SLA at 100: Chapter 4 1920-1929
An Era of Prosperity and the Adolescence of the Association

[Originally published, in a slightly different format, in *SLA at 100: From Putting Knowledge to Work to Building the Knowledge Culture* (Alexandria VA: SLA, 2009) by Guy St. Clair.]

The association's second decade began as America's confident citizens, having been spared the agonies of having the war fought on their own ground, looked to a future that they genuinely expected to be a prosperous one. True, prohibition began in 1920, but 1920 was also the year that women were given the right to vote in the United States. The Special Libraries Association had anticipated the national mood by electing its first woman president, Maude A. Carabin Mann, in 1919, so as the new decade began, specialist librarians—after having pulled their association through some tough times—were expecting it to continue its growth and its contribution to modern American librarianship.

Looking back, the optimistic mood is not particularly surprising. The Treaty of Versailles came into force on January 10th, 1920, bringing into existence the League of Nations with its idealistic mission to use negotiation to prevent war. So the beginning of the decade was a time of global optimism as well. Business and industry, science and research, and all sorts of endeavors that looked to a better future were predicted, even expected, to be brought to fruition, and these were the very endeavors that specialized librarianship had been created to support. The future couldn't have looked any brighter, and even though John Maynard Keynes warned that the reparations required by the war's victors could not be met, and that the worldwide economy would not be able to relieve the resulting level of suffering, his caution was met with opposition and insult. To the victors belong the spoils, and no one, not even an economist as eminent as Keynes, would be allowed to dampen the spirit of optimism that followed the end of World War I.

The general trends associated with industry's move forward in those busy days and the role of specialist librarians has been captured by Edythe Moore, SLA's president in 1974-75. In an essay published in 1988 Moore wrote: "Industries proliferated in the early 1920s after the First World War and those that already existed grew quickly in size. The number of corporate libraries also multiplied. The libraries were now recognized as a decided corporate asset or, as one prominent librarian of that period noted, industry 'has become aware that experience crystallized in print is a tool which may be used as effectively as any part of its accumulated capital.'" Moore's analysis was an early and prescient allusion to the connection between specialized librarianship and the management of knowledge.

In 1991, only a few years after Moore's essay, Thomas Stewart would bring the concept of organizational intellectual capital—its "knowledge, information, intellectual capital, experience"—to the attention of the management world, and Moore's linking the concept of what would become characterized as knowledge management to what had been thought about in the 1920s was an important statement about the

role of the specialist librarian in the workplace. Of course the knowledge management of the later twentieth century no longer limited those assets to what is captured in print, but in SLA's second decade, print was still the primary information medium that specialist librarians would utilize for their parent organizations.

Moore writes that these precursors of later "information specialists" were enthusiastic about their new responsibilities for "supplying information which would further the work of their companies." With the development of SLA they and colleagues who faced similar challenges in such matters as the development of standard practices for acquiring, processing, classifying, and indexing the resources their organizations required were able to come together in both geographically designated chapters (then called "regions" and, a little later, "districts") and subject-oriented divisions to share expertise and innovative techniques. Moore sees these early days as clearly laying the foundation for what specialized librarianship was to be, with the development of classification and subject heading schemes, the compilation of local directories, meetings for sharing information about suppliers and resources, and, especially, about new services they had instituted in their own libraries. As Moore put it, these early knowledge workers "took judicious shortcuts in traditional library practices and streamlined procedures" and she praised them for their willingness and the "great spirit" they brought to their tasks.

Like the founders of the association, the tireless professionals leading and participating in the work of SLA in the 1920s found themselves explicitly characterizing that third attribute of specialized librarianship that sets it apart from other types of librarianship. These people were totally committed to a level of collaboration that stood out, that pushed them to go that clichéd "extra mile," because they knew that their contribution would benefit them all. "It was a period of close-knit unity," Moore would write, "where both individual and shared responsibilities were highlighted. It was networking at its best—many decades before the concept of networking began to be talked about by more tradition-oriented librarians."

Such collaboration was, indeed, a hallmark of the association, both with members working with one another and with their clients in their parent organizations. As for the tense subject of collaboration between them and other professional colleagues, as members of different library associations, the picture is not quite so pleasing. If the descriptions of the events of the decade in this respect are accurate (and we have no reason to believe that they are not), and if the tone of the published reports is typical, it was a very unhappy time. As specialist librarians saw themselves moving ever forward and into the future, the antipathy between the members of ALA and the members of SLA was growing to a point that, before the end of the decade, it would produce what can only be described as the nadir of their relationship.

