

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION - MICROPHOTOGRAPHY

200K
ALA
Microphotography

\$16,000 - RF 37013 March 1, 1937 - December 31, 1937
1,500 - RA April 15, 1938 - April 15, 1939

Appraisal: Microphotography has been used commercially and for military

October, 1938 purposes for so many years that the demonstration at the Paris Exposition of 1937 was largely a proof of applied values of recognized techniques, but the American experiments of recent years were needed to make these demonstrations useful to librarians. Though the American Library Association took over the products of American inventors, they arranged through the Maison de la Chimie to have excellent presentation of French machines and technical practices. They likewise brought the weight of the International Committee of Librarians behind the demonstration to give international character to the project through drawing in German, Italian, and Scandinavian interests. Special delegations attending from these countries and two research workers representing the British Library Association made long stays in Paris. The technical aspect of the demonstration is fully recognized in the reported Transactions (two volumes) of the International Federation for Documentation in its Fourteenth Conference at Oxford during September 1938. The addresses of delegates from other countries constantly refer to the stimulus to microfilm practice developed by the American Library Association demonstration. Papers of the four Americans most active in this work were read and two delegates, K. D. Metcalf of Harvard and H. H. Fussler of Chicago,* not only read papers but directed informal and formal discussions. A recent letter from Fussler (10.17.38) includes the following note on developing activity in Europe: "Dr. Schürmeyer from Frankfurt-am-Main reported that by the end of the year

*A grant-in-aid of \$1,200 to the American Library Association provided for their attendance at the Conference.

500 reading machines would be constructed and in use in all leading German universities and research institutions in an attempt to see how far inter-library loans and completions of special collections might be accomplished by the use of microfilm." Full reports from these two men will be in files shortly as evidence of the general outcome of this conference.

The American Library Association brought back, as expected, long runs of microfilm copies of French newspapers hitherto not available in this country. We now know that costs for foreign work can be kept at certain low prices, and free access has been gained for the first time to the holdings of the Bibliotheque Nationale. During the autumn of 1938 events in Europe unquestionably had their part in increasing the desire of librarians to get their rare materials into microfilm copies. The combination of understanding and need was accidental, but fortunate for the future of library development both here and abroad. We should look toward the easy transfer of materials from ^{to country} country/and greater security for perishable documents. Also, it is unquestioned that the work at the National Archives and elsewhere in this country will motivate entirely new standards of library construction so that we shall have fireproof vaults for film and a great saving of space in handling certain classes of documents.

DHS

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Objectives: To cover the operating expenses of a continuous demonstration of microcopying at the Paris Exposition of 1937. The demonstration was intended to provide copies of French source materials for American scholars and, more important, to familiarize Europeans with American mechanized methods of microcopying and their low cost, thus stimulating interchange and preservation of research materials. This action was within the program of aid to American and foreign libraries in the collection and distribution of materials for research workers.

The demonstration was planned originally by the American Committee for Intellectual Cooperation as a contribution to the exhibit of the Institut International de Cooperation Intellectuelle. When administrative considerations made it desirable to set up the demonstration among library exhibits in the Trocadero rather than among the IICI exhibits, sponsorship passed by general agreement to the American Library Association. As agent for the ALA, Mr. M. L. Raney, Director of the Library of the University of Chicago, made arrangements for space, secured French permission to copy research material, and contracted for apparatus, whereupon the Foundation granted \$1500 for operating expenses - salaries, travel, freight, etc.

Fulfillment: Before the Exposition opened, Mr. Raney received suggestions from appropriate American agencies concerning research material to be brought back to the United States. The journals of the French Revolution and at least one complete newspaper file from its first issue to date were among the materials specified. The program was considerably curtailed because the Exposition was almost three months late in opening, and the camera* designed to copy newspapers was not operating until the end of September. The exhibit's second camera, a Photorecord also lent by the University of Chicago, was used therefore for the newspaper work, and copying of other types of source material was not attempted.

Twelve volumes of Le Globe (1824-31) and thirty-four French Revolution journals were filmed. The negatives are the property of the ALA. Two positives were produced at the expense of the grant and presented to the University of Chicago and the Bibliotheque Nationale.

The demonstration of American methods of microcopying attracted and impressed many important groups, among them L'Association Populaire des Amis de Musees, Le Barreau de Paris, library students of several French libraries, L'Association des Bibliothecaires Francais and Le Comite International des Bibliotheques. Perhaps the most important visitors were the delegates of Le Congres Mondial de la Documentation Universelle, who studied and compared the American cameras with the French exhibits for a period of several hours while the Trocadero was closed to the public. English interest was especially strong.

The filming was continuous. Operators of the photographic and processing equipment were surrounded by constantly changing groups of

*Built by Lt. R. H. Draeger of the United States Navy with funds provided by RF to the University of Chicago and lent by the University to the exhibit.

spectators, most of their questions answered by printed legends on the walls. The space in the Trocadero building was adjacent to that for library equipment of general character, and the relevance of film work to other types of documentation was fully expressed by actual exhibit materials. Mlle. Oddon, a former fellow of the RF, was responsible for this coordination and showing of library techniques.

In order to reward French collaborators and to make certain that British and French interest in American methods will be permanent, the Foundation granted \$1500 to the ALA in April, 1938, which covered the cost of cameras, readers and compressors, to be sent as gifts to King's College in England and four French institutions. Among these was La Maison de la Chimie, which demonstrated the American instruments and illustrative material to the International Conference of Chemistry in Rome during May, thereby enlarging knowledge of the microcopying process and perhaps opening another country to interchange of film copies of research materials.

Financial statement:

<u>Grants</u>	<u>Payments</u>	<u>Balances Lapsed</u>
\$16,000 - RF 37013	\$9,859.84	\$6,140.16
1,500 - RA	1,500.00	10.28

Source material:

Letters

12/9/36	M.L. Raney to DHS
9/24/37	M.L. Raney to DHS

JNL