Historical Government Documents Cataloging Project: The Five Colleges of Ohio

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Introduction

We are happy to talk with you today about our project. It is my pleasure to be the coordinator of this project and to work with all five of the colleges in the consortium. I would like to thank Mary Prophet for all her work on the PowerPoint slides and Margie Powell for her editing and writing assistance.

All of us have horror stories of research that did not get done or of hours spent by some unsuspecting reference librarian or patron trying to find an elusive old document. I'll never forget the student who wrote his senior thesis on Senator Joseph McCarthy using secondary sources only to learn later that the library had all the original hearings - but they were not in the on-line catalog. I know some of the responsibility lies with the researcher, but we need and want to do all we can to make these sources accessible. There are way too many of these hidden treasures.

We are excited about and proud of the Historical Cataloging Project of the Five Colleges of Ohio and want to give the brightest possible picture of it, but I am compelled as well to be honest. I will try to include some of our real life stories, not to discourage you but to let you see that this IS a do-able project and we hope you will want to try it too. We have planned for time to take questions and for discussion at the end.

With the advent of the on-line catalog in the 1970's, the documents community began to dream. Over the years there have been many discussions and much interest in providing access to older documents. In fact the Depository Library Council and GPO have initiated and encouraged discussions. Some current members of the Five Colleges Documents Committee were part of these early talks.

Wooster History

In 1984, Margaret Powell and Barbara Bell, Documents Librarians at the College of Wooster, went to Library Director Michael Freeman proposing to catalog documents. "Prove to me it can be done," he said. So we did. Margie Powell, Deborah Smith Johnston, a student employee, and I studied the availability and quality of OCLC records for documents and published the results of that study in 1985.

Based on our positive results and with the support of Mike Freeman and the Technical Services department, the documents staff began a two-pronged cataloging project on July 15, 1986. Since that time, all current U.S. Government Documents acquisitions have been cataloged using OCLC.

Also beginning that day, a piece by piece retrospective cataloging of the historical documents collection at Wooster began. The first pass through the collection took ten years and the vast majority of the documents collection was cataloged. As part of the consortium's current project, Wooster is working through the titles they were unable to complete in that first pass through.

The Five Colleges of Ohio

In the fall of 1995, The Five Colleges of Ohio Consortium was formed with funding support from the Mellon Foundation. These schools, all undergraduate liberal arts colleges, are Denison University, Kenyon College, Oberlin College, Ohio Wesleyan University and The College of Wooster.

Although the consortium involves more than the libraries, the initial focus was on library cooperation. In 1996 four of the five colleges merged their online catalogs into the single CONSORT system based at Denison University, and that joint catalog became part of OhioLINK's central catalog. OhioLINK is a major consortium of all the public universities and many private colleges in Ohio. CONSORT, Oberlin and OhioLINK are all Innovative Interfaces Inc. systems.

The consortium and the joint catalog provided the opportunity for cooperative cataloging of the four documents collections. The documents staffs of the colleges were already well acquainted, had shared in many projects and ideas in the past and were among the original dreamers of documents cataloging. Beginning in January 1997, they began dividing current cataloging responsibilities and assignments by item number. In an article in the Ohio GODORT newsletter, Mary Prophet, then acting director of Denison, discusses this process.

With the cooperative cataloging of current acquisitions well underway, in January 1998 the documents committee proposed a project to catalog their historical collections. In a relatively small geographic area there is a wealth of information available that is not easily accessible. Ohio Wesleyan became a depository in 1845 and is the oldest depository in the state. Kenyon is second in the state - designated in 1873; followed by Denison in 1884 and Oberlin in 1885. And, adding to this wealth of materials we had the Wooster project to build on. We were ready to take the next step.

Initial Plans

From the start our single goal was to provide bibliographic access to these valuable materials. All five of the libraries are charter members of OCLC and as a group we are very committed to the growth and integrity of the OCLC database for worldwide access to bibliographic information.

