

A Short History of the Documents Section of the N.C. Library Association

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Beginning librarians, or even staff members with other duties, are frequently given responsibility for the government documents collection. Though actual working experience teaches quickly, a novice often has a lack of time and training to do an adequate job. Recent technological developments and changes in government publishing compound the job problems both for new librarians and the experienced. Workshops and conferences bring together librarians with common working situations; this develops an exchange of ideas and information regarding alleviation of job problems. Several leading librarians saw the need for meetings and communication and cooperation to improve work skills of documents librarians, and, in 1973, they formed an organization to fill that need: Documents Librarians of North Carolina.

Few meetings were held for documents librarians until the late 1950s and the 1960s. The American Library Association and the Special Libraries Association both gave attention to documents work at several of their national conferences, but no special attention had been given to a permanent organization of documents librarians until 1972. In 1972, the Government Documents Round Table of ALA (GODORT) was formed.

On the state level, the North Carolina Library Association provided documents librarians with an opportunity to meet at the 1965 biennial conference. At this meeting, on November 4, 1965, in Winston-Salem, approximately twenty-five persons involved with documents collections held an open forum. Questions were answered concerning the responsibilities of depository librarians, interlibrary loans, and the processing of documents.¹

Beginnings of the Organization

Several years later, Louise J. Hawkins, then department head of the Wilson Library documents collection at UNC, formulated and distributed a questionnaire for North Carolina libraries receiving federal documents on a depository basis. Many questionnaire respondents expressed an interest in a workshop or meeting of the state's documents librarians.² Long realizing the need for such a meeting, Mrs. Hawkins proposed a program and date for this assembly.

The meeting was scheduled for March 23, 1973, at UNC. Mrs. Hawkins and her staff planned the activities of this first North Carolina Documents Librarians Conference, attended by forty-nine librarians. Guest speakers for the meeting were Dr. Angell Beza and Mrs. Judy Poole of UNC's Social Science Data Library who spoke on services of the data library, and Dr. Fred

Roper, Assistant Dean of UNC's Graduate School of Library Science, who spoke on the selection of documents. A panel discussion on record keeping systems at four large depositories followed. Then, several topics were discussed in an open forum, led by Grey Cole, who was then documents librarian of UNC-G. Among these was the need for a newsletter for documents librarians. During the forum, it was suggested that a permanent documents librarians association be formed. Marking the beginning of formal organization, two committees were appointed. The first was to draft a constitution; the second was to nominate officers and plan a program for the first meeting.³

The first annual meeting of the Documents Librarians of North Carolina (DLNC) took place at D.H. Hill Library on the North Carolina State University campus. Held on October 5, 1973, the meeting drew over fifty librarians. The Constitution and By-laws were first discussed and adopted by unanimous voice vote. As stated in the Constitution, the purposes of the organization are promotion of state-wide cooperation, opportunity for problem and idea sharing, sponsorship of projects, and promotion of bibliographic control. The first elected officers were Louise Hawkins (Chairman), Grey Cole (Vice-Chairman), Betty Sell (Treasurer), and Gene Teitelbaum (Secretary).⁴ Ensuing from this first meeting, correspondence between Louise Hawkins and Suzi Rose discussed the need of a newsletter for the group. Mrs. Rose volunteered to be editor of the publication.⁵ Funding for the newsletter came from dues collected at the meeting and the first number was issued in February 1974. Entitled *The Docket*, the newsletter's purposes were to provide news: on meetings and committee work of the organization, from North Carolina libraries concerning documents staff or collections, and from Washington affecting government publishing and depository libraries.