The issues of cooperation, collaboration, and inter-association collegiality during the decade seem to have centered, to a large extent, on that difficult quest for a definition of specialized librarianship. As noted earlier, the attempt to describe a type of librarianship that moved from the cultural and the theoretical to the practical had begun with the association's formation (or even before). And as long as that sought-

for definition, in its many forms and variations, implied a *difference* between specialist librarians and those who worked in public and academic libraries, there was, naturally, a fear that such a difference might also infer superiority or a heightened status of some sort. Those comfortable with a professional role already well established in society did not like that idea. It should also be recognized that some of the leaders in the larger profession would not have been interested in reducing or sharing the power base that had been brought into being through their own efforts, or that of their immediate predecessors. It is certainly not hard to understand their discomfort at the success of an organization that could be thought of as encroaching on their territory.

Some of the problem seems to have been that those who were not part of—or who did not agree with the idea of—the special libraries movement were also somewhat uncertain about exactly what the movement represented. They, like many later observers, found the basics of specialized librarianship unclear and vaguely defined. The difficulties in defining specialized librarianship had continued well into the association's second decade (and there are those who would argue that a satisfactory definition has never been achieved). In his history, Anthony Kruzas noted that definitions had begun to crystallize after the turn of the century, "but librarians seeking to differentiate specialized programs only succeeded in making more obvious their lack of agreement by developing too many definitions. Each tried to isolate the unique quality of the movement, but none developed a set of criteria that was acceptable to all the others."

This lack of specificity with regard to defining special libraries cannot be seen, however, as the sole reason for ALA's indifference (and sometimes hostility) to the unique nature of specialized librarianship. Writing in the January, 1920, issue of *Special Libraries*, J.H. Friedel—who at the time held the title of the magazine's "editor-in-chief"—was very concerned about what he saw as the ALA leadership's refusal to consider the interests of other types of librarianship. It wasn't so much a question of a confusing lack of definition, it was simply that the profession's leaders wanted to maintain an exclusive role. Like many in those days, Friedel believed that the concepts of democracy and democratic and open discourse in all of society's interactions were expected to flow over into one's professional life as well. In his editorial comment that February, Friedel wrote:

> …the domination of the ALA by the public library interest and the failure of the ALA to give the existing associations and sections a voice in the affairs and councils which directly concern them not only weakens its influence but threatens its existence. No association can hope to exist in America and have a widespread appeal that does not act in accord with the principles on which American institutions rest. The right to representatives of their own choosing is inherent in democratic government, yet we have seen the ALA refuse us representation on the War Library Service [Committee?], although it proudly claimed that that was a special library service; have seen the ALA for many months refuse us a representative on the Committee on

> Enlarged Program, although the hope for success of that Program rests largely on its ability to make capital of what special libraries have been doing for years. By its action it frankly says to us: "We will let you dig the ground, plant the seed, and raise the fruit, but we will eat it." That is the doctrine of democracy in library work as we face it. Let us hope that it will be a passing phase. And the sooner the ALA learns that to be representative it must represent, that to be the national association it must give every special interest and group the right of a hearing and of representation in matters which directly affect their welfare, the sooner will it win that support which is now withheld, and withheld justly.

