

Rick Grapes
Trip to Rexburg, October 25 - 28, 2004

This brief report is to describe and evaluate a four day trip to BYU Idaho where I met with Chris Fox for 2 days helping him evaluate the organization of their map collection, and with training and cataloging of map materials in general. Once approval for the trip was received from CES, I made motel reservations over the Internet at the Days Inn just west of the Rexburg campus.

Day 1

The drive north was uneventful. I stopped for a late lunch with some friends at a restaurant in Pocatello, arriving in Rexburg about 5:00PM on Monday Oct. 25th. Once checked into the motel, I walked around campus finding the library, and then within the library I located the map collection. I made a cursory look at the collection checking to see how the maps were organized, what was contained, and noticing a few problems and issues that we might want to address. At this point it was getting dark, so I got a bite to eat, and then headed to the motel.

Day 2

Skipping breakfast, Tuesday morning I arrived at the library a few minutes after 8AM. Chris introduced me to his fellow employees, and then we unloaded my car which was full of 5 or 6 boxes of maps and books. After that we sat in Chris's office and talked about maps generally. I mentioned a few of the concerns I had noticed the night before, and so we walked down to the collection and we discussed such issues as why the topographic maps are filed separately vs. being interfiled in the G schedule etc. Once back in Chris's office we continued to discuss various map issues and practices until lunch time. For lunch I walked downtown. After lunch we continued to talk and train about all kinds of map librarianship topics. Much of our discussion revolved around map cataloging and how to balance the issues between patron access and the geographical grouping of maps. Another issue that repeatedly came up during both days was how to keep from being overwhelmed by the map collection while at the same time providing the library patron with a well organized and logically organized collection. I don't remember what time we quit on Tuesday, but it was a day well spent.

Day 3

Again skipping breakfast I arrived at the library at about 8:30AM on Wednesday. We planned on starting the map cataloging training first thing, but while reviewing his notes Chris had some more questions from the previous day. So we spent the first half of the morning mostly reviewing what was covered the day before. After that Chris pulled up an OCLC record for a map he was waiting to catalog, and we went step by step thru the fixed and variable fields correcting and improving this map record online. In the middle of this process we both quit and walked over to the student union for lunch. Back at cataloging this map we talked about such topics unique to maps as latitude and longitude, scale and how to calculate the scale even when it doesn't appear on the map, physical descriptions, and subjects etc. One issue that came up was its call number. This map had previously been assigned in OCLC what we both thought was an incorrect call number.

The map in hand was of the US Forest Service's Medford District. Whoever created this record in OCLC had given it the call number for the City of Medford Oregon. While the city was included in the map with limited detail, Chris and I both agreed that the Medford City call number was inappropriate. It was a good training experience for us, using the G Schedule, to go back and forth trying to decide what kind of call number would be best for this map, keeping in mind that maps of other forest districts in Oregon might be added to the collection in the future. Once this map record was updated to both our satisfaction in OCLC, we proceeded to start cataloging another map, but OCLC crashed. We were not able to catalog for the rest of the day. So we again went down to the map collection and continued to look for and discuss problems and issues unique to Map Libraries. Back in Chris's office we discussed map series and the cataloging options available to series maps until well after 4PM. With this Chris had a meeting to which he was late, so I proceeded to pack up and load my car. I finally left campus about 5PM, bought dinner, and went back to the motel to eat.

Day 4

The drive back to Provo was uneventful even though the weather was bad. It rained or snowed the whole way to Salt Lake Valley. Malad Pass was especially bad. While the roads were just slushy over the pass, visibility was limited forcing everyone to slow down. In Ogden there was standing water on the highway which really slowed traffic down also.

Conclusion

The trip was very useful and Chris was fantastic to work with. We even talked about my returning to Rexburg for another longer stay to help him solve some of these map problems. It was a great experience over all.

A short summary of the visit Rick Grapes made on Tuesday and Wednesday, October 25-26, 2004.

Rick brought with him hundreds of maps of Idaho and the western United States. These maps were duplicates of maps already held in BYU's collection and were given to us to add to or fill in gaps in our collection. Sorting these maps, checking for duplicates, and evaluating which ones to keep will be a great project for a student to do. Once that preliminary analysis has been done, then I will make final decisions and do the actual cataloging of these maps.

Rick's visit was very productive and helpful. Most of the time was spent discussing maps series, particularly those issued by the government, and how to deal with them. To do this adequately, Rick and I made several trips downstairs to our map collection, during which times he would evaluate our collection and cataloging practice to date. Then he was able to explain potential problems with the way we have done things in the past. He also explained in detail how maps are issued by the government, what constitutes a map series, terminology used in maps and map series, and rationale and theory behind how they are cataloged. He suggested ways to solve the problems in our map collection, or how to make it better, using his experience at the Lee Library. His suggestions are a compromise between providing detailed access to individual maps versus the need to get them cataloged and useable by patrons. Such a compromise is necessitated by the sheer volume of maps to be cataloged. Cataloging each one individually, given current staffing (even at BYU, which has many times the number of cataloging staff that we do), would be impossible. Rick has found a way to manage the volume efficiently while providing as much

access as possible. Other valuable suggestions included physical processing of maps, how to properly house and care for them, and possibly creating additional collection codes for various types of maps.

What I need to do, as a result of Rick's visit and suggestions, is to go over in detail the notes I took, looking again at our collection and practice to date, and figure out how to apply his suggestions, or whether to apply them at all. I feel confident that, given what I know about our collection, that many changes will have to be made. The question is whether to perform a large retrospective project on the entire collection, or gradually implement these changes over time as new maps are received and older ones withdrawn. Implementing as many of the changes Rick suggested as possible will allow for more efficient processing of maps, and will also facilitate better cooperation and collaboration between our two libraries. We will be "talking the same language" and organizing our maps similarly, thus allowing for exchanging of records, easier problem solving when questions arise, and many other benefits. We spent the last couple of hours of his visit going over a map record in detail, and he explained the various MARC fields unique to map records and explained where to look on a map for that information, or, in some cases, how to calculate it if it is not given.

That is a rather long "short summary" of Rick's visit, although we did talk about many more things in greater detail (I have probably 20 pages of notes). It was an invaluable visit, extremely helpful to me, and sets the tone for greater collaboration between Rick and me. At some point, we might want to arrange another visit during which Rick could help me process or rearrange things, once the necessary policy decisions of what works best for our library and situation are made.

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