

**A HISTORY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF NATAL
LIBRARIES, 1910 – 2003**

by

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requirements for the degree of

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Abstract

A history of the University of Natal Libraries, 1910 – 2003 by Nora Buchanan

The University of Natal was unique in South Africa for many years in that, unlike other South African universities, it was split between two geographically distant campuses, Pietermaritzburg and Durban. The research problem which was central to this study was to document the development of the libraries of the University of Natal from inception in 1910 to the point of merger at the end of 2003 in order to arrive at an understanding of how the libraries in the two centres, Durban and Pietermaritzburg, developed. Linked to the central problem were two sub-problems which were, firstly to discover whether the two libraries had, as stated by a highly placed University Task Team, developed “too independently ...”¹ was true or at least partially true and secondly to find out whether the personalities of individual University Librarians had a significant influence on the development of the libraries. In order to solve the research problem and the two sub-problems as well as to guide the structure of the chapters, four research questions were posed:

- What administrative problems were encountered as the libraries expanded and how did the dual-centred nature of the University affect their development?
- What level of financial support did the University provide to the libraries and was this sufficient?
- What impact did the introduction of information and communications technology (ICT) have on the development of the libraries? and lastly;
- What services were offered to users of the libraries and how did these differ between the two centres.

¹ [University of Natal, Library Task Team], *A report on the University of Natal Libraries submitted to the Executive Implementation Team*, 1998, p. 31.

The broad approach to the study is interpretative. It has been written as a narrative, with interpretations interwoven throughout the discussion, in chronological order to best show change over time.

Understanding the present and anticipating and managing change with some measure of success depends to an extent on our appreciation and understanding of history. This study, by investigating the historical record of the nine decades of existence of the University of Natal Libraries, is not only a revelation of the past but will also, it is hoped, assist in identifying possible future trends in academic librarianship in South Africa, particularly as far as the management of multi-centred university libraries is concerned. The value of the study also lies in the consolidation and interpretation of information in numerous unpublished records and scattered, ephemeral resources.

The historical research method was chosen for this study. Given the nature of the research problem it was deemed to be the optimal method for the collection and analysis of data. In order to gain an understanding of the problem, evidence was gathered from primary sources, such as letters, library committee minutes, memoranda, newsletters, photographs and reports, including library annual reports, as well as secondary sources. Oral testimonies assisted in verifying information pertaining to the written record, shedding light on certain events and providing added insight.

The research undertaken for the study showed that an offer of a Library Fellowship by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, which would enable a staff member to undergo professional training in librarianship in the United States, was the catalyst for the unification of the two libraries. This system prevailed for 22 years. Thereafter the unitary library system was dismantled and the two libraries developed in

completely different directions until economic necessity resulted in a concerted effort to bring the libraries together again in 1997, although this time as a federal rather than a unitary system. The research showed that the criticism that the two libraries had developed too independently was true and that a holistic approach to library services at the University of Natal was lacking. Secondly, the research also showed that the personalities of individual University Librarians did exert a significant influence on the development of the libraries although other elements also influenced their development.

Although the study is an history of a university library rooted in a “first world”² culture there are lessons to be learnt which could be applied to other institutions, particularly in the context of post-apartheid South African higher education. Several dual- or multi-centred institutions now exist. The integration of different libraries, each with its own idiosyncrasies and its own ethos can be complex and is potentially divisive. There has to be institutional commitment to the idea of a unitary library system as the library service in any university is shaped to a large extent by the parent institution.

The study was limited to an investigation of the historical record of the University of Natal Libraries. An historical analysis of university libraries on a national scale lay beyond the scope of this study. It was also limited to a focus on the institution itself and the difficulties encountered in the administration of a dual-centred library service rather than focusing on the library service from the users’ point of view.

Lastly the study suggests several areas for future research. It is noted that there is a dearth of in-depth critical texts available on the history of South African university

² C. Darch & P. Underwood, Dirt road or yellow brick superhighway?, *Library hi tech*, vol. 17, no. 3, p. 285.

libraries. An historical analysis of university libraries on a national scale would become feasible if research is undertaken into the histories of more South African university libraries.

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

ALASA	African Library Association of South Africa
ALIS	Automated Library Information System
ANC	African National Congress
ARAC	Academic Resource Allocation Committee
ARL	American Research Libraries
BIC	Business Information Centre
CALICO	Cape Library Consortium
CATNIP	Cataloguing Network in Pietermaritzburg
CD-ROM	Compact Disc-Read Only Memory
CESM	Classification of Educational Subject Matter
CHELSA	Committee for Higher Education Librarians of South Africa
COLCIN	Committee on Library Co-operation in Natal
COSALC	Committee of South African Library Consortia
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
DBN	Durban
DDC	Dewey Decimal Classification
DISA	Digital Innovation South Africa
DOBIS/LIBIS	Dortmunder Bibliotheks System/Leuven Integraal Bibliotheek System
EIFL	Electronic Information for Libraries
esAL	eastern seaboard Association of Libraries
esATI	eastern seaboard Association of Tertiary Institutions
FTE	Full time equivalent
FULSA	Forum of University Librarians in South Africa
GAELIC	Gauteng and Environs Library Consortium
ICT	Information and communications technology
IFLA	International Federation of Library Associations

IIC	Industrial Information Centre
IML	Institute for Medical Literature
INCH	Institute for Contemporary History
ITLC	Inter-Technikon Library Committee
IULC	Inter-University Library Committee
LIASA	Library and Information Association of South Africa
LISDESA	Libraries and Information Services for a Democratic South Africa
LIWO	Library and Information Workers' Organisation
MARC	MAchine Readable Cataloguing
NUC	Natal University College
NUDF	Natal University Development Foundation
OCLC	Online Computer Library Center
PAC	Pan African Congress
PBL	Problem-based Learning
PMB	Pietermaritzburg
RELINAT	Regional Libraries in Natal
RICP	Regional Institutional Co-operation Project
SABINET	South African Bibliographic and Information Network
SACP	South African Communist Party
SALA	South African Library Association
SAILIS	South African Institute for Library and Information Science
SAPSE	South African Post Secondary Education
SARIS	South African Retrospective Information System
SASLI	South African Site Licensing Initiative
SASDI	South African Selective Dissemination of Information
SAUVCA	South African Universities Vice-Chancellors' Association
SDI	Selective Dissemination of Information

SEALS	South Eastern Seaboard Library System
Senex	Senate Executive
UDC	Universal Decimal Classification
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UNDLWA	University of Natal Durban Library Workers' Association
Unisa	University of South Africa

Chapter One

Introduction

All institutions need to question their inheritance. It is all too easy to follow a well trodden path, and seek recognition for following in the footsteps of those who preceded us unaware that our destination is different. We need the integrity and honesty to say: this is not our tradition, it does not meet the needs and objectives of our society nor conforms to its values; and we need the courage and confidence to take our own initiatives.¹

In this, her inaugural speech, Dr F.N. Ginwala, first Chancellor of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, highlighted the difficulties facing all South African institutions in striving to overcome “the legacies of the past, and meeting the challenges of the future.”² South Africa’s first democratic elections in 1994 heralded the beginning of an era of enormous change in the country. “The tasks that confronted the new government” says Thompson, “were awesome. The country was racked by the cumulative effects of colonialism, *apartheid*³ and urbanization.”⁴ For universities and other institutions in the tertiary education sector the demise of apartheid meant the restructuring of “a fragmented and distorted higher education system”⁵ so that the demands of social justice⁶ and the challenges of globalisation⁷ might be met.

In practice, the most visible evidence of transformation in higher education was the reconfiguration of the sector by means of incorporations and mergers of various institutions. Based on an analysis of enrolment patterns and trends, the idea which

¹ F.N. Ginwala, Remaking the African university, in *Towards African scholarship*, [Durban]: Public Affairs & Corporate Communications, UKZN, p. 6.

² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

³ *Apartheid*: Literally meaning “separateness,” it was the “official doctrine of the South African government, and the ruling National Party (NP), between 1948 and 1991.” – D. Robertson, *A dictionary of modern politics*, 3rd edition, London: Europa, 2002.

⁴ L. Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2006, p. 258.

⁵ K. Asmal, Transformation and restructuring, South Africa, *Government gazette* no. 23549, Government notice no. 855, 21st June 2002, p. 6.

⁶ Social justice is a concept which holds that “governments are instituted among populations for the benefit ... of those populations, those governments which fail to see to the welfare of their citizens are failing to uphold their part in the social contract and are, therefore, unjust.” – *Webster’s online dictionary*, <http://www.websters-online-dictionary.com/definition/social+justice>.

⁷ Globalisation is defined as “social change, an increase in connections among societies ... [it] has become identified with a number of trends ... [which] include greater international movement of commodities, money, information, and people ...” – *Webster’s online dictionary*, <http://www.websters-online-dictionary.com/definition/globalization>.

underpinned these mergers was to reduce the number of institutions of higher education, thus making more effective and efficient use of scarce resources.⁸ The first merger, usually described as a “voluntary” merger⁹ because the agreement between the Councils of the two institutions preceded the *National plan for higher education*¹⁰ of 2001, took effect on 1st April 2002. This was the merger of the Natal Technikon¹¹ and the M.L. Sultan Technikon in Durban to form the Durban Institute of Technology.¹² The first legislated merger was that of the Universities of Natal and Durban-Westville which formally became the University of KwaZulu-Natal on 1st January 2004. The mergers, completed in 2006, reduced the number of institutions of higher education in South Africa from 35 universities and technikons to 23 institutions.¹³

In a similar vein to Ginwala, Professor M. W. Makgoba, first Vice-Chancellor of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, spoke in his own inaugural speech about the challenge of overcoming the colonial past and of forging a new African university in an African country. “We have to face and indeed overcome the penalties of a colonial history,” he stated, but we also have to “face the responsibility of being an African university, for it is here that I suspect we will also find our most honourable identity ...”¹⁴

It is in this context, namely, the need to question the past and to transform the university libraries to meet the needs of the future, that this study is undertaken. The current process of transformation provides an opportunity for reflection on the past. Indeed it might be said that the claims of the past demand to be reconciled “with the social forces dictating a different institutional future.”¹⁵

⁸ Council on Higher Education (South Africa), Shape and Size of Higher Education Task Team, *Towards a new higher education landscape*, Pretoria: The Council, 2000, p. 51.

⁹ N.J. Muller, *The management of change*, M.I.S. thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 2003, p. 5.

¹⁰ National plan for higher education, South Africa, *Government gazette* no. 22138, Government notice no. 230, 9th March 2001.

¹¹ A South African term for an institution offering a technological education at a tertiary level. Many South African universities and technikons (now called Universities of Technology) share common historical roots; Kraak explains that “both institutional types arose from a variety of ‘college’ institutional formats. – A. Kraak, “Academic drift” in South African universities, *Perspectives in education*, vol. 24, no. 3, September 2006, p. 136-137.

¹² Now the Durban University of Technology.

¹³ N. Pandor, Foreword, in M.W. Makgoba, *Merger report 2007*, [Durban]: University of KwaZulu-Natal, [2008], p. 2.

¹⁴ M.W. Makgoba, The African university, in *Towards African scholarship*, [Durban]: Public Affairs & Corporate Communications, UKZN, p. 13.

¹⁵ J.E. Flaherty, *Peter Drucker*, San Francisco: Josey-Bass, 1999, p. 99.

1.1. Background to the study and statement of the research problem

The University of Natal was unique in South Africa for many years in that, unlike other South African universities, it was split between two geographically distant campuses, Pietermaritzburg and Durban. Taylor, in her list of South African university libraries, described the University of Natal as having “two seats, one in Durban and one in Pietermaritzburg, towns about fifty miles apart.”¹⁶ It is the only university in her list which is described thus. Other universities, such as the University of Cape Town which has a main campus and three smaller campuses,¹⁷ may be described as “multi-campus” but the University of Natal was the only one which had two main campuses, each situated in a different city. This dual nature provides a unique perspective to the investigation of the development of the University’s library services. Dr H. Coblans, the first University Librarian of the University of Natal, referred to the “administrative complexity” involved in the management of a multi-campus library system and wrote that the libraries represented “in microcosm what is met in trying to integrate the resources of a region: such matters as local union catalogues, centralized cataloguing and co-operative sharing of subject fields.”¹⁸ Nearly half a century later, a team tasked with investigating the University of Natal’s libraries, concluded that the two libraries,

... have been allowed to develop too independently (as can be seen, for example, in the very different staffing structures they have created for themselves). As a result there is very little, if any, sharing of ideas and strategies.¹⁹

The paragraph and statement above thus introduce the research problem which is central to this study, that is, to document the development of the libraries of the University of Natal from inception to the point of merger at the end of 2003 and, in doing so, to discover whether this authoritative statement from a highly placed University Task Team is, in fact, true or partially true. This study is an attempt to understand how and why the situation described above came about through an examination of the historical record. The broad approach to the study is therefore

¹⁶ L.E. Taylor, *South African libraries*, London: Bingley, 1967, p. 35.

¹⁷ The University of Cape Town’s campuses comprise the main Grootte Schuur campus which is divided into the Upper, Middle and Lower campuses, the Breakwater campus, the Hiddingh campus, the Medical Grootte Schuur campus and the Medical School campus. –

<http://www.uct.ac.za/contact/campus/>

¹⁸ H. Coblans, Some problems of a multi-centred library, *South African libraries*, vol. 17, 1949, p. 35.

¹⁹ [University of Natal, Library Task Team], *A report on the University of Natal Libraries submitted to the Executive Implementation Team*, 1998, unpublished, p. 31.

interpretative. In this approach, Henning points out, “Phenomena and events are understood through mental processes of interpretation which are influenced by and interact with social contexts.”²⁰ In contrast to the positivist research paradigm, which argues that the world “operates by laws of cause and effect”²¹ that can be observed and measured, the interpretivist accepts that “all theory is revisable.”²²

The emphasis in an interpretivist research paradigm is on “small-scale research,” on understanding actions and interpreting specific data.²³ Henning notes that uncertainty is “a key principle of this paradigm”²⁴ and that the interpretive researcher analyses texts “to look for the *way* in which people make meaning ... and *what* meaning they make.”²⁵ Likewise, the researcher of history, by critically examining historical sources, represents the past through interpretation, looking for meaning in records and interpreting this meaning as he or she understands it in relation to the “broader contemporary context.”²⁶ In this sense, the approach used to determine meaning in the historical record is hermeneutical,²⁷ based as it is on a disciplined approach to the interpretation and understanding of historical data. As Crotty points out, “Interpreters may end up with an explicit awareness of meanings, and especially assumptions, that the authors themselves would have been unable to articulate.”²⁸ This could be said to be especially true of historical research since the historian is in a position to enjoy the benefit of hindsight.

1.2. The research problem

As noted above, the research problem central to this study was to chart the historical development of the University of Natal Libraries in order to arrive at an understanding of how the libraries developed and whether they did indeed develop differently. A further issue to be explored was to discover whether the personalities of the different University Librarians played a significant role in the development of the two libraries. These two issues, namely, whether and how the two libraries developed differently and the

²⁰ E. Henning, *Finding your way in qualitative research*, Pretoria: Van Schaik, 2004, p. 20.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 19.

²³ P. Clough & C. Nutbrown, *A student's guide to methodology*, London: Sage, 2002, p. 16.

²⁴ Henning, *Finding your way in qualitative research*, p. 20.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ S.J. Shep, Historical investigation, in G.E. Gorman & P. Clayton, *Qualitative research for the information professional*, 2nd edition, London: Facet, 2005, p.163.

²⁷ The term hermeneutics is derived from the Greek word “hermeneuein” meaning “to interpret” or “to understand.” – M. Crotty, *The foundations of social research*, London: Sage, 1998, p. 88.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

influence of personalities on their development constitute the two sub-problems which provided foci for the development of the study and assisted with the selection and interpretation of the historical records.

The evolution of the two Libraries was traced from their colonial roots, through difficult years of political turmoil and isolation to the decade preceding the merger with the University of Durban-Westville. Finally, an attempt was made to reformulate the role of the library in a new, merged institution which will hopefully be useful in the broader context of the South African university library environment of the 21st century. It is likely that the university library of the future will be different to what it has been in the past. As Roberts points out, “Although the passing of the millennium provides a symbolic marker of change, in reality the traditional library has been experiencing a period of steadily increasing change since the 1980s.”²⁹ Similarly Gorman writes that, “We live and work in a time of change. Old certainties no longer seem to apply, and many librarians are fearful about the future of libraries ...”³⁰ One writer has even been so bold as to declare, “The very existence of research libraries as we know them is in doubt.”³¹ Although many of these changes have been ascribed to the so-called technological revolution, a library, as Gorman points out, embraces many different concepts, such as services, collections and staff.³² It is therefore necessary to balance the idea of the technological revolution with the notion that technology is simply a means to an end. Technology assists in enhancing access to resources with a concomitant improvement of services to library users.³³

1.3. Research questions

In order to address the research problem of the study and its two sub-problems, the following four research questions were posed:

- What administrative problems were encountered as the libraries expanded and how did the dual-centred nature of the University of Natal affect their development?

²⁹ S.A. Roberts, Trends and developments in financial management of collections in academic and research libraries, *The bottom line*, vol. 14, no. 3, 2001, p. 152.

³⁰ M. Gorman, *Our enduring values*, Chicago: American Library Association, 2000, p.1.

³¹ D. Butler, The writing is on the web for science journals in print, *Nature*, vol. 397, January 1999, p.195.

³² Gorman, *Our enduring values*, p. 8

³³ Ibid.

- What level of financial support did the University provide to the libraries?
- What impact did the introduction of information and communications technology³⁴ have on the development of the libraries? and lastly;
- What services were offered to users of the libraries and how did these differ between the two centres?

In searching for answers to these questions primary and secondary sources of information were used to gather as comprehensive a range of relevant historical evidence as possible in order to provide an accurate and coherent historical account. The sources consulted are discussed in more detail below.

1.4. The period covered

The period selected covers the founding of the Natal University College in Pietermaritzburg in 1910 to 2003, the year in which the University of Natal officially ceased to exist. The Natal University College was incorporated by an Act of Parliament on 11th December 1909, on the eve of Union and classes began in March 1910 in temporary premises. The exact date of the founding of the first library is not clear but, according to one of the first students,³⁵ the library was started at the end of 1910. It was most likely little more than a collection of classroom texts on a bookshelf in the temporary accommodation in the Pietermaritzburg Town Hall building. The first university building erected in Scottsville, Pietermaritzburg, and opened in 1912, included accommodation for a library and a reading room. The merger of the University of Natal with the University of Durban-Westville on 1 January 2004 marked the end of an era in the history of both the university itself as well as of the two libraries.

³⁴ For the purposes of this study the definition of information and communications technology (ICT) provided in *Harrod's librarian's glossary and reference book*, 9th edition, has been adapted to define the concept as used in this study. The term ICT is "the wording currently in favour ... [used] to express the combination of computing hardware and software" that, together with "the capabilities of communications networks" provides new opportunities for libraries to deliver information. - *Harrod's librarian's glossary and reference book*, 9th edition, Aldershot: Gower, 2000.

³⁵ S.E. Lamond, Early 'varsity days, *Natal University College magazine*, vol. 1, October 1919, p. 34. Lamond completed a Bachelor of Arts degree at the Natal University College in 1910.

1.5. Justification for the study

Professor A.D.M. Walker, Acting Director, Special Research Projects, at the new University of KwaZulu-Natal for the first two years following the merger of the two universities, reaffirmed the centrality of the university library to academic endeavour as follows:

The purpose of a University is to advance knowledge. It does so by increasing it, by transmitting it and by preserving it. The intellectual capital of humankind consists of the knowledge and skills of individuals, and the record of what is known – largely preserved in the research libraries of the world. Prosperous nations recognize this by supporting National Libraries. The United Kingdom has the British Library, the United States the Library of Congress. For a less prosperous nation like South Africa, the intellectual capital, recorded in books, journals, electronic media and other resources, is largely held in university libraries and its preservation is their responsibility.³⁶

Furthermore, he points out that:

The library is a resource, central to the research and teaching activity of the university. It should not be overlooked that, in addition to this, the university has a responsibility to the general academic community, the local community and the nation, to maintain and extend the collections that constitute a large part of our intellectual capital.³⁷

Bridges concurs. He notes that, “In the academic environment the library has traditionally served as part of the core academic experience.”³⁸ The university or college library serves as a connecting force which links students both to the institution of which they are a part as well as to the wider world of scholarship. Disturbingly, however, Bridges is of the opinion that the modern academic library “seems to reflect the consumer values of the contemporary university ... in the name of innovation or service, many libraries have adopted policies and procedures that are actually detrimental to their users.”³⁹ This is in direct contrast with “Library 2.0,”⁴⁰ the new model for library service at the heart of which is, according to Casey and Savastinuk, “user-centred

³⁶ A.D.M. Walker, *Funding policies in the University Libraries*, 2003, unpublished, p. 4.

³⁷ Walker, *Funding policies in the University Libraries*, 2003, p. 4.

³⁸ K. Bridges, Why traditional librarianship matters, *American libraries*, vol. 32, no. 10, November 2001, p. 52.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁴⁰ M.E. Casey & L.C. Savastinuk, Library 2.0, *Library journal*, vol. 131, no.14, 1st September 2006, p. 40.

change.”⁴¹ An historical investigation may be expected to highlight the problems faced by the modern university library in the provision of a service to its users.

Another important consideration is the fact that a university library represents a large cumulative investment of university capital. Changes cannot therefore be lightly undertaken. Through historical investigation it is possible to acquire an historical perspective which may usefully inform the planning of the library of the future. This is hardly a new argument. Historians have long argued that a study of history can lead us to an understanding of the present and thus help us to plan the future. Lloyd writes that:

Both ancient Greece and ancient China (among other societies) came to use the active study of the past as a resource for understanding the present and anticipating the future, providing a powerful if certainly not unambiguous weapon in the evaluation of the current *status quo* or the recent conduct of affairs ...⁴²

Philosopher, cultural historian and opportunist⁴³ De Vleeschauwer, arguing in a rather circuitous manner for the scientific value of history, considered that “The present is full of the past.”⁴⁴ He goes on to explain this paradoxical statement by noting that “History may be regarded as a living science when it leads to an explanation of the present.”⁴⁵

Yet the past, argues Irwin, cannot be considered as a dress-rehearsal for the future:

Some will defend the careful investigation of the past by its practical value today, dwelling on the so-called lessons of history and the repetition of cause and effect. There is danger here, for such lessons as history can teach are inconclusive, uncertain and double-faced... If we seek immediate value in the study of history, we should do well to regard it as a source of inspiration rather than practical guidance.⁴⁶

He also points out that:

The special gift of Clio⁴⁷ is the power to see the temporal universe as a whole: the recorded past, the momentary present and, so far as we can penetrate it, the misty future, as a single span of human thought and activity, much as a traveller views the whole landscape from a mountain top.⁴⁸

⁴¹ Casey & Savastinuk, *Library journal*, vol. 131, no.14, 1st September 2006, p. 40.

⁴² G.E.R. Lloyd, *The ambitions of curiosity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, p.18.

⁴³ For an interesting discussion of De Vleeschauwer’s dubious past, see: A.L. Dick, Scholarship, identity and lies, *Kleio*, 34, 2002, p. 5-27.

⁴⁴ H.J. De Vleeschauwer, Library history in library science, *Mousaion*, no. 29, p. 13.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ R. Irwin, *The English library*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1966, p.14.

⁴⁷ Clio, the Muse of History, was one of the nine muses in ancient Greek mythology – *The Cambridge encyclopedia*, edited by D. Crystal, 4th edition, London: BCA, 1994.

⁴⁸ Irwin, *The English library*, p.14-15.

Understanding the present and anticipating and managing change with some measure of success therefore depends to an extent on our appreciation and understanding of history or, at the very least, our identifying and understanding social trends. Shiflett notes that “history ... perhaps more than other research methods, provides librarians with a context.”⁴⁹ It should be remembered, though, that the situation is complicated by the fact that historical interpretation can never be entirely objective, as noted below in the section on the characteristics of historical research. According to Dick, the demise of apartheid contributed to an “an end of history mentality among many South African information professionals.”⁵⁰ In Suttie’s opinion, too, South Africans in general were encouraged to “forget the past, or at least lay it to rest.”⁵¹ However, this limited outlook, Dick argues,

... threatens to erode an awareness of the weight of the past on the present, and to overlook continuities and changes that shape both the way we think about our social roles and how we do our work.⁵²

Shep argues convincingly that, “in any organization it is impossible to understand the present situation without an appreciation of the past, of the organization’s history.”⁵³ This argument would apply particularly if one were concerned with change since, he goes on to explain, “historical perspective is vital both in providing a realistic idea of what might be feasible and in revealing any distorted representations of the past that may be obstructing change.”⁵⁴ Wiegand agrees. “Historians,” he states, “study the past to augment understanding of the present.”⁵⁵

Thus this study, by investigating the historical record of the nine decades of existence of the University of Natal Libraries, is not only a revelation of the past but will also, it is hoped, assist in identifying possible future trends in academic librarianship in South Africa, particularly as far as the management of multi-centred university libraries is concerned. The value of the study also lies in the consolidation and interpretation of information in numerous unpublished records and scattered, ephemeral resources.

⁴⁹ O.L. Shiflett, Clio’s claim, *Library trends*, Spring 1984, p. 390.

⁵⁰ A. L. Dick, Editorial, *Innovation*, no. 28, June 2004.

⁵¹ M.-L. Suttie, The University of South Africa Library, *Mousaion*, vol. 24, no. 2, 2006, p. 284.

⁵² Dick, *Innovation*, no. 28, June 2004.

⁵³ Shep, in *Qualitative research for the information professional*, p.160.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.160-161.

⁵⁵ W.A. Wiegand, Introduction, in *Leaders in American librarianship*, edited by W.A. Wiegand, Pittsburgh, Pa.: Beta Phi Mu, 1983, p. 3.

1.6. Research methodology

The historical research method was chosen for this study. Given the nature of the research problem this was deemed to be the most suitable research methodology. Although, as Shep points out, it is difficult to find “a simple and agreed definition”⁵⁶ of historical investigation, for the purposes of this study historical research is defined as the gathering of significant information about an event or a series of events and the interpretation of the data collected. In this study the social role of history, which lays stress on the analysis of information and the elucidation of “causes and consequences,”⁵⁷ is emphasized. Historical research is distinguished from chronology in that while chronology is confined to the setting down of events in the order of their occurrence, historical research is concerned with the analysis and interpretation of historical events in context. Chronology is, of course, a useful first step in the process of historical research and a timeline of significant events in the history of the University of Natal Libraries is provided in Appendix 1.

1.6.1. Characteristics of historical research

An historical investigation is, according to Shep, defined by the following characteristics:

- A concern with the past. A distinction may be made between history as it actually occurred and “history” as the historian’s account of what happened. Obviously, as we cannot re-enact the past, our concern is with the latter meaning of history, that is, the account written by the historian who has worked with the evidence of the past;
- The relationship between the historian and the sources. The nature of an historical account is dependent upon the historian’s focus and his or her interpretation of the evidence surviving from the past. There is constant interaction between interpretation and the evidence and depending on the historian’s focus, some data will be accorded more attention than other data;
- As interpretation in an historical account is very important, it must be borne in mind that historians, in attempting to describe and explain past events, also bring their own “pre-existing interpretive frameworks” which have been shaped by their social concerns, preoccupations and historical background to the work.

⁵⁶ Shep, in *Qualitative research for the information professional*, p. 162.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

Some historians take up a particular theoretical or political stance of which their readers need to be aware. There is a fine line between history and social memory and history and propaganda;

- Historians use imagination and empathy in order to interpret historical records and to create historical concepts.⁵⁸

History is therefore defined as the “representation of the past in the work of historians.”⁵⁹ Through critical examination, evaluation, prioritisation and interpretation of historical evidence, the historian builds an historical context and communicates his or her interpretation of that context in written form.

1.6.2. The historical research method

Various scholars have expressed differing viewpoints on what constitutes the proper historical research method, in particular regarding the extent to which historical research methods can approximate scientific methods in order to achieve objectivity. However, the interpretive theory of knowledge holds that scientific methods “can only give us an approximation of the truth.”⁶⁰ Thus it would serve no purpose to reiterate those arguments here. There are, however, established conventions which govern the ways in which historians conduct research. Most scholars identify four phases in the historical research process. These are:

- The location of relevant information sources (historical data);
- The evaluation of these sources;
- The interpretation of the evidence found in the sources; and
- The recording of findings or conclusions.

Some scholars add another phase: the formulation of an hypothesis, if appropriate. Unfortunately, the problem with historical hypotheses, as Powell and Connaway point out, is that it can be far more difficult to test an historical hypothesis than it is to test one developed for another type of research because “the researcher obviously has no control over the relevant variables.”⁶¹ One cannot turn back the clock and re-enact the past.

⁵⁸ Shep, in *Qualitative research for the information professional*, p. 162-163.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

⁶⁰ Henning, *Finding your way in qualitative research*, p. 20.

⁶¹ R.R. Powell & L.S. Connaway, *Basic research methods for librarians*, 4th edition, Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2004, p.218.

Even Goldhor, a determined proponent of the historical hypothesis, admits that an historian “never knows for sure whether the evidence he has is enough, and whether the next batch he uncovers will disagree with his hypothesis and force a revision in it.”⁶² He does, however, make an important point regarding the purpose of historical research, stating that “If historical research seeks to understand the past ... it is necessary to consider causality because it moves the focus of the study from description to explanation...”⁶³

For this study a research problem and two sub-problems, as stated above, were developed and four research questions were posed. The research questions have served as guidelines for the structure of each chapter of the study.

1.6.3. Historical data sources

Shep highlights two distinctions regarding historical data sources which need to be borne in mind. The first relates to the distinction between primary and secondary data sources.⁶⁴ Primary data sources may be described as those which came into existence during the period to which they refer. They are usually regarded by historians “as being closest to the ultimate ‘Truth’ about historical events”⁶⁵ although they may and often do reflect the biases and opinions of their authors. Powell and Connaway contend that “The use of primary sources tends to ensure the integrity of a study and to strengthen its reliability.”⁶⁶ Secondary sources are accounts written by historians about past events or periods. “Secondary sources”, warn Leedy and Ormrod, “inevitably reflect the assumptions and biases of the people who wrote them.”⁶⁷ Such biases in both primary and secondary data sources need not pose a problem, provided one is aware of their probable existence. In fact, biases reflected in primary data may assist in the interpretation of information in its contemporary context.⁶⁸

⁶² H.H. Goldhor, *An introduction to scientific research in librarianship*, Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois, Graduate School of Library Science, 1972, p.110.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.111.

⁶⁴ Shep, in *Qualitative research for the information professional*, p.164.

⁶⁵ P.D. Leedy, & J.E. Ormrod, *Practical research*, Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson, 2005, p.165.

⁶⁶ Powell & Connaway, *Basic research methods for librarians*, p. 214.

⁶⁷ Leedy & Ormrod, *Practical research*, p.164.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

A second distinction may be made concerning the nature of the evidence derived from the sources. This, says Shep, may be described as “witting and unwitting testimony”.⁶⁹ Witting testimony is provided by sources created deliberately for posterity. Examples of such sources include official reports, formal minutes of meetings, newsletters and guides. “Unwitting testimony” refers to sources which were not created for posterity; in most instances such sources have been created by the author for his or her information only. Examples of such are private correspondence, notes made in the margins of reports by University Librarian as *aide memoires* to themselves or handwritten notes made in preparation for an address to the particular University Senate. In this study extensive use was made of primary sources, both official, such as minutes of library committee meetings, and unofficial, such as notes written by first University Librarian, Dr H. Coblans, in preparation for committee meetings, which provide some insight into his extreme frustration with the University authorities.

1.6.4. Evaluation of data

Once historical data relevant to the particular research problem have been located it is necessary that their authenticity or validity be determined. Most scholars agree that there are two types of evaluation. The first is an evaluation of the external evidence and includes such techniques as handwriting analysis, identification of ink and paper, writing style and even carbon dating.⁷⁰ Fortunately, since the University of Natal came into being less than a century ago, it was fairly easy to establish the authenticity of the various reports, letters, minutes, handbooks and other primary sources consulted without going to these lengths. In some instances individuals were able to provide first-hand verification of documents. Undated documents were problematic but in most cases it was possible to estimate dates. Electronic sources can pose special problems for the historical researcher as their authenticity and integrity may be difficult to determine given the ease with which such documents can be modified.⁷¹ For the purposes of this study, the only electronic sources which were consulted were those which had been printed out. In fact, the printed copies of e-mail letters and other documents were the only copies available, a situation which served as a reminder of how easily electronic documents can be deleted or trashed and thus lost completely.

⁶⁹ Shep, in *Qualitative research for the information professional*, p. 164.

⁷⁰ Leedy & Ormrod, *Practical research*, p. 167.

⁷¹ Shep, in *Qualitative research for the information professional*, p. 168.

The second type of evaluation concerns the internal evidence, in other words, what do the data mean?⁷² Questions the researcher should ask regarding the data include “What was the writer trying to say?” or, “What was his or her intention?” One needs to bear in mind possible bias on the part of the author of a document when evaluating data. The same document prepared for different readers may be written with different emphases or may even leave out information. Sometimes, what has been left out of a document may be as relevant as the content itself. A wide variety of source material was used in this study and, where possible, sources were cross-checked against other sources or oral evidence in an attempt to counteract the effects of bias.

1.6.5. Interpretation of the data

The interpretation of the information lies, to quote Leedy and Ormrod, at the “heart of the historical method.”⁷³ The gathering of information about an event or series of events and the organisation of this information into a chronological sequence will yield an historical narrative but it does not constitute historical research. Such narratives have their place and value but the historical researcher will attempt to understand and explain the past.

The dimensions of time and space are important concepts which the researcher must bear in mind when attempting to interpret historical data. Historical time refers to chronology, the setting down of events in the order in which they occurred, without any attempt at interpreting them. Chronology is also an essential first step in the attempt to reconstruct an event or series of events which took place in the past. The juxtaposition of more than one set of chronological data can assist the researcher to gain increased insight into the problem under study⁷⁴ and the use of multiple timelines helps the researcher to place events in context. Such an analysis might reveal a pattern of events meaningful to the study as a whole. A timeline of the events in the history of the two libraries was employed in this study and was juxtaposed with the chronology provided by Thompson in his *A history of South Africa*.⁷⁵

⁷² Leedy & Ormrod, *Practical research*, p.167

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.161.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p.170.

⁷⁵ See Appendix 1 and Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, p. xiv-xviii.

Historical space refers to the geographical location in which events occurred. Maps are the usual tools used. In this study, three maps are included.⁷⁶ The first shows the Republic of South Africa as it was prior to 1994, the second shows the Republic of South Africa as it is today, divided into nine provinces, and the third is a map of KwaZulu-Natal (formerly Natal) which shows clearly the two cities, Pietermaritzburg and Durban.

1.6.6. Recording the findings

Once data have been collected, organized and analysed, the final phase is the writing up of the research. As noted above, chronology is an essential first task but, once all the facts have been accumulated and organized in the order in which they occurred, the researcher must then establish links between events, decide on which to prioritise and to attempt to explain “how and why things happened and what their outcomes were.”⁷⁷ This study was based on a chronological framework in order to best show the logical progression of events as they occurred. The thematic approach was considered but abandoned at an early stage as unnecessarily complicated. A thematic approach would have necessitated the repetition of information in the discussions around each theme which would not only have confused the reader but would have been tedious as well. The study is written as a narrative, with interpretations and explanations interwoven throughout the discussion.

1.7. Primary sources consulted

The annual reports of the University Librarians provided a great deal of data about the University Library. The earliest reports were little more than records of statistics but the later reports, particularly those written during the 1980s, provided a wealth of information on the libraries. Agendas and minutes of library committee meetings were also excellent sources of data. Minutes of meetings of the University Senate and other University committees were consulted to cross-check information when necessary. Unfortunately, all Senate and Council minute books prior to 1973 were destroyed in a fire in 2005 at the off-site storage depot where they had been sent for safekeeping⁷⁸ but fortunately extracts of minutes of Senate meetings held from 1968 to 1984 which

⁷⁶ See Appendix 2.

⁷⁷ Shep, in *Qualitative research for the information professional*, p. 173.

⁷⁸ A fire in the MetroFile warehouse, Durban, which took place in April 2005, destroyed all University of Natal documents stored there. Confirmed by telephone on 8th September, 2007.

pertained to Library affairs had been meticulously pasted into the Durban Library Committee minute books. Senate and Council minutes of meetings from 1973 onwards are held in the University Archives in Pietermaritzburg. Library newsletters also contained useful contemporary information about new books, library staff and services offered to users. The Pietermaritzburg University Librarian, Mr R.A. Brown, wrote three short articles on the early history of the Pietermaritzburg Library between October 1971 and June 1973 which served to give some guidelines to events, despite the paucity of material available on the early years of the University Library.

It was discovered that the Library in Durban had a particularly rich collection of letters, memoranda and reports which covered all the libraries. It seems that copies of all these documents were kept in Durban because that is where all three University Librarians were based.⁷⁹

Information regarding the types of materials acquired for the collections as well as receipts of donations was gleaned from old accessions registers, some of which had notes scribbled in the margins. This is a prime example of unwitting testimony – these notes were not written for posterity and were likely meant only for the scribbler's eyes.

Photographs were also a useful source of information. As Childress points out:

Much can be learned from the study of photographs, and the most obvious detail is the physical appearance of the library building as it evolved from a single purpose to a multi-use facility.⁸⁰

Photographs of buildings, internal views of the libraries, library staff, press photographs and photographs of other subject matter were studied for any information they could provide.

Oral testimonies assisted in verifying information pertaining to the written record, shedding light on certain events and providing added insight. Enquiries pertaining to specific events or to particular personalities were preferred to formal interviews. The

⁷⁹ A unitary library system was introduced in 1946 under the control of a single University Librarian who was responsible for the libraries in both centres but was based in Durban. This arrangement persisted until 1967 and thereafter reverted to two separate libraries, each with a University Librarian in charge.

⁸⁰ B. Childress, Library history, university history, and photographic history, *Journal of library history, philosophy and comparative librarianship*, vol. 22, no. 1, Winter 1987, p. 71.

only formal interview which was conducted did not yield any relevant information, possibly because the interviewee had been retired for a long time and had forgotten most of the events which took place during her working life at the University of Natal.

Other primary sources were consulted which provided information on the milieu in which university libraries in South Africa operated. These included minutes of meetings of the Inter-University Library Committee (IULC), a sub-committee of the Committee of University Principals, and the minutes of meetings of the Natal branch, the Committee on Library Co-operation in Natal (COLCIN) and its successor, the eastern seaboard Association of Libraries (esAL), reports of the South African Bibliographic and Information Network (SABINET), newsletters and reports from the national library associations such as the South African Library Association (SALA) and its successor, the South African Institute for Librarianship and Information Science (SAILIS), the Library and Information Workers' Organisation (LIWO) and similar bodies. Plaques attached to buildings provided information on dates of opening, as did glossy publicity pamphlets issued when new buildings were officially opened.

1.8. Secondary sources consulted

Hattersley⁸¹ and Brookes⁸² provide some information on the University libraries in their histories of the Natal University College and the University of Natal respectively. Articles published in *South African libraries* and its successor, the *South African journal of library and information science*,⁸³ as well as numerous other journal articles, provided information and insight on conditions prevailing in university libraries in South Africa in general during various periods. Theses on various aspects of the University Libraries were also consulted for the information they might yield.

⁸¹ A.F. Hattersley, *The early history of the Natal University College*, 1948, unpublished manuscript, and A.F. Hattersley, *The University of Natal, 1909 – 1960*, 1960, unpublished manuscript.

⁸² E.H. Brookes, *A history of the University of Natal*, Pietermaritzburg: University Press, 1966.

⁸³ Title varies: from vol. 49 –51 title was: *South African journal for librarianship and information science*; from vol. 52- 67 title was: *South African journal of library and information science*.

1.9. Scope and limitations of the study

The scope of this study is limited to the investigation of the historical record of the libraries of the University of Natal. Part of its value, as has been pointed out above, lies in the consolidation and interpretation of scattered, ephemeral material and unpublished information. Primary material was, on the whole, fairly easily obtainable in the University of KwaZulu-Natal Archives, in library files and in the manuscript collections of the Campbell Collections. As noted above, oral testimonies were also used to assist in the verification of the written record. Comparisons with other university libraries in South Africa have been made where relevant and provided information was available, but an in-depth historical analysis of university libraries on a national scale lay beyond the scope of this study. As will be noted in the literature review, very little has been written on the history of university libraries in South Africa. It was thus impossible to undertake an in-depth historical review of and comparison between all South African universities in the time available.

1.10. Structure of the study

The study is divided into three main sections. The first three chapters are introductory chapters. Chapter One introduces the study, providing a background to the study and stating the research problem, listing the research questions, discussing the justification for and scope of the study and describing the research methodology chosen. Chapter Two reviews the relevant literature, contextualizing the study and identifying the niche which this research will occupy. Chapter Three provides the background to the study, including a brief historical overview of higher education in South Africa and describing the founding of the Natal University College, later to become the University of Natal.

In the next eight chapters the history of the University libraries is examined. Chapters Four and Five discuss the earliest years of the library services, from 1912, when space in the newly erected College building in Scottsville was set aside for a library, to 1945. Chapter Four is devoted to the early history of the Pietermaritzburg Library while the early history of the Durban Library, started in 1931, is considered in Chapter Five. Chapters Six to Eight deal with the period during which the library system was a unitary one, administered by a single University Librarian. A separate chapter is devoted to each University Librarian since each made his own contribution to the development of the

University Libraries. There were three during this period: Dr H. Coblans (1946-1953), Mr J. W. Perry (1954-1961), and Mr (later Dr) S. I. Malan (1962-1967).⁸⁴ Chapters Nine to Eleven are divided into periods which correspond roughly with the first three phases of Dr R. D. Stueart's "four phases in the history of library development."⁸⁵ These are:

- The paper library;
- The automated library, and;
- The electronic library.

Stueart's fourth phase, the digital library, which may best described as the "library of the future"⁸⁶ does not feature in this study.

Chapter Twelve forms the third section of the study and concludes the research. This chapter provides an overview of the entire study, outlining the major themes and summarising the findings related to the research problem and the four research questions. Limitations of the study are also discussed and the implications for policy and practice as well as for further research are highlighted.

1.11. Summary

This introductory chapter has provided an overview of the study, giving the background, stating the research problem and providing the justification for the study. The scope and limitations of the study have also been outlined. The methodology chosen and the sources used have been discussed in depth. The next chapter will review the literature on the history of university libraries in South Africa, thus providing the context within which this study was carried out.

⁸⁴ Shortly before Malan commenced work, the post of University Librarian was regraded to Library Director.

⁸⁵ R.D. Stueart, Talk delivered to the Library and Information Association of South Africa, KwaZulu-Natal Branch, at the Consulate of the United States of America in Durban, on 14th August 2006.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

Chapter Two

The history of university libraries in South Africa: a review of the literature

The purpose of this review of the literature on the history of South African university libraries is to provide a contextual framework for the study. As a former colony of the British Empire, the majority of South Africa's universities were moulded along the lines of contemporary British universities. It therefore stands to reason that university libraries, too, conformed to the pattern of their British counterparts. Hoare notes that "British influences affected new library developments throughout the Empire, as they continued to do for many years,"⁸⁷ and Rosenberg, too, argues that, as the European powers colonised Africa, "the types of libraries which were well established in the home countries, were founded."⁸⁸ Manaka agrees. He has written that "[Library services in South Africa] are greatly biased towards western culture and explicitly manifest their Anglo-American origins."⁸⁹ University libraries in the United States of America have also, to a certain extent, exerted an influence on South African university libraries. In fact Hamlin makes the bold claim that library service "throughout the world" was transformed by innovations introduced into university libraries in the United States from 1876, the year he calls the "*annus mirabilis*"⁹⁰ of American⁹¹ librarianship. South African universities and, by association, their libraries, are therefore rooted in the culture of Anglo-American higher education.

⁸⁷ P. Hoare, Fifteen hundred years of libraries, *Library & information update*, vol. 6, no. 1/2, January/February 2007, p. 55.

⁸⁸ D. Rosenberg, The sustainability of libraries and resource centres in Africa, in *Knowledge, information and development*, edited by C. Stilwell, A. Leach & S. Burton, Pietermaritzburg: School of Human and Social Studies, University of Natal, 2001, p. 11-24.

⁸⁹ S. Manaka, The future of libraries in South Africa, in: *A world too wide*, edited by Joseph Sherman, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand Library, 1993, p. 51.

⁹⁰ A. T. Hamlin, *The university library in the United States*, Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981, p. 45.

⁹¹ The adjective "American" is used for libraries specifically in the United States of America.

2.1. Universities and university libraries in Africa: the geographical context

University education in Africa did not, as is too often assumed, begin with the arrival of the Europeans in Africa in the 17th century. In spite of the fact that African universities today resemble Western universities and the assumption is therefore made that “higher education in Africa is a Western colonial invention,”⁹² Lulat argues that institutions of higher education did in fact exist in pre-colonial Africa. One of the most famous “universities” of ancient times was founded in Alexandria in Egypt by Ptolemy I Soter. Although not a “university” in the modern sense, since there was no systematic method of teaching or examining of students, Lulat contends that the library complex at Alexandria “resembled in many ways a research institute with librarians acting as scholars in residence.”⁹³ El-Abbadi explains:

By renown, the most famous ... was the Library of Alexandria. Not only was it the largest in all antiquity, but it was associated with scientific research and was frequented by scholars from all over the Mediterranean. Even after its disappearance with the decline of the ancient world, it continued to survive in the memory of medieval authors. In the same way, its fate continues to be a bone of contention among scholars to this day. The reason for this extraordinary interest, is that the Library and the Mouseion were the chief representatives of the civilization of their time and the foundation on which arose the ancient University of Alexandria which upheld the banner of international scholarship and learning for more than seven centuries.⁹⁴

The ancient library at Alexandria has captured the imagination of scholars over the centuries and it features in numerous scholarly texts on library history. In recent years the Egyptian government, in an effort to “recapture the spirit of openness and scholarship of the original Bibliotheca Alexandrina,”⁹⁵ built a new library near the site of the ancient library. Opened in 2003, the modern Bibliotheca Alexandrina is far more than just a library. Offering a general library, six specialised libraries, three museums, a planetarium, an exploratorium designed to introduce children to science, seven

⁹² Y.G.-M. Lulat, The development of higher education in Africa, in *African higher education*, edited by D. Teferra & P.G. Altbach, Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2003, p. 15.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁹⁴ M. El-Abbadi, *The life and fate of the ancient Library of Alexandria*. [Paris]: Unesco, 1990, p. 76-77.

⁹⁵ The Bibliotheca Alexandrina, <http://www.bibalex.org/English/Overview/overview.htm> .

academic research centres and a variety of other services, it can truly be described as a centre of scholarship and learning in the spirit of its ancient precursor.

North Africa was also home to a number of other universities, including the Ez-Zitouna madrasa in Tunis, founded in 732, the Quaraouiyine mosque university founded in Fez in 859, the Al-Azhar mosque university founded in Cairo in 969, and the Sankore mosque university founded some time during the twelfth century in Timbuktu, in present day Mali.⁹⁶ Neither the histories of the universities themselves nor their libraries could be traced but this is not surprising since any histories that may have been written would most likely have been in Arabic. Of these North African centres of learning, Timbuktu is the most famous. Described as “still home to many philosophers and scholars of Islam,”⁹⁷ it is also home to the famous Timbuktu manuscripts which caught the public imagination in South Africa when South African President, after visiting Mali in 2001, pledged to assist with the restoration of the ancient manuscripts which had been found to be in a poor condition. In May 2008 it was announced that South Africa will contribute R1-million towards the construction of a new library in Timbuktu “where ancient manuscripts dating back to the early 13th century were found – as part of a bi-national agreement between the two countries ...”⁹⁸

In sub-Saharan Africa there are few higher education institutions of any great age and certainly, as far as can be ascertained, none to rival the age of the North African universities mentioned above. Rosenberg has pointed out that, “Until the arrival of the Europeans in Africa, the continent, except for the Islamic North and Christian Ethiopia, remained mostly preliterate.”⁹⁹ The oldest university, according to Shiflett, is the University of Sierra Leone which can trace its heritage to the Fourah Bay College founded by the British Church Missionary Society in 1827,¹⁰⁰ two years before the founding of the South African College in Cape Town in 1829, the forerunner of the University of Cape Town.

⁹⁶ Lulat, in *African higher education*, p. 16.

⁹⁷ *Saving the Timbuktu manuscripts*, <http://www.southafrica.info/africa/timbuktumanuscripts.htm> .

⁹⁸ G. Khumalo, *SA gives R1m for Timbuktu library*, <http://www.southafrica.info/africa/timbuktumanuscripts.htm> .

⁹⁹ Rosenberg, in *Knowledge, information and development*, 2001, p.11.

¹⁰⁰ O.L. Shiflett, *Academic libraries*, in *Encyclopedia of library history*, p. 5.

In a 1997 survey of the experiences and achievements of university libraries in Africa, Rosenberg provides brief but useful historical background notes on 18 university libraries in a number of African countries.¹⁰¹ However, as Dick points out, “Little has been done to collate solid historical library research already undertaken by Africans themselves ...”¹⁰² There are no comprehensive surveys of historical research into African library history on lines similar to surveys published in Britain and the United States. In fact, the amount of historical research available on American libraries is arguably the most substantial in the world. The first comprehensive survey of the literature of American library history was compiled by Shera in 1945, covering the years 1850 to 1945, and was published in the *Library quarterly* of 15th January 1945. Wiegand, in his critical overview of American library history literature from 1947 to 1997, notes that a “substantial base of quality literature”¹⁰³ has been established over the intervening half century, supporting Colson’s notion of the “flowering” of American library historiography which followed Shera’s article.¹⁰⁴ The *Bibliography of library history*, an annual bibliography which first appeared in 1968 in the *Journal of library history* and which, from 1990 onwards, can be consulted online on the website of the American Library Association’s Library History Round Table¹⁰⁵ occasionally includes references to journal articles and theses on African library history. Since Fall 1995 a separate “Africa, Asia and other” section has been included which facilitates retrieval of references to literature written about libraries in these areas. However, the fact remains that it is difficult to trace literature on the history of African libraries and, says Dick, “because we do not know who or where the library historians in (or of) Africa are, there is no active research community.”¹⁰⁶

2.2. South Africa

The history of university education in South Africa is reviewed in Chapter Three. For the purposes of this literature review, it is sufficient to mention that the University of the

¹⁰¹ D. Rosenberg, *University libraries in Africa*, London: International African Institute, 1997, 3 vols.

¹⁰² A.L. Dick, Editorial, *Innovation*, no. 28, June 2004.

¹⁰³ W. Wiegand, American library history literature, 1947-1997, *Libraries & culture*, vol. 35, no. 1, Winter 2000, p. 4.

¹⁰⁴ J.C. Colson, The writing of American library history, 1876-1976, *Library trends*, vol. 25, no. 1, July 1976, p. 8.

¹⁰⁵ *Bibliography of library history*, edited by E. Goedeken, <http://www.ala.org/ala/lhrt/libhistorybib/libraryhistory.cfm>

¹⁰⁶ Dick, *Innovation*, no. 28, June 2004.

Cape of Good Hope, founded in 1873, was the first South African university. It was an examining body only which meant that it did not have need of a library. Thus the oldest university library in South Africa is that of the University of Cape Town which can trace its roots back to the founding of the South African College in 1829.

On 23rd September 1829 the following advertisement, soliciting donations of books, appeared in the *South African commercial advertiser*:

SOUTH AFRICAN COLLEGE

The Council of Managers and Directors of the South Africa College having determined to establish a Library for the use of the Students, beg to inform the Public, that any Donation of Classical, Instructive, or Amusing Books for that purpose, will be thankfully received by them. J. de Wet, Secretary.¹⁰⁷

It is therefore fitting that the first contribution to South African university library history was written by R.F.M. Immelmann, University Librarian at the University of Cape Town from 1940 to 1971. In an article which appeared in *Mousaion*, entitled “A contribution to the history of scholarly libraries in the Cape Province (before 1920),” he wrote:

“Although the history of public libraries in South Africa has been written up to some extent; the history of scholarly libraries has received very little attention.”¹⁰⁸ Included under the banner of “scholarly libraries” were university, reference and research libraries as well as the libraries of learned societies. Immelmann adds that “This [article] is intended to be a first contribution to the history of such libraries as a preliminary step to a more exhaustive account.”¹⁰⁹

In spite of Immelmann’s optimism, an “exhaustive account” has not yet been written. There is still a paucity of literature available on the history of South African university libraries and, unlike in Britain and the United States, no comprehensive literature surveys of South African library history appear to have been drawn up. This made it difficult to trace works on the subject and a number of different sources had to be consulted in order to draw up as complete a picture as possible. A useful paper presented by Aucamp at the annual South African Library Association Conference held in 1978 in Johannesburg provides an overview of university libraries in South Africa

¹⁰⁷ R.F.M. Immelmann, *University of Cape Town Libraries, 1829-1955*, Rondebosch: University of Cape Town Libraries, 1956, p. 1.

¹⁰⁸ R.F.M. Immelmann, A contribution to the history of scholarly libraries in the Cape Province (before 1920), *Mousaion*, no. 5, 1955, p. 25.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

from 1828.¹¹⁰ Other sources consulted include a number of journals such as *Innovation* (an entire issue of *Innovation* was devoted to library history in 2004), *Mousaion*, *South African libraries*, and its successors, the *South African journal for librarianship and information science* and the *South African journal of libraries and information science* (title varies slightly) and South African databases: *SACat* (the South African online union catalogue) *SA e-publications* and the *Union catalogue of theses and dissertations*. International databases such as *Academic Search Premier* (available via EbscoHost), *Emerald*, *Library and Information Science Abstracts* and *Library, Information Science and Technical Abstracts* were also searched.

2.2.1. Histories of South African universities

A number of histories of South African universities were examined for their treatment of the development of their academic libraries.¹¹¹ Although most make mention of their university libraries, few devote more than a few lines to the topic. These are discussed below, arranged in alphabetical order by author, if there is a personal author or, in the case of works compiled by editorial committees or more than three personal authors, by title.

Ad destinatum: gedenkboek van die Universiteit van Pretoria covers the years 1910 to 1960 and contains five index references to the University of Pretoria Library. Of these an entire section of 15 pages is devoted to the development of the Library, including the Library buildings, cataloguing and classification, growth of collections and donations received, the library staff and the problem of untrained staff who were “originally not even matriculated,”¹¹² cataloguing and classification and branch libraries. A number of photographs of the exterior and interior of the Library are also provided. Of all the works perused, this book contained the most comprehensive overview of the university library.

Boucher’s *Spes in arduis: a history of the University of South Africa* has 15 index references to the library but very little information about the library is provided apart

¹¹⁰ P. Aucamp, *Universiteits- en kollegebiblioteke in Suid-Afrika, 1828 – 1989*, in *South African Library Association Conference (Johannesburg : 1978), Papers presented at the conference, Johannesburg, 1978*, Potchefstroom: SALA, 1978, p. 157-184.

¹¹¹ The publications consulted were, of necessity, confined to items in the University of KwaZulu-Natal Libraries or available for loan through the national interlending network.

¹¹² *Ad destinatum*, Johannesburg: Voortrekkerpers, 1960, p. 314.

from a photograph of the library building on the south-east corner of Skinner and Van der Walt Streets in Pretoria, a very brief mention of the budget and a heartfelt complaint about the lack of staff in 1953 by the Librarian, Dr H. Zastrau.¹¹³

Brookes's *A history of the University of Natal* contains 12 index references to the library. He provides some details on the early beginnings of the University Library and makes brief mention of various aspects throughout his work. A paragraph is devoted to an overview of the growth of the collections from 1946 to 1964 and mention is made of the appointment of a Director of Library Services which, states Brookes, "marked a forward move in the history of the Library."¹¹⁴

Challenge to a South African university: the University of Durban-Westville, edited by Oosthuizen, purports to present a critical overview of the founding of one of South Africa's ethnic universities, namely the University College for Indians. Its tone is, however, somewhat defensive of the government policy of the time which provided for the education of different race groups on a strictly segregated basis. Some information is provided on the size of the collection and the new library building. It is also mentioned that "In 1981 the Library is installing a modern, computerized information retrieval and library management system, the first of its kind in a South African university library."¹¹⁵ This is incorrect since other South African universities, notably the University of South Africa and the Rand Afrikaans University, were already quite advanced in the area of library computerization at the time, as will be discussed later on in this study.

Currey's history, *Rhodes University, 1904 – 1970: a chronicle*, has only two index references to the Rhodes University Library. However he has provided a fairly comprehensive three-page section on the growth and development of the library and its collections as well as some interesting insights into the organisation of an early South African university library. One cannot help but sympathise with the "devoted Honorary Librarian," a member of the Senate, whose task, for 38 years, "of acquiring, classifying, housing and distributing the books of the Rhodes Library was a labour of love carried out

¹¹³ M. Boucher, *Spes in arduis*, Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1973, p. 291.

¹¹⁴ E.H. Brookes, *A history of the University of Natal*, Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1966, p. 138.

¹¹⁵ *Challenge to a South African university*, chief editor G.C. Oosthuizen, Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1981, p. 57.

... with a Committee and a small Library staff to help him.”¹¹⁶ The problem of space is also an all-too familiar one. The Rhodes University Library, like most other libraries the world over, had to contend with lack of space to house its growing collections. Currey comments wryly that “Books take up space, as we are reminded by the almost frantic efforts of old and famous libraries to deal with this awkward fact.”¹¹⁷ Rhodes University Library also, in the early days, received its share of unsolicited donations:

... students of these early days remember that while they sought in vain for many standard works they needed to consult there was nevertheless, within three years of the start of things, a very remarkable collection of volumes. For in 1907 there arrived at Rhodes some hundreds of massive quarto volumes of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ... as a gift to the Library from H.M. Stationery Office...It is possible that of some of these volumes the leaves have not yet been cut; but in 1907 they certainly gave an air of respectable erudition to the infant Library. It would be interesting to know who it was that suggested to whom that these books should be given to Rhodes University College in the Eastern Province of the Cape Colony.¹¹⁸

*From Grey to gold: the first 100 years of the University of the Free State*¹¹⁹ is a beautifully illustrated celebration of the centenary of the University of the Free State. It has three sections on the library, from its beginnings under an Honorary Librarian who combined responsibility for the library with his teaching role through its development into a modern information service to students and staff of the University. Interestingly, S.I. Malan, Library Director at the University of Natal from 1962 to 1967, was the second professionally trained librarian to be appointed, succeeding D.I. Ehlers as University Librarian in May 1947.¹²⁰

Murray’s two volume work on the history of the University of the Witwatersrand, entitled respectively *Wits, the early years: a history of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg and its precursors, 1896-1939* and *Wits, the open years: a history of the University of the Witwatersrand, 1939-1959*, can be described as a “warts and all chronicle of Wits’s evolution from a tiny school of mines in Kimberley ...”¹²¹ Murray provides an overview of the development of the Wits Library, concentrating mainly on

¹¹⁶ R.F. Currey, *Rhodes University, 1904- 1970*, Grahamstown: [s.n.], 1970, p.166.

¹¹⁷ Currey, *Rhodes University, 1904- 1970*, p.166.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.167.

¹¹⁹ *From Grey to gold*, Bloemfontein: University of the Free State, 2006.

¹²⁰ Dr S.I. Malan, *South African libraries*, vol. 34, no. 4, April 1967, p. 126.

¹²¹ R.W. Charlton, Foreword to B.K. Murray, *Wits: the open years*, [Johannesburg]: Witwatersrand University Press, 1997.

descriptions and statistics but, interestingly, also makes insightful and critical comments on the personalities of library staff and Senate Library Committee members.

As befits a history of South Africa's oldest university, the work by Phillips entitled *The University of Cape Town, 1918 – 1948: the formative years* has the largest number of index references on the University Library. There are 35, although many of them are simply single sentences or short paragraphs dealing with book stock, the branch libraries, new library buildings, the budget, donations and the growth of collections. Phillips notes that under Immelmann, who was the first professionally trained librarian to be hired by the University, the library underwent considerable expansion, setting a good example to other university libraries in South Africa.¹²²

A short pictorial history of the University College of Fort Hare, 1916 – 1959 celebrates the first 40 years of the College's existence. It was established mainly to provide university facilities to the inhabitants of the area formerly known as the Ciskei and was built on a site at Fort Hare, "the largest of the 19th Century frontier forts in the territory formerly known as Kaffraria ..."¹²³ No mention at all is made of the library in this publication beyond the fact that financial assistance was provided by Carnegie Corporation of New York for the Library and Museum.¹²⁴ One photograph of the library is also provided.

*Stellenbosch, 1866 - 1966: honderd jaar hoër onderwys*¹²⁵ also contains a three-page summary of the growth and development of the Library, although emphasis is placed mainly on the donations, particularly of valuable Africana, of which the library has been the fortunate recipient.