Funding had been included in the original Mellon grant for databases and services which became available as part of our OhioLINK membership. Therefore, these funds could be used by the libraries for other purposes. You know documents folks aren't likely to pass up a good opportunity. So, the Documents Committee worked with the five Library Directors to redirect these monies. The Mellon funds have covered the OCLC and coordinator costs since July 1998. In addition to Mellon funds, the individual libraries cover the costs for student workers, staff at each college, computer equipment, space and supplies. So, with a great idea and some money in hand, the committee was ready to go!

Staffing

Happily, this coincided with my return to Ohio. My experience at Wooster gave me a good background for the project, and I feel fortunate to have been hired as Project Coordinator. It was fun for me to be part of the original Wooster plan and now to build on that project with the Five Colleges, helping to move historical documents cataloging to the next level.

The colleges have each designated staff to work with the coordinator and the students. In each case, they work with other aspects of documents and have added this cataloging to their responsibilities. They typically spend from one tenth to one third of their time on the project. The documents personnel at each college are the mainstays of the project. They are the hands-on people who deal with the everyday work and questions.

In addition to the continuing staff, each of the colleges has committed student workers to the project. Student time and responsibilities vary at each library. If you have had the opportunity to work with students you understand when I say that they are the joy and the headache of a project. However, when you find the rare one who truly gets excited about the documents and handles them with the care and interest we have all developed, it is a rewarding day.

Duration

The project funds were to be spent within three years. We have been downright miserly with the money and will be able to fund the full three years with additional help and support from the libraries. We are looking for other ways to continue after these original funds are depleted. Regardless of outside funding, we plan to continue the documents cataloging and estimate it will take from 4 to 8 more years.

I remember when we began retrocon at The College of Wooster, many commented on our estimate that it would take at least ten years. We were right; it did take that and more, but now looking back we are so glad that we did it. So now with money and staff, we began to implement the plan.

Resources Available for Cataloging

Because of Wooster's original project, there were over 100,000 document records in the CONSORT joint catalog upon which to build this project. We also had encouraging, helpful and supportive Technical Services staffs. Each of the Five Colleges was already cataloging with OCLC. Using OCLC for historical documents copy cataloging was a natural next step.

Since many of the historical documents do not have records available on OCLC, we explored options for original cataloging. We contacted other libraries to solicit references for TechPro and possible other ideas. We looked at interns from Kent State University Library School. We interviewed several individuals who were interested in piecework contracts. We talked with a private firm that does a variety of library technical services projects.

While each of these options had merit, they each had drawbacks. Where would we set someone up to work and which school would be responsible for providing space and equipment, or would they travel so we would have to have five work stations and travel money? Who would supervise and review their work? How would we do billing and payment? What about quality control and OCLC access? A financial analysis showed us that most of these options would cost about as much, if not more than TechPro.

We decided OCLC TechPro was the best choice. We contracted with TechPro including unique information and specifications for each of the five schools and we have been very pleased with the decision. If you have questions about this part of our project, we would be happy to talk with you later.

Preservation

We are very concerned about and interested in preserving, protecting and repairing our fragile treasures. Unfortunately we are not trained preservationists and do not have the facilities or the resources for large-scale preservation. We are operating under a strict "do no further damage" plan. All of our staff and students are trained in the gentle handling of the documents.

We have purchased acid-free envelopes to store documents in need. We have moved some documents to special collections. We have made phase boxes and preservation folders, a variation of which we call "Cynthia folders" named for one of our colleagues who is making them. We are doing some photocopying of fragile items. We plan to microfilm the publications of the Children's Bureau and we will combine our collections to create a complete set.

We are looking forward to spending more time and energy on preservation as the project progresses and we are working with the preservation specialist at Wooster, planning a workshop on strategies and techniques.

Potential Problems and Concerns

In any major project, there are problems and we have gone down our share of dead ends and made our share of wrong turns. While it has not always been a smooth ride, I can honestly say that we have been able to negotiate most of the problems. Some of the issues are as simple as, "I thought I was supposed to be cataloging the Office of the President, it

looks like someone else is doing it." I check my records to see who is assigned, tell someone to wait, tell someone to proceed, problem solved.