The State Documents Depository System

During the time of these first meetings, DLNC and NCLA appointed an Ad hoc Committee on a State Documents Depository System. This committee was formed to investigate the depository system in North Carolina and the concern of librarians over the depository law and bibliographic control of North Carolina publications. In May 1974, the group sent out questionnaires on the need for a state depository system. Results revealed that thirty libraries were willing to become depositories. The committee recommended that NCLA and the North Carolina State Library jointly request a Legislative Study Commission to further investigate a depository system, whereby state publications would be automatically deposited at selected libraries.⁶ Resulting from this group's initial efforts in 1977 and the intense work and support of others, N.C. Ratified House Bill 241 was passed in 1979. N.C. General Statute 147-50.1 now states that five copies of all government issued publications must be deposited at the State Library. Though a system of depositories for all state publications has yet to be established, having all publications at the State Library greatly enhances

bibliographic control. A listing of the State Library's holdings will now serve as a catalog of state government documents.

Affiliations of the Organization

The third annual meeting, held October 10, 1975, at UNC-Charlotte, opened with discussion of NCLA affiliation. A written ballot vote showed a majority in favor of affiliation, and a petition to NCLA was signed by all members present. It was determined that DLNC should be a section of NCLA.⁷ Completed petitions and requests for affiliation were submitted to the Executive Board of NCLA on November 17, 1975. At the Board's December 5th meeting, the new Documents Section was "created".⁸

Major changes in the organization as a result of NCLA affiliation concerned dues, memberships, and meeting schedules. All members of DLNC must now first join NCLA, then request membership in the Documents Section. Meetings are scheduled as a part of the NCLA biennial conference, with a separate daylong meeting on the alternate years when NCLA does not meet.

Another affiliation was approved at the October 7, 1977, Documents Section meeting. Bernadine Hoduski, founder and active member of GODORT (the Government Documents Round Table of the American Library Association) spoke on bibliographic access to government publications. During that day's business session, a motion for the association to become an affiliate member of GODORT passed. This affiliation entitles the group to receive news, announcements and newsletters from GODORT. Other benefits include seed money for workshops, participation in Round Table activities, and national communication between documents librarians.

Recent Workshops

An especially useful workshop on locating census data was sponsored by the Documents Section in Raleigh, April 27-28, 1978. Workshop leaders came from Census Data User Services in Alexandria, Virginia and Charlotte, North Carolina. They instructed the group of over thirty librarians on the history of the U.S. Census Bureau and guidelines for locating data. Participants performed exercises for hands-on experience.

The seventh annual meeting of DLNC, October 19, 1979, in Charlotte, focused on local documents. Six speakers with varying experiences in local collections discussed municipal and regional government publications. This informative program concluded with a recommendation for the documents Section to develop guidelines for local documents service. A joint committee with the Public Library Section developed these guidelines and published them in *The Docket* (8:1, Jan. 1981).

Skilled use of the *Federal Register* and the *Code of Federal Regulations* is mandatory for federal government documents librarians. A workshop to develop this skill was sponsored by DLNC in October 1980. Carol Mahoney of the Office of the Federal Register addressed the group and outlined steps for research on federal regulations.

Since its inception, DLNC has actively and successfully pursued its goals. The annual meetings, workshops, committee activities, and *The Docket* have all served to further and improve communication between documents librarians. This communication has led to provision of better services and augmented professional growth. Attendance at meetings, as well as membership in the Documents Section, increases each year. The strength of the organization can be seen in its continued growth and its many accomplishments. Contributions and accomplishments of the group include directories of documents personnel published in 1976 and 1981; workshops given on Census materials, use of the *Federal Register*, and other pertinent topics; sponsoring speakers from the Government Printing Office; and influencing local and federal legislation.

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References

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3. "North Carolina Documents Librarians Conference", Minutes of March 23, 1973, meeting.
4. Gene Teitelbaum, Minutes of October 5, 1973, meeting.
5. Susan S. Rose, Letter to Louise Hawkins, November 13, 1973.
6. Sangster Parrott, Memorandum to Annette Phinazee, Final Report of Ad hoc Committee on State Documents Depository, December 2, 1975.
7. Minutes of October 10, 1975, meeting.
8. William H. Roberts, NCLA Secretary, Letter to Ridley Kessler, December 12, 1975.



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