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PRESERVATION FROM OUTSIDE DANGERS

Part I

Controlling Theft and Facing the Riot Threat to Records

By

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Theft and riots are age-old problems. Rare books and not so rare books are especially desirable subjects of theft. They are relatively easy to take, even the most expensive and rare items. Books are to be handled, read, and analyzed. We can lock them up, but if they can not be used, the principal value of a book--its content, accompanied by a feel for the book itself--is lost to the book lover and to the book user. Copies can be made of the book, of course, and the copies can be used in lieu of the book in many cases, but if a bibliophile wants to see and examine the book, out of the shelf, case, safe, or drawer it must come, except in rare instances.

And how many books have been taken by book authorities from shelves of book innocents, through the borrowing process (without benefit of a library charging system), through purchase at a ridiculously low figure, or through actual theft of the book? in Kentucky a few years ago, the best known club of bibliophiles gave themselves the name of "Book Thieves." the members, of course, were not thieves, but the title suggests a high degree of opportunism among book collectors.

Our subject today is concerned primarily with thefts and riot threats in libraries. To what degree are book thefts and riot threats problems? In this age of professional competence and technical skill, are we troubled with losses because we are not as professional as we should be or because we simply are not properly equipped with the right hardware or properly organized? Right away, it should be freely admitted that if we want our books to be used, we are going to minimize, not eliminate, the problems, at the best. Security has been excellent in the British Museum, the National Archives of the United States, and the Biblioteque Nationale, for example, but even with tight controls and protective devices, books and other materials are taken. In 1847, twenty-seven volumes containing political and religious pamphlets were taken from the British Museum. One of these turned up at Georgetown University in the library after being lost for over a hundred years. (1) Three nineteenth century letters, one written by General Ulysses Grant in 1866, were recently recovered and returned to the National Archives, which promptly placed a tighter security on such materials. (2) The Biblioteque Nationale is known to have excellent control systems over its book and manuscript holdings, including burglar alarms and an active guard force. Early in January, 1967, four of eight leatherbound notebooks comprising the manuscripts of Mozart's "Don Giovanni" were taken with no traces of forcible entry or clues as to how the material was taken. So good is the security that the

manuscripts constitute the first major publicized theft of the French National Library since 1804 when the "treasury" of Childeric, King of the Franks, was lost. (3)

How widespread is the problem today? Is the theft problem in American libraries becoming more serious? The answer is a resounding yes according to the American Library Association. In one year alone, 1963, the American Library Association reported "a veritable epidemic of thefts of books, manuscripts, and documents." A committee was established by the A.L.A. to handle reports and complaints from victimized libraries. And what was the principal problem in that year? Rare books and journals were being borrowed for the purpose of microfilming and not returned. (4) A celebrated indictment in a United States District Court was returned in this same year, 1963, cited by the A.L.A., against a bookseller and a former head librarian of the library of a major U.S. city, who allegedly were appropriating library property for their own use and personal benefit. (5) According to the College and Research Library Division of A.L.A., most of the complaints from libraries to this special committee of the American Library Association have been associated with the borrowing of books and journals for copying purposes. (6)

So even the librarians and the booksellers are causing headaches in libraries, which in the 1960's are resulting in record losses. But even more serious because probably less can be done about it are the illegal removals from book stacks in college, public, and school libraries of the United States, just how serious can be determined by examples of egregious cases, but not by accurate accounting which simply does not exist in library systems of this country. (7)

One library in the United States, the Brooklyn Public, recently, made a detailed study of its losses and made an astounding discovery that book losses over a brief period of time represented the equivalent of the entire book holdings of six of its branch libraries, representing a loss of over a half million dollars or a little more than 7% of the total library budget. So serious have the losses of this library been that a special Security Investigative Staff of ten members was developed to make a study of the theft problem and to develop measures which may reduce these large losses substantially. (8)

A 1966 inventory at five Washington, D.C. university libraries--Georgetown, Catholic, Howard, American, and George Washington--revealed that a staggering 9,000 volumes were missing, presumably stolen from the stacks by users. Far from being in-print monographs, which are inexpensively replaced, or relatively so, at \$10 a volume or for a total cost of \$90,000, the study showed that basic reference tools which are quite expensive were among the favorites of the book thieves, such as, encyclopedias, dictionaries, atlases, and books on antiques. According to the librarian of Catholic University, the theological students at the school are as bad about taking books out without authorization on a "temporary basis" as other students, if not worse. (9)

Isolated examples of book losses such as those just given illustrate what we suspect to be true in any heavily-used library in the United States. We are losing books through thefts and careless handling at a very high rate, and often the books which are missing are among the most needed and the most expensive. Two summers ago, we found at Murray State University

that we had lost over a hundred of our key books in our Reference Collection which had been on hand the previous summer. This fact made it a little easier to decide to go to an open stack--check out system at the main door of the library. A few of these books are so difficult to find at any price that we have not to this day been able to replace them.