The *University of the North jubilee publication, 1980*¹²⁶ is, as the title suggests, a celebration of the establishment of the University of the North, near Pietersburg¹²⁷ in

¹²² H. Phillips, *The University of Cape Town, 1918 – 1948*, [Cape Town]: University of Cape Town, 1993, p. 221-222.

¹²³ *A short pictorial history of the University College of Fort Hare, 1916 – 1959*, [Lovedale]: Lovedale Press, 1961, p. 3.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹²⁵ *Stellenbosch 1866 - 1966*, Cape Town: Nasionale Boekhandel, 1966,

¹²⁶ *University of the North jubilee publication, 1980*; editor-in-chief C.H. Muller, [S.l.: The University, 1980].

¹²⁷ Pietersburg is now called Polokwane.

1960. The University itself was founded shortly after the promulgation of the Extension of University Education Act of 1959 to provide university facilities for Blacks in the northern region of South Africa. A short chapter is devoted to the university library, providing a brief overview of its origins and growth over 21 years as well as two photographs, both of external views of the library. It is the only history of its kind to include a short paragraph specifically on library users, probably attributable to the fact that, unlike most other university histories, the author of the chapter was the University Librarian, Mr C.P. Bothma.

Van der Vyver's *My erfenis is vir my mooi* was penned to celebrate the occasion of the centenary of the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education. There are two brief sections, two pages each in length, on the founding and the extension of the university library. Van der Vyver is the only author who admits that the university library, like the university archives, is often treated by the university itself as a stepchild ("in 'n mate as 'n stiefkind").¹²⁸

Vista University, published in 1984 by the University's Public Relations department, is nothing more than a public relations brochure. Vista University itself was established in 1981 for the purpose of "providing university facilities for urban Blacks in the RSA."¹²⁹ It was spread across five campuses in five different towns – Bloemfontein, Mamelodi, Port Elizabeth, Sebokeng and Soweto – with a central administrative section in Pretoria. The brochure, which is only 16 pages long, not unexpectedly contains only one very brief paragraph on the library facilities available.

On the whole the university library is given very superficial treatment in all these works, the emphasis being mainly on descriptive chronology and statistics. This is unsurprising, given the fact that most of these were written as general histories of a particular university, usually of a celebratory nature, and thus descriptions of most sections of the university are summaries. It is necessary to look elsewhere in order to build up a comprehensive idea of the development of South African university libraries.

¹²⁸ G.C.P. van der Vyver, *My erfenis is vir my mooi*, Potchefstroom: Kalvyn Jubileum Boekefonds, 1969, p. 170.

¹²⁹ *Vista University*, Pretoria: Department of Public Relations, Vista University, 1984, p. 4.

2.2.2. Books and journal articles on South African university libraries

Five histories were traced which celebrate milestones in the development of particular university libraries, although it is possible that there are others in existence which were not traced since no comprehensive surveys of historical research into South African library history exist.

The first is the *University of Cape Town Libraries: historical development, 1829 – 1955*, written by R.F.M. Immelmann on the occasion of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the main library of the University of Cape Town. It was reviewed by H.L. Maple, who described Immelmann's "brochure" as an "ample and inspiring preliminary survey of an intricate subject."¹³⁰ Fifty years later Barben wrote *The sapling that grew into a tree: 100 years of the University of Cape Town Libraries* to celebrate the centenary year of the University Libraries. This six-page article is available on the Libraries' web site and provides an overview of the important personalities, collections, building and dates in the history of the University of Cape Town Libraries.¹³¹

Musiker published *Aspects of Wits library history* in 1982 on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of the University of the Witwatersrand. The first part of this booklet consists of a condensed version of a lecture given to the Wits' Friends of the Library and reflects "significant issues which were always in the forefront of academic library development."¹³² Nearly two decades later Reuben and Naomi Musiker collaborated on *Wits Library: a centenary history*.

Both the Immelmann and Musiker histories provide a detailed account of the growth and development of the respective libraries as far as buildings, finances, staff and collections are concerned as well as significant events. Wits Library, for example, suffered terrible damage after a fire in 1931 destroyed the central portion of the University's Central Block

¹³⁰ H.L. Maple, The library of the University of Cape Town, *South African libraries*, vol. 24, no. 2, October 1956, p. 48.

¹³¹ T. Barben, The sapling that grew into a tree, <http://www.lib.uct.ac.za/index.php?html=/2004/info/sapling5.htm&libid=88>.

¹³² R. Musiker, *Aspects of Wits library history*. Johannesburg: The Library, 1982, p. v.

and 35,000 volumes - almost the entire library stock, including a number of valuable and irreplaceable manuscript collections – were destroyed.¹³³

The University of Stellenbosch published *US Library service, 1895 – 1995*, written by Professor B. Booyens, on the hundredth anniversary of the Library.¹³⁴ This slim booklet is a celebratory publication and as such provides a very brief overview of the foundation of the Library and its various branch libraries as well as a number of interesting photographs.

Interesting as they are, a criticism which could be levelled at these histories – perhaps unfairly, given the fact that they were written to commemorate milestones reached in the histories of their respective universities – is that they are celebratory rather than critical. They lack critical analysis of the events which they describe. It would have been interesting, for example, to learn more about how the economic and political milieu of the time affected library services but, aside from Musiker and Musiker's centenary history of the Wits Library, most make no more than passing mention of such events.

Suttie's two articles in *Mousaion*,¹³⁵ which cover the history of the University of South Africa (Unisa) Library from 1946 to 1990, take a different approach to the celebratory histories mentioned above. Not only does she provide an overview of the development of the Unisa Library but she also succeeds in filling, within the limitations of the two articles, "a lacuna in the history of information in the apartheid era."¹³⁶ She examines "[Unisa's] alleged political complicity and ambivalent reputation"¹³⁷ and does not balk at criticising both the University and library management for decisions taken and policies drawn up during a difficult and volatile period of South African history.

In 1957 Hutton, University Librarian at the University College of Fort Hare, published a short, factual article in *South African libraries* on the Howard Pim Library at the University College of Fort Hare. The Howard Pim Library dates back to 1916 and, unlike

¹³³ Musiker & Musiker, *Wits Library*, Johannesburg: Scarecrow, 1998, p. 23-25.

¹³⁴ B. Booyens, *US Library service, 1895 – 1995*, [Stellenbosch]: J.S. Gericke Library, University of Stellenbosch, 1995.

¹³⁵ M.-L. Suttie, The formative years of the University of South Africa Library, 1946 to 1976, *Mousaion*, vol. 23, no. 1, 2005, p. 97-118; and M.-L. Suttie, The University of South Africa Library, *Mousaion*, vol. 24, no. 2, 2006, p. 283-312.

¹³⁶ Suttie, *Mousaion*, vol. 23, no. 1, 2005, p. 98.

¹³⁷ Suttie, *Mousaion*, vol. 24, no. 2, 2006, p. 283.

so many other university libraries which relied upon donations to form the nucleus of their infant libraries, the College purchased “About 350 volumes in general literature” and a section was formed “of works dealing with native life, language and literature.”¹³⁸ The article provides an overview of how the library started and, in the space of a few pages provides information on accommodation, library staff and valuable donations received, mainly from private individuals. Along the same lines is an article by Gerrits published in *South African libraries* in 1978 which describes the development of the library services of the University of Pretoria.¹³⁹ The approach of both these articles is descriptive rather than critical but both are useful in that they provide overviews of the development of two university libraries in South Africa.

Festschrifts dedicated to individual librarians such as R.F.M. Immelmann¹⁴⁰ and Reuben Musiker¹⁴¹ and articles such as Immelmann’s brief biography of the first university librarian at the University of Cape Town, the Reverend G.F. Parker¹⁴² were also useful in that they provided valuable insights into the development of South African university libraries, although a tendency to focus on the positive aspects and ignore the negative ones could be discerned in many of the contributions. In contrast, Dick’s articles on P.C. Coetzee, “one of the key figures of twentieth century South African librarianship and a prominent Afrikaner intellectual,”¹⁴³ and H.J. De Vleeschauwer are critical explorations of how leading figures in the world of librarianship influenced the library profession in South Africa.

2.2.3. Theses and dissertations

Few historical studies on university libraries or aspects of university libraries are listed in the *Union catalogue of theses and dissertations*. Pim’s thesis entitled *A history of the*

¹³⁸ J. Hutton, The Howard Pim Library, University College of Fort Hare, *South African libraries*, vol. 25, no. 1, July 1957, p. 13.

¹³⁹ E.D. Gerrits, Die biblioteekdiens aan die Universiteit van Pretoria, *South African libraries*, vol. 45, no. 3, January 1978, p. 85-91.

¹⁴⁰ *Libraries and people*, edited by J.G. Kesting, et al, Cape Town: Struik, [1970?].

¹⁴¹ *A world too wide*, edited by J. Sherman, Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand Library, 1973.

¹⁴² R.F.M. Immelmann, The Rev. G.F. Parker, *South African libraries*, vol. 27, no. 2, October 1959, p. 52-55.

¹⁴³ A.L. Dick, Science for ideology?, *Mousaion*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2001, p. 64.

Killie Campbell Africana library,¹⁴⁴ Shah's thesis, *An investigation into the raison d'être of the autonomous libraries on the Howard College campus of the University of Natal, Durban*¹⁴⁵ and Puzi's thesis, *College libraries in the Transkei, 1882 – 1994: a brief history*¹⁴⁶ were the only theses retrieved on a search on histories of academic libraries (including universities and other tertiary institutions) in this database. Pim's and Shah's theses were useful in that both provided historical overviews of aspects of the University of Natal Libraries during the period under review, although their subjects were so different that it was difficult to discern underlying trends which could have informed the current study. Puzi's thesis documents the history of college libraries in the former Transkei territory (now incorporated into the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa) and, while interesting, was not of particular relevance to this study.

2.3. Summary

The history of South African university libraries is therefore, as Immelmann has pointed out “A subject that awaits further investigation before an all-round picture can be drawn.” Further, he points out that “Such investigation, however, requires to be done, because it is one facet of the history of cultural development in South Africa.”¹⁴⁷ Articles and dissertations on various aspects of university libraries provide details during specific periods in areas such as collection development, physical facilities, financial support, bibliographic control, information and communications technology and usage of collections. Collectively, they assist in building up a cumulative picture of trends and developments across the spectrum of South African university libraries from the early twentieth century to the modern period. This study is, in small part, an addition to that literature.

Chapter Three, which follows, is the last of the introductory chapters to this study. In this chapter the history of university education in South Africa is reviewed from its earliest days to the dawn of the twenty-first century. The founding and development of

¹⁴⁴ J.A. Pim, *A history of the Killie Campbell Africana Library*, M.I.S. thesis, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1990.

¹⁴⁵ T.D. Shah, *An investigation into the raison d'être of the autonomous libraries on the Howard College campus of the University of Natal*, Durban, M.I.S. thesis, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1995.

¹⁴⁶ M.E. Puzi, *College libraries in the Transkei, 1882-1994*, M.I.S. thesis, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1999.

¹⁴⁷ Immelmann, *University of Cape Town Libraries, 1829 – 1955*, p. v.

the University of Natal itself is discussed in more detail in order to provide the context within which the University of Natal Libraries operated.

Chapter Three

An overview of university education in South Africa and the founding of the University of Natal

Whereas it is expedient, for the better advancement of sound learning amongst all classes of Her Majesty's subjects in this Colony, to establish and incorporate an University at the Cape of Good Hope, and thereupon to dispense with the services of the existing Board of Public Examiners: Be it enacted by the Governor of the Cape of Good Hope, with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council and House of Assembly thereof, as follows:-

1. An University, consisting of a chancellor, a vice-chancellor, a council and graduates, shall be established at the Cape of Good Hope, and shall be a body politic and corporate by the name of 'The University of the Cape of Good Hope' ...¹⁴⁸

With this pronouncement, the first university was established in South Africa and on 1st September 1873 the governing council held its first meeting. During the century to follow the number of universities in the country increased considerably, particularly after the promulgation of the Extension of University Education Act no. 45 of 1959 which formally extended *apartheid* policies to universities in South Africa. By 1973 there were 16 universities in South Africa, ten residential universities catering for white students, five residential universities catering for students of other ethnic groups and the University of South Africa, which catered exclusively for external students. The addition of five more universities, established along ethnic lines, brought the total number of universities in South Africa to 21. It is therefore not surprising that, in the year 2000, the Shape and Size of Higher Education Task Team of the Council on Higher Education came to the conclusion that "The current ... institutional configuration of higher education ... is no longer sustainable."¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ Cape of Good Hope, Parliament, The University Incorporation Act no. 16 of 1873, in *Statutes of the Cape of Good Hope, 1652-1905*, Cape Town: Cape Times, 1906, vol. 1, p. 1286.

¹⁴⁹ Council on Higher Education (South Africa), Shape and Size of Higher Education Task Team, *Towards a new higher education landscape*, Pretoria: The Council, 2000, p. 51.

3.1. The University of the Cape of Good Hope

The University of the Cape of Good Hope had its origins in the Board of Public Examiners in Literature and Science mentioned in the Act quoted above. The Board had been established in 1858 to advance learning “among all classes of Her Majesty’s subjects”¹⁵⁰ and to examine and grant certificates to successful candidates in the fields of Literature and Science, Law and Jurisprudence, Land Surveying, Engineering and Navigation. Candidates were prepared for the examinations at various secondary schools, notably the South African College in Cape Town which has the distinction of being South Africa’s first high school. The Board, according to Boucher, “undoubtedly helped to raise educational standards at the Cape”¹⁵¹ but it had many shortcomings and lacked the status of a full university. Thus a decision was taken to establish a University in the Cape Colony.

The newly established university was an examining body only, with no teaching facilities. The system adopted was modelled upon the University of London model which, Boucher explains, had become a “popular model for export” due to it being fairly cheap to run and, unlike early 19th century Oxford and Cambridge, religiously neutral.¹⁵² By the mid-19th century similar institutions similar had been established in other parts of the British Empire such as Canada, India and South Africa.

The University of the Cape of Good Hope prescribed courses of study, tested students and granted degrees in Agriculture, Arts, Divinity, Law, and Mining Engineering. It also granted certificates of proficiency in Law and Jurisprudence, Land Surveying, Civil Engineering and Navigation and was responsible for the control of the Junior Certificate and Matriculation examinations, the Civil Service, Law and Teachers’ Professional Certificate Examinations and the examination for entrance to the Public Service. It was, in short “a vast examining machine.”¹⁵³ Students were prepared for the examinations at various secondary school colleges, such as the aforementioned South African College.

¹⁵⁰ Cape of Good Hope, Parliament, Public Examiners’ Act no. 4 of 1858, in *Statutes of the Cape of Good Hope passed by the first Parliament, sessions 1854 – 1858*, Cape Town: Saul Solomon, 1863, p. 325.

¹⁵¹ M. Boucher, *Spes in arduis*, Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1973, p. 22

¹⁵² M. Boucher, History of the South African university system, in *Tertiary education*, editor: B.F. Nel, [Pretoria]: South African Association for the Advancement of Education, 1973, p. 4.

¹⁵³ Boucher, *Spes in arduis*, p. 43.

These colleges received grants from Parliament under rules and regulations framed by the governor and published in the government gazette.¹⁵⁴ Teachers were precluded from examining their own students. The Higher Education Act of 1873 states firmly that:

It shall be the duty of the council to appoint examiners ... and the said council, in appointing such examiners shall avoid, as much as may be, appointing any person to be an examiner of any candidate who shall have been under the tuition of such examiner at any time during the two years next before the examination.¹⁵⁵

The courses were by no means easy and students required stamina and determination in order to succeed. Currey describes the strenuous nature of these examinations:

For this examination [first year Bachelor of Arts] the student had to take at least five subjects; and to do well in it six or even seven, were necessary. But, this hurdle cleared, he had a run of two years before taking his finals ... If one read for Honours this had to be done concurrently with the work for the Pass degree... The requirement for Honours was considerably higher than that for the Pass degree; and the fact that these had to be, or in practice always were, taken at the same time made the Honours course a grimly strenuous one.¹⁵⁶

The University Extension Act no. 9 of 1875 empowered the Council to hold examinations beyond the borders of the Cape Colony, thus enabling people living “beyond the limits of this Colony to participate in certain of the benefits enjoyed by Her Majesty’s subjects within this Colony.”¹⁵⁷ In 1877 Queen Victoria bestowed upon the University a Royal Charter which, in theory, granted its degrees the same rank, precedence and consideration as the degrees of universities in the United Kingdom.¹⁵⁸ In 1896 the Cape Legislature passed the University Incorporation Amendment Act (no. 6 of 1896) whereby membership of the Council of the University of the Cape of Good Hope was extended to nominees of the Orange Free State, Natal and the South African Republic on condition that these Governments made an annual contribution towards the general expenses of the University. Natal availed itself of this opportunity in 1897 but the Boer Republics of the Orange Free State and the South African Republic (renamed the Transvaal) did so only after the end of the second Anglo-Boer War, in 1902.

¹⁵⁴ Cape of Good Hope, Parliament, Higher Education Act no. 24 of 1874, in *Statutes of the Cape of Good Hope, 1652-1905*, Cape Town: Cape Times, 1906, vol. 1, p. 1352.

¹⁵⁵ Cape of Good Hope, Parliament, The University Incorporation Act no. 16 of 1873, in *Statutes of the Cape of Good Hope, 1652-1905*, Cape Town: Cape Times, 1906, vol. 1, p. 1288.

¹⁵⁶ R. F. Currey, *Rhodes University, 1904 – 1970*, Grahamstown: [s.n.], 1970, p. 3.

¹⁵⁷ Cape of Good Hope, Parliament, University Extension Act no. 9 of 1875, in *Statutes of the Cape of Good Hope, 1652-1905*, Cape Town: Cape Times, 1906, vol. 1, p. 1362.

¹⁵⁸ Boucher, *Spes in arduis*, p. 40.

In summary, by the time the Union of South Africa¹⁵⁹ was formed on 31st May 1910, the University of the Cape of Good Hope had become responsible for examining candidates taught at eight different institutions. In the Cape Colony itself there were four colleges, the oldest of which was the South African College in Cape Town, founded in 1829. The second was the Undenominational Public School, founded in Stellenbosch in 1866, incorporated as a college in 1881 and renamed Victoria College in Queen Victoria's jubilee year, 1887. The others were the Huguenot Seminary for women, founded in 1874, and Rhodes University College in Grahamstown, founded in 1904.

The Orange River Colony boasted only one college. Founded in 1855 by the Governor of the Cape Colony, Sir George Grey, Grey University College was completely reorganized in 1907 and incorporated as a University College in 1910.

In the Transvaal two colleges arose out of the Technical Institute which had been established in Johannesburg in 1903, taking over the work of the former School of Mines at Kimberley. The Institute was renamed the Transvaal University College in 1906. The following year a commission appointed by the Transvaal government to investigate the question of higher education in the Transvaal recommended the continuation of technical classes in Johannesburg and the establishment of Science and Arts classes in Pretoria as part of the Transvaal University College. Three years later, in 1910, the Pretoria classes became an independent institution under the name of the Transvaal University College while the Technical section in Johannesburg was renamed the South African School of Mines and Technology.

In Natal university education had a slow start. Post-matriculation classes were already on offer at both the Durban High School and the Pietermaritzburg College when the Natal Technical Education Commission recommended the establishment of a University College in Pietermaritzburg in 1905. Nothing further transpired until the Natal University College Act no. 18 was promulgated on 11th December 1909 and the Natal University College opened in the following year. The history of university education in Natal is described in greater detail below.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ Prior to Union the four colonies – the Cape, Natal, the Orange River Colony and the Transvaal (previously the South African Republic) – were all colonies of the British Empire but were politically independent of each other.

¹⁶⁰ See section 3.3.2.

3.2. The university colleges achieve full university status

Three Acts assented to by the Governor-General of South Africa in 1916 brought about a change in this state of affairs. According to Subotzky, a certain amount of political intrigue, fuelled by “the ongoing sharp political and cultural tensions between British and Afrikaans nationalists”¹⁶¹ surrounded the establishment of the first three independent South African universities. The Victoria College in Stellenbosch, having raised sufficient funding to establish itself as an independent university, received its own charter and became the University of Stellenbosch. The former South African College in Cape Town, too, received its own charter and was renamed the University of Cape Town. Provision was also made for a federal examining body, the University of South Africa, with six constituent teaching colleges,¹⁶² namely, the Transvaal University College in Pretoria, the Natal University College in Pietermaritzburg, Rhodes University College in Grahamstown, the Grey University College in Bloemfontein, the South African School of Mines and Technology in Johannesburg and the Huguenot University College in Wellington.¹⁶³

In the same year the South African Native College was declared open. Built on a site donated by the United Free Church of Scotland at Fort Hare in the Eastern Cape, “the largest of the 19th Century frontier forts in the territory formerly known as Kaffraria,”¹⁶⁴ it was intended primarily for the education of the black African people although during its early years it also accepted students from other race groups. The policy was, however, not to admit more than 15 per cent of the total student population from other groups.¹⁶⁵ Although not a constituent college of the University of South Africa, its students were registered as external students and took the examinations of the University. In 1921 another constituent college, the Potchefstroom University College (which changed its name to the Potchefstroom University College for Christian Higher Education in 1933), was incorporated under the University College of South Africa.

¹⁶¹ G. Subotzky, South Africa, in *African higher education*; edited by D. Teferra & P.G. Altbach, Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2003, p. 547

¹⁶² These Acts were: University of South Africa Act no. 12 of 1916; University of Stellenbosch Act no. 13 of 1916 and University of Cape Town Act no. 14 of 1916.

¹⁶³ Listed in Schedule 1 of Act 12 of 1916.

¹⁶⁴ *A short pictorial history of the University College of Fort Hare, 1916 – 1959*, Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1961, p. 3.

¹⁶⁵ *Challenge to a South African university*, chief editor G.C. Oosthuizen, Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1981, p. 12.

By 1951 all the constituent colleges of the University of South Africa except the Huguenot University College, which had closed at the end of 1950, had become autonomous and had assumed full university status. In 1952 the South African Native College became affiliated to Rhodes University and in 1953 changed its name to the University College of Fort Hare.

In 1959 the notorious and curiously named Extension of University Education Act was promulgated in line with the South African government's policy of "separate development." The effect of this Act was to impose segregation, already in place in the schools and other educational institutions, on universities. The Act empowered the Government to establish universities along ethnic lines and barred "non-whites" from registering at existing South African universities without the consent of the Minister concerned. The Act provoked angry reactions from universities. Malherbe called it "a flagrant violation of academic freedom"¹⁶⁶ and Saunders commented that:

Like many authoritarian regimes, they used language to try to hide the truth and to put the best possible gloss on what they were doing to make their actions appear civilised. They were doing anything *but* extending university education.¹⁶⁷

The only exceptions allowed to this law were the University of South Africa which taught by correspondence and the Medical School of the University of Natal. Thus during the following decade the number of universities multiplied as new institutions were established for people who were considered "non-white". In essence the South African higher education landscape was changed as it suited "the geo-political imagination of apartheid planners."¹⁶⁸ The University College of the North was established at Turfloop for Sotho-speaking people, the University College of the Western Cape was established in Bellville for coloured students, the University College of Zululand was established for Zulu-speaking people and the University College for Indians was established in Durban.

In 1965 the only dual-medium (Afrikaans and English) institution, the University of Port Elizabeth, was inaugurated in Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape. A year later, in 1966, the Rand Afrikaans University joined the ranks of the existing white Afrikaans-medium

¹⁶⁶ E.G. Malherbe, *Never a dull moment*, Cape Town: Timmins, 1981, p. 311.

¹⁶⁷ S. Saunders, *Vice-Chancellor on a tightrope*, Cape Town: Philip, 2000, p. 21.

¹⁶⁸ K. Asmal, Foreword, National Plan for Higher Education, South Africa, *Government gazette*, no. 22138, part 1, 9th March 2001.

universities of Stellenbosch, Pretoria, the Orange Free State and the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education. As Saunders pointed out, “If there was extension of university education, it certainly favoured Afrikaans-speaking white South Africans.”¹⁶⁹

In 1969 the Fort Hare Transfer Act no. 64 placed the University College of Fort Hare under the control of the Department of Bantu Education and limited it to Xhosa students only, against the will of the College staff. A number of them resigned in protest.¹⁷⁰ The three University Colleges of Fort Hare, the North and the Western Cape were accorded full university status in 1970 while the University College for Indians in Durban became the University of Durban-Westville in 1971.¹⁷¹ The Medical University of Southern Africa (Medunsa) was inaugurated in 1976 as a medical school solely for black Africans. Shortly thereafter a number of other universities for black Africans were established in the nominally independent homelands such as the University of Bophuthatswana, the University of Venda, the University of Transkei (founded in 1976 as a branch of the University of Fort Hare and incorporated as an independent university in 1977) and the multi-campus Vista University, established in 1981 “with the purpose of providing university facilities for urban Blacks in the Republic of South Africa.”¹⁷²

In 1983 the government “relaxed the measures”¹⁷³ which had, since the promulgation of the Extension of University Education Act, ‘virtually prevented the registration of black students at ‘white universities’”¹⁷⁴ and in 1987 these restrictions were lifted completely. Universities were at last allowed to admit whomever they chose.

The year 1994 is described by Saunders as “a watershed year for universities”¹⁷⁵ The new democratically-elected South African Government committed itself to the transformation of higher education with emphasis on the equitable distribution of benefits, democratic decision-making processes, quality assurance and academic freedom within the framework of affordability. A significant part of the process involved a reduction in

¹⁶⁹ Saunders, *Vice-Chancellor on a tightrope*, p. 21.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ The University of Durban-Westville merged with the University of Natal on 1st January 2004 to form the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

¹⁷² *Vista University*, Pretoria: Dept. of Public Relations, Vista University, 1984, p. 4.

¹⁷³ *A university in transformation*, [Durban: University of Natal, 1997], p. 1.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Saunders, *Vice-Chancellor on a tightrope*, p. 241.

numbers of the universities which had proliferated as a result of the former government's policy of separate development.

3.3. The Natal University College

Natal, renamed KwaZulu Natal in March 1996,¹⁷⁶ is situated on the east coast of Africa, south of the Tropic of Capricorn. The smallest province in South Africa, it covers an area of approximately 92,000 square kilometres and is bounded by the Drakensberg mountain range to the north west, Moçambique and Swaziland to the north and the province of the Eastern Cape to the south. The name "Natal" was bestowed upon it by the Portuguese explorer, Vasco da Gama, who supposedly first sighted the coastline on Christmas Day in 1497.¹⁷⁷ Historians now seem to agree that it was more likely the coast of Mpondoland which was sighted, but the name "Natal" remained.¹⁷⁸ A brief consideration of the early history of the province will provide a background to the founding of the Natal University College.

3.3.1. Early history of Natal

Prior to its transformation by the rise of the Zulu kingdom and the subsequent European conquest, the region was inhabited by Nguni-speaking farmers who grew crops, kept cattle, sheep and goats and made and traded iron tools and weapons and copper ornaments. In 1687 the survivors of the wreck of the *Stavenisse* who had spent more than a year in "Terra de Natal"¹⁷⁹ reported to the Dutch commander of the Cape Colony, Simon van der Stel, that they had found the country:

... very fruitful and populous, and the natives friendly, compassionate, obliging, strong ... living in communities, in huts made of branches wrought through with rushes and long grass, and roofed like haystacks in Holland ... The women attend to cultivation, the men herd and milk the cows ..."¹⁸⁰

The rise to power of the Zulu chieftain, Shaka, and his establishment of a militant Zulu kingdom in 1816 wrought great changes. The resultant *Mfecane*, the "time of troubles"

¹⁷⁶ South Africa, Parliament, *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Amendment Act no. 2 of 1994*, Amendment of section 124 of Act 200 of 1993.

¹⁷⁷ J. Bird, *Annals of Natal*, Pietermaritzburg: Davis, 1888, vol. 1, p. 1-2.

¹⁷⁸ E.H. Brookes & D. de B. Webb, *A history of Natal*, Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1987, p. 3.

¹⁷⁹ Bird, *Annals of Natal*, p. 27.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

defined by Hamilton as the ripple effect of disruption resulting from the wars,¹⁸¹ brought immense suffering and virtually destroyed the farming society of southeastern Africa. Many died violent deaths while entire villages and chiefdoms were eliminated. Thompson maintains that “the wars provided whites with unprecedented opportunities to expand into the eastern part of southern Africa.”¹⁸²

The first Europeans were British traders; ex-officers of the Royal Navy who arrived by ship in 1824 and set up a permanent trading post on the coast in an area they named Port Natal. As British subjects the traders were under the authority of the Governor of the Cape Colony but in practice they enjoyed the protection of Shaka. Brookes and Webb describe the primitive living conditions of the little settlement of Port Natal thus:

Gradually attracting as they did masses of refugees [from Shaka’s warriors] around them, they settled at some little distance from one another, each having the appearance, as it were, of chief of a small tribe ... The homes were all carefully concealed among the bush and approached by narrow and winding avenues.¹⁸³

In 1834 a party of Boers from the Cape Colony, led by one Pieter Uys, arrived at the Port on a reconnaissance mission. The traders welcomed them enthusiastically. After exploring the hinterland, they returned home bearing favourable reports of the fertile soil and good grazing lands. Three years later, in November 1837, the Dutch-speaking Voortrekkers came over the Drakensberg passes into the fertile lands east of the escarpment to settle. The murder of one of their leaders, Piet Retief, and his party at the hands of King Shaka’s successor, Dingane, and their subsequent retaliatory victory over the Zulu army at the Battle of Blood River in 1838 resulted in the founding of the inland Republic of Natalia. The Voortrekkers laid out their administrative capital on the banks of the Msunduzi River and named it Pietermaritzburg, after Retief and another of their leaders, Gert Maritz. Barely five years later, in 1843, in response to perceived strategic necessity, Natal was annexed as a British dependency. It became a district of the Cape Colony with a separate government administered by a Lieutenant-Governor in 1845. Unhappy with these developments, large numbers of the Dutch-speaking inhabitants journeyed back over the Drakensberg to the highveld, out of reach of British rule.

¹⁸¹ C. A. Hamilton, Introduction, *The Mfecane aftermath*, edited by C.A. Hamilton, Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1995, p.1.

¹⁸² L. Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2006, p. 85.

¹⁸³ Brookes & Webb, *A history of Natal*, 2nd edition, p. 20.

At around the same time, during the years 1849-51, five thousand men, women and children emigrated from Britain to Natal under a scheme initiated by a speculator, Joseph Byrne. In return for a small sum, they received their passage to Natal and twenty acres of land per head but soon discovered that farming in the Colony was considerably more difficult than they had been led to believe. Disenchanted, some returned to England and others moved elsewhere but a number settled in the developing port of Durban.¹⁸⁴ It was soon discovered that the subtropical coastal climate of Natal was ideal for the growing of sugar cane but there was one problem: it was difficult to attract African labour to carry out the arduous work in the cane fields. The colonists turned to British India for assistance and, as a result, the first indentured Indians arrived in Natal. Under the conditions of their contract the Indians were required to serve their employers for five years, after which time they were free to work for themselves. After another five years they were entitled to either a free return passage to India or a small grant of land in Natal. The majority chose the latter and thus a permanent Indian community was established in the Colony. The indentured Indians were followed by other Indian immigrants who, possibly attracted to a new life and keen to exploit opportunities not available to them in India, paid for their own passages to Natal.

By the year 1870, notes Thompson, there were three distinct communities in the Colony of Natal, "...distinguished by history, culture and wealth and power in the colonial situation"¹⁸⁵ as well as by size of population. The largest group was the Africans who numbered over a quarter of a million. The whites, mostly of British origin, numbered about 18,000 and the most recent arrivals, the Indians, numbered about 6,000.¹⁸⁶ On 1st June 1910 the Colony of Natal was united with the other three colonies – the Cape, the Orange River and the Transvaal – to form the Union of South Africa.

3.3.2. University education in Natal

At a public meeting held on 21st September 1853 a number of leading Durban citizens decided to establish the Durban Mechanics Institute¹⁸⁷ for the "moral and intellectual

¹⁸⁴ At a meeting of settlers convened by Captain Allen Gardiner on 23 June 1835, Port Natal was declared a township and renamed D'Urban in honour of the Governor of the Cape, Sir Benjamin D'Urban. – Brookes & Webb, *A history of Natal*, p. 24.

¹⁸⁵ Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, p. 98

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ The Mechanics Institutes, which provided part-time adult education to working men, originated in Glasgow in the early nineteenth century. By 1850 there were well over five hundred in Britain. -

improvement of its members and others.”¹⁸⁸ These men had fond hopes of the Institute developing into a “young man’s university” but, as Rees notes, the Institute eventually “shared the fate of many such institutes in England.”¹⁸⁹ It increasingly took on the character of a literary, social and recreational club and eventually closed. The efforts of its founders were not wasted however for, although it never grew into a university, it eventually formed the foundation for the first public library in Durban.

Almost twenty-five years later, in 1877, the Governor of Natal, Sir Henry Bulwer, drafted a bill with the aim of establishing a Royal College of Natal. The **majority** of the elected members of the Natal Parliament thought it was premature and the bill was thrown out on its second reading.¹⁹⁰ Brookes notes that:

Indeed as late as 1907 a prominent member of the Legislative Assembly objected to the waste of public money on high-school education because it unfitted boys for life and work in Natal.”¹⁹¹

Nevertheless, by the end of the 19th century several high schools in the Colony, such as the Durban High School, Maritzburg College and Michaelhouse (for boys) and the Durban Ladies’ College and Girls’ Collegiate in Pietermaritzburg were providing tuition to matriculated students who wished to take the examinations of the University of the Cape of Good Hope. Financial assistance in the form of scholarships was also available on application to those who wanted to attend universities abroad provided they had obtained suitably high results in the Cape University examinations.

In 1904 a Technical Education Commission was appointed by the Natal Government to investigate technical education in Natal. The Commission issued its report on 11th May 1905, by which time a rift had developed between the members. All had agreed upon the desirability of establishing a university college in Natal but differences, it appears, had arisen over the organisation and scope of this college.¹⁹² The Commission advocated the establishment of a University College at Pietermaritzburg with provision for the

W. Rees, *The Natal Technical College, 1907 – 1957*, [Pietermaritzburg]: University of Natal Press, 1957, p. 11.

¹⁸⁸ *Jubilee historical sketch of the Durban Public Library and Reading Room*, Durban: Josiah James, 1903, p. 12.

¹⁸⁹ Rees, *The Natal Technical College, 1907-1957*, p. 12.

¹⁹⁰ E.H. Brookes, *A history of the University of Natal*, Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1966, p. 2.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹² Rees, *The Natal Technical College, 1907-1957*, p. 5.

extension of the College to Durban. For some reason the recommendations of the Commission were shelved and the report was apparently not even debated in Parliament. However, Brookes comments:

So far as Pietermaritzburg was concerned, events had to wait upon the appointment of a further Commission; but Durban possessed a dynamic personality who was willing to act without indefinite waiting for Ministers or Departments.¹⁹³

The “dynamic personality” was a local doctor, Dr S. G. (“Sam”) Campbell who convened a meeting of interested citizens at his home in Musgrave Road in Durban on 4th April 1907 to discuss the setting up of a Technical Institute in Durban. As a result of this meeting the Durban Technical Institute (renamed the Durban Technical College in 1915 and the Natal Technical College in 1922) was established on 8th July 1907. Classes were formally opened on 14th September of the same year. Nevertheless, the intention of the founders of the Institute was clearly “to aim at University education for Durban”¹⁹⁴ as may be deduced from Dr Campbell’s speech at his home in 1907, as quoted by Narbeth:

The beginning would need to be very small, but the great thing was to make a start – what might be begun in this small way would, in a short time, perhaps, develop into such a University College as would do great things for the future of men and women in Natal.¹⁹⁵

3.3.3. A College is founded

At the instigation of C.J. Mudie, the Superintendent of Education in Natal, the Natal government appointed another Education Commission in 1909 which unequivocally recommended the institution of a University College in Pietermaritzburg. Providentially, in the same year the colonial Government also found itself with £30,000 to spend before the Colony of Natal ceased to exist.¹⁹⁶ Hastily therefore, on 11th December 1909, a scant six months before the Colony’s legal existence expired on 31st May 1910, the Natal University College Act No. 18 of 1909 by which the Natal University College was founded, was promulgated. Thus, says Metrovitch:

... the Natal Government decided to rush through a measure, which would give Natal its own University College and thus enable it to enter the Union on

¹⁹³ Brookes, *A history of the University of Natal*, p. 6.

¹⁹⁴ Rees, *The Natal Technical College, 1907-1957*, p. 34.

¹⁹⁵ B.M. Narbeth, From a very small beginning, reprinted from *The Natal mercury*, 27th July 1931, [p. 1].

¹⁹⁶ University of Natal, *Calendar*, 1960, [S.l.: The University, 1960], p. 1.

something like equal terms with the other States as regards the facilities it possessed for higher education.¹⁹⁷

The first meeting of the Natal University College Council, presided over by Sir Henry Bale, Chief Justice of Natal, was held on 21st January 1910. Professors Petrie (Classics) and Denison (Physics and Chemistry), who were the first of the eight new professors to arrive, met their classes on 18th April 1910 in a two-roomed wood and iron building at Pietermaritzburg College School, taking over from the school staff.¹⁹⁸ Petrie describes that first morning:

On the morning of Monday, the 18th of April, 1910, two newcomers to the city appeared at the Maritzburg College. They were Dr. R.B. Denison, first Professor of Chemistry, and the writer, first Professor of Classics, of the recently established Natal University College ... After sundry introductions, they addressed a few words to the assembled senior pupils, from whom the members of their respective classes were to be drawn. Nothing much more than perhaps some arranging of timetables could have taken place that day. But, whatever happened, it was an epoch-making morning. The work of the N.U.C. had begun!¹⁹⁹

Subjects other than Classics, Physics and Chemistry continued to be taught by the schoolmasters until the remaining professors arrived in August of the same year. Brookes remarks, "Thus, under every material disadvantage, and bearing every mark of hurried improvisation, the Natal University College began its history."²⁰⁰ It is interesting to note that at the time of the appointment of the new professors, academic ties with Great Britain were still strong since, of the eight Professorships, only three were appointed from South Africa. In 1910 there were 57 students, the "N.U.C. Aborigines,"²⁰¹ of which 49 were men and only eight women. In August of that year, while they waited for their new premises to be constructed, the College moved to the Town Hall, with the exception of Zoology classes under Professor E. Warren which remained at the Natal Museum where he was the Director, and Chemistry classes under Professor Denison which continued at the school where there was a laboratory.

¹⁹⁷ F.C. Metrovich, *The development of higher education in South Africa, 1873 – 1927*, Cape Town: Maskew Miller, 1929, p.13.

¹⁹⁸ A.F. Hattersley, *The University of Natal, 1909 – 1960*, unpublished manuscript, p. 15.

¹⁹⁹ A. Petrie, N.U.C. 1910, *Nux*, 15th September, 1945, Pietermaritzburg: Students' Representative Council, Natal University College, p. 2.

²⁰⁰ Brookes, *A history of the University of Natal*, p. 13.

²⁰¹ Petrie, *Nux*, 15th September 1945, p. 2. They were probably given this name because the term "aboriginal" is defined as "inhabiting ... a land from the earliest times ..." - *The new Oxford dictionary of English*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1998.

The first building, now called the old Main building, designed by Pietermaritzburg architects, Messrs. Tully, Waters, Cleland and Pentland Smith, and “personally supervised” by Tully himself,²⁰² was erected on forty acres of land donated to the new university by the Pietermaritzburg Town Council. The foundation stone was laid by His Royal Highness, the Duke of Connaught, on 1st December 1910 and the building was officially opened on 9th August 1912 by the Minister of Education, F.S. Malan. Unfortunately the sum of money put aside for furniture and fittings was reduced to such an extent that, according to Brookes, it appeared as if “a large part of the building, including the Great Hall and the chemistry lecture theatre would be left without furniture of any kind.”²⁰³ For the first few years the only sources of revenue were student fees and a grant made by the Natal Law Society towards the salary of the Professor of Law. The balance was made up by *ad hoc* Parliamentary grants. Council therefore had very little financial control and the College had no endowments to supplement the inadequate funds. Brookes does not mince words:

In these circumstances it was a real miracle that the College was able to retain the services of the gifted men who formed its first teaching staff. What kept them there, except a loyalty to the job unusual to-day?²⁰⁴

Relief in the form of state aid allowed the Council to assume full financial control from 1st April 1913. The Government grant was made on the basis of £1 for £1 on general expenses and maintenance and £3 for £1 on professorial salaries.

The onset of the world war in 1914 placed a great strain on the struggling College. Many young Natalians responded to the call for service. Prospective students went to the battlefield instead of to University while existing students left with their courses incomplete. Student numbers fell to forty in 1916. The University Council offered the Government the use of the Scottsville building, with the exception of the science laboratories, for the purposes of a convalescent hospital. The College itself moved out in 1917 to rooms in the Natal Government Railways headquarters in Loop Street where they remained for the duration of the War.

On 2nd April 1918, in accordance with the provisions of Act no. 12 of 1916, the Natal University College became a constituent College of the University of South Africa, which

²⁰² Natal University College, *The African Architect*, September 1912, p. 60.

²⁰³ Brookes, *A history of the University of Natal*, p. 15.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

status it retained until it received its own charter in 1948. Brookes states that this new status was “a distinct improvement”²⁰⁵ since it meant that students were examined by their own teachers together with external examiners on syllabi which the said teachers had assisted in drawing up. No longer did they have to “spot questions” for external examinations which would be marked by strangers. One person representing the Council and one the Senate of every constituent college sat on the Council of the University of South Africa. Thus professors of the constituent colleges were able to exercise some measure of control over the University’s work.

3.3.4. Extension of university classes to Durban

In August 1912 the Natal University College Senate learned that the Durban Technical Institute was preparing students for the examinations of the University of the Cape of Good Hope. Rees explains:

In 1912 the Institute started university classes for part-time students in the B.A. Intermediate Course of the University of the Cape [of Good Hope]... One or two students who had studied at the University College in Maritzburg, and who had left without completing their degree, were enrolled in these classes. In his 1912 Report, Dr. Campbell explained that there was no overlapping with the Natal University College for the university classes at the Institute were designed to meet the needs of students in local employment who were unable to attend the Natal University College in Pietermaritzburg.²⁰⁶

The classes were small and were abandoned after two years. However, it is clear from this initiative that the Council of the Technical College had never given up the dream of a university college in Durban. The demand for vocational training had continued to grow and the population of Durban itself was increasing to match the commercial and industrial growth. Then an opportunity arose. When hostilities ceased in 1918 the Durban public became preoccupied with the consideration of a suitable form of memorial to be erected in honour of those who had given their lives in the world war. Ideas ranged from a cenotaph to a Shrine of Memory to a War Museum and Library. Councillor J.H. Nicholson had suggested a Memorial Park of 100 acres on the Berea. Campbell wanted a Memorial Technical University College and he got his way - in August 1918 the Technical College Council was persuaded to adopt his suggestion. The scheme was presented to the citizens of Durban in a series of three extension lectures delivered at the College in September 1918. Unfortunately, it was not to be. Durbanites declared

²⁰⁵ Brookes, *A history of the University of Natal*, p. 25.

²⁰⁶ Rees, *The Natal Technical College, 1907-1957*, p. 55

themselves opposed to the idea, alleging that there was no need for a university in the town; it was “a luxury catering only for sons and daughters of the wealthy and leisured class.”²⁰⁷ Rees criticises the Durban public of the time for missing out on a “unique opportunity,” as he explains:

In retrospect, it is evident that the people of Durban were presented with a unique opportunity in 1918 of securing for the town its own University College for Technology and Science. This would have been the logical outcome of the pioneering work of the Technical College since 1907. Had the War Memorial proposal of Dr. Campbell and his associates been accepted, and the necessary funds raised, which Durban could well have afforded, then university development there would have proceeded locally in accordance with an historical background which was unrelated to that of Pietermaritzburg, where a University College conforming to the traditional academic pattern had emerged.²⁰⁸

This was a setback for Campbell and the other members of the Technical College Council but they did not give up. In the meantime, the Natal University College authorities had come to realize that they needed to “tap the wealth of Natal business and industry”²⁰⁹ if the future of the College was to be assured. The province’s commercial activity was largely concentrated in Durban and, as the University authorities shrewdly realised, the Durban Technical College had a prior claim. A fund-raising scheme in competition with the Technical College would probably fail. The Minister of Education, F.S. Malan, had also indicated that the South African Government would not permit the establishment of a seventh constituent college of the University of South Africa in Durban. Thus, in August 1920 the first meeting was held between representatives of the Technical College in Durban and the Natal University College in Pietermaritzburg, chaired by the tenacious Campbell. It took some time and considerable persuasion before agreement was finally reached in 1922 and approval could be sought from the University of South Africa for university courses in Commerce and Engineering to be taught at the Technical College in Durban. Money raised for university education would be under the control of the Natal University College Council. Accordingly, classes in Electrical and Mechanical Engineering and Commerce opened in 1923 with just 16 students.

In April 1923 Campbell announced that a donor had been found who was willing to donate £50,000 for the purposes of erecting a building for University purposes in Durban, once the Durban Town Council had made a suitable site available. The donor

²⁰⁷ Rees, *The Natal Technical College, 1907-1957*, p. 113.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

was Thomas B. Davis who owned a stevedoring firm (Brock & Company) operating on the East African coast between Durban and Mombasa. The new institution was to bear the name of the donor's son, Howard Davis, who had been killed in one of the bloody battles on the River Somme in 1917. Interestingly, Brookes points out that this generous gift "finally made University dualism inevitable ... The Senate and Council in Pietermaritzburg were faced with the fact that, while they had few funds apart from Government subsidies, Durban had a private endowment."²¹⁰ It should be mentioned here that a Government Commission, chaired by Mr J.G van der Horst to consider the relationship between universities and technical colleges, had unequivocally condemned university classes in Durban.²¹¹ Notes Brookes:

The forces working for them [that is, university classes in Durban] were too strong to accept this drastic conclusion, but the Report meant that the break with the Technical College must be complete. The final cutting of the knot was the work of Bews.²¹²

Following protracted negotiations, the Durban Town Council was eventually persuaded to allocate a 50-acre site in the Stellawood bush for the University. Designed by William Hurst, work on the building began in 1929 and Howard College was officially opened by the Earl of Clarendon on 1st August 1931. B.M. Narbeth, first principal of the Natal Technical College, captured the spirit of the moment:

The events of the coming week will mark a definite stage in the achievement of the aims which Dr Campbell and his co-workers had in view. The Technical College has given birth to a University College and is about to hand over to the Natal University College authorities this daughter institution with a student body of over 200 undergraduates, a staff of highly qualified professors and lecturers, a magnificent campus of 50 acres, the gift of the Durban Corporation, a beautiful and capacious building, the Howard College, the gift of Mr T.B. Davis, which is completely furnished and partially equipped by Mr A.H. Smith and other generous donors, and a steadily growing endowment fund, raised by the University Development Committee.²¹³

In this same year most full-time classes were moved from the Technical College to the new building. Part-time courses in the Commerce Faculty continued to be offered at the Technical College until 1936, when the new Commerce Building, later renamed the Oldham Building and popularly referred to as "City Building", was erected in Warwick Avenue to cater for these students.

²¹⁰ Brookes, *A history of the University of Natal*, p. 30

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 31

²¹² *Ibid.*, p. 30. Professor J.W. Bews was the first Principal of the Natal University College.

²¹³ Narbeth, *From a very small beginning*, [p. 2].

3.3.5. Classes for “Non-Europeans” in Durban

University classes for “non-Europeans”²¹⁴ were initiated in 1936 at Sastri College, an Indian boys’ high school in Durban, “... on the initiative of an extraordinary woman, Mrs (later Dr) Mabel Palmer, who believed that tuition even in separate classes was preferable to no classes at all.”²¹⁵ In a letter to the editor of the *Daily news* of 15th March 1957, Palmer explained how the “non-European” section of the Natal University College began:

The question was brought before the Senate of Natal University College as it then was, in 1935, and it became clear that there was no chance whatever of getting the ordinary classes opened to non-Europeans. By the kindness of the Registrar, I have been allowed to read the minutes of these proceedings, and the opposition was adamant. Finally a resolution was passed allowing non-European classes to be established, but only if they did not use the same buildings as Europeans, and did not involve the college in any expenditure. The opposition thought that these conditions made the establishment of non-European classes impossible, and therefore allowed the resolution to go through.²¹⁶

Palmer was a determined woman and not easily defeated. The holder of a first class Honours degree from Glasgow University, she had the distinction of being one of its first women graduates. She had been appointed to the staff of the Natal Technical College in 1920 as a tutor in its Department of Tutorial Studies, the successor to the Workers’ Educational Association started by Narbeth in 1916, transferring to the staff of the Natal University College when the University extended classes to Durban in 1922. Rees describes her as “undoubtedly the most highly qualified person yet to join the staff of the Technical College – and certainly one of the most gifted.”²¹⁷ Prior to this, she had lecturing experience in universities in both Great Britain and the United States of America and had been the first Woman Tutor of the tutorial classes run by the University of London in conjunction with the Workers’ Educational Association in Britain.²¹⁸ She had resigned as a leader writer on the London *Daily news* because “she could not accept

²¹⁴ A term used to denote African, Indian and Coloured (persons of mixed blood) South Africans. It is no longer in use as it has assumed derogatory connotations.

²¹⁵ *Help your people*, [Durban]: Natal University Development Foundation, 1953, p. 6.

²¹⁶ M. Palmer, How non-European classes began at Natal University, *Daily news*, 15th March 1957, p. 15.

²¹⁷ Rees, *The Natal Technical College, 1907-1957*, p. 97

²¹⁸ Retirements: Dr Mabel Palmer, *University of Natal gazette*, vol. 2, no. 2, November 1955, p. 36.

the policy of the *Daily news* with regard to Women Suffrage [sic].”²¹⁹ She had also served on the Executive of the Fabian Society, along with George Bernard Shaw and Sydney Webb. Her tenacity is evident from this passage taken from *Not either an experimental doll*:

When [the University] Council refused to allow classes for black students to be held on university premises, she organised (perhaps ‘dragooned’ would be more accurate) her friends into running dual classes, initially in her own living room, later on in Sastri Indian College.²²⁰

The University Council agreed to provide the classes on condition that they were taught separately from the “European” students. To start with there were only 19 students, of whom most were employed as teachers in and around Durban. Demand increased and within four years the numbers had increased more than threefold to seventy-one. There was a sharp increase in enrolments in 1943 (from 90 to 130 students, an increase of 44%) due, according to a memorandum submitted to the Natal Indian Judicial Commission, to the fact that the Natal Education Department’s revised salary scale “provided for qualifications as one of the means for determining pay.”²²¹ The subjects offered were mostly those leading to a Bachelor of Arts degree, the majority of the students being Indian teachers seeking to better their education. Fees were payable for the courses and, according to the students themselves, “the Non-European classes are not only helping to pay for themselves but are a source of substantial surplus to the Natal University College.”²²² Classes were held in the evenings and on weekends in order to accommodate the working students. An annual twelve-day vacation school was also offered at Adams College, near Amanzimtoti, south of Durban.

3.3.6. Expansion of the Natal University College

When the third Principal, Dr E. G. Malherbe, took office in April 1945, his impression was that “Natal was the least university-minded of all the four provinces.”²²³ He attributed this attitude to the “backwardness of Durban in higher education.”²²⁴ In spite of the severance of the ties with the Technical College, Brookes explains that “Durban

²¹⁹ Retirements, *University of Natal gazette*, vol. 2, no. 2, November 1955, p. 36.

²²⁰ *Not either an experimental doll*, edited by S. Marks, Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal, 1987, p. 5.

²²¹ Natal University College Students’ Union (Non-European), *Memorandum submitted to the Natal Indian Judicial Commission*, [1944], unpublished, p. 3.

²²² *Ibid.*

²²³ Malherbe, *Never a dull moment*, p. 290.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

still remained a sort of technological University with part-time classes annexed.”²²⁵

These part-time classes as well as the absence of student residences and other university facilities “gave the Durban section of the College something of the nature of a Workers’ Educational Association rather than a University.”²²⁶ Malherbe set out determinedly to change this and to develop Durban as a university centre. He had to proceed cautiously, however. He notes:

In doing so I had to be most circumspect, because there was great jealousy on the part of Pietermaritzburg lest any university development in Durban should prejudice its own legitimate growth as the original centre for higher education in Natal and as the administrative capital of the province.²²⁷

Malherbe was also astonished at what he termed the “financial poverty” of the Natal University College, particularly in comparison to the “manifest wealth of the city of Durban and of the sugar farming community generally.”²²⁸ On taking up office he immediately set about fund raising and developing plans for the erection of much-needed new buildings, including student residences, in both centres to house the soldiers returning from World War II. Indeed, the year following the cessation of hostilities – 1946 – saw an increase in student intake of more than 200%. Alumnus J. Hulley reminisces:

In 1946 – my first year at Howard College – the student enrolment included the returning ex-service men and women, resulting in student numbers increasing from more than 900 in 1945, to more than 1,900 in 1946. This included students on all campuses of the University, namely Pietermaritzburg, Howard College, Sastri College and Commerce block near the Natal Technical College.²²⁹

3.3.7. The College becomes the University of Natal

Scarcely a month after attending his first Senate meeting on 28th April 1945, Malherbe announced his intention to seek independent status for the Natal University College. In his autobiography he comments that:

This was an ideal for which my predecessor, Dr Bews, had already worked. He, as well as I myself, had found it tiresome to be tied to the apron strings of the University of South Africa ...”²³⁰

²²⁵ Brookes, *A history of the University of Natal*, p. 56.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷ Malherbe, *Never a dull moment*, p. 290

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 293.

²²⁹ J. Hulley, *Memories of student days*, *Heritage*, vol. 8, 1st quarter, 2001, p. 3.

²³⁰ Malherbe, *Never a dull moment*, p. 305.

Malherbe approached the Department of Education in March 1946 and followed this up with an energetic campaign to gain the support of the public of Natal. The dual-centred nature of the College complicated matters but, with the assistance of a number of able and erudite men, notably Professor F. B. Burchell (head of the Faculty of Law at the Natal University College), Lord E. Percy (Principal of the dual-centred University of Durham and Newcastle) and Sir R. Priestley (Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University), the necessary legislation was drafted and the Bill was read in the House of Assembly on 21st January 1948. The Governor-General assented to the Bill on 22nd March 1948 and almost a year later, on 15th March 1949, the Natal University College became the University of Natal.

Only four years later, in 1953, the University Council took the decision to move the administrative centre of the University from Pietermaritzburg to Durban due, says Malherbe, to the problems being experienced in Durban “particularly in connection with the non-European section and the development of a Medical School ...”²³¹

3.3.8. The Medical School

The first attempt to set up a medical school in Natal was made in 1922 by two medical doctors, J. B. McCord and A. B. Taylor, but the scheme failed to gain the required approval of the authorities.²³² In 1938 a Government-appointed committee on medical training in South Africa recommended that a separate medical school for “non-Europeans be envisaged;” the chosen centre was Durban.²³³ Nothing further was done until the Natal Branch of the Medical Association of South Africa took up the matter in December 1943 and the Natal University College Council was persuaded to support a proposal “to establish a Medical School under its administration.”²³⁴ After numerous delays, the Government finally approved the establishment of a Medical School in Durban under the auspices of the Natal University College but, before the decision could be implemented, Parliament was dissolved and a general election took place which resulted in a further delay. Long discussions ensued and at last the new Government agreed, not only to the establishment of the Medical School in Durban but also to a

²³¹ Malherbe, *Never a dull moment*, p. 291.

²³² Brookes, *A history of the University of Natal*, p. 79.

²³³ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

“generous special subsidy ... to enable the University to meet the costs.”²³⁵ However, as Brookes points out, “in conveying this decision, the Secretary for Education, in July 1950, coupled with it a proviso that no European students were to be enrolled in the School.”²³⁶

Classes for medical students began at last in 1951 in temporary premises which had once served as a naval training camp at Wentworth in Durban. In 1954 the Faculty was able to move out of its temporary quarters into a new six-storey building in the grounds of the King Edward VIII Hospital on Umbilo Road, about 3 kilometres from Howard College. Malherbe relates the battle he had to gain the City Council’s permission to erect the Medical School on those premises:

Among those who strongly opposed the erection of a Medical School on that site was Mr Percy Osborne, the Mayor. Dr Alan Taylor and I, before the meeting at which a decision was to be taken, had lobbied a large number of the City councillors in order to get their support until we were more or less assured of a majority...After some more discussion during which only one member spoke in favour of having the Medical School there, they voted and we won our case by a majority of two votes. The Mayor who was in the Chair was so furious that he immediately adjourned the Council and said that he wanted to talk to the members. They all moved into an adjoining room to have tea and one of the Council members came up to me and took me by the arm and said, “Come and have tea with us”. I, of course, went along, but as soon as the Mayor saw me in the room he shouted at me, “You get out!”²³⁷

Barely three years after the opening of the new building, the Medical School was once again embroiled in apartheid politics. In January 1957 the Principal received notification of the Government’s intention to close the University’s “non-European” classes and to remove the control of the Medical School from the University of Natal. A battle royal ensued. The University lost on the issue of academic segregation but won on the specific issue of retaining control of the Medical School. The “trump card”²³⁸ apparently was the announcement by the academic staff of the Faculty of Medicine that they would resign *en masse* if the Separate University Education Bill (1957) was implemented. Although the Government persisted in what Malherbe described as its “stupid course”²³⁹ of legalising academic segregation, the Extension of University Education Act no. 45 of 1959 excluded the Medical School of the University of Natal.

²³⁵ Brookes, *A history of the University of Natal*, p. 83.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

²³⁷ Malherbe, *Never a dull moment*, p. 297.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 312

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

3.3.9. Closure of the “Non-European” Section

As noted above, the promulgation of the Extension of University Education Act sounded the death-knell for the University’s “non-European” classes, despite vigorous protests by the Council, Principal, academic staff and students. The one concession given was that students who had registered before the Act came into force were to be allowed to complete their degrees at the universities at which they were registered. This knowledge provoked a rush of new registrations in 1958 and 1959. These students continued to be taught at the University of Natal and, although their numbers dwindled, the student enrolment statistics indicate that they never reached zero.²⁴⁰

3.3.10. Difficult times

Malherbe retired in December 1965 and was succeeded by Professor O.P.F. Horwood, William Hudson Professor of Economics at the University of Natal since 1958.²⁴¹ Horwood’s relatively short period in office was marked by clashes with liberal student leadership as well as certain academic staff. He eventually resigned with effect from 31st January 1970 and was immediately appointed as a National Party Senator by Prime Minister B.J. Vorster.²⁴² A commission appointed by the University Council to enquire into student affairs noted that “the problems in Durban which gave rise to our appointment as a Commission of Enquiry are largely symptoms ... of a world-wide ferment”²⁴³ and went on to say that “Students the world over are increasingly critical of their elders and of the ‘establishment’ ...”²⁴⁴ Horwood’s successor, in what the newspapers considered “a surprise decision”²⁴⁵ by the Council, was Professor F. Stock, who had been Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Head of the Department of Surgery at the University of Liverpool before taking up the position at the University of Natal. A distinguished scholar, the announcement of his appointment was greeted with a mixture of pleasure and caution. The then president of the Students’ Representative Council, Mr P. Pretorius, stated:

²⁴⁰ Student enrolment statistics, in University of Natal, *Calendar*, 1984, [S.I.: The University, 1984], p. A140-A141.

²⁴¹ Brookes, *A history of the University of Natal*, p. 177.

²⁴² I. Wilkins & H. Strydom, *The super-Afrikaners*, Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1978, p. 279.

²⁴³ A.B. Harcourt, (Chair), *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Student Affairs [University of Natal]*, 15th June 1968, unpublished, p. 13.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 14

²⁴⁵ Englishman is new head of Natal Varsity, *Natal mercury*, 4th April 1970.

Professor Stock is a man of eminence who, we hope, by virtue of his overseas residence, will bring objectivity to the post – unprejudiced by past trouble here.²⁴⁶

The University's financial difficulties increased, too. Due to the increasing costs of travel between the two centres, a separation of the academic activities was effected in 1973.²⁴⁷ Each centre thus had a parallel faculty of Law, Humanities, Commerce, Science and Social Science. In the case of some departments this meant that extra staff had to be employed to compensate for staff who had previously had to travel between centres for teaching purposes.²⁴⁸ Some academic staff expressed delight at this decision although in retrospect there is no doubt that the separation prompted a further polarisation of activities in the two centres and was to have major financial implications in later years.