That January, 1920 issue of *Special Libraries* also included a large feature article (by Friedel) describing the association's response to ALA's proposed "Enlarged Program," a grand scheme that would enable ALA to "extend its present scope" in such areas as advancing the profession of librarianship, increasing its publishing activities and promoting "the intelligent use of print," developing and improving libraries and library service, and providing "direct library service." This last, a catch-all phrase describing some of the actual services that ALA would provide directly to library users, referred to many activities that were at the time being offered by the Library War Service, still in operation even though the war had been concluded. Friedel, the SLA representative on the ALA Enlarged Program Committee (apparently having been appointed only after "repeated protests" that affiliated organizations were not represented on the committee), was concerned about a number of issues relating to the proposed "enlargement," expected to cost some two million dollars. His particular concerns seem to have centered around a stated effort written in a published description of the ALA Enlarged Program, "In cooperation with the Special Libraries Association, practical aid should be given to business concerns in the organization of *special libraries*. Further development of *technical and business departments* in public libraries should also be fostered (original emphasis)." Friedel, who must have been one of the original time-management masters, considering that in addition to service on this committee he was editing *Special Libraries*, serving as librarian at the National Industrial Conference Board, editor of a periodical called *100% - The Efficiency Magazine*, and serving as a member of SLA's Executive Board, took issue with the lack of specificity in that recommendation. As SLA's representative on the committee, Friedel could not vote to approve the idea until he had some assurance that a committee to implement the recommendation would be formed, with an equal number of SLA members and ALA members. He appealed to the SLA membership to respond to him with their thoughts on the subject, and closed his appeal by quoting the association's president, Miss Maude A. Carabin (later Mrs. Maude A. Carabin Mann), who had taken great pains to define SLA's "attitude" toward ALA and other associations in a "statement of principle," which Friedel printed for SLA's membership:

(1) The *Special Libraries Association* as constituted today stands ready and does cooperate whenever requested in good faith by the American Association of Law Libraries, American Library Association, League of Library Commissions, and National Association of State Libraries;

(2) That its attitude is one of dignified respect for the professional strivings of these organizations;

(3) That its deliberations are of such a character as to expect a like respect for its professional aspirations;

(4) That it expects in all cases involving cooperation between any or all of these organizations, that such matters be introduced through the duly constituted channels;

(5) That it has no desire to dominate the proceedings nor policies of these organizations;

(6) And that a decent respect for the library profession demands that these bodies in their separate identities exist together in harmony and good fellowship.

Relations between the two organizations had obviously come to a serious impasse if it was necessary to publish such a statement. But what was it about specialized librarianship that so bothered other professional librarians? Was it a lack of agreement about the split allegiance specialist librarians so willingly embraced, in which they not only held allegiance to the profession, but to their parent organizations as well? Or was it the "limitation of scope," which strongly suggested—despite efforts at collaboration and cooperation between librarians in those areas where they could collaborate and cooperate—that there were many other, proprietary areas where they could *not* collaborate and cooperate? In some areas specialist librarians would—as required by their parent organizations—actually *refuse* to cooperate, an exclusionary scenario that was (and remains) abhorrent to practitioners in the larger, more general profession of librarianship. It is not difficult to imagine the tensions that these strongly differing philosophies of service delivery might have engendered.

Things did not get better. Dennis Thomison has described how this continuing antipathy between the two organizations was "to bear bitter fruit." In 1922, at a general session about publications and how ALA's publishing program could better serve various groups, Adelaide Hasse was asked what ALA could do for the specialized library community. Miss Hasse—who was at that time editor of *Special Libraries*, having been appointed to succeed Friedel in the autumn of 1920—was ready with an abrupt response: "Nothing," she said.

Thomison reports that Hasse then went on to describe how ALA, for too long, had had a public library point of view, and until that changed, its activities would be of little value to special librarians. She then added, "As a matter of fact, I think it takes a great deal of nerve on the part of ALA at this late date to ask what it can do for

special library work, when there is a well-organized association, much younger than ALA, attempting to do it—and doing what the ALA has not done."

The strain was to continue, to the point that by 1924 an effort was being made to dissolve SLA and have its activities absorbed into ALA as a business libraries section, a frightening situation that in Thomison's description threatened the very existence of SLA.

> The following plan was quietly developed by a small group of librarians. The nominees for offices in SLA would, upon election, form a committee to negotiate a merger with ALA. This would be accomplished by combining the similar groups of the two organizations. The business librarians would become a new business section in ALA. Other parts of SLA would similarly become sections of ALA. To forestall any further activity within SLA, the new elected officials were to copyright the name *Special Libraries*. The old organization's official publication would therefore no longer be available for use by any dissident group. The SLA would cease to exist.
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> Unfortunately for the planners of this coup, the activities became public knowledge at Saratoga Springs, where SLA was also meeting. Reaction was immediate. SLA elected new officials pledged to continue the organization. Since the action rallied support to the smaller organization, the result of the merger attempt was to strengthen SLA. In its failure, the attempt also hurt relations between the two organizations and ended any possibility of a future merger.

