
Introduction to Cataloging and the Classification of Books

By

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Director's Introduction

In preparing textbooks for this series the following methods are utilized:

The Advisory Committee of the Curriculum Study, selected by the Board of Education for Librarianship of the American Library Association to represent all the types of institutions concerned with the preparation of the textbooks, determines matters of policy.

The Editorial Committee of the American Library Association, with the advice of the Advisory Committee, selects a small group of outstanding persons in the field to be treated by the textbook, from which group the author is selected by the Director of the Curriculum Study.

A subcommittee of advisers composed of experts in the field gives advice and assistance to the author.

The author and the staff make a detailed analysis of the duties and traits of workers in this field in order that a clear picture may be had of the problems and activities that are to be discussed in the text.

All the literature bearing upon the methods of performance of duties, principles underlying the methods, points of view, and objectives of the field is canvassed.

Visits are made to at least fifty libraries having a substantial reputation in the field in order to secure best methods which have not been recorded in print.

The author comes to the Study headquarters in Chicago and devotes an uninterrupted period of several months to preparing the first draft of the textbook with the assistance of the staff.

The textbook as prepared in tentative form is mimeographed and used in library school classes for the purpose of receiving criticisms and suggestions which will be of use in the later revision of the text.

It is also submitted to twenty-five or more persons who

qualify as experts in the field and are not connected with library schools.

The author in the light of these criticisms and suggestions revises the text for final publication. The text is then printed for general distribution by the American Library Association.

At least two hundred people engaged in library work contribute to the preparation of each text. Thus the series is to a quite unusual degree a cooperative enterprise of the library profession.

W. W. C.

Chicago
July, 1929

Preface

Purpose. This book is intended for students beginning a study of Library Science. It is written with the realization that the course in cataloging and classification is but one course in a full curriculum, and that, while such a course leads to specialization, it cannot be expected that all students will choose to become catalogers. An attempt has been made to tell what the catalog is, where it leads, and what service it can give, and therefore what it means to catalog and classify books. By covering principles, as well as certain detailed methods, the text aims to reach not only those who will become catalogers, but also those who may be executives or assistants in any part of the library staff. Thus the interpreters as well as the makers of the catalog have been kept constantly in mind.

Scope. This is an *explanatory* text with some detailed outlines which give the first description of present (1929) library practice. No attempt has been made to give the history of classification and cataloging, or to cover the cataloging of special collections, such as maps, documents, pictures, and other auxiliary groups, but the underlying principles herein expressed may guide one in dealing with such material. The discussion is not limited to problems in a single type of library, but reference is made to public, university, and special libraries as these types need emphasis. When small libraries require a different treatment from that described, this is usually stated.

The choice of matter to go into the book has been very carefully considered from the pedagogical point of view. Advanced courses must grow out of basic courses. Subjects have been introduced sometimes with only a suggestion as to their development, inviting further study. Some excerpts included in the book may seem unnecessarily long when taken from reference books which are easily accessible, but these have been included so that this text may be used for home

study. One or two chapters do not have decided teaching value, but it seemed best to include them for the use of the students when beginning their work in the field.

The interest of the student is more easily sustained if the emphasis of the course is placed on books and their potential readers, and if the principles of cataloging and classification precede the technique. Such a presentation will show that cataloging and classification are two of the fundamental branches of library science. By stressing principles the student learns, too, that he is preparing for a bibliographical, not a clerical, position.

Laboratory practice. The study of these branches involves problems requiring performance of a definite duty as well as the creation of a definite thing. The student must, therefore, spend a carefully proportioned part of his time in laboratory practice where he catalogs and classifies books. Such laboratory practice makes clear the objective of the course "to fit for useful employment." It should not be carried beyond the point of being a learning medium. In the laboratory the student has an opportunity to show his desire and aptitude to cooperate, to work with consideration for others, to subordinate himself to the accomplishment of his task, to do accurate and painstaking work, and to acquire that skill in execution which will make him a quick and discriminating assistant.

