).
64.  Cent. Intel. Agency, *The World Fact Book*, https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/ [https://perma.cc/3QYN-75H9].

account for the vast geopolitical changes that would require reclassification. It is unknown whether Hicks anticipated these changes.

## The Utility of Hicks's System

¶34 An analysis of the retrieval aspects of the Hicks Classification System should be conducted from the perspective of how well it served its intended function and audience. Overall, it appears to have effectively facilitated access to the holdings by students and faculty who were conducting curricular and scholarly research. However, retrieval of information in any classification system is only as good as its finding aids. In 1937, the card catalog for the Yale Law School occupied 440 trays, which contained approximately 280,000 cards.[65] For each book, there were as many cards as needed to represent author, joint author, editor, title, series, and the subject or subjects treated in the book. In other words, a single item could have several separate cards, each providing access points. All cards, whether they represented author, subject, or title, were interfiled into a single alphabetized collection, much like a dictionary (i.e., there was no separate subject catalog). Each tray contained guide cards to aid and cross-reference to and from related subjects. Additionally, for current sets of periodicals, annual reports, and series of various kinds, there were cards in the form of tables that showed what volumes the library owned and the period covered by each.[66]

¶35 While Hicks's system largely facilitated access to the collection, via the card catalog, the physical grouping of books was by type rather than subject as in a Library of Congress arranged library. Because similar subjects were not necessarily arranged on the shelf next to each other, users could not browse to find similar items and were forced to employ the card catalog as their primary means of creating a subject list.

¶36 The efficacy of the Hicks Classification System, then, can be found in its contribution to the field of library science, information systems, and human learning. It filled a void where there previously was no classification system at any law school and supported the changing nature of legal education. If emerging pedagogical methods called for law libraries to supplement and cultivate classroom learning, then Hicks successfully created the classroom's laboratory of legal information. Although Hicks created his classification system to address the needs of a growing law library, as the practice and the study of law became more diverse and interdisciplinary, it rendered much of Hicks's classification obsolete and created gaps in the scheme. Nonetheless, it remains an effective information retrieval system for Yale's rare book and manuscript collection of over 50,000 legal volumes to this day.

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65.  Manual, *supra* note 19, at 51.
66.  *Id.* at 51–52.

## Conclusion

¶37 In 1956, Samuel Thorne, Hicks's successor at Yale, noted, "Under his direction, the Yale Law Library rose to the first rank among the law libraries of the world, whether that statement be tested by the criterion of size, richness of collection, adequacy of catalogue and classification, or physical facilities for convenient use."[67] Yale's status, as described by Thorne, can be directly attributed to Hicks's passion for the organization and accessibility of information and the fruits of his labor. To be sure, this passion was so central to his life that Hicks embarked on the daunting task of creating his own classification system.

¶38 Hicks was truly a pioneer in the evolution of law librarianship. The legacy he left our profession can be viewed from multiple perspectives as demonstrated by the more than dozen publications on his life and career. Not only does this article fill a void in the literature regarding Hicks and his classification system, but it also helps to illustrate the various organizational issues that large academic libraries were struggling with to meet the changing nature of legal education at the beginning of the 20th century.

¶39 Above anyone else, Hicks understood the symbiotic relationship between the law library and legal education. In the introduction to the *Yale Law Library Manual*, he wrote:

> A Reeve, a Story, a Kent, a Baldwin, or some lesser preceptor, facing a group of students, notebooks in hands, may once have constituted a satisfactory law school. If so, we are far from that simplicity and time. Around students and professors of today, shelves must be erected, filled with books elaborately indexed and catalogued. One can say only that every tendency of legal education today emphasizes the demand for more books, better organized for use.[68]

¶40 For Hicks, a vital step in forging this symbiotic relationship was for all the books in the law library's collection to be readily accessible to readers, and for this to occur a practical classification system and a card catalog providing multiple access points to the collection was required. As a 21st century digital world continues to change the nature of legal research, coupled with user preference and expectations, let us look to Frederick Hicks as a source of inspiration as we strive to ensure the law collections under our care are properly housed and organized for service.

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67. Samuel E. Thorne, *In Memory of Frederick Charles Hicks*, 49 Law Libr. J. 277, 278 (1956).
68. Manual, *supra* note 19, at v.