As Thomison notes, his telling of the story was based on the published "President's Address" made to the SLA Annual Conference on June 24, 1924. "There is no mention of the incident in ALA literature," Thomison reports, but there was definitely a struggle taking place. The May, 1924, issue of *Special Libraries* had a rather defensive tone to it, with feature articles such as Frank H. Chase's "The Special Librarian and the General Library," an article by Guy E. Marion on "The Library: A Necessary Adjunct to Statistical Work," and R.H. Johnston's "The Special Library vs. The Special Collection" (with this last including a long section suggesting rather forcefully that librarianship "is perhaps not yet a profession, but unlike barbering or even salesmanship, it is on the way to becoming a profession").

By September, the efforts of the attempted takeover were still resonating throughout SLA, and the September issue of *Special Libraries* included a long and, again, rather defensive article about SLA and its accomplishments. Written by Rebecca Rankin (who had served as SLA's president in 1922-23), the article began by noting that it had been fifteen years since the establishment of SLA. It went on to specify some nineteen accomplishments, including such achievements as the development of the Public Affairs Information Service, exhibits about specialized librarianship, directories of special libraries (including both national and local directories), union lists of periodicals, surveys of "special library methods," employment work, and,

importantly, recognition of the importance of special libraries work "by all librarians and by library schools in the country."

Proposed improvements in the association, as put forward in Rankin's list of accomplishments, included bringing local associations (with some 900 members) into the larger parent organization, making *Special Libraries* a "better" magazine, additional emphasis on employment services ("we should become the recognized employment bureau for special librarians, and only recommend reliable workers in our profession"), consultation advice, particularly with respect to helping "industrial concerns" in the "installation of special libraries", and the development of a "Clearing House of Information," which Rankin described as "the assembling of facts about special libraries, their equipment, resources, etc. that would form a reservoir of knowledge upon which all could draw." Rankin's final suggestion proposed "permanent headquarters and a paid secretary." Obviously, at least among the coterie of specialist librarians who were in Rankin's camp, the road to success for SLA was being clearly charted.

To be fair, however, there followed in the Rankin paper an "alternative suggestion," that members of SLA might ask ALA "for the privilege of uniting with them in *one* organization so that all librarians in the profession can work together, and be recognized by all outsiders as firmly united in one effort" (original emphasis). "These are the alternatives," Rankin wrote. "Strengthen our present organization by uniting locals and national [members], and promulgating and financing a useful and effective program, or unite with all other librarians in one national organization, and carry on our special work through the local associations."

An article which followed Rankin's, entitled "Miss Rose's View of the Situation," presented by Alice L. Rose, Director, National Business and Financial Library in Babson Park, Boston, MA, also pointed out the strengths of SLA but advocated re-opening the effort to affiliate with ALA as a section of that organization. Whatever discussion ensued throughout the association, and particularly among its leadership, it was clear that by November of that same year (1924), SLA President Daniel N. Handy would have none of it:

> Special Libraries Association has suffered too long from a policy of uncertainty—amounting to times to timidity. Our members have had held before them a possible unfavorable outcome of all their efforts—an *impasse* the only way out of which must be to disband and reintegrate the scattered fragments of the Association around or within some other body. Let us make an end of such nonsense! The Association stands today as the foremost association devoted to organized information-getting and using. It is at the beginning, not the end of a great movement. … It is for the Association to hold what it has won and to strive intelligently to gain for itself recognition from those who, once its aims are well understood, will be among its chief supporters. … What special librarians need to remember is that the special library has been called into existence to supply a need for prompt, adequate, practical service—under reasonable control of those

> to whom the service is to be rendered. A knowledge of the field covered, a willingness to utilize all means available for its information-exploitation, and a wholesome distrust of information-getting by *formulas* of any kind will go far toward making the work of the special library a success. … The Association will aim for very definite results employing such means for their accomplishment as experience has shown desirable. It will stand between a great body of people using information for immediate and practical purposes, on the one hand, and the general libraries on the other. It will bring the two together, but it will retain its independence and it will prefer to hold fast to its power to initiate and direct the policies by which its future is to be shaped.

There could have been no better statement of the new, modern American librarianship that the special libraries movement had brought forward. SLA was indeed by 1924 the foremost organization for the many librarians who provided their specific subset of professional librarianship, and surely President Handy's sentiments could not have been clearer: it was time to stop the foolishness about merging SLA into ALA.