3.3.11. A university in transformation

During the 1980s it became evident that the composition of the student body was undergoing a transformation. The Government's relaxation of the measures which had prevented black students registering at "white" universities and the complete removal of these restrictions in 1991 meant that black students were registering at the University in ever-increasing numbers. By 1988 black students accounted for 35% of first year enrolments. The document entitled *A university in transformation* states:

It was now clear that the University could not continue to be regarded as a "white" institution based on the British university tradition. It could not remain the same and simply require black entrants to adapt to the ways of a white-styled university.²⁴⁹

In 1989 the University adopted a new mission statement along with a new statement of vision and a reiteration of the values of the University. Termed a "focused Mission Statement,"²⁵⁰ it begins with the statement that "The University of Natal strives to serve all sections of its community through excellence in scholarship, teaching, learning, research and development."²⁵¹

²⁴⁶ Englishman is new head of Natal Varsity, *Natal mercury*, 4th April 1970.

²⁴⁷ G. Dubbeld, *A chronology of the University of Natal*, [1994], unpublished, [p. 15].

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ *A university in transformation*, p. 1.

²⁵⁰ *Strategic initiatives for the University of Natal*, edited by B. Bell, [Durban]: Communication and Publicity, University of Natal, 1999, p. 1.

²⁵¹ *The role in society of the University of Natal, 1989 onwards*, [Durban: The University, 1989], p. 20.

Phrases such as “progress through reconstruction” and “development services which meet community needs” appear in the document, indicating that the University had reassessed its role and was attempting to reposition itself in a changing South Africa. Two years later, in 1991, the new Vice-Chancellor, Professor J. Leatt, instituted a major review of the University. The final report, released in August 1994, contained a number of proposals for far-reaching strategic changes in the University, one of the major ones being the restructuring of Council in order to make it more representative of the community. As few changes had been made to Council’s composition since 1948 this restructuring was long overdue. Other proposals included the introduction of educational development programmes which precipitated a total restructuring of this section of the University in 1995, as well as new interdisciplinary programmes and the establishment of a Broad Transformation Forum to oversee the processes of transformation at the University. The University was proudly able to state that:

Long before the National Commission on Higher Education ... the University, in its planning documents, anticipated Government’s present emphasis on quality assurance, new modes of education delivery, efficiency, cost-effectiveness and regional co-operation.”²⁵²

The University was also ahead of its time when it appointed Professor B. Gourley as the ninth Principal and seventh Vice-Chancellor in 1993. She was the first woman to be appointed as Vice-Chancellor of a South African university “and one of the few [female Vice-Chancellors] in the world.”²⁵³

3.3.12. A financial crisis

In 1997 the University found itself facing a major financial crisis. A Task Group, convened with the aim of reviewing University structures and making recommendations for cost savings, announced that the University’s staff component would have to be reduced by some six hundred posts. The unpleasant alternatives were outlined in the foreword:

If it does not do so, student fees will continue to rise; affirmative action will be retarded; there will have to be further reductions in the purchase of library books and library, laboratory and computer equipment; building plans will have to be

²⁵² *Strategic initiatives for the University of Natal*, p. 1.

²⁵³ Welcome to new Vice-chancellor, *NU info*, vol. 4, no. 1, 15th February-14th March 1994, p. 3.

shelved; existing buildings will deteriorate and staff members will not receive salary increases.”²⁵⁴

Among the reasons given for the crisis was the fact that the level of the University’s financial resources was “at least 5% below a sustainable level of expenditure”²⁵⁵ and it was expected that the situation would become worse due to expected drastic changes in the government’s financing of universities. The expectation was that future government funding to the University of Natal would decrease significantly as growth in the higher education sector in South Africa was expected to take place in the technical and further education sectors rather than in the university sector. It was also expected that the historically black universities – the “ethnic” universities brought into being by the Nationalist government following the Extension of University Education Act of 1959 - would receive the lion’s share of the funding earmarked for universities. However, the Task Group also outlined other, more fundamental reasons, for the crisis in which the University found itself. It was noted that, in spite of the major restructuring of the University’s administrative and committee systems, a number of important goals outlined in the Vice-Chancellor’s review had not been attained. These pertained to academic development, duplication of services and lack of conformity to common University policy between the two centres. Basically, resources were being wasted.

The outcome of the review was a complete re-organization of academic structures in the University. New departmental and faculty structures were created and administrative activities were, as far as possible, rationalised across the centres.

3.3.13. An incorporation and an impending merger

During the transitional period before the first democratic elections were held in South Africa in 1994 the need for a commission to investigate the transformation of higher education was identified. Thus in 1996 the National Commission on Higher Education was established by presidential proclamation with the ultimate aim of putting forward proposals for a new system for South African higher education. In the introduction to the report, the Commission explains why new policy proposals were considered necessary:

²⁵⁴ University of Natal, University Planning and Resources Committee Task Group, *Structures and funding*, May 1997, unpublished, Executive summary.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

South Africa has the most developed and well-resourced system of education and training in Africa. Some of its higher education institutions, programmes and research compare with the best in the world. It is crucial for these strengths to be supported and preserved. Yet the legacy of apartheid has led to the fragmentation of higher education, to discriminatory policies and practices, inequitable allocation of resources and undemocratic governance structures. The consequences are restricted participation of black people, an unplanned and uncoordinated system with no clearly articulated national goals, and an inability to respond meaningfully to the economic and social needs of the majority.²⁵⁶

The principles of equity, democracy, academic freedom coupled with institutional autonomy, effectiveness and efficiency underpin the proposals. In order to give effect to its aims, the Commission stated that it favoured a higher education model which resulted in fewer, larger, multidisciplinary institutions which included “the incorporation of many of the colleges of education, nursing and agriculture into universities and technikons.”²⁵⁷ For the University of Natal this meant, in practical terms, the incorporation of the Edgewood College of Education, a former teachers’ training college in Pinetown, into the University on 1st February 2001. Three years later, on 1st January 2004, the University of Natal merged with the University of Durban-Westville to become the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

3.4. Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the development of South African university education and specifically the foundation and development of the University of Natal in order to place the development of the University of Natal Libraries in context. The next chapter explores the early formative years of the Natal University College Library in Pietermaritzburg.

²⁵⁶ South Africa, National Commission on Higher Education, *A framework for transformation*, [Pretoria: HSRC], 1996, Introduction.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

Chapter Four

The first library: Pietermaritzburg, 1910-1945

The scenario which greeted the newly appointed professors on their arrival in Pietermaritzburg in 1910 was somewhat bleak. The newly constituted College was homeless and had no funds, apart from student fees and a government grant of £30,000 voted by the former government of the Colony of Natal. This amount, according to Bews, was supposed to be the “first installment of a contemplated expenditure of £90,000”²⁵⁸ but the full amount was never forthcoming. The first students were taught in a two-roomed wood and iron building, erected especially for the purpose,²⁵⁹ at the Pietermaritzburg College School but classes, except for Chemistry, Physics and Anatomy, were moved after June 1910 to the Pietermaritzburg Town Hall. A terse note in the December issue of the school magazine advised readers that “The University College classes which were conducted here last term are now located in the Town Hall.”²⁶⁰ The opening of the new building in Scottsville, which took place on 9th August 1912, provided greatly improved accommodation for both students and staff. It boasted a large Central Hall, eight lecture halls, laboratories for Physics, Chemistry, Botany and Geology and a library and a reading room, the latter two rooms being situated on the first floor above the entrance hall.

During this period, as has been noted previously, the fledgling Natal University College struggled to survive. The outbreak of the First World War dealt “a shattering blow to the small and struggling College”²⁶¹ as many students responded to the call to arms and others, who might have gone to College, went instead to war. However, from 1919 onwards the College became firmly established. Gradually, the library was expanded in keeping with the expansion of the College itself. This chapter charts the early days of the

²⁵⁸ J.W. Bews, Generous gifts to education, *Natal mercury*, 1st August, 1931.

²⁵⁹ S.E. Lamond, Early 'varsity days, *Natal University College magazine*, vol. 1, October 1919, p. 34.

²⁶⁰ Notes, *Pietermaritzburg College school magazine*, vol. 3, no. 31, December 1910, p. 1.

²⁶¹ E.H. Brookes, *A history of the University of Natal*, Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1966, p. 17.

College Library in Pietermaritzburg up until the appointment of the first Chief Librarian, who was to be in overall charge of the libraries in both Pietermaritzburg and Durban.

4.1. Early days, 1910 – 1920

The first library dates almost from the inception of the College but was started, according to one of the first students,²⁶² “Practically at the end of the year [1910] – almost too late to be of any use to the Senior B.A. students.”²⁶³ The borrowing of books was “under the control of the recently-appointed Registrar, Mr. Feltham.”²⁶⁴ The “Library” does not, however, appear to have been much more than a collection of classroom textbooks and, according to Brookes, other plans had to be made to provide students and staff with access to the books and journals that they needed.²⁶⁵

In the absence of adequate library facilities students were encouraged to rely upon the Natal Museum, which had a few books of reference and the Natal Society Library, which, according to the College Calendar, possessed “a very fine library of literary and scientific works and admits students of the College to its full privileges at the specially reduced terms of seven shillings and sixpence per annum.”²⁶⁶ This was actually the cost of junior membership, for those aged between eighteen and twenty, of the Natal Society Library. Students younger than eighteen would have been able to join the Library for the sum of five shillings per annum.²⁶⁷ The students may not have minded these arrangements but Hattersley indicates that the lack of books was a serious handicap for the Arts professors. “Without a good library, literary research was virtually impossible.”²⁶⁸

The new building in Scottsville provided space for rudimentary library facilities. As the College calendar of 1912 stated, “A College Library containing all the works of reference necessary for the various departments is now available for students.”²⁶⁹

²⁶² S.E. Lamond completed a Bachelor of Arts degree at the Natal University College in 1910.

²⁶³ Lamond, *Natal University College magazine*, vol. 1, October 1919, p. 36.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁵ E.H. Brookes, *A history of the University of Natal*, Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1966, p. 15.

²⁶⁶ Natal University College, *Calendar*, 1911, Pietermaritzburg: [The College], 1911, p. 101.

²⁶⁷ Library notes and news: Pietermaritzburg – Children’s Library, *South African libraries*, vol. 2, no. 1, July 1934, p. 27.

²⁶⁸ Hattersley, *The University of Natal, 1909-1960*, p. 16.

²⁶⁹ Natal University College, *Calendar*, 1912, Pietermaritzburg: [The College], 1912, p. 110.

By 1916 an Honorary Librarian, Professor O. Waterhouse (Professor of English and Philosophy), had been elected by Senate. This was the usual practice in South African university libraries at this time. Malan has noted that until 1919 university libraries in South Africa were run by professors who, in addition to their professorial duties, also had to deliver a library service.²⁷⁰ The following year a set of “College Library Regulations”²⁷¹ was published, from which we note the hours of opening: 9 a.m to 4 p.m. daily except on Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays, amounting to 35 hours per week. The books in the collection remained the property of the academic departments and thus a would-be borrower had to apply to the professor or lecturer in charge of the department “to which the book belongs.”²⁷² On borrowing a book the student had to fill in a form which was retained as a record until the book was returned to “the professor or lecturer who issued it.”²⁷³ Special permission was required to borrow a book during the vacation. Such stringent restrictions would be anathema to the modern student, not to mention the nuisance it must have been to the academic staff who were required to maintain records of book issues, but it seems that the demands made upon the Library in those early days were few. Similarly McKitterick, in his history of the Cambridge University Library, reflects that few demands were made on the University Library until the late 19th century because the curriculum “did not compel candidates to read or study over a very wide range of topics ...”²⁷⁴ The same was true of early college libraries in the United States, according to Childress:

The original college library was used primarily for book storage, with very few hours of access, no trained librarian, and a college curriculum that emphasized the lecture method and did not demand books for investigative study.²⁷⁵

There is also no evidence that Waterhouse, as Honorary Librarian, had to shelve and catalogue the books – unlike Professor Logeman, Honorary Librarian of the University of Cape Town from 1905 to 1920, who, Barben says:

... took steps to bring all the books accumulated in College departments together into one place ... where he arranged them systematically and catalogued them. Carefully nurtured by a dedicated altruist, the library began to grow and flourish,

²⁷⁰ S.I. Malan, Opleiding van professionele bibliotekaris, in: *Libraries and people*, edited by J.G. Kesting, *et al*, Cape Town: Struik, [1970?], p. 37.

²⁷¹ Natal University College, *Calendar*, 1917, Pietermaritzburg: [The College], 1917, p. 124.

²⁷² *Ibid.*

²⁷³ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁴ D. McKitterick, *Cambridge University Library*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 9.

²⁷⁵ B. Childress, Library history, university history, and photographic history, *Journal of library history, philosophy and comparative librarianship*, vol. 22, no. 1, Winter 1987, p. 71.

despite the rigours of the post-South Africa War economic depression in the Cape Colony.²⁷⁶

The outbreak of the First World War in August 1914 disrupted the early years of the struggling College. Since the Council had offered the Government the use of the Scottsville building for the purposes of an army convalescent hospital, the staff and the few remaining students had to move to temporary premises in the Natal Government Railways headquarters in Loop Street in 1917. Brown notes that moving the Library to Loop Street presented no problem since, says he, “What books there were were in the possession of the lecturers.”²⁷⁷ In 1919 the College returned to its own premises in Scottsville and Waterhouse relinquished the position of Honorary Librarian to Mr A.F. Hattersley, lecturer in History. Events, as far as the Library was concerned, were about to take a decided turn for the better.

4.2. The formative years, 1921 – 1936

In May 1921 the College received a generous donation of nearly 4,000 volumes as well as the sum of £480, being a contribution towards the salary of a librarian, from Mrs P. Davis, widow of Pietermaritzburg businessman, Mr Peter Davis. Davis, described as “Natal’s leading bookseller at the beginning of the century,”²⁷⁸ was also a member of the 1904 Natal Technical Education Commission appointed by the colonial government to investigate technical education in the Colony. On the strength of this donation the College was able to employ a part-time librarian. Captain D.A. Henry, a war veteran and secretary to the scout group committee of Hattersley, Honorary Librarian, was appointed at the meagre salary of £10 per annum.²⁷⁹ A Library Committee was appointed by Senate and the first committee meeting took place in the University staff room at 3 p.m. on 11th October 1921. The College was at last taking the management of the Library more seriously. Brown declares this date the “official birthday of the library.”²⁸⁰ Present at this first meeting were Professors G. Besselaar (Modern Languages), P. Mesham (Physics), G.W. Ferguson (Education) and the erstwhile Honorary Librarian, Mr A.F.

²⁷⁶ T. Barben, *The sapling that grew into a tree*, 2005,

<http://www.lib.uct.ac.za/index.php?=html/info/2004/sapling5.htm&libid=88>

²⁷⁷ R.A. Brown, *History of the Library, part 1*, Supplement no. 8 to *[Library] bulletin*, [Pietermaritzburg], October 1971, p.1.

²⁷⁸ R.A. Brown, *History of the Library, Part 2*, Supplement no. 9 to *[Library] bulletin* [Pietermaritzburg], November 1971, p.1.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

Hattersley (History), with the newly appointed Librarian acting as secretary. Discussion at this first meeting centred on practical matters such as the opening hours of the Library, the division of books and lending rules. Henry was charged with contacting the Natal Society and Education Department libraries and obtaining “a copy of their rules and regulations and to embody such as be applicable in a set of rules to be drawn up by Oct. 20th [1921] for the governing of the Library.”²⁸¹

A decision was taken at the second meeting, held on 24th October 1921, that the Committee would become a Standing Committee of Senate. The first rule reads: “The general management supervision of the library shall be vested in the Standing Library Committee, appointed yearly by the Senate, of which the librarian shall be, ex officio, Secretary.”²⁸² As far as the day-to-day business of the Library was concerned, the Librarian was to be in charge and would be responsible to the College Council, through the Library Committee, for all property belonging to the Library. All matters regarding the management of the Library were discussed at the meetings of the Library Committee and most matters were referred to the Senate and Council for decisions. Therefore financial matters such as the purchase of library materials, furniture and equipment, rules for the circulation of library material, hours of opening, cancellation of missing books and other seemingly mundane matters were referred to the Senate and thereafter the Council. This state of affairs was to last for seventy years, until the recommendations of the Vice-Chancellor’s Review of 1991 removed the executive function of the Library Committees and they became advisory committees.²⁸³

At its second meeting the Committee once again considered a draft set of rules for the Library. The rules dealt with hours of opening, rules for the borrowing of books, the recording of stock - “every book belonging to the Library shall be entered in [the] catalogue and bear the library mark”²⁸⁴ - what to do if an infectious disease broke out in any house containing library books and, notably, the division of the library into three sections, namely, books which could be borrowed, reference books (which had to be used

²⁸¹ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 11th October 1921*.

²⁸² Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 24th October 1921*.

²⁸³ University of Natal, Vice-Chancellor’s Review, *Report*, December 1991, unpublished, p. 112.

²⁸⁴ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 24th October 1921*.

in the Library) and thirdly books retained for class use in the lecture rooms. This “iniquitous” third section was, according to Brown, the “birth” of the troublesome “departmental collections.”²⁸⁵ These remained in the academic departments but were still considered to be part of the Library’s collections, as noted in the minutes of a Library Committee meeting held over twenty years later: “... it being understood that departmental libraries form a section of the main Library ...”²⁸⁶ The University of the Witwatersrand suffered similar problems. Murray states that:

At Milner Park, the various departments all supposedly ran their own libraries, and in most instances these catered for teaching and research interests of staff rather than the needs of students. In 1926 a start was made with the establishment of a central library at Milner Park ... but many heads of departments were reluctant to allow their books to be transferred to it.²⁸⁷

It is interesting to note that, with the employment of a permanent Librarian, the hours of opening were reduced from 35 hours per week (as indicated in the Calendar of 1917) to only 20 hours per week, although the Library was to open on Saturday mornings. These hours, however, did not suit the students and the Students’ Representative Council made application, through Senate, for the hours of opening to be changed. This was considered at a Library Committee meeting held on 3rd May 1923 and was agreed to, subject to the approval of the Chairman of Senate.

The addition of the Peter Davis collection doubled the size of the Library and necessitated a move to the Main Hall of the Main building of the College. The Librarian’s report for the period December 1921 to June 30th 1922 shows the number of books belonging to the College as 3,549 while the addition of the Peter Davis collection of 3,971 volumes brought the total size of the Library to 7,520 volumes.²⁸⁸ The glass-fronted book cabinets and other furniture were moved down from the reading room to more spacious quarters in the gallery of the Main Hall but, judging from a contemporary photograph which shows bookshelves stretched along the sides and three long tables in the centre of the room, it was not a particularly comfortable venue. With its wooden floors and high ceiling it was also probably quite noisy.

²⁸⁵ Brown, *History of the Library, Part 1*, October 1971, p. 1.

²⁸⁶ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 26th June 1944*.

²⁸⁷ B.K. Murray, *Wits, the early years*, Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1982, p. 119.

²⁸⁸ Natal University College, *1st report of the Librarian for the period December 1921 to June 30th 1922*, [Pietermaritzburg].

The Librarian was instructed by the Library Committee at the meeting of 1st March 1922 to “take over from the Registrar all periodicals at present being received by him, and also to take charge of all office books in connection therewith.”²⁸⁹ Barely two months later, however, the Committee rescinded the decision that the Librarian take charge of the “office books.”²⁹⁰ No reasons were given although it is possible that, due to the fact that he worked only part-time, Henry had more than enough work to do without handling the library acquisitions as well.

During the first year of its existence the Library Committee found that the chief problem it had to deal with was that of missing books. Henry, in his first report to the Library Committee, noted with pride that in less than a year the number of missing books had been reduced from 116 in December 1921, “since the taking over of the Library,”²⁹¹ to 88. However, Henry also complained that “Students still show a good deal of slackness when dealing with the books and I beg to bring before your notice the following irregularities which interfere considerably with the proper working of the Library ...”²⁹² A list of misdemeanors follows which apparently sorely tried poor Henry in his attempts to keep the Library in good order. The Committee took the matters seriously and it was decided that the “irregularities” would be brought before the Students’ Representative Council and that “offenders” would be reported to the Standing Library Committee.

4.2.1. Finances, 1921 – 1936

Allocations for the purchase of library books were first mentioned in the minutes of the Library Committee meeting of 27th April 1922, when Professor Besselaar “brought up the question of the exceeding, by heads of departments, of their votes for books ...”²⁹³ The problem was not solved at this meeting and it continued to be discussed off and on for many years, but at the Library Committee meeting of 3rd March 1924 it was noted that Senate had resolved to consider a set of rules, to be drawn up by the Library Committee,

²⁸⁹ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 1st March 1922.*

²⁹⁰ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 27th April 1922.*

²⁹¹ Natal University College, *1st report of the Librarian for the period December 1921 to June 30th, 1922.*

²⁹² *Ibid.*

²⁹³ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 27th April 1922.*

on the administration of Library funds. The chairman, Dr Besselaar, brought a set of proposals to the meeting of 1st April 1924. Considerable discussion ensued and the meeting was adjourned twice. Finally, at the Committee meeting of 23rd April 1924 a set of rules was adopted. In summary these were that a sum for the upkeep and extension of the Library be voted for the Library on the yearly College budget. Hattersley had shrewdly proposed that the Librarian's salary, as well as library furniture and fabrics be excluded from the vote. The amount as well as the distribution between departments was calculated according to a fairly simple formula as follows:

- Each department conducting a major course in an Arts subject in the year under review should be credited with a sum of £15;
- Each department conducting a major course in law or in a Science subject under the above conditions should be credited with a sum of £10;
- Each department conducting a course for the Master's degree or a minor course for a Bachelor's degree should be credited in respect of each such course with £5;
- For the purposes of this allotment a major in Geography and the Diploma course in Education should each be defined as an Arts major, a major in pure Mathematics should be defined as a Science major, and the various courses in Secondary school subjects for the Higher diploma should be defined together as the equivalent of two minor courses;
- In addition the Library vote should be credited with a sum of £50 for contingencies from which provision would be made for Library requisites (other than furniture), miscellaneous literature and special departmental grants, the claims of departments with large enrolments and of departments conducting Masters courses receiving first consideration under the last head;
- The allotted but unexpended monies at the end of the financial year, should be carried forward to the credit of the Library Contingencies fund of the year following, provided that the total amount standing to the credit of the fund did not, in any year, exceed the sum of £100 and any surplus over this figure would revert to general college funds.²⁹⁴

²⁹⁴ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 23rd April 1924*. See Appendix 4 for a list of the formulae adopted over the years by both the Pietermaritzburg and Durban Library Committees to calculate the distribution of book and journal funds.

The Librarian was instructed to order the books “on terms most advantageous to the N.U.C.” under the direction of the Library Committee and all accounts were to be sent to the Registrar’s office.²⁹⁵ This represented a change in procedure as previously the Registrar had been in charge of the ordering of books for the Library. The Librarian’s task had been confined to the entry of details of the newly purchased books in the register.

For five years, from 1923 to 1927, the book vote remained at a paltry £250. As a comparison, the University of the Witwatersrand spent £1,859 on its Library in 1927 and Cape Town spent £2,563. Murray’s comment is damning:

It is also evident from the accounts that in the 1920s neither Wits nor U.C.T. spent more than a derisory sum upon their libraries. In 1927 Wits spent £1859, Cape Town £2563.²⁹⁶

Even Henry’s salary, a meagre £10 per annum for a part-time post, was extremely low in comparison to the salary of £150 per annum which had been paid to the librarian at Beaconsfield Park, near Kimberley, twenty years earlier in 1901.²⁹⁷ It is therefore not surprising that a report drawn up by the Reverend A.P. Stokes, who visited South and East Africa under the auspices of the Carnegie Corporation of New York in 1932, criticised the College Library:

The standards of the University colleges in Grahamstown and Pietermaritzburg are high. Few institutions I visited impressed me more favourably. These colleges seemed to have excellent leadership and most creditable educational standards ... The Library facilities however are very inadequate ...²⁹⁸

In 1928 the book vote was decreased to £180 and all departments had perforce to take a decrease of 10% in their allocations. The vote remained at this level for the following four years due, as noted at the Library Committee meeting of 14th March 1929, to “the present financial stress”²⁹⁹ although an extra grant of £40 had to be provided by the College for library books during the course of 1930 as there had been an unexpected increase in the numbers of Masters students. The parlous state of the Library’s book vote was a cause

²⁹⁵ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 23^d April 1924*.

²⁹⁶ Murray, *Wits, the early years*, p. 118.

²⁹⁷ R.F. Kennedy, Library mechanics, in: *Libraries and people*, Cape Town: Struik, [1970?], p. 12.

²⁹⁸ Currey, *Rhodes University, 1904-1970*, p. 81.

²⁹⁹ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 14th March 1929*.

for great concern on the part of the Library Committee. At their meeting of 20 March 1933 discussions were held on the matter and various suggestions were made as to how funds could be raised. Eventually it was decided that:

...representations be made to Dr Bews that an appeal for funds for the College Libraries of Durban and Maritzburg be made at the Graduation Ceremony to be held in Durban next month, also that the Secretary of the old students Union, who hold their reunion meeting at the same time, be requested to bring the matter before the gathering, and that all other avenues be explored with the object of raising funds for the use of the libraries.”³⁰⁰

There is no indication that these appeals met with much success. Undoubtedly the Great Depression, a worldwide economic downturn which began with the stock market crash in the United States in October 1929,³⁰¹ was a contributing factor. As world trade slumped, South Africa, says Gale, “entered a period of depression which lasted several years.”³⁰² Economists agree that the gold mining industry saved the economy from complete collapse but it was a time of extreme economic hardship for many. Gale describes what this period of economic depression meant to the College:

There was a shortage of funds, both at the Union Treasury and in the business world, which made it difficult indeed to maintain even what had already been established ... Bews indulged in no vain repining. He did what he could, by efficient administration, to make what money there was go as far as possible.³⁰³

Fortunately the College did not also have to contend with poor enrolment figures as student registration increased steadily during this time.

In 1932 an extra £20 was granted to the Library, bringing the book vote to £200 and in 1934 the grant was returned to the same amount as had been granted in 1923, namely £250, where it remained for the next three years. During this time departments frequently overspent their allocations and either extra allocations had to be made from the Library’s contingency fund or departments had to carry their deficits over into the next financial year. In August 1935 the Library Committee agreed that the Chairman should write a report to Dr Bews, pleading the case for a grant from the Carnegie

³⁰⁰ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 20th March 1933*.

³⁰¹ The worldwide slump in business and increased levels of unemployment occurred between the years 1929 and 1934. – *The Cambridge encyclopedia*, edited by D. Crystal, 2nd edition, London: BCA, 1994.

³⁰² G.W. Gale, *John William Bews*, Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1954, p. 83.

³⁰³ *Ibid.* p. 83-84.

Corporation of New York.³⁰⁴ This report provides a succinct overview of the situation in 1935:

Since 1923 the College grant for books to its Maritzburg Library has stood at £250 per annum – a sum which now has to be distributed among nineteen subject departments. The College has been unable to consider requests for an increase in the amount owing to heavy demands for extension of staff and accommodation to deal with a greatly increased student roll. These demands have all occurred in recent years and since the stabilisation of the Government grant. The limitation of the library grant has told particularly hardly on the Arts departments, whose classes have doubled or trebled and in some cases quadrupled in these years, and which on their small departmental grants find it impossible to keep up with the increased demands for reading material. But it tells no less on the Science departments which cannot afford the range of periodical literature necessary to keep a Science department up to date.³⁰⁵

The second part of the report deals with the necessity of classifying the collection, à propos the Librarian's recommendation to the Committee on 8th August, 1935 that the Dewey Decimal Classification system be adopted and "that an application be made to the Carnegie Foundation [sic] for a grant to enable the turn over [to be] carried out."³⁰⁶ The report requested funding both for a temporary assistant and for the purchase of Library of Congress catalogue cards, the latter in response to an earlier recommendation by the Librarian that a set of Library of Congress cards be ordered "for each new volume purchased, and, as funds permit, sets for books already in the library."³⁰⁷

4.2.2. Library staff, 1921 – 1936

As noted above, it was entirely due to the contribution made by Mrs P. Davis from the estate of her late husband that the College was able to hire a part-time librarian. Brown has written a brief biography of Henry,³⁰⁸ wherein he states that Henry emigrated to South Africa from Scotland at the age of seventeen (in about 1897) and settled in Ladysmith, Natal. He enlisted in the Royal Field Artillery during the First World War and served both in South West Africa (now Namibia) and on the Western Front, being

³⁰⁴ Carnegie Corporation of New York, a philanthropic organisation established in 1911 by Andrew Carnegie.

³⁰⁵ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Report of N.U.C. Library Committee (Pietermaritzburg) on Carnegie Corporation grant*, [1935], unpublished, p. 1.

³⁰⁶ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 8th August, 1935*.

³⁰⁷ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 18th October, 1934*.

³⁰⁸ R.A. Brown *History of the Library, Part 3*, Supplement no. 10 to *[Library] bulletin*, [Pietermaritzburg], June 1973, p.1.

gassed and twice wounded. On demobilization from the Army he purchased a smallholding in the Blackburrow area of Pietermaritzburg with his gratuity and settled to a life of dairy farming and polo until his appointment as part-time Librarian at the Natal University College in Pietermaritzburg. The exact date of his appointment is uncertain; however he was certainly in place when the first Library Committee met on 11th October 1921. He did not possess any library qualifications, nor does he appear to have had any experience of working in a library. His selection for the post may have been based on his love of books and reading but was more likely based simply on the need for a job. This was the norm for most library staff in South Africa at the time. Pitt,³⁰⁹ in his report on the provision of library services in the universities and colleges of South Africa noted, regarding “expert [library] staff,” that “All are inadequately provided in this respect.”³¹⁰ Ferguson, too, considered that “Nothing is more important in this work [library service] than the librarian, and herein the country as a whole is in a sad plight.”³¹¹

Henry occupied the post of Librarian for twenty-three years, until his retirement in 1944. He was, according to Brown, a “severe disciplinarian” with a rather abrupt manner who insisted upon total silence in the Library, “though he had a tendency to doze behind a newspaper when roped in to invigilate.”³¹² The years he spent as Librarian were not easy. The Library’s annual book grant of £250, sometimes less, was inadequate. The Library itself was housed in the Main Hall for some fifteen years, until 1st July 1937, when the first Library building was opened. The Library premises themselves posed problems. During dances and performances of the Dramatic Society curtains were discreetly drawn to hide the books. The curtains were, as was to be expected and as Brown points out, “more useful for other purposes”³¹³ and, to the consternation of all concerned, a curtain caught fire at a performance of the Dramatic Society in 1928 “as the result of

³⁰⁹ Messrs S.A. Pitt and M.J. Ferguson, from Scotland and the United States of America respectively, visited South Africa in 1928 under the auspices of the Carnegie Corporation of New York to survey the library services of the Union, make recommendations for improvements and convene a national library conference. Their visit is considered to mark “the beginning of modern library development [in South Africa].” – L.E. Taylor, *South African libraries*, London: Bingley, 1967, p. 18.

³¹⁰ S.A. Pitt, Memorandum, in P.C. Coetzee, *Die Carnegie-biblioteeksending van 1928*, Pretoria: State Library, 1975, p. 44.

³¹¹ M.J. Ferguson, Memorandum, in P.C. Coetzee, *Die Carnegie-biblioteeksending van 1928*, Pretoria: State Library, 1975, p. 74.

³¹² Brown, *History of the Library, Part 3*, p. 1.

³¹³ *Ibid.*

smoking.”³¹⁴ The Library Committee took a serious view on the matter and reported it to Senate.

The increasing workload led the Library Committee, at its meeting of 3rd March 1924, to pass a resolution whereby Senate was to be asked to recommend to Council that a full-time Librarian be appointed. Confirmation of Council’s approval was noted at the Standing Library Committee meeting of 1st April 1924 and Captain Henry became full-time from this date. It was noted with satisfaction that this appointment resulted in an increase in the number of books borrowed “of over 66%” (in comparison with the same period as the previous year) and that “The afternoon attendance averaging 34 students is also satisfactory.”³¹⁵

The formation of the South African Library Association (SALA) in 1930 on the recommendation of visiting overseas librarians Messrs M.J. Ferguson and S.A. Pitt represented a turning point for librarianship in South Africa, particularly with regard to the training of librarians. Up to this time persons wishing to train as librarians either had to study overseas or to undertake a correspondence course, usually that offered by the British Library Association.³¹⁶ It was reported by the President of SALA at the first triennial general meeting that:

...the Transvaal Branch has started Correspondence Courses in Librarianship, and they are under the direction of Mr R.F. Kennedy [Librarian at the Johannesburg Public Library], with the assistance of tutors. We have no longer now to look overseas. It is no longer necessary for young library students to get all their coaching from London or America.³¹⁷

Although not young (he would have been in his fifties), Henry took advantage of the opportunity to acquire qualifications in librarianship. In June 1934 he had attended a SALA vacation school held in Durban and this no doubt encouraged him to acquire further skills. He wrote his first SALA examination in December 1936 and thereafter was entitled to place the initials ASALA (Associate of the South African Library Association) behind his name.

³¹⁴ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 14th August 1928*.

³¹⁵ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 12th August 1924*.

³¹⁶ F.R. Bell, *The Department of Information Studies, University of Natal*, M.I.S thesis, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1998, unpublished, p. 54.

³¹⁷ Report of the first Triennial General Meeting of the South African Library Association, *South African libraries*, vol. 2, no. 1, July 1934, p. 7.

4.2.3. Collections, 1921 – 1936

The early Librarian's reports to the Library Committee provide detailed lists of the books pertaining to subjects taught at the College but no other detail. No details of the Peter Davis Collection were provided and it is thus left to Brown to describe it:

[The Davis collection] consisted very considerably of review copies of books received by the *Natal Witness* [Peter Davis had been the owner of the newspaper], and comprised for the most part general works on art, travel, biography and current affairs, now [in 1971] very much period pieces.³¹⁸

At the Library Committee meeting of 10th August 1923 a two-person sub-committee, consisting of the Chairman of the Library Committee and the Librarian, was appointed to “go into the matter of compiling a catalogue of the library.”³¹⁹ A decision was taken at the following Committee meeting of 22nd November that, during the long vacation, the pair should also investigate methods of library management at other universities in South Africa. The visits bore fruit in that the Library Committee decided, in March 1923, to introduce the Dewey Decimal Classification scheme. It was noted that “The Library Committee resolves to introduce the Dewey system of cataloguing [sic], adapted to the needs of the N.U.C. Library,”³²⁰ but the decision was unaccountably rescinded a year later. In place of a systematic arrangement of books in the Library, it was agreed that each head of department “subdivide his section as he thinks proper.”³²¹ Thereafter the topic came up for discussion at Committee meetings several times over the next decade but each time it was agreed that no changes should be made in the arrangement of the collection and the matter was shelved. Thus, for many years the College Library was really nothing more than “a number of class-room libraries housed for convenience in a central hall.”³²² It was an unsatisfactory arrangement as it relied on the idiosyncrasies of the professors, but it persisted until the Librarian attended a vacation course organised in Durban by the South African Library Association, from 18th to 30th June 1934.

³¹⁸ Brown, *History of the Library, Part 3*, p. 1.

³¹⁹ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 10th August 1923*.

³²⁰ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 3rd March 1924*.

³²¹ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 1st April 1924*.

³²² Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Report of the N.U.C. Library Committee (Pietermaritzburg) on Carnegie Corporation grant*, [1935], p. 1.

Henry, upon his return from the SALA course, provided the Library Committee with a resumé and gave it as his opinion that it was time to adopt a systematic method of classifying and indexing the Library collection. He proposed to the Committee that a set of Library of Congress catalogue cards be ordered for every new volume purchased and that, as funds permitted, sets for books already in the Library be purchased retrospectively.³²³ He pointed out that “From 1930 onwards these cards are printed with the Dewey number; this will save a large amount of time in cataloguing new books.”³²⁴ His proposal was accepted without objection and £5 was voted from the Library’s “contingency fund” for the purchase of cards. He was also instructed to request funds from the Registrar to purchase a stylus for the marking of book spines and, at the following meeting held on 16th April 1935, the Committee instructed him to “write to the Howard College suggesting that they should adopt the same method of classification.”³²⁵

Unlike the decision to adopt the Dewey Decimal Classification as the method by which books should be arranged, the design of bookplates proved to be a surprisingly difficult problem to resolve. The matter was first discussed at the Library Committee meeting of 10th November 1931 when Henry tabled “a bookplate designed by the N.U.C. Durban for their use and making an offer of it to us should we care to make use of it.”³²⁶ The matter was allowed to “stand over” and was not mentioned again until both Libraries were united under a University Librarian in 1946.

4.2.4. User services, 1921 - 1936

No services other than the basic loan and references services were offered to students or staff. Students made good use of the Library for study purposes, prompting the Librarian to request extra tables at the Committee meeting of 22nd November 1923.

³²³ The Library of Congress, in Washington, D.C., started a catalogue card distribution service to other libraries in 1902. The service was eventually closed in 1997. – Library of Congress, Cataloging Distribution Service, *Catalog cards*, www.loc.gov/cds/cards.html

³²⁴ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 18th October, 1934.*

³²⁵ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 16th April, 1935.*

³²⁶ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 10th November 1931.*

Another reason for requesting extra tables was, states Henry primly, “The men students also appear disinclined to mix with the women students at the same tables.”³²⁷

The Library’s collections were sometimes put to more unusual uses as may be noted from the fiercely worded resolution passed at the Library Committee meeting of 2nd

November:

It was resolved that the Secretary of the Dramatic Society be written to, pointing out that books belonging to the Library had been found stored with the stage scenery in the basement, the books having, presumably, been used in connection with their dramatic performances, and to take measures to prevent a repetition of the occurrence.”³²⁸

In 1925 Library membership was extended beyond the staff and students of the College. It was agreed that non-members of the College would be allowed to use the Library on payment of a membership fee of one guinea (later reduced to £1) and a refundable deposit of one guinea. Such membership would only be granted by the Librarian “after consultation with the heads of Departments concerned.”³²⁹ Council members had been granted the privilege of free Library membership in May of the same year. University staff in Durban were allowed to borrow books from the Pietermaritzburg Library³³⁰ but sadly, Durban students were not, as reported at a Durban Library Committee meeting as follows: “Mrs Palmer reported that she had seen Captain Henry and that he assured her that lending of duplicates by the Maritzburg Library to Durban students was not possible.”³³¹

The very first “library orientation” was planned in April 1934. At the Committee meeting of 19th April 1934 it was agreed that “on opening day Dr Bews [Principal of the Natal University College] be asked to address the students on the uses of the library, at the same time stressing the necessity of strict observation of the rules ..” and also that “first year students be addressed by the librarian, on the library regulations and sundry other

³²⁷ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 22nd November 1923.*

³²⁸ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 2nd November 1923.*

³²⁹ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 8th September 1925.*

³³⁰ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting of 2nd December, 1924.*

³³¹ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 28th June 1934.*

matters in connection therewith.”³³² It is obvious from this discussion that the emphasis in those days was on rules and regulations and the adherence thereto rather than on the support the Library could provide as far as learning and research was concerned.

4.3. Library expansion, 1937 – 1945

In 1937 the first building dedicated to library facilities on the Pietermaritzburg campus was opened. The Library took occupation on 1st July 1937. A considerable amount of planning went into this building. Discussions took place about the size of the building, the height of the windows and, most important of all, that it had to be fireproof. The terrible fire at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1931³³³ in which the Library and its entire contents had been completely destroyed was most likely uppermost in everyone’s minds at this time. At first the Library occupied the ground floor and had to share the premises with the Department of Fine Arts (which moved from Durban in the same year) which occupied the top floor. However, as Brown remarks, “gradually the Library managed to squeeze Fine Arts out and take over the whole building”³³⁴ The spacious and newly furnished premises “added greatly to the convenience of staff and students, enabled the librarian to keep a better check on the issue of books, and made more efficient work possible.”³³⁵ One small annoyance was that, in spite of the Library Committee’s preference for steel shelving – they had gone to some trouble to establish the superiority of steel over wood - Council ruled that teak bookshelves were to be installed. This building was to serve the University for twenty seven years until the present Library building was completed in 1964.

4.3.1. Finances, 1937 - 1945

The opening of the new building in 1937 coincided with an astonishing increase of 70% in the book grant, namely from £250 to £425 (the £25 extra being for the binding of loose journals). Although the extra money was welcomed, the Chairman of the Library Committee pointed out that “we have much leeway to make up and that it has transpired

³³² Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 19th April 1934*.

³³³ R. Musiker & N. Musiker, *Wits Library*, Johannesburg: Scarecrow, 1998, p. 23-25.

³³⁴ Brown, *History of the Library, Part 3*, p. 1.

³³⁵ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Chairman of Library Committee’s report*, [1937], unpublished.

that even with the increased grant various departments are still unable to supply the barest teaching needs ...”³³⁶ The grant was increased again in the following year to £500 but unfortunately was to remain at this level for the next seven years, when it was increased to £600 (with a further £50 for equipment) in 1945. Lack of funds, particularly for the purchase of books, was a perennial problem.

The idea of fining borrowers for late returns was first mooted at the meeting of 15th August 1943. The matter was referred to Senate and Council and at the Committee’s first meeting of the following year it was recorded that Council had agreed to fines being imposed upon defaulting borrowers. Any borrower who did not “return a book 3 days after being recalled, shall, from the 4th day, be liable to a fine of 1/- a week or part thereof ...” and all amounts collected were to be credited to the library account.³³⁷ Fines at this time were applied to staff and students alike.

4.3.2. Library staff, 1937 - 1945

The request by the Library Committee in 1935 to the Carnegie Corporation for a grant to purchase books had also included a request for funds to employ an assistant to help with the construction of a library catalogue. On 1 February 1937 a temporary typist, Miss S. Nicholson, was employed for the express purpose of cataloguing and classifying the books. Apparently the Carnegie Corporation had made this a requirement for the granting of funds, as may be deduced from a statement made by the Chairman of the Durban Library Committee in his report for 1936 which said, “It is hoped, too, that the Carnegie Corporation will, seeing that the requirements are being met, be encouraged to give us funds which are urgently needed.”³³⁸

Whatever the reason, this initiative paid off and Nicholson’s hard work was much appreciated. In his report for 1937 the Librarian reported: “I cannot speak too highly of the valuable work she has done in cataloguing and classifying the books.”³³⁹ In 1939 Nicholson’s post was made permanent and during her term of employment she

³³⁶ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Chairman of Library Committee’s report*, [1937], unpublished.

³³⁷ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 13th March 1944*.

³³⁸ Natal University College, *Library report* [Durban], 1936.

³³⁹ Natal University College, *Report of the Librarian* [Pietermaritzburg], 1937.

catalogued and classified the contents of the entire Library, barring the “Miscellaneous” section, as well as undertaking the typing of a union list of scientific journals “held in Pietermaritzburg and surrounds” which had originally been compiled by Professor of Zoology, S.F. Bush.³⁴⁰ Upon her resignation in April 1943 to take up a position at the State Library in Pretoria her vacant post was advertised. Interestingly, it may be seen from the requirements as set out in the advertisement, that it was no longer considered good enough to have an interest in books. According to the advertisement, knowledge of cataloguing and classification was considered essential. Applicants were also required to state their qualifications, including their knowledge of languages and those applicants who possessed “advanced library qualifications”³⁴¹ could be considered on a higher scale than that advertised. Obviously, the Library Committee had begun to recognise the importance of relevant qualifications, possibly as a result of Henry himself having undertaken the SALA correspondence courses on offer.

A sub-committee was convened to consider applications and finally Miss W.M. Snelling, who possessed a diploma from the University of London, was a Fellow of the British Library Association and had previous work experience at the Port Elizabeth Public Library, was appointed. She commenced duty on 20th July 1943 and, presumably due to her qualifications and previous experience, it was agreed that she should be paid on the higher salary scale of £200 x 20 - £300, starting on the £260 notch.³⁴²

Henry retired after 23 years’ service at the end of 1944. Snelling was appointed Acting Librarian and it was agreed that a temporary assistant be appointed to assist her until the proposed new staffing arrangements for the College Library could be put into effect. An explanation of these is provided below.

In 1938 an offer was made by the Carnegie Corporation of New York which would have far-reaching consequences for the management of the Library. At the first Library

³⁴⁰ S. Nicholson, *Scientific periodicals available for consultation in Pietermaritzburg*, [Pietermaritzburg]: Natal University College Library, 1943. First mentioned at the Library Committee meeting of 3rd March 1942; at the meeting of 6th May 1943 it was reported that the list had been completed. It listed 524 titles and also provided two indexes, one grouped by subject and the other grouped by country of publication.

³⁴¹ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 18th March 1943*.

³⁴² Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 6th May 1943*.

Committee meeting of 1938,³⁴³ the Chair read out a letter received from the Carnegie Corporation of New York,³⁴⁴ seemingly the Corporation's response to the request for a grant made in 1935. In addition to a book grant, the Corporation was prepared to offer a "Carnegie Library Fellowship."³⁴⁵ The minutes state that "A letter from the Carnegie Corporation with reference to an offer of a Carnegie Library Fellowship and grant for books was read to the meeting by the Chairman."³⁴⁶

The offer, it seems, was the same or very similar to that made to Rhodes University by the Corporation as reported by Currey. In *Rhodes University, 1904 – 1970*, Currey mentions that in 1938 the University received a letter from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, offering a one year Carnegie Library Fellowship to enable a librarian to be trained in the United States.³⁴⁷

The Library Committee agreed to recommend to Council that the "full conditions and proposals as laid down in the letter"³⁴⁸ be accepted in principle. At the October meeting it was reported that a decision had been taken to set up a Selection Committee to "select a candidate for the post of Chief Librarian, Natal University College."³⁴⁹ A circular letter inviting applications for the Fellowship and the post of Chief Librarian of the College was sent out on the same day. The letter stated:

The successful applicant will, after satisfactorily completing the year of overseas study be appointed as Chief Librarian of the N.U.C. (Pietermaritzburg and Durban) and will be required to give an undertaking to serve the College in this capacity for a period of three years following such appointment.³⁵⁰

Details of the salary scale are given: a starting salary of £450 for a man and £50 less for a woman. This differentiation in the salaries for men and women was in keeping with the

³⁴³ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 15th March 1938*.

³⁴⁴ No copies of this letter appear to have survived.

³⁴⁵ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 15th March 1938*.

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

³⁴⁷ Currey, *Rhodes University, 1904-1970*, p. 81-82.

³⁴⁸ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 15th March 1938*.

³⁴⁹ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 18th October 1938*.

³⁵⁰ Quoted in a letter from J.J. le Roux, Chair, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, to the Registrar, Natal University College, 6th March 1942, unpublished.

accepted norms of the day and College policy.³⁵¹ It was stated quite clearly that the Chief Librarian would be stationed in Pietermaritzburg. At the Committee meeting of 14th March 1939,³⁵² the Chair announced that Dr H. Coblans had been selected for this Fellowship. Coblans, a graduate of the Natal University College and at that time a chemistry lecturer at Howard College in Durban, had been a member of the Durban Library Committee since 1936. He was thus no stranger to the functioning of a college library although at this stage he did not hold any library qualifications.

As is so often the case in matters such as this, events moved exceedingly slowly, to the chagrin of the Committee. They looked forward with anticipation to the Chief Librarian assuming his duties and had high hopes in the development of the College Library once Coblans commenced his duties as Chief Librarian. In a report presented by the Library Committee to a College committee investigating the present and future needs of the Natal University College, they hoped that there would be

... immediate developments in all branches of the Natal University College library, thus resulting in the library playing a more vital role in the educational life of the College (and of the Province).³⁵³

They thus recommended that "... Dr Coblans be released at the earliest possible moment to take up his Carnegie Fellowship. This matter is considered to be of the utmost urgency."³⁵⁴ It appears that the College Council was dragging its heels about releasing Coblans from his lecturing duties, but it was to be another five years before Coblans was in a position to take up office as Chief Librarian.

4.3.3. A proposed new staffing structure

The envisaged staffing structure of the Library was reported by the Chairman of the Library Committee to the Registrar in a letter dated 6th March, 1942. It appears that the two managerial posts, one in Pietermaritzburg and the other in Durban, were regarded as the equivalent of academic posts, as may be seen in the quote below. It is also

³⁵¹ The differentiated salary scales for male and female library staff were scrapped during Malan's term of office, in 1965.

³⁵² Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 14th March 1939*.

³⁵³ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Report of the Library Committee to the Investigation Committee on Present and Future Needs of the Natal University College*, [March 1941], unpublished.

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

interesting to note the application of differential salary scales for men and women in those days:

The Library Committee proposes that there be:

- (a) A Chief Librarian at Pietermaritzburg. Salary scales: those of Senior Lecturers;
- (b) A Deputy Chief Librarian at Durban. Salary scales: those of Lecturers;
- (c) An Assistant Librarian (qualified) at Pietermaritzburg. Salary scales: for men: £300– 20-£400 p.a.; for women: £200-20-£300 p.a.
- (c) [sic] A student-librarian (assistant) at Pietermaritzburg. Salary scale: £84-12-£120 p.a. The student-librarian is to be at least matriculated and consideration will be given to requests for permission to attend free of charge, College lectures in subjects necessary for the Librarian's Diploma;
- (d) Durban is also being asked for a report and will doubtless state its further needs.³⁵⁵

However, it seems to have been Henry's impending retirement which finally galvanized the College authorities into action. In a sudden and rather surprising turn of events the Council decided to release Coblans "for the purpose of attending a course for librarians at the University of Cape Town"³⁵⁶ and, at the first meeting of the Library Committee in the following year, it was announced that "Dr Coblans had taken up his librarianship studies at the University of Cape Town this year."³⁵⁷ No reason is provided as to why he did not take up the overseas Fellowship but one might speculate that difficulties associated with travel during the War were a contributing factor as well as the apparent tardiness of the College Council in releasing him from his lecturing duties in Chemistry. The person selected by Rhodes University for the Carnegie Library Fellowship did take up the Fellowship in the United States,³⁵⁸ but he left for the United States in 1938 and thus had probably returned home by the outbreak of war. Coblans was fortunate in that, only seven years previously, the University of Cape Town had established a Library School and that at this time it was under the leadership of the energetic R.F.M. Immelman. However, a letter sent to the Principal by the Carnegie Corporation advised that "the Fellowship offered to Dr Coblans was now withdrawn, but would be reconsidered on a

³⁵⁵ J.J. le Roux, Chair, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, Letter to the Registrar, Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg, 6th March, 1942, unpublished.

³⁵⁶ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 19th September 1944*.

³⁵⁷ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 20th March 1945*.

³⁵⁸ Currey, *Rhodes University, 1904-1970*, p. 82. The person selected was F.G. van der Riet, who became Rhodes University's first professional librarian.

basis of six months instead of twelve, if the matter was re-opened in a year's time."³⁵⁹ No reason for the withdrawal is recorded in the minutes but it seems likely that the Carnegie Corporation had decided that there had been too long a delay in the taking up of the Fellowship.³⁶⁰

In the meantime, Snelling resigned her post to take up a post at the University of Cape Town Library and Henry was asked to return to work on a temporary basis from 1st July to 31st December 1945. A note of desperation can be detected in the minutes of the last meeting held in 1945. It was agreed that "it was desirable for the Committee to get in touch with Dr Coblans as soon as possible and that a committee meeting be called early in the year."³⁶¹

4.3.4. Collections, 1937 - 1945

During World War II major difficulties were experienced in obtaining books. In 1940 the Librarian warned that "Owing to the present conditions it is expected that a long period will elapse between the ordering and the delivery of books"³⁶² and two years later Dr M.K. Leiper of the Department of French begged that she be granted an increased library grant after the war as "she was unable, at the present time, to obtain a supply of books for her department owing to all communication with the Continent being cut off ..."³⁶³ Every year the Librarian reiterated that "Owing to delays in obtaining books, it will be greatly appreciated if heads of Departments will hand in their orders for books as early as possible."³⁶⁴ Donations, however, were plentiful and it was decided, in 1944, that the names of the most important donors should be listed on a "Donors' Board" in

³⁵⁹ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 13th June 1945.*

³⁶⁰ R. Bawa, Program Officer, International Development Program, Carnegie Corporation of New York, Personal communication, 11th August 2008.

³⁶¹ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 7th November 1945.*

³⁶² Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 21st March 1940.*

³⁶³ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 3rd March 1942.*

³⁶⁴ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 18th March 1943.*

recognition of their “outstanding contributions to the Natal University College Library...”³⁶⁵ The Board was to be placed in the Library.

Publications by members of the Natal University College staff and theses submitted by students also came under consideration during this period. At the meeting of 3rd March 1942 the Librarian was instructed “to advise Heads of Departments that one copy of every thesis should be supplied to the College Library.”³⁶⁶ Theses were to be housed in a locked cupboard and only “responsible” students were to be allowed to read them in the Library. As far as staff publications were concerned, it was decided at the meeting of 20th October 1942 that all staff publications should be lodged “as a permanent record” in the Library.³⁶⁷ Heads of academic Departments were accordingly requested to collect copies of papers and books published by members of staff in their respective departments and to hand these over to the Librarian.

The interlibrary loan statistics are indicative of the state of the collections at that time. Interlibrary loans were mentioned for the first time in the 1938 Librarian’s report and it is obvious that the Natal University College Library was, to make use of a modern phrase, a “net borrower” rather than a “net lender”, that is, more books were borrowed from other libraries than were lent out. The table below shows this clearly, but it may also be seen that the number of books lent to other libraries in 1944 shows a startling fivefold increase, almost equalling the number of books borrowed from other libraries. This was, presumably as a result of the steady, albeit slow, expansion of the collection.

³⁶⁵ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 27th November 1944.*

³⁶⁶ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 3rd March 1942.*

³⁶⁷ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 20th October 1942.*

Year	Books borrowed from other libraries	Books lent to other libraries
1938	46	8
1939	42	8
1940	23	12
1941	73	13
1942	66	11
1943	137	12
1944	87	68
1945	88	85

Table 4.1. Interlibrary loan statistics, 1938 – 1945³⁶⁸

The first mention of a concerted effort to “weed” the Library’s collections was made at the Library Committee meeting of 15th August 1944. It was decided that the Librarian would request Heads of Departments “to notify the Librarian of all books on their subject [sic] on the shelves of their department which in their opinion are of no value. Library Committee to inspect all rejects.”³⁶⁹ No further discussions on the subject took place so it remains a matter of conjecture as to whether the collections were actually weeded or not.

Interestingly, at the Committee’s September 1945 meeting a request was placed before the Library Committee for a grant to build up a fiction library at the Men’s Hostel. The Committee was sympathetic to the need “for good modern fiction”³⁷⁰ as an experiment had been carried out earlier in the year which had proved the need for books of this nature.³⁷¹ They resolved to recommend to Council that the Library be given a special grant of £50 to purchase some works of modern fiction to be placed in a special section of the Library. The recommendation was obviously successful as the grant was included in the Library estimates for 1946.

³⁶⁸ Collated from: Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg, *Library annual reports, 1938-1945*.

³⁶⁹ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 15th August 1944*.

³⁷⁰ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 11th September 1945*.p. 2.

³⁷¹ A small sum of money had been set aside out of the Library grant for 1945 to purchase works of fiction.

4.3.5. User services, 1937 - 1945

The move to the new building prompted an extension of library hours. The Library was to open on weekdays at 08:30 and to close at 16:30 (with an hour for lunch). On Fridays it was to close at 18:00 and on Saturdays it was to be opened for two hours, from 08:30 to 10:30. The hours were extended again at the request of the Students' Representative Council when Nicholson was employed as a library assistant. In 1945 the Library Committee agreed to opening the Library on weekday evenings, from mid-September to the end of November and, for the first time, student assistants were employed to "undertake supervision each evening ... to be paid at the rate of one shilling per hour."³⁷² The extension of hours of opening proved successful but it was also reported that "several irregularities" had occurred which jeopardized the success of the scheme. A certain student assistant received a warning!³⁷³

The Librarian reported that far greater use was made of the new Library, which could seat 59 students, than had been made when the Library had been in the Main Hall, although it is impossible to check this statement as no statistics were reported. This seating seems to have been adequate for some years but in 1945 the Acting Librarian, Miss Snelling, reported that study space was inadequate during peak periods and a record of attendance taken during the year-end examinations indicated that this was indeed correct.

There were apparently no repeats of the library orientation talks given to students in 1934 until 11 years later, in 1945, when Snelling reported that she had given a short talk on the Library to first year students. It was agreed by the Committee that in future two talks should be given annually to first year students – one by the Librarian in the Library "on technicalities" and the other "outside [the library]" by a member of the academic staff. It was also suggested that a pamphlet, to be entitled "About books,"³⁷⁴ be drawn up for students but the matter was left in abeyance until the following year.

³⁷² Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 11th September 1945*, p. 2.

³⁷³ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 7th November 1945*, p. 2.

³⁷⁴ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 20th March 1945*, p. 3.

4.4. Summary

The 35 years, from 1910 to 1945, saw the College Library develop from a small collection of classroom textbooks to an established College Library, housed in its own building and managed by trained staff. A Senate Library Committee had been established, rules for borrowers had been set out and the first catalogue had been started. Students used the Library for study and reference purposes but beyond ensuring that library rules were strictly adhered to, no special efforts were made to assist them. There is evidence of a highly disciplined approach to detailed record-keeping. Statistics were kept of issues according to departments, additions to the collection, and missing books for which Council's permission had to be sought before they were deleted from the register. Funding for the Library, albeit insufficient to provide for the needs of the College, had been secured on a permanent basis.

The long delay before Coblans took up the post of Chief Librarian was frustrating for the Library Committee. However, when he finally commenced work in 1946, he introduced many administrative changes in an attempt to unify the operations of the multi-centred College Library. However, before these developments are investigated, it is necessary to consider the early history of the Library at the Natal University College in Durban. This period will be described in the next chapter.

Chapter Five

Expansion of the library service to Durban, 1931-1945

On 1st August 1931 the Chairman of the Natal University College, Dr L. Sormany, addressed a large crowd gathered in front of the newly built Howard Memorial College in Durban:

To-day the magnificent dream of this Province is becoming a reality: the largest centre of population in Natal [Durban] sees at last opened – a mark of its desire for greater facilities for instruction and education – its branch of the Natal University College.³⁷⁵

For almost eight years and in spite of the fact that, in the opinion of a governmental Commission, that “The arrangement with the Natal University College seems thoroughly unsound to us,”³⁷⁶ lecturers at the Natal Technical College in Durban in the Departments of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering, Commerce and Auditing and Fine Arts had been preparing students for university examinations. Students attended classes at the Natal Technical College and were obliged to make use of either the Technical College Library, described as “a good library, including the Hillier³⁷⁷ collection of 2,500 volumes,”³⁷⁸ or the Durban Municipal Library. The lack of library facilities did not appear to present a problem during those early years since the first class in 1923 had only 16 students, 12 of whom were part-time Commerce students,³⁷⁹ but by 1931 there were over 200 students. Lecturers were allowed to borrow from the Natal University College Library in Pietermaritzburg as is evidenced by the discussion which took place at

³⁷⁵ L. Sormany, Address on the opening of Howard College, *The weekend advertiser*, 1 August, 1931.

³⁷⁶ J.G. Van der Horst, (Chair), *Report of the University Commission*, (U.G. series; no. 33, 1928), Pretoria: Government Printing and Stationery Office, 1928, p. 18.

³⁷⁷ Businessman Josiah Jasper Hillier arrived in Natal in 1881, served two terms as mayor of Durban (1883 and 1889) and founded a successful legal practice. An avid book collector, he was in possession of over 7,000 volumes by the time of his death in 1921. - Jasper Hillier and the Shakespeare collection, in *More gems from Hillier*, Durban: Durban Municipal Library, 1988, p. 1. The collection, apart from his unique Shakespeareana collection which was acquired by the Durban Municipal Library, was donated to the Natal Technical College.

³⁷⁸ Natal University College [Durban], *Calendar*, 1930, [Durban]: Natal Technical College, [1930], p. 5.

³⁷⁹ O. Oldham, Training the business man of the future, *The Natal mercury*, July 27, 1931.

a meeting of the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee on 2nd December 1924. A request from the Professor of Fine Arts, O.J.P. Oxley, to borrow books from the “fine arts section of the Peter Davis collection”³⁸⁰ was granted. Oxley was to be allowed to borrow books “as a member of the N.U.C., in terms of our rules and regulations.”³⁸¹

In 1931 full-time classes were transferred to Howard College in Stellawood, but the part-time classes continued to be offered at the Technical College at the foot of the Berea, approximately five kilometres away. Five years later, in 1936, the part-time classes were moved to the new Commerce Building in Warwick Avenue. The same year also saw the introduction of the “non-European” classes at Sastri College. All these students required library services and thus, within a few short years, the Durban section of the Natal University College had to contend with the challenges related to funding and managing three separate libraries in different parts of town. Each section is described in brief below.

5.1. Howard College

On 1st August 1931 the Natal Technical College and the Natal University College in Durban parted ways. The opening of the new Howard College building on 50 acres of land in Stellawood, with its magnificent views of the Indian Ocean, saw the transference of full-time Engineering and Commerce classes and the beginnings of a fledgling library, the first six books being accessioned on 9th November 1931. The library itself was situated on the upper floor of the building, along with Physics, Mathematics, Commerce and Economics. Laboratory facilities and the heavy machinery of the Engineering Departments were situated on the lower floor.³⁸² Within a year the book stock had increased to 452 volumes although students were still encouraged to use the facilities of the Natal Technical College and the Durban Municipal Library. The Durban Library Committee first met in November 1933,³⁸³ almost three years after the recommendation

³⁸⁰ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 2nd December, 1924.*

³⁸¹ Ibid.