In the main, it is a commonly known fact that we really do not know in precise terms how many books we are losing annually in the United States every year due to unauthorized removals. Our manual system of record keeping of books does not include in by far the majority of cases a method of inventorying books against the shelf list file. We do read book shelves, as we call it, but principally what we are doing here is to maintain order, not determine losses. Will the new PL-1 programming allow us eventually to establish a routine system of checking the inventory of books annually? Perhaps. Librarians have been slow to change, to modernize, and to employ new techniques of administering libraries, but the newly accredited library schools are moving to meet the challenge, and the modern library administrator--primarily because of rising costs in the library and demands for greater efficiency--is much more disposed to change to new ways of doing things than was the library administrator of yesterday.

What about an honor system at our universities and colleges? We hear a lot these days about the desirability of treating students as adults. According to Williams College, the honor system, which for them has been in effect since 1840, does not work any longer. Williams made a study which showed that approximately 6,000 books were being taken annually without having been first checked out at the circulation desk and that about 1,000 of these were never returned. Five of the six doors at Williams have now been locked, and a student inspector is on duty at the sixth to back up the honor of the student adult. (10) In defense of the student, however, for whom I have a great deal of respect, adults, themselves, are often more irresponsible about unauthorized withdrawals and failure to return college books which have been checked out but which are more difficult to regain because either the adult is a faculty member and does not choose to cooperate because of his special status or because he or she is outside the disciplinary control of the college community. (11) I do not claim to know the answer to the theft problem, but I and other librarians do know that it is apparently one which is becoming increasingly serious. We need more facts, however, before we can fully identify the problem and fully maximize the solution. Certain measures can be and are being taken. These will be discussed later in the paper as these techniques also apply in large part to riots, an old, old problem which is causing libraries very serious difficulties as we approach the 1970's.

Riots are not a new phenomenon in society. It would not be difficult to devote a book to this subject showing that mass defiance of law and order has been with us a long time. American history has its share of riots, such as Shay's Rebellion and the draft riots in New York City during the Civil War, but they have been minimized, perhaps, because until recent years our national problems have been less complex and our leadership much more respected. Truly, we are faced today with a national test, not one of cities and country side in isolation as we have known throughout our history. This test centers in part on the emerald, nutmeg, and snow-covered campuses of institutions of higher learning, where maturity and immaturity must

face anew our nation-old problem of balancing security against freedom or freedom against security.

And back of the national security vs. freedom struggle is a deeply changed society which can not fail, it would seem to me, to increase the importance of the sociologist over the mere historian, the interpreter of what has happened and is happening in terms of the past experience of recorded history. Philip M. Hauser of the University of Chicago in his 1968 presidential address to the American Sociological Association made the point, which it seems to me, expresses best the problem in America today which is disturbing the nation and even affecting the existence of library collections and indexes to those collections. He said that our society today in many ways is not unlike societies which the historian has observed in his study of civilizations. But there are areas which make our dangers unique and large: (1) Contemporary society contains a far more complex array of cultural layers both in quantity and quality which make self-identification and self-analysis far more difficult and (2) We are facing the real danger of collective suicide in the possible employment of the atomic bomb or some other great destructive force. (12) Do we have the knowledge in social sciences to dissipate confusion and restore order, as Dr. Hauser puts it, to avoid collective suicide? The University of Chicago sociologist thinks so, but he questions "the will and the organization to utilize available knowledge to this end." (13)

Many of us would go a step further. Sound work in the social sciences has been accomplished in the last fifty years in the world and in the United States, but to many observers, social scientists on college and university campuses are not exercising the disciplines of their respective divisions but are more concerned with involvement or politics than they are with a stoical presentation of truth. The fictionalized and emotionalized versions of knowledge should be left to a politician who is an expert in the art of getting things done. Social science is being disserved when the theoretician descends to the fishwife level, reducing his scholarship to a level as debased and confused as everyman's society, which the "scholar" serves so ill.