Some of the problems are harder: such as questions of record quality, or serials check-in standards. We have made great progress with many questions, but in some cases we acknowledge that we are indeed five different institutions and we compromise. This group has a history of working together successfully on a variety of projects and we build on that relationship.

Necessary Papers, Policies, Etc.

To direct and support the project, we have defined many parameters and have written and collected policy statements, procedures, instructions and samples. For example, we have criteria for brief records, collection consolidation and sharing, record enrichment, TechPro preparation, record evaluation, and notes fields and statements.

We have pulled this material together from OCLC Tech Memos, the Wooster Cataloging Manual, OhioLINK standards, and assorted job descriptions, but mainly from the discussions, desires and ideas of the Five Colleges documents group. These working papers, changed and updated as needed, have been invaluable in helping us think through what we want to do and how to do it consistently.

We spent considerable time and energy on these beginning steps. Deciding on the scope of the project took much thought and discussion. Do you do everything in the collection? Do only pre-1976 (when GPO began cataloging on OCLC), which would leave sections of material between '76 and the currently cataloged materials un-cataloged? What about different formats? Do you work in priority classes only? You can see the issues. We have set guidelines for what the project will cover, when to bend them a bit, and who will pay for what. This was and continues to be a difficult issue. It comes down to the need to balance our desire to catalog everything with the reality that we have limited funds and staff. I think this is the balance you all look at every day. This is one of the places I mentioned earlier, we compromise.

We did decide to focus on pre-76 publications, because the project was originally presented to catalog historical materials and because we believed the post-76 documents would be easier for each college to tackle on their own. Many post-76 docs ARE being cataloged as we work through the shelves, but are not counted as part of the project.

Setting standards for what statistics to keep and how to track them was also a big job. We knew we needed simple bibliographic and item record counts. But which bibs and items? All of them, ones for only pre-'76, item records attached to existing records in the system? We have gone back and forth on this, too. What we HAVE done is find places in the records to insert codes so we can run lists of the records we create. These codes took some doing. We had to find unique codes and unique places to put them. They needed to be searchable fields for list making. They needed to be easy enough to do that they would get done. Some we have been able to pre-program so they appear automatically. Some statistics can be taken from the OCLC bills, TechPro records and record enrichment. Another challenge, but one that was do-able.

Each of the colleges created a prioritized list of classes to catalog. The five lists were combined to create a consortium-wide priority list for cataloging. This assures that if we are not able to do all of the documents, admittedly our dream and goal, those we have identified as highest priority will get done. A sample from that follows. I am pleased to say that we have already worked through many of those highest priority classes.

Priority Classes for Cataloging Sample Entries

Class	Agency	Assignment
I 52 and Pr 32.5400	War Relocation Authority	Denison, Kenyon, Ohio Wesleyan, Wooster
I 20	Indian Affairs Bureau	Oberlin
W, M, N, D	Military Agencies	Kenyon
I 19	Geological Survey	Ohio Wesleyan

For example, the War Relocation Authority is classed in both the I 52's and the PR 32's. Denison, Kenyon, Ohio Wesleyan and Wooster all listed it as a high priority. The Indian Affairs Bureau was a high priority for Oberlin.

At Ohio Wesleyan the entire collection of US Geological Survey materials, a highly used part of their collection, has now been cataloged. Denison's outstanding collection of Depression Era documents and World War II materials are now in the system. The Peace Corps materials are completed at Oberlin which is particularly appropriate since they have had 413 alums in the Peace Corps, the fifth highest number among small colleges. Kenyon has completed the PR's through the W's, a wonderful body of documents. These are just a few examples. The next two screens give you an example of how we track these assignments.

