

Libraries, Cooperation, and Brazilian Studies in the United States

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Introduction

The university library is the key component in the research process of most scholars in the United States who study Brazil. The size and quality of collections of Braziliana in the United States is impressive both in terms of number of collections and quality of research materials. Few scholars outside of those who work in libraries understand the complexities and challenges involved in building a foreign language collection. It is not simply a matter of placing an order and waiting for the requested item to arrive. Numerous activities are required including determining needs, obtaining funding, establishing availability, ascertaining the best method of getting the item, procuring, processing, and finally making the item available to researchers. The operation becomes even more complicated when unique or unusual research materials are involved.

Due to challenges in building collections, area studies librarians who work with international studies have a fundamental necessity of and openness to cooperation with others. Area studies librarians form associations not just to meet with colleagues to present their latest research but exchange ideas and establish programs to work cooperatively to accomplish the tasks of building collections to serve the academic community. These organizations are key to the development of research libraries.

The library organization that serves the Brazilian academic community in the United States is the Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials (SALALM). The purpose of this paper is to both demonstrate the necessity and success of librarians who work with Brazil to cooperate in building library collections. It will examine three different nation-wide projects connected to SALALM that have made available important Brazilian research materials to the academic community of the United States. It will show that the ability of this organization to create and support cooperative projects is an important element in the evolution of Brazilian studies that is often overlooked and ignored by scholars.¹

¹The latest study of Brazilian studies in the United States has a library component by Ann Hartness. "Brasiliana in the United States: Reference Sources and Documents," in *Envisioning Brazil: A Guide to Brazilian Studies in the United States*, ed. Marshall C. Eakin and Paulo Roberto de Almeida (Madison, University of Wisconsin, 2005), 424-59. Helen Delpar's recent book on the evolution of Latin American studies only briefly acknowledges important library

SALALM and LACAP

SALALM was the creation of Marietta Daniels (Shepard) of the then Pan-American Union (later the OAS) and Stanley West, head of the library at the University of Florida at Gainesville. Since becoming library director in the late 1940s West had focused significant time and effort in creating a strong Caribbean collection in his library. The geographic location of the university made this collecting effort logical. His aspiration was strengthened by the assignment of collecting responsibility for the Caribbean to Florida by the Association of Research Libraries' project called the Farmington Plan. The purpose of the Plan was to insure that at least one copy of every foreign language research item published worldwide be acquired and made available in U.S. Libraries. The challenges of identifying and obtaining materials so frustrated West that in 1955 he expressed his concerns to a Columbia University student friend Marietta Daniels of the Pan American Union, suggesting they invite selected librarians from across the country to attend a seminar to explore ways to improve U.S. librarian's abilities to obtain research materials from Latin America and the Caribbean. The first meeting was held in June of 1956 at Chinsegut Hill, a large plantation home near the town of Brooksville Florida and owned by the University of Florida. The sixteen working papers presented at the Seminar suggested the need for further discussion so a second meeting was held at the University of Texas at Austin the following year and within a short time a permanent organization was formed and annual meetings held since.²

As is suggested in the name of the organization the primary concern of SALALM was the acquisition of library materials. In several early seminars the challenges in research material acquisition from Latin America were discussed in great depth and a variety of plans discussed to improve the process. Most suggested the necessity for cooperative efforts to purchase materials for U.S. libraries. The primary challenge faced was that the Latin American book trade was focused internally and the ability of librarians in the United States to obtain recently published materials was problematic. For librarians in the United States just determining what was being published was a difficulty that was exacerbated by the challenge finding a dealer or bookstore willing to supply those materials. If librarians had been able to travel to Latin America often and visit bookstores and publishers, the problem would have been solved, but it was impossible for U.S. librarians from all research institutions interested in Latin America to visit over twenty countries periodically. During a social gathering at the fourth SALALM meeting held in Washington DC in 1959 an outline to work together was discussed and a specific plan suggested. As the head of the New York Public Library stated to Nettie Lee Benson, Latin American Studies Librarian at the University of Texas, "We have talked about it for four years but we haven't made any progress."³

collections in the early history of Latin American scholarship in the United States and does not mention library organizations or the recent evolution of libraries. Helen Delpar, *Looking South: The Evolution of Latin American Scholarship in the United States, 1850-1975* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2008).