There is little question that the social science faculty with some help from their colleagues in the humanities are in large part in the background of student unrest on campuses, either unintentionally or intentionally. The scholar does not or should not take sides. The ill-equipped and incompetent student is often permanently scarred or hopelessly confused. These students deserve more careful screening. America is the land of opportunity, but it would appear that many students are going to universities and colleges who are not intellectually or emotionally equipped to understand and to assist in the improvement of society and our country. It also appears evident to many of those on campuses that there are some Ph.D.'s who received their degrees too easily or are too emotional and undisciplined as to be problems themselves. Instead of assisting students to mature, they often contribute to their basic immaturity and permanent incapacity to be leaders in society.

This paper was prepared well in advance of its presentation as it is to be published with others which will be given at the World Conference on Records at Salt Lake City, Utah, in August, 1969, and, therefore, it may not contain the most current and best examples of the

effects of student riots on libraries, but already enough has happened to enable us to see the trend and the seriousness of this phenomenon on American campuses. ROTC's may be condemned, but random and senseless destruction is taking place mainly in administrative and academic rooms, including libraries.

At the preparation of this paper in early May, the evening news described a major fire in the University of Indiana Library, destruction of the contents of several rooms, and an overturning and dumping of library catalog cards on the floor. In January, ten or fifteen radical students toppled 60-drawer catalog cabinets and, to insure increased damage, destroyed or damaged the contents of some 25 catalog trays. In a matter of minutes, extensive damage was done. (14) A few weeks later, a similar occurrence took place at the University of Illinois. Their library cards were removed completely from the card catalog when no one was around and destroyed, making it difficult, if not impossible, to know which books have been lost to the user because the indexes have been completely removed and eliminated. (15)

Wanton destruction of library cards is a recognition by students that libraries are especially vulnerable in this area. Few libraries--the University of Illinois being an example--have duplicate public catalogs. (16) We do have the shelf list, but as has been stated before, American libraries have not been able, as a very practical matter to inventory periodically their book collections, nor have ways been devised to inventory periodically the main card catalog.

What has happened in America that has resulted in an increase of thefts not from confirmed criminals, but apparently from book dealers, librarians, and from Mr. and Mrs. Average American and their sons and daughters. Taking books by faculty members and never returning them, what is this if not stealing? Borrowing a book overnight or for a few days without going through standard procedures, what is this if not stealing? And, of course, everyone agrees that books tossed out of windows or concealed deliberately fit into this category. Where is honor, ethics, and consideration for one's fellowman?

And if to confound the problem of morality, what is generally considered to be a basic good in America, that is the recognition of common and individual rights, now we must be confronted by another ethic, that of the pseudo social scientist, who, like the theoretical Communist several decades ago, yearns for the withering away of the state and for the replacement of all evils with the natural goodness of mankind.

Two world-wide conflicts and a threat of another which may be World War III or the Last World War, two large scale police actions, devastating civil riots, and rearward kicks by our militant college sons and daughters surely should have taught us that good isn't necessarily the opposite of bad, but rather a sun or a heaven of suns, with which to illuminate the world's problems. Just as no millinium can be promised for Americans in general, though some are donning their ascension robes and climbing to the tops of our highest mountains, there will be no perfect solutions for the nation's record keepers or for anyone else. But many of the records keeping problems are being studied and are being illuminated with some success.

Business men, librarians, archivists, and rare book and manuscript specialists are tested daily by thieves and now weekly by rioters. We have vaults and safes, locked cages and cabinets, open and closed stacks, whose access or control is assigned to mature, trusted employees, sometimes armed with legal authority such as the right of replevin or restoration of rightful ownership, sometimes as in the example of the Biblioteque Nationale with guards or at the security checkpoint by police. The techniques used are very common and will not be gone into detail for this reason.

We may make extra copies through forms-management pre-planning. This could take the form of an extra copy for State Civil Defense of the most recent organizational chart of the State Police force; it could be an extra copy for cataloging control of a temporary catalog slip which has been filed in the Main Card Catalog; or it could be an additional copy of an accessioning record for a manuscript collection. Additional copies may also be made by various copying devices, examples of which are 914-generated catalog cards, IBM cards in a data text system, or by a 3-M aperture card copy of the original micro-recorded document. And often, a printed, processed, or second copy of a manuscript can be purchased from a dealer in the open market, a source which is often used but rarely mentioned, for it may take much sleuthing to discover that additional copies exist and may be found and purchased.