³⁸² Dignified building on a magnificent site, *The Natal mercury*, 27th July, 1931.

³⁸³ The earliest extant minutes of the Durban Library Committee are dated Monday, March 26th, 1934 but this was the second meeting of the Committee. Minutes of the Committee meeting dated 27th November 1933 have not been traced.

made to Senate by the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee that a separate Committee should be constituted in Durban to administer the book grant for Durban.³⁸⁴

Part-time classes continued to be conducted on the premises of the Technical College and the problem of how to provide these students with the necessary reading matter exercised the minds of the Durban Library Committee. Since “it was not possible for part-time students at the Natal Tech. College to attend at the times at which the Library there was open ...”³⁸⁵ other plans had to be made and it was finally resolved that a lockable bookcase be placed “in the janitor’s room opposite the N.U.C. blackboards.”³⁸⁶ Permission was to be sought from the Principal of the Technical College, Professor B.M. Narbeth, to do this. It seems that the students borrowed and returned the books on a trust basis as no loan records appear to have been kept. This collection was eventually absorbed into the Commerce Library once the new Commerce Building had been completed.

5.2. Commerce Building

The Commerce Faculty under Professor O. Oldham had, according to Brookes, “attracted, not unnaturally, numbers of part-time students, for whom, under the conditions of the 1930s, Howard College was inconveniently distant.”³⁸⁷ Indeed, from 1923, when only 12 part-time students were registered for the degree of Bachelor of Commerce until the opening of the new Howard College building in 1931, student numbers had increased more than eightfold to 100.³⁸⁸ Many of these were part-timers. Thus, in 1936, the Commerce Block, later renamed the City Building when it was enlarged,³⁸⁹ was erected in Warwick Avenue to accommodate these students. When the

³⁸⁴ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 20th April, 1931.*

³⁸⁵ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 28th March 1934.*

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

³⁸⁷ E.H. Brookes, *A history of the University of Natal*, Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1966, p. 41.

³⁸⁸ O. Oldham, Training the business man of the future, *The Natal mercury*, 27th July, 1931.

³⁸⁹ G.W. Gale, *John William Bews*, Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1956, p. 86.

Commerce Faculty moved to the Commerce Block the library collection at Howard College was “roughly split in half.”³⁹⁰

5.3. The “Non-European” Library

Classes for “Non-Europeans,” as mentioned in Chapter Three, were inaugurated in 1936 at Sastri College at the instigation of Mrs M. Palmer, who lost no time in requesting a library grant from the Durban Library Committee to start a library on the premises. A letter to the Chair of the Committee requested that “an expenditure of £50 should be estimated for by the Committee for Non-European Library purposes.”³⁹¹ The Committee agreed to this request, the amount being 5% of the total estimate for the Durban Library of £1,000 for 1937 (although the final amount allocated to the Library appears to have been considerably less).

The library for these students had to be accommodated in “an ordinary classroom” which, Palmer stated pointedly at a meeting of the Non-European Studies’ Committee, had resulted in the “necessary cupboards for books ... crowding the room to an uncomfortable extent.”³⁹² Sadly, the Library Committee refused to allow the “Non-European” students access to the Main Library collections, stating firmly that “the principle of lending books from the Main Library to Non-European students should not be established.”³⁹³ Their stand was almost certainly based on racial rather than administrative considerations - student numbers in the “Non-European” section were small³⁹⁴ and would not have resulted in more work for the library staff – but their attitude was in keeping with the attitude which had been displayed by the University College authorities when the idea of opening classes to all races was first brought before the College Senate in 1935.³⁹⁵ As Nkomo has commented, “The racial policies and practices of the English-medium universities were essentially a reflection of the “liberal,”

³⁹⁰ H. Coblans, *Memorandum by Librarian on the University of Natal Library*, 2nd April, 1951, unpublished.

³⁹¹ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 28th August, 1936*.

³⁹² Natal University College, Non-European Studies’ Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 11th June 1940*, unpublished, p. 4.

³⁹³ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 22nd April 1937*.

³⁹⁴ In 1940 there were only 58 students in this section. – University of Natal, *Calendar*, 1984, [S.l.: The University, 1984], p. A140.

³⁹⁵ See quote from M. Palmer’s letter to the editor of the *Daily news* in section 3.3.5.

laissez-faire racial segregation that characterized the various administrations, especially during the 1910-1948 period.”³⁹⁶ It is no wonder that these students felt that they were being treated as the “step-children of the College.”³⁹⁷ Dr P. Ramasar, a former student, stated that “It was starkly brought home to us that we were really not an integral part of the mainstream student body.”³⁹⁸

5.4. Administration and governance

In May 1927 the first application for a book grant for the Durban section of the College was received by the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee from Mr G.M.J. Sweeney, who had been appointed as lecturer in Law in Durban at the beginning of 1927. Prior to this Professor F.B. Burchell had travelled down to Durban regularly to lecture students studying for the Attorney’s Admission Examination.³⁹⁹ Sweeney required £22 to purchase books. At the Library Committee’s request Council made a special grant for this purpose and thus the monies did not have to be found from the annual Library vote for the Pietermaritzburg Library. Seven books were duly purchased and sent to Sweeney in Durban.⁴⁰⁰ However, more requests were forthcoming and finally, in 1931, the Committee found it necessary to recommend that:

...it is considered desirable that a separate grant should be made for the purchase of books for the Durban branch of the College to take place from this year, also that a separate Committee should be formed to administer same.⁴⁰¹

The Durban Library Committee, as mentioned above, was first constituted in November 1933 by Senate. The Committee commenced business with only three members, namely Professors J.H. Neal (Mechanical Engineering) and O. Oldham (Commerce) and Mrs M. Palmer; but by the third meeting it had been expanded to include Professor H. Clark, “as substitute for Prof. Neal – absent on leave,”⁴⁰² and Messrs W.M. Thomas, K. Byrd and D.B. Hodges as well as a student representative, Mr T.C. Salmon. Palmer, as well as

³⁹⁶ M.O. Nkomo, *Student culture and activism in black South African universities*, Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1984, p. 37.

³⁹⁷ Natal University College Students’ Union (Non-European), *Memorandum submitted to the Natal Indian Judicial Commission*, [1944], unpublished, p. 3.

³⁹⁸ P. Ramasar, Telling it like it was, *Heritage*, vol. 7, no. 3, 3rd quarter 2000, p. 1.

³⁹⁹ M. Sweeney, From humble beginnings, *Library news*, [Durban], no. 12, August 1976, p. 6.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid. Sweeney notes that he never received any more books “from that source.”

⁴⁰¹ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 20th April, 1931*.

⁴⁰² Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of an emergency meeting held on 26th March 1934*.

serving as secretary to the Committee, appears to have been responsible for the functioning of the fledgling library although she was apparently not accorded the official title of Honorary Librarian. She was possibly the first woman in South Africa to hold such a position.⁴⁰³

In 1944 the matter of student representation on the Durban Library Committee reared its head. From the outset, students had enjoyed representation on the Committee but when Palmer suggested that “non-European” students should also have represented on the Committee⁴⁰⁴ it appears that objections were raised.⁴⁰⁵ After considerable discussion it was finally agreed that, in addition to the Howard College student representative, “the student bodies be asked to elect student representatives, one for the Commerce Building and one for the non-European students” but that the students “should not be full members.”⁴⁰⁶ Apparently the Students’ Representative Council was unhappy with decision and a message was conveyed to the Librarian by a Mr F. Deeb, who assured her that he spoke on behalf of all students, that “no student representatives should be elected for 1945.”⁴⁰⁷

There were also divisions within the ranks of the members of the Library Committee. At the October 1944 meeting Professor H.R. Burrows gave it as his opinion that there was attempted over-organisation and control of the Durban Library, by implication by the sub-committee which had originally been formed to deal with book vote allocations and which had, over time, metamorphosed into an Executive Committee.⁴⁰⁸ Palmer was a member of that Executive Committee and it is likely that, although she was no longer in charge of the Durban Library, she liked to retain a measure of her old influence. Coblans, at that time still a lecturer in the Department of Chemistry and a member of the Durban Library Committee, moved that the Executive Committee be disbanded and this was finally agreed to more than a year later in December, 1945.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰³ As far as it has been possible to ascertain from the histories of South African universities, all other Honorary Librarians were men.

⁴⁰⁴ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 28th February 1944.*

⁴⁰⁵ The minutes do not record the discussion in detail.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁷ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting of 9th April 1945.*

⁴⁰⁸ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 24th October 1944.*

⁴⁰⁹ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 19th December 1945.*

5.5. Finances

As noted above, monies for the purchase of books for the Durban centre of the Natal University College were provided for the first time in 1927 by a special Council grant. However, it was only after the Durban Library Committee had been convened that a regular vote was provided for the administration of the Durban centre library. A record of the book votes for the years 1931 and 1932 has not survived but in 1933 a sum of £275 was granted to the Library for the purchase of books. An extra £30 6s 4d had been netted by a Bridge drive, bringing the total grant to £305 6s 4d, over £55 more than the amount made available to the Pietermaritzburg Library for the purchase of books. The grant was increased to £750 in 1934 but this included £50 intended for the purchase of furniture and equipment, unlike the Pietermaritzburg Library vote which specifically excluded the Librarian's salary and Library furniture.⁴¹⁰ Thereafter the Durban grant seems to have settled into a grant of similar size to that given to the Pietermaritzburg Library although, from 1936, the Durban section of the College had three separate libraries to maintain.

The distribution of the book grant was the contentious subject of many a Committee meeting. Originally the book grant had been allocated to academic departments, following the pattern of the Pietermaritzburg Library. However, it was decided at the meeting of 28th June 1934 that the allocation in Durban should be by Faculties.⁴¹¹ At the time the only three Faculties in Durban were: Arts (including Architecture), Commerce & Administration and Engineering. This arrangement continued until 1940, when it was decided that "the allocation of the annual library grant on the basis of arbitrary divisions by faculties should be discontinued"⁴¹² and a sub-committee was appointed to consider alternative ways of dividing the annual grant. The sub-committee duly devised a simple formula for the allocation of book grants. Factors determining allocation included statistical details such as the number of courses offered per subject, the number of students, the adequacy of the existing stock and the average cost per volume in the subject. Periodicals were to be considered separately from books and their consideration

⁴¹⁰ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 27th April 1924.*

⁴¹¹ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 28th June 1934.*

⁴¹² Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 21st March 1940.*

included the extent to which research work was done “or is proposed in any department.”⁴¹³ This division was an attempt to reconcile the needs of both the individual departments and the needs of the three libraries in Durban.

In 1941 the idea of a borrowers’ library fee or deposit was mooted. The same idea had been discussed fifteen years previously at the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee meeting of 1st May 1925, when it was proposed that “... it be compulsory on all students to pay a small subscription fee for the use of the Library ...”⁴¹⁴ In Pietermaritzburg it had been agreed that the discussion be held over, although the matter was never mentioned again, while in Durban a decision was taken not to implement such a measure.⁴¹⁵

Monies for the purchase of books for the “Non-European” Library were granted annually on application to the Durban Library Committee but were usually woefully inadequate. The “Non-European” students were not allowed to borrow books from either the Main or Commerce Libraries so their Library had to cater for all their needs. As noted above, the first library grant to the “Non-European” section for the purchase of books was £50, which was doubled the following year, but reduced in 1940 to £80, “this sum [to] be taken from Non-European funds.”⁴¹⁶ Undaunted, Palmer worked tirelessly to secure extra funding and eventually her efforts bore fruit. An offer to donate £100 was made by the Rustomjee Trust, which had been set up by Indian businessman Mr P. Rustomjee in memory of his late wife, Shrimati Bai Jerbai. One of the goals of the Trust was to “establish and promote libraries of a national character,”⁴¹⁷ and it seems that the extension of the “Non-European” Library’s collections fitted right in with this goal. The trustees made the offer with two provisos, firstly that their donation should earn a Government grant of pound sterling for every pound that the Trust donated, and secondly that this anticipated Government grant of £100 also be spent on the “Non-

⁴¹³ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 21st March 1940*.

⁴¹⁴ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 1st May 1925*.

⁴¹⁵ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 24th February, 1941*.

⁴¹⁶ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 30th November, 1939*.

⁴¹⁷ N. Meer, *The M.K. Gandhi Library, the Parsee Rustomjee Hall and the Bai Jerbai Rustomjee Trust, 1921 – 1946*, student essay, unpublished, p. 3.

European” Library.⁴¹⁸ Difficulties arose as the Library Committee found this request most irregular. The Chair was obliged to take up the matter with the Principal. No record of what transpired seems to have survived but apparently a mutually satisfactory solution was reached since the trustees of the Rustomjee Trust were invited to a tea party to celebrate the opening of the new “Non-European” Library in its own (albeit rented) premises in 1942.

5.6. Library staff

Until the first librarian⁴¹⁹ was employed, a member of the academic staff, the redoubtable Palmer, was responsible for the overall administration of the Howard College Library. Student assistants performed the daily tasks. Like Currey’s “devoted Honorary Librarians”⁴²⁰ at Rhodes University, and Professor W.S. Logeman at the University of Cape Town,⁴²¹ the work was a labour of love on the part of Palmer which she carried out in addition to her teaching duties. Although she withdrew from these duties in 1936 when she became the coordinator of the “Non-European” classes, she remained a member of the Library Committee until 1947, by which time she was well over 70 years old.

Along with Palmer, the student assistants shouldered a fair amount of responsibility. They were the ones who carried out the daily tasks associated with running a library, as evidenced by a report they compiled for the Durban Library Committee. Their report points out the problems which beset the Library, including difficulties that students experienced with finding books; “largely due to the lack of knowledge of the method of finding any particular book ...”⁴²² and selfish borrowers who took advantage of the lack of rules. They grumbled that

Another trouble we experienced was that students persisted in taking out as many books as they could find on the shelves pertaining to their subject and

⁴¹⁸ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 5th March 1941*.

⁴¹⁹ Ms Barbara Fraser was employed on a part-time basis in 1936. She held a Bachelor’s degree but did not possess a professional library qualification.

⁴²⁰ R.F. Currey, *Rhodes University, 1904-1970*, Grahamstown: [s.n.], 1970, p. 166.

⁴²¹ T. Barben, *The sapling that grew into a tree*, <http://www.lib.uct.ac.za/index.php?html=/2004/info/sapling5.htm&libid=88>

⁴²² T.C. Salmon, *et al*, *Report on the Howard College Library by the student helpers*, 21st March, 1934, unpublished.

would then keep such books out for an indefinite period, merely, as a protective measure to prevent any other student from doing the same!⁴²³

Arising from the report the Library Committee agreed to a few basic rules, including a restriction on the number of books that students were allowed to borrow – only three books at a time for 14 days – and that, as in Pietermaritzburg, books were to be recalled at the end of November each year in order to facilitate stock-taking. This discussion points to another difference between the two libraries, that is, in Pietermaritzburg the very first Library Committee meeting revolved around library rules while in Durban it took several months before the Library Committee thought about applying a set of rules.

An arrangement whereby students had charge of the university library was not an unusual one. At the University of the Witwatersrand in the mid-1920s Musiker and Musiker report that “two senior students” were appointed to take charge of the Medical Library and “five senior students” were appointed to take charge of the Central Library.⁴²⁴

Although clerical assistance was provided to the Library by the Principal, it was minimal. At a Library Committee meeting held on 17th May 1934 it was noted that a “Miss Hartley”⁴²⁵ would provide a minimum of six hours of clerical assistance to the Library. Palmer voiced her disappointment at this announcement, giving it as her understanding that “a much larger proportion of Miss Hartley’s time would be available for Lib. Work.”⁴²⁶ In a bid to ease the staffing situation, she proposed at the next Library Committee meeting that “the Council and Senate be requested in future to award scholarships on the condition that the holders give 2 hours a week of work for the College if requested.”⁴²⁷ This request could not be granted; Senate’s reply was that the conditions attached to scholarships were laid down by the donors of said scholarships and that the College itself could not impose conditions. Despite further discussion on the need for extra help in the Library, the problem remained unresolved.

⁴²³ Salmon, *et al*, *Report on the Howard College Library ...* , 21st March, 1934.

⁴²⁴ R. Musiker & N. Musiker, *Wits library*, Johannesburg: Scarecrow, 1998, p. 13.

⁴²⁵ There was no library staff at this time so it can be assumed that Miss Hartley was a clerical assistant employed by the Principal’s office.

⁴²⁶ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 17th May 1934*.

⁴²⁷ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 28th June 1934*.

The unsatisfactory state of affairs continued. The first stocktaking of the Durban Library, undertaken in December 1934, was a case in point. Palmer's report on the 4th April 1935 to the Committee regarding the project is tinged with exasperation. She reported that the help promised by the students had been inadequate and that "she had been obliged to give up much of her own time to the work."⁴²⁸ Clerical assistance to the Library was being provided for three hours per day but "this was only to overtake the accumulation of work & could probably not be continued."⁴²⁹ Students also assisted with cataloguing although progress was slow.⁴³⁰ Matters came to a head towards the close of 1935. At the Committee meeting of 31st October Palmer read a memorandum which unfortunately has not been traced. It dealt with the difficulties which had arisen in the arrangements for the Library and proposed solutions. The matter was discussed at length by the Committee, Palmer having withdrawn from the meeting. Opinion, it seems, was divided. Two members, Professors Oldham and Neal, "stressed the need of training in library work" while Professors E. Whittaker and Clark felt that more use could be made of student assistants given "the present financial stringency."⁴³¹ Eventually Oldham proposed the following resolution, which was adopted after much discussion:

This committee is of the opinion that the policy of the N.U.C. Library should provide for an organization embracing a chief librarian & library assistants who should as far as possible be fully trained.⁴³²

From the discussions at this meeting it may be concluded that the Durban Library Committee had had some input into the request for funding for books and monies to pay clerical staff which had been sent to the Carnegie Corporation of New York in 1935.⁴³³ The Durban Library Committee hoped that "In the event of the Carnegie grant being available ... a partly qualified librarian will be appointed to work in Durban."⁴³⁴ In the meantime it was agreed that the "present arrangement" with Palmer would continue until June of the following year.

⁴²⁸ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 4th April 1935*.

⁴²⁹ Ibid.

⁴³⁰ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 6th June 1935*.

⁴³¹ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 31st October 1935*.

⁴³² Ibid.

⁴³³ Natal University College, [Pietermaritzburg] Library Committee, *Report of the N.U.C. Library Committee (Pietermaritzburg) on Carnegie Corporation grant*, [1935], unpublished.

⁴³⁴ Ibid.

It was not to be. Palmer, who had borne the burden of administering the Library for over two years with minimal assistance in addition to her teaching load, resigned from the Committee. In 1935 she had become Organiser of the University's Non-European classes and her time was consumed by this pioneering work which she had to develop "in the face of much indifference, and even hostility."⁴³⁵ She quite obviously had no time to run the Library as well. However, her resignation was also a shrewd move and had what can be presumed to be the desired effect. The Committee Chairman was obliged to make alternative arrangements for the carrying out of routine library tasks for 1936 in a hurry and, as so often happens when there is a crisis, sufficient money was suddenly made available to employ a Librarian:

The Chairman stated that Dr Bews had unexpectedly been able to find a sum of about £50-0-0 which might be devoted to the appointment of a Librarian for part time work and that Miss Barbara Fraser was willing to undertake work under these conditions.⁴³⁶

Only one member, Professor Whittaker, protested, considering the money better spent on the purchase of books. When it was pointed out that "the funds were not likely to be available for any purpose other than salary,"⁴³⁷ he acquiesced and Fraser started work in a part-time, temporary capacity on 1st April 1936, the first Librarian at the Howard College campus. A year later she became a full-time permanent member of the University College staff and Fraser, "the pioneer who remained the longest,"⁴³⁸ had begun a career which was to last for 32 years. An Arts graduate of the College, she possessed no library qualifications until she was granted ten months' leave, in 1951, to take the Higher Certificate and Diploma in Librarianship at the University of Cape Town. Calvert describes the numerous difficulties under which she had to operate. Her responsibilities included the Howard College Library as well as the Commerce Library in the city building in Warwick Avenue. "Some days," says Calvert, "she was the only staff member on duty, but she had to try to keep both the Howard College and the City Building Libraries open for those who wanted to use them."⁴³⁹ However, these difficulties were yet to manifest themselves when she was first appointed. The Library

⁴³⁵ Retirements: Dr Mabel Palmer, *University of Natal gazette*, vol. 2, no. 2, November 1955, p. 36.

⁴³⁶ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of the meeting of 31st March 1936*.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁸ C. Calvert, Barbara Davidson Fraser, 1906 – 1982, *Library news*, no. 24, 1982, p. 30.

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*

report of 1936 encapsulates the hopes of the Library Committee for the fledgling Durban Library:

Further, the appointment of Miss Fraser as a full-time Librarian will enable the Library work to be placed on a proper footing; and it is confidently hoped that many of the troubles which have been experienced in running the Library in the past will disappear and that, as a result, students will be able to make better use of the facilities than heretofore.⁴⁴⁰

The increasing work load as well as the demands made by students for longer opening hours soon necessitated the hiring of another staff member. Unfortunately the library assistant hired in 1939 did not stay long and her resignation coincided with Fraser's departure on two months' sick leave in September 1940. Once again, the Committee faced a staff crisis and students had to be called upon to assist. It appears that, in order to relieve the pressure of work, a request was made by the Library Committee to the Principal to allow students from the "Non-European" section to work in the Library at the Commerce Building but the request was refused. The Chair reported, at the meeting of 5th March 1941, that

...the Principal was strongly opposed to the use of Non-European students in the Library at the Commerce building, in view of the Council's decision regarding the use of [the] building by Non-Europeans. In this connection the Library Committee asked the Sub-Committee to go into the question of extra assistance required and gave it power to act.⁴⁴¹

Given the problems being experienced at the time with staff shortages, this answer is astonishing, but a comment made by the students of the "Non-European" section sheds some light on the attitude of the University authorities. They complained that

It is our grievance that whenever it comes to a question of contact between European and Non-European students the College authorities are directly interested and communiqués are issued forbidding such contact. The European student, so far we have found, is most willing to co-operate with us on various issues; they seem to have transcended the limitations of race, but the authorities are, it seems to us, attempting to propagate race-hatred.⁴⁴²

Hattersley has also commented on the racial prejudice exhibited by the University authorities of that time:

⁴⁴⁰ Natal University College, *Library report [Durban]*, 1936.

⁴⁴¹ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 5th March 1941*.

⁴⁴² Natal University College Students' Union (Non-European), *Memorandum submitted to the Indian Judicial Commission*, [1944], unpublished, p. 4.

Senate's attitude in the early years was governed by academic traditions of long validity in Great Britain, from which country most of the original staff had been obtained. But what may be described as colonial prejudices in questions of colour were strongly entrenched in the early Councils.⁴⁴³

The Sub-Committee applied itself to arranging extra assistance, and in the same year, in 1941, a Mr J. Prakasim was hired to assist with the processing, shelving and repair of books, collection of mail and making tea at the Howard College Library. Prakasim recalled particularly being taught to make tea "in the proper way" by Fraser and also, very occasionally, having to stand in at the Issue Desk, although, surprisingly, he dismissed this part of his duties as "not an important job!"⁴⁴⁴

In 1943 the opening of the "Non-European" Library at its own, rented, premises at 78 Commercial Road, necessitated the appointment of a part-time library assistant, Mr S.M. Moodley. Due to the demands by students for longer hours of opening, it was agreed in February 1944 that students in the respective sections would be used at both the "Non-European" and Commerce Libraries to assist with library duties.

At the Library Committee meeting of 9th August 1944, discussions arose once more over the administrative problems being experienced in the Durban Libraries. The administration of the library was apparently severely criticised by a member of the Committee but his comments were not recorded. Some felt that "...the administration of the library is seriously defective and it is doubted that the present Librarian can carry out the position ..." ⁴⁴⁵ Fraser retorted that the staffing was inadequate as the staff complement was exactly the same as in 1938 but that both the library stock and the number of borrowers had grown. Her statement was dismissed – some members felt that it was simply "a matter of library organisation"⁴⁴⁶ As a way forward, Professor J.H. Neal proposed and the Committee agreed, that Dr H. Coblans be appointed Chief Librarian at the Natal University College immediately. Neal's proposal refers to a decision taken six years earlier by a selection committee, comprising the Principal and

⁴⁴³ A.F. Hattersley, *The University of Natal, 1909 to 1960*, unpublished, p. 52

⁴⁴⁴ J. Prakasim, Personal communication, Durban, 17th October 2000.

⁴⁴⁵ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 9th August 1944*.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

two members each from the Pietermaritzburg and Durban Library Committees⁴⁴⁷ to recommend to Council that Coblans⁴⁴⁸ take up a Carnegie Overseas Fellowship and the post of Chief Librarian of the College. There had been a long and inexplicable delay in Coblans undertaking this course of action. Eventually, Coblans was granted leave of absence from his lecturing post in the Chemistry Department in Durban to undertake a course in librarianship but, instead of travelling to the United States, he remained in South Africa and attended a course in librarianship in Cape Town in 1945.⁴⁴⁹

5.7. Collections

As mentioned above, the start of the Howard College Library can be traced back to 9th November 1931, when the first six books were accessioned. In addition, the Natal Technical College loaned a number of books to the University College on the understanding that the Natal University College would eventually purchase them but, cash-strapped as it was, the Library Committee in 1934 decided “to take no action until the matter was raised by the Nat. Tech. College [Natal Technical College].”⁴⁵⁰ In 1946, over a decade later, the University College eventually paid the Technical College £60 for the collection.⁴⁵¹

The difficulties of maintaining library collections at different venues manifested themselves early on. At Howard College lack of space was a serious problem. According to a report compiled by the student assistants in 1934, only three years after the first books were accessioned, shelf space was already at a premium. “At present there are about two dozen new books to place on the shelves and we can find no space for them until more books are borrowed from the shelves”⁴⁵² they grumbled. There was a lockable bookcase containing books in the janitor’s room at the Natal Technical College which provided for the needs of the part-time students until the completion of the Commerce Building in 1936. The first books destined for that library were accessioned on 20th

⁴⁴⁷ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 18th October 1938.*

⁴⁴⁸ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 14th March 1939.*

⁴⁴⁹ As discussed in Section 4.3.2.

⁴⁵⁰ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 17th May 1934.*

⁴⁵¹ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 23rd September 1946.*

⁴⁵² Salmon, *et al*, *Report on the Howard College Library ...*, 21st March 1934.

March 1937 and at the same time the books contained in the bookcase as well as a number of books from Howard College were transferred.⁴⁵³

As far as the “Non-European” section was concerned, Palmer wrote to the Durban Library Committee in 1936, “pointing out the necessity of some provision of books for the use of Non-European students of the N.U.C. Durban.”⁴⁵⁴ Her proposal that such provision should follow the pattern of the “Extra-Mural Library” at the Natal Technical College appears to have been accepted by the Library Committee. The first books were accessioned on 2nd November 1937. Palmer donated books from her own personal library and a number of books were moved from the Main Library in Howard College. It was also decided that “the Botany books in the N.U.C. Library Durban, should be transferred to the Library established for the use of non-European students.”⁴⁵⁵ The entire collection was transferred from Sastri College to separate premises in 1943. A conditional gift of £250 for a dedicated building had been offered by a certain Mrs Whitehead⁴⁵⁶ but sadly the University did not reply within “the time limit”⁴⁵⁷ and the offer lapsed. Therefore the University rented a room at 78 Commercial Road in Durban to temporarily house the “Non-European” Library and, in spite of wartime restrictions, a function was organised in 1942 to celebrate the opening of this library at its new premises.

The discussions of the Durban Library Committee in 1942 regarding the safety of the collections were a reminder that a world war was raging and that Durban was a strategically important seaport. Jackson relates that on 30th May, 1942 and again, five days later, an unidentified aircraft, thought to be a Japanese “spotter” aircraft, flew over Durban. The result was the imposition of a blackout in the town.⁴⁵⁸ No lights – not even car headlights - were allowed on the streets or for 20 miles inland. It was also known that enemy submarines lurked off the south-east African coast and had sunk Allied

⁴⁵³ Natal University College, Library [Durban], *Accessions register for Commerce Building*, unpublished.

⁴⁵⁴ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 28th August 1936*.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁶ No other information on this potential donor could be found.

⁴⁵⁷ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 26th June 1942*.

⁴⁵⁸ A. Jackson, *Facts about Durban*, 3rd ed., Hillcrest: FAD, p. 31.

ships.⁴⁵⁹ The minutes of the meeting of 26th June 1942 discussed arrangements to be made “in the event of enemy action”⁴⁶⁰ in order to keep the collections safe. The Librarian reported that the accessions registers had been sent to Pietermaritzburg for safekeeping. Black-out materials had to be purchased for the libraries and the Howard College Library was closed during the lunch hour on Wednesdays as these were military drill days for, apparently, both staff and students.

As far as the allocation of books between the three Durban libraries is concerned, an interesting comparison of numbers of books to students was presented to the Durban Library Committee in 1943. Statistics were provided for each of the three Durban libraries and it was glaringly obvious that those students using the “Non-European” Library had access to markedly fewer books than the other students although they, too, paid tuition fees.

Library	No. of students	No. of books	Books per student
Howard College	145	4,500	31
Commerce Library	156	6,000	38
“Non-European” Library	131	2,100	16

Table 5.1. Ratio of books to students in the Durban libraries, 1943⁴⁶¹

Understandably, these students complained that library facilities were inadequate. The section offered courses in a range of subjects leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree but Library grants allocated for the purchase of books were too small to allow for the purchase of more than the basic texts. The Natal University College Students’ Union (Non-European), in a memorandum drawn up for the Natal Indian Judicial Commission, drew attention to the surplus of funds which they estimated were left over after overhead expenses had been met. For the three years from 1942 to 1944, they estimated that there would have been a surplus of £5,679. They urged the Natal Indian Judicial Commission

⁴⁵⁹ J.A. Buchanan & K.G. Buchanan, Personal communication, 21st July, 2007.

⁴⁶⁰ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 26th June 1942.*

⁴⁶¹ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 7th June 1943.*

to “investigate and find out what has happened to the surplus balance,”⁴⁶² pointing out that “The money has at no time been applied to the betterment of the Non-European classes.”⁴⁶³ There is no indication that the University authorities took cognisance of the complaints although in 1947 the Durban Library Committee, in a surprise move, decided to increase the monies allocated for purchasing books for the “Non-European” Library.⁴⁶⁴ Their decision does not, however, appear to have been made in response to the memorandum.

Duplication of library materials between the three Durban libraries was not encouraged but practical difficulties were encountered in the prevention of duplication between the two centres. In 1944 Dr R.L. Rosenberg of the Department of Mathematics requested, via the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, that “a complete catalogue of the books and journals of the N.U.C. Library in Durban be made available in the Pietermaritzburg Library, pointing out that this will avoid excessive duplication and increase our library facilities and also that current numbers of certain journals, which by arrangement are obtained in Durban and not in Pietermaritzburg, be circulated in the Pietermaritzburg Library one month after their arrival in Durban.”⁴⁶⁵ Professor Warren was requested to discuss the matter with the Chair of the Durban Library Committee and to report back to the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee. He spoke to Dr H. Coblans, apparently then Chair of the Durban Library Committee, who indicated that it would be impossible to implement the suggestion.⁴⁶⁶ Given the problems being experienced at the time with the administration of the Durban libraries, his answer is not surprising.

5.8. User services

Hours of opening are usually one of the primary concerns of students wanting to use a university library and the Natal University College libraries were no exception. As student numbers increased, so did the demands from students for longer opening hours. Again, problems were experienced with the necessity of having to keep three

⁴⁶² Natal University College Students' Union (Non-European), *Memorandum submitted to the Natal Indian Judicial Commission*, unpublished, p. 13.

⁴⁶³ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁴ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 17th September 1947*.

⁴⁶⁵ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 26th June 1944*.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid., Additional page.

geographically separate libraries open. A complaint from students was read out at the Library Committee meeting of 7th June 1943 concerning the fact that the Howard College Library had been closed at the beginning of term until 10:15 on weekdays due to staff shortages.⁴⁶⁷ The “Non-European” Library was used mainly after hours. At the Committee meeting of 28th February 1944 it was decided to open it on Saturday afternoons and a year later it was agreed that hours should be extended to include Sundays and “several evenings during the week” and that a student assistant would be hired for this purpose.⁴⁶⁸ The Commerce Building Library was generally closed on Wednesday and Thursday mornings because the assistant was required at Howard College but at the Committee meeting of 28th February 1944 it was stated that there were

...a number of full-time Sociology, Psychology and Economics students who would stay at College all day if they could use the Library in the mornings at the Commerce Building.⁴⁶⁹

The first recorded library instruction session, if it could be termed that, in the Durban Library was Palmer’s address to students, recorded in the student library assistants’ report of 21st March, 1934. In their report the students stated:

Discontent on the part of students is largely due to the lack of knowledge of the method of finding one particular book, but a meeting, at which Mrs Palmer spoke, should have removed this difficulty.⁴⁷⁰

Thereafter, no mention is made of any more sessions until 1942, when Fraser addressed the first year English students. In 1943 she reported that she was providing library instruction to students in Sociology I, Commerce I (full-time) and Sociology III (part-time) and that plans were afoot to extend the lectures to other students.⁴⁷¹ It seems likely that no library instruction at all was provided to the users of the “Non-European” Library, possibly because the Library was used mostly used in the evenings and on weekends. As in Pietermaritzburg, the emphasis was mainly on adherence to library rules and regulations.

⁴⁶⁷ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 7th June 1943*.

⁴⁶⁸ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 9th April 1945*.

⁴⁶⁹ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 28th February 1944*.

⁴⁷⁰ Salmon, *et al*, *Report on the Howard College Library ...*, 21st March, 1934.

⁴⁷¹ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting of 7th June 1943*.

5.9. Summary

In summary, the period 1931 to 1945 saw the establishment of library services in the Durban centre together with a Library Committee to administer them. It may be seen from the discussion above that three libraries were more difficult to administer and more expensive to maintain than one library. Apart from space problems - "There is no more storage space at either section of the Library"⁴⁷² complained Fraser in 1942 – difficulties were experienced with opening hours due to the severe shortage of staff. There was dissension amongst the members of the Library Committee regarding the control⁴⁷³ of the Durban Library and a suggestion by a member of that committee, unfair under the difficult circumstances under which she laboured, that Fraser was incompetent.⁴⁷⁴

In 1946 the Pietermaritzburg and Durban libraries were united under a University Librarian and a new era in their development, which will be discussed in the following chapter, began.

⁴⁷² Natal University College, *Report of the Librarian [Durban] for the year 1942.*

⁴⁷³ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 24th October 1944.*

⁴⁷⁴ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 9th August 1944.*

Chapter Six

The Coblans years, 1946 – 1953

The end of World War II ushered in an era both for the Natal University College and for South Africa. The new Principal, Dr E.G. Malherbe, who was to guide the University through two challenging decades, officially assumed duty in April 1945. Malherbe immediately initiated the pursuit of independent university status for the College and in 1946 the Council informed the University of South Africa and the Minister of Education of its intention to petition Parliament for a charter granting the College independent status in terms of the Universities Act no. 12 of 1946. It was envisaged that there would eventually be three affiliated colleges; one in Pietermaritzburg and two in Durban, namely Howard College and a “non-European” college which would be “a natural outgrowth of the courses in the Arts and Social Sciences at present conducted by Natal University College staff at our buildings on the Sastri College grounds.”⁴⁷⁵ Malherbe’s ambition was realised on 15th March 1949 when the Natal University College became the University of Natal.

Student numbers, as has already been mentioned in Chapter Three, also increased considerably after the end of the War as a result of the demobilisation of large numbers of servicemen and women. Student statistics for the Natal University College for the year show an increase of almost 100%, from a total of 911 students in 1945 to 1,808 students in 1946.

A further change came about in 1953 when the University Council decided to move the administrative headquarters of the University to Durban. The move was necessary, explains Malherbe, because of “the problems in Durban, particularly in connection with the non-European section and the development of a Medical school.”⁴⁷⁶ Malherbe points out that the Durban centre had undergone very rapid expansion. Within a few years Durban “had twice as many students as Pietermaritzburg”⁴⁷⁷ and monies raised in

⁴⁷⁵ Natal University College, *Calendar*, 1946, Pietermaritzburg: [The College, 1946], p. 15.

⁴⁷⁶ E.G. Malherbe, *Never a dull moment*, Cape Town: Timmins, 1981, p. 291.

⁴⁷⁷ Malherbe, *Never a dull moment*, p. 291.

Durban by Malherbe were, in fact, subsidising development on the Pietermaritzburg campus.⁴⁷⁸ The “problems in Durban” seem to have been caused by rapid growth as well as by the multi-campus nature of the Durban centre of the university.

On the political front, too, changes occurred which were to have a profound effect on universities in South Africa. When the Afrikaner-dominated National Party won the general election of 1948 it set about consolidating its power as quickly as possible. It was to control the country for the next 46 years in the face of mounting international criticism and internal unrest. Building upon the racial legislation of the former Smuts government, the National Party introduced their doctrine of *apartheid*,⁴⁷⁹ supported by an entire spectrum of laws designed to ensure “domination by the white minority population of blacks and ‘coloureds’.”⁴⁸⁰ The first two laws, the Population Registration and the Group Areas Acts, promulgated in 1950, classified people by race and forced them to live in “racially zoned areas.”⁴⁸¹ At the same time a new generation of black African leaders had arisen who were eventually to lead the resistance against white hegemony.⁴⁸² For education in general it was a time of increasing government interference as the governmental controls were tightened, at first over the school system but eventually over higher education as well.

6.1. Administration and governance: a unitary library service

Dr H. Coblans took up his duties in 1946 as University Librarian with authority over all the College libraries. The former Chemistry lecturer at Howard College and member of the Durban Library Committee was, as has previously been noted, recommended for the Carnegie Library Fellowship⁴⁸³ and the post of Chief Librarian of the Natal University College in 1939.⁴⁸⁴ There had unfortunately been a long and inexplicable delay between the announcement that he had been recommended and his assumption of duty, the reasons for which are not entirely clear. However, once he had been released by the College Council from his lecturing duties in Chemistry in 1945 he enrolled at the

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁹ See: Footnote no. 3, Chapter One for a definition of this doctrine.

⁴⁸⁰ D. Robertson, *A dictionary of modern politics*, 3rd edition, London: Europa, 2002.

⁴⁸¹ L. Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2006, p. xvi.

⁴⁸² Ibid., p. 177. The men were Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and Oliver Tambo.

⁴⁸³ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 14th March 1939*.

⁴⁸⁴ See Chapter Four, section 4.3.2 for a discussion of this appointment.

University of Cape Town to undertake the one-year certificate course in librarianship. Upon completion of the course he returned to the Natal University College as the new University Librarian.

It had originally been planned that the University Librarian would be based in Pietermaritzburg.⁴⁸⁵ However, Coblans remained in Durban. It does not appear as if a specific decision was taken that the University Librarian's office should be in Durban and it is therefore a matter of speculation as to why this was *de facto* the case. It may have been due to the time-consuming administrative problems connected with the difficulties of running three libraries in the Durban area, or perhaps a decision was made based on the severe criticism of the administration of the Durban Library voiced at the Durban Library Committee meeting of 9th August, 1944.⁴⁸⁶ It may also have been related to the simple fact that Coblans was living in Durban and did not wish to uproot his family and move to Pietermaritzburg. Whatever the reason, it seems that the decision as to the location of the University Librarian's office had already been taken when the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee met on 7th November, 1945, since it is stated in the minutes that:

Agreed that Prof. Le Roux and Dr Pratt Yule be appointed a sub-committee, together with the Chairman and Principal, to meet two members of the Howard College Library Committee for the purpose of discussing the staffing of the Pietermaritzburg Library.⁴⁸⁷

Of course, once the decision had been taken by the University authorities to move the administrative headquarters from Pietermaritzburg to Durban in 1953, as noted above, it made sense for the University Librarian to be based in Durban. Durban also had a larger library staff (there was an assistant-in-charge at each of the three libraries) as opposed to the single staff member in Pietermaritzburg, although the appointment of H.L. Maple as Deputy Librarian in June 1947 brought the number of staff in Pietermaritzburg to two. Despite the dual-centred nature of the library service and the problems associated with inadequate finances and lack of sufficient staff, Coblans apparently enjoyed cordial relationships with the library staff and the Library Committees in both centres. The

⁴⁸⁵ J.J. le Roux, Letter to the Registrar, Natal University College, 6th March, 1942, unpublished.

⁴⁸⁶ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 9th August, 1944.*

⁴⁸⁷ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 7th November 1945.*

minutes of Committee meetings convey a sense of co-operation and a unity of purpose which was to continue for over 20 years.

Coblans had been appointed with a mandate to form a single, unitary library service.⁴⁸⁸ At the time of his appointment there were four libraries, the oldest and largest being the Pietermaritzburg Library, and three in Durban – Howard College, the Commerce Library and the “Non-European” Library. He began work at once, immediately introducing a number of administrative changes which included uniform rules for lending and standard methods for ordering and classifying books throughout all four libraries. A start was made on compiling a central catalogue of the total holdings of all the College libraries, firstly with the object of providing users with a comprehensive guide to the Library holdings and secondly to avoid the “excessive duplication,”⁴⁸⁹ noted at a meeting of the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee two years previously. It was no easy task. In an article published in *South African libraries* in 1949, Coblans discussed the numerous problems he had encountered in trying to integrate the library resources of the two centres of the University.⁴⁹⁰ As the “problems arising from unification”⁴⁹¹ manifested themselves, the need was felt for a change in the way that the College libraries were governed.

A motion, to be proposed at the Senate meeting of 3rd April 1947, that there should be “a Joint library committee of N.U.C. concerned with matters affecting the various university libraries as a whole”⁴⁹² was discussed by both library committees at their March meetings but committee members were left to “express their own views before Senate.”⁴⁹³ At the Senate meeting of 3rd April 1947 a decision was taken to create a Joint Library Committee, the purpose of which would be to deal with matters that affected the College libraries as a whole.⁴⁹⁴ Membership was to consist of the Principal (ex-officio), the Chairs of the Pietermaritzburg and Durban Library Committees, the Librarian and

⁴⁸⁸ H. Coblans, *Memorandum by Librarian on the University of Natal Library*, 2nd April 1951, unpublished, p. 1.

⁴⁸⁹ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 13th March 1944*.

⁴⁹⁰ H. Coblans, Some problems of a multi-centred library, *South African libraries*, vol. 17, no. 1, July 1949, p. 35-40.

⁴⁹¹ Coblans, *Memorandum by Librarian on the University of Natal Library*, 2nd April 1951, p. 2.

⁴⁹² Natal University College, *Joint Library Committee: proposed terms of reference*, unpublished.

⁴⁹³ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 27th March 1947* and Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 28th March 1947*.

⁴⁹⁴ Natal University College, *Joint Library Committee: proposed terms of reference*.

two additional members, one from each of the local committees. Its terms of reference included:

- The appointment of library staff “affecting the libraries as a whole”, namely the librarian and the deputy librarian;
- Matters referred to it by the local committees.⁴⁹⁵

It could also initiate discussion on matters affecting the College libraries as a whole and make recommendations to Senate or the Senate Executive but it was in effect subordinate to the two local library committees. Coblans did not support the motion. In a memorandum presented to the Pietermaritzburg and Durban Library Committees on 22nd May and 20th June 1947 respectively, he argued that the creation of a joint committee would not assist in the creation of a unitary library system since it retained “the present divided control.”⁴⁹⁶ Other anomalies he pointed out included the differing methods of appointing local library committee members and, more seriously, the lack of an “objective basis for determining annual library estimates for the sections Pietermaritzburg, Howard College and Commerce, and Non-European.”⁴⁹⁷

In place of a third committee he suggested the abolition of both existing library committees and the formation of a single library committee which would function along the lines of the Faculty committees: “just as there is one Faculty of Arts, which has jurisdiction for both Maritzburg and Durban.”⁴⁹⁸ The Pietermaritzburg Library Committee rejected this suggestion immediately, considering that a single unitary committee would be “out of touch with the special requirements of Pietermaritzburg.”⁴⁹⁹ The Durban Library Committee, on the other hand, concurred with the suggestion. The minutes of the meeting of 20th June 1946 record the discussion on the matter:

- (a) Professor Clark moved that there should be no library committee at all. The motion was duly seconded, and after discussion, put to the vote. The motion was lost;
- (b) Professor Neal moved that there should be one library committee for the whole college. This motion was duly seconded, and after discussion, put to the vote. The motion was carried ...⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁵ Natal University College, *Joint Library Committee: proposed terms of reference*.

⁴⁹⁶ H. Coblans, *Some comments by the Librarian on proposed terms of reference [of the Joint Library Committee]*, [1947], unpublished.

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹⁹ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 22nd May 1947*.

⁵⁰⁰ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 20th June 1947*.

It is not easy to explain the difference in views expressed by the two Library Committees. The Pietermaritzburg Library and the Library Committee had been in existence for a longer time than the Durban Committee and this would have been a contributing factor. However, it is possible that, in line with Brookes's comments on University dualism and the growth exhibited by the Durban centre,⁵⁰¹ there was concern that the needs of the Pietermaritzburg Library would be swamped by the demands made by the rapidly expanding Durban libraries. There is, however, no indication in the minutes of either the Pietermaritzburg or Durban Library Committees that this was the case. As Senate had already agreed to its formation, the Joint Library Committee met for the first time on 21st August, 1947. Its discussions and decisions were, as Coblans had predicted, confined mainly to financial matters⁵⁰² although other matters such as staffing and accommodation were dealt with as the need arose.

In January 1952 the University Librarian received a letter from the Registrar, informing him that "in future the minutes of the Library Committees should be presented direct to the Senate Executive Committee and further, that if necessary the Librarian would be invited to attend when these reports are discussed by Senex."⁵⁰³ The reason for the change is provided in the minutes of the Joint Library Committee meeting of 20th November, 1951 in which it is stated that:

The relationship of the Joint Library Committee and the Pietermaritzburg and Durban Library Committee was discussed. The Library Committees are the only university committees which do not report directly to Senate Executive. Their minutes only go to Senate and are therefore not given adequate attention.⁵⁰⁴

According to Coblans, this instruction constituted an important procedural change. It certainly meant that concerns raised at the Library Committee meetings could be dealt with timeously, rather than disappearing into the administrative complexities of the expanding University.

⁵⁰¹ E.H. Brookes, *A history of the University of Natal*, Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1966, p. 50

⁵⁰² Coblans, *Memorandum by the Librarian on the University of Natal Library*, 2nd April 1951, p. 2.

⁵⁰³ The Registrar, Natal University College, *Re: Library Committees*, Letter to H. Coblans, 4th January 1952, unpublished. Senex is an acronym for the Senate Executive.

⁵⁰⁴ University of Natal, Joint Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 20th November 1951*.

6.2. Finances

The allocation of the grant for Library books was the subject of considerable discussion at the first meeting of the Joint Library Committee. It was finally decided to recommend to Council that “the [total] Library Grant (exclusive of salaries) be based on £x per student in the whole institution in any given year, irrespective of location.”⁵⁰⁵ Both Library Committees put forward suggestions as to how the grant should be allocated between centres, with the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee submitting an extremely detailed formula which took into account the number of courses taught per department, courses offered at more than one centre and total number of students taking each course. They also submitted that the English and Dutch departments required extra “units” because to them “books represent laboratories and apparatus.”⁵⁰⁶ Coblans was tasked with working out the departmental allocations based on the Pietermaritzburg formula and was requested to report back to the Joint Library Committee before the Senate meeting scheduled for 28th November 1947. This he did and reported back at a Joint Library Committee meeting held on 30th October. However the Committee declared that “the Pietermaritzburg formula leads to anomalous results entailing perpetual difficulties”⁵⁰⁷ and the complicated formula was abandoned. It was finally agreed that the basis of allocation would be by centre; one allocation for Pietermaritzburg and three for Durban, including the Howard College and Commerce Libraries and the “Non-European” Library. Amounts would be calculated according to the number of students enrolled at each centre.⁵⁰⁸ Further, it was agreed that the “non-European” section should receive a larger amount, in line with a well-meaning but rather patronising suggestion put forward by the Durban Library Committee that:

... the actual needs of students must not be overlooked, particularly those of the Non-European students whose need for books of a general character to fill in the requisite cultural background was for various reasons very great.”⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰⁵ Natal University College, Joint Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 21st August 1947.*

⁵⁰⁶ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 19th September 1947.*

⁵⁰⁷ Natal University College, Joint Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 30th October 1947.*

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁹ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of the meeting of 17th September 1947.*

In 1946 the total library expenditure including expenditure on books, equipment and salaries for library staff had been £2 7s 0d per student, increasing to £3 3s 0d per student in 1947. In a report drawn up for the Durban Library Committee Coblans notes that in 1928 (nearly 20 years previously!) a committee of the American Library Association had recommended an expenditure of £5 per student and that the “University of Capetown [sic] was spending about £3.5 per student in 1945.”⁵¹⁰

Further, he pointed out that another criterion to be considered is the relationship of library expenditure to total university expenditure. He states that “Both British and American authorities suggest that 3½ % is a minimum. On the 1946 expenditure of £190,000 this would amount to £6700.”⁵¹¹ Actual expenditure on the Library for 1946 had been £5320, 2.8% of the total university expenditure. A report prepared by Coblans for the Holloway Commission⁵¹² indicates that over four years, from 1948 to 1951, the situation had actually worsened, as shown in Table 6.1. below:

Year	Registered students	Salaries	Books & equipment	Total	Total per student	Total Univ. expenditure	% library to total university expenditure
1948	1846	£3140	£3700	£6840	£3 7s 0d	£209,000	3.3
1949	1840	£4010	£4220	£8230	£4 5s 0d	£218,000	3.8
1950	1690	£4110	£4400	£8510	£5 0s 0d	£228,000	3.7
1951	1876	£4810	£3550	£8360	£4 5s 0d	£260,000	3.2

*Table 6.1. University of Natal: comparison of library vs. University expenditure, 1948–1951*⁵¹³

To be fair, the University was experiencing severe financial difficulties. It should be noted that financial problems at this time were not confined to the University of Natal. As Taylor comments, “Up to 1948, the government subsidy to universities was based on a variety of formulas which, with the phenomenal postwar growth of the universities

⁵¹⁰ H. Coblans, *A note on criteria for estimates requested by Durban Library Committee at a meeting held on 28th March 1947, 19th June 1947*, unpublished.

⁵¹¹ Ibid.

⁵¹² A government Commission of Enquiry into University Finances and Salaries, appointed on 15th August 1951, and chaired by J.E. Holloway.

⁵¹³ H. Coblans, *Some considerations in drafting a memorandum for the Holloway Commission, 17th May, 1951*, unpublished.

became completely unsatisfactory ...”⁵¹⁴ The difficulties at the University of Natal were, however, exacerbated not only by a too rapid growth rate but also by the dual-centred nature of the institution which naturally made it more expensive to run than a University in only one centre.

The financial difficulties were “further accentuated by the pegging of the Government Grant to a fixed amount”⁵¹⁵ for the three years, from 1949 to 1951. A two-person commission, consisting of Professors M.C. Botha and J.P. Duminy, was set up in 1951 jointly by Council and the Natal University Development Foundation to investigate the “organisation of the University in relation to its financial position” as well as how the University’s resources could be used in the most efficient manner “in the light of the present and future educational needs of the Province of Natal.”⁵¹⁶ There had been some discussion in Council, “arising purely out of force of circumstances,”⁵¹⁷ about consolidating most of the faculties in Durban, leaving the Pietermaritzburg campus with the Faculty of Agriculture only. According to Brookes, the idea had originated with the government and caused uproar in Pietermaritzburg, “all because of a desperate attempt to remedy a desperate financial situation which ought never to have been allowed to arise and which was the direct result of inadequate and unscientific subsidisation.”⁵¹⁸ The Botha-Duminy Commission reaffirmed the policy of dualism and put forward a number of suggestions regarding the administration of academic matters including rectification of the dispersal of activities in Durban. Briefly, these were that a separate “self-contained academic institution”⁵¹⁹ should be established for the “Non-European” students and that an effort should be made to “concentrate all University activity at Howard College.”⁵²⁰ These measures would, if followed, they said, automatically remove the difficulties which faced the Library in Durban.⁵²¹ They also, in their report, indicated that library grants were inadequate. In spite of the straitened financial position of the University, they emphasized strongly that:

⁵¹⁴ L.E. Taylor, *South African libraries*, London: Bingley, 1967, p. 32.

⁵¹⁵ M.C. Botha & J.P. Duminy (Chairs), *Report of the Commission of Enquiry [into the University of Natal]*, 5th May 1951, unpublished, [p. 13].

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.*, title page verso.

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 1

⁵¹⁸ Brookes, *A history of the University of Natal*, p. 123.

⁵¹⁹ Botha & Duminy, *Report of the Commission of Enquiry [into the University of Natal]*, 5th May 1951, p. 8.

⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁵²¹ Botha & Duminy, *Report of the Commission of Enquiry [into the University of Natal]*, 5th May 1951, p. 10.

The library must be built up to and maintained at a standard which is absolutely essential to the proper functioning of the University and which will adequately reflect its academic worth.⁵²²

Coblans felt strongly about the treatment meted out to the Library by the University. “No department has been so shabbily treated”⁵²³ he noted indignantly. He considered that the authorities did not take the University Library seriously. He appealed to the Committee and the University authorities to “take a realistic view about the Library,”⁵²⁴ pointing out firmly that:

It is customary to pay lip service and to speak with glowing idealism [about the library] on public occasions. Practice from the Ministry downwards has been much more restrictive. We cannot run our libraries properly on the present scale ... If no more money is available then we must cut our services ... we need a conscious policy rather than a vague feeling of the importance of the Library.⁵²⁵

In 1952 the Joint Library Committee exhorted Coblans to “make very strong representations to Senex⁵²⁶ on the complete inadequacy” of the £3,400 granted for 1952 “for the maintenance of the University Library.”⁵²⁷ His efforts met with some success since Council agreed to making a further sum of approximately £1,900 available but in his *Annual report* for that year he comments acidly that “three separate library systems ...are being maintained with resources barely adequate for one system.”⁵²⁸

There was a faint light at the end of the tunnel in the form of the appointment of a government Commission of Enquiry, chaired by Dr J.E. Holloway, to consider the question of university subsidies. Presented to government on 4th May, 1953, its main recommendations were approved retrospectively to 1 January 1953.⁵²⁹ The new arrangements for the government subsidy brought a measure of financial relief to the University of Natal but, as Brookes points out, it did not take into account the “trialism

⁵²² Botha & Duminy, *Report of the Commission of Enquiry [into the University of Natal]*, 5th May 1951, p. 10.

⁵²³ H. Coblans, [Notes written in preparation for the Joint Library Committee meeting of 20th November 1951].

⁵²⁴ H. Coblans, *Statement by Librarian* [to the Joint Library Committee meeting of 20th November, 1952], unpublished, p. 2.

⁵²⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵²⁶ Senate had agreed that the reports of all the library committees be presented direct to Senex, “the Librarian being present if necessary when the reports are brought before Senex.” – University of Natal, Joint Library Committee, *Minutes of the meeting of 6th May 1952*, p. 1.

⁵²⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵²⁸ University of Natal Library, *Annual report*, 1952.

⁵²⁹ Brookes, *A history of the University of Natal*, p. 126

that was *de facto* in existence, the Government virtually averting its eyes (over nearly three decades) from the embarrassing phenomenon of the separate non-European classes.”⁵³⁰

Two monetary donations during this period are worth noting. Carnegie Corporation of New York granted \$15,000 to the Library in 1948, apparently for the purchase of library materials. Senate decided at a meeting held on 12th June 1948 that the fund would be administered by the Librarian under the direction of the Joint Library Committee. The fund was to be used to purchase “books which cannot be normally afforded”⁵³¹ including standard reference works, duplicate copies of books in demand and basic periodicals. The Joint Library Committee agreed that the monies were to be expended over a period of several years.⁵³² The Librarian noted gratefully in his report for 1949 that this grant “added appreciably to the Library’s holdings of scientific journals and of the general reference section.”⁵³³ Four years, later, in 1952, Mrs F. A. E. Powell, later to be described as the Library’s “fairy godmother,”⁵³⁴ donated £500 towards the creation of a fund, of which half was to be used for the purchase of books published in the social sciences and the other half was to be devoted to the purchase of books in the “technical sciences.”⁵³⁵

6.3. Library staff

As matters stood in 1946 when Coblans took over, the library staff totalled five, including him. The Pietermaritzburg and Howard College Libraries each had an Assistant-in-Charge (Mesdames Galloway and Fraser respectively), there was an Assistant in the library at City Building and the “Non-European” Library had a part-time Assistant. The enormous increase in student numbers in 1946, coupled with the considerable amount of work entailed in the unification of the library system meant that “without the necessary staff, only the most urgent jobs”⁵³⁶ could be carried out. Staff shortages notwithstanding, in 1946 Coblans advised both Library Committees that he would be taking advantage of the Carnegie Library Fellowship (which he had received in 1939) to go to the United

⁵³⁰ Brookes, *A history of the University of Natal*, p. 127.

⁵³¹ Natal University College, Joint Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 4th May 1948*.

⁵³² *Ibid.*

⁵³³ University of Natal Library, *Annual report*, 1949, p. 1.

⁵³⁴ University of Natal Library, *Annual report*, 1956, p. 1.

⁵³⁵ University of Natal Library, *Annual report*, 1952, p. 2.

⁵³⁶ Coblans, *Memorandum by Librarian on the University of Natal Library*, 2nd April, 1951, p. 1.

States of America⁵³⁷ and that the Principal had agreed to the employment of a “sub-librarian” who would deputise for him. Mr H.L. Maple was subsequently employed and began his duties as Deputy Librarian, stationed in Pietermaritzburg, in June 1947.⁵³⁸ His appointment “helped to relieve the understaffing”⁵³⁹ for the eighteen months prior to Coblans’s departure for overseas.

Initially, Coblans had been granted leave by Council for six months, from December 1948 to July 1949⁵⁴⁰ as per the terms of the Fellowship.⁵⁴¹ However, in July 1949 he was appointed to the post of Librarian at Unesco⁵⁴² and was granted long leave by the University Council to remain in the post until June 1950.⁵⁴³ Subsequently his leave was extended to December 1950. He was thus absent for over two years, only returning to his post as University Librarian in January 1951.

On his return, he found the libraries in a serious state as far as staffing was concerned. Student numbers and book stock had increased exponentially without a concomitant increase in the number of library staff to carry out the necessary work. The Pietermaritzburg Library, he found, was barely coping with the daily work. “The arrears, especially the cataloguing of periodicals, could not be undertaken,”⁵⁴⁴ he said. His frustration is obvious from the memorandum he presented to the Joint Library Committee meeting of 18th June 1951. He considered that “a university operating as one unit cannot afford the luxury of so much duplication, in fact multiplication, by place, colour and type (full-time and part-time),”⁵⁴⁵ concluding that:

If the present policy of providing the same subjects in certain faculties in both centres i[s] retained, it may be necessary to treat the two centres as entirely separate for purposes of library administration.⁵⁴⁶

⁵³⁷ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 31st October 1946*.

⁵³⁸ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 21st September 1948*.

⁵³⁹ Natal University College Library, *Annual report*, 1947.

⁵⁴⁰ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 27th March 1947*.

⁵⁴¹ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 13th June 1945*.

⁵⁴² University of Natal Library, *Annual report*, 1949, p. 1.

⁵⁴³ University of Natal, Joint Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 27th May 1949*.

⁵⁴⁴ Coblans, *Statement by Librarian* [to the Joint Library Committee meeting of 20th November, 1951], p. 1.

⁵⁴⁵ Coblans, *Memorandum by Librarian on the University of Natal Library*, 2nd April, 1951, p. 3.

