

A Succinct Report on the Department of Geography

Map Library

The Map Library began at the University of Lethbridge during the 1969-70 academic year. A room attached to the Geography Department on the Lethbridge Community College campus was redesigned specifically to store what was then a limited collection of maps. At that time the holdings of the Map Library consisted of topographic map coverage of parts of western Canada along with a few wall maps for classroom use.

The next year, 1970-71, marked the beginning of our present operations. Stan Young was hired as a map librarian and staff cartographer and agreements were reached between the Department of Geography and the Canada Map Office and the National Hydrographic Service. The gist of the two agreements was that the Canada Map Office and the National Hydrographic Service would supply the Geography Department Map Library with maps and designate us as a regional depository if we would provide proper facilities and a map librarian. There is no record of any written agreements between any of the parties involved, but inspections were made by representatives of both contributing agencies on an irregular basis through the years and all parties have been satisfied with these arrangements. The Map Library of the Department of Geography is the only full depository serving Southern Alberta.

Since the early 1970's the Map Library has grown significantly. In addition to the standing orders for maps from the Canada Map Office and the Canadian Hydrographic Service the Map Library regularly receives maps from PAIGH Hemispheric Mapping Project (Central and South American topographic maps), from Maps on File in New York (updated versions of outline and thematic maps), air photos from the National Air Photo Library and Alberta Department of Lands and Forests and occasional contributions from the map librarians of The University of Alberta, The University of Calgary and the University of Oregon at Eugene. These exchanges are from agreements made between the universities' map librarians during the period 1974-77. The exchanges are usually of older maps of specific interests or duplicates in various collections.

Currently the Map Library holdings number over 50,000 maps of various types along with 25,000 (approximately) air photos. The main collection consists of more than 45,000 topographic maps and is supplemented by hydrographic charts, thematic maps (population densities, climate, landforms, geologic maps and air charts). There is also extensive foreign topographic coverage, teaching sets, raised relief maps and 150 wall maps for classroom use. These in turn are supplemented by approximately 300 atlases of all types, planning maps from various regional planning commissions, films, film strips and globes, technical manuals, general reference texts, a Digital Pro 350 computer and printer and a Canon NP 270 duplicating machine. Additions to the map collections consistently number from 1500 to 1600 a year and fifteen to twenty atlases are added on a yearly basis. Replacement value of the maps, atlases and air photos is near \$200,000.

The physical facilities of the enclosed portion of the map library is a single room approximately 1050 sq. ft. (Room C753). There are 76 map cabinets, 10 file cabinets for air photos and shelving for the atlases and map indexes. The main room is operating at near capacity levels so additional space is used in Room C754.

Currently the map library is used extensively by many recognizable groups. The operational hours are from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday on all days the University is open. During a recent average month (October 1986) 687 library related items were borrowed or used. The most frequent users of map library materials are the students and faculty of the University of Lethbridge but our facilities and services are used regularly by the Provincial Agricultural Research Station, the Federal Agricultural Research Station, Lethbridge Community College, the Oldman Regional Planning Commission, Lethbridge Planning Commission, local banks, YMCA, Alberta and Federal Social Services, the Lethbridge and Separate School Districts, Farmers, people planning trips, those doing geneological research and the general public.

The map librarian is available to explain and help library users, provide assistance with stereo optical equipment (for air photos), provide copying and some drafting services, handle mail and telephone search requests and offer teaching and training seminars to on and off campus map library users. In the past year (1986-87) five of these seminars were conducted, by our map librarian, for various groups. This part of the map library program is just in the development stage.

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