²For a description of this meeting of see, Mark L. Grover, "The Beginning of SALALM," in *Latin American Studies Research and Bibliography: Past, Present, and Future*, ed. Pamela F. Howard-Reguindin (New Orleans: SALALM, 2007), 16-42.

³Nettie Lee Benson, interviewed by William Jackson, n.d., Austin, Texas. Original in the

The plan was simple, a private book company, Stechert-Hafner centered in New York City, would have traveling agents throughout Latin America who identify recent academic publications and purchase multiple copies of those materials. Librarians would provide to Stechert-Hafner general subject outlines of their collection needs and agree to purchase the item selected for them on what is described as a “blanket order” agreement. Knowing the collecting needs of each library traveling agents would determine which books to purchase based on the profile provided. Stechert-Hafner agreed to initially finance the venture with the goal of breaking even within three years. By the fifth SALALM held at the New York Public Library in 1960, a formal proposal for a cooperative project was made and accepted.⁴

The plan was under the direction of Dominick Coppola of Stechert-Hafner. In 1960 Nettie Lee Benson of the University of Texas and Coppola visited several countries of Latin America. Ms Benson was given an initial six months unpaid leave of absence from the University of Texas and became the primary traveling agent for the program. Between January and May, Dr. Benson traveled to Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, and Bolivia. Her adventures are recorded and described in typical Dr. Benson fashion highlighting the joys, challenges, and intrigue of buying books at this level. Between March and May Coppola visited Central America and Mexico. Books selected and purchased by Benson and Coppola were in U.S. libraries by late summer. Dr. Benson was to take two additional trips, January to July, 1961 to the rest of the Spanish speaking countries of South America and April-July, 1962 to Central America and a return visit to four of the countries she visited in 1960.⁵

Brazil was the last major county of Latin America added to the program. The hesitancy about going into Brazil was related to the size and complexity of the book trade. It was deemed advisable to gain experience in the smaller countries of Latin America before going to Brazil. By May of 1963 they were ready and Dr. A. W. Bork visited Brazil. He immediately recognized the geographical challenges that made the acquisition of books from Brazil difficult. In most countries of Latin America the size of the country was such that by working out of the capital city LACAP could obtain most of the desired academic material wanted. The vastness of Brazil and strong regionalism made that impossible. Bork was able to obtain a number of books for U.S. libraries from Brazil and eventually the decision made to establish a permanent office for

possession of William Jackson.

⁴M. J. Savary, *The Latin American Cooperative Acquisitions Program: An Imaginative Venture* (New York: Hafner Publishing Company, 1968),54-7.

⁵For a description of her trips see, Nettie Lee Benson, “Report of the Latin American Cooperative Acquisition Project,” in Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials, V, New York City, June 14-16, 1960 *Final Report and Working Papers*. (Washington, D.C.: Pan American Union, 1965), 263-84, and Nettie Lee Benson, “LACAP Report Number Two,” Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials, VI, Southern Illinois, Carbondale, Illinois, July 6-8, 1961. Working Papers (Unpublished). Copy found in the SALALM Archives, Benson Library, University of Texas at Austin. See also letters written from South America found in her papers at the University of Texas, Benson Latin American Library Archives, Nettie Lee Benson Collection, Box NLB Office Files-BLAC info.

LACAP in Rio de Janeiro administered by the Brazilian academic, Vicente Barretto.⁶

Unfortunately by the time the office in Brazil was established the future of LACAP was in doubt.⁷ The success of LACAP in the end became the reason for its failure. The need for agents in Latin America was because Latin American publishers and bookstores were not responding to the market in the United States. It was obvious, however, that a single company headquartered in the United States with the necessity of having representatives regularly traveling throughout the entire region was an expensive proposition and the cost was passed on to libraries through increased cost of the books. What LACAP did by purchasing large quantities of library materials in Latin America was to impress upon a few dealers, book stores, and publishers that there was a market in the United States for library materials from Latin America. The potential was great because eventually over forty libraries joined LACAP, though at different levels of participation. By the mid 1960s dealers from most of the major countries had begun competing with LACAP. They were able to provide better service at a cheaper price primary because they were in country. That initial small number of Latin American book dealers expanded to the present time where there are more than thirty Latin American companies who work with the international market primarily in the United States and regularly attend the annual meetings of SALALM. They function similar to the way LACAP did; they determine new books and periodicals that are available in the country, make lists, send those lists to libraries in the United State and Europe, and sell the identified books at the cost of the book plus a fee which is incorporated into the price of the book. They prefer to work with blanket or approval programs which means that the books are in U.S. libraries shortly after publication. Because they are in country they are able to rapidly identify and provide to U.S. libraries publications, many of which have limited distribution.⁸ Their fees are high but the service provided well worth the expense. There are five companies in Brazil with offices in Rio, São Paulo, and Campinas who work with U.S. libraries. Though the problem of regional coverage continues to be a serious challenge,