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

Lack of staff and the poor salaries paid to library staff were amongst the chief complaints voiced by Coblans throughout his tenure as University Librarian. In 1948 he complained “It is still very difficult to attract members of staff with a minimum of professional training and some experience.”⁵⁴⁷ In 1951 he compared the salary scales paid at three universities: Natal, Cape Town and the Witwatersrand. As may be clearly seen in Table 6.2. below, the salaries of library staff at the University of Natal salaries are the lowest of the three:

Library staff	Natal	Witwatersrand	Cape Town
Librarian	£600 x 25 - 900	£1000 x 50 - 1400	£1000 x 50 - 1300
Deputy Librarian	£550 x 25 - 725	£800 x 40 -1400	£800 x 40 - 1000
Senior Assistants (Degree + professional qualification)	£400 x 25 - 550	£550 x 25 - 800	£550 x 25 - 800
Assistants	£240 x 20 – 320 (Graduates)	£300 x 25 – 550 (promotion dependent on professional examinations)	£300 x 25 - 450

*Table 6.2. Comparison of salary scales between the Universities of Natal, the Witwatersrand and Cape Town.*⁵⁴⁸

It is no wonder that the University found it difficult to attract qualified and experienced staff. Interestingly, the Librarian at the University of the Witwatersrand, Mr P. Freer, voiced a similar complaint in 1946 regarding the salaries paid to librarians. Musiker and Musiker quote him as stating that:

Until we have a sufficient number of posts carrying salaries which can compete with other libraries, we cannot hope to give service worthy of a university library.⁵⁴⁹

Matters at the University of Natal were made more difficult by the fact that the Libraries were operating in three centres, divided both geographically and racially. The Botha-Duminy Commission noted that:

The dispersion of effort and activity in Durban is far too great and is producing an intolerable strain on many members of staff. Several factors combine to bring about this unhealthy state of affairs, the chief among them being the part-time

⁵⁴⁷ Natal University College, *Librarian's report*, 1948

⁵⁴⁸ Appendix 3 to Coblans, *Statement by Librarian* [to the Joint Library Committee meeting of 20th November, 1951), unpublished.

⁵⁴⁹ R. Musiker & N. Musiker, *Wits Library*, Johannesburg: Scarecrow, 1998, p. 39.

Non-European classes, the full-time Non-European classes, the part-time European classes, and the library organisation.⁵⁵⁰

The problems were actually beyond the Library's control. Botha and Duminy made several suggestions regarding the rectification of academic administration and, if their recommendations were acceptable to Council, they stated, "their application would immediately and automatically tend to remove any of the difficulties with which library organisation in Durban is faced."⁵⁵¹ Council, however, opted for a cautious approach and no immediate benefits accrued to the Library as a result of this report. An indication of the University's shortcomings both as far as staffing and collections were concerned may be seen from the following minimum standards for university libraries, quoted by Coblans from evidence submitted by the South African Library Association (SALA) to the Holloway Commission:

- Staff: five assistants for a college of 500 students, 10 assistants for 1,000 students and 4 additional assistants for each additional 500;
- Bookstock: the College Library should have books in large measure, 100,000 to 150,000 books per 1,000 students.⁵⁵²

Coblans drew up a table, indicating the shortcomings of four South African university libraries. As may be seen from the table below, none of the libraries met the standards drawn up by SALA. Of course, at Natal the complications of the geographically and racially separated multiplicity of libraries served only to compound the problems.

⁵⁵⁰ Botha & Duminy, *Report of the Commission Enquiry [into the University of Natal]*, 5th May 1951, p. 8.

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁵⁵² H. Coblans, *Some considerations in drafting a memorandum for the Holloway Commission*, 17th May 1952.

University	Students	Staff - actual	Staff - required	Bookstock - actual	Bookstock - required
Natal	1880	12	18	c.65,000	c. 200,000
UCT	3970	28	35	c.272,000	c. 400,000
Wits	4240	23	37	c.220,000	c. 400,000
Rhodes	780	7	8	c. 65,000	c. 100,000

Table 6.3. Comparison of minimum standards between four South African university libraries⁵⁵³

In 1951 the Library was, however, relieved of one burden. For some years the University Press in Pietermaritzburg had operated under the auspices of the University Library. The Publications Officer spent an hour every day “registering, numbering and display[ing]”⁵⁵⁴ periodicals in the Pietermaritzburg Library but his dismissal in 1950 for an unspecified offence⁵⁵⁵ meant that it became a matter of urgency that a clerical assistant be employed to administer the periodicals section.⁵⁵⁶ Funds were found to employ an assistant as well as two part-time Publications Officers and the Librarian was happily able to report that: “Publications work is thus no longer a library responsibility.”⁵⁵⁷

Coblans resigned at the end of 1952, having spent more than 30 years at the University, as student, lecturer and lastly University Librarian. His last two years at the University had been both difficult and frustrating. It is recorded in the minutes of the Durban Library Committee meeting of 26th June, 1952 that the Committee regretted “that Dr Coblans has felt this step necessary” and hoped that “he will reconsider it, at least until the recommendations of the Holloway Commission are known.”⁵⁵⁸ In this respect, the University had requested the regrading of the posts of University Librarian, Deputy Librarian and Senior Assistant Librarian to professor, senior lecturer and lecturer, respectively.⁵⁵⁹ Coblans was not inclined to wait and left South Africa early in January

⁵⁵³ Coblans, *Some considerations in drafting a memorandum for the Holloway Commission*, 17th May 1952.

⁵⁵⁴ H.L. Maple, Letter to Professor Davies, 9th October 1950.

⁵⁵⁵ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Memorandum from [the] Pietermaritzburg Library Committee to the Senate Executive*, 5th October 1950.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁷ University of Natal Library, *Annual report*, 1951.

⁵⁵⁸ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 26th June 1952*.

⁵⁵⁹ H.S. van der Walt, Secretary for Education, Arts and Science, *New posts and regrading of posts for 1952*, Letter to the Registrar, University of Natal, 5th October 1951, unpublished.

1953 to return to the Unesco Library, leaving Maple, the Deputy Librarian based in Pietermaritzburg, acting as University Librarian until he went on long leave in August 1953. Fraser, the Senior Assistant Librarian based in Durban, took over the management of the libraries until the new University Librarian took up office in March 1954.

The Joint Library Committee did not advertise the post immediately, preferring to await the outcome of the Holloway Commission. It turned out to be a worthwhile wait as the Commission recommended the upgrading of the status of University Librarian as well as the Deputy Librarian and Senior Assistant Librarian.⁵⁶⁰ In addition, a new permanent post of Deputy University Librarian in Durban had been agreed to by the Minister of Education. At a meeting of the Joint Library Committee on 10th September, 1953, it was agreed that the Library's management team should consist of a Librarian and two Deputy Librarians, one in Pietermaritzburg (Maple already occupied this post) and one in Durban.⁵⁶¹ Significantly, it was also noted that "... the appointment of [a] Deputy Librarian in Durban would not absolve the Librarian from routine work because the Library is grossly understaffed."⁵⁶²

6.4. Collections

As seen above, the size of the collections in all four sections of the University Library increased considerably during the period 1946 to 1952. Book stock in the Durban libraries had doubled while in Pietermaritzburg it had increased by 50%.⁵⁶³ In spite of this, Coblans noted that "not one of the 4 libraries is adequate for undergraduate requirements, not to mention books and periodicals for research."⁵⁶⁴ The reason for this was undoubtedly the "dire financial straits"⁵⁶⁵ mentioned by the Botha-Duminy Commission. Worse still, duplication of subjects between the two main centres meant that duplication of collections was inevitable. The distance between the three libraries in Durban meant that sharing of collections was not practicable. In addition, the "Non-

⁵⁶⁰ University of Natal, Joint Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 21st May 1953*.

⁵⁶¹ University of Natal, Joint Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 10th September 1953*.

⁵⁶² Ibid.

⁵⁶³ Coblans, *Statement by Librarian [to the Joint Library Committee meeting of 20th November, 1951]*.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁵ Botha & Duminy, *Report of the Commission of Enquiry [into the University of Natal]*, 5th May 1951, p. 10.

European” students were not allowed to make use of the Howard College Libraries, in accordance with a decision taken by the Durban Library Committee in 1937⁵⁶⁶ and so had to be provided with their own library collection. Due to its straitened financial circumstances, the Library relied fairly heavily on donations and exchanges to increase its stock. In fact, Maple commented in the 1953 *Annual report that*: “In recent years almost one-third of the new accessions consisted of gift or exchange material.”⁵⁶⁷ Coblans had made a concerted effort to institute exchange agreements with other libraries worldwide and in this way acquired many useful and valuable materials to add to the University Library’s stock. Of particular use as exchange material were the publications of the University Press.⁵⁶⁸ The exchange agreement was a fairly old-fashioned and staff-intensive but effective means of increasing a Library’s collection. Hamlin mentions this practice in his historical overview of university libraries in the United States:

In the early 1900s most research libraries utilized to some degree the device of interlibrary exchange of publications, a matter of “send us what you publish, or have in duplicate, and we’ll do the same.”⁵⁶⁹

To avoid duplication of expensive periodical subscriptions, the current issues of a number of titles were circulated between Pietermaritzburg and Durban and between the three Durban libraries as well. Regular weekly transport between the two centres had to be arranged and from Coblans’ *Memorandum* of 1951 it is evident that the Librarian himself had the tiresome task of transporting the items since no regular University transport system existed for anything but letters.⁵⁷⁰

The interlibrary loan figures for the years 1946 to 1953 indicate that the University of Natal Library continued to be a “net borrower,” a sure sign that the library stock remained inadequate for research purposes. The figures in Table 6.4 below show that the number of items borrowed was in most years approximately double that of the number of items lent:

⁵⁶⁶ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of the meeting of 22nd April, 1937*.

⁵⁶⁷ University of Natal, *Annual report*, 1953, p. 2.

⁵⁶⁸ Natal University College Library, *Annual report*, 1948.

⁵⁶⁹ A.T. Hamlin, *The University library in the United States*, Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania, 1981, p. 100.

⁵⁷⁰ Coblans, *Memorandum by Librarian on the University of Natal Library*, 2nd April 1951, p. 1.

	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953
Items borrowed	327	1061	Not available	874	800	843	833	1510
Items lent	154	371	Not available	481	419	382	509	577

Table 6.4. University of Natal interlibrary loan statistics, 1946-1953⁵⁷¹

6.5. Accommodation

As the collections grew in size and student numbers increased, lack of space became a major problem in both centres. By 1948 the Howard College, City Building and Pietermaritzburg libraries were all overcrowded and uncomfortable for both library staff and users. Coblans commented on the staff accommodation in 1948:

In Durban the librarian and three assistants, in Pietermaritzburg the deputy and two assistants are herded into one room in each case. In this room all interviews and discussions with staff, students and public take place; all books are processed and administrative work is carried out.⁵⁷²

The most seriously congested library of all was that at Howard College. However, once the Memorial Tower building had been completed in 1951 – eighteen months after its scheduled completion date – the library was able to move into its new premises in the tower itself. A promotional brochure, compiled to solicit funds from the public, advertised the new Library Tower as follows:

The big central tower of this new Science and Technology Block which is being erected next to Howard College has been designed to house the Reading Rooms and the Library of the University of Natal in Durban. There are eight floors. Two of these floors, each of which comprises about 2,000 square feet, have already been earmarked as Memorial Reading Rooms. The one is the Students' War Memorial Reading Room and the other the 19th Battalion S.A. Coastal Defence Corps Memorial Room.⁵⁷³

Each room was to be furnished with bookshelves and study alcoves so that students could work “in peace and quiet.”⁵⁷⁴ Officially dedicated by the Minister of Education in November 1951, the Library Tower consisted of nine floors, namely the Main Lending Room, the Reference Room, the Periodicals Room, three Memorial Reading Rooms and

⁵⁷¹ Collated from the *Annual reports* of the Library for the years 1946–1953.

⁵⁷² Natal University College Library, *Annual report*, 1948.

⁵⁷³ *Natal University, Durban, 1946*, unpublished. This publicity brochure accompanied a letter written by Professor E.G. Malherbe to Miss K. Campbell on 6th August 1946 requesting her to “become a sponsor in this campaign for funds.”

⁵⁷⁴ *Natal University, Durban, 1946*.

three small floors at the top which provided storage space. It was estimated that there would be enough space to house 35,000 volumes which was considered adequate for the next fifteen years. Malherbe considered the new Library provided “very pleasant reading accommodation overlooking the ... city and Durban Bay.”⁵⁷⁵ In spite of his enthusiasm and the magnificent views, it was a ridiculous design for a university library building. As the collections grew in size, more books had to be moved up into the reading and storage rooms, resulting in a collection “spread over seven floors and over a dozen rooms or areas.”⁵⁷⁶ The monumental design of the building did not allow for easy extension and was very “wasteful of space.”⁵⁷⁷ Secluded study alcoves, out of sight of library staff, were also not a good design feature for a university library.

One of the suggestions which had been made by the Botha-Duminy Commission of enquiry was for a “gradual move towards the concentration of the Library at Howard College” to eliminate the large amount of duplication which existed.⁵⁷⁸ The decision to do this was not, however, based upon their advice. Coblans recorded in the 1951 *Annual report* that all attempts to increase library space at the City Building “had failed” and that he had received an instruction from the Registrar, based on a report by the Professor of Architecture, Professor P.H. Connell,⁵⁷⁹ that “the Library floor should not be loaded any further.”⁵⁸⁰ “This overcrowding”, he stated, “was one of the factors which led to the decision at the end of the year to move the full-time work to the Howard College site.”⁵⁸¹ Approximately 8,000 books were transferred from the City Building to the Howard College Library.⁵⁸² From 1952 the Library’s hours at City Building were restricted to afternoons only (from 15:00 to 18:00)⁵⁸³ to service the needs of part-time students. Coblans remarked that “The consolidation of the Main Library in Durban on the Howard College site is the first step towards the beginnings of an adequate library service.”⁵⁸⁴

⁵⁷⁵ Malherbe, *Never a dull moment*, p. 293

⁵⁷⁶ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1960, p. 1.

⁵⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁵⁷⁸ Botha & Duminy, *Report of the Commission of Enquiry [into the University of Natal]*, 5th May 1951, p. 10.

⁵⁷⁹ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 30th October 1951*.

⁵⁸⁰ University of Natal Library, *Annual report*, 1951.

⁵⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸² University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1952, p 1.

⁵⁸³ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 26th February 1952*.

⁵⁸⁴ University of Natal Library, *Annual report*, 1952.

The upper floor of the library building⁵⁸⁵ in Pietermaritzburg had been made over to the Library in November 1949 but unfortunately the “plans for occupation” had to be modified as the architect’s report indicated that the structure could not bear heavy loads.⁵⁸⁶ Further relief was provided in the form of a Memorial Reading Room, with a small room above it, which was added on to the library building in 1949. This Memorial Reading Room was dedicated on 29th June, 1951 and provided welcome extra seating and storage space for the Pietermaritzburg Library.

In 1946 the only library which had sufficient space for its needs was the “Non-European” Library, which had moved at the beginning of 1946 “into spacious new premises,”⁵⁸⁷ actually an army hut at Sastri College.⁵⁸⁸ It was expected that this library would be moved to Wentworth⁵⁸⁹ in July 1950 and it was reported in 1949 that a building “with about the same floor space as the present library” had been adapted.⁵⁹⁰ However, the expected move did not take place. Instead, when the pre-Medical classes began in 1951 at Wentworth, the necessary books were placed in the charge of the four lecturers conducting the classes and in July of the same year a part-time assistant, Mrs B.H. Robinow, was hired to “prepare for library use the medical books and periodicals, which have been accumulating over a period of more than ten years.”⁵⁹¹ Plans for a new library at the Medical School were drawn up in consultation with the Medical Faculty and the architect in 1951. It was anticipated that the new Medical Faculty building would be ready for occupation in 1954.

6.6. User services

Coblans held the firm belief that “the library also has a formal teaching function.”⁵⁹² For the first time, a clear distinction was made between induction into the library rules and

⁵⁸⁵ The old library building became the Administration building when the Library moved to its new premises in 1965.

⁵⁸⁶ University of Natal Library, *Annual report*, 1949, p. 1.

⁵⁸⁷ Natal University College, *Librarian’s report*, 1946.

⁵⁸⁸ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of the meeting of 19th December, 1945*.

⁵⁸⁹ For many years the first two years of the University’s medical course were conducted at Wentworth, approximately 10 kilometres from Howard College, in buildings erected by the British Government during World War II. – Brookes, *A history of the University of Natal*, p. 86-87.

⁵⁹⁰ University of Natal Library, *Annual report*, 1949, p. 2.

⁵⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹² Coblans, *South African libraries*, vol. 17, no. 1, July 1949, p. 40.

regulations and an in-depth, subject oriented approach. In his article in *South African libraries* he elaborates on this:

The incoming students need only some orientation and occasional lectures in the first year on the significant journals in the arts and sciences. In the graduate years broad subject groups are taken separately... At the post-graduate or more specialized level a narrower subject approach is essential. This can only be done in a [sic] intensive course in the sources and organization of the subject, both its literature and its research structure (learned societies, etc.)⁵⁹³

Thus, in addition to the introductory talks which had become the norm for all new students, a series of regular weekly lectures entitled “The literature of the sciences – sources and organisation” were introduced for half the academic year for all students registered for the Masters course in Science as well as fourth year Engineering students. The intention was to eventually extend these lectures to all third year and postgraduate students but there were difficulties, not least amongst which was the reluctance of Faculties to “surrender one lecture period for this purpose”⁵⁹⁴ as well as the scarcity of graduate library staff with professional qualifications in librarianship. As Hamlin has pointed out, progress in this area of library service was very slow. “Few topics,” he notes, “crop up as frequently in the professional literature since 1900 as library orientation and user education”⁵⁹⁵ but real progress “dates from about 1960, as many reference departments came to recognize a responsibility for bibliographic instruction ... in lecturing to courses on research methods in given fields.”⁵⁹⁶

Coblans also considered that an important part of university library work was “the stimulation of the student as a citizen of the academic world”⁵⁹⁷ and felt that the task of the university library was to broaden the thinking and outlook of the students by encouraging them to read widely. In practical terms this meant using classification to “serve the ends of display” by introducing a number of “parallel classifications.”⁵⁹⁸ Thus he introduced a “new books” section which allowed the circulation and display of new books in each of the four libraries in turn as well as a “modern fiction” (post-1890) section at each centre. The idea behind the latter was to “entice the young mind” to read contemporary novels and to discourage the conservatism and narrow subject focus which

⁵⁹³ Coblans, *South African libraries*, vol. 17, no. 1, July 1949, p. 40.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁵ Hamlin, *The university library in the United States*, p. 144

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 145

⁵⁹⁷ Coblans, *South African libraries*, vol. 17, no. 1, July 1949, p. 36.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid.

he, Coblans, considered inherent in the nature of universities.⁵⁹⁹ A further innovation was the introduction of regular showings of films of academic interest at the Howard College, Commerce and Pietermaritzburg Libraries. The practice started at Howard College in 1946. Within two years film projectors were available in all three libraries and films were being screened once a week during the Thursday lunch period.

6.7. Summary

The years of Coblans's stewardship were years of considerable growth in size, particularly in the Durban area. From 1949 to 1952 the total book stock almost doubled in size, from 37,000 to 70,000 volumes, and the number of journal subscriptions increased from 170 to 790 titles. Five libraries were in operation, one in Pietermaritzburg and four in Durban – the Howard College, Commerce and “Non-European” Libraries and a fledgling medical library at Wentworth. Coblans introduced a unitary library system, brought order to the Library's organisation and, perhaps most important of all, had introduced the concept of in-depth subject-oriented library user education to the University community. Regarding the latter, he was years ahead of his time. There had also been two major moves in Durban; firstly, the Main Library's move from its cramped quarters in the Howard College building into the Memorial Tower building in July 1951, followed by the transfer of approximately 8,000 books from the Commerce Library in the City Building to Howard College in 1952. Nevertheless, the difficulties Coblans faced in terms of staff shortages and insufficient funds were extremely limiting. He spent a considerable amount of his time making representations to the University authorities on the inadequacy of both the staff and the library grants, and criticised the University severely for attempting to maintain multiple library systems with barely enough resources to maintain one. He himself cannot be absolved from blame, either. His two-year absence from office must surely have had a detrimental effect on the functioning of the University Library, given its meagre resources.

It was left to his successor, Mr J.W. Perry, to continue the battle. The next chapter will consider the development of the University Library during the years of Perry's tenure, from 1954 to 1961.

⁵⁹⁹ Coblans, *South African libraries*, vol. 17, no. 1, July 1949, p. 36.

Chapter Seven

The Perry Years, 1954 – 1961

The new University Librarian, Mr J.W. Perry, took office in March 1954 with the status of a full professor.⁶⁰⁰ An historian, educated at both Cambridge and London Universities, he had had several years' worth of experience working in libraries, including a stint as University Sub-Librarian at the University of Cape Town.⁶⁰¹ During his tenure the library services were improved and expanded considerably to "meet the demands of a growing University,"⁶⁰² albeit against a background of growing tension and unrest on the political front as the National Party set about consolidating white, and in particular Afrikaner, supremacy.⁶⁰³ Scholars consider the years 1959 to 1961 a "watershed in the making of apartheid."⁶⁰⁴ The year 1960 was particularly momentous. On 3rd February 1960 British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, delivered his "wind of change"⁶⁰⁵ speech to a joint sitting of Parliament in Cape Town. In the same year, the escalation of African resistance to the government's racial policies culminated in the Sharpeville massacre of 21st March.⁶⁰⁶ Joyce describes the event as "a turning point in the liberation struggle. Freedom ... could not be achieved by peaceful means."⁶⁰⁷ The resultant widespread unrest led to ever-increasing state control and legislative restrictions. Just over a year later, on 31st May 1961, South Africa became a republic and in the same year was forced to withdraw from the Commonwealth.

For the University of Natal, the promulgation of the Extension of University Education Act no. 45 of 1959 meant the eventual closure of the University of Natal's separate "non-

⁶⁰⁰ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1954, p. 18.

⁶⁰¹ University Library, *University of Natal gazette*, vol. 1, no. 1, April 1954, p. 16.

⁶⁰² University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1961, p. 1.

⁶⁰³ P. Joyce, *The making of a nation*, Cape Town: Zebra Press 2007, p. 90.

⁶⁰⁴ B.K. Murray, *Wits, the open years*, Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1997, p. 322.

⁶⁰⁵ Macmillan stated that "The wind of change is blowing through this continent, and, whether we like it or not, this growth of [African] national consciousness is a political fact." – *Oxford dictionary of political quotations*, 3rd edition, edited by A. Jay, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

⁶⁰⁶ On 21st March 1960, the Pan-Africanist Congress launched a campaign against the pass laws. Large numbers of Africans gathered at police stations around the country, inviting arrest. At Sharpeville, near Johannesburg, police opened fire on the crowd, killing 67 people and wounding many others. – L. Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, Johannesburg: Ball, 2000, p. 204.

⁶⁰⁷ Joyce, *The making of a nation*, p. 109.

European” section. Although classes continued for some time, since government policy allowed for students who had already registered to complete their studies, an immediate result was the closure in 1960 of the “Non-European” Library and the transfer of its holdings to the City Building Library.⁶⁰⁸

There was also the so-called “brain-drain” from the more liberal South African universities. Murray notes that the University of the Witwatersrand “was inevitably a victim of the flight of despairing liberals, harassed radicals, and frightened conservatives.”⁶⁰⁹ The University of Natal suffered a similar fate. Trapido,⁶¹⁰ in her autobiographical novel, *Frankie and Stankie*, mentions that a number of academics at the University of Natal fled the country after the National Party’s victory in the 1948 elections, “taking jobs in Toronto, Los Angeles, Glasgow, Salisbury and New South Wales”⁶¹¹ while others “drain away later, because, come 1953 ... the Nats⁶¹² romp home with a massively increased majority ...”⁶¹³

Notwithstanding the political problems of the day, the University of Natal was fortunate enough to attract a trio of professionally qualified and experienced librarians to manage the library services during this period. The “exuberant, bubbling”⁶¹⁴ Perry and his two Deputy Librarians, Messrs H.L. Maple and L. Milburn, together made a significant contribution to the development of the Library’s services during this period. All three men were, according to Mr E.W.O. Pugsley,⁶¹⁵ “educated men in the widest sense of the word.”⁶¹⁶

7.1. Administration and governance

The general management and supervision of the University Library continued to be vested in the cumbersome system of three standing Library Committees appointed yearly

⁶⁰⁸ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report, 1960*, p. 2.

⁶⁰⁹ Murray, *Wits, the open years*, p. 325.

⁶¹⁰ B. Trapido, novelist and daughter of Professor F.J. Schuddeboom of the Department of Mathematics at the University of Natal.

⁶¹¹ B. Trapido, *Frankie and Stankie*, London: Bloomsbury, 2003, p. 92-93.

⁶¹² National Party.

⁶¹³ Trapido, *Frankie and Stankie*, p. 93.

⁶¹⁴ G.R. Bozzoli, Foreword, R. Musiker and N. Musiker, *Wits Library*, Johannesburg: Scarecrow, 1998.

⁶¹⁵ Pugsley joined the library staff as Library Assistant in charge of the Commerce Library and was promoted to Deputy Librarian in Durban in 1969.

⁶¹⁶ E.W.O. Pugsley, Personal communication, 2nd April 2008.

by Senate, with the Joint Library Committee being subordinate to the other two. The University Librarian, an *ex officio* member of all three committees, was the executive officer and was himself a member of Senate. In 1955 yet another committee was created – the Medical School Library Sub-Committee. Perry had called an informal meeting between representatives of the University Library, the Medical School and the medical profession which took place on 24th August, 1955. As a result of that meeting, the Durban Library Committee requested the University Senate to institute the sub-committee due to the “special character”⁶¹⁷ of the Medical Library. It should be noted here that the Medical Library of the University of Natal, like the Medical Library of the University of the Witwatersrand,⁶¹⁸ served not only the university community but the medical profession of the province as a whole. The record of the first meeting, held on 2nd November 1955, is indicative of the very different character of this Library.⁶¹⁹ Committee members included not only the University Librarian, the Assistant Librarian in charge of the Medical Library, the Chairman of the Durban Library Committee and the Dean of the Medical School but also representatives of the South African Medical Association, the Union Health Department and the Natal Provincial Administration, which administered the provincial hospitals. Discussions at the first meeting indicate the problems posed by the Medical Library’s broad user community. Loan policies, it was decided, had to be more restrictive than those operating in the other libraries of the University due to “the varying types of users of the Medical Library viz. students, university staff, general practitioners, specialists, hospital staff and also postal users.”⁶²⁰ The budget, too, was allocated by the Faculty of Medicine and did not form part of the University’s general library grant. In practical terms this placed the Medical Library’s finances on a reasonably adequate footing. Perry recorded his gratitude:

The Librarian wishes to thank the Dean of the Medical Faculty for his help in this matter and also the Medical Sub-Committee of the University Advisory Committee for their sympathetic realisation of the needs of a medical library particularly in the early years of its growth.⁶²¹

⁶¹⁷ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1955, p. 1.

⁶¹⁸ Murray, *Wits, the open years*, p. 164.

⁶¹⁹ University of Natal, *Record of a meeting held in the Medical Library, University of Natal, to discuss Medical Library matters*, 24th August 1955, unpublished.

⁶²⁰ University of Natal, Medical School Library Sub-Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 2nd November 1955*, unpublished, p. 1.

⁶²¹ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1955, p. 1.

In 1958 yet another Medical Library Sub-Committee was formed, this time as a sub-committee of the Faculty of Medicine. The reasons for the formation of this committee are spelled out in the minutes of the first meeting:

The need has long been felt for a small and active Library Committee, composed of members of the Faculty who have a vivid interest in the Library and would be prepared to meet once a month. Such a Committee would discuss and advise on purely Medical Faculty matters connected with book selection, allocation of Faculty funds, service to students and staff, and would also assist the library staff as far as possible.⁶²²

The existence of two committees connected to the same library obviously caused some confusion for at the fourth meeting of the Faculty of Medicine Sub-Committee it was noted that the Chair had discussed its functions with the Dean of Medicine. It was agreed that the “present committee is an advisory faculty sub-committee while the original Medical Library sub-committee of the Durban Library Committee was an executive committee.”⁶²³ The Assistant Librarian in charge of the Medical Library, Mrs B.H. Robinow, was a member of the Faculty sub-committee and at its fifth meeting, held on 14th October, 1959, it was decided to co-opt the University Librarian onto the Committee. Inevitably this Faculty sub-committee began to take on most of the functions of the official Medical Library Sub-Committee. It met on a monthly basis and discussions took place upon all matters connected with the Medical Library, from loan policies to the allocation of book and journal funds, new journal subscriptions, hours of opening and space requirements. Eventually the official Medical Library Sub-Committee simply became the point of contact between the University and the external users of the Medical Library while the Faculty sub-committee made all the decisions pertaining to the Medical Library.⁶²⁴

7.2. Finances

The decision to duplicate full-time Arts and Science classes in Durban in 1946 and 1947 respectively were to result in “unforeseen”⁶²⁵ financial hardships. Brookes notes that “Bews and Denison left the University solvent but set it on a path which was to involve

⁶²² University of Natal, Faculty of Medicine, Library Committee, *Report of the 1st meeting held on 3rd April 1959*, unpublished.

⁶²³ University of Natal, Faculty of Medicine, Library Committee, *Report of the 4th meeting held on 9th September 1959*, unpublished. .

⁶²⁴ G.H. Haffajee, Personal communication, 15th November 2007.

⁶²⁵ E.H. Brookes, *A history of the University of Natal*, Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1966, p. 57.

great expenditure.”⁶²⁶ The Library, in particular, struggled to maintain its scattered collections. Great store had been set by the anticipated relief that the Holloway Commission would provide but this hope proved to be in vain. Unaccountably, the Commission did not consider that the demands of a multi-centred Library merited special funding. The report stated that:

In the case of the University of Natal, some of whose faculties are housed in both Pietermaritzburg and Durban, 54 miles apart, a certain amount of duplication is inevitable, and library costs must be higher in comparison with those of the more centralized institutions. Your Commission considers, however, that no justification exists for recommending a higher State grant to the Natal University for library purposes than that recommended in the standard formula outlined in this report.⁶²⁷

A brief summary of the Holloway Commission’s recommendations insofar as they affected the Library finances would be useful here. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Holloway Commission was appointed in 1951 by the government to consider the question of subsidies to universities. Its recommendations were presented to the Government on 4th May, 1953. The subsidy formula recommended by the Commission was divided into three parts which were:

- A basic subsidy;
- A standard provision; and,
- A standard fee income.⁶²⁸

Library needs, together with teaching needs (in relation to student numbers), administration, laboratories and maintenance (of buildings and grounds) were catered for under the heading “standard provision.” Brookes notes that a university “was not bound to spend its standard provision on these specific items” with one exception – the provision for library needs.⁶²⁹ Universities were thus not supposed to take from the library’s subsidy to finance other things, thereby curtailing the expansion of the library service. The University of Natal, however, was inclined to ignore this recommendation. The grant per student in 1955 was £3 (exclusive of salaries for library staff) which was increased in 1956 to £4 and again in 1957 to £5 but disappointingly it remained at £5 for 1958 and 1959 although the government allocation for library purposes was £7 and £11 respectively. As Perry explained:

⁶²⁶ Brookes, *A history of the University of Natal*, p. 57.

⁶²⁷ J.E. Holloway (Chair), *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into University Finances and Salaries*, [Pretoria: Government Printer, 1951], p. 93.

⁶²⁸ Brookes, *A history of the University of Natal*, p. 124.

⁶²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

The Library did not receive any proportional benefit from this increase however, since it was decided to use it to relieve the University of part of its share in the burden of financing the Library, a burden which it had borne to a disproportionate extent over the last few years.⁶³⁰

While one might be inclined to condemn the University for its miserliness, Malherbe's comment in the *University gazette* of November 1955 is enlightening. With barely concealed irritation he pointed out that in the United Kingdom, "it is not a case of the universities going on their knees to the Government for money in the way that we have to in this country."⁶³¹ The University was, through circumstances beyond its control, forced to keep a very tight hold on the purse strings.

In 1955 the Joint Library Committee decided, as an experiment, to "place the Non-European Library on an equal footing to the Pietermaritzburg and Durban Libraries insofar as allocations for book purchases were concerned."⁶³² Although this section had fewer graduate students than the Howard College and Pietermaritzburg campuses, the Committee was keen to extend the book collection. The University Librarian pointed out that:

The Committee also agreed that the present allocation of funds for the non-European Library was inadequate, evidence for which can be seen in the statistics for accessions to this Library, which has not shared proportionately in the general increase in the overall size of the University Libraries.⁶³³

The decision elicited strong criticism from some academic departments in Durban which would have preferred to have their book allocations increased for the Howard College and City Building Libraries. In particular, the head of the Law Department argued eloquently that "a division of my grant into two equal parts was not completely fair or reasonable."⁶³⁴ Given the financial constraints, their concern is understandable, but both the Joint and Durban Library Committees stood firm, maintaining that "whatever the future of the Non-European Library might be, all funds for book purchase should be fully used, and that Heads of Departments should be encouraged to spend their allocations for

⁶³⁰ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1959, p. 1.

⁶³¹ E G Malherbe, Meeting of the Executive Council of the Association of Universities of the British Commonwealth (Australia : 1955), *University of Natal gazette*, vol. 2, no. 3, November 1955, p. 34.

⁶³² University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1955, p. 1.

⁶³³ Ibid.

⁶³⁴ G.M.J. Sweeney, Letter to the Librarian, 20th February 1957, unpublished.

this Library.”⁶³⁵ Perhaps their stance resulted from Professor of Sociology L. Kuper’s request to the Durban Library Committee at their meeting of 23rd May, 1955, to allow

... senior non-European full-time students of Sociology to enjoy the general facilities for browsing in the Howard College Library where book stock was so much more extensive than at the Non-European Library itself.”⁶³⁶

Kuper has been described by one of his ex-students as “one of the most intellectually demanding, principled, politically uncompromising, and committed sociologists ... one of the few who insisted on teaching only to racially integrated classes ...”⁶³⁷ Predictably, however, the Durban Library Committee had denied his request, resolving that “no change be made in present practice concerning the attendance of Non-European students at the Howard College Library.”⁶³⁸ It is also possible that Perry’s mission to extend and improve the library collections as a whole had also played a part in this decision. It is unfortunate that they had waited so long before making this effort as, within three years, the “Non-European” Library was closed down.⁶³⁹

In 1956, at the request of the University’s Finance and General Purposes Committee, Perry drew up comparison of expenditure at ten South African and British university libraries. Although he was unfortunately unable to obtain up-to-date figures for the British university libraries, the comparisons with other South African university libraries make interesting reading as may be seen in Table 7.1 below:

⁶³⁵ University of Natal, Joint Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 21st May, 1957*.

⁶³⁶ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 23rd May 1955*.

⁶³⁷ H. Adam & K. Moodley, *South Africa without apartheid*, Cape Town: Maskew Miller, 1986, p. x.

⁶³⁸ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 23rd May 1955*.

⁶³⁹ The “Non-European” Library was summarily closed in June 1960. See section 7.5 below.

University (year in brackets)	Number of students	Percentage library budget spent on salaries	Proportion of total instructional expenditure spent on library	Expenditure per student – books & journals only
Birmingham (1951/52)	3349	53.5%	4%	£3 10s 0d
Bristol (1951/52)	2834	45%	2.8%	£7 0s 0d
Leeds (1951/52)	3607	55%	3.5%	£8 0s 0d
Nottingham (1951/52)	2193	58%	5%	£7 10s 0d
Cape Town (1955)	4265	76%	10%	£2 7s 6d
Natal (1955)	1984	69%	8%	£3 0s 0d
Potchefstroom (1955)	1296	51%	14.5%	£7 0s 0d
Pretoria (1954)	4286	49%	8%	£3 0s 0d
Rhodes (1954)	785	55%	7%	£5s 0s 0d
Wits (1954)	4277	58%	7%	£4 0s 0d

Table 7.1. Comparison of expenditure on library services between university libraries in Britain and South Africa.⁶⁴⁰

Of particular interest are the comparisons with the Universities of Cape Town, Pretoria and the Witwatersrand. Perry considered these university libraries to be similar to that of the University of Natal, since each possessed a main library, a medical library and a law or commerce library.⁶⁴¹ The figures indicate that, to all appearances, the University of Natal compared quite favourably with other South African universities yet the figures do not show the drain on Natal's resources through its having to maintain two main libraries as well as the "Non-European" Library. The higher cost of duplication of library services is also evident in the higher percentage of the Library budget which had to be spent on staff salaries.

From 1955 the number of scholarly journals⁶⁴² to which the Library subscribed had steadily increased. In four years, from 1954 to 1958, the number of new subscriptions acquired totalled 113, split almost equally between the two centres (54 new titles were for Pietermaritzburg and 59 new titles were for Durban). Unfortunately, unexpected

⁶⁴⁰ Collated from: J.W. Perry, *[Report on library expenditure]*, 11th June 1956, unpublished.

⁶⁴¹ Perry, *[Report on library expenditure]*, 11th June 1956.

⁶⁴² The Library Committees used the terms "journals" and "periodicals" interchangeably. An attempt has been made in this study to standardise on the term "journals" wherever possible.

increases in the prices of subscriptions resulted in the journals budget being overspent in 1958.⁶⁴³ It had been expected that the Library's grant would be increased by a small amount every year due to the fact that the vote was based on student numbers, but, as pointed out above, no increase at all was received for the years 1958 and 1959. Thus in 1959, the Joint Library Committee "asked the Librarian to circularise all the teaching staff in order to try to assess the use of the large number of journals to which the Library now subscribes."⁶⁴⁴ The Library's financial report for 1960 revealed a deficit large enough to create some anxiety at the Joint Library Committee meeting of 22nd May, 1961. The University Council had increased the Library's grant by ten shillings per student to £5 10s 0d⁶⁴⁵ but the extra allocation was intended specifically "for the purpose of enlarging the Library's holdings of back numbers of journals"⁶⁴⁶ it could not therefore be used to pay for current subscriptions. At the same meeting the Committee requested that the Librarian encourage academic departments "especially those relying largely on periodicals, to cut down on book orders ... so that essential periodical needs were not endangered."⁶⁴⁷ Unfortunately these measures were insufficient and the latter part of 1961 saw the Library financially embarrassed to such an extent that book ordering had to be stopped completely "in an effort to pull the finances straight."⁶⁴⁸ Thus began a period of financial austerity which will be discussed in the following chapter.

Donations from individuals and bodies outside the University helped to mitigate some of the effects of inadequate library grants and Perry himself tirelessly sought out donations. Although the monies donated by the Carnegie Corporation of New York in 1948⁶⁴⁹ were finally expended by the end of 1955, numerous donations were received from both individuals and corporate bodies. Notable donors included Mrs Florence Powell who donated £2,000 to enable the Medical Library to form a special collection, the "Florence Powell Cancer collection"⁶⁵⁰ and a further £1,350 "to be used for the establishment of a special collection of works illustrative of the history of engineering and science."⁶⁵¹ Mr

⁶⁴³ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1958, p.1.

⁶⁴⁴ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1959, p. 1.

⁶⁴⁵ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1960, p. 1.

⁶⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴⁷ University of Natal, Joint Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 22nd May 1961*.

⁶⁴⁸ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1961, p. 1.

⁶⁴⁹ In 1948 Carnegie Corporation of New York granted \$15,000 to the Library for the purchase of books. It was decided at the Joint Library Committee meeting of 4th May 1948 that the monies were to be expended over a period of several years.

⁶⁵⁰ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1954, p. 5.

⁶⁵¹ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1956, p. 1.

M. Webb, past president of the South African Institute of Race Relations, presented the Library with a collection of over 400 books written by Africans and African-Americans along with a sum of £200 to be invested in order to purchase book additions to the collection. This collection was to be a memorial to the achievements of African people and would be known as the “Maurice Webb Collection of African and Negro books.”⁶⁵² It was a noble idea but sadly the collection, since it was housed in the Main Library in the Memorial Tower building, would have been unavailable to some of the very people it was meant to inspire as black Africans were not, at this time, allowed to make use of the collections in either the Main or Commerce Libraries.⁶⁵³

Perry, together with the Dean of the Medical School, attended a meeting in Cape Town with representatives of the South African Medical Association. Arising from this meeting, the Medical Library became the recipient of an annual donation of £100 per annum from the South African Medical Association, in return for the “availability of the full facilities of the Medical Library to its members.”⁶⁵⁴

Donations were also received from the Ford Foundation as part of its \$27,500 grant towards the Programme of Advanced Training in Social Science. The Foundation donated £1,350 in 1954 and the same amount again in 1955 to the Library for the purchase of books to support the Programme. Monies from this grant were added to the library grants of the academic departments associated with the work of the Institute for Social Research. The 12 departments which benefited from the additional grant were: Architecture, Bantu Studies, Commerce, Economics, Education, Educational Psychology, Geography, History, Law, Mathematics, Psychology and Sociology.⁶⁵⁵

7.3. Collections

One of the first tasks Perry undertook when he became University Librarian was to take stock of the collections. He was unimpressed. The total estimated number of items in

⁶⁵² Donation of African and Negro collection to University Library, *University of Natal gazette*, vol. 1, no. 4, November 1954, p. 89.

⁶⁵³ The decision not to allow so-called “non-Europeans” to use these libraries was taken at the Durban Library Committee meeting of 22nd April 1937 and reiterated at the Durban Library Committee meeting of 23rd May 1955.

⁶⁵⁴ University of Natal, *Annual report*, 1956, p. 1.

⁶⁵⁵ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 30th June 1954*, p. 1.

the libraries topped 95,000 but the enforced duplication inherent in the University having to maintain two main university libraries “has meant that the Library has had to indulge in the luxury not only of duplicating textbooks, but also expensive reference works, sets of journals and law reports.”⁶⁵⁶ Perry found that the University of Natal collections were geared to serving the undergraduate rather than the scholar or researcher and were weak in a number of areas. He enlarged on this:

A very striking but less tangible general weakness of the collection lies in its utilitarian content, the feeling that most books have only found their way on to the shelves in answer to an immediate and pressing demand. This weakness reveals itself not only in the lack of surprises in the collection, but in the lack of the obvious, of the classic, which has not been purchased because it has not been specifically recommended for study.”⁶⁵⁷

To support his argument that students and scholars require access to a catholic collection of reading material he referred to the bibliographical notes in works by Pareto⁶⁵⁸ which indicated that the scholar had read widely.⁶⁵⁹ Interestingly, many years later De Jager, in an attempt to find out if there was a correlation between student academic performance and library use, concluded that a positive relationship did indeed exist between the use by students of books on the open shelves of the library (that is, books that had not been specifically recommended by lecturers) and academic achievement.⁶⁶⁰ Her findings vindicate Perry’s belief that a university library collection should be diffuse in order to provide sufficient support for scholarship.

The “utilitarian” nature of the collections is not surprising, given that the oldest library, the Main Library in Pietermaritzburg, had been in existence for only 33 years and the Main Library in Durban for 23 years. The collections of 1954 were not very far removed from the “class-room libraries housed for convenience in a central hall.”⁶⁶¹ From information he gleaned from interlibrary loans statistics, Perry considered that the

⁶⁵⁶ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report, 1954*, p. 1.

⁶⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁶⁵⁸ Vilfredo Pareto was professor of political economy at Lausanne in Switzerland. His writings are said to have laid the foundations of modern welfare economics. His famous work, *The mind and society*, is considered to have anticipated the principles of facism. – *The Cambridge encyclopedia*, edited by D. Crystal, 2nd edition, London: BCA, 1994, p. 835.

⁶⁵⁹ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report, 1954*, p. 2-3.

⁶⁶⁰ K. de Jager, Library use and academic achievement, *South African journal of library and information science*, vol. 65, no. 1, March 1997, p. 27.

⁶⁶¹ Natal University College, *Report of the N.U.C. Library Committee (Pietermaritzburg) on Carnegie Corporation grant*, [1935], unpublished.

Library had “fairly strong and representative collections”⁶⁶² in social science, engineering, geology, education, psychology, chemistry and architecture but the same statistics also revealed that there were too many incomplete runs of journals.⁶⁶³ As Perry stated, “The presence of good runs of journals in a library stimulates research and scholarship, while their absence constitutes a severe handicap.”⁶⁶⁴ Hence the University Council eventually agreed in 1960 to increase the Library grant by ten shillings per student so that back issues of journals could be purchased.

“Eclectic purchasing” and the obtaining of private collections by purchase or gift were Perry’s remedies for enlarging the library collections.⁶⁶⁵ His aim was to build up the University Library’s collections and he set to work with a will. He made a considerable effort to supplement the Library’s annual book grant with donations, both monetary and in kind. The 1955 statistics showed that over 9,000 items were added to the Library in that year, of which only one quarter had been purchased with University funds.⁶⁶⁶ The lists of donations reported each year in the *Annual report* were never less than two pages. The Library was frequently the beneficiary of deceased estates such as the personal library of over 2,000 volumes bequeathed by Dr M. Palmer. Even the withdrawal of the Indian High Commissioner’s Office from South Africa had a positive outcome for the University Library in the form of a donation of 50 volumes on various Indian subjects, including “Tendulkar’s eight-volume biography of Mahatma Gandhi.”⁶⁶⁷ The Medical Library received numerous donations of books and journals from other university libraries and was the fortunate recipient of the entire library of the Natal Coastal Branch of the Medical Association of South Africa.⁶⁶⁸

The results of Perry’s energetic book collection policies were impressive. The 1961 statistical summaries reveal that, during the seven years of his tenure, the total book stock had increased considerably, from 95,000 to 162,767 volumes, an increase of 71%. His efforts were not confined to additions to the collection. His institution of a weeding

⁶⁶² University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1954, p. 3.

⁶⁶³ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1957, p. 2.

⁶⁶⁴ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1960, p. 1.

⁶⁶⁵ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1954, p. 3.

⁶⁶⁶ The University Library, *University of Natal gazette*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1956, p. 5.

⁶⁶⁷ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1954, p. 5.

⁶⁶⁸ University of Natal Library, Medical School Library Sub-Committee, *Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd November, 1955*, unpublished, p. 1

programme ensured that “out-of-date and misleading materials”⁶⁶⁹ which had been acquired by the Library by various means over the years were removed from the shelves, thus improving the usefulness of the collections.

7.4. The establishment of a bindery and a photoduplication unit

The idea of establishing a University bindery was first mooted in 1955. Perry considered that:

It would be possible for the Library to find sufficient material on its shelves to maintain a bindery of its own, although this would mean more than doubling the present binding fund. On the other hand within the University as a whole, including the associated libraries and departments, it would seem that there is easily enough work to keep a University bindery fully occupied.”⁶⁷⁰

Worthy of mention here is the fact that the Holloway Commission noted that two university libraries in South Africa had set up on-site binderies due to the high prices charged by commercial binders both in South Africa and overseas, although the members of the Commission were unconvinced that the establishment of these binderies had resulted in the claimed financial savings.⁶⁷¹ The government did, however, have a vested interest. A scheme, called the Sheltered Employment Scheme for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons, had been set up with a grant from the Treasury to assist disabled soldiers. Although the scheme charged prices which were far lower than those charged by commercial firms “the libraries who have used them differ in their opinions of the quality of the work produced.”⁶⁷²

By the time Perry established the Bindery at the University of Natal in December 1956, the Universities of Cape Town, Potchefstroom, Pretoria and Stellenbosch already had working binderies. In his proposal for the establishment of a bindery, Perry expounded on the advantages of in-house binding over the use of commercial binders. These included availability of material, a faster turnaround time, and control of priorities as well as the handling of “difficult items” such as government publications, pamphlets and older works which he considered required particular care when it came to restoration.⁶⁷³

⁶⁶⁹ University of Natal Library, *Annual report*, 1958, p. 2.

⁶⁷⁰ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1955, p. 5.

⁶⁷¹ Holloway, *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into University Finances and Salaries*, p. 91.

⁶⁷² *Ibid.*

⁶⁷³ J.W. Perry, *The establishment of a university library bindery*, 12th June 1956, unpublished.

In 1956 the University Council approved £1,100 towards the establishment of the Bindery⁶⁷⁴ and thus, with the aid of the Library Binder from the University of Cape Town, a Mr E.F. van der Horst, the unit was set up on the ninth floor of the Memorial Tower at Howard College. Operating with a staff of one bookbinder, Mr P. van der Busken, and two helpers, work commenced in December 1956, at first “on a provisional basis,” but in 1957 the University Council confirmed the Bindery’s permanence.⁶⁷⁵

In 1957 another new service was introduced in the Library. A marvellous machine, described as “...an item of photographic equipment of the xerographic type”⁶⁷⁶ which made possible the “instantaneous reproduction on to any type of paper of any written or drawn material of whatever size”⁶⁷⁷ was purchased and put into operation. A similar service had already been introduced into the libraries of the Universities of Cape Town and Pretoria in 1946 and a review undertaken in 1949 “showed that nearly all larger library centres in Southern Africa already offered a photographic service or were planning to do so.”⁶⁷⁸ At the University of Natal it was soon found that this machine, a forerunner of the modern photocopier, was working under considerable pressure due to the demands placed upon it both by University administration and individual members of the academic staff⁶⁷⁹ so in 1958 it was decided to set up a new unit, the Photoduplication Unit, in the Durban Library. The newly appointed bookbinder was tasked with the initial set-up and supervision of this section and was provided with a technical assistant to operate the machine. The purpose of this section was to duplicate documents for all University departments, including the Library, but as the work for University departments increased over the years, library work declined. Ten years after its initial set-up it had become a liability rather than an asset to the Library as Milburn wrote in a letter to Miss L.E. Taylor, Sub-Librarian at the University of Cape Town:

Here the Photographic Department started under library control, but over the years its work has expanded so that the Library has become almost a minor user. I should welcome a new set-up which would remove it from library premises (already hopelessly overcrowded) and give it a different orientation in keeping with its present operations.⁶⁸⁰

⁶⁷⁴ The University Library, *University of Natal gazette*, vol. 3, no. 2, November 1956, p. 48.

⁶⁷⁵ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report, 1957*, p. 6

⁶⁷⁶ The University Library, *University of Natal gazette*, vol. 3, no. 2, November 1956, p. 48.

⁶⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁶⁷⁸ O.H. Spohr, Photographic reproduction methods in libraries, *South African libraries*, vol. 29, no. 1, July 1961, p. 26.

⁶⁷⁹ The University Library, *University of Natal gazette*, vol. 4, no. 1, June 1957, p. 26.

⁶⁸⁰ L. Milburn, *Re: Photographic Department*, Letter to L.E. Taylor, 29th April 1968, unpublished.

Eventually, as had happened with the University Press in Pietermaritzburg, the section was moved to its own premises in Durban and became a separate unit, the Multicopy Centre. In Pietermaritzburg, a “new multi-copy centre,”⁶⁸¹ completely separate from the Library, was opened in 1972. In an odd reversal of events, the Pietermaritzburg Multicopy Centre moved into rented space in the Library basement when the University outsourced the service on both campuses to Xerox in May 1999.⁶⁸²

7.5. Accommodation

Perry’s first *Annual report* provides a succinct overview of what the libraries were like in 1954. Of the Pietermaritzburg Library he said,

It would be hard to find any university library in South Africa which is so intimately associated with the life and work of staff and students as this Library. This happy situation springs from its central position, easy accessibility, liberal hours of opening and close contact between academic and library staff.⁶⁸³

However, the building itself, he felt, was “unsatisfactory and difficult to improve.”⁶⁸⁴ The structure itself required strengthening in 1957 by the addition of steel columns to allow for the addition of extra shelving on the upper floor.⁶⁸⁵ There was also the matter of the two rooms on the upper floor which were still occupied by the Departments of Philosophy and Fine Arts. At a meeting of the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee held on 2nd December, 1954, the Librarian had been mandated to ask that these rooms be “handed over to the Library”⁶⁸⁶ but seven years lapsed before the Library finally managed to gain possession of this space. In 1960 a request was made to the University for a grant of £18,000 “as an initial grant in re-adapting and extending the present building.”⁶⁸⁷ Further grants were recommended “with the ultimate object of a separate university multi-storey library building of functional design similar to those erected at the Universities of Potchefstroom and the Orange Free State, at Rhodes University and at

⁶⁸¹ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian’s 11th annual report*, 1972, p. 4.

⁶⁸² University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, [*Librarian’s*] *37th annual report*, 1999, p. 26.

⁶⁸³ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1954, p. 13.

⁶⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸⁵ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 20th November 1957*.

⁶⁸⁶ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 2nd December 1954*.

⁶⁸⁷ J.W. Perry, *Request for a grant for improving and extending the present accommodation for the University Library at the Pietermaritzburg Centre*, 21st April 1960, unpublished.

the University of South Africa.”⁶⁸⁸ The current library building was considered unsuitable because it could not be expanded. Perry, notes that “It was not erected exclusively for library use, and its foundations are not strong enough to take further storeys.”⁶⁸⁹ Discussions around the new building began at the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee in May 1960 although the retirement of Maple in April and the resignation of Perry in September 1961 stalled the planning process until the new Pietermaritzburg Librarian commenced his duties in 1962.

In contrast to the Pietermaritzburg Library, the Howard College Library was not “of easy access, although centrally placed.”⁶⁹⁰ There was insufficient space, the Library being “shelved to capacity,”⁶⁹¹ and the resultant lack of space for books posed a serious problem. Perry was, however, impressed with the “three memorial rooms” in the tower which, he felt,

... when more fully fitted out, with glazed or latticed bookshelves, are well suited for the purpose of providing quiet study rooms for staff and students and also of housing closed collections.⁶⁹²

The lack of space in the Main Library grew ever more serious as more stock was added as a result of Perry’s initiatives in acquiring donations. In a letter to Perry from New York in 1956 the University Principal wrote:

I want to tell you that my next drive for more funds for building will be to complete the wing of the Memorial Tower Building as soon as possible ... it would provide the Library with two whole floors right to the end of the extension. In addition we should put in a basement under the extension where stacks can go and provide also room for binding and storage and as the University expands in the more distant future, other floors can be taken over by the Library. Plans should be made accordingly in order to provide for proper rationalisation and control of the Library in the future.⁶⁹³

The extension was, however, only completed in 1959, by which time a number of books had been removed from the open shelves and boxed, only to have to be unpacked and re-arranged once the alterations were complete. The enlarged but rambling library was still far from satisfactory. As Perry stated, “the Library’s contents are now spread over seven

⁶⁸⁸ Perry, *Request for a grant for improving ...*, 21st April 1960.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁰ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1954, p. 13.

⁶⁹¹ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1955, p. 1

⁶⁹² University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1954, p. 13.

⁶⁹³ E.G. Malherbe, Letter to J.W. Perry, 22nd March, 1956, unpublished.

floors and over a dozen rooms or areas ... the present arrangement is very wasteful of space and makes expansion within that space very awkward.”⁶⁹⁴

As far as the “Non-European” Library was concerned, the accommodation at Sastri College had for some time been unsatisfactory. Plans were put forward in 1954 to build an extension but there were problems with the Provincial authorities who dragged their heels about granting permission for further extensions on the site. As an interim measure, an extension to the Library was built in 1956, increasing both shelving and seating space, but within a year it was once again “stacked to capacity.”⁶⁹⁵ Palmer, who, at the age of 80 had finally retired as Organiser of the “Non-European” section in 1955, was succeeded by Mr I.K. Allan who “set to work with a will to improve the condition of the non-European students.”⁶⁹⁶ His efforts resulted in the relocation of the entire section from the hutments at Sastri College to Marian Building in Lancers Road during the course of 1958. Unfortunately, to quote Brookes, it was “too little” and “too late⁶⁹⁷ as without warning the “Non-European” Library was summarily closed in July 1960 and the stock moved to the Commerce Library in the City Building. The closure was, it seems, necessitated by the need for extra classroom space, as is apparent from the minutes of the Durban Library Committee meeting of 23rd August which note that the Committee “Whilst appreciating the urgent need of the Library premises at Marian Building for class-room purposes ... noted with regret that no previous consultation had been held, either with the Librarian or with the Library Committee.”⁶⁹⁸ As has already been mentioned in a previous chapter,⁶⁹⁹ the knowledge that students who were registered before the Act came into force were to be allowed to complete their degrees at the University of Natal provoked a rush of registrations in 1958 and 1959. Student numbers in this section reached an all time high of 896 in 1960 and it is therefore not surprising that classroom accommodation was at a premium. The closure of this Library precipitated a recommendation to the Library Committee from the Faculty of Arts that “Non-European students should be admitted to all university libraries without

⁶⁹⁴ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1960, p. 1-2.

⁶⁹⁵ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1957, p. 1.

⁶⁹⁶ Brookes, *A history of the University of Natal*, p. 75.

⁶⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁸ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 23rd August 1960*.

⁶⁹⁹ See: Chapter 3, section 3.3.9.

restriction.”⁷⁰⁰ The recommendation was fully supported by the Committee and thus, although they lost their “own” library, these students at last were able to access the larger, better collections of the Howard College and City Building libraries.

It was fortunate that, during the July 1959 vacation, the Commerce Library had moved to larger premises on the fourth floor of the City Building. It was thus able to accommodate the extra stock but the lack of a lift in the building meant that the Library was less accessible than it had been previously. Students were often unwilling to climb the four flights of stairs to use the Library. Perry laid the blame for the declining issue statistics of this Library on its decreased accessibility. He commented that, “a lift to this Library will have to be provided if this Library is to play its full part in the work of the down-town Faculties.”⁷⁰¹ In 1954 the Medical Library moved from its temporary premises at Wentworth into new accommodation in the Medical School building in Umbilo Road, next door to the King Edward VIII Hospital, a hospital designated by the Government for “non-Whites”⁷⁰² only. The battle to acquire permission from the Durban City Council to build a Medical School on this site has been described at length by E.G. Malherbe in his autobiography.⁷⁰³ Suffice it to note here that there was considerable opposition from some of the councillors to the establishment of a Medical School for “non-Whites” in Umbilo Road, next to the hospital, in spite of the fact that, according to Malherbe, it was “the logical site on which to build it.”⁷⁰⁴

Shelving, tables and chairs for the new Medical Library were purchased with a £2,000 donation from the Directors of Barclays Bank. Since medical books and journals had been accumulating at Wentworth since 1951,⁷⁰⁵ and donations of books and journals to

⁷⁰⁰ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 2nd November 1960*.

⁷⁰¹ University of Natal Library, *Annual report*, 1959, p. 1.

⁷⁰² The term “Non-European” was eventually replaced by the term “Non-White” to denote persons who were either of African, Indian or “Coloured” (mixed race) descent. Both terms have now fallen out of favour. Thompson explains that, at the “heart” of the National Party government’s apartheid system was the idea that the population of South Africa comprised four racial groups; White, Coloured, Indian and African. - Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, p. 184. “Non-White” is the collective noun applied to persons who did not fit into the category “White.”

⁷⁰³ Malherbe, *Never a dull moment*, p. 297.

⁷⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰⁵ A small Pre-Medical collection remained at Wentworth in the charge of the lecturers. The pre-medical year was an additional year of study undertaken by students to improve their English before they commenced with the formal pre-medical year. Subjects taught were those which required the writing of essays, such as English, History and Sociology. In July 1960 a “library helper” was appointed to manage the Wentworth collection. – S.I. Malan, *A short outline of the history of the Medical Library*, [1965], unpublished. The Wentworth Library was eventually closed, apparently in the late 1980s.

the Medical Library continued to stream in, it is not surprising that, in Perry's opinion, "The quarters provided, although at first apparently spacious, are by no means too large to cope with the tremendous growth of this collection."⁷⁰⁶ The Medical Library was to remain in these premises for over 40 years, until the erection of a new library in 1992.

7.6. Library staff

Perry, University Librarian, was assisted by two Deputy Librarians, one in Pietermaritzburg and one in Durban,⁷⁰⁷ whose functions were to "supervise and handle routine and to take charge and make decisions in the absence of the Librarian at the other centre."⁷⁰⁸ Together the three men were a team under which the libraries expanded and prospered. Perry, with his degree in history and years of experience, described himself as an "all-rounder rather than a specialist [one who is] happily succumbing to the pleasures of knowing less and less about more and more,"⁷⁰⁹ while his staff considered him "a very nice man to work for."⁷¹⁰ His two deputies were likewise men of learning and experience. The Pietermaritzburg Library was in the charge of Dr H. L. Maple, described as "Philosopher, wit, man of principle and scholar-librarian."⁷¹¹ Maple, a Fellow of the British Library Association, had worked as a librarian at the London School of Economics, the University of Cape Town and the Royal Egyptian University in Cairo.⁷¹² He received his doctorate from the University of London while in the employ of the University of Natal.⁷¹³ Once permission had been granted by the Minister of Education for an additional permanent post of Deputy Librarian in Durban,⁷¹⁴ this was filled in May 1954 by Mr L. Milburn, another history graduate with a Diploma in Librarianship from the University of London. He too had several years of experience, having worked as Deputy Borough Librarian in Chelsea, Assistant Librarian at the University of Cape Town and Librarian at the University of Tasmania.

⁷⁰⁶ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1954, p. 14.

⁷⁰⁷ At the Joint Library Committee meeting of 10th September 1953 it was agreed that the University of Natal Libraries be managed by this team of three.

⁷⁰⁸ University of Natal, Joint Library Committee, *Minutes of the meeting held on 10th September 1953*.

⁷⁰⁹ J.W. Perry, *Libraries, readers and Zeitgeist [inaugural lecture]*, Durban: University of Natal, 1956, p. 22.

⁷¹⁰ J. Prakasim, Personal communication, 17th October 2000.

⁷¹¹ U.E.M. Judd, The retirement of Dr. H.L. Maple, *South African libraries*, vol. 29, No. 1, July 1961, p. 32.

⁷¹² *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁷¹³ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 28th February 1956*.

⁷¹⁴ University of Natal, Joint Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 21st May 1953*.