This book attempts to orient the student for his approach to this practice work. If this method of orientation is followed, some time will be spent in stressing books and their make-up, catalogs and their use, and subjects and their ramifications, before beginning the actual making of catalog cards. During this time the laboratory practice will consist in handling types of books so that the student may become familiar with them.

Code recommended. The *A.L.A. Catalog rules*¹ is the code recommended as a laboratory manual. While rules for catalog entries are rarely repeated in this text, the value and necessity of following definite directions are made apparent.

¹ Catalog rules, author and title entries, compiled by committees of the American Library Association and the (British) Library Association. American ed. A.L.A., 1908.

Rules for entry have been officially accepted and adopted by libraries as the result of long discussion and study. England and America through their joint code, the American edition of which is recommended above, have provided standard rules for cataloging which have been adopted not only by our national library, but also by foreign authorities as a base for codes compiled by them.

Now that our rules have been uniformly accepted this seems to be an opportune time to relax the rigor of the detailed method of studying rules alone and to substitute a broader and perhaps more interesting procedure.

Card form. Library of Congress cards are emphasized, and the unit card form is recommended in all but exceptional cases, since it is recognized as most economical and most satisfying.

Methods of presentation. This text only suggests methods of study. Anyone is free to use the chapters as best judgment dictates. It has been written with a conviction that more work can be covered, more interest can be aroused, more of value given, and better catalogers and more discerning executives produced, if the course in cataloging and classification is built around the whole book, and its subject as expressed in classification and in the subject catalog. The author therefore advocates the study of classification and cataloging in the same course. The two subjects can not, or should not, be entirely divorced in actual practice in a library, and even if so divided the cataloger should know the relation between the two processes, and the classifier should understand how books are cataloged. There is a decided gain both to the student and to the library school if one catalogs and classifies at the same time, as more work can be accomplished in the same amount of time.

These suggestions, representing the feeling of catalogers already in the field, have resulted in the shaping of this text so as to prepare students, in so far as possible, for practical work under existing conditions. Sufficient time should be devoted to each chapter to master the details included and to allow for the examination of illustrative material.

Plan. The plan may be outlined as follows: An introduction for the purpose of giving some conception of what it means to prepare books for use (Chapter I) ; this is followed by an analysis of the make-up of a book and the value its different parts may have for the reader (Chapter II) ; books are then discussed as groups to find some common basis for their classification and shelf arrangement (Chapter III), which study leads naturally to the need for definite schedules of classification (Chapters IV and V) and the records necessary to maintain a specific scheme of classification and furnish symbols for shelving books (Chapter VI). Having shelved the books by subject, the next step is to catalog them so they may be quickly found. This means a discussion of the catalog: its function, form, type and technique (Chapters VII-XII). With these needs settled we now turn to a study of duties as actually carried out in practice (Chapters XIII and XIV) followed by a consideration of the movements leading to the distribution of the Library of Congress printed cards and the use of these cards in practice (Chapters XV and XVI). The next consideration is how best to organize and administer a department which must care for the work as herein surveyed, together with a consideration of supplies and equipment (Chapters XVII and XVIII). Finally comes a discussion of how the instrument we have been constructing may be made to yield its greatest usefulness (Chapter XIX). The last chapter (Chapter XX) is introduced to illustrate the presentation of one subject during one class period.

From the above outline it is apparent that the book follows the progressive method of treatment. The method of teaching used by the instructor will, of course, determine the way in which the book can be made to yield the greatest service. Some chapters will be most effective if read before the instructor begins a discussion of the topic to be studied, while others will be more helpful if read to summarize a discussion. The chapters are correlated to make a whole, therefore no one chapter can be read independently of others by those unfamiliar with the subjects of cataloging and classification.

Thought questions. Following each chapter is a list of questions by which the student can test his own knowledge of what he has just read. These questions should provoke discussion and add interest to the subject.