In ALA, though, the effort did not end. Thomison reports that further attempts to merge the associations were made in 1925 and in 1927, and by ALA's midwinter meeting in January, 1928, ALA Council provoked further resentment by approving the formation of a Business Libraries Section, "an apparent encroachment on the Special Libraries Association." SLA's president, Francis E. Cady, did not see the need for such a group, but later in 1928, on December 29, ALA Council took the matter up again. Despite Cady's opposition and his noting that a mail vote had indicated that a majority of members in both organizations did not want to see the Business Libraries Section created, ALA Council voted to form the section. At the 1929 ALA Annual Conference, the effort turned ugly, as Thomison has reported:

> The new section then sparked additional interest at the 1929 conference by holding a secret, unannounced session. Attended only by the original signers of the petition to establish the section, it elected officers and announced bylaws. An editor of *Special Libraries* called the unusual session "unprecedented" and "unconstitutional." There was considerable discussion over this matter, since ALA and SLA were meeting concurrently in Washington at the time. It was clearly a defeat for SLA and something of an embarrassment for ALA. However, the SLA president emphasized conciliation. In his address to SLA, he pointed out that that organization "attached great importance to those cordial relations with the great sister association…." ALA unofficially also tried to smooth over the troubled areas. Two prominent members of the association addressed SLA at its first general session. R. R. Bowker expressed the hope that there would be no rift between the organizations. Frank P. Hill endorsed Bowker's remarks and also told SLA it should not let ALA hinder its programs. Fortunately, the conciliatory attitude of SLA's leadership helped to prevent any open

> breach between the two groups. However, the council's action in establishing a section in direct competition with SLA was unfortunate. It helped to foster the growing impression within SLA that its sister organization was more interested in gaining members than in coexisting peacefully and without rivalry.

While the decade of the 1920s was one of prosperity and positive growth for society at large, the association's formative years were tough. But growth was definitely taking place. Membership would grow to over 1,000 by the end of the decade, and by as early as 1923 it had become evident that different "classes of membership" (as they were referred to) would be appropriate. Five were established, including the Individual (later to be called "Active"), for which annual dues were $3.00, Institutional, for $5.00 annual dues, Associate, for $2.00, a Life membership for $100, and an Honorary Membership. Unfortunately, there exist no records of what eminent personages might have been named Honorary Members of the Special Libraries Association in its early years. The list of names of Honorary Members does not begin until 1952.

There were other important changes taking place in the 1920s, in SLA, in the profession, in the United States, and in the world. For example, the role of women in society and in the business and research communities was being recognized. Indeed, in 1925 the first woman state governor had been elected in the U.S., and it was no longer unusual for a woman to be "working" (this despite the fact that literary practice at the time still used the masculine pronoun when a generic allusion was made). In a profession with so many women professionals—such as was the case with specialized librarianship—women often took on leadership responsibilities. Two of the association's presidents in the 1920s were women (Maude A. Carabin Mann and Rebecca B. Rankin) and as noted throughout this chapter, many of the leading advocates of the specialized libraries movement were women. In 1927, the association was incorporated in Rhode Island, and Mrs. H.O. Brigham, the wife of the then-editor of *Special Libraries* was appointed SLA's first executive secretary. With the title of "Executive Officer," Mrs. Brigham worked at the association's office in Providence, with her duties described as "to take care of practically all of the routine work of the Secretary and Treasurer, to provide as far as possible a clearing house of information, look after all matters connected with the publication of the journal except those handled by the Editor; as far as feasible, assist the chapters ['districts' had been re-designated 'chapters' in 1924] if so requested, in the preparation of programs, in methods for creating interest and extending memberships; and in general to consider ways and means for promoting and maintaining the welfare of the Association."

Association governance, too, was an important issue during the decade, particularly in terms of SLA's relationships with other organizations and its uniqueness in providing services to its constituent membership. The association's constitution was revised twice during the decade, once in 1924 and again in 1929, both actions being efforts to modernize the association's ability to meet its legal responsibilities (for example, the association's having become incorporated with power to hold and

dispose of property), and to define more specifically the roles of the officers and the paid executive (who later would be given the title Secretary of the Association, with the right to speak at board meetings, but without the right to vote). The latter revision also provided “a definite way of terminating” the services of the paid executive, should that become necessary.