⁶See his report, Albert William Bork, "LACAP Survey in Brazil" in Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials, VIII, Madison, Wisconsin, July 11-12, 1963. *Final Report and Working Papers*. 2 vols. (Washington D.C.: Pan American Union, 1964), 136-50. For a description of LACAP in Brazil see chapter 14 in M. J. Savary, *The Latin American Cooperative Acquisitions Program: An Imaginative Venture*, 92-7. Vicente was a young scholar who would write studies on liberal thought in the political history of 19th century Brazil. See an important early volume, *A ideologia liberal no processo da independência do Brasil, 1789-1924* (Brasília: Câmara dos Deputados, Diretoria Legislativa, Centro de Documentação e Informação, Divisão de Publicação, 1973).

⁷For a pessimistic evaluation of LACAP see, "Resources for Research in Latin American Literature in Southern Libraries," in Lawrence S. Thompson, *Essays in Hispanic Bibliography* (Hamden, Connecticut: Shoe String Press, 1970), 100-1.

⁸The speed at which books are cataloged and made available to U.S. scholars was noted by the Mexican scholar Federico Patán in an article suggesting that Mexican books were processed faster in United States libraries than in Mexican libraries. Federico Patán, "Mexicanos en una computadora," *Uno mas uno, suplemento sabado*. 17 June, 1995, 10.

thousands of books from Brazil enter U.S. libraries annually and are quickly made available to scholars.⁹

SALALM and LAMP

A second cooperative activity emanating from SALALM was the acquisition and/or preservation of primary source research materials from Latin America. A valuable service libraries provide is to make available research materials to as many scholars as possible in an accessible format. That need is so great that there exists a lucrative industry connected to libraries in the creation and sale of collections of microfilm or more recently digitized scarce and/or non published primary source material. An important activity of SALALM has been the identification and preservation of these materials.

Collecting these types of materials from Latin American is a challenge for libraries. Because the number of research libraries with strong interest in Latin America is comparatively small, research materials of interest to Latin American scholars are not economically viable for many private companies. Also since most of the research materials are housed in Latin America the cost of microfilming or digitizing on site is often seen as prohibitive for these companies. SALALM in its first meeting in 1956 discussed issues of primary source materials preservation suggesting the need for projects that would increase availability while at the same preserve these valuable resources. Large research collections such as the University of Texas, Harvard, and the University of Florida were already involved in projects, primarily newspaper microfilming.¹⁰

The impetus for SALALM's organizational involvement in these types of projects was the existence of the Center for Research Libraries (CLR).¹¹ Founded in 1949 (first named the Midwest Inter-library Center) the Center ultimately became a depository library for important but lesser used research materials of the Chicago area, primarily newspapers in any form. It was a subscription based service that acquired and then held research materials which would be lent to participating institutions. Participating institutions were encouraged to transfer to the Center their collections of materials that fit the Center's collection criteria. With time the Center expanded beyond the mid-west region to become a national organization.

After several years of discussion and evaluation in SALALM, the Latin American Microform Project (LAMP) was officially organized in 1974 with sixteen libraries as founding members.¹² The organization was a completely independent organization through associated with

⁹For a list of most of the companies working with U.S. libraries see the SALALM home page, <http://library.lib.binghamton.edu/salalm/booksellers/libreros.html>.

¹⁰For a description of the Texas program see, Adán Benavides, "Benson Latin American Collection," *Discovery* 16(2002), 20-23. For the Florida microfilming program see <http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/digital/collections/cnip/eng/index.htm>.

