

WAR DEPARTMENT
ARMY MEDICAL LIBRARY

7TH ST. AND INDEPENDENCE AVE. SW.
WASHINGTON

SPMCL-600.93

March 27, 1943

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Mr. Keys D. Metcalf, President,
American Library Association,
Cambridge, Massachusetts.

My dear Mr. Metcalf:

The Surgeon General of the United States Army has requested me to write you concerning the proposed survey of the Army Medical Library and to state that he will appreciate the assistance of the American Library Association in this matter. He has further directed me to take whatever action is advisable and has authorized me to arrange all the details.

Acting upon his instructions and in my capacity as Librarian of the Army Medical Library, it is requested that the President of the American Library Association initiate a comprehensive survey of the Army Medical Library according to a proposed outline, which is appended. This survey, it is understood, will have such financial backing as may be given by one of the educational foundations, preferably the Rockefeller Foundation. No restriction is placed upon the character of the survey except that it shall not obligate the Government of the United States financially. If the necessary funds are secured to conduct the survey, the authorities of the Army Medical Library agree to render all possible assistance to the end that every activity deemed necessary to be investigated may be studied. It is desired especially to have a full report with concrete recommendations as to present and future policies and operation.

With regard to the director of the survey and his associates, no restriction will be placed upon this by The Surgeon General, and it is expected that the selection can be made by informal conference and agreement between the Librarian of the Army Medical Library and the President or Executive Secretary of the American Library Association. The work of the survey should be entirely independent in order to arrive unhampered at worthwhile conclusions and recommendations.

In the matter of publication of the report, it is believed that this should be submitted in full to The Surgeon General, but only such portions as are deemed proper for examination by the reading public, should be printed. It is inevitable that certain questions may arise as to changes in operation which might, perhaps, run counter to the present War Department policies and customs, and which, while worthy of consideration, should not be released to the public at this time.

At our conference held in New York March 26, 1943, the entire matter of the proposed survey was discussed with Dr. Alan Gregg of the Rockefeller Foundation and yourself. While many details will present

themselves for solution, I believe that Dr. Gregg and you understand fully the proposed scope and general outline of the survey. Such details as were not considered for lack of time are included in the preliminary outline which follows:

I. Purpose and Scope

1. The history of the Army Medical Library and the Index-Catalogue.
2. The operation of the Army Medical Library in past years.
3. The objectives of the Library, present and prospective. The place of the library among Government libraries and in relation to other medical libraries in the United States.
4. The general organization and operation of the Library.
5. The functions and operation of the several divisions of the Library. The rôle of the Library in the preparation of catalog cards for use by other libraries.
6. A consideration of the personnel with respect to number, qualifications, and categories, with a special reference to the number of professional persons employed.
7. The financial support and the allocation of funds used in the various operations of the Library.
8. Library holdings, serial and book; special collections.
9. The lending system, particularly the interlibrary loans; service to individuals and institutions; microfilm service.
10. Book repairs.
11. Library statistics.
12. The Branch Library in Cleveland.

II. Procedure

An adequate survey of the functions, activities, holdings, organization, administration, personnel, budget and buildings of a library of such importance would require a staff of at least three or four people, some of whom would work over a period of a few or several months. Associated with such staff should be a group of consultants and advisers from the medical profession and medical research agencies.

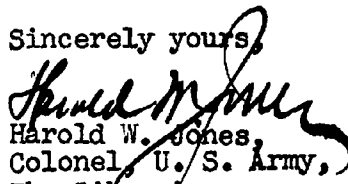
1. The director of the survey should be appointed first and should

participate in the selection of his associates.

2. Plans for the survey should be worked out in considerable detail.
3. A meeting of the survey staff would be desirable.
4. The director and other members of the staff would familiarize themselves with all available reports of the Library.
5. They should visit the Library for an over-all look, and for conference with the Librarian and other members of the staff.
6. The investigators should remain for a considerable time assembling the detailed information needed.
7. The director should consult with the directors of the Library of Congress and other important Washington libraries, and possibly with the directors of other medical libraries in the United States.
8. The director should confer with his advisers and should probably solicit comments from those who make use of the library services.
9. At the end of several weeks the investigators should have completed their inquiry and compiled their data. The staff should meet then to review the data and prepare preliminary recommendations.
10. They should then meet with the Librarian and perhaps other members of the staff and with the Committee of Consultants to check the data and the recommendations.
11. They should put their findings and recommendations into final form and submit them to the A.L.A. for mimeographing or other publication.
12. The report as a whole should be available to anyone interested. The surveyors might however wish to file a confidential report with the Librarian on some personnel or other matters requiring confidential treatment.

Suggestions as to the appointment of the director and staff of the survey and the consultants, together with the amount of money necessary for the complete project, are left to you as President of the American Library Association. I have every confidence that your advice will be entirely acceptable.

Sincerely yours,


Harold W. Jones,
Colonel, U. S. Army,
The Librarian.