One of the best ways, though not always the cheapest as advertised by self-interested companies, is to make photographic copies in various sizes, often in miniature form, of hard copy. These copies consist of at least one security copy and at least one use copy in most cases; although this is not always the case. The best example of what can be done in this area is the excellent work on a large scale by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, our host, who not only makes available in the large research libraries of the world excellent copies of records, but provides maximum security of the film under ideal conditions in the heart of a granite mountain. This is not cheap, and we owe, of course, a lasting debt of gratitude to this religious group with headquarters here in Salt Lake City.

In the mid 1960's, there was much talk in the library profession about the new electronic devices on the market--Sentronic and Bro Dart "Book Detectives," probably the two best-known. These devices are expensive, with the Sentronic running in this period \$6,500 for 5,000 books and the Bro Dart, \$6,800 base cost plus 25cents each for the bomags. Certainly, the smaller libraries may find them so costly as to be prohibitive; whereas, the larger libraries may be able to afford them, but may find that thieves can spot the devices easily either by observation or through detection devices carried on their persons. A 10cent pocket compass, for example, one author says, will indicate books containing the metal, which is not fool proof enough even for average system beaters. (17) Another author, writing in 1968, terms the electronic devices impractical because of high costs and unworkable because of inherent weaknesses in the system (18)

Department stores expect losses and are content when they do not exceed a certain percent of sales. Some library administrators argue that libraries should employ good surveillance and circulation practices, but should expect certain losses. But as a California

librarian wrote in 1962 on this subject, following a nationwide survey on professional practices and book losses, most libraries do not take inventories and do not therefore know what acceptable loss levels are and if we had national standards would not know about their own losses. Of thirty-two libraries completing the questionnaire only five had taken complete book inventories. No wonder that this author concluded that librarians who are willing to take losses, in the main, "are having to take a pretty subjective approach in estimating the seriousness of the problem".(19) Another researcher discovered in a four-year study of book thefts that the facts were few, but academic libraries lose books in "considerable numbers." His answer was that acceptable loss levels must be determined for each environment and that cooperation be sought with patrons as the chief answer to the problem. (20)

And what about library cards? How can we protect ourselves from destruction or misplacement of library cards? Some answers are at hand, though too expensive, probably, for most libraries. A second catalog could be created and kept up to date in another location by xeroxing the catalog and thereafter making another complete set of cards for every new book added to the collection. The catalog could be photographed, and from this reproduction, a book catalog could be created with cards representing additional books collected elsewhere and held for supplementary editions of the catalog. Finally, the day is probably not too far off when the entire book collection of many libraries will be stored in the memory of a computer, from which a complete card catalog could be created at will, but of course at a price.

No library today has all the answers, but it is encouraging that library schools are stimulating, on the one hand, a more businesslike approach to libraries and, on the other hand, a quality of scholarship which is already showing signs of courageously attacking problems one by one. Instead of ignoring real problems and following the leadership of pseudo-scholars, who prefer the arena of "the now" to a world view of the best possible ever changing truth. The new researcher is anxious to identify the problem, and after identified solve it as scientifically and objectively as may be accomplished.

1. *Library Journal* 88 (Nov. 1, 1963), 4186.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Willson Library Bulletin* 41 (March 1967), 655-6.
4. *Library Journal* 89 (April 1, 1964), 1574-5.
5. *College and Research Libraries* Vol. 25 (march, 1964), 139.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Library Journal*, 91 (Feb. 1, 1966), 642-3.
8. *Ibid.*, 87 (July, 1962) 2509.
9. *Ibid.*, 91 (Oct. 1966), 4609.
10. *Ibid.*, 93 (Mar. 1, 1968), 4086.
11. *College and Research Libraries*, 28 (May, 1967), 191-6.
12. His three factors were combined and reduced to two. Philip M. Hauser, "The Chaotic Society: Product of the Social Psychological Revolution," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 34 (Feb. 1969).
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Library Journal* (Feb. 1, 1969), 481-82.
15. *New York Times*, Feb. 18, 1969, Pg. 25.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Library Journal*, 90 (April 1, 1965), 1617-21.
18. *College and Research Libraries*, 29 (July 1968), 259-75.
19. *Library Journal*, 87 (Spet. 1, 1962), 21843.
20. *College and Research Libraries*, 29 (July 1968), 259-75.