In order to share the workload and to catalog as many unique titles as possible, we have developed a rotation system. For each individual class, we select the college which has both strong holdings in that class and a high priority for cataloging it. They become the first library to catalog the materials from that agency. When they are finished, a second college is assigned to the class. Of course for the second school the rate of matches in CONSORT is much higher as they have the first college's records to build on. Then the third college searches, etc. Documents without records on OCLC are set aside for TechPro cataloging. This cataloging rotation is working very well, and has given us a better idea of how much unique material is in the combined collections.

Current Classes Assigned & Completed Sample Entries

Class	DNU	KEN	OBE	OWU	WOO
I 17-18	A 9/99	A 6/00	C 4/00		
L 13 & L 36.100	C 4/99	C 8/99	A 9/00	C 2/99	C 4/99

This is a sample of the classes currently assigned and completed, by college. The I 17 and 18 documents were assigned (the designation A) to Denison in September of '99 and to Kenyon in June of 2000. Ohio Wesleyan has completed the classes, the C 4/00 note. Wooster and Oberlin have not yet been assigned these classes.

Looking at our priority lists, Kenyon had a fine collection of War Department documents; it is one of their strengths. It was first on their priority list so that is where we began cataloging. BIG MISTAKE. While it was philosophically the right decision, it was actually a really bad place to start. The section consists entirely of very old materials, which makes the presence and quality of OCLC records pretty slim. It is full of serials, manuals, revisions and other catalogers' nightmares. It was just way too difficult to begin there to train new catalogers. So the moral of the story is: evaluate a class for the type of materials and potential problems in it and begin with an easier section to insure that all-important factor - initial success. However, the War Department is now finished and we lived to tell about it. In fact, in addition to War, we have done Defense (the D's), and the N's and M's (Navy and Military) completing a nice subject area.

Since Oberlin's catalog is not part of CONSORT they proceed a bit differently, searching OCLC first and adding records to their catalog.

To facilitate a smooth and efficient workflow between colleges, I track when a class is assigned for linking, copy cataloging, original cataloging and clean up. These are my most fluid and most complete records. I have a page for each class in the SuDocs system so I can know who, what or if there is any work in progress.

Student Workers

Our student employees are critical to the project, and we couldn't do it without them. All five colleges have long traditions of good student workers in their libraries and the students on this project are no exception.

Each school interviews, hires and gives basic instruction to the student workers. The coordinator also plays a role in student training for the project. Students are trained on the local systems, searching OCLC and WorldCat, using the paper tools like Monthly Catalog, Andriot's Guide to US Government Publications, and The 1909 Checklist. Depending on their assignments and skills, students are given other specialized training.

When students begin to actually catalog, their work is closely supervised and checked. We are also careful about the types of material given to them for cataloging. Serials, for example, are usually reserved for the staff or for that rare exceptional student.

Jessy was one such student. We gave her a cart to link, thinking it would be simple and we were wrong. She discovered all kinds of variations. I wanted to highlight her thoroughness and the thought that went into her work. She found title changes, OCLC records, SuDocs number changes, and authenticated records that she was unhappily unable to enrich. This is a complex and exacting piece of work. We are proud of our student workers.

Cataloging

So now you have a book truck full of old docs, here is what you are going to do:

First, search CONSORT, the combined catalog for Denison, Kenyon, Ohio Wesleyan and Wooster. If a suitable record is found there, edit it as needed and add a local holdings record. Include barcode, write control numbers on documents, and so forth. Add holdings to OCLC and enrich the OCLC record when possible.

When no matching record is found in CONSORT, we search the OCLC database using a retrocon authorization. We do initial searching on WorldCat, which is easier for students to search and reduces our OCLC expenses. When a record is selected for use, it may be enriched, holdings are added and the record is exported to the CONSORT catalog where local editing is done.

The Five Colleges of Ohio Government Documents Group is committed to high quality records, both in our individual catalogs and in the OCLC database, benefiting the entire documents community. We have routinely corrected and upgraded records in our local catalogs, but we wanted to do more. OCLC enhancement means bringing a record up to full Encoding Level:I status. The four CONSORT colleges have neither the time nor the expertise for this. Oberlin, however, has full enhancement status and can upgrade OCLC records.