In the larger scheme of things, the association was required to make other changes. Much effort went into defining and describing specialized librarianship and, particularly, the association and its work. There was a considerable amount of what later would be described as long-range planning or, in today’s management terminology, strategic planning. The leaders of the association saw their role as one of continuous evaluation, monitoring, innovation, and change leadership, although within the constraints and under the influence of the society and environment in which they flourished.

Much energy continued to be put into promoting the “idea” of specialized librarianship, and in 1920, Dorsey William Hyde, Jr. edited a special issue of the association’s magazine, devoted to the concept of “selling the special library idea” Agnes S. Perkins, too, went “public” with her theories about how specialized libraries could be exploited for the benefit of business and research organization. In 1928, her seven-page document, “The Libraries and the Manufacturers: Being a Brief Presentation of the Value of the Educational and Research Institutions to the Industry of the Country” was given wide distribution, and offered non-information executives good advice about how they could use the services of specialized libraries.

There was even attention, among these pioneers in the specialized library movement, to taking the idea abroad. Almost from its earliest days, there had been an interest in what might be happening in specialized librarianship in other parts of the world. Although SLA—and perhaps the idea of specialized libraries itself—was initially organized as a North American construct, with adherents from both the United States and Canada, there was a desire to know what was going on elsewhere. Certainly SLA’s leaders wanted to be part of a larger movement if there were such a thing, and early on, an informal link was established with the Association of Library and Information Bureaux (ASLIB), in London. Connections were made with appropriate colleagues and sections of The Library Association in Great Britain as well. Efforts would be made to organize “study tours” and conference excursions to meet with colleagues in these two organizations, and several of SLA’s early leaders made trips to England to participate in such activities.

The ASLIB connection was described for SLA members in *Special Libraries*. Calling ASLIB SLA’s “sister organization in Great Britain,” the article noted that its formation was due in great part to the enthusiasm of Mr. J.G. Pearse, who was inspired to work for the creation of the organization “by his attendance at the Atlantic City meeting of the Special Libraries Association in 1923.” The collegial relationship between the members of the two organizations was one that was to continue throughout the many years of the both organizations’ growth and development.

Another early international effort, in 1927, occurred when O. Tyrogod, President, Special Libraries Association of Denmark, came to the SLA conference in Atlantic City in 1926. His comments were printed in the February, 1927 issue of *Special Libraries*. Noting that Danes were "long backward in library spirit, which is America's contribution to humanity," Tyrogod went on to explain that the Danish Library Association was formed in 1909, the same year that SLA was formed, and that the F.B.F., "which translated into English means Special Libraries Association of Denmark" had been founded in 1924, the 15th anniversary year of the Special Libraries Association. The Danish organization's goals were to "increase the size and values of the libraries represented and the efficiencies of their staffs." Seeking further cooperation, Tyrogod then appealed to SLA's members to think of him as a member also, as "your associate," and promised to send to the Special Libraries Association the "first result" of the F.B.F., a union list of applied sciences periodicals currently available in Copenhagen.

Much that was published during the decade was intended to take the specialized libraries idea beyond the profession itself. These early leaders wanted to get the message out to the larger business and research community, where specialist librarians would be able—and expected—to provide essential and critical support. To this end, the publication of articles with such titles as "The Specialized Library of Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow," "Libraries for Specialists," "The Dependence of the Business Executive upon the Special Librarian," and "What is a Special Library?" all testified to the fact that taking the special libraries movement into a wider service sphere was high on the list of members' priorities. Even conference programming reflected this interest, with such presentations as "The Special Librarian: His Personality—His Training—His Objective" (at the 1922 conference) and "Knowledge is Power" (at the 1923 conference) designed to enable attendees to return to their organizations and proselytize.

In 1926 SLA published "Adding a Special Library to a Business: How to Go About It" to provide a step-by-step guide for organizational management. The document provides a useful list of basic activities that even today cut through the various layers that modern management has built in to the development of such initiatives. It recommended that the organization appoint a librarian and notify department heads that "a central information office is to be established," that the librarian meet with executives and conduct what would today be referred to as a knowledge services audit, and that the organization "build up" an "index to information," and "advertise the information office continuously to your department heads and employees."