However, perusal of the list of library staff in 1955 indicates that, although the three top management posts were held by men, the remainder of the professionally qualified staff were all women (one Assistant Librarian in Pietermaritzburg, one at the Medical Library and four at Howard College). It would be interesting at this point to consider briefly the position of women in university libraries in South Africa in general.

7.6.1. The position of women in the Library

The predominance of women in the lower paid positions in a library while men occupied the better-salaried positions was the norm for the times. Traditionally women, on leaving school, were expected to marry and raise a family while it was expected that men would establish a career for themselves. A survey undertaken by University of Cape Town Librarian Mr R.F.M. Immelman on staff in South African libraries indicated that, of the staff employed in professional posts in libraries, over 68% were women.⁷¹⁵ Coetzee commented on Immelman's findings:

Considering the personnel of these institutions as a whole, it would appear that almost three-quarters ... were women [including both professional and clerical staff], of whom one quarter were married but remained in or returned to library posts some time after their marriage (the latter were in a very small minority)...The picture as a whole, then, is one of personnel consisting overwhelmingly of women, among whom wastage is comparatively high.⁷¹⁶

The phenomenon was not confined to South Africa. In the United States in 1956 Wilden-Hart gave it as her opinion that:

It is true that many men are preferred for senior positions by committees because their status (married or single) will in no way interfere with their work; in fact, it is often assumed that a married man will settle ...⁷¹⁷

Some years later Holden interviewed the Dean of a prominent library school in the United States who said:

“Right or wrong,” where men are presidents and board members of colleges and library systems, they usually select men for the management operations positions, because they find men to be more in harmony with their way of

⁷¹⁵ P.C. Coetzee, Voorraad en personeel in die Suid-Afrikaanse biblioteekwese, *South African Libraries*, vol. 29, no. 4, April 1962, p. 133.

⁷¹⁶ Ibid.

⁷¹⁷ M. Wilden-Hart, Women in librarianship, in Weibel, K. & Heim, K., *The role of women in librarianship, 1876-1976*, Oryx Press, 1979, p. 144.

thinking. We know there are exceptions to this, but the ratio of women to men in top library executive posts is in favour of MEN.⁷¹⁸

Interestingly, the first woman in South Africa to hold the position of University Librarian was Miss E. Hartmann, who was appointed University Librarian at the University of the Witwatersrand in April 1954, following Mr P. Freer's retirement. She was also the first woman to sit on the University of the Witwatersrand Senate. Her appointment was, however, controversial, being strongly contested in Senate with the motion to refer the selection committee's recommendation back being defeated by only one vote "in a secret ballot rather than by the customary show of hands."⁷¹⁹ Sadly, says Murray, she "never won the full support of Senate, and in 1960 she resigned in bitterness ..."⁷²⁰

At the University of Natal the management of the Library remained the province of men for over 20 years, until the appointment of Miss C. Vietzen as University Librarian in Pietermaritzburg in 1978.⁷²¹

7.6.2. Qualifications of librarians

Prior to the introduction of the correspondence courses by the South African Library Association (SALA) in 1933 and the university courses in librarianship introduced at the Universities of Pretoria and Cape Town in 1938 and 1939 respectively, library staff were either untrained, as in the case of the two librarians at the University of Natal, Henry in Pietermaritzburg and Fraser in Durban, or they had to travel overseas to acquire qualifications. The introduction of training courses in South Africa meant that the numbers of qualified librarians in South Africa gradually began to increase and thus it became possible for South African university libraries to employ Assistant Librarians who held professional qualifications in librarianship. The University of the Witwatersrand Library was in the fortunate position in 1953 of all its permanent librarians being in possession of "degrees and qualifications,"⁷²² due to the encouragement received from Freer, the first University Librarian, as well as his successor, Hartmann. New Assistant Librarians employed at the University of Natal,

⁷¹⁸ M.Y. Holden, The status of women librarians, in Weibel, K. & Heim K., *The role of women in librarianship, 1876-1976*, Oryx Press, 1979, p. 151.

⁷¹⁹ Murray, *Wits, the open years*, p. 162.

⁷²⁰ Ibid.

⁷²¹ N. Knowler, *University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, press release [on C. Vietzen]*, no. 49/78, 14th November 1978, unpublished.

⁷²² Murray, *Wits, the open years*, p. 162.

too, possessed both degrees and postgraduate qualifications in librarianship.⁷²³ Fraser was also qualified by this time, having taken ten months' leave in 1951 to study for a professional qualification from the University of Cape Town.⁷²⁴ Yet the pressing problem of an "acute shortage of trained librarians"⁷²⁵ remained. Several *Annual reports* mention the difficulties experienced in engaging qualified and experienced librarians, in particular those who were able to catalogue. Perry enlarged upon this problem:

Cataloguing is not merely a technique, but is greatly accelerated if the cataloguer is also a person with a scholarly background and considerable experience. This combination is rare and the Library cannot always recruit suitable persons.⁷²⁶

Milburn, Deputy Librarian in Durban, contended that the shortage of professionally trained librarians was felt more in Natal and the Orange Free State than in the other South African provinces "owing to the lack of training facilities in these two provinces."⁷²⁷ He was most likely correct. Besides the two courses at the Universities of Pretoria and Cape Town, new schools of librarianship had been introduced in 1955 at the University of South Africa, which took over the South African Library Association's examining and training functions in 1961,⁷²⁸ in 1956 at the University of Potchefstroom and in 1958 at the Universities of Stellenbosch and the Witwatersrand. Thus by the close of the 1950s the Transvaal had three schools of librarianship and the Cape had two while no courses could be offered to would-be librarians in either Natal or in the Orange Free State.

Maple retired at the end of April, 1961 and the difficulties experienced in filling his post resulted in the upgrading of the post of Deputy Librarian in Pietermaritzburg to that of Librarian, although the incumbent would still report to the University Librarian.⁷²⁹ Shortly before Perry's resignation in September 1961 to take up the post of University Librarian at the University of the Witwatersrand it was announced that the post of University Librarian would be re-designated "Director of Library Services."⁷³⁰ The departure of two thirds of the management staff complement left Milburn, Deputy Librarian in Durban, to cope alone until both vacant posts were filled.

⁷²³ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report, 1955*, p. 6.

⁷²⁴ C.F. Calvert, Barbara Davidson Fraser, 1906 – 1982, *Library news*, [Durban], no. 24, p. 30.

⁷²⁵ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report, 1961*, p. 1.

⁷²⁶ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report, 1958*, p. 3.

⁷²⁷ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report, 1961*, p. 1.

⁷²⁸ Coetzee, *South African libraries*, vol. 29, no. 4, April 1962, p. 140.

⁷²⁹ University of Natal, Joint Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 22nd May 1961*.

⁷³⁰ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 8th September 1961*.

7.7. User services

Perry averred that the “amount of use of a university library is the chief justification of its existence”⁷³¹ but he was well aware that the Library staff were not doing enough to bring the students and academic staff into contact with the Library’s resources.⁷³² He ascribed this omission to the amount of time which “perforce has to be spent on getting books on to the shelves ...”⁷³³ The greater numbers of books and other materials flowing into the libraries as a consequence of Perry’s aggressive efforts to strengthen the collections meant that a considerable amount of staff time had to be spent on cataloguing and processing. Thus for some years following Coblans’ departure, user education was confined to orientation for new students. Talks were given to “freshers” (new students) and a time slot was allowed for demonstrations on the use of the Library to be given to small groups of students.⁷³⁴ In keeping with the University policy of segregation, “Non-European” students were given separate orientation talks by the Librarian.⁷³⁵

In 1957 Perry resumed “the practice of his predecessor” in delivering a series of lectures to third year Engineering students entitled “Sources of technical information.”⁷³⁶ The following year, due to concerns that students and academic staff alike were not utilising the Library to its maximum, an assistant with a Bachelor of Science degree, Mrs C. Perrett, was employed in 1958 in the Main Library in Durban. Perrett’s duties were twofold; she was required to handle queries in the science and technical fields from University staff and students and to assist members of the Industrial Information Centre to obtain the information they required. The introduction of this service to industry in Natal is described in the following section.

The Medical Library, on the other hand, had taken the initiative in user education in 1960. Second year students were each set a short paper in which they had to “examine and comment on the scope of a journal and also to find articles in journals on a particular specialised subject.”⁷³⁷ This was apparently the first instance of students at the

⁷³¹ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1954, p. 15.

⁷³² University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1958, p. 2.

⁷³³ *Ibid.*

⁷³⁴ Fresher reception 1956, Durban, *University of Natal gazette*, vol. 2 no. 2, November 1955, p. 61.

⁷³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

⁷³⁶ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1957, p. 6.

⁷³⁷ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1960, p. 3.

University actually being required to complete an assignment for library user education purposes rather than passively listening to lectures. This initiative foreshadowed the emphasis which would be placed on library user education in later years in both centres.

7.8. The Industrial Information Centre

In 1957 an innovative service was introduced at the University of Natal. In collaboration with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), the Natal Chamber of Industries and the Durban City Library the Industrial Information Centre (IIC) was established with the aim of providing an information service to industry in Natal. The Centre was originally set up on an experimental basis in order to gauge the demand for such a service. By June 1958 it was reported in the *University of Natal gazette* that “a total sum of £2,100 has already been received, consisting of £500 from the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research and over £1,6000 from member firms of the Natal Chamber of Industries, all of which pledged continued financial support, if the scheme were a success.”⁷³⁸ A Management Committee, consisting of one representative each from the CSIR and local industry as well as the City Librarian and the University Librarian, was set up to oversee the expenditure of the funds on books and journals “likely to be of assistance to scientists and others working in local industries.”⁷³⁹ As noted above, Perrett, who possessed a Bachelor of Science degree, was employed specifically to assist both “enquirers from local industry”⁷⁴⁰ and University library users. Membership of the Centre was open to all profit-making industries and firms in Natal upon payment of an annual membership fee.

7.9. Summary

During the seven and a half years of his tenure it was said of Perry that “his enthusiasm was sustained, the field of his activities wide and the results impressive”⁷⁴¹ The University Library’s book stock had been increased and special collections in several different fields had been acquired. Under Perry’s care the collections lost some of their strictly “utilitarian nature”⁷⁴² and began to resemble collections befitting a scholarly

⁷³⁸ The University library, *University of Natal gazette*, vol. 5, no. 1, June 1958, p. 15.

⁷³⁹ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1958, p. 1.

⁷⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴¹ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1961, p. 1.

⁷⁴² University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1954, p. 2.

institution. The Pietermaritzburg, Howard College and City Building Libraries had all been expanded, the Medical Library had moved into permanent accommodation at the Medical School, a University Bindery had been started and an innovative information service to industry in the region, possibly the first such service offered by an academic library in South Africa, had been instituted. Conversely, although the “Non-European” Library had been closed down, the students in this section benefited by gaining access to the more comprehensive collections at the Commerce Library in the City Building. As far as staffing was concerned, staff numbers had increased from 12 to 19 persons, of whom seven were qualified librarians. The hiring of qualified personnel was indicative of a national trend rapidly taking hold in South African universities. Another trend was the preponderance of qualified female librarians in the lower paid positions in the library while the more senior posts were occupied by male librarians.

In summary, the University of Natal Library, in spite of financial hardships and the critical shortage of qualified staff, was thriving. Shortly before Perry left the employ of the University, the post of University Librarian was upgraded to that of Director and his successor, Mr (later Dr) S.I. Malan, became the first and only Director of Library Services at the University of Natal. Malan’s tenure will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Eight

The Malan years, 1962–1967

The appointments of the new Director of Libraries, Mr S.I. Malan, and the Pietermaritzburg Librarian, Mr R.A. Brown, were announced at the final Library Committee meetings of 1961 in Durban and Pietermaritzburg.⁷⁴³ Malan took up his appointment on 1st January 1962 and Brown on 1st February. It had no doubt been expected that the difficulties of administration⁷⁴⁴ occasioned by the loss of two senior members of the library staff in 1961, namely Perry and Maple, would be resolved once the new Director of Library Services and the new Pietermaritzburg Librarian commenced their duties. There were, however, misunderstandings about the nature of the responsibilities attached to the posts and within a short period of time serious problems concerned with the administration of the Library surfaced.

The period was also an eventful time for South African librarianship. Walker notes that in 1962 “as apartheid in South Africa tightened its iron fist under Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd and Justice Minister John Vorster”⁷⁴⁵ the South African Library Association (SALA), previously a racially mixed body, voluntarily passed a resolution at its annual conference that:

1. The establishment of separate associations for various racial groups be accepted in principle and Council was requested to investigate as soon as possible the practical implications of the decision;
2. The Membership of the S.A.L.A. be limited to Whites from 7th November, 1962.⁷⁴⁶

The question of separate associations for so-called “non-whites” was discussed at the 1962 conference and three subcommittees were formed to “enquire into and report upon

⁷⁴³ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 1st November, 1961*, p. 3, and Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 9th November 1961*, p. 1.

⁷⁴⁴ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1961, p. 1.

⁷⁴⁵ C.M. Walker, Library associations in South Africa, 1930-2005, *Library management*, vol. 27, no. 1/2, 2006, p. 27.

⁷⁴⁶ South African Library Association, *Annual report, 1962-1963*, Potchefstroom: SALA, [1963], p. 9.

all matters relating to the establishment of such associations.”⁷⁴⁷ Brown, the Pietermaritzburg Librarian, was nominated as the convener of the sub-committee tasked with enquiring into and reporting on the establishment of a library association for Indians.⁷⁴⁸ Dick notes that “What also still awaits an explanation is the rather ‘tame’ acceptance of this decision by black South African librarians ...”⁷⁴⁹

In November 1962 a National Conference of Library Authorities was held in Pretoria. In preparation for this conference, a number of investigations were undertaken, the most notable being the investigations by R.F.M. Immelmann, University Librarian at the University of Cape Town, into the staffing of libraries and R.F. Kennedy, retired Johannesburg City Librarian, into library collections and the financing thereof. As a result of this conference, a number of recommendations for planning the future of library development in South Africa were adopted, including the establishment of a National Library Advisory Council.⁷⁵⁰ Kennedy’s recommendations for university libraries are of particular interest to this study as will be discussed below.

8.1. Administration and governance

Upon his appointment Malan set to work immediately on the task of updating and consolidating the organization and administration of the University Library as a unitary system. It would be useful at this point provide some background on the two new senior staff, Malan and Brown. The new Director of Library Services came to the University from Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education where he had been head of the Department of Library Science from 1956 to 1961. Prior to this he had spent nine years as University Librarian at the University of the Orange Free State. He is remembered by some staff as “a quiet, clever man, very strict but fair”⁷⁵¹ and by others as “autocratic.”⁷⁵² Very pro-Afrikaner,⁷⁵³ it has been suggested that he was a member of the

⁷⁴⁷ South African Library Association, *Annual report*, 1962-1963, p. 10.

⁷⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁷⁴⁹ A. L. Dick, Science for ideology?, *Mousaion*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2001, p. 84.

⁷⁵⁰ The National Library Advisory Council was established in 1967. It was superseded by the National Advisory Council for Libraries and Information in July 1982. – R. Musiker, *Companion to South African libraries*, Craighall: Ad Donker, 1986, p. 140.

⁷⁵¹ S.G. Govender, Personal communication, 20th December 2007.

⁷⁵² E.W.O. Pugsley, Personal communication, 2nd April 2008.

⁷⁵³ *Ibid.* An Afrikaner is defined as a white, Afrikaans-speaking South African. Members of the ruling National Party were predominantly Afrikaners.

sinister secret Afrikaner organisation, the Broederbond,⁷⁵⁴ as were several senior members of the South African Library Association,⁷⁵⁵ although it has not been possible to find out if this is true or not. Malan was certainly very active in the affairs of the South African Library Association and assumed office as president in 1966.⁷⁵⁶

Brown, appointed to the newly upgraded post of Librarian in Pietermaritzburg, had been Deputy University Librarian at Rhodes University for nine years and prior to that a school teacher.⁷⁵⁷ He has been described as a “somewhat old-fashioned figure, the scholarly librarian who was interested in publishing and knew how to catalogue and classify his material.”⁷⁵⁸ Almost from the outset of their working relationship problems between Brown and Malan surfaced. Both were competent and dedicated professionals but Brown laboured under the impression that his position carried more autonomy than it actually did.⁷⁵⁹ In this he was supported by the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee which was also determined to retain a measure of independence, thus placing Malan in a difficult position. It may have appeared to the members of the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee that concerns unique to Pietermaritzburg were being swamped by concerns affecting the much larger Durban Library.

In consultation with the Principal, Dr E.G. Malherbe and some (not all, as was pointed out when Malan presented the document to the Joint Library Committee) members of the Joint Library Committee, he drew up a memorandum setting out the Library’s staff establishment as it stood in 1962, the responsibilities and duties of the Director, a proposed new organizational structure for the Library and the practical implications thereof. He presented it at a special meeting of the Joint Library Committee held on 23rd March, 1962. Under the heading “Internal organization” Malan listed the general principles which would guide the organizational structure and functioning of the Library. Three key points were:

⁷⁵⁴ M.L. Suttie, The formative years of the University of South Africa Library, 1946 to 1976, *Mousaion*, vol. 23, no. 1, 2005, p. 111.

⁷⁵⁵ A. Dick, Book burning and the complicity of South African librarians, *Innovation*, no. 28, June 2004, p. 37; see also: Appendix 1 Broederbond membership list, in: I. Wilkins & H. Strydom, *The super-Afrikaners*, Houghton: Ball, 1978.

⁷⁵⁶ Dr S.I. Malan, *South African libraries*, vol. 34, no. 4, April 1967, p. 127.

⁷⁵⁷ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1962, p. 6.

⁷⁵⁸ C. Vietzen & C. Merrett, Ron Brown (1914-2002), *Library bulletin*, [Pietermaritzburg], no. 349, February 2003, p. 1.

⁷⁵⁹ University of Natal, Joint Library Committee, *Minutes of the special meeting held on 23rd March 1962*, p. 1.

- Uniformity throughout the system was considered essential for the sake of economy in the building up of the organization and the administration of and use of the service;
- The Library Staff should, as far as possible, be relieved of administrative routines so that more time can be spent on direct service to the users of the Library;
- The centralization of certain administrative routines which were considered essential for the sake of economy, control and coordination.⁷⁶⁰

These principles were in line with the thinking of contemporary experts in the field of librarianship. For example, M. F. Tauber, library administrator of Columbia University, New York, from 1944 to 1980, believed strongly in the centralisation of activities concerned with the purchasing and processing of library materials. He considered that:

Effective centralized processing should be prompt, be less expensive than if individual units did their own work, take advantage of skilled centralized personnel, concentrate expensive references sources and equipment ... relieve personnel in units so they can spend more time on the readers, eliminate deviations from standard practices, and limit personal idiosyncrasies.⁷⁶¹

Unfortunately, it soon became apparent that a particularly contentious issue was the proposed centralisation of orders for books and periodicals. Malan provided his reason for this particular proposal, perfectly justifiable in the light of a Library struggling to maintain a service in two centres with barely enough staff to adequately service one main library:

The actual ordering of literature for a university library is an administrative routine best centralized and done through one channel. This is borne out by the best authorities on university library administration in South Africa as well as overseas. As a matter of interest, the S.A. Library Association is contemplating measures to realize co-operative and centralized purchasing for S.A. libraries on a regional and/or subject basis as already exists in some overseas countries.⁷⁶²

Some discussion on the issue of centralised ordering had already taken place in the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee meeting of 15th February, 1962 when it had been agreed that matters should be left “as formerly unless any change in procedure was agreed upon in the future.”⁷⁶³ No changes were to be made “without consultation with the Librarian and the Committee.”⁷⁶⁴ Further consultation, it seems, did not take place

⁷⁶⁰ S.I. Malan, *University of Natal Library*, 20th March 1962, unpublished, p. 2.

⁷⁶¹ K.S. Maier, Maurice F. Tauber, in *Leaders in American academic librarianship, 1925-1975*, edited by W.A. Wiegand, Pittsburgh, Pa.: Beta Phi Mu, 1983, p.338.

⁷⁶² Malan, *University of Natal Library*, 20th March 1962, p. 3.

⁷⁶³ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on Thursday, 15th February 1962*, p. 1.

⁷⁶⁴ Ibid.

and thus the contents of the memorandum of 20th March were not well received by all committee members. The Joint Library Committee eventually agreed, after a prolonged discussion, that a sub-committee be set up to “consult on the centralization of orders.”⁷⁶⁵

Brown, the Pietermaritzburg Librarian, also voiced his dismay at the contents of the memorandum. He maintained that “the terms of his letter of appointment implied wider freedom of action than was now to be enjoyed by him.”⁷⁶⁶ Discussion appears to have become rather heated at this point. The official response to Brown was:

In answer he was reminded that whatever independence was granted to the Librarian at Pietermaritzburg must be subject to the co-ordination and ultimate control of the Director who was in charge of all libraries of the University.⁷⁶⁷

When the memorandum was presented to the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee meeting of 4th April the Committee stated firmly that it “could not concur in the proposed changes reflected in this memorandum.”⁷⁶⁸ Furthermore, probably in order to confirm that they were not going to be dictated to by the Joint Library Committee, it was minuted that “the entry in the University calendar was correct, namely that the Joint Library Committee is subordinate to the two local committees.”⁷⁶⁹ To add fuel to the fire, Brown expressed his “considerable unhappiness in his new post”⁷⁷⁰ in his report to the meeting. He stated that:

He accepted the invitation to the post only after he had received assurance on the considerable misgivings he felt. Before he had had a chance of finding his feet and assessing the problems before him, he was confronted with a doctrinaire scheme from higher authority. Thus much of his time is being diverted from the work on hand in Pietermaritzburg.⁷⁷¹

It should be mentioned here that the status of the Pietermaritzburg Librarian had previously been discussed by the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee at its meeting of 15th February, 1962. The minutes record that it was agreed that the Pietermaritzburg library was an “autonomous library in the sense that the Librarian is responsible for

⁷⁶⁵ Malan, *University of Natal Library*, 20th March 1962, p. 2.

⁷⁶⁶ University of Natal, Joint Library Committee, *Minutes of a special meeting held on 23rd March 1962*, p. 1.

⁷⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶⁸ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 4th April 1962*, p. 2.

⁷⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷⁰ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian's report*, no. 2, 4th April 1962, unpublished, p. 2.

⁷⁷¹ *Ibid.*

internal organisation and administration,⁷⁷² albeit under the direction of the Director. Under the proposed new organisational structure it must have appeared that Brown was to lose some of his autonomy, hence the sense of outrage. Not unnaturally, Malan replied that he “disapproved strongly”⁷⁷³ of Brown’s comments.

The Pietermaritzburg Committee resolved to draw up its own memorandum “detailing its attitude towards the problems raised by the Director’s memorandum.”⁷⁷⁴ The Principal, in his capacity as Chair of the Joint Library Committee, was to be invited to a discussion thereon. A counter-memorandum was apparently duly drawn up but, due to the illness of Professor Warren, Chair of the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, discussion at the following meeting was postponed.⁷⁷⁵ A discussion between Warren, Malan and Brown, scheduled for 19th September,⁷⁷⁶ did not take place. Eventually, Warren and Malan met, without Brown, and the matter was apparently laid to rest.⁷⁷⁷

An outcome of the dissension was the recommendation that the Pietermaritzburg Librarian be made an *ex officio* member of the Joint Library Committee.⁷⁷⁸ The Acting Chair, Dr H. Meidner, undertook to discuss the matter with the Registrar and report back to Malan. Presumably as a result of this request, a report submitting an amended constitution and outlining the functions of both the Joint and local Library Committees was discussed at and subsequently adopted by Senate at its meeting of 12th September 1962. As a result, membership of the Joint Library Committee was extended to include both the Pietermaritzburg Librarian and the Deputy Librarian, Durban, as *ex officio* members. Furthermore, the Senate Executive affirmed that “the status of the Joint Library Committee was a co-ordinating [no longer a subordinate] committee to the two Library Committees”⁷⁷⁹ and agreed that the University *Calendar* was to be amended to

⁷⁷² University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 15th February 1962*, p. 1.

⁷⁷³ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 4th April 1962*, p. 2.

⁷⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷⁵ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 16th May 1962*, p. 2.

⁷⁷⁶ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 13th September 1962*, p. 1.

⁷⁷⁷ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 15th November 1962*, p. 1.

⁷⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁷⁷⁹ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 12th March 1963*, p. 3.

reflect this changed status. In fact, the word “subordinate” was simply removed from the sentence describing the library committees in the University *Calendar*.⁷⁸⁰ It was also resolved that all three of the library committees would have “direct approach to Senex.”⁷⁸¹

Brown’s first annual report to the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee also aroused Malan’s ire. Brown, in his opening paragraph stated that, as Maple’s successor, he had become “the holder of the reinstated post of Librarian.”⁷⁸² He then went on to complain that too much time was being spent on “unnecessary work and unnecessary duplication of work,” and rather sarcastically noted that ‘Der Drang nach Durban’ [the pressure towards Durban] had been intensified and that “weekly ‘Voyages à Pietermaritzburg’ [a reference to Malan’s weekly visits to the Pietermaritzburg Library] are consuming of time and money. Co-ordination had been ignored in favour of control.”⁷⁸³

Malan drew up a memorandum for the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee meeting of 13th March, 1963, and responded to Brown’s attack. Under the heading, “Misconceptions,” he noted that “The post of Librarian has not been “reinstated” but it has been regraded to Librarian (PMB) from Deputy Librarian.”⁷⁸⁴ He took issue with Brown’s complaint about co-ordination being ignored, stating firmly that, “This is not true as far as the other sections of the University Library is [sic] concerned,” but, he pointed out, “is true to a certain extent for the P.M.B. section as it has been rendered almost impossible by the total lack of co-operation from the Librarian (PMB).”⁷⁸⁵ He pointed out that his weekly visits to Pietermaritzburg were necessary in order to “co-ordinate and control the Pietermaritzburg section ... Insinuations such as those made in the report are very much out of place.”⁷⁸⁶ Lastly, he made a subtle counter-attack:

It is the specified duty of the Director of Library Services to report to Senate and Council annually on the University Libraries as a whole. Separate reports are unnecessarily time consuming and involves [sic] unnecessary duplication of work.”⁷⁸⁷

⁷⁸⁰ University of Natal, *Calendar*, 1963, [S.I.: The University], 1963, p. 114.

⁷⁸¹ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of the meeting held on 12th March 1963*, p. 3.

⁷⁸² University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian’s report*, no. 2, 4th April 1962, p. 1.

⁷⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁴ S.I. Malan, [*Memorandum prepared for the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee meeting of 13th March 1963*], 11th March 1963, unpublished, p. 1.

⁷⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁷ Malan, [*Memorandum ...*], 11th March 1963, p. 2.

The battle lines were drawn. Unfortunately, such exchanges became a feature of the relationship between the two men and did nothing to assist in unifying the library service in the two centres.

The sub-committee appointed by the Joint Library Committee on 23rd March 1962 to investigate the possibility of centralising book orders eventually met on 12th March 1963. It recommended that “book orders for the Pietermaritzburg section of the University Library be dealt with locally.”⁷⁸⁸ The crisis passed but an uneasy truce prevailed. Administrative problems continued to plague the Library. A request by the Director that he was to be copied on all correspondence sent out from the Library was not well-received by the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee which was of the opinion that “the Library functioned as part of the University as a whole where, unlike the Civil Service, the practice of sending copies of correspondence does not exist.”⁷⁸⁹ In the 1964 *Annual report* Malan commented that:

After prolonged discussion on detailed considerations of the problems underlying the organization and administration of a dual-centred library, a *modus operandi* has been drawn up and accepted to the satisfaction of all parties concerned. The underlying principle of this system remains a unitary one. Accordingly the library, as in the case of the university as a whole including all academic departments which extend to both centres, operates as a unitary organization under one responsible head.⁷⁹⁰

8.2. Finances

The latter part of 1961 had seen the Library financially embarrassed to such an extent, due to increased expenditure on periodicals, that book ordering had had to be stopped completely “in an effort to pull the finances straight.”⁷⁹¹ At the end of 1962 Malan reported that “a very conservative financial policy”⁷⁹² had been maintained, thus resulting in a positive balance at the end of the year. He too, like his predecessors, found that the operation of a university library in two centres was a more expensive

⁷⁸⁸ University of Natal, Joint Library Committee, *Report of the Sub-Committee on the Centralisation of Book Orders*, 12th March, 1963, unpublished.

⁷⁸⁹ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 16th May 1962*, p. 3.

⁷⁹⁰ University of Natal Library, *Annual report*, 1964, p. 5.

⁷⁹¹ University of Natal Library, *Annual report*, 1961, p. 1

⁷⁹² University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1962, p. 2

undertaking “than a university library with ordinary branches.”⁷⁹³ Of necessity many books had to be duplicated in Pietermaritzburg and Durban, “resulting in a duplication of expenditure for such items.”⁷⁹⁴ Of interest is his comparison of expenditure on library materials per student across seven South African university libraries which showed that Natal’s expenditure per student was third highest on the list (see Table 8.1. below). However, the duplication of books⁷⁹⁵ meant that the benefit derived from this expenditure was lower than that of other universities with only one main library and “where the necessity for duplication does not exist.”⁷⁹⁶

University	Subsidy students	Budget 1962	Expenditure per student
Orange Free State	1450	R46316	R31.94
Rhodes	1490	R40950	R27.48
Potchefstroom	1779	R77900	R43.70
Natal	3252	R89929	R27.64
Stellenbosch	4140	R100530	R24.28
Witwatersrand	5150	R98050	R19.03
Pretoria	7132	R117459	R16.46

Table. 8.1. Comparison of expenditure on library materials per student across seven South African universities⁷⁹⁷

To be fair, the University never allowed total expenditure on the Library, including staff salaries, library materials and operating expenses, to drop below 4.8% of the total University expenditure, and in 1967 it reached a record 8%. This comparison is shown in the following table:

⁷⁹³ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1962, p. 2

⁷⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹⁵ Kennedy, in his investigation into the book stock of South African libraries suggested that there was not enough duplication. – R.F. Kennedy, *Books for study and research*, Potchefstroom: Potchefstroom University for C.H.E., 1962, p. 61. Kennedy’s study is discussed in more detail in section 8.3.

⁷⁹⁶ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1962, p. 3.

⁷⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Year	Library expenditure	Total University expenditure	%
1962	R83,256	R1,572,463	5
1963	R93,454	R1,685,126	5.5
1964	R110,770	R2,310,154	4.8
1965	R125,301	R2,511,190	5
1966	R144,935	R1,839,431	7.8
1967	R153,500	R1,925,190	8

Table 8.2 University of Natal: comparison of library vs. university expenditure, 1962–1967⁷⁹⁸

The real problem was, of course, the necessity of maintaining what amounted to two main libraries which meant that the percentage of the Library budget spent on staff salaries and operating expenses tended to be high, with a concomitantly lower percentage spent on books and periodicals. Expenditure on books and journals varied between 31% and 35% of the Library's total expenditure every year which worked out to be a paltry 1.5% to 2% of total University expenditure. Malan considered that this was "according to accepted standards ... too low a percentage for books and journals"⁷⁹⁹ although, as Musiker reveals, inadequately funded university libraries were not a phenomenon peculiar to South Africa. In a biennial report on South African university libraries, Musiker noted that:

In 1963/64 the amount spent by British universities on libraries was less than 4 per cent of their budget, and less than 1 ½ per cent of the total budget was for books and periodicals.⁸⁰⁰

Malan also contended that the quinquennial revisions of the subsidy formula for universities were unrealistic since they were based solely on student numbers and failed to take into account rising book and journal subscription prices.⁸⁰¹ His remarks echo the conclusions pertaining to the financing of university libraries drawn by Kennedy, retired Johannesburg City Librarian, in his investigation into the strengths and weaknesses of the national book stock.⁸⁰² Kennedy rightly pointed out that:

⁷⁹⁸ Collated and adapted from: University of Natal, *Expenditure and revenue account and balance sheet*, 1964 – 1974, unpublished.

⁷⁹⁹ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1964, p. 5.

⁸⁰⁰ R. Musiker, University library progress in South Africa, January 1965 – December 1966, *South African libraries*, vol. 35, no. 4, April 1968, p. 124.

⁸⁰¹ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1966, p. 4.

⁸⁰² This investigation is discussed in more detail in section 8.3. below.

[A] peculiarity of university libraries is that in many of them the financial allocation for books and journals is based on the number of students in each department. The basic stock for any given subject will cost the same whether it is to be used by 20 or 200 students... the present method ensures that the smaller university must be inferior to the bigger so far as the literature of research is concerned.⁸⁰³

Kennedy's recommendations for improving the book stock of the University of Natal Libraries included increasing the annual book vote to at least R45, 000 (in 1961 only R30, 106 had been expended on books and periodicals) as well as an ad hoc grant of R250, 000 to be spent over ten years, to "make good deficiencies"⁸⁰⁴ and to bring the collections up to the "required minimum."⁸⁰⁵ This did not happen. In 1962 library expenditure on books and journals actually fell by 3% to R29,232. Even in 1967, expenditure on books and journals had not quite reached the R45,000 target recommended by Kennedy. At R42,883 it constituted just 2% of overall University expenditure, although total library expenditure constituted nearly 8% of the total (see Table 8.2 above). Needless to say, no ad hoc grant was forthcoming, either.

8.3. Collections

"...our universities have been starved of books."⁸⁰⁶ This startling statement was made by Kennedy in the concluding remarks of his investigation into the book stock of South African libraries. In order to place Kennedy's statement in context, it is necessary to go back a few years to the 1959 annual conference of the South African Library Association (SALA). At this conference it was resolved to "take strong measures to promote closer co-operation among libraries in South Africa."⁸⁰⁷ Accordingly, an Action Committee on Library Co-operation was immediately appointed to draw up recommendations. The Action Committee recommended that a comprehensive investigation into various aspects of South African libraries and librarianship be undertaken. These investigations into the finances, book stock and library staff of the whole country were completed during the course of 1962 and incorporated into the "Programme for future library development" which was adopted and approved at a National Conference of Library Authorities held in

⁸⁰³ Kennedy, *Books for study and research*, p. 83.

⁸⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 85

⁸⁰⁵ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1962, p. 1

⁸⁰⁶ Kennedy, *Books for study and research*, p. 84.

⁸⁰⁷ Programme for future library development in the Republic of South Africa, *South African libraries*, vol. 30, no. 3, January 1963, p. 81.

Pretoria on 5th and 6th November, 1962.⁸⁰⁸ Representatives of public, university and special libraries in South Africa attended. Representing the University of Natal were the Principal, Dr E.G. Malherbe, the chairs of the two Library Committees, Professors Warren and Kelly and Malan, Director of Library Services. The recommendations of this conference were sent to the appropriate authorities for further action and, as mentioned above, a National Library Advisory Council was established in 1967.

Of these investigations, one of the most important was that undertaken by R.F. Kennedy “to discover and report upon the strengths and weaknesses of the book-stock of six regions.”⁸⁰⁹ Kennedy built upon an earlier survey undertaken by H.C. van Rooy of Potchefstroom University in 1960 which measured the “numerical book-stock”⁸¹⁰ of South African libraries. Kennedy’s investigation took the work a step further by “viewing the book-stock qualitatively.”⁸¹¹ Of particular interest to this study are Kennedy’s findings on the holdings of South African university libraries and those of the University of Natal in particular.

For the purpose of the investigation Kennedy defined “basic book stock” as:

... a collection of the best books to satisfy the reasonable needs of all the people in a given area. It should include standard works on all subjects; be strong in encyclopædic works, general and special, such as dictionaries of national biography; have available the world’s great literary classics in the original for the main Western European languages and in translation; have sets of the most important journals in wide subjects such as chemistry, economics and music; and include files of the most important newspapers, either in the original or on microfilm. Each region should also have a sufficient number of books of a reasonable standard to satisfy the needs of general readers of recreational books.⁸¹²

For purposes of comparison Kennedy compiled checklists of standard books and periodicals, against which book stock could be checked. There were four checklists:

- Reference books: he compiled a list of titles from Winchell’s *Guide to reference books* and Walford’s *Guide to reference material* and included a number of the titles used in a contemporary survey of rate-supported libraries in England and

⁸⁰⁸ R. Musiker, *Companion to South African libraries*, p. 140.

⁸⁰⁹ Kennedy, *Books for study and research*, p.1. The six regions were the Transvaal, the Orange Free State, Natal, the Eastern Cape, the South-western Cape, and the Northern Cape

⁸¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 2.

⁸¹¹ *Ibid.*

⁸¹² *Ibid.*, p.1.

Wales. This list was sent out to national, city, provincial and university libraries;⁸¹³

- Periodicals: Kennedy drew up a list from various sources such as the list of 327 scientific periodicals appended to a paper by D.J. Urquhart which was published in the *Proceedings of the International Conference on Scientific Information* (held in Washington, D.C., in 1958) and the *Ulrich's periodicals directory* of 1959. He then compared this list to *Periodicals in South African Libraries*, a national union list of all periodicals holdings in the country;⁸¹⁴
- A bibliography of a special subject: Kennedy called this the "Rhinceros list."⁸¹⁵ He explained:

It was expected that most libraries would have a large proportion of the books on the main check-list of reference books...I wished to go a step further and demonstrate that ... [our libraries] are ill equipped to deal with a piece of research for which rare books are required."⁸¹⁶

His choice fell on a bibliography of rare books appended to an article by F.J. Cole, "The history of Albrecht Dürer's rhinceros in zoological literature" from the monograph, *Science, medicine and history* (published by Oxford University Press in 1953). The result of the check was surprising; of the 56 items listed, 35 were held in South African libraries. He concluded that his hypothesis was wrong since he discovered that the research could have been carried out in South Africa! Interestingly, four of the items were held in the University of Natal Libraries, two each in Durban and Pietermaritzburg;⁸¹⁷

- His final check list was a list of both books and periodicals in the field of library science. He called this the "special subject" list.⁸¹⁸ It was a list of recommended readings listed in SALA's *Study guide to classification and cataloguing* for 1960. Periodicals listed were those under the entry "Library periodicals" in *Ulrich's periodicals directory* as well as H.J. Aschenborn's *Library journals in South African libraries*.⁸¹⁹

⁸¹³ Kennedy, *Books for study and research*, p.2.

⁸¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.15.

⁸¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁸¹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸¹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁸¹⁹ *Ibid.*

The checklist of reference books was sent out to national, city, provincial and university libraries. Kennedy also visited libraries, examined inter-library loan records and checked the holdings of libraries as reported in the national catalogue of periodicals, *Periodicals in South African Libraries* (PISAL). It was a mammoth task and the results provide an in-depth insight into the state of the national book stock in the mid twentieth century. The libraries with the “most comprehensive stock,” Kennedy concluded, were “the Johannesburg Public Library, the South African Public Library and the universities.”⁸²⁰ He considered that all the universities were “centres for study and research” but added that it was “... clear from the schedules that all university libraries have serious deficiencies of stock ...”⁸²¹

As far as the University of Natal was concerned, Kennedy observed that the policy of avoiding the duplication of books in order to conserve finances had resulted in serious lacunae in the collections. He observed that “many books that should be in both libraries are found in one or the other.”⁸²² Echoing the criticism voiced by former Natal University Librarian, J.W. Perry, Kennedy pointed out that “The subjects that suffer most are those that fall outside the regular syllabus.”⁸²³ That said, he found the University Library in Durban, in company with the University of Cape Town, to have good holdings in Architecture periodicals as well as in company histories, in Fabian “and other sociological pamphlets”⁸²⁴ and in Edmund Spenser. The Powell Collection of early works on technology and science also drew his attention, in particular a bibliography based on this collection drawn up by library staff.⁸²⁵ He remarked that “Lists such as this is are very useful in making known the special subjects or fields in which a library is collecting.”⁸²⁶

On the negative side Kennedy considered that “Cape Town, Stellenbosch and Natal University allocate too little for the purchase of current medical journals.”⁸²⁷ The Medical Library subscribed to 300 current titles in medicine but, commented Kennedy,

⁸²⁰ Kennedy, *Books for study and research*, p. 84.

⁸²¹ Ibid.

⁸²² Ibid., p. 61.

⁸²³ Ibid.

⁸²⁴ Ibid., p. 63.

⁸²⁵ University of Natal Library, *A Short-title list of books printed before the year 1701*, Durban: University of Natal, 1961, 24 p.

⁸²⁶ Kennedy, *Books for study and research*, p. 63

⁸²⁷ Ibid., p. 25.

“the minimum number of journals essential in a medical school library is, I am informed, 600.”⁸²⁸ The Durban section of the University of Natal Library was also “very weak in general bibliographies and indexes and in runs of periodicals earlier than 1945.”⁸²⁹

To conclude, Kennedy’s findings echoed Malan’s contention that the University of Natal Library was underfunded. He pointed out that the Natal University Library was “a comparatively new library, still in process of being built up,”⁸³⁰ and stated that he considered the financial allocation “quite inadequate.”⁸³¹

8.3.1. Microforms

In order to fill the serious gaps highlighted by Kennedy’s survey, the Library began to purchase out-of-print scholarly texts and back runs of journals in microform “on a large scale⁸³² in 1966. Malan was enthusiastic about the new medium, pointing out that “microforms cost about a third of the price of the originals and save a tremendous amount of storage space.”⁸³³ These tiny images had, over the years, become increasingly important as a cost-effective way for university libraries to expand their collections. Microforms were first created in 1839 by J.B. Dancer who had managed to reduce photographic images and at the same time produce a translucent image.⁸³⁴ “This early microform,” says Hamlin, “achieved fame in 1870 from its use to transmit messages, via carrier pigeon, to and from Paris, then under siege in the Franco-Prussian War.”⁸³⁵ The medium first received “serious attention from the library profession”⁸³⁶ at the American Library Association (ALA) Midwinter Meeting of 1936 and was soon generally accepted as a convenient medium for the storage of large volumes of scholarly information.⁸³⁷ South African libraries were slower on the uptake although it is interesting to note that

⁸²⁸ Kennedy, *Books for study and research*, p. 64.

⁸²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 63

⁸³⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸³¹ *Ibid.*

⁸³² University of Natal Library, *Annual report*, 1966, p. 7.

⁸³³ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁸³⁴ A.T. Hamlin, *The university library in the United States*, Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981, p. 212.

⁸³⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸³⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

an article on microforms by Coblans appeared in *South African libraries* in 1952⁸³⁸ in which he cautions that “the future of microcopy for us depends essentially on whether the users of libraries ... will adapt themselves to these ‘gadgets.’”⁸³⁹

The University invested in two microfiche/microfilm readers, one for Pietermaritzburg and the other for Durban in 1966. Malan noted that “the buying of the lesser used materials in microform”⁸⁴⁰ was one way of attaining “the ideal.”⁸⁴¹ At the same time it was a way of saving both money and space, both important considerations for the University of Natal Libraries.

8.3.2. Banned collections

Although 1950, the year in which the Suppression of Communism Act was promulgated, is regarded as the beginning of “widespread, systematic”⁸⁴² censorship in South Africa and a consolidated list of over 4,000 publications banned in South Africa had been published in 1956,⁸⁴³ the question of banned books was discussed at the University of Natal for the first time in 1962. At a meeting of the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee on 16th May 1962 it was recorded that the Director had compiled a list of banned books which was to serve as an “Index.”⁸⁴⁴ Prior to this date no mention at all of banned books had been made either in the Library’s *Annual reports* or in the minutes of the library committees. It seems that Perry and the Library Committees had ignored the issue and banned books had been left on the libraries’ open shelves. In contrast, at the University of the Witwatersrand, the immediate withdrawal of all banned books from circulation had been ordered in 1954 by the chairman of the library committee, who had insisted that such books were to be stored “in such a manner that they are accessible to the Librarian only.”⁸⁴⁵ Fortunately, both for the University of the Witwatersrand and other

⁸³⁸ H. Coblans, Some recent developments in microcopy, *South African libraries*, vol. 19, no. 3, January 1952, p. 77-81.

⁸³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

⁸⁴⁰ University of Natal Library, *Annual report*, 1966, p. 8.

⁸⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴² C. Merrett, *A culture of censorship*, Cape Town: David Philip, 1994, p. 2.

⁸⁴³ Customs Act 1955: objectionable literature: revised list, South Africa, *Government gazette*, no. 5730, Government notice no. 1510, 17th August 1956.

⁸⁴⁴ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 16th May 1962*, p. 3.

⁸⁴⁵ Murray, *Wits, the open years*, p. 165.

South African universities, his successor,⁸⁴⁶ Professor G. Thomas, took up the issue with the Committee of University Principals, requesting that universities be indemnified.⁸⁴⁷ Thomas's plea was successful and although a bureaucratic and cumbersome system was put in place to manage banned collections in university libraries it did at least allow scholars access to banned literature.

Malan, an Afrikaner and most likely a supporter of the Nationalist government,⁸⁴⁸ took action at once and had a list drawn up by members of staff in the Periodicals Department in Durban, namely M.G. Morton and W.W.C. Brink. Malan had, however, said that he would be willing to take legal advice⁸⁴⁹ and the advice, provided by A.S. Matthews and Professor E. Burchell, makes interesting reading. Burchell, in a letter to the Principal, stated:

At the last Senex meeting you asked me to let you have a memorandum on the legal position in respect of banned books ...In view of the remote danger of criminal prosecution, it seems to me that it is not necessary for the University to take any action at all in this matter... If universities are autonomous in the sense that they have the right to decide how and what to teach, I don't think they should consider begging the Minister for permission to retain basic teaching material ...⁸⁵⁰

Nevertheless, Malan went ahead and gave instructions that the catalogue cards for banned books were to be removed from the catalogues.⁸⁵¹ An objection lodged at the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee meeting of 13th March, 1963⁸⁵² resulted in the referral of the matter to the Joint Library Committee for a decision. The Joint Library Committee ruled that "banned books cannot be kept on the open shelves ..." ⁸⁵³ but sanctioned the retention of cards for banned books in the general catalogue so that library users would at least know that such books were in stock, although not easily available for use. The issue of the banned collections was to remain an extremely

⁸⁴⁶ Thomas is described by Murray as "a more liberal-minded" man. – Murray, *Wits, the open years*, p. 165.

⁸⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁸ Pugsley, Personal communication, 2nd April 2008.

⁸⁴⁹ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 13th March 1963*, p. 3.

⁸⁵⁰ E. Burchell, *Re: Banned books in the University Library*, Letter to E.G. Malherbe, 28th June 1962.

⁸⁵¹ L. Milburn, Letter to S.P.M. O'Byrne, 11th December 1962, unpublished; S.I. Malan, Letter to R.A. Brown, 19th December 1962, unpublished.

⁸⁵² University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 13th March 1963*, p. 3.

⁸⁵³ University of Natal, Joint Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 29th March 1963*, p.3.

contentious matter at the University of Natal until their disbandment in 1990. It was to drive a wedge between the libraries, particularly the Durban Library under the management of Mr F. Scholtz, and the academic staff at the University.

8.3.3. Notable donations

In 1963 the Hillier collection, consisting of approximately 5,000 “out-of-print books on history and English literature,”⁸⁵⁴ was donated outright by the Council of the Natal Technical College to the University. It had been on loan to the University for an unspecified period although it seems safe to assume that it was moved from the Technical College Library to the Natal University College Library shortly after the latter moved to Howard College in Stellawood. In the same year Mrs F. Powell, whose Cancer Research Library was housed in the Medical Library and administered by library staff on her behalf, donated this collection outright to the University.

Powell also continued to donate monies annually for the upkeep and extension of the Powell collection of Early Science and Technology. Additions to this collection were purchased on a regular basis on the recommendation of a small committee, consisting of the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, the Vice-Principal (Durban), the Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering and the Library Director.

In 1965 the Pietermaritzburg Library acquired, on permanent loan from the local Anglican cathedral, the St. Lawrence Library consisting of some 3,000 books. This library had been accumulating for over 100 years at St. Saviour’s Cathedral, for it had been “the tradition for every new member of the Cathedral chapter to donate a book to the library.”⁸⁵⁵ The University eagerly accepted the offer of this library on permanent loan for it contained some rare and valuable works, “volumes in Greek and Latin by the theologians of the second, third and fourth centuries”⁸⁵⁶ and also, as Brown said, it added “to the University’s somewhat meagre collection of theological works.”⁸⁵⁷ In return, it was agreed that the University Library would “admit to honorary membership ... any

⁸⁵⁴ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1963, p. 6.

⁸⁵⁵ P.E. Patrick, *Natal Diocese transferred to University*, University of Natal press release, 7th November 1966, unpublished.

⁸⁵⁶ Patrick, *Natal Diocese transferred to University*.

⁸⁵⁷ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian’s report*, no. 8, 16th September 1964.

clergy of the Church of the Province of South Africa and ministers of other denominations who wish to come and study these theological works.”⁸⁵⁸

However, by far the most important and valuable donation to the University during this period was the bequest of the Africana library belonging to Dr M. R. “Killie” Campbell which passed into the hands of the University upon her death on 27th September 1965. As “one of the largest private libraries of Africana in existence”⁸⁵⁹ it merits in-depth consideration.

8.4. The Killie Campbell Africana Library

This exceptionally generous and valuable gift to the University consisted of some 35,000 items including rare books, manuscripts, paintings, drawing and prints. Dr Campbell, known to many people simply as “Killie,” had spent a lifetime collecting items for her library which was housed in the Campbell family home, “Muckleneuk”, at 220 Marriott Road, Durban. Perry, in a letter to the Rhodes University Librarian, Dr F.G. van der Riet, described the library as follows:

The library is remarkable in that it must be one of few private libraries run systematically in which library assistants (three) are employed. It is not only catalogued, but many aspects are indexed within the catalogue (e.g. Tribes – all references to each one in any book). The library is classified into about six main fields. It has a fairly normal accessions register. By all standards it is I think the showpiece of Durban and would be remarkable in any country... Killie is extremely helpful to all visitors to her library, whether they be natives trying to write a thesis or dignitaries of foreign powers. Hardly a week passes without someone from overseas visiting the library.⁸⁶⁰

Malan himself had described the library as “An outstanding collection of Africana ... It comprises perhaps the best known and best equipped private Africana collection in the country.”⁸⁶¹ The University Library had enjoyed a long-standing association with the Campbell Africana Library. Students and researchers affiliated to the Natal University College were welcome to make use of the collection and in 1946 Campbell wrote to Coblans, enclosing a description of her library for inclusion in the Natal University

⁸⁵⁸ Patrick, *Natal Diocese transferred to University*.

⁸⁵⁹ Dr Killie Campbell becomes an Honorary Fellow, *South African libraries*, vol. 24, no. 1, July 1956, p. 72.

⁸⁶⁰ J.W. Perry, Letter to F.G. van der Riet, University Librarian, Rhodes University, 17th August 1956, unpublished.

⁸⁶¹ S.I. Malan, University libraries in the Republic of South Africa, *The library world*, vol. 64, no. 755, May 1963, p. 323.

College Library's guide. The pleasure she took in her collection shines through, but, more importantly, it is quite obvious from this brief report that her intention was eventually to donate her library to the University. She wrote:

This Library has approximately 20,000 books and pamphlets and specialises chiefly in history and Bantu Africana. It is destined at some future date to be the nucleus of a library for the School of Bantu Studies which has just been established in Durban in connection with the Natal University College. It comprises with various other interesting items the Colenso letters and papers also Colenso's Digest "Commentary on Frere's Policy" with marginal notes in his own handwriting. Missionary Journals, Chronicles and some diaries on Mission work and a great number of articles and extracts ... mostly to do with Bantu Customs, folk lore [sic] etc. and history. Reminiscences of early Settlers form a part either collected from old diaries or written or given by the descendents of Old Settlers. Photographs too are an important item chiefly collected from the point of view of Bantu or historical content.⁸⁶²

Campbell concludes: "Research Students are welcomed to use the library or any who are specially interested in Bantu ethnology and anthropology etc. and also history by applying to Killie Campbell 220 Marriott Rd."⁸⁶³

In 1946 the Principal, Dr E.G. Malherbe, wrote to Campbell as part of his fundraising drive, enclosing a copy of the brochure *The development of the Natal University*, and inviting her to "become a sponsor in this campaign for funds."⁸⁶⁴ She replied, stating that:

I think the best way I can serve the Natal University College at present is by actively building up and collecting for my Africana library which eventually will go to the N.U.C. It is as you know being freely used by Research workers, students and writers...⁸⁶⁵

In 1948 Malherbe wrote again to her regarding "the bequest of your library to the Natal University College, which we discussed a while ago ..." ⁸⁶⁶ as well as her interest in establishing a museum of African culture and endowing a Chair of African Studies.⁸⁶⁷ He warned, though, of not attaching conditions to her will regarding land for the museum. In this letter he says:

I am approaching the City Corporation again with a view to ascertaining whether we could get the land adjoining the present museum and library. As there is a

⁸⁶² K. Campbell, *The Campbell Africana Library*, [23rd May 1946], unpublished.

⁸⁶³ Ibid.

⁸⁶⁴ E.G. Malherbe, Letter to K. Campbell, 6th August, 1946, unpublished.

⁸⁶⁵ K. Campbell, Letter to E.G. Malherbe, 10th August 1946, unpublished.

⁸⁶⁶ E.G. Malherbe, Letter to K. Campbell, 6th June 1948, unpublished, p. 1.

⁸⁶⁷ Ibid.

considerable amount of doubt as to whether we shall be able to acquire this land, you must please not make that a condition in your Will. Besides, if we do not acquire this additional land it is likely that in twenty years' time we shall be forced to give up the City Building as we shall be completely squeezed out by the market.⁸⁶⁸

The following year she and her brother, Mr W. Campbell (known as "Wac"), offered to bequeath £8,000 and £10,000 respectively upon their deaths to the University of Natal for the purposes of erecting a library, to be called the "Killie Campbell Library" and a museum of African Studies, to be called the "Mashu Museum,⁸⁶⁹ 'Mashu' being the name by which the Donor's father was known to the Zulus."⁸⁷⁰ Contrary to Malherbe's advice, though, the gifts were conditional upon the transfer by the Durban City Council to the University of Natal of suitable land close to the City Building. The Durban Corporation allocated the land but later took it back, as Campbell explained in a letter to Malan in 1962:

...I set aside money for a building to house my collection for the Natal University and the Corporation allocated ground near Warwick Avenue, but this ground has since been appropriated for transport purposes. Application has now been made for my Africana to remain here [at "Muckleneuk"], and this will release the money set aside for the building to be used for the upkeep of the collection. My firm rule has always been that no books should be taken out of this Library, and this must be carried out by the University.⁸⁷¹

The housing of the library and the museum caused many problems. William Campbell decided, in 1954, to donate Muckleneuk to the City of Durban. It was to be a museum, containing the furniture, pictures and other items which he had amassed and was to be known as the "William Campbell Africana Museum," entirely separate from the "Mashu Museum" and the Africana library. In a letter to Malan after Killie Campbell's death author D.R. Morris,⁸⁷² her friend and great admirer, wrote that he suspected the property was "originally deeded to the municipality in connection with a tax settlement" and indicated to Malan that Killie considered "a terrible mistake had been made in the disposition of the house."⁸⁷³ In a subsequent letter to Malan he elaborated:

⁸⁶⁸ Malherbe, Letter to K. Campbell, 6th June 1948, p. 2.

⁸⁶⁹ The Mashu Museum of Ethnology was eventually launched over 30 years later, in 1981, to celebrate the centenary of Dr Killie Campbell's birth.

⁸⁷⁰ *Deed of gift, Margaret Roach Campbell, in favour of the University of Natal*, 28th September 1949, unpublished, p. 3.

⁸⁷¹ K. Campbell, Letter to S.I. Malan, 5th April 1962, unpublished.

⁸⁷² D.R. Morris, *The washing of the spears*, London: Cape, 1966, 655 p.

⁸⁷³ D.R. Morris, Letter to S.I. Malan, 11th October 1965, unpublished.

In 1962, when I first met her, Killie was enormously agitated because she had just discovered what plans the municipality had for Muckleneuk. She had just started to give battle, and I have a letter from her dated 5 October 1964 saying it was settled, the council had agreed to lease...⁸⁷⁴

On her death, however, it was discovered that the property had not been leased to the University. "This creates a problem," wrote Malan to Morris "but I think it will be overcome by a lease being signed by the N.U.D.F. and the Municipality of Durban."⁸⁷⁵ Morris, by way of reply, wrote: "if the municipality will not give it up it should be bought back from them – I am counting on Ford [the Ford Foundation] for this!"⁸⁷⁶⁸⁷⁷ Morris, an outspoken man, felt strongly that the University should obtain the freehold for the property. He stated firmly that "There will always be a risk until Muckleneuk is yours outright and the municipal council is chancey."⁸⁷⁸ Killie had a low opinion of most of the members ..."⁸⁷⁹ Over a period of three years prior to Campbell's death Morris had attempted to interest the Ford Foundation and others in a scheme for financial assistance which, he envisaged, would include "buying the site back from the city of Natal [sic]"⁸⁸⁰ for the University. The Principal had shown interest in the plan but it was never realised, possibly due to numerous legal hurdles and also to Malherbe's retirement at the end of 1965. The University finally signed a fifty-year lease with the Durban Corporation for R1.00, "payable yearly in advance."⁸⁸¹

The University Library formally took over the administration of the Killie Campbell Africana Library on 1st December 1965,⁸⁸² placing a trained librarian in charge.⁸⁸³ This

⁸⁷⁴ D.R. Morris, Letter to S.I. Malan, 27th October 1965, unpublished, p. 1. Morris does not elaborate on City council's alleged "plans."

⁸⁷⁵ S.I. Malan, Letter to D.R. Morris, 21st October 1965, unpublished. N.U.D.F. is an acronym for the Natal University Development Foundation.

⁸⁷⁶ Morris, Letter to Malan, 27th October 1965, unpublished, p. 1.

⁸⁷⁷ Interest in the collections had also been shown by Gwendolen M. Carter, Director of the Program of African Studies at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, U.S.A. She wrote to Malan, requesting a copy of the library catalogue. – G.M. Carter, Letter to S.I. Malan, 14th January 1966.

⁸⁷⁸ As evidenced by the problems Killie had experienced with the City Council regarding the land promised to her in Warwick Avenue and the unspecified plans she had discovered which the Council had for Muckleneuk.

⁸⁷⁹ Morris, Letter to Malan, 27th October 1965, unpublished, p. 2.

⁸⁸⁰ D.R. Morris, Letter to S.I. Malan, 22nd May 1962, unpublished.

⁸⁸¹ *Deed of Lease* [to the University of Natal], 20th September 1966, p. 4.

⁸⁸² The name "Campbell Collections" was adopted when the University formally took over administration. – Natal History Research Resources Consultation Group, *Aide memoire of the meeting held on 29th October 1986*, unpublished, p. 1.

⁸⁸³ Malan, Letter to Morris, 21st October 1965, unpublished.

was Miss S. Speedy, who had been appointed prior to Campbell's death⁸⁸⁴ but was retained at the Howard College Library until the end of October 1965 in deference to Campbell's wishes. Campbell had written to Malherbe a few months before her death that she thought:

Miss Speedy sounds splendid for the library, but the congestion here – books and exhibits overflowing for lack of space – would make working here impossible for her. I am on the last lap of my long journey, so perhaps you might retain Miss Speedy in some other capacity until she can take over here.⁸⁸⁵

During the course of 1966 staff were kept extremely busy “with the arrangement of the collection in some order or another so that items could be readily found”⁸⁸⁶ Although Campbell had employed assistants to help her, none of them were trained librarians and neither was she. The methods she followed to organise her collection were idiosyncratic. She had devised her own classification scheme which meant that “the success of her library rested on her knowledge of where the material was housed.”⁸⁸⁷ Her collection was arranged by section, each section being placed in a different room so that, for example, material on “Bantu history” would be stored in the “Ironing Room.”⁸⁸⁸ The first task to be undertaken was the sorting of the books “according to a standard classification scheme, namely a simplified form of the Dewey Decimal classification scheme, and to note the classification number inside the books and on the main card of Campbell's handwritten library cards.”⁸⁸⁹ However, it proved impossible to re-catalogue the entire collection as speedily as was desired, and the task was expected to take several years. Sadly, the Campbell collections had a chequered subsequent history.

8.5. Accommodation

A major event during this period was the erection of a new library building in Pietermaritzburg. Discussions around the subject had begun in 1961 but it was upon Brown, the newly appointed Pietermaritzburg Librarian, with his experience of planning the Rhodes University Library,⁸⁹⁰ that the burden of planning fell. Following

⁸⁸⁴ S.I. Malan, Letter to E.G. Malherbe, 8th September 1965, unpublished.

⁸⁸⁵ K. Campbell, Letter to E.G. Malherbe, 30th March 1965, unpublished.

⁸⁸⁶ University of Natal Library, *Annual report*, 1966, p. 10.

⁸⁸⁷ J.A. Pim, *A history of the Killie Campbell Africana Library*, M.I.S. thesis, University of Natal, 1990, p. 105.

⁸⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 42

⁸⁸⁹ J.F. Duggan, The Killie Campbell Africana Library since 1965, in *Killie Campbell, 1881-1965*.