There is another option--enriching OCLC records. With full cataloging status, we can make improvements to selected fields in existing records. For example:

074	GPO item numbers
0860	SuDocs number (when none are in the record)
300	Physical description in CIP records
505	Contents notes
6xx	Subject headings if there are no LC headings

OCLC record number 10579584 is a record we have enriched with a SuDocs number and two subject headings. The OCLC symbols in the 040 field now reflect Ohio Wesleyan and Wooster. You may notice it is an Encoding Level:K record. We have added significantly to the quality of a K level record, but are unable to change its status.

Of course copy cataloging is the simplest and easiest type of cataloging. It is those titles without records that we are especially eager to catalog. I mentioned earlier that we send uncataloged materials to TechPro for original cataloging. Documents with poor quality records are also sent to them and are enhanced to full Encoding Level:I records. Our cataloger, Peter Applin, has been a great addition to our project. He has copies of Andriot and the Checklist on his desk now--we are trying to convert him into a docs person. We are very pleased with the work he has done for us and with the system. It is a pleasure to have high quality records contributed to OCLC in the name of the Five Colleges.

While I am not sure the error report division of OCLC is pleased, we are also aggressively sending reports to them. There are typos, errors of numbers and so forth in the records on line. In our quest for the best information possible, we report them. This is easy using the on-line form, Electronic Bibliographic Change Report. I even have it book marked at all five colleges.

We continue to work with the tension between perfect records versus reality. This is a very difficult balance, because we all want things to be perfect, but we need to make reasonable progress, too. We have written standards for acceptable records and we strive to reach and maintain these standards.

Oberlin - Consort Records Transfer

With two catalogs in the Five Colleges consortium, we are sharing records between CONSORT and Oberlin. We have successfully transferred records, evaluated them, checked for duplicates, and added holdings. It is a bonus to be able to share the work; we all benefit from it. The systems managers for the two catalogs have been great about running tests, loading records and creating lists. For me this high tech part of the project is a mystery but there are people who make it happen. You don't have to be the techie.

State Library of Ohio

We are also working with the State Library of Ohio Cataloging Center and Barbara Kussow, the regional documents librarian for Ohio. They are very interested in the project, both original and copy cataloging. Since they are in the midst of moving their whole library, they have not been able to work with us at this time, but we are looking forward to their participation in the future. We have supplied them with a list of records for the Women's Bureau (an agency we have completed) as a test for them to work with. It is fun to see the project expand--not to mention sharing the work load.

Statistics

Now when all of you go back to your libraries, raving about this project, you are going to want statistics, so here they are. We have given you totals by college.

Bibliographic Records
July 1998 - June 2000

Denison University	6,366
Kenyon College	2,378
Oberlin College	2,191
Ohio Wesleyan University	6,951
The College of Wooster	3,176
Total	**21,062**

In two years we have added over 21,000 bibliographic records for pre-1976 documents to the catalogs. One of the interesting things about the project is the statistics. There are so many variables that influence them. Kenyon, for example, has a lower bibliographic record number in part because they have been the second college to catalog in several classes and have added to the work of the first college. Wooster is working on the titles that were left from the first pass through the collection so virtually everything they work on is a problem.

Item Records
July 1998 - June 2000

Denison University	19,740
Kenyon College	14,374
Oberlin College	n/a
Ohio Wesleyan University	13,272
The College of Wooster	7,075
Total	**54,461**

Item records count the number of pieces we have processed. There are now over 54,000 more pieces reflected in our catalogs, many being linked to bib records added by another college. Since Oberlin is working in a separate catalog their item record count closely parallels their bib number of 2,191 bring our total item count for the project close to 57,000.

Records Enriched on OCLC
January 1999 - June 2000

Denison University	4,888
Kenyon College	1,879
Oberlin College	846
Ohio Wesleyan University	4,305
The College of Wooster	2,693
Total	**14,611**

The opportunity to enrich records and the need for original cataloging are both strongly influenced by and tied to the classes being cataloged. Some areas, such as the old USGS titles, had no SuDocs numbers in the OCLC records so, for example, Ohio Wesleyan was able to do a lot of enriching as was Denison with Smithsonian reports. We have been enriching records since January 1999 and have upgraded 14,611 records.