Included in the planning document, and obviously meant to be passed on to business and research executives, was a collection of specific endorsements of the specialized library idea. Such people as the President of The Guaranty Trust Company of New York ("Our organization has found a special library not only very helpful but practically essential to our security business."), the Vice President of The National City Bank of New York ("The growing use to which our organization subjects this library is sufficient evidence of its importance."), and Roger W. Babson of Babson's Statistical Organization Incorporated in Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts

("Our special library is indispensable to our business. It has often been said that a man's judgment is no better than his information. The special library supplies the information in an organized form which is both convenient and quickly available."). A pamphlet version of the document—"Printed for the U.S. Special Libraries Association, 900 members, as an expression of its approval of the "Special Library Idea," by the Business Branch of the Public Library of the City of Newark, New Jersey."—listed some forty other endorsements.

Providing information about the organization of a specialized library and for the development of their professional staffs was an important consideration in the association's second decade. In addition to offering networking opportunities, the association published "how-to" documents, resource lists, and much material having to do with the mechanics of managing a specialized library (including labor analyses). One of these last, published in June, 1920, discussed "Costs in the Special Library" and established, in a delightfully convoluted analysis, that the labor costs for handling a volume of current periodical literature was slightly under thirty-two cents, and that the labor costs for binding, cataloging, and shelving periodicals came to a total cost of more than forty cents per volume and required a total labor output of 81.5 hours!

The trend toward the practical—so much a part of the evolution of modern American librarianship, particularly as associated with SLA and its efforts—resulted in the publication of many descriptions of new specialized libraries and their contributions to the movement. Such descriptions appeared with such frequency that a separate volume of just these descriptive articles could be published. Two particularly stand out. On November 7, 1925, Dr. A.W. Kenney described, in a presentation to the Special Libraries Council of Philadelphia and Vicinity and later published, an account of "The du Pont Experimental Station Library: A Chemical Special Library." Its role, Dr. Kenney stated, was like that of any special library, "to collect pertinent information and to dispense it in more or less digested form at the time and in the place where it will do the most good." At the National Research Council, Robert M. Yerkes, Chairman and Resident Director of the Research Information Service, described that operation as seeking "to promote research by supplying individuals or institutions with such information concerning research projects, equipment, methods, problems, or results as will encourage cooperation, lessen duplication, increase support, permit the exchange of reports concerning progress in related investigations and render possible increasingly satisfactory distribution of research effort and greater wisdom in the choice of problems."

Such activities make it clear that the basic elements of what we think of today as knowledge services—obviously not yet designated as such—was expected to play an essential role in specialized librarianship from the beginning, or at least from the 1920s. These people knew what they were doing. Invoking the basic premise of knowledge management (that it is a management practice used to help a company or organization manage explicit, tacit, and cultural information in ways that enable the organization to reuse the information and, when required, to create new knowledge), they were confirming their commitment to their host organizations to

establish an atmosphere and culture based on knowledge development and knowledge sharing. Combining this management of knowledge with their information management skills and their expertise in strategic learning, to ensure that all "department heads and employees" could utilize what was provided for them, these early specialist librarians were the true precursors of today's knowledge services professionals.

With such a different view of what librarianship entailed, it is not surprising to find a growing call for professional training specific to specialized librarianship. An announcement in the early autumn of 1920 noted that a "School for Business Librarians" would be formed as one of three departments of the Washington School for Secretaries, a new school that had just opened the previous March. But that type of training was not good enough. For general librarianship, practitioners were, to some extent, being educated in formal programs at the university level and some of that education was achieved by librarians who would find professional positions in specialized librarianship. But there was a growing sense that education concentrating solely on general librarianship was simply not sufficient.

For example, Henry V. Hopwood complained in an article entitled "The Educational Standard of Librarianship in Relation to Technology" that "up to the present, no attempt has been made to fix a standard of knowledge for librarians in any special sphere except that of literary history, and that subject can hardly be regarded as special…. [T]he staff for a specialized library, or the specialized branch of a general library should be drawn from those already qualified in library routine and cataloging; a selection being made of those having personal liking and aptitude for the special subject. Instead of trying to turn a student into a librarian, a librarian should be encouraged to qualify himself in the special subject required. In this matter, Technology, with a necessary accompaniment of a limited amount of Pure Science, presents greater difficulties than most other branches of specialized knowledge." In seeking to find people qualified to deal with these different subjects—and these different levels of subjects—Hopwood was merely echoing what others were saying.