References. References at the end of each chapter have been chosen for students. For this reason it has not always been possible to choose the best, or even the most interesting, articles and books. Such reading must come within the range of the student's knowledge of the subject. Controversial literature has generally been excluded. In some cases where it was necessary to abridge a chapter, the references have been made more complete, so that the instructor may have a greater number from which to choose in making assignments for further study.

Model cards. Model cards could not be included satisfactorily in the text, but a list of Library of Congress card numbers for printed cards illustrative of each A.L.A. rule is included in Appendix I at the end of the volume. Rule numbers followed by the Library of Congress card numbers are furnished so that model cards may be ordered in complete sets or as individual cards. The use to be made of these cards is explained in Chapter VII.

Acknowledgment for valuable information is due, and is here gratefully made, to the libraries so generously contributing to the data collected for this text, to my co-workers who helped in shaping the book, and to those who so generously furnished constructive criticism of the preliminary edition.

A word of appreciation is also extended to students in my classes at the University of Michigan during the years 1926-1929. Their interest in and criticism of this text while it was in the process of writing have made the book better than it could otherwise have been.

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INTRODUCTION TO CATALOGING AND THE CLASSIFICATION OF BOOKS

CHAPTER I

Introduction

To those who have had their interest in library science quickened by a love of books, or to those who have a desire to know books better and make them known to others, there is no more satisfying work than the handling of books as they come into a library. Here one turns his attention not to gratifying his own hunger for literature, but to the far broader task of studying books and recording them so that they may reach the thousands of readers who are in search of literature to satisfy some need.

To pass from a private library to a large collection of books brought together for public use carries one across a very broad and full flowing stream. Quantities of books confront one and the attitude of mind must change from small to large questions, for librarians are not owners of a few books, but distributors of many books and of much information. One cannot choose what he shall read, but must dip into volume after volume, passing from one author to another and from one subject to another, making contacts with all minds of the world's past history, and entering into the society of mental superiors and mental inferiors. Modest men and women make up the galaxy of wisdom which confronts the cataloger as he daily works with books. Catalogers find through their work a realm as large as the universe, "the poets sing, the philosophers discourse, the historians unfold the wonderful march of life, and the searchers of nature reveal the secrets and mysteries of creation. . . . The only true equalizers in the world are books; the only treasure-house open to all comers is a library; the only wealth which will not decay is knowledge. . . . To live in this equality, to share in these

treasures, to possess this wealth, and to secure this jewel may be the happy lot of everyone."¹

The study of books. It is the happy lot of the cataloger not only to dwell in this world of books, but to study and examine them so that the readers who frequent libraries may have the benefit of the wisdom, intelligence, and literary talent of those whose works are on the library shelves. This analysis demands a broad vision, a sympathetic outlook, and a determination to read perseveringly with faculties on the alert, as well as a certain amount of sustained effort and expenditure of brain-tissue. Those who catalog may truly be called the "servants of the servants of literature" for it is their task to examine, cull, arrange, and record the works of the writers of all generations. The cataloger must act as a medium between writer and reader, endeavoring to estimate justly the intention of the one and the need of the other. He must study books comparatively to detect differences in style and treatment in order to know what value they may have for various types of readers. He must realize that the books intrusted to his care must be examined and made ready for use in the same way that any other commodity is analyzed and studied, so that it may serve its maximum purpose. To bring about this fulfilment of purpose there must also go hand in hand with the study of books, an understanding of people. The cataloger must envisage the needs of the reader, endeavoring in every way to make it a simple process for him to find books. He should, like the librarian, adopt a neutral stand between the reader and his books, giving emphasis to what the author intended to describe rather than to his own views. He must realize that the methods and terms used to express subjects, as well as book technique, must be suited to the type of reader for whom the book was prepared. He must be aware that what will please the advanced student will be unintelligible to the average man, what will furnish information to the uninitiated will be useless to the specialist, what will interest and stimulate one reader will find little favor from another, what is written for the adult cannot be understood

¹ Scott, Temple. *The friendship of books*. Macmillan, 1911, p. 155.

by the child, and conversely, what is prepared for the child is too elementary for the adult. It is this understanding of groups of readers which must go into the successful study of books as they are being prepared for the use of a miscellaneous clientele. There are those who will demand special translations, revised editions, works with illustrations, compilations containing definite essays and stories, authors whose names they know but vaguely, subjects which are possible of various interpretations, histories of places difficult to locate, and a thousand things which only a thinking public can demand.