OCLC TechPro Records
July 1999 - June 2000

Denison University	336
Kenyon College	9;151
Oberlin College	44
Ohio Wesleyan University 30	
The College of Wooster 391	
Total	**952**

The fact that Wooster is focused on problem documents makes it reasonable that they would have higher TechPro numbers since these are the titles they were unable to catalog earlier. We began taking documents to TechPro in July of 1999 and they have created 952 new records. It is also noteworthy that of the 21,000 new titles we have cataloged, less than 1,000 needed original cataloging. There ARE records for most of the older documents.

Rewards

We have already seen many rewards from the project. I would like to highlight a few:

In addition to improved access, cataloging has given us better control over the collections. We now know exactly what we have, are more familiar with the materials, and have the opportunity to share and strengthen our collections.

We have seen a notable increase in use and circulation of the materials, both locally and through interlibrary loan. For example, we had an ILL request recently at Wooster for a document that was not on the shelf, a Labor Department report. Upon checking, we realized it was one that had JUST been finished by TechPro and had not even gotten back to the library yet. The patron was so glad to have found the information, he was happy to wait the few days it took us to get it to him.

Women's Bureau Leaflet #6, Jury Duty for Women, was cataloged by Kenyon. Denison was working through their holdings and found they had only the addendum for that title, but not the main document. We transferred the addendum and made one complete report. GPO has agreed that we may transfer materials within the consortium without creating individual selective housing agreements.

I've already talked about enrichment and given you statistics, but we just had to include enrichment in our list of "rewards" of the project and hope you agree with us that it is an important addition to documents cataloging. The library administrations have allowed us to keep the enrichments credits ($0.53 a record) to supplement the project funds.

Since both catalogs are part of the OhioLINK system, our holdings are added to that database and strengthen it as well.

Our plans to work with the State Library will improve access to their collection and benefit the entire Ohio depository community, which includes 59 selective depository libraries.

The records, enrichments and holdings we have added to OCLC are available to all.

Conclusion

As you can tell, we are excited about and proud of our project. I have had the privilege of talking with you today. I want to introduce you to some of the people who are the ones who make this happen.

Denison University

      Cynthia Cort
      Beverly Gage
      Mary Prophet

Kenyon College

      Mark Gooch
      Andrea Peakovic
      Donna Wilson

Oberlin College

      Tom Hinders
      Cecilia Robinson
      John Sluk
Ohio Wesleyan University
      Joy He
      XuDong Jin
      Judy Orahood

The College of Wooster

      Barbara Bell
      Jennifer McMullen
      Margaret Powell

The Five Colleges of Ohio

      Ellen Conrad

We can give you information that might help you "sell" this idea to your own colleagues and administrations. We are happy to share our policies and procedures. Our statistics are tangible proof that this is a do-able project.

We encourage you not to look at this as an overwhelming, therefore impossible, task. Set some priorities and start small. Focus on a unique or strong part of your collection. Doing something, even if it is not doing everything, is definitely better than doing nothing.

Tackle copy cataloging first. If you use OCLC, you can build on what we and others have already done.

Look into Enrichment status on OCLC. While this must be done with care, it is an opportunity for all of us to improve records that already exist.

When copy cataloging is not available, don't give up. Original cataloging may not be out of reach. Many of you have the necessary training or technical staff to help. TechPro and other contractors are available.

Or, at the very least, create brief records in your local catalog. This can be done by less than fully trained catalogers and provides some access and identification of materials.

To catalog historical documents, there is room for a wide variety of approaches. We are working with two catalogs, five schools, five technical service departments, five unique documents staffs and five different ways of approaching the daily work, all stirred up occasionally by one coordinator. It is challenging and sometimes hard--and it is working. We are getting documents information into the catalog and documents into the hands of those who need them.