Among these were Ellen A. Hedrick, Instructor in Library Science at the United States Department of Agriculture Graduate School, who prepared an article that confirmed the difficulties Hopwood had identified, but on a larger scale and with subjects other than technology. Hedrick, along with W. P. Cutter, Librarian, Arthur D. Little, Inc., discussed several areas of concern that had been identified in the famous 1923 Williamson Report on library education. Dr. Charles Williamson's report, "Training for Library Service: A Report Prepared for the Carnegie Corporation," had been widely distributed and read (and even today is considered one of the most influential studies having to do with library education), and three of its findings and recommendations were given serious attention by Hedrick. These were the division of clerical and professional work in libraries, the placing of library schools on a graduate basis, and courses specifically designed for training the specialist librarian. With respect to this last, Hedrick wrote that "it is true that the library schools have been slow in introducing courses for the specialists in their curricula, but then we must remember that it has not been so very long since librarians recognized the

rights of specialists to the services of libraries. We are just beginning to recognize that banking, insurance, and manufacture are as much subjects for our study and service as literature, history, and political science. … One has to but glance at the many and varied subjects represented by the membership of the Special Libraries Association to appreciate that new vistas have opened up, that new fields of service have been staked off. Librarians today filled with renewed zeal are advancing to their greater opportunities with a spirit worthy of the pioneers of 1876 who blazed the first trails of the library domain."

One of those pioneers—and perhaps *the* pioneer as far as specialized librarianship was concerned—was about to pass from the scene. On July 21, 1929, after six weeks' illness, and just a few days shy of his 73rd birthday, John Cotton Dana died at St. Vincent's Hospital in New York City.

Dana was described in a long obituary in *The New York Times* as "a man of original ideas." Born in 1856, he had been educated at Dartmouth, from which he received his A.B. in 1878. He studied law at Woodstock, Vermont for a few years, worked as a land surveyor, was admitted to the New York bar, returned to civil engineering (in Colorado) for another few years, and then, as the obituary noted, he "found his vocation when he joined the Denver Public Library." Widely known through his "radical" views concerning libraries and museums, (the newspaper wrote) he had the happy faculty of being able to get them before the public. As an example of Dana's originality, the following paragraph was included in the obituary:

> When the short skirt was still an open question for discussion Mr. Dana found in it a parallel for art—not in its brevity, but through the appeal that the same freedom should be given to taste in art as women exercised in the height of the hem-line.

A brief commentary about Dana and his leadership, "A Leader Passes On," appeared in *Special Libraries* in the July-August, 1929, issue. "The tributes paid to him by editorial writers throughout America," it said, "indicate the eminent standing of Mr. Dana and the great respect in which he was held by the American press." The notice also commented on Mr. Dana's personal style, for which he was so well known: "His keen rapier wit punctured illogical thought and his quick grasp of library problems made his opinions respected…."

The New York Herald Tribune carried an elegiac poem about Dana by American poet Gerald Raftery:

LIBERATOR

John Cotton Dana, 1856-1929

He hurled no ultimatum at the state
Nor led a revolution out to cry
An empty creed against the empty sky.
Nor ever did he play upon the hate
Of poor for rich, of ignorant for great.
And since his slow revolt was fine and high

For him no banner dip along the sky,
No cannons roar, no millions venerate.
His deed was not a sudden, blaring thing;
It was a lifework, patient, unacclaimed.
And now before the searching mind of youth
The serried thinkers of the ages fling
Their gold. This man made knowledge free, unchained;
He loosed the slow, invading tide of truth.

On the first anniversary of Dana's death, a bronze tablet was erected in his memory in the Newark Public Library:

> Lover of books and beautiful things, helper of men, he based idealism on common sense and joined loveliness with utility. He blazed intellectual trails in culture, education, and industry.

It was a sad end to an eventful decade for the association, one that had, indeed brought prosperity but had also prompted the attentions of SLA's members—and especially its leaders—to do all they could to keep their movement alive. This they did, and they succeeded admirably, little knowing that larger, societal challenges were awaiting them. Only a few months after Dana's death, the country began the downward spiral into what would be known as "The Great Depression." Challenging all people and all organizations to use every resource they could muster just to stay alive, the Depression would throw SLA dramatically, unceremoniously into adulthood.