¹¹For a history of CRL see, Bernard F. Reilly, "The Center for Research Libraries: An Overview," *World Libraries*, 15(Spring, 2005),10-19.

¹²Carl W. Deal, "The Latin American Microform Project: The First Decade," *Microform Review* 15(Winter, 1986), 22-27.

both CRL and SALALM. Each participating member pay an annual fee and the collected amount used to finance a microfilming project in Latin America. Representative members from each institution meet at the annual meeting of SALALM (often 3-4 hour long) to discuss and vote on potential projects for microfilming. LAMP is unusually effective in encouraging cooperative projects in which they pay for part in conjunction with a Latin American organization. The final microfilm products are placed in the CRL collection in Illinois and participating members are allowed to use the research materials. The number of LAMP members has increased to 47 libraries in 2008.¹³

Brazil has been a primary focus of the LACAP. Initially the group felt they needed to emphasize Mexico and Brazil so the early projects are significant for Brazilian scholars. Three early projects microfilmed document collections from São Paulo, “Atas da Câmara da Cidade de São Paulo,” “Registro geral da Câmara da Cidade de São Paulo,” and “Inventários de testamento: papeis que pertenceram ao lo cartório de orfãos da capital.” Another early important and large project was the microfilming of Brazilian Presidential Reports of the Brazilian Provinces, “Relatórios” and other associated documents. The filming was done in the Biblioteca Nacional and the Arquivo Nacional in Rio De Janeiro. LAMP provided funds for salaries of the technicians and purchased materials such as the film and light bulbs and the two Brazilian institutions prepared and copied the materials. This project which already had subject indexing published by Ann Hartness, brought together widely dispersed documents into one single place and made readily available to both Brazilian and American scholars.¹⁴ It was a major early achievement of LAMP. Two projects currently (2008) being finished by LAMP in Brazil are the archival collection about Brazilian children and youth at the CESPI (Coordenação de Estudos e Pesquisa Sobre a Infância/Center for Research on Childhood) at the Universidade Santa Úrsula in Rio de Janeiro and the archive of Adbias Nascimento, long time Afro-Brazilian activist and politician.¹⁵ The value of these SALALM and CRL projects is inestimable.

SALALM and HAPI

Having Brazilian publications and research materials available in U.S. libraries is important in supporting the research of faculty and students. The value of those materials, however, is significantly diminished if there is no access to the information through a subject index. This is particularly relevant for information in periodical and serials literature where the subject content often varies according to article. Brazilian periodicals are particularly important to U.S. scholars because they carry the latest research of Brazilian scholars.

Providing indexes of Brazilian serials has historically been a challenge. *The Handbook of Latin American Studies* which began in 1936 was an important subject index but too limited in

¹³James Simon, “Area Studies Microform Projects at the Center for Research Libraries,” *World Libraries* 15(Spring, 2005), 29-47.

¹⁴Ann Hartness, *Subject Guide to Statistics in the Presidential Reports of the Brazilian Provinces, 1830-1889* (Austin: Institute of Latin American Studies, University of Texas, 1977).

¹⁵For a complete list of the Brazilian materials filmed by LAMP including current projects see, <http://crl.edu/areastudies/LAMP/collections/lampguide.htm>.

its coverage of periodical literature and not a comprehensive index which is important in periodical literature. A few individual libraries developed their own index of serials, the most extensive being that of the Pan American Union Library (OAS). Beginning in 1929 the Union began a subject card index to the periodicals received by library. Their index was published as a set in 1960 with two additional supplements bringing the collection up to 1969 when the index was discontinued.¹⁶

In 1973 Arizona State University hired Barbara Valk, a recently graduated library science student as their Latin American reference specialist. Encouraged by the university tenure requirements to publish, Barbara began searching for a project. She recognized the void left by the cessation of the Pan American Union guide and the need for a comprehensive periodical index for Latin America. A proposal for funding was accepted by the Arizona State Latin American Studies Center to create a finding aid by indexing 125 periodical from the ASU collection. The index was published in 1974 in four quarterly cumulative issues. Barbara was pleasantly surprised when over 100 copies of her guide were sold to other libraries. The SALALM Committee on Bibliography under Margarita Anderson-Imbert of Harvard University invited Valk to describe her project at the 1975 meeting in Bogota, Colombia. She received enthusiastic support and encouragement to expand the project and offers of help with the indexing. At that meeting she met Larry Lauerhass, Associate Director of the UCLA Latin American Center (and a Brazilianist) who was particularly supportive of the project. Through a series of events connected to obtaining funding, Barbara was offered a position at UCLA and the project was transferred to California. She received a significant three-year NEH grant of \$400,000 to produce quarterly publications and an annual accumulation and the *Hispanic American Periodical Index* (HAPI) began publication in April 1977.¹⁷