Books are valuable because they contribute to a certain subject or subjects; because they have been written by a certain person, institution, or group of persons; because the titles make an appeal; because they have been compiled or edited by persons of authority; because they have been recommended for a definite purpose; because some one chapter contains the only thing on the subject in print; or because a new edition of an old book has brought to light new information. Books in a library are tools collected for public use. They are usually chosen to serve the specific needs of a definite group of people. This group may be the inhabitants of a limited community, a village, town, or city; or it may be a student body, as in university and college libraries. Again, the library may aim at serving a group of specialists by building a collection limited to one subject, as Art, Engineering, or Medicine. Books for any one of the above types are selected to make a rounded whole by which the institutions may furnish information, recreation, and stimulation according to the needs of the group they are designed to serve.

Particular regard must be given to those libraries serving a very special class of readers so that the proper emphasis can be given to books according to their use. The medical library will find one use for a book, while an engineering library may wish to use the same book for quite a different purpose.

It is surprising to find how many interpretations can be given to the same treatise. Taking a rather homely example, the books on occupational diseases may illustrate the possible variations of use to which books may be put. To the medical

library the value of these books lies in the information they give about the cause and treatment of a disease; in the technical library they are used to study the effect a certain product may have on health; for the insurance library they contribute to the question of a certain risk; in the civic library they make a contribution to a phase of the labor question; to the financial library they give information about investing in a business where a certain risk exists; while to the public library will come readers seeking the subject from one or all the points of view mentioned above.

Purpose of cataloging. To catalog is not merely to copy title-pages. All books are listed as published, but the moment books are purchased for a definite purpose, as are the books in a library, the cataloger must not only record the names of the authors and titles but he must draw attention to their purpose, contents, and relation to other works, bringing together those books which treat the same subject, and arranging the whole collection so that books may be used comparatively. All the volumes treating of Chemistry will be brought together on the shelves, and all those on History, Education, Astronomy, Physics, Art, Music, Drama, Sociology, and Religion will be found in separate groups. The reader interested in seeing what books the library has in the field of education, for example, will not want to go all over the library collecting these books. The classifier must so assemble this information before the request comes that he can answer questions quickly and effectively. Within each large field, he will so well arrange the books that the searcher may be led from one topic to another. For example, the reader beginning his search with books on general education may expect to find this subject covered by a very few books, but as he proceeds, he is led on step by step into the ramifications of the subject. He will find books which not only show the extent of his general topic, but also those which give him the works covering the details of each branch of his theme. He finds books on teaching methods, school organization, curriculum making, school discipline, etc., all of which help to map out for him the possibilities of his field of work.

Problems of cataloging. Since every book which comes into a library must be examined and studied before it can be placed on the shelves with other books of like kind, the cataloger encounters many problems. Many a book is elusive and many a subject is baffling. For example, a title will appear to be perfectly new, the title-page may even bear a recent date, and yet upon examination the book will be found to be merely a new edition of a work already in the collection.

Again the cataloger soon learns that the title is no criterion for determining the subject of a book. This is true even when the words in the title do not seem ambiguous. Such a simple title as *Railroads* would seem to present no very serious consideration, but the cataloger knows that he must immediately put the questions: Does this book treat of the subject of railroads in general, or is only the economic side emphasized, or does it cover merely the construction of railroads? If the point of view is not recognized by the classifier the man who is studying railroad engineering may miss a book covering his field because it is incorrectly classified with the books on the economics of railroads.