⁸⁹⁰ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 9th November 1961*.

considerable discussion and negotiation, the site eventually chosen for the new building was “at the top of the plane [tree] avenue,”⁸⁹¹ an ideal place “chosen for easy access by staff and students and for its central position”⁸⁹² and, since there were no other buildings in close proximity, “the possibilities of expansion both behind the building and lengthways”⁸⁹³ were considered to be almost unlimited. In the Pietermaritzburg Library *Bulletin* of March 1964, Brown noted that:

Although the destruction of the top of the plane tree avenue will be a sadness to many, we have been told that the days of the planes were numbered as they were in the grip of a fatal disease.⁸⁹⁴

Brown worked closely with the architect, J.C. Simpson of the Durban firm of Geoffrey le Sueur & Partners, “to ensure that the ... Library building ... was practical and flexible.”⁸⁹⁵ Built at a cost of R225,000, it was “modular”⁸⁹⁶ in design, a concept which was gradually gaining in popularity amongst library planners and architects worldwide. Unlike the monumental, fixed-function building design which had dominated library architecture for many years and which could not be easily adapted to the demands of the modern library, the modular design was intended to be infinitely flexible. A pioneer modular library building was that of the University of Iowa, opened in 1951.⁸⁹⁷ University of Iowa Library Director Ralph E. Ellsworth described the difference between the two types of building as follows:

Prior to World War II all academic libraries were planned on a fixed function basis. After World War II the American colleges and universities faced new conditions, specifically the need for extensive expansion, for direct use of the bookstacks, and for new kinds of study facilities. To meet these conditions a new type of library structure – the so-called modular building – came into general use.⁸⁹⁸

The first South African university library to be designed on a modular basis was the Ferdinand Postma Library at the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher

⁸⁹¹ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian's report*, no. 5, 15th November 1962, p. 2.

⁸⁹² *The opening of the new library, Pietermaritzburg*, 1966, unpublished brochure.

⁸⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹⁴ The pleasure of believing what we see, *[Library] bulletin*, [Pietermaritzburg], no. 1, March 1964, p. 1.

⁸⁹⁵ Ron Brown (1914-2002), *Library bulletin*, [Pietermaritzburg], no. 349, Feb. 2003, p. 1.

⁸⁹⁶ *The opening of the new library, Pietermaritzburg*, 15th October 1966, unpublished.

⁸⁹⁷ E.R. Johnson, Ralph E. Ellsworth, in: *Leaders in American librarianship, 1925-1975*, edited by W.A. Wiegand, Pittsburg, Pa.: Beta Phi Mu, 1983, p. 97.

⁸⁹⁸ R.E. Ellsworth, *Academic library buildings*, Boulder, Colo.: Colorado Associated University Press, 1973, p. 7.

Education.⁸⁹⁹ Pietermaritzburg's new library building, completed in 1965, was a classic example of the modular design. An article in *South African libraries*, probably written by Brown, described the design thus:

Structurally the building is a concrete frame with pillars 22 [feet] apart, and all walls are functional and removable except for one service "module" in the rear which incorporates a staircase, lift shaft and lavatories. This "modular" system gives the building great flexibility, so that it can be adapted to any particular use required.⁹⁰⁰

The plan of the ground floor of the building, shown below, illustrates clearly the modular construction. Library collections were moved to the new building during the long vacation at the end of 1964. The Library "opened for service in January 1965"⁹⁰¹ although, for various unavoidable reasons, the official opening had to be delayed until 15th October 1966. The new library building could accommodate 270,000 volumes, which was more than double the 100,000 volumes in stock at the time, and could seat 500 users. It was to serve its purpose for over 25 years, unaltered apart from the enclosure of the basement space, until extensions were built in 1990.

⁸⁹⁹ P. Aucamp, *Universiteits- en kollegebiblioteke in Suid-Afrika, 1828 – 1989* [sic], South African Library Association Conference (Johannesburg : 1978), *Papers presented at the conference, Johannesburg, 1978*, Potchefstroom: SALA, 1978, p. 178.

⁹⁰⁰ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *South African libraries*, vol. 35, no. 2, October 1967, p. 66.

⁹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

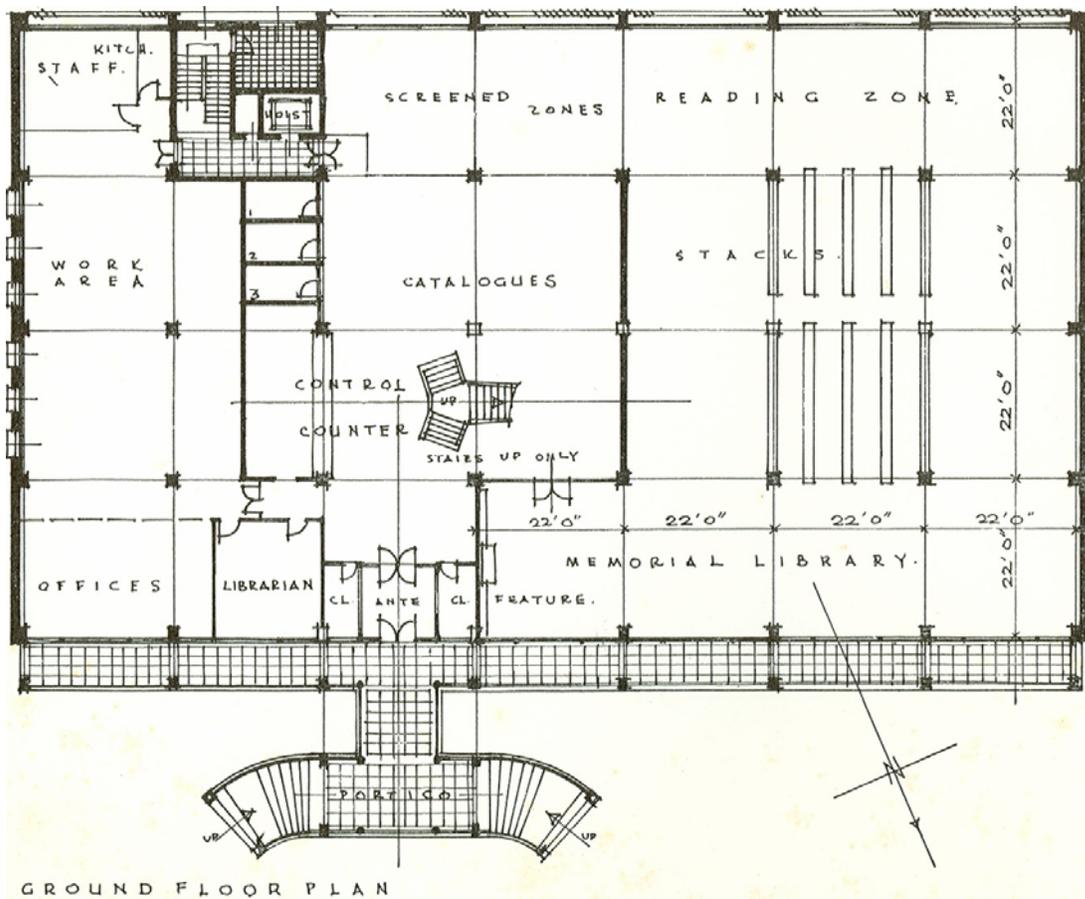


Figure 8.1. Ground floor plan of the new Main Library building in Pietermaritzburg⁹⁰²

In Durban, however, both the Howard College and Medical libraries were suffering from a critical shortage of space. The library accommodation in the Memorial Tower Building had been extended in 1959, but by 1962 there were indications that more space would shortly be required. It is recorded in the minutes of the first Durban Library Committee meeting of 1963 that

... all alterations had now been completed, including an access door to the rooms now occupied by Professor Schuddeboom. It was hoped that these rooms would, in due course, become available for Library use.⁹⁰³

At the same meeting it was noted that a new library building for Howard College was a distinct possibility and that a site had already been chosen. The minutes state that "... whilst the site for a new building must be retained, arguments for the adaptation and use

⁹⁰² *The opening of the new library, Pietermaritzburg, 15th October 1966.*

⁹⁰³ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of the meeting held on 12th March 1963*, p. 1.

of the Tower Building as a Library should be fully investigated.”⁹⁰⁴ To this end a three-person Planning Committee which included Malan, Milburn and P. H. Connell, Professor of Architecture, was constituted. Over the next few years this Committee was fully occupied as the shortage of space in the Howard College Library became more acute. The inadequate and inflexible library quarters in the Memorial Tower Building were a prime example of the type of monumental, “fixed function” building described by Ellsworth. In May 1964 Deputy Librarian Milburn prepared a report which put forward a number of solutions to the problem. He emphasized that “The prime need is for more reading space,”⁹⁰⁵ and indicated various ways in which more space could be made available, including the transfer of unbound periodicals to the “rather unsatisfactory top floors of the Tower,”⁹⁰⁶ taking over rooms occupied by academic departments and even “taking a second look at the large staff room used by the European Library staff ...” because “it was not possible to see how the Non-European staff could be given an alternative room as a temporary measure.”⁹⁰⁷ Racial segregation at this time was taken for granted; staff did not mix, even over a cup of tea!

One of the more imaginative solutions to the space problem was an investigation into the possibility of erecting a temporary structure on the roof⁹⁰⁸ but this idea was vetoed by the City Engineer who sensibly felt that “this would not be advisable, one of the reasons being that a considerable subsidence had occurred and might affect any temporary structures.”⁹⁰⁹ Eventually, when the accommodation problem had, according to Milburn, reached “Vietnam proportions,”⁹¹⁰ relief was offered in the form of an allocation of extra space in the Memorial Tower building itself, although the area would become

⁹⁰⁴ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of the meeting held on 12th March 1963*, p. 1.

⁹⁰⁵ L. Milburn and P.H. Connell, *Report of the Deputy Librarian and the consulting architect on possible measures for the immediate relief of congestion in the Library, Memorial Tower building, Durban, to look after the needs of the Library during the period 1965-1967*, 28th May 1964, unpublished, p. 1.

⁹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2

⁹⁰⁸ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 2nd November 1966*, p. 1.

⁹⁰⁹ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 15th March 1967*, p.1.

⁹¹⁰ University of Natal Library, *Annual report*, 1967, p. 1.

available only after the Departments of Mathematics and Physics moved out to their new building, which was expected to take place in 1968.⁹¹¹

The Medical Library was more fortunate in its quest for extra space. Alterations begun in 1966 were completed by May 1967 and the Medical Librarian, Miss C. Maguire, was able to report that “The seating and shelving capacity has now been doubled and a much more congenial atmosphere has been created.”⁹¹² The Florence Powell Cancer Collection also had new quarters in a new extension, a “comfortable and air-conditioned room which overlooks the hospital.”⁹¹³

The City Building Library also lacked “suitable accommodation”⁹¹⁴ but little could be done about this since, as Malan said, “too many uncertainties exist regarding the future of the building itself.”⁹¹⁵ As noted above, Malherbe had mentioned in his letter to Dr Killie Campbell that it was possible that the University might have to give up the City Building, in which case “we shall have to transfer everything to the University site ...”⁹¹⁶ His words were to be proved correct before many years had passed.

8.6. Library staff

Although the post of the Deputy Librarian in Pietermaritzburg had been upgraded prior to Brown’s taking up his appointment, the post of Deputy Librarian in Durban, occupied by Milburn, had remained the same. The Durban Library Committee, at its meeting of 4th September 1963, decided to recommend to the Joint Library Committee that this post should be regraded to that of Librarian (Durban).⁹¹⁷ Malan drew up a memorandum which was discussed and agreed to at the Joint Library Committee meeting of 13th April 1964.⁹¹⁸ Malan was able to report at the next meeting that the post “had been upgraded

⁹¹¹ E.L. Beyers & S.I. Malan, *Ad hoc loan for the purchase of books*, 11th October 1966, unpublished.

⁹¹² University of Natal, *Annual report*, 1967, p. 3.

⁹¹³ *Ibid.*

⁹¹⁴ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1965, p. 2.

⁹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁹¹⁶ E.G. Malherbe, Letter to K. Campbell, 6th June 1948, p. 1.

⁹¹⁷ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 4th September 1963*, p. 3.

⁹¹⁸ University of Natal, Joint Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 13th April 1964*, p. 1.

to that of Librarian (Durban).”⁹¹⁹ Considering that the Durban Librarian carried a proportionately heavier work-load than his Pietermaritzburg counterpart, the upgrading of the post was fair. The library services as a whole consisted of five sections, four of which were situated in Durban. As the Durban Deputy Librarian, Milburn was expected to oversee the operations of all four Durban libraries. The staff complement was larger in Durban in keeping with the distributed nature of the library service - there were 9 library staff in Pietermaritzburg, while Durban had 29 staff. Statistics of books processed, current periodical subscriptions and items circulated were considerably higher in Durban, too. As part of his motivation, Malan provided figures for 1963 which show the exponential growth which had taken place in Durban since 1931, as shown in Table 8.3 below:

	Durban	Pietermaritzburg
Total bookstock	106,900	72,476
Books catalogued	5457	2016
Items circulated	52,024	29050
Current subscriptions	1,773	974

*Table 8.3. Statistical comparison 1963: Durban and Pietermaritzburg*⁹²⁰

When Malan took over the directorship in 1962 the total number of library staff, both professional and clerical, stood at 25, too small a number, Malan felt, to maintain two main libraries and three branches. By 1965 the staff complement had more than doubled. The 52 members of staff were distributed as follows: 29 in the three Durban libraries, 12 in Pietermaritzburg and 11 staff members in the “central organisation” which included the Bindery and Photoduplication Unit.⁹²¹ A small victory for equality had also been won when the differential salary scales for men and women were abolished. The matter had arisen during a discussion about the salary to be paid to a recently-hired library assistant in Pietermaritzburg. The minutes record that:

The Director asked for an expression of opinion on the scales of pay for the Library staff members who are grouped as male and female, each group with its own scale of pay. He pointed out that the difference between pay for the two sexes now operated in the case of Library staff only. The Committee agreed that

⁹¹⁹ University of Natal, Joint Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 11th November 1964*, p. 1.

⁹²⁰ S.I. Malan, *Regrading of post of Deputy Librarian (Durban)*, April 1964.

⁹²¹ University of Natal Library, *Annual report*, 1965, p. 5.

the scale for female library staff [which was the lower of the two] be on the same scale of pay as for male staff.⁹²²

The matter was discussed at Council and it was reported at the next committee meeting that “Council had agreed that the new maximum for women should be the same as that on the scale for men⁹²³.” The new uniform scale was scheduled to come into effect on 1st January 1965.

8.7. User services

In March 1962 the Pietermaritzburg Librarian, Mr Ron Brown, started a new library bulletin, the purpose of which was to alert readers to new acquisitions and other items deemed newsworthy. The first issue comprised only two pages and provided very brief information on where the offices of the Librarian and other staff were to be found, hours of opening, lists of current newspapers on display and similar information. Brown continued to compile the bulletin for eleven years, until his retirement in 1973, during which time it was expanded to include an editorial and short book reviews of new acquisitions as well as items of interest to library users. Written in an impeccable style, its tone is cheerful and informal, providing a fascinating glimpse of Brown the man as well as providing a wealth of detail on the content of collections, changes made in library procedures and the activities of library staff.

The Annual report of 1966 mentions “an increased demand on direct personal services, especially by members of the academic staff”⁹²⁴ which made it “increasingly difficult for the staff to cope with the volume of work”⁹²⁵ even though the staff complement had grown considerably since 1962. Cataloguing of materials was still a primary task for the qualified librarians on the staff, although it is evident that Malan had given some thought to the mechanisation of cataloguing processes “to deal with this time-consuming but essential part of library routines.”⁹²⁶ Brown, in his annual report to the Pietermaritzburg

⁹²² University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 16th May 1962*, p. 1.

⁹²³ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 15th November 1962*, p. 1.

⁹²⁴ University of Natal Library, *Annual report*, 1966, p. 7.

⁹²⁵ Ibid.

⁹²⁶ Ibid., p. 10.

Library Committee, listed as a “future project” for 1968 the development of “instruction to students in the use of the library.”⁹²⁷

8.8. The Industrial Information Centre

The ongoing success of the Industrial Information Centre (IIC), launched in 1957 as an experiment, resulted in its being placed on a permanent footing in 1962. Kennedy remarked that it was a “most interesting experiment in library cooperation”⁹²⁸ and that “The University Library is, in fact, the coordinating agent for the industrial libraries of Durban.”⁹²⁹ Industry in Natal was booming, as indicated by an article which appeared in the *South African panorama* of April, 1962:

Natal, the Republic’s smallest Province, has made a remarkable switch from an agricultural to an industrial economy since the end of World War II. It now has an industrial strength second only to that of the Southern Transvaal. The basis for this development has centred on the port of Durban, Africa’s largest tonnage handler.⁹³⁰

It was therefore not surprising that membership and usage of the Centre was steadily increasing. A problem which had been encountered, however, was that of establishing and maintaining contact with industry. At a symposium, organised jointly by the South African Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and the Industrial Information Centre, in September 1963, Malan pointed out that there were two sides to the problem:

... on the one we lack as yet both time and staff to establish and maintain contacts and on the other – partly as a result of the first – we often find it difficult to bring the information whether general or specific, scientific and technical or managerial in nature to the attention of the right persons.”⁹³¹

Nevertheless, the statistics for the years 1959 to 1966 showed that the number of queries handled per year had increased enormously, from only 20 queries handled in 1959/60 to 390 queries handled in 1967. In 1965, due to demand, the Management Committee decided to purchase the *International index of patents, 1790-1960*; and both the *Official gazette of the United States Patent Office* and the *South African patent journal* were

⁹²⁷ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian’s 6th annual report*, 1967, p. 3.

⁹²⁸ Kennedy, *Books for study and research*, p. 63.

⁹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 64

⁹³⁰ J. Kerr, Progress of a province, *South African panorama*, April 1962, p. 3.

⁹³¹ S.I. Malan, Information for industry: the local scene, in *Information for industry: symposium arranged by the South African Council for Scientific and Industrial Research*, (Durban : 1963), p. 4.

being received as donations. There could be no doubt that the IIC was fulfilling a need in the region and it continued to prosper for many years. Eventually, however, the Durban Municipal Library and the CSIR representatives ceased attending Management Committee meetings. The name of the centre was changed in 1992 to the Business Information Centre (BIC) to reflect a change in focus and in 1999, following the review of the Durban Library which necessitated a reduction of staff, a decision was taken, in consultation with the membership, that the BIC would “cease operation as an independent service and become one of the [Durban] Library’s in-house services”.⁹³² The Centre re-opened in January 2000 as the Gateway Information Service with one part-time member of staff who reported to the head of the Subject Librarian Unit.

8.9. The end of the unitary library system

Malan resigned from the employ of the University in June 1967 to take up the position of Professor of Librarianship at the University of South Africa. His departure was apparently greeted with relief, as Brown remarked in the introduction to his 6th *Annual report*: “After five years of various turmoils, this has been a relatively peaceful year ...”⁹³³ At a meeting held on 30th August 1967 the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee agreed to recommend to the Joint Library Committee that:

... before proceeding to the appointment of a new Director or to any alternative arrangement, the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee [should] have the opportunity of considering the matter and of making representations to the Joint Library Committee, in view of the fact that certain differences of opinion have arisen in the past and therefore the structure of the library administration should be carefully defined.⁹³⁴

The Durban Library Committee merely expressed its opinion that “the post of Director of Library Services be filled by the beginning of 1968.”⁹³⁵ The matter was put to the vote at the Joint Library Committee meeting held in October 1967 and as a result the Committee recommended that the post of Director be advertised.⁹³⁶ In the meantime, the Durban and Pietermaritzburg Librarians between them continued to carry out the duties previously assigned to the Director.

⁹³² University of Natal Libraries, Durban, *Annual report*, 1999-2000, p. 9.

⁹³³ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, Librarian’s 6th annual report, 1967, p. 1.

⁹³⁴ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 30th August 1967*, p. 2.

⁹³⁵ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 6th September 1967*, p. 1.

⁹³⁶ University of Natal, Joint Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 18th October 1967*, p. 2.

8.10. Summary

The five and a half years of Malan's tenure were difficult ones. Besides the problems of maintaining a library service in two geographically distinct centres, there were differences of opinion between the Director on the one hand and the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee and Librarian on the other. In spite of this the University Library had continued to grow and thrive. The University had received Dr Killie Campbell's magnificent bequest of an invaluable Africana collection, the Pietermaritzburg Library had moved into a new building, the Industrial Information Centre had been placed on a permanent footing, and the number of library staff had more than doubled. There was also the small victory of the abolition of the different salary scales for male and female library staff.

Malan's departure signaled the end of an era. Milburn and Brown between them acted as "caretakers"⁹³⁷ for the remainder of 1967 carrying out the duties which had previously been assigned to the Director as well as their own duties. They commented that their position was "analogous to that of the Captains-Regent of the Republic of San Merino"⁹³⁸ in which one rules the town and one the country."⁹³⁹ The next chapter will describe subsequent changes in the administration which resulted in the abandonment of the unitary library system and will investigate the separate development of the two libraries.

⁹³⁷ University of Natal Library, *Annual report*, 1967, p. 1

⁹³⁸ The Republic of San Merino is a European microstate, surrounded on all sides by Italy. The Parliament elects two captains regent who become the heads of state for a period. – *The new encyclopædia Britannica micropædia*, 15th edition, Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, 2003, vol. 10.

⁹³⁹ University of Natal Library, *Annual report*, 1967, p. 1

Chapter Nine

Division and expansion, 1968 - 1975

The student unrest of the late 1960s did not leave the University of Natal untouched. After three stormy years in office, during which time he clashed with academic staff as well as students, the Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Natal, Professor O.P.F. Horwood, left the University at the end of September 1969. He was subsequently appointed a Senator in the Nationalist government.⁹⁴⁰ Following Horwood's departure, Professor W.E. Phillips, the Durban Vice-Principal, acted as Principal from 1st October, 1969 until the new Principal, Professor F.E. Stock, took up office on 5th October, 1970. Stock found himself in a very demanding new job. The English-language universities in South Africa were, according to Thompson, "foci of opposition to apartheid"⁹⁴¹ and the University of Natal was no exception.

As far as the Library was concerned, the departure of the Director of Library Services effectively signaled the end of the unitary library system at the University of Natal. The post was not filled and, at the end of 1968 the two Librarians, Messrs Milburn and Brown, reported:

The University Library has now been functioning for some eighteen months as a dual-centred library... The Central organization has been disbanded, and each library is now responsible for its own administration and finance. The Joint Library Committee at its meetings allots monies to the respective centres and deals with matters common to both centres. The Librarians have found that these arrangements work very satisfactorily.⁹⁴²

In 1973 a complete separation of the academic activities of the two centres was effected, due partly to a national "fuel crisis"⁹⁴³ and partly to the increasing financial burden on the University's coffers of teaching staff traveling between Durban and Pietermaritzburg. "Most departments," noted the Principal in his *Annual report* for the year, "were able to separate and become autonomous as from 31 December."⁹⁴⁴ This development was in keeping with the proposal made by the University's Planning and Policy Committee that

⁹⁴⁰ I. Wilkins & H. Strydom, *The super-Afrikaners*, Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1978, p. 279.

⁹⁴¹ L. Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2000, p. 199.

⁹⁴² University of Natal Library, *Annual report*, 1968, p. 1.

⁹⁴³ University of Natal, *Annual report of the Principal*, 1973, p. 7.

⁹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

“consideration be given to the possibility of achieving local autonomy in the two centres on academic matters ... with a view to a change to a federal structure or full separation into two universities ...”⁹⁴⁵ Each centre thus had a parallel faculty of Law, Humanities, Commerce, Science and Social Science which meant that, in some cases, extra staff had to be employed to compensate for staff who had previously travelled between Durban and Pietermaritzburg.⁹⁴⁶ As far as the two Libraries were concerned, the separation was complete. Each began to operate and develop in quite different ways, as will be seen in the following discussions.

9.1. Administration and governance

After an intensive discussion at the October 1967 meeting, the Joint Library Committee put the question of whether to fill the post of Library Director or not to the vote. The Pietermaritzburg Library Committee felt strongly that the post should not be filled⁹⁴⁷ but the vote resulted in a decision to advertise. As a compromise, the Chairs of the two local committees were requested to “discuss this matter and make a careful analysis of the role the Director will play in the Library.”⁹⁴⁸ Subsequently an advertisement for a Director of Library Services appeared in the December 1967 issue of the *SALA newsletter* with a closing date of 15th January 1968 for applications.⁹⁴⁹ However, the surprise announcement that Milburn, Librarian in Durban, would be retiring a year early, at the end of 1968, resulted in the Principal calling a meeting of a special *ad hoc* committee consisting of himself, the two Vice-Principals (Durban and Pietermaritzburg) and the chairmen of the two local library committees to discuss the matter. The *ad hoc* committee recommended the “deferment by 12 months of the appointment of a Director of Library Services.”⁹⁵⁰

Upon this decision being conveyed to them, the Durban Library Committee, concerned about the possible adverse effects that this decision might have on the staffing situation

⁹⁴⁵ University of Natal, *Annual report of the Principal*, 1973, p. 7.

⁹⁴⁶ G. Dubbeld, *A chronology of the University of Natal*, unpublished, [p. 15].

⁹⁴⁷ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of an ad hoc meeting held on 11th October 1967*.

⁹⁴⁸ University of Natal, Joint Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 18th October 1967*, p. 2.

⁹⁴⁹ [Advertisement for] University of Natal Director of Library Services, Durban, *SALA newsletter*, vol. 19, no. 6, December 1967, p. 130.

⁹⁵⁰ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 6th March 1968*, p. 1.

in the Durban libraries, convened a special meeting. It was noted that “the Durban libraries together with the Bindery and the Photoduplication departments involve much more administrative and planning work than is involved in the Pietermaritzburg centre.”⁹⁵¹ Furthermore, as Milburn pointed out in a report he prepared for this meeting, with 52 staff distributed between four libraries (Howard College, City Building, Medical Library and the Killie Campbell Africana Library) and the two ancillary departments mentioned above, “... proper and efficient control of all the library services in Durban is beyond the capacity of one person, unaided.”⁹⁵² The Durban Library Committee finally decided to recommend to the Joint Library Committee that a post of “Co-ordinating Librarian and Senior Librarian (Durban)”⁹⁵³ should be appointed before the retirement of the present Durban Librarian. They also requested that a Deputy Librarian (Durban) be appointed. The Librarian in Pietermaritzburg was to retain his status as Librarian. In fact, this recommended management structure was not new, being very similar to the pre-1964 structure prior to Malan’s successful request for an upgrade for the Deputy Librarian’s post in Durban to match the grade of the Pietermaritzburg Librarian.

The report was discussed at length by the Joint Library Committee at its April 1968 meeting but a decision could not be reached. The decision was deferred. The post of Director was to be retained but not filled, the matter of Library representation on Senate was to be “decided at a later date”⁹⁵⁴ and the post of Librarian (Durban) was to be filled before Milburn’s retirement at the end of 1968. Deliberations on the thorny issue of the staffing of the Durban libraries were postponed to “some future date.”⁹⁵⁵

In the end the three pressing problems were resolved quite quickly. The Durban Library Committee, determined to sort out the important matter of representation on Senate, pressed for a select committee of Senate to be set up to consider the matter.⁹⁵⁶ The matter was resolved when Senate accepted the Joint Library Committee’s

⁹⁵¹ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a special meeting held on 16th April 1968*, p. 1.

⁹⁵² L. Milburn, *Report on the staff situation in Durban*, April 1968, unpublished, p. 2.

⁹⁵³ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a special meeting held on 16th April 1968*, p. 2.

⁹⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁵⁶ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 11th September 1968*, p. 1.

recommendation that both Librarians become full members of Senate.⁹⁵⁷ Milburn's successor, Mr F. Scholtz, was appointed three months before Milburn's retirement after 14 years' service at the end of 1968. Scholtz, former Pretoria City Librarian,⁹⁵⁸ assumed duty on 7th October 1968. Nevertheless, the span of control of the Durban Librarian was still considered to be "impossibly large."⁹⁵⁹ At a special meeting held in December 1968, the Durban Library Committee decided that a post of Assistant Librarian on the existing staffing establishment should be upgraded to Deputy Librarian to alleviate the situation.⁹⁶⁰ At the same meeting it was also decided that Mr E.W.O. Pugsley, a professionally qualified librarian with ten years' experience working in the University Library, "being the most suitably qualified and experienced member of the staff"⁹⁶¹ be appointed to the post. Although an existing post had to be used as no new post had been approved, the unilateral manner in which this decision was taken seems quite extraordinary. Why was the post vacated by Fraser, who retired at the end of 1968, not upgraded and advertised? There were, however, no objections to the Durban Library Committee's actions and Pugsley started in his new job as Deputy Librarian on 1st January 1969. He resigned three years later in March 1972 to take up a career in the Anglican Church⁹⁶² and Miss E.M. van der Linde, formerly librarian in charge of the Killie Campbell Africana Library, was appointed to the vacant post.

Necessity soon dictated that a Deputy Librarian be appointed in Pietermaritzburg, too.

In his annual report for 1971 Brown mentioned that:

Experience has proved that in practice when the University Librarian is away the librarian in charge of the Cataloguing Department has to bear the administrative brunt. This librarian should really be the Deputy Librarian, with responsibility for Acquisitions and Administration, and the librarian in charge of Cataloguing should have no other responsibilities or distractions.⁹⁶³

⁹⁵⁷ University of Natal, Joint Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 16th April 1969*, p. 1

⁹⁵⁸ Personalia: Mnr F. Scholtz, *SALA newsletter*, vol. 20, no. 6, December 1968, p. 128.

⁹⁵⁹ F. Scholtz, *Item discussed at the Staff Selection Committee meeting held on Friday, 29th November, 1968*, 3rd December 1968, unpublished.

⁹⁶⁰ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a special meeting held on 4th December 1968*.

⁹⁶¹ Ibid.

⁹⁶² E.W.O. Pugsley, Personal communication 2nd April 2008.

⁹⁶³ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian's 10th annual report*, 1971, p. 4.

However, a different procedure was followed in Pietermaritzburg. The post of Deputy Librarian was advertised⁹⁶⁴ and the successful applicant, Miss C. Vietzen, formerly Librarian in charge of the Cataloguing Department, who had worked in the Library since 1963, was appointed Deputy Librarian with effect from 1st January 1973. Brown took pre-retirement leave from July 1973 and Vietzen managed the Pietermaritzburg Library in an acting capacity for six months until the new Librarian, Mr D.E. Schauder, former Director of the National Library for the Blind in Grahamstown, commenced duty in January 1974. Although Schauder remained barely more than three years, he introduced a number of new ideas and made many changes in the Pietermaritzburg Library.

The 1969 *Annual report* was therefore the last jointly issued report. From 1970 onwards the libraries functioned as independent entities, each with its own library committee. Coblans's prediction regarding the Joint Library Committee 20 years previously⁹⁶⁵ came true. The Committee became merely a financial decision-making body and, in fact, it could hardly be called that when it failed to make a decision on a controversial financial matter raised by the Durban Library Committee in 1971, as discussed below in the section on Finances. Small wonder that the Durban Library Committee pointed out in 1971 that it had "lost its usefulness"⁹⁶⁶ once the Directorship of the Library was abandoned. Committee meetings were held less frequently and eventually, at a special meeting held on 28th February 1972, it was decided that "in future the Joint Library Committee would meet only on an ad hoc basis whenever it may be necessary to call a meeting to consider major issues concerning finance and policy."⁹⁶⁷ Further, it was agreed that the two Librarians would, in future, be responsible to their respective centre's Vice-Principals and that the chairmen of the local library committees would report directly to Senate.⁹⁶⁸

In retrospect it is hardly surprising that the unitary library service at the University of Natal failed. A system whereby the management and supervision of a library service is

⁹⁶⁴ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 9th November 1972*, p. 1.

⁹⁶⁵ H. Coblans, *Some comments by the Librarian on proposed terms of reference [of the Joint Library Committee]*, 1947, unpublished.

⁹⁶⁶ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 21st June 1971*, p. 3.

⁹⁶⁷ University of Natal, Joint Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 28th February, 1972*.

⁹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

vested in two different standing committees,⁹⁶⁹ whose members often have differing priorities and different agendas, is bound to encounter many difficulties. In addition, there had quite obviously been a clash of personalities between the Director, Malan, and the Pietermaritzburg Librarian, Brown. In the case of the University of Natal the subsequent difficulties proved to be insurmountable.

9.2. Finances

During the 1970s the South African economy was beginning to show signs of stagflation, described as “continuous increases in the rate of inflation coupled with lower real growth rates.”⁹⁷⁰ On 21st December 1971 the South African government devalued the rand by 12.28% in an effort to stimulate the domestic economy⁹⁷¹ and a further devaluation of 17.9% was implemented on 21st September 1975.⁹⁷² While these devaluations had a beneficial effect on South Africa’s balance of payments they had a negative effect on the Library’s purchasing power. In 1975 Schauder noted that the cost of the Pietermaritzburg periodical subscriptions had increased by more than 50%.⁹⁷³ Scholtz also noted that there had been an increase of 22% in the cost of imported library materials as well as an approximate increase of 25% in the price of periodicals.⁹⁷⁴ Since most books and periodicals were purchased from overseas, the resultant overall increase in costs “probably exceeded 50%.”⁹⁷⁵ Although the University had increased the library allocation in 1975 considerably, from R26,00 per student to R68,00 per student,⁹⁷⁶ spiraling costs negated the advantages of the increased grant. Of course, the Libraries of the University of Natal were not the only ones feeling the pinch. Musiker, in his history of the University of the Witwatersrand Library, states:

From 1973 onwards, the University Library in common with many other South African libraries, entered a doubtful period in its financial history ... In terms of aggregate amounts the Library’s total budget exceeded the million rand mark in 1976 for the first time in its history ... While this appeared to be an impressive amount, the grants had not in actual fact kept pace with purchasing power in inflationary times.⁹⁷⁷

⁹⁶⁹ University of Natal, *Calendar*, 1962, [S.l.: The University, 1962], p. 52.

⁹⁷⁰ *South Africa*, 3rd edition, [Pretoria]: Department of Information, 1976, p. 535.

⁹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 536.

⁹⁷² University of Natal, Durban Libraries, *Annual report*, 1974/1975, p. 16.

⁹⁷³ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian’s 14th annual report*, 1975, p. 6.

⁹⁷⁴ University of Natal, Durban Libraries, *Annual report*, 1974/1975, p. 16.

⁹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁹⁷⁷ R. Musiker & N. Musiker, *Wits Library*, Johannesburg: Scarecrow, 1998, p. 62.

The only South African academic library which remained relatively unaffected by the unfavourable economic situation was the University of South Africa (Unisa) Library which, says Suttie, achieved “unprecedented growth in the 1970s” due to “Unisa’s financial well-being [which] allowed larger allocations to the library.”⁹⁷⁸ This can probably be ascribed to the relationships forged between Unisa on the one hand and government and the private sector on the other. As Suttie notes, “Unisa’s Sanlam Library was emblematic of its connection with big business ...”⁹⁷⁹

The prognosis for academic libraries was not entirely gloomy, however. On the positive side Suttie notes that during the 1970s higher costs “forced libraries to co-operate in order to cut down on unnecessary duplication.”⁹⁸⁰ As far as university libraries were concerned, this was effected mainly through the Inter-University Library Committee (IULC), a sub-committee of the Committee of University Principals,⁹⁸¹ launched, says Suttie, “because the National Library Advisory Council proved rather ineffective in orchestrating co-operation among important libraries.”⁹⁸² The IULC met once a year and had a number of regional sub-committees, of which the Committee on Library Co-operation in Natal (COLCIN) was one. COLCIN was formed towards the end of 1975.⁹⁸³ Membership consisted of the four University Librarians in Natal, namely, Durban-Westville, Natal (Durban and Pietermaritzburg) and Zululand. Matters discussed at COLCIN meetings included co-operative purchasing of periodicals, the rationalization of periodical subscriptions in Natal and arrangements for reciprocal borrowing facilities. However, co-operation proved to have limited benefits. The Pietermaritzburg Library Committee considered that the investigation into duplication of holdings between Durban, Pietermaritzburg and Durban-Westville was “unlikely to make a substantial difference to the total journal commitment and therefore to the amount available for books”⁹⁸⁴ and at a later meeting Schauder was reported as stating that “it appeared that co-operation was unlikely to effect any real economies. In most cases of duplication,

⁹⁷⁸ M.-L. Suttie, The formative years of the University of South Africa Library, 1946 to 1976, *Mousaion*, vol. 23, no. 1, 2005, p. 114.

⁹⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁸⁰ M.-L. Suttie, The University of South Africa Library, *Mousaion*, vol. 24, no. 2, 2006, p. 287.

⁹⁸¹ The Committee of University Principals was established under the Universities Act no. 61 of 1955.

⁹⁸² Suttie, *Mousaion*, vol. 24, no. 2, 2006, p. 287.

⁹⁸³ University of Natal, Durban Libraries, *Annual report 1976/1977*, p. 24.

⁹⁸⁴ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 17th March 1976*, p. 2.

journals were needed locally.”⁹⁸⁵ It was only 20 years later that real co-operative efforts were made to rationalise expensive periodical subscriptions on the part of the two University of Natal Libraries. The rationalisation of periodical subscriptions will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Eleven.

Library finances were further complicated at the University of Natal by the dual-centred nature of the University. The division of library funds between the Libraries of the two centres became an extremely contentious issue when the Durban Library Committee made representations to the Joint Library Committee regarding the division of the library materials budget between Durban and Pietermaritzburg. In a memorandum dated 10th June 1971 Scholtz noted that:

It is accepted without argument that the Durban Library is much below standard as far as its literature resources are concerned. It therefore seems a great pity that it must subsidise Pietermaritzburg to the extent shown...⁹⁸⁶

The “extent shown” in the calculations indicated that while the University had granted an amount of R19,00 per subsidy student for the libraries, the application of the formula⁹⁸⁷ devised by the Joint Library Committee resulted in an amount of R17,09 per subsidy student being allowed for Durban and R23,41 per subsidy student for Pietermaritzburg. The Joint Library Committee was quite unable to deal with the issue. At the meeting of 27th October 1971 the problem was deferred to a special meeting scheduled for 28th February 1972. No solution was forthcoming at this meeting, either. Instead it was resolved that the issue “be reviewed as soon as any significant change occurs, resulting from either the De Vries Commission report or the Faculty of Agriculture being brought in to the Pietermaritzburg centre.”⁹⁸⁸ Nearly two years passed and nothing further transpired until the Durban Library Committee took the initiative and sent a memorandum to the Senate Executive (Senex) who referred the matter to the dormant Joint Library Committee. A meeting of this Committee was convened on 10th December 1974. Projected calculations for 1975 showed that, while Council had allocated a library

⁹⁸⁵ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 18th August 1976*, p. 2.

⁹⁸⁶ F. Scholtz, *Memorandum on amount requested for the purchase of books and periodicals for 1972*, unpublished.

⁹⁸⁷ The Joint Library divided the total grant into two parts, allowing 70% for the number of academic departments per centre and 30% for the number of students per centre. The formula thus favoured the centre with the most number of academic departments. See Appendix 4 for details of formulae applied through the years to the library book allocations.

⁹⁸⁸ University of Natal, Joint Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 28th February 1972*, p. 2.

grant of R26 per subsidy student, the application of the formula resulted in Durban receiving R24,22 and Pietermaritzburg receiving R29,49 per student. The Durban Library Committee insisted that funds should be allocated solely on the basis of student numbers, that the formula “favours unduly the centre which has the greater number of small departments”,⁹⁸⁹ and that it was “not valid to argue that all departments need the same basic book stock since knowledge is not compartmentalized in this way and frequently the newer departments use the same material as older departments.”⁹⁹⁰ Discussion revealed that, if the Durban Library Committee’s proposal to allocate funds solely on the basis of student numbers was adopted, the Pietermaritzburg Library’s allocation would drop by R15,000. Naturally, this proposal did not find favour with the Pietermaritzburg representatives on the Committee. It seems that, by this time, the recommendations contained in Kennedy’s report, *Books for study and research*, had been completely forgotten. Kennedy had stated that:

Another peculiarity of university libraries is that in many of them the financial allocation for books and journal is based on the number of students in each department. The basic stock for any given subject will cost the same whether it is to be used by 20 or 200 students ...⁹⁹¹

The basis of Kennedy’s argument was that the amount of funds required for the purchase of books and journals should be increased in proportion to the number of faculties and departments there were. His argument actually supported the formula used by the Joint Library Committee for dividing the funds between the centres. It was unfortunate that the Kennedy report had apparently, by this time, been forgotten and thus no agreement was reached. The meeting eventually adjourned without a decision being made.⁹⁹² The status quo remained.

However, on 20th June 1975 it was resolved by the University Council that “an annual allocation per student be adopted for the determination of funds to be allocated to the libraries to cover both staff and students, and that for 1975 the allocation be R68,00 per

⁹⁸⁹ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Memorandum on the Durban Library Committee’s objections to the existing formula for the division of funds between Durban and Pietermaritzburg for the purchase of books and journals*, unpublished, p. 1.

⁹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁹⁹¹ R.F. Kennedy, *Books for study and research*, Potchefstroom, Potchefstroom University for C.H.E., 1962, p. 83.

⁹⁹² University of Natal, Joint Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 10th December 1974*.

student.”⁹⁹³ Scholtz reported with satisfaction that: “These decisions cancelled a long-standing but unsatisfactory practice ...”⁹⁹⁴

9.3. Arson and theft

Apart from official co-operation with other university libraries through the offices of the IULC and COLCIN, the Durban Library of the University also extended an offer of assistance in quite different circumstances. In October 1968 the library of the University College for Indians⁹⁹⁵ on Salisbury Island in the Durban bay was set alight. A large part of the collection was badly damaged although the reserved collection and the periodicals section escaped the flames⁹⁹⁶. However, the law collections were completely destroyed and many other books were burnt. The arson was it seems, politically motivated although it appears that no-one ever came forward to claim responsibility. It was a reminder that libraries were not immune to attack by political activists. The Durban Library offered assistance to the College students. A brief section in the minutes of the Durban Library Committee meeting of 13th November 1968 records that:

...the Library of the University College for Indians had recently suffered heavy damage by fire, and a suggestion had been made that students of the College be allowed temporary borrowing facilities from our libraries, i.e. until the end of November. With the sanction of the Principal and the agreement of the chairman these facilities were offered and accepted, but no response had followed.⁹⁹⁷

This offer made a refreshing change from the attitude of former Durban Library Committees which had refused permission to the “Non-European” students of the University of Natal to make use of the library facilities at Howard College.⁹⁹⁸ The lack of response was thus disappointing. It is also not easy to explain. While the library in the Memorial Tower building was probably too far out of town for the Indian students, many of whom relied mainly on public transport, the Commerce Library in the City Building, with its collections of law, business and education books, was conveniently situated in

⁹⁹³ University of Natal, Durban Libraries, *Annual report*, 1974/1975, p. 14.

⁹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹⁵ The University College for Indians became the University of Durban-Westville in 1971. See Chapter Three, section 3.2.

⁹⁹⁶ G.H. Haffajee, who was, at one time, a library assistant at the University College for Indians on Salisbury Island, Personal communication, 28th March, 2008.

⁹⁹⁷ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 13th November 1968*, p. 2.

⁹⁹⁸ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 22nd April 1937*, and University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 23rd May 1955*.

town. It is possible, according to G.H. Haffajee, one-time library assistant at the University College for Indians, that the person to whom the offer was made and who accepted it did not tell the students or anyone else about it.⁹⁹⁹ The information may have been deliberately withheld or simply forgotten.

While the University of Natal Libraries were not directly affected by the arson described above, the Main Library in Durban became the victim of another crime. During the course of 1975 it was discovered that approximately 360 rare and valuable books had been stolen from the Memorial Tower building. The books were taken from the Powell Collection of Early Science and Technology as well as another collection of early published works housed in the same locked premises. The thieves (for more than one person was involved) had, over a period of some months, surveyed the collection, noting the rarest and most valuable works. Access was gained to the collection from the roof of the Memorial Tower building through a window which had been left slightly open for this purpose. Thereafter the stolen items were shipped overseas and, by the time the theft was discovered, many had already been sold “by auction at sales rooms in another country.”¹⁰⁰⁰ According to the description of the crime in the *Annual report for 1974/1975*, it appears that the theft was only discovered “because of the alertness of a well-known antiquarian bookseller.”¹⁰⁰¹ Although the South African Police were called in and some of the books were eventually found in Europe and returned, a number of them were never located.¹⁰⁰²

9.4. Accommodation

The libraries in both centres experienced shortages of space during this period although the problems in Durban were arguably much worse than those in Pietermaritzburg. The services of both libraries were also expanded by the establishment of branch libraries; two were established in Pietermaritzburg, namely the Agriculture and Law branch libraries, and four in Durban, namely the Architecture, Law, Music and Science and Engineering branch libraries. Not surprisingly, concern was expressed about the financial implications of establishing branch libraries, in particular how the greater number of branch libraries in Durban would affect the Pietermaritzburg library. The

⁹⁹⁹ Haffajee, Personal communication, 28th March, 2008.

¹⁰⁰⁰ University of Natal, Durban Libraries, *Annual report*, 1974/1975, p. 20.

¹⁰⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰² University of Natal, Durban Libraries, *Annual report*, 1976/1977, p. 20.

Joint Library Committee therefore, at the request of Professor G.D.L. Schreiner, delegated the task of investigating the cost implications to the two University Librarians.¹⁰⁰³ Simultaneously, the Durban Library Committee asked Scholtz, with the assistance of Professor P.H. Connell, Director of Physical Planning, to report on “the cost associated with the establishment of branch libraries”.¹⁰⁰⁴ The specific focus of the investigation was “whether a policy of decentralization in Durban will influence Pietermaritzburg adversely in the area of library finance”¹⁰⁰⁵ but it was pointed out that it would serve no purpose to compare costs between Durban and Pietermaritzburg, since it could result in the undesirable situation where “essential development could be curtailed ... because the other centre does not see the need for it.”¹⁰⁰⁶ The library needs of each centre should, they thought, be considered separately on their own merits. In conclusion they noted that library decentralisation obviously did add to the cost of library service, in particular as far as staffing needs were concerned. In fact, as Scholtz pointed out in his *Annual report for 1972*, decentralization could become very expensive indeed.¹⁰⁰⁷ Years later his warning was to come true and his words were echoed by Pietermaritzburg University Librarian, Merrett, who pointed out the “gross uneconomic nature of a branch library structure” in his submission to the Libraries Task Team in 1997.¹⁰⁰⁸

9.4.1. The Main Library, Pietermaritzburg

The Pietermaritzburg Library building, completed in 1964, had been designed to last for ten years. The original plan allowed for expansion into the basement area but this had, for some years, been in use as an undercover parking lot and had also provided temporary housing for the University Press, the Language Laboratory and several academic departments. In spite of vague suggestions being made regarding the “erection of a library on the golfcourse [sic] campus”¹⁰⁰⁹ Schauder went ahead with a request that “by mid-1976 all areas of the basement ... be returned to the library”¹⁰¹⁰ and in his triennial plan for 1976-1978, motivated strongly for this space:

When the building was planned it was intended that the full basement should be available for library use. During the past ten years strong protests were lodged by

¹⁰⁰³ F. Scholtz, *Proposed new library building*, 11th March 1971, p. 1.

¹⁰⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰⁷ University of Natal, Durban Libraries, *Annual report*, 1972, p. 12

¹⁰⁰⁸ C.E. Merrett, *Further submission to Libraries Task Team*, 1997.

¹⁰⁰⁹ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, *Minutes of a meeting held on 19th March, 1975*, p. 2

¹⁰¹⁰ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Triennial plan, 1976-1978*, unpublished, p. 17.

the University Librarian and often the Library Committee, each time a new encroachment took place. It was originally projected that the building ... including the full basement area, should be adequate for ten years. These ten years are now up and the unavailability of the alienated basement space is the main reason for the accommodation problems ... on the upper floors.¹⁰¹¹

Fortunately, the modern, modular design of the building allowed for such extension without the expense and inconvenience of major building alterations. When the Library Committee met in October 1975 it could be reported that “funds had been approved for the conversion of the basement area ... into a Reserve Book Room and Audiovisual area early next year.”¹⁰¹²

9.4.2. Branch libraries in Pietermaritzburg

Small subsidiary Law and Commerce libraries had, for many years, been housed along with their respective Faculties in the City Permanent Building in Longmarket Street, Pietermaritzburg. Although the ordering and processing of items were carried out by library staff, these were in reality little more than departmental collections. However, in February 1972 the Faculty of Law moved to a new building on the Golf Road campus, a short walk from the main campus, and a new branch library “in attractive and spacious quarters”¹⁰¹³ was also opened. An article in the *Natal University news* boasted that “The law building incorporates a fine library with a gallery to house the faculty’s 8,000 volumes and reading carrells for 48 students”¹⁰¹⁴ and Brown noted with pleasure that “This is now becoming a very good law library handsomely housed.”¹⁰¹⁵

A year later, in 1973, the library of the Department of Agricultural Technical Services (formerly the Department of Agriculture) was transferred to the University¹⁰¹⁶. The Faculty of Agriculture itself had been established in Pietermaritzburg in 1949 but was only incorporated into the University on 1st April 1973,¹⁰¹⁷ although it took another three

¹⁰¹¹ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Triennial plan, 1976-1978*, p. 18.

¹⁰¹² University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 23rd October 1975*, p. 2.

¹⁰¹³ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian’s 11th annual report, 1972*, p. 6.

¹⁰¹⁴ Law Faculty moves to Scottsville, *Natal University news*, no. 13, Sept. 1972, p. 4.

¹⁰¹⁵ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian’s 11th annual report, 1972*, p. 6.

¹⁰¹⁶ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian’s 12th annual report, 1973*, p. 7.

¹⁰¹⁷ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 21st March 1973*, p. 3.

years before the incorporation was fully accomplished.¹⁰¹⁸ The transfer came as no surprise since it had been noted at a Joint Library Committee meeting in 1970 that the University was “going to make direct representations to retain the Faculty of Agriculture within the University.”¹⁰¹⁹ An Assistant Librarian from the main library had to be seconded to the Agriculture Library to take charge but the integration into the University’s library service nevertheless took three years. Despite the cancellation of all duplicate periodical subscriptions, funding was found to be a major problem. Vietzen voiced her dissatisfaction, complaining that funds were “inadequate to maintain the facility at its former level.”¹⁰²⁰ Monetary assistance, which should have been forthcoming from the government,¹⁰²¹ never materialised. In 1976 the Registrar wrote to the Department of Agricultural Technical Services, pointing out that, according to the findings of the Van Wyk de Vries Commission, the Department of Agricultural Technical Services should maintain its ties with the universities and should also contribute to the upkeep of the libraries.¹⁰²² It took nearly a year for the Secretary for Agricultural Technical Services to reply to the Registrar, stating that it was regretted “that it was not possible to subsidise the Agriculture Library.”¹⁰²³ The University therefore had to bear the full cost of maintenance.

9.4.3. A new central library for Durban

In Durban planning for a new library building began in earnest in 1969. In a memorandum presented to the Durban Library Committee on 19th March, 1969, Scholtz stated that:

Although the Tower Building could be adopted and altered to be a minimally efficient Library building, the fact remains that it could never be made into a really well-planned, and functional modern university library.¹⁰²⁴

¹⁰¹⁸ University of Natal, Faculty of Agriculture, Minutes of a meeting held on 4th April 1976, p. 690.

¹⁰¹⁹ University of Natal, Joint Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 19th October 1970*, unpublished, p. 2.

¹⁰²⁰ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian’s 15th annual report*, 1976, p. 9.

¹⁰²¹ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 21st March 1973*, unpublished, p. 1.

¹⁰²² University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 23rd November 1976*, unpublished, p. 1.

¹⁰²³ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 17th August 1977*, unpublished, p. 1.

¹⁰²⁴ F. Scholtz, *Investigation into the accommodation of the Durban Library of the University of Natal*, 1969, unpublished.

The Committee agreed and a three-person planning committee, consisting of Scholtz, the chair, Professor Bayles, and Professor Connell was immediately constituted. It was also agreed that application be made “for a loan of R2,000,000 to initiate the project over a period of 5 years.”¹⁰²⁵ In 1975, as part of the planning project, Scholtz even travelled to Britain and the United States of America to visit various university libraries in order to assess their buildings. Unfortunately, the hard work was in vain for the worsening economic situation in South Africa meant that planning for a new central library on the Howard College campus in Durban could not be continued. Disappointingly, plans had to be shelved until the economy and the financial situation of the University itself improved.

9.4.4. Branch libraries in Durban

The Architecture Branch Library was the first of the Durban branch libraries to be opened. On 3rd March 1965 the Durban Library Committee had finally agreed to establish this branch library due to “the special circumstances in relation to architectural and town planning studies ...”¹⁰²⁶ The catalyst for this library had been the establishment by the Department of Architecture of a Technical Reference Library of building samples and similar materials for the use of students. The academic staff were of the opinion that it would be beneficial to the Architecture students to have access to relevant books and periodicals together with samples of the raw materials of their profession.¹⁰²⁷ There were numerous delays due to financial, staffing and accommodation problems¹⁰²⁸ but despite these impediments the new branch library opened its doors on 28th April 1969 in two small rooms loaned by the Department of Civil Engineering. Four years later it moved to spacious new premises in the Denis Shepstone building.¹⁰²⁹ Due to the dedicated efforts over the years of both the academic staff and the librarian in charge, the collection was built up to become arguably one of the finest Architecture libraries in Africa.¹⁰³⁰

¹⁰²⁵ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 19th March 1969*, unpublished, p. 3.

¹⁰²⁶ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 3^d March 1965*, unpublished, p. 3.

¹⁰²⁷ B. Kearney, (former Dean of the Faculty of Architecture), Personal communication, 28th March 2008.

¹⁰²⁸ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 7th September 1966*, p. 1.

¹⁰²⁹ University of Natal, Durban Libraries, *Annual report*, 1973, p. 19.

¹⁰³⁰ Kearney, Personal communication, 28th March 2008.

In 1972 two more branch libraries were opened in Durban and a fourth followed in 1973. The first of the two was a new Music branch library. A new Department of Music was opened in Durban in 1972 and Professor M. Brimer, first head of the department, had insisted that a music library would be required. He wrote to Scholtz¹⁰³¹ from Monash University in Australia some months prior to taking up his appointment, detailing his requirements for a library. Like the Architecture Library it was to be a specialist collection and would contain not only relevant books and periodicals but also music scores and records for the use of academic staff and students of music. The Eleanor Bonnar Music Branch Library, named after the donor of the bequest which formed the foundation for the collection,¹⁰³² opened in March 1972. The naming of the library caused some minor irritation to the Durban Library Committee which had not been consulted, but, since the naming of the library was a *fait accompli*, it was allowed to pass.¹⁰³³

The establishment of a law branch library was necessitated by the closing of the City Building Library. Closure was planned for the long vacation in December 1971¹⁰³⁴ but in the end it had to remain open until the refurbishment of the premises for the new Law Branch Library, on the ground floor of the Memorial Tower building in rooms vacated by the Physics Department, was complete. Its closure marked the end of an era. Scholtz reported in 1971 that:

This library incorporated the old so-called Non-European Library and, in the more than thirty years of its existence, has served several generations of law and accountancy articulated clerks, education students, part-time arts, social science and commerce students and non-White students ... Its passing marks the closing of an era and the beginning of a period of centralisation of all studies except medicine on the Howard College campus. Labelled at various times dingy, inconvenient, inadequate and cramped, the Oldham¹⁰³⁵ building Library nevertheless served thousands of part-time students and played an important role in the history of part-time studies in the University. That, perhaps, is as good an epitaph as any.¹⁰³⁶

¹⁰³¹ M. Brimer, Letter to F. Scholtz, 17th July, 1970, unpublished.

¹⁰³² R. Musiker, *Companion to South African libraries*, Craighall: Ad Donker, 1986, p. 137.

¹⁰³³ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 27th September 1971*, p. 5.

¹⁰³⁴ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 27th September 1971*, p. 4.

¹⁰³⁵ City Building was renamed Oldham House during the course of 1970 in memory of Professor Orlando Oldham, first Professor of Commerce and Administration at the Natal University College in Durban. – University of Natal, Durban Libraries, *Annual report*, 1970, p. 8.

¹⁰³⁶ University of Natal, Durban Libraries, *Annual report*, 1971, p. 16.

The new Law Branch Library opened its doors on 1st May 1972. Although part-time classes continued at Oldham House until 1979, when the University finally vacated the premises, a library service was no longer provided on the premises.¹⁰³⁷ It was indeed the end of an era.

Due to the “peculiar geographical problems of the Durban campus”¹⁰³⁸ a third branch library was established to “serve the new Science Complex at the Southern extremity of the Durban campus”.¹⁰³⁹ Opened on 6th August 1973, it was housed in temporary quarters in the newly built Physics and Mathematics building. Following a decision taken at an *ad hoc* meeting held on 25th January 1972, both science and engineering books and journals were moved to this site and it became the Science and Engineering Branch Library.¹⁰⁴⁰ As per the Durban Library’s resolution in 1970 that “a library facility be taken into consideration as an integral part of the new science complex,”¹⁰⁴¹ it was planned that at some time in the future a new science library would be built as part of this complex. It was not to be. The library remained in its temporary accommodation until it was moved onto the fourth floor of the newly built E.G. Malherbe Library at the end of 1987. The collections were eventually re-integrated into the general collections of the E.G. Malherbe Library.

9.5. Library staff

“A fresh mind on a library’s organizational structure is often an advantage,”¹⁰⁴² wrote Schauder, the new University Librarian, in his first report to the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee. The University, in 1970, had finally made the decision to distinguish formally between library staff who had professional qualifications and those who did not,¹⁰⁴³ thus bringing the library “into line with the pattern in most university libraries in

¹⁰³⁷ M.T. Webster (granddaughter of the caretaker), Personal communication, 25th March, 2008.

¹⁰³⁸ Scholtz, *Proposed new library building*, 11th March 1971, p. 1.

¹⁰³⁹ University of Natal, *Calendar*, 1972, p. 62.

¹⁰⁴⁰ University of Natal Library, [Durban], *Minutes of a meeting held on 25th January 1972 ... to decide upon the categories of material to be removed from the Main Library, Durban to the new Science Branch Library*, unpublished, p. 1.

¹⁰⁴¹ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a special meeting held on 21st May 1970*, unpublished, p. 2.

¹⁰⁴² University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian’s report no. 28*, 8th August, 1974, unpublished, p. 1.

¹⁰⁴³ Qualified staff became “Librarian” or “Assistant Librarian,” according to their years of post-qualification experience, while semi-qualified and unqualified staff became either “Senior Library Assistant,” “Library Assistant” or “Administrative Assistant.” The Librarians in charge of the

the country...”¹⁰⁴⁴ However Schauder began to consider staffing structures which would not only assist in the provision of a better service to library users but also develop staff in their professional capacity. He expressed his conviction at a meeting of the Library Committee in 1974 that “senior library staff should be encouraged to engage in research work”¹⁰⁴⁵ and at another meeting later that year that he was considering “a new ‘professional’ staffing structure involving subject librarians spanning the whole subject spectrum”.¹⁰⁴⁶

In order to deliver a better service to library users, it became necessary to introduce what he termed “radical changes”¹⁰⁴⁷ in the staffing arrangements in the Pietermaritzburg Library. In order to relieve the one and only librarian in the Circulation Department of the administrative duties which were consuming her time, Schauder himself took these over, in the process relinquishing control of technical services, including the acquisitions and cataloguing functions of the Library, to the Deputy University Librarian. This division of duties allowed the librarian in her new role as a “Reader’s Advisor” to concentrate “exclusively on reference work and reader assistance.”¹⁰⁴⁸

In Durban, although the City Building Library closed, the establishment of four branch libraries inevitably affected the staffing of the Library. A specialist music librarian was employed to manage the Eleanor Bonnar Music Branch Library as had been requested by Professor Brimer,¹⁰⁴⁹ but staff from the main library, in particular cataloguers, usually had to be seconded to other branch libraries. Scholtz pointed out that “Once new branch libraries ... have been established, this department [Cataloguing] is expected ... to bear much of the burden of running such branches by providing relief staff when needed.”¹⁰⁵⁰ The growth in student numbers on the Durban campus also placed a strain on library staff. Again, Scholtz drew attention to the unfavourable ratio of library staff to students in Durban as compared to other South African universities in his *Annual report* for 1973:

Durban and Pietermaritzburg Librarians were accorded the title “University Librarian” while the Deputy Librarian in Durban became “Deputy University Librarian.”

¹⁰⁴⁴ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian’s 8th annual report*, 1970, p. 4.

¹⁰⁴⁵ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 22nd March 1974*, p. 5.

¹⁰⁴⁶ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 21st August 1974*, p. 4.

¹⁰⁴⁷ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian’s 13th annual report*, 1974, p. 2.

