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Chapter I.   INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this 1953 - 1967 segment of the History of the

Office of Central Reference (OCR) is to describe the further evolution of the

specialized research support activities developed by OCR for the Central Intelligence

Agency. CIA, comparatively young in the annals of the U.S. Government, was having

growth problems since its establishment in 1947. As the concept of a centralized

intelligence agency was new to the Government, so was the idea of a central

reference service of the type being established by OCR, even though the latter concept
was prominent in the planning for CIA's predecessor, CIG.

The mission of OCR was to ensure that the support given first to

CIA was speedy and efficient, and second to the intelligence community as

effective manner as available manpower and time permitted. OCR had to demonstrate

that its central reference facilities were first-rate, productive and comprehensive.

The assignment was broad in scope and encompassed many facets.

Since the research elements of CIA were in a similar developmental

stage, OCR had its problems eliciting from analysts the specific kinds of facilities

they required in support of their programs. OCR encouraged user's expressions of their

needs. While some responded and their comments resulted in improvements, OCR

developed its systems primarily upon estimates of optimum service requirements

based on problems arising in responding to customer needs, or in providing a

facility not available elsewhere.

In the intelligence community OCR developed a reputation for

service through the use of a procedure at least one that none of the members could match for some

years - an efficient system of processing and retrieving intelligence documents

prepared not only by CIA but by all the other agencies releasing their material

to OCR. Frequently the OCR system was able to produce urgently the required

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documentation for a particular agency when often the product was that of the requesting

agency itself, only its document retrieval system was unable to find the material

in time.

During the last few years of the scope of this history, narrative OCR

concentrated on developing more modern techniques of information retrieval, which of

resulted in diminishing services to the intelligence community. There were two (necessity

reasons for this: a) the development of retrieval capabilities by the other

agencies, and b) the increasingly stringent budget cuts, required in part by

the training of personnel capable to harness the computers, and by the replacement

of out-moded machine equipment for retrieval by computers, In the meantime, OCR and by the growing needs of the research offices

was required to operate its existing systems with fewer personnel. for increasing the number

variety   remarkable   of personnel.
The scope of OCR activities has been varied. The details were their

almost innumerable. The history covers only a small portion, intended primarily

conflicts
to record some of the achievements, frustrations, and problems. Those who

creation of the events
participated in the making of this history during the years covered, probably

found their roles exciting and dynamic. anything but static.

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This is a story of how OCR responded dynamically to rapidly changing

needs, pioneered in creating means to meet them, and made a substantial

contribution during the growth period of the Agency and the Community.

It is a story of initiative, flexibility and accomplishment.

of each ... in this History has been evolved to give ~~the reader~~ 1) the background ~~prior~~ to 1953, 2) how OCR in the first four chapters marshalled its resources prior to the transition of 1957-58. After that, ~~the~~ each of Chapters deals with a specific broad subject chronologically within the subject. The conclusions are ~~those~~ the prerogatives of the authors, thus they may be considered subjective but it is hoped objective as well.