HAPI began as a private funded project supported financially by UCLA and foundational support until it became self-supporting. It was developed and sustained almost single-handedly by its committed and talented creator, Barbara Valk until her retirement in 2005. Like LAMP, HAPI's connection with SALALM was important and vital. The backbone of the project has been and continues to be the support and work of SALALM members. Most of the indexing is done by SALALM members and annual reports continue to be an important part of SALALM meetings. HAPI is an "affinity group" in SALALM which allows for meetings to discuss changes and challenges to be held in conjunction with the annual meetings. Advice and assistance came from SALALM committees and members. This relationship was particularly important in the beginning and then during the recent evolution to a digitized platform.¹⁸

¹⁶The index was published in three different sets, *Index to Latin American Periodicals Literature, 1929-1960* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1962), 8 vols., *Index to Latin American Periodicals Literature, Supplement, 1961-1965* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1968). 2 vols., and *Index to Latin American Periodicals Literature, 1966-1970* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1980), 2 vols.

¹⁷Barbara, Valk, "HAPI and SALALM: Thirty Years of Close Cooperation," in *Latin American Studies Research and Bibliography: Past, Present, and Future*, ed. Pamela F. Howard-Reguindin (New Orleans: SALALM, 2007), 9-15.

¹⁸HAPI continues to publish an annual paper copy but it is also an important database available to libraries. See <http://hapi.ucla.edu>.

Brazilian periodicals have always been an important part of the indexing agenda of HAPI. In the first volume there were 21 Brazilian periodicals indexed, which was 10% of the 214 total serials indexed. In the most recent publication for the year 2005 the number of Brazilian serials increased to 30 of the 399 periodicals indexed. Important runs of serials such as *Revista de Letras* are completely indexed. HAPI is an important and valuable research tool for Brazilianists throughout the world that has significantly benefitted from the activities of SALALM.¹⁹

Conclusion

Librarians who work with Brazil and Latin America have a unique position in the evolution of the academic world in the United States. All have been trained with library degrees but also have academic degrees, often a discipline Ph.D. They do not follow the path to traditional professorial positions in teaching and research department but for a variety of reasons chose to become librarians. One reason is that library positions allow for greater involvement in interdisciplinary activities related to Latin America. With their feet in both the academic and library world they have an appreciation of disciplinary and research needs with an understanding of how to obtain those important documents.

In 1964 Richard Morse the eminent Brazilianist and scholar of Latin America studies published a scathing reaction to the then recent production of research by United States scholars on Latin America. He has little to say that was positive but did recognize as an important U. S. contribution, the work of libraries and librarians. "I venture that till now the most important American contribution to Latin American historiography has been in the realm of 'services': bibliographic compilation, devising of research aids, and enhancement of library collections."²⁰ Much of what he recognized was the work of librarians and the cooperative activities of the Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials.

The activity and role of SALALM in the evolution of Brazilian Studies in the United States is seldom understood and consequently not recognized by the academic community. Through Brazil is often a challenge for librarians due to the size and complexity of the country there is not a lack of recognition of the importance of Brazil in SALALM. Scholars should appreciate the amazing collections of Brazilianiana found in libraries scattered across the country. Much of what is found in those libraries is the result of librarians with a passion for Brazil who have worked together in cooperative programs to ensure that scholars and students in the United States have the needed resources to conduct their research.

¹⁹*HAPI: Hispanic American Periodicals Index* (Los Angeles: HAPI, 1975), 3-15.

²⁰Richard M. Morse, "The Strange Career of Latin American Studies," in *New World Soundings: Culture and Ideology in the Americas* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 173. The article was originally published in the *American Academy of Political and Social Science, Annals* 365 (1964), 106-12.