When a book called *Simplified school accounting* comes over the cataloger's desk, he must decide whether it is best to put such a book with others on the subject of accounting, or to let it take its place with books on school organization and management. The volume *Bad debts; a drama in one act*, by Margaret Cassie Searle, for example, is to be placed with other dramas, but before this can be done the cataloger must know the nationality of the writer, since a library usually plans to arrange works of *belles lettres* together by the nationality of the author. Next is a translation of Jeffery Farnol's *The broad highway* into Polish (*Na szerokiej drodze*). Shall this stand with books in the Polish language, or with the English edition of the same work? It is this grouping of books which makes it possible for much of the work with readers, and for readers, to be carried on effectively, and it is the classifier who is responsible for their correct allocation.

Unless books are correctly classified they are not ready

for use. A new branch library, for example, cannot function unless there are books on its shelves marked and ready to circulate, nor can the reference librarian answer so quickly the demands which come to his desk, if he cannot go directly to the shelves and find in one place books of like kind. He must be able to pick out one book after another and use these comparatively. The mechanical make-up of a book is such that even though it treat of two or more subjects the book itself can stand only in one subject group on the shelves. A book on travel in France and Switzerland can be shelved with other books treating of France, but it cannot at the same time be shelved with those on Switzerland. A key to the shelves must be provided which will list this book not only under France but also under Switzerland and under the name of its author as well. This key to the books is the catalog. It is made up of entries so arranged on cards that authors, titles, and subjects, and the books to which they refer can be quickly and easily located. The catalog functions whether the books are in or out of the library and it is to this record that one must go to find not only what authors and subjects are represented by the books on the shelves, but also all their bibliographic details, such as publisher, date of publication, illustrations and other descriptive items.

The department of the library where the catalog is compiled may be likened to a scientific laboratory in which the scientist analyzes his minerals. As the assayer separates the precious metal from its alloys, preserving the choice bits which are buried in each piece of ore, so the cataloger analyzes each book, not alone to discover its major subject, but to find hidden bits of information which may be buried between its covers. Not only subjects but authors as well are ferreted out. Authors furnish many entanglements which the cataloger must unravel before he can give the reader a correct reference to the works of the hundreds of writers who crowd the library shelves. Often these are loath to divulge their names, others cover their identity by an assumed name, while some use a name so brief that it is difficult to prove their identity.

It would seem to be a very simple matter to make an alphabetical list of authors and their books; in most cases the name of the author is on the title-page and the title is clearly set forth. But when one begins to collect proper names, there are many complications. For one thing, every name must be correctly designated. If, for example, ten different men by the name of John Smith have written books, each must be linked with the correct book. John Smith, who was born in 1880, has written the book on mathematics, and John Smith, the scientist, has written the one on astronomy, and so on. Each John Smith must be given a distinguishing mark to place him correctly for the reader. The same difficulty is found with persons who have changed their names. On one title-page we find George A. Birmingham and we enter the book under Birmingham; in a few weeks we find another book written by the same author, but the title-page bears the name J. O. Hannay. The two books must be grouped together, because we find on investigation that Birmingham is only an assumed name sometimes used by J. O. Hannay.

It is a stimulating study to trace the elusive author who apparently feels privileged to use any name which fancy dictates. Occasionally an author assumes a double personality, as did William Sharp. Here was a man who wrote a certain type of book under his real name, and quite a different type under the pseudonym of Fiona Macleod. The identity of the assumed name never became known during the lifetime of the author, so well was it guarded by his publishers. Some writers have been known to use as many as twenty or more pseudonyms, but if the cataloger follows all of these, the works of one writer will be scattered in twenty or more places in the catalog. Rather than do this the cataloger must choose one name, preferably the real one, and make a reference from all the others. These references make it possible for the reader who may have remembered one of the pseudonyms, or who may have found one from another catalog or bibliography, to be directed to the name chosen. This system of "cross references" plays an important part in any catalog and will be treated in more detail as this text advances.