¹⁰⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴⁹ M. Brimer, Letter to F. Scholtz, 17th July, 1970.

¹⁰⁵⁰ University of Natal, Durban Libraries, *Annual report*, 1972, p. 27.

Comparisons between the library staffing in this University and in seven other major South African universities from which it was possible to obtain data are ... depressing. The subsidy student number differs little – an average of 4 870 at the other seven universities as against 4 523 at Durban; and the number of service points is identical – five. But the seven other universities have an average staff complement of 58, compared with only 42 in Durban.¹⁰⁵¹

Little wonder, then, that he felt at his wits' end “regarding the stretching of available human resources to keep dissatisfaction at a minimum.”¹⁰⁵² Relief was at last afforded in 1975 when a “new dispensation”¹⁰⁵³ came into effect whereby the library committees, previously obliged only to distribute book funds, were themselves given the duty of distributing library funds between staff and books. Scholtz described the new system as “revolutionary”¹⁰⁵⁴ in that it gave the committees jurisdiction over staffing matters whereas they had previously “acted only in an advisory capacity.”¹⁰⁵⁵ It certainly allowed for greater flexibility in the distribution of the library grant since, subject to the approval of the University Staffing Committee in the case of promotions and the Academic Planning and Policy Committee in the case of new posts, the library committees could divert funds to where the need was greatest. The Durban Library Committee immediately requested that nine posts, which had been long-outstanding, be approved by the University for 1976. Seven of the nine were approved at the end of 1975¹⁰⁵⁶ and library management was able to anticipate being able to offer a better service to students the following year.

9.6. Establishment of a library school in Natal

The momentum to found a School of Librarianship was directly related to the need of the University Library to employ qualified staff. It has already been noted that, as long ago as 1958 Milburn, then Deputy Librarian in Durban, had complained about the difficulties of hiring professionally qualified staff which he blamed on the “lack of training facilities” in Natal.¹⁰⁵⁷ Bell notes that the University had first considered a School of Librarianship when the post of Director of Library Services was advertised in 1961. In an interview with Brown she elicited the information that “the University wanted the appointee to

¹⁰⁵¹ University of Natal, Durban Libraries, *Annual report, 1973*, p. 12.

¹⁰⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁰⁵³ University of Natal, Durban Libraries, *Annual report, 1974/1975*, p. 12.

¹⁰⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹⁰⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵⁶ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian's 13th annual report, 1974*, p. 13.

¹⁰⁵⁷ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report, 1958*, p. 3.

plan new library buildings for both the Durban and Pietermaritzburg campuses and to start a School of Librarianship.”¹⁰⁵⁸ Malan, with his experience as Head of the Department of Library Science at the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education¹⁰⁵⁹ was the ideal candidate but during his tenure as Director no further developments took place. In 1968 the Joint Library Committee decided that Senate’s attention should be drawn to the difficulties of attracting qualified librarians to vacant posts in the University.¹⁰⁶⁰ It is stated in the minutes that:

All libraries in Natal have to staff themselves in the large majority of cases from people already working in the province. As there is this shortage of librarians the need exists for investigation into the desirability for the establishment of a library school in Natal.¹⁰⁶¹

A memorandum, compiled by Brown but presented in the names of both University Librarians, was presented to the Joint Library Committee at its meeting of 16 April 1969. The Committee requested that the Librarians “broaden this memo and especially elaborate on the motivation.”¹⁰⁶² Scholtz subsequently revised and expanded the memorandum and it was presented to the Joint Library Committee meeting of 22nd October 1968 at which it was accepted. The Joint Library Committee agreed that “the establishment of a School of Librarianship is strongly supported ... the Committee requested that the memorandum be submitted to the Registrar for forwarding to the appropriate University authorities.”¹⁰⁶³ Bell records that the proposal was agreed to in principle by the Senate Executive in March 1970 and that at the Senate meeting of 16th September 1970, it was agreed to establish the school in Pietermaritzburg. She notes that, according to Brown, there were two reasons for choosing Pietermaritzburg. One reason was that the Pietermaritzburg case had been well prepared and presented and the second reason was that the University was “always looking for new departments to start in Pietermaritzburg so they didn’t all go to Durban”.¹⁰⁶⁴ The Durban Library Committee and Scholtz himself were deeply disappointed. Scholtz was detailed by the Durban

¹⁰⁵⁸ F.R. Bell, *The Department of Information Studies, University of Natal*, M.I.S. thesis, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1998, p. 101.

¹⁰⁵⁹ S.I. Malan, *South African libraries*, vol. 34, no. 4, April 1967, p. 126.

¹⁰⁶⁰ University of Natal, Joint Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 24th April 1968*, p. 2.

¹⁰⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶² University of Natal, Joint Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 16th April 1969*, p. 1.

¹⁰⁶³ University of Natal, Joint Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 22nd October 1968*, p. 1.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Bell, *The Department of Information Studies, University of Natal*, p. 110.

Library Committee to prepare an argument for presentation to the Joint Library Committee requesting the establishment of a library school on the Durban campus. It was presented at the Joint Library Committee meeting of 27th October 1971.

Diplomatically, the Committee decided to defer a decision, agreeing that:

... the incoming head of the Department of Librarianship be requested to investigate and report on the need for training in librarianship to be given in Durban, and that he be asked to give this matter priority.¹⁰⁶⁵

Classes in librarianship were introduced in Pietermaritzburg in 1973 with senior lecturer, Mr C. Mornet, presiding.¹⁰⁶⁶ A library school was never established on the Durban campus.

9.7. First steps towards automation

“Computers will probably cause a complete reassessment of the philosophy of librarianship”¹⁰⁶⁷ predicted Brown in 1968. There was considerable interest in the developments in computerisation of library processes in South Africa at this time. The University of South Africa (Unisa) lays claim to have been the first library in South Africa to exploit computers when it experimented with a computerised circulation system in 1967. The system worked with punched cards and was so successful that it was implemented fully in May 1968.¹⁰⁶⁸ The University of the Witwatersrand Library employed its first systems analyst in 1971. Mr I.W. Atkinson was appointed “to investigate the feasibility of mechanising and computerising the Library’s processing activities and services.”¹⁰⁶⁹ In 1968 the new Rand Afrikaans University developed a computerised catalogue and shortly thereafter added acquisitions and circulation modules.¹⁰⁷⁰ A survey of mechanised library services in South Africa by Lodder, carried out in 1971, revealed that:

University libraries are the most active with regard to the mechanisation of library housekeeping procedures and are either actively applying or developing

¹⁰⁶⁵ University of Natal, Joint Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 27th October 1971*, p. 2.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Librarianship comes to NU, *Natal University news*, no. 14, April 1973, p. 6.

¹⁰⁶⁷ R.A. Brown, *University Library, Pietermaritzburg*, 1968, unpublished, p. 11.

¹⁰⁶⁸ D.W. Fokker, Biblioteekrekenariserings in Suid-Afrika, in *Computers in South African libraries*, Cape Town: South African Library, 1988, p. 12.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Musiker & Musiker, *Wits Library*, p. 48.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Fokker, in *Computers in South African libraries*, p. 12.

mechanised procedures or keeping themselves informed of developments with a view to the application of the mechanised procedures in the next few years.¹⁰⁷¹

Lodder's survey also showed that the two academic libraries which had made the most progress were the Rand Afrikaans University in Johannesburg, which had computerised both cataloguing and circulation, and Unisa which had computerised its circulation function and the book lists for its study collection.¹⁰⁷²

In 1970, at the request of the Durban Library Committee, Mr C. Calvert, Head of the Cataloguing Department, produced a comprehensive report detailing the problems and pitfalls involved in library computerisation. Four years later Schauder, the new Pietermaritzburg University Librarian, in his August report to the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee urged that:

Serious consideration of mechanisation in the areas of orders, cataloguing and issues is necessary if the library's present ratio of salaries to acquisitions is to be maintained. Our library system is too small to bear the costs of developing a system from scratch and should rather seek to adapt a simple and relatively inexpensive system already successfully in use elsewhere, such as that at Rand Afrikaans University.¹⁰⁷³

In the end it was the Pietermaritzburg Library which took the initiative. Funds were made available for Professor M.C. Boshoff, head of the Department of Library Science at the University of Pretoria, to visit the University in December 1975 to carry out an investigation into the possibilities of the mechanisation of library processes. Boshoff had been "chiefly responsible for designing the mechanised system at Rand Afrikaans University"¹⁰⁷⁴ and was thus the ideal person to provide advice and direction. His recommendations laid the foundations for the future computerisation of the cataloguing process in Pietermaritzburg and also bore fruit in that the cataloguing and classification procedures were immediately simplified and streamlined,¹⁰⁷⁵ thus providing a basis for future adjustments to the role of the qualified staff in the Pietermaritzburg Library as will be described in the following section.

¹⁰⁷¹ N.M. Lodder, Preliminary survey of mechanised library and information services in South Africa, *South African libraries*, vol. 39, no. 2, October 1971, p. 106.

¹⁰⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 106.

¹⁰⁷³ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian's report no. 28*, 8th August 1974, unpublished, p. 1.

¹⁰⁷⁴ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian's report no. 29*, 24th October 1974, p. 5.

¹⁰⁷⁵ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian's 14th annual report*, 1975, p. 6.

9.8. User services

There is evidence during this period of a growing concern with reference services and reader guidance. In a report compiled by Scholtz and Pugsley in 1969, they commented on the “possible connection between university failures and ignorance of library facilities and their use.”¹⁰⁷⁶ The following year, as part of his motivation for an extra post in the Circulation Department, Scholtz stated that:

The University Library in Durban provides only the bare essentials and operates at a “stripped down” or “housekeeping” level. There is no question of a qualitative service in the sense of reference services, guidance of individual readers (especially students) and the initiating of students into the use and resources of the library ...”¹⁰⁷⁷

In 1973 the Acting University Librarian in Pietermaritzburg expressed regret that “the vital service of library instruction was not expanding”¹⁰⁷⁸ in part due to the lack of interest shown by academic staff but also because the library staff were far too busy with routine chores to “promote imaginative and effective programmes.”¹⁰⁷⁹ Her comment on a library instruction lecture offered to students studying for the post-graduate University Education Diploma indicates a definite need:

It was patently obvious that most students lacked even the most fundamental skills in finding information for themselves, and they remarked that such instruction would have been even more valuable much earlier in their University careers.¹⁰⁸⁰

The following year, as part of his re-organisation of the Pietermaritzburg Library staffing structure, newcomer Schauder changed the duties of the only Reader’s Advisor so that she could concentrate exclusively on providing guidance to users and reference services. However it was not until 1976 that radical changes were made with user service in mind and once again it was the Pietermaritzburg Library which took the initiative. In this case it seems that it was the innovative personality of Schauder himself that was the driving force here. Some years later he wrote that “If the library is appropriately organised, such gains [in productivity through the use of information technology] can enable it to serve

¹⁰⁷⁶ F. Scholtz & E.W.O. Pugsley, *Commission of Inquiry into Universities*, 6th June 1969, unpublished, p. 1.

¹⁰⁷⁷ F. Scholtz, *Requests for permanent establishment changes and for temporary posts in 1971*, unpublished, p. 1.

¹⁰⁷⁸ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian’s 12th annual report*, 1973, p. 5.

¹⁰⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

greater numbers of clients without a proportionate increase in staff numbers.”¹⁰⁸¹ The introduction of a subject librarian service in both libraries will be discussed in the following chapter.

9.9. Summary

The eight years from 1968 to 1975 saw several radical changes. The disbandment of central library organisation set each of the libraries on its own path of separate development. Finances were always an issue, as illustrated by the Durban Library Committee’s complaint that the Durban Library was subsidising the Pietermaritzburg Library and the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee’s concern that the proliferation of branch libraries in Durban would have an adverse financial effect on the Pietermaritzburg Library. The Durban Library Committee and the Durban University Librarian had to concede the battle for the School of Librarianship but did not do so willingly. Preliminary steps had been taken towards the automation of library processes in the form of an investigation undertaken by Boshoff, who had been instrumental in designing the mechanised system at the Rand Afrikaans University. The following chapter traces the separate paths each library took as they moved into the era of modern library services.

¹⁰⁸¹ D. Schauder, A gentle transformation, in *A world too wide*, edited by J. Sherman, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand Library, 1993, p. 79.

Chapter Ten

The age of automation, 1976 - 1989

The political turmoil following the Soweto uprising on 16th June 1976¹⁰⁸² affected every aspect of South African life. Although some considered that the real impact of the student riots “had not really filtered through to the universities,”¹⁰⁸³ the University of Natal did not escape unscathed. Only two days after the Soweto uprising, on Friday 18th June 1976, a “deliberate attempt”¹⁰⁸⁴ was made to burn down the Wentworth Branch of the Medical Library. Although little structural damage was done, books and furniture were damaged in the fire.¹⁰⁸⁵ The miscreants were never caught. It was an unpleasant reminder of the vulnerability of libraries in troubled times.

The 1980s dawned with the South African government, under the leadership of P.W. Botha, struggling to reform apartheid in a “complex attempt to adapt to changing circumstances without sacrificing Afrikaner power.”¹⁰⁸⁶ The reforms included the relaxation of petty apartheid laws, labour reforms, and the scrapping of the “iniquitous pass system which so controlled the labour mobility of black South Africans”¹⁰⁸⁷ but were undermined by several factors including Botha’s own “bumbling reform management style ... [and] a weakening economy beset by many structural dysfunctions...”¹⁰⁸⁸ For the universities, the relaxation of government restrictions on university admissions in 1983 led to ever-increasing numbers of Black students, formerly confined to their “ethnic” universities, enrolling at the universities formerly designated for “whites only”. Bell noted that, “The most notable challenge to the University in the 1980s, has been and is,

¹⁰⁸² A protest march by a large crowd of Black school children in Soweto, a township near Johannesburg, on 16th June 1976, ended in tragedy. The children were protesting against the imposition of Afrikaans-medium instruction in Black secondary schools. Police opened fire on the protestors, killing two. News of the trouble spread and by evening large areas of Soweto were in flames. The uprising lasted three days and spread to other centres.

¹⁰⁸³ A.S.C. Hooper, Academic library management in South Africa in the 1980s, in *A world too wide*, edited by J. Sherman, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand Library, 1998, p. 12.

¹⁰⁸⁴ University of Natal, Durban Libraries, *Annual report, 1976/1977*, p. 22.

¹⁰⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸⁶ L. Thompson, *A history of South Africa*, Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2006, p. 217.

¹⁰⁸⁷ B. Pottinger, I outlived the bastards, *Sunday Tribune Opinion*, Nov. 5, 2006, p. 22.

¹⁰⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

the changing composition of the student body incorporating an ever increasing percentage of Black students.”¹⁰⁸⁹

Financially, these were difficult times, too, not only for the University but for the entire country. President Botha’s declaration of a state of emergency in 1985 plummeted South Africa into a financial crisis while his Crossing the Rubicon speech, delivered to the Natal Congress of the National Party on 15 August, 1985, dashed hopes for immediate significant political reforms.¹⁰⁹⁰ Coovadia’s address to an audience gathered in the Jameson Hall of the University of Cape Town summed up the bleak situation:

The Janus-face of reform that the Botha government shows to the world has been revealed for the fraud it is. We are now in the midst of the most violent and profound upheaval in the history of our country ... The economy has been systematically destroyed with a fall in the Gross Domestic Product of 2% in 1985, an annualised inflation rate of 16% (reaching a maximum of about 20%) and an unprecedented rescheduling of South Africa’s foreign debts.¹⁰⁹¹

Closer to home, on 19th October 1987 the government, through the Minister of Education, issued a directive to all South African universities, “calling on them to enforce a series of highly contentious security laws”¹⁰⁹² which would in effect force the University administrators to become Government agents, thereby “stifling free discussion and criticism of what is happening in our developing society.”¹⁰⁹³ The punishment for non-compliance with the directive would be the loss of the state subsidy which would, in effect, mean that the University would have to close down since without the subsidy it could not possibly survive financially. The University of Natal challenged the government in the Natal Supreme Court on the grounds that the University’s primary functions were teaching and research and that the government could only apply a financial penalty if the University were to be proved to be defaulting in these areas. The University won the case but it was, again, an unpleasant reminder of the “disturbed societal conditions”¹⁰⁹⁴ of the day.

¹⁰⁸⁹ R. Bell, Disadvantaged student or disadvantaged librarians – the changing nature of user education at the University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, in SAILIS Natal Branch Conference (Durban : 1989), *Provision of library and information services in the 1980s*, p. 22.

¹⁰⁹⁰ C.Saunders & N. Southey, *A dictionary of South African history*, Cape Town: David Philip, 1998, p. 147.

¹⁰⁹¹ H.M. Coovadia, *From ivory tower to a people’s university*, [Cape Town]: University of Cape Town. p. 2.

¹⁰⁹² University of Natal, *In defence of our freedom*, [S.l.]: University of Natal, [1988], [p. 2].

¹⁰⁹³ *Ibid.*, [p. 9].

¹⁰⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, [p. 4].

Despite the political uncertainties and the financial hardships of the time, both University of Natal libraries continued to expand their services although their differing circumstances meant that they developed along fairly different lines, as will be seen in this chapter.

10.1. Administration and governance

In March 1977 Schauder resigned, having spent only three years as University Librarian in Pietermaritzburg. Deputy University Librarian, Vietzen, found herself acting again while the post was reviewed. At the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee meeting of 16th March 1977 (Reserved Business Section) it was agreed that: “The need for a University Librarian Pietermaritzburg to fill the vacancy occasioned by Mr Schauder’s resignation is self-evident.”¹⁰⁹⁵ Importantly, they further reiterated that “the present relation between the libraries in the two centres and the independent status of the Librarian should be maintained.”¹⁰⁹⁶ Vietzen was appointed University Librarian in September 1978. As the first female University Librarian at the University of Natal, she admitted that she found her appointment both “exciting and challenging.”¹⁰⁹⁷ The major challenge for a “small academic library” such as the Pietermaritzburg Library consisted, she felt, “in maintaining its traditional ethos while keeping abreast of new management techniques and technological facilities.”¹⁰⁹⁸ The Deputy University Librarian’s post in Pietermaritzburg remained vacant for over a year until the appointment of Mr C.E. Merrett on 1st November 1979.

In Durban, an additional senior post of a librarian to take charge of reader services had first been requested by Scholtz in 1971.¹⁰⁹⁹ However, it was only after the crisis in the Durban Libraries, described below, had been investigated by Musiker, who strongly recommended the creation of a post of Senior Librarian to oversee reader services, that this post was established in 1981. Mr G.H. Haffajee, who had been Assistant Librarian at the Medical Library for nine years, was appointed to this post, the first so-called “non-white” person to be employed in a senior post in a so-called historically “white”

¹⁰⁹⁵ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *University Librarian: Pietermaritzburg*, unpublished.

¹⁰⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹⁷ N. Knowler, *University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg press release [on C. Vietzen]*, no. 49/78, 14th November, 1978, unpublished.

¹⁰⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹⁹ University of Natal, Durban Libraries, *Report for the years 1978/1979 [Annual report]*, p. 8.

university library.¹¹⁰⁰ His task was to oversee the “whole spectrum of the University’s library services in Durban”¹¹⁰¹ as far as reader services were concerned, with particular emphasis on “the development and maintenance of close liaison with academic and other library users.”¹¹⁰² When his post was upgraded in 1982 to Deputy University Librarian the Durban centre had two Deputy University Librarians, Miss E.M. van der Linde who was in charge of technical services which included the Acquisitions, Periodicals and Cataloguing Departments as well as library automation, and Haffajee, who was responsible for reader services. The library in Pietermaritzburg, the smaller centre, had only one Deputy Librarian’s post.

At the end of September 1984 Scholtz retired after 17 years’ service. His time in office was not easy, as will be discussed in more detail below. Van der Linde was appointed to the post of University Librarian, Durban, on 1st April 1986, the second woman to hold one of the most senior managerial posts in the University of Natal Libraries and one of a very few female university librarians in the country at the time.

10.2. Finance

Due to South Africa’s straitened economic circumstances the University had to take stringent measures to contain expenditure and to remain solvent during this period. The devaluation of the rand during the latter half of 1975, the rising costs of library materials and the imposition of a 15% surcharge on imported books which was introduced in 1977 all took their toll on the Library’s budget. Scholtz commented that “this was the first time, as far as we know, that books, and therefore knowledge, have been taxed in South Africa.”¹¹⁰³ The introduction of the South African Post Secondary Education (SAPSE) information system in 1980 also changed the way in which the government calculated funding for universities. The SAPSE system is described in greater detail below.

During 1980 the slight improvement in South Africa’s economic situation benefited the universities and happily the University of Natal was able to increase its funding to the libraries. Another favourable development was, as Scholtz reported, that from 1980 the University was required to take over the financing of the Medical School “on the basis of

¹¹⁰⁰ G.H. Haffajee, Personal communication, 1st February, 2002.

¹¹⁰¹ Senior appointment in Durban, *SAILIS newsletter*, vol. 1, no. 8, August 1981, p. 4.

¹¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰³ University of Natal, Durban Libraries, *Annual report*, 1976/1977, p. 12.

the Van Wyk de Vries Commission's formula for medical schools."¹¹⁰⁴ To enable the University to do so the government increased its total grant to the University and this increase was passed on to the libraries.

Unfortunately, this pleasant state of affairs did not last. In 1984 the government introduced a new formula for calculating university subsidies and at the same time also introduced "severe cuts in the subsidy to universities"¹¹⁰⁵ which continued to the end of the decade. In 1985 a newspaper article announced: "All departments at the University of Natal have had to slash expenditure by at least 25 percent in terms of a direction by the Principal, Professor P. Booysen."¹¹⁰⁶ To compound the situation for the libraries, the deterioration in the rand/sterling and rand/dollar exchange rates from 1984 also affected the library materials budget since both libraries were largely dependent on imported books and journals. In 1988 the University's Finance Officer warned the Library Committees that "a steady decline in library funds can be expected in forthcoming years and that orders which involved ongoing commitments should be avoided."¹¹⁰⁷ Hooper also noted that,

Towards the end of the decade, white university education was being challenged by the mushrooming technikons for available funds as part of the Government's strategy to develop a larger body of skilled manpower in South African society. Sanctions and boycotts were further adding to the burden of university librarians and the dramatic increases in academic publication prices world-wide only served to exacerbate the situation. Doing more with less became the focus of most university library directors, and they recruited whatever resources they could to achieve that end.¹¹⁰⁸

Part of the problem was simply that there were "too many academic libraries"¹¹⁰⁹ in South Africa. By 1989, says Hooper, "22 university libraries were represented at the meetings of the Inter University Library Committee."¹¹¹⁰ There were far too many universities for the country's beleaguered economy to support. Unfortunately, as he points out, "no one suggested that the number of universities be reduced, only that the

¹¹⁰⁴ University of Natal, Durban Libraries, *Annual report*, 1980/1981, p. 11.

¹¹⁰⁵ *The role in society of the University of Natal, 1989 onwards*, [Durban: The University, 1989], p. 1.

¹¹⁰⁶ Varsity to cut spending by 25 pc, *Daily news*, 4th April, 1985.

¹¹⁰⁷ L. Prozesky, Book/periodical funds 1988, [*Library*] *bulletin*, [Pietermaritzburg], no. 207, October 1988, p. 1.

¹¹⁰⁸ Hooper, in *A world too wide*, p. 12.

¹¹⁰⁹ R. Musiker, The South African librarianship and information scene in the 1980s, *Wits journal of librarianship and information science*, no. 1, Dec. 1982, p. 8.

¹¹¹⁰ Hooper, in *A world too wide*, p. 13.

resources be spread more thinly.”¹¹¹¹ An article in the *NU digest* of June 1989 indicates that the difference between the University of Natal’s formula entitlement and its actual provision between the years 1984 and 1989 totalled R88 million, a substantial sum by any standards.¹¹¹² There did not seem to be any hope that the situation would improve in the near future.

Related to the financing of universities and university libraries in South Africa was the South African Post Secondary Education (SAPSE) information system which was introduced by the Department of National Education in 1979. The SAPSE system was devised to “collect and collate comparable statistical data about the universities”¹¹¹³ in order to assist the government in the analysis of and planning for future funding requirements of universities and other tertiary educational institutions. Every university was required to submit returns annually to the government “in respect of seven major areas of university involvement.”¹¹¹⁴ The seven areas included qualifications, students, personnel, buildings, finance, fixed assets and lastly, libraries. The library itself was required to collect, on an annual basis, specific statistical information such as numbers of students and staff, qualifications offered, fields of study and fixed assets, including buildings, space and library collections.¹¹¹⁵ In terms of SAPSE, library requirements were to be funded as fixed capital assets and therefore the calculations of monies would no longer be as closely linked to student numbers as they had been in the past. The information to be submitted by institutions was grouped into 11 programmes which were further divided into sub-programmes. Library services were classified as a sub-programme under “Academic support” and had to report on their total collections as well as annual changes to collections - additions and cancellations - according to 23 Classification of Educational Subject Matter (CESM) categories. The use made of the library during the academic year also had to be reported. Usage was calculated by counting the number of seats occupied on certain dates specified by the Department.

In order to gather data on the total collections of each library, a physical retrospective count of library materials had to be carried out in both centres. This enormous task was

¹¹¹¹ Hooper, in *A world too wide*, p. 13.

¹¹¹² University subsidy, *NU digest*, vol. 10, no. 6, June 1989, p. 2.

¹¹¹³ P. Lor, The South African ‘system of libraries and information’, in *A world too wide*, edited by J. Sherman, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand Library, 1993, p. 33.

¹¹¹⁴ M. Muir, SAPSE, *NU digest*, vol. 1, no. 10, October 1980, p. 3.

¹¹¹⁵ R. Musiker, *Companion to South African libraries*, Craighall: Ad Donker, 1986, p. 220.

carried out by library staff during the university vacation at the end of 1979 and was complicated by the fact that the CESM categories did not correspond with the Dewey classification scheme.¹¹¹⁶ From 1980 onwards all current acquisitions had to be reported. Since the Pietermaritzburg Library had already computerised its book ordering and accounting systems, it was easily able to supply the requisite data once the necessary adjustments had been made to the computer program. The Durban Library, however, had to continue with manual counts annually for another ten years until the acquisitions function in Durban was automated.

The formula itself was highly complex, centring around three major variables, namely:

- The projected number of FTE (Full Time Equivalent) subsidy students and their year-on-year increase (projected);
- The predetermined ratios of various resources (such as supplies and services and personnel) to each FTE student;
- The cost unit applicable for the year to each resource input.¹¹¹⁷

The Department of Education also used the SAPSE formula to lay down norms for the size of library buildings, a factor which had to be taken into consideration when expansions to existing buildings or new library buildings were planned. This meant that planning for a new central library in Durban had to begin again in 1980 from a different angle due to the “very definite guidelines”¹¹¹⁸ laid down by the government. The delay proved disastrous for the beleaguered Library in Durban, as described in greater detail below.

10.3. Accommodation

Careful planning on the part of Brown, Pietermaritzburg University Librarian at the time, and the architect who designed the building facilitated interim expansion in the Pietermaritzburg Library without involving the University in too much expense. In Durban, however, where the Main Library had outgrown its inconvenient premises in the old-fashioned, monumental Memorial Tower building, space problems precipitated a crisis.

¹¹¹⁶ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian's 18th annual report*, 1979, p. 14.

¹¹¹⁷ A. Leonard, *Library books and periodicals – subsidy provision and budget allocations*, Letter to Professor G.A.H. Chapman, 21st January 1987.

¹¹¹⁸ University of Natal, Durban Libraries, *Report for the years 1978/1979* [Annual report], p. 12.

10.3.1. Pietermaritzburg

The Pietermaritzburg Library managed to regain a fairly large amount of extra space once the tenants who had been occupying the basement of the Main Library had moved out and the parking area had been enclosed. The space thus gained was converted into a new reserve book room as well as a late night reading room. Opened in 1976, the latter proved extremely popular with students who wished to study until late at night. As Schauder commented, “appeals for longer opening hours have virtually ceased as it provides a comfortable study accommodation from 6 a.m. until midnight.”¹¹¹⁹ Sadly, it was eventually closed down in 1988 due to the vandalism of the furniture.

The removal of the reserve collection from the ground floor of the library facilitated a major reshuffling of the collections, allowing for a more logical, user-friendly arrangement. It was calculated that sufficient space had been gained to last for ten years, a correct calculation as space shortages only resurfaced in the mid-1980s. By 1986 lesser used materials from both the Main Library and the Law branch library were being relegated to storage in the library basement. As Vietzen explained, although it was both “academically unfortunate and logistically cumbersome for the user”¹¹²⁰ it had become essential in order to preserve some reading space for users. The Main Library building had originally been designed to accommodate an upwards extension of two extra floors¹¹²¹ and strong representations were made by both the Librarian and the Chairman of the Library Committee to the Physical Priorities Committee for this expansion. Finally, a decision was taken in 1988 to begin planning in earnest “in order to have a proposal to present to potential donors.”¹¹²² This proved to be a wise move as in June 1989 it was announced that a local benefactor, Mr C. Renaud, had donated R1 million towards an extension to the Main Library, an amount which was later matched by the University Council “in order to make the alterations more meaningful.”¹¹²³

A new Life Sciences branch library in the newly built John Bews Building was opened on the Pietermaritzburg campus in July 1983. The Botany and Zoology collections from the

¹¹¹⁹ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 26th July 1988*, p. 1.

¹¹²⁰ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian's 25th annual report*, 1986, p. 26.

¹¹²¹ *The opening of the new library, Pietermaritzburg*, 15th October 1966, unpublished.

¹¹²² University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 26th July 1988*, p. 1.

¹¹²³ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian's 28th annual report*, 1989, p. 3.

Main Library as well as the collections from the old Agriculture Library were moved to the new premises but unfortunately, the new building had a number of design defects due, asserted Vietzen, to “the absence of library staff in the very early planning stages...”¹¹²⁴ The most serious of these defects was a lack of space for expansion. Lesser used materials had immediately to be relegated to storage in the Main Library basement which proved to be very inconvenient to users.¹¹²⁵

10.3.2. A crisis in Durban

Although the University Council had decided, in April 1974, that a new main library for the Durban campus was a top priority, events moved very slowly. In November 1975 Messrs. Paton, Taylor, Willie and Bennett were appointed as architects.¹¹²⁶ A site was chosen for the new building. In the meantime, the collections in the Memorial Tower building had to be extensively re-arranged five times and an increasing number of items had to be sent to a closed stack in the nearby Denis Shepstone Building, putting pressure even on the closed stack. As Brown wrote in 1970, “Anyone who has worked in a cramped and inadequate library building will appreciate how incredibly frustrating and wasteful of staff time it can be ...”¹¹²⁷ Brown was commenting on the situation in Pietermaritzburg prior to the erection of the new library building but his words were equally applicable to the situation in Durban. Scholtz himself documented no less than 21 moves of books, journals and other items during the period 1968 to 1978, some fairly minor and others quite major.¹¹²⁸ These moves increased the workload of staff as, besides the physical labour, multiple moves of collections also meant that catalogue records had to be altered, a process which, in the era before computerised catalogues, was extremely time-consuming.¹¹²⁹ Complaints from some academic staff about the Durban library service eventually reached the point at which the Senate Executive (Senex) had to step in. The crisis, described in greater detail below, was precipitated “by the appalling conditions in which we were then, having ... to put books on the floor because there was

¹¹²⁴ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian's 22nd annual report*, 1983, p. 24.

¹¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹²⁶ University of Natal, Council, *Extract from the minutes of a meeting held on 21st November, 1975*, unpublished.

¹¹²⁷ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian's 9th annual report*, 1970, p. 1.

¹¹²⁸ F. Scholtz, *Moving of books and other publications, October 1968 – September, 1978*, unpublished.

¹¹²⁹ A courageous Department, *Library news*, [Durban], no. 1, November 1973, p. 7.

no space for additional shelving.”¹¹³⁰ Another likely catalyst for this unprecedented attack on library management was a decision taken in 1978 to remove all books which had not been borrowed for ten and more years to a closed stack room in the nearby Denis Shepstone building in order to relieve the pressure on the badly over-crowded book stacks in the library itself.¹¹³¹

“The years 1978 and 1979 proved to be a very difficult period for the Durban Library of the University of Natal,”¹¹³² Scholtz wrote in the opening paragraph of his biennial report. This was an understatement. The problems began with a statement made at the Senate meeting of 30th May 1978 that “it was general knowledge that the state of the library in Durban was chaotic.”¹¹³³ The Chairman of the Durban Library Committee, Professor I.K. Allan, thus took it upon himself to conduct an investigation in order to find out how widespread this perception of the state of the Durban Library was. He wrote letters to the heads of all academic departments in Durban, soliciting information. His investigations revealed that, of the 30 replies he received, 13 “spoke unconditionally in favourable terms of the library’s service.”¹¹³⁴ The remaining 17 replies reflected criticisms ranging from the physical layout of the main library in the Memorial Tower building, which Allan declared “a structure blatantly unsuited to the needs of a University library,”¹¹³⁵ to the use of two different classification systems,¹¹³⁶ the operation of the Reserve Book Room, the book ordering process, the application of the Dewey Decimal classification system and the way in which the banned book collection was managed. In at least one instance, the criticism took the form of a personal attack on Scholtz himself. One member of the academic staff went so far as to recommend that the Principal “arrange for a questionnaire to be completed by library staff anonymously ... in

¹¹³⁰ University of Natal, Durban Libraries, *Annual report*, 1982/1983, p. 20.

¹¹³¹ C.E. Dubbeld, Personal communication, 17th April 2008.

¹¹³² University of Natal, Durban Libraries, *Report for the years 1978/1979*, p. 4.

¹¹³³ I.K. Allan, *Report of the Chairman of the Durban Library Committee on the operation of the Durban Library*, 1978, unpublished, p. 1.

¹¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹¹³⁶ Although the libraries in both centres used the Dewey Decimal Classification (D.D.C.) scheme, during the 1940s Coblans had introduced “some of the [Universal Decimal Classification scheme] devices to “make classification flexible enough to solve our four centre problem” – H. Coblans, Some problems of a multi-centred library, *South African libraries*, vol. 17, no. 1, July 1949, p. 38. The U.D.C. scheme was thus not properly implemented, resulting in a confusing hybrid classification scheme being used. At a special meeting of the Durban Library Committee held on 18th June 1973 it was decided to change the classification system of the Durban libraries, with the exception of the Medical Library, to the D.D.C. scheme. The enormous task of reclassifying the older bookstock was not complete and thus library users were obliged to search in two different collections for books they required, – the U.D.C collection (for older books) and the D.D.C collection (for new books).

an attempt to establish the existence or otherwise of staff frustration and dissatisfaction,”¹¹³⁷ a suggestion which Allan dismissed as unnecessary. He stated firmly that,

On the evidence available to me there is no justification whatsoever for my recommending the subjecting of the University Librarian to the indignity and harassment of such a fishing trip by the Principal.¹¹³⁸

Allan concluded that his investigations had “yielded few surprises” but that there was “considerable dissatisfaction with the limitations that space and finance”¹¹³⁹ had placed upon the library services. Nevertheless, he felt that, “Whatever current dissatisfactions exist ... the overall picture is one of constant and substantial improvement in most aspects of the library’s service.”¹¹⁴⁰

Allan’s report was rejected, probably, commented Scholtz, “because of the feeling in some quarters that the situation in the Library was so bad that any investigation, the results of which showed that conditions were not as unreasonable as alleged, was unacceptable.”¹¹⁴¹ Minutes of a meeting held between the professional staff of the library and Allan reveal that it was the “Durban members of the Board of the Faculty of Arts”¹¹⁴² who found Allan’s report unacceptable. In October 1978 Senex finally resolved¹¹⁴³ to call in an external expert to conduct an enquiry into the Durban library service. In consequence, Professor R. Musiker, University Librarian at the University of the Witwatersrand, was invited to visit the Durban campus in June 1979 to “assist and advise the Durban Library Committee and the University Librarian, Durban in securing the best results from the resources available to the Library.”¹¹⁴⁴ In his initial report, based on Allan’s report, Musiker stated that the problems enumerated were “all well within the range of conventional library problems common to any university ... the great majority are certainly not unique to Durban.”¹¹⁴⁵ Musiker’s final report, written following his visit

¹¹³⁷ Allan, *Report of the Chairman of the Durban Library Committee ...*, 1978, p. 10.

¹¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹¹³⁹ Allan, *Report of the Chairman of the Durban Library Committee ...*, 1978, p. 14.

¹¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴¹ University of Natal Library, Durban, *Report for the years 1978/1979 [Annual report]*, p. 4.

¹¹⁴² University of Natal Library, Durban, *Minutes of a meeting of Librarians and Assistant Librarians of the University of Natal Library, Durban, held on 10th November 1978*, unpublished.

¹¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴⁴ I.K. Allan, *Memorandum to Deans/Deputy Deans of Faculties in Durban and members of the Durban Library Committee, 22 June 1979*, unpublished.

¹¹⁴⁵ R. Musiker, *Observations and comments on the Report of the Chairman of the Durban Library Committee on the operation of the Durban Library, 1978, April 1979*, unpublished, p. 1.

to the Durban campus, stated that, “The Durban Library has suffered under the most severe physical disadvantages I have witnessed anywhere in South Africa.¹¹⁴⁶ In his opinion, the University Librarian and the library staff deserved “to be commended for the gradual transformation of the Library from a rigid multi-storey structure to a more modular situation”¹¹⁴⁷ and recommended that the University make “an exceptional financial gesture” to the Durban Library for the following purposes:

- (i) The installation of an electronic security system in the Main Library to prevent book losses;
- (ii) The funding of a retrospective reclassification project of the older books which were still classified according to the Universal Decimal Classification scheme, and;
- (iii) The funding of a new post of Senior Librarian to take charge of Readers’ Services.¹¹⁴⁸

His response to suggestions by academic staff that “existing staff resources can be more fruitfully re-deployed” was that “the library staff-student ratio found at Durban is not favourable or generous in relation to the majority of other South African university libraries.”¹¹⁴⁹ Musiker also pointed out that comparisons with the Pietermaritzburg Library were “especially unfair” as “circumstances and environment are totally different e.g. a modern modular building and a much smaller academic community.”¹¹⁵⁰ Pietermaritzburg also had a student complement less than half the size of that in Durban as may be seen in Table 10.1. below:

¹¹⁴⁶ R. Musiker, *Final report on the operation of the University of Natal Library, Durban*, August 1979, unpublished, p. 1.

¹¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴⁸ Musiker, *Final report on the operation of the University of Natal Library, Durban*, August 1979, unpublished, p. 2.

¹¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

Year	Pietermaritzburg	Durban	Total
1910	57	0	57
1920	115	0	115
1930	337	143	480
1940	378	506	884
1950	576	1163	1739
1960	1202	2657	3859
1970	1849	4409	6258
1978	2650	5727	8476

Table 10.1. Summary of student growth 1910 –1978: Durban and Pietermaritzburg¹¹⁵¹

To an extent Musiker’s findings vindicated the library staff in general and the University Librarian in particular. The allegations made by certain academic staff, of which the most hurtful were that “morale in the Library was so low that all the best persons had found employment elsewhere,”¹¹⁵² were not supported. As far as Scholtz himself was concerned, Musiker stated that:

I am aware of the fact that something of a controversy surrounds the University Librarian, and having encountered this very situation in other South African universities I wish to make one fact clear. To the best of my professional judgement ... the University Librarian at Durban deserves not only to be vindicated in terms of his situation, but praised for his achievement in the most difficult physical circumstances...¹¹⁵³

However, the entire debacle left bitter feelings. It was, as Scholtz pointed out, “an almost classic example of inadequate library facilities ... being blamed on those providing the service” rather than the fault of the “whole University community in its corporate decision making role.”¹¹⁵⁴ As an Afrikaner,¹¹⁵⁵ Scholtz was, to an extent, an outsider at the predominantly English-speaking University of Natal. He never excused his cultural affiliations nor would he compromise on matters of law, particularly where censorship

¹¹⁵¹ Collated and adapted from University of Natal, *Calendar*, 1995, p. 9-10; see also Appendix 3, which provides statistics of student enrolments for the years 1910 – 2003 by centre.

¹¹⁵² University of Natal, Durban Libraries, *Report for the years 1978/1979 [Annual report]*, p. 8.

¹¹⁵³ Musiker, *Final report on the operation of the University of Natal Library, Durban*, p. 3

¹¹⁵⁴ University of Natal, Durban Libraries, *Report for the years 1978/1979 [Annual report]*, p. 4.

¹¹⁵⁵ White, Afrikaans-speaking South African. See Chapter Eight, section 8.1. S.I. Malan was also an Afrikaner.

was concerned.¹¹⁵⁶ This attitude made him very unpopular with certain sectors of the University and often led to strained relations between the Library and the academic staff.

Fortunately for all concerned, the building project for the new central library was revived in 1980 and a number of basic planning principles were “hammered out.”¹¹⁵⁷ Originally a two-phase project was planned: firstly, a new Main Library building would be built on a central site and secondly, a new Science and Engineering Library was to be included in the planned new building for the Science and Engineering Faculties.¹¹⁵⁸ In the meantime, the collections of the old Science and Engineering branch library would be incorporated into the new Main Library. It was planned that the new building would provide library facilities to serve a projected student head count of 6,122 in 2003.¹¹⁵⁹ SAPSE space planning norms dictated the amount of space that the library could occupy. This was based on the projected numbers of full-time equivalent (FTE) students for 2003, multiplied by the SAPSE space norm to give a result measured in “assignable square metres.”¹¹⁶⁰ The SAPSE space norm made provision for seating/study space for 25% of the total FTE student numbers. SAPSE space norms were also applied to office and stack space.

Excavations for the new building began at last on 15th April 1985. As had been the case when the site of the new library in Pietermaritzburg was announced, there had been a few objections to the choice of site. One member of the Durban Library Committee grumbled that the site was “a disastrous piece of town planning”¹¹⁶¹ but his objections were overruled when it was explained that the University authorities had ratified the site “after two-and-a-half years’ debate”¹¹⁶² and that the decision could not be reversed. At the end of 1987 collections from the Memorial Tower Building, the Science and Engineering branch library in the Desmond Clarence Mathematics and Physics building and the closed stack in the Denis Shepstone Building were moved into their new quarters. The doors of the old Main Library in the Memorial Tower Building closed in

¹¹⁵⁶ G.H. Haffajee, Personal communication, 1st February, 2002

¹¹⁵⁷ University of Natal, Durban Libraries, *Annual report*, 1980/1981, p. 21.

¹¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 21-22.

¹¹⁵⁹ In 2003 there were 17,224 students on the Howard College campus.

¹¹⁶⁰ H.M. Edwards, Academic library building planning and design, *South African journal for library and information science*, vol. 55, no. 1, 1987, p. 17.

¹¹⁶¹ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 6th September 1982*, p. 2.

¹¹⁶² *Ibid.*

December 1987 and in January 1988 library users were welcomed into the new, custom-designed E.G. Malherbe Library, built at a cost of R12,442,671,¹¹⁶³ and named after the University's longest serving Principal.¹¹⁶⁴

Accommodation for two branch libraries, namely Law and Music, was also improved during this period. In July 1982 the G.M.J. Sweeney Law branch library moved into refurbished quarters in the Howard College building. Scholtz commented that it had been "allocated a considerably larger area than that of the former Law Library [in the Memorial Tower Building]."¹¹⁶⁵ The space occupied by the Eleanor Bonnar Music Library was expanded and renovated when offices in the Music Building were vacated. Thus, within a period of ten years, the accommodation situation had improved beyond all measure.

10.4. Collections

As noted above, the mid-seventies were characterised by financial austerity. In 1977 a major periodicals cancellation exercise took place in Pietermaritzburg when it was discovered that the ratio of journal to book spending had increased to an unacceptable 75:25. By way of comparison, in 1970 the ratio of periodical to book spending had been 43:57. A number of titles were cancelled to bring the ratio down to a more acceptable ratio of 65:35 and thereafter procedures were put in place for "regularly culling periodicals."¹¹⁶⁶ In Durban, too, 39 titles, at a cost saving of R1, 875, were cancelled in 1978. It was hoped that some of the savings could be used to purchase new titles, but, warned Scholtz, "It might ... be prudent to wait with any new subscriptions until the financial position for 1979 has become known."¹¹⁶⁷

A period of financial recovery at the beginning of the 1980s provided a brief respite but both libraries were very careful not to commit funds to items which would involve ongoing expenses, such as periodical subscriptions. Vietzen noted with pleasure that 1981 was "a period of consolidation and growth during which the combined effects of a substantially increased bookfund and a hardworking staff were evident in a much

¹¹⁶³ News briefs: E.G. Malherbe Library, *NU digest*, vol. 11, no. 6, June 1990, p. 4.

¹¹⁶⁴ Naming of new library in Durban, *NU digest*, vol. 1, no. 9, September 1980, p. 1.

¹¹⁶⁵ University of Natal, Durban Libraries, *Annual report 1982/1983*, p. 19.

¹¹⁶⁶ Crisis update, [*Library*] *bulletin*, [Pietermaritzburg], special issue, July 1976, p. 2.

¹¹⁶⁷ F. Scholtz, *Cancellation of journals purchased for the use of departments in the Faculties of Science and Engineering*, 31st August, 1978, unpublished.

improved book collection and the rise in user statistics.”¹¹⁶⁸ The declining rand exchange rate in the latter half of 1984 put an end to this. In 1986 the libraries in both centres were once again forced to consider cancellation of periodical subscriptions. In a joint circular issued on 24th July 1986, Van der Linde and Vietzen drew attention to “The alarming increase in expenditure on journals since July 1984”¹¹⁶⁹ which had had a “negative effect on the collection content of all libraries...”¹¹⁷⁰ The most obvious solution to this recurrent problem was to find out which periodical titles were duplicated in Durban and Pietermaritzburg and to cancel duplicated subscriptions in one of the centres. To this end an investigation was conducted in July 1986 and a joint sub-committee with representatives from both libraries met to evaluate the findings. It was discovered that 662 titles, to the value of approximately R230, 000 were duplicated between the centres but, as most of these were considered “core” titles, such as law reports and various abstracts and indexes,¹¹⁷¹ few savings could be made. The most expensive single duplication was *Chemical Abstracts*, costing each library at that time approximately R25,000, but neither of the two Chemistry Departments was inclined to part with the subscription. Nevertheless, the Durban Library went ahead and cancelled nearly 200 periodical titles, including 42 medical titles.

10.5. Library automation

At the time of Lodder’s survey in 1971,¹¹⁷² there were only two universities in South Africa which had automated their processing routines to any significant extent. They were the University of South Africa (Unisa),¹¹⁷³ and the new Rand Afrikaans University (RAU). In 1975 the University of the Witwatersrand, like RAU, implemented a computerised cataloguing system which had been developed in-house.¹¹⁷⁴ Thereafter it was only a matter of time before other university libraries in South Africa followed. A survey carried out by Fokker 16 years later in 1987 showed that, of the 21 university libraries in

¹¹⁶⁸ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian’s 20th annual report*, 1981, p. 1.

¹¹⁶⁹ E.M. van der Linde & C. Vietzen, *Rationalization of journal subscriptions*, Circular letter 86/21, 24th July 1986.

¹¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷¹ Crisis update, [*Library*] *bulletin*, [Pietermaritzburg], special issue, July 1976, p. 1.

¹¹⁷² N.M. Lodder, Preliminary survey of mechanised library and information services in South Africa, *South African libraries*, vol. 39, no. 2, October 1971, p. 106-117. See Chapter Nine, section 9.7 for a discussion of this article.

¹¹⁷³ D.W. Fokker, *Biblioteekrekenariserings in Suid-Afrika*, *Computers in South African libraries*, Cape Town: South African Library, 1988, p. 12.

¹¹⁷⁴ R. Musiker, *Companion to South African libraries*, p. 79

existence in South Africa, all except one were making use of computerised library systems to a greater or lesser extent.¹¹⁷⁵

The decision to computerise the University of Natal libraries had been accepted in principle by the University in 1975. A special meeting of representatives of both libraries to discuss library automation was called on 15th December, 1975 because, significantly, the University's Academic Planning and Policy Committee had insisted that there be a "joint approach."¹¹⁷⁶ Chaired by the University Principal, Professor N.D. Clarence, attendees included the chairs of the two library committees, the two University Librarians, Professor M.C. Boshoff, who was Head of the Department of Library Science at the University of Pretoria at the time and considered to be a specialist in library automation, and Mr C. Mornet, Head of the Department of Library Science at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. Following a brief report on progress to date in each library by the respective University Librarians and some discussion thereon, Boshoff emphasised that it was imperative that a "philosophy" be decided upon before any steps were taken to decide on a system.¹¹⁷⁷ It was therefore agreed at the meeting that the two librarians would draw up a common philosophy and that thereafter a steering committee would be formed with the purpose of planning for an automated library system.¹¹⁷⁸ Significantly, the Joint Library Committee, which had never been formally disbanded, was not convened to consider the matter.

The University Librarians duly drew up a common "philosophy" which, in short, emphasized that the primary function of the library was "efficient service to users."¹¹⁷⁹ In order to fulfil this function, they agreed that the "most important library tool" was the catalogue and that the re-planning of the catalogue "should be carried out with a view to implementing, as soon as possible, a total computerised system, including acquisitions, bookkeeping, and circulation in addition to cataloguing."¹¹⁸⁰ A Joint Steering Committee on Library Automation, consisting of librarians from both centres and computer experts was formed in order to consider options, decide upon policy and negotiate funding. The

¹¹⁷⁵ Fokker, in *Computers in South African libraries*, p. 19-23.

¹¹⁷⁶ University of Natal, *Minutes of a meeting in the Frank Bush Committee Room [Pietermaritzburg] ... to discuss library mechanisation*, 15th December 1975, unpublished, p. 1.

¹¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹¹⁷⁹ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Library philosophy*, [26th April 1976], unpublished.

¹¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

Committee investigated a number of options which included a visit by Ms J. Goddard, systems librarian at the University of the Witwatersrand Library, to the University of Natal in February 1979 to conduct a “detailed analysis of the Natal libraries’ procedures”¹¹⁸¹ as well as a consideration of the possibilities which could be offered by a national network. Despite these efforts, the libraries in the two centres initially moved in quite different directions as far as automation was concerned. The Pietermaritzburg Library selected URICA, a South African system, installed on a minicomputer housed in the Library itself while the Durban Library chose DOBIS/LIBIS, a European system installed on a mainframe computer housed in the University’s Computer Centre. The reasons for how and why this was allowed to happen are discussed in more detail below. Although the national network¹¹⁸² was fast becoming a reality it was, at the time when the University of Natal was considering its options, still in development and could not be considered an option. Both libraries did, however, ensure that the cataloguing format of the systems they chose was compatible with the SAMARC¹¹⁸³ format which was to form the basis for co-operative cataloguing in South Africa.

10.5.1. Library automation in Pietermaritzburg

The Pietermaritzburg Library was the first to consider automating library functions. Based on Boshoff’s recommendations and with the help of the University’s Computer Centre, an in-house computerized ordering and bookkeeping system was devised and implemented on the University’s mainframe computer in 1976. It was immediately successful, saving staff time and improving efficiency.¹¹⁸⁴ The following year, in an effort to lessen the amount of time that the newly formed subject librarian unit was spending on book processing, preliminary investigations were begun into the possibility of automating cataloguing processes.¹¹⁸⁵ The eventual decision to computerise the Pietermaritzburg Library catalogue was therefore directly related to “manifest inadequacies in the manual systems, the solutions to which could most economically be

¹¹⁸¹ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian’s 18th report*, 1979, p. 10.

¹¹⁸² Originally named SABNET, an acronym for Suid-Afrikaanse Biblioteeknetwerk, and later renamed SABINET, the South African Bibliographic and Information Network.

¹¹⁸³ The MARC (Machine Readable Cataloguing) format is a machine readable form of catalogue records which enable bibliographic data to be stored on a computer and exchanged between libraries. SAMARC was the accepted South African version, developed in the late 1970s.

¹¹⁸⁴ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian’s 15th annual report*, 1976, p. 5.

¹¹⁸⁵ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian’s 16th annual report*, 1977, p. 10.

found in automation.”¹¹⁸⁶ The “inadequacies” included the absence of a subject catalogue, the difficulties inherent in providing a library service across “a campus spread across 2-3 kilometres in three different directions”¹¹⁸⁷ and, more seriously, the “staff work-saturation situation which pointed to severe escalation in numbers and cost in order to meet the demands of the next decade.”¹¹⁸⁸ The final catalyst was the need to merge four separate collections in the new Life Sciences Library and the necessity of recataloguing all 12,000 items in these collections.

In 1981 a pilot project was put into place to recatalogue in machine-readable format all the books which had to be moved to the new Life Sciences branch library. The University of Durban-Westville (UDW) Library in Durban had recently purchased a minicomputer and had installed the URICA¹¹⁸⁹ library system, which had been developed in South Africa for South African libraries. Arrangements were made with UDW to catalogue on their system via a dataline. The pilot project proved to be “extremely successful.”¹¹⁹⁰ Thereafter, two other library systems, the DOBIS/LIBIS¹¹⁹¹ system marketed by International Business Machines Incorporated (IBM) and the ALIS¹¹⁹² system, marketed by Perseus, were also investigated by comparing cataloguing modules. As Merrett and Vietzen explain,

The most obvious disparities between computerized library systems occur in their cataloguing modules. Acquisitions and circulation modules tend to be more standard as the range of options is necessarily more limited.”¹¹⁹³

The ALIS system had too many disadvantages and was quickly eliminated. UNICOM’s system, URICA, achieved the highest score in the “suitability rating” devised by the

¹¹⁸⁶ C.E. Merrett & C. Vietzen, Aspects of card catalogue conversion at the University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *South African journal of library and information science*, vol. 53, no. 2, 1985, p. 89.

¹¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸⁹ Developed in South Africa by a South African company called Unicom in the late 1970s. – K.E. Jones & G.A. Rea, *URICA*, Aldershot: Gower, 1989, p. 5. The name of the system, URICA, is not an acronym.

¹¹⁹⁰ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian’s 21st annual report*, 1982, p. 21.

¹¹⁹¹ Two European universities, Dortmund University in Germany and the Catholic University in Leuven in Belgium, independently devised software which was eventually to be combined as the DOBIS/LIBIS library system. The name came from DORTmunder Bibliotheks System and Leuven’s Integraal Bibliotheek Systeem. – P. Brophy, *et al*, *DOBIS/LIBIS*, Aldershot: Gower, 1990, p. 13.

¹¹⁹² Automated Library Information System. The University of South Africa installed this system in 1982. – UNISA rekenariseer, *SAILIS newsletter*, vol. 2, no. 7, July 1982, p. 3.

¹¹⁹³ C. Vietzen & C. Merrett, An assessment of the basic characteristics of three computerized cataloguing systems and their suitability for the University Library, Pietermaritzburg, [1981] unpublished.

Pietermaritzburg librarians. The DOBIS/LIBIS system also achieved a high rating but a pre-requisite for selecting this system was that the IBM hardware be based on the Pietermaritzburg campus, not on the Durban campus. Vietzen and Merrett were adamant that “The operation of a high priority service at the end of an 80km long dataline is unacceptable ...”¹¹⁹⁴ It seems that this pre-requisite could not be met and thus, at a meeting held on 26th March 1982, the Joint Steering Committee on Library Computerization recommended to the University Council that “Pietermaritzburg proceed with the purchase and installation of URICA...”¹¹⁹⁵ In November 1982 a REALITY minicomputer was purchased for the Pietermaritzburg Library and the URICA software for cataloguing and information retrieval was installed on it.¹¹⁹⁶ On 11th November 1982 the card catalogue was finally closed for new acquisitions and the URICA cataloguing module “was put into full operation.”¹¹⁹⁷ It was decided to produce a catalogue on microfiche rather than a printed book catalogue and to this end complete author/title and subject catalogues on microfiche were produced on a quarterly basis, with fortnightly cumulated supplements.

In January 1983 the retrospective capture of existing catalogue records began, “in preparation for an on-line circulation system.”¹¹⁹⁸ The “mastermind”¹¹⁹⁹ behind the retrospective conversion project was Deputy University Librarian, Merrett, whose meticulous planning and systematic execution ensured that the project was completed timeously. At a rate of input of 1,000 bibliographic records per week the project took three years to complete. The article written by Merrett and Vietzen on completion of the project, “Aspects of card catalogue conversion at the University of Natal library, Pietermaritzburg,” which appeared in the *South African journal of library and information science* in 1985, won the first URICA Integrated systems annual award.¹²⁰⁰ The award was a return airfare overseas to visit other URICA installations and was taken up by Merrett in May 1987. He visited several British university libraries with two aims in mind, firstly to compare the Pietermaritzburg Library’s progress in the automation of

¹¹⁹⁴ Vietzen & Merrett, An assessment of the basic characteristics of three computerized cataloguing systems ..., [1981].

¹¹⁹⁵ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian’s 21st annual report*, 1982, p. 21.

¹¹⁹⁶ REALITY computer for UNP, *SAILIS newsletter*, vol. 3, no. 6, June 1983, p. 3.

¹¹⁹⁷ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian’s 21st annual report*, 1982, p. 10.

¹¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹¹⁹⁹ L. Prozesky, Award to Pietermaritzburg librarian, *[Library] bulletin*, [Pietermaritzburg], no. 189, October 1986, p. 1.

¹²⁰⁰ Prozesky, *[Library] bulletin*, [Pietermaritzburg], no. 189, October 1986, p. 1

library routines to that of British university libraries and secondly to gauge whether the version of URICA used in the United Kingdom¹²⁰¹ had any features which could be used in Pietermaritzburg.¹²⁰² On his return he reported unequivocally that “The quality of Pietermaritzburg library’s (PMU) database and the routines set up to monitor current work are far superior to those of the libraries seen on this visit.”¹²⁰³

Other URICA modules were implemented as the retrospective conversion project drew to an end. The circulation module was implemented at the beginning of 1985 in the Life Sciences branch library and in the Main Library in November 1986. The acquisitions module was also implemented in 1985; although financial data related to book ordering was retained on the in-house system on the University’s Sperry mainframe until 1987, when the entire book ordering procedure could finally be transferred to the URICA system.¹²⁰⁴ In 1985 the Deputy University Librarian’s duties were changed so that he could concentrate fully on the computer system, but four years later, in 1989, a full time librarian was appointed as Database Administrator. Her appointment, said Merrett, “improved the staffing situation enormously. She was able to take over ... all matters concerning liaison with UIS [formerly UNICOM] ... and to participate in the roster governing operation of the hardware and daily, weekly and monthly routines.”¹²⁰⁵ By the end of the decade and despite various setbacks, the Pietermaritzburg Library had achieved its primary goal, which had been to “build up an acceptable database”¹²⁰⁶ and thereafter to integrate and computerise “as many library functions as possible.”¹²⁰⁷ In Durban the transition to a computerised library system was not as smooth.

¹²⁰¹ By this time there were URICA users in both Tasmania and the United Kingdom. – Growing use of URICA, *SAILIS newsletter*, vol. 4, no. 7, July 1984, p. 5.

¹²⁰² L. Prozesky, Deputy University Librarian visits Britain, *[Library] Bulletin*, [Pietermaritzburg], no. 195, June 1987, p. 1.

¹²⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰⁴ L. Prozesky, Acquisitions, *[Library] bulletin*, [Pietermaritzburg], no. 192, Mar. 1987, p. 1.

¹²⁰⁵ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian’s 28th annual report*, 1989, p. 14.

¹²⁰⁶ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian’s 23rd annual report*, 1984, p.19.

¹²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

10.5.2. Library automation in Durban

In 1981 the Durban City Council made the sum of R300,000 available to the University “over a period of three years”¹²⁰⁸ for the specific purpose of “automating the Durban Library of the University.”¹²⁰⁹ The generous offer was accepted and Scholtz noted happily that: “Whereas the funds for library automation for Durban had heretofore always been an obstacle, this difficulty was suddenly removed.”¹²¹⁰ During 1982 various library packages, including the URICA system, were investigated and the DOBIS/LIBIS system marketed by International Business Machines (IBM) was selected. A formal schedule like the comparative schedule drawn up by Vietzen and Merrett in Pietermaritzburg could not be traced although other documents were found which provided fairly in-depth descriptions of how the DOBIS/LIBIS system itself functioned. It seems likely that a detailed comparative schedule of library packages was not drawn up. Library staff were informed of the choice after the decision had been taken.¹²¹¹ On the surface it appears that the Durban Library management took a unilateral decision to purchase the DOBIS/LIBIS system but upon further investigation it was discovered that there were more complex reasons for this decision, as discussed below.

At first the idea of a dedicated library computer was considered but eventually the University decided to supplement the Durban City Council’s grant and purchase an IBM 4341 model which was installed in the Computer Centre in Durban in the latter half of 1983. Scholtz noted that there was doubt at the time “about sharing computer facilities” with the rest of the University, but that “no logical objection could be raised after the University gave a guarantee that other needs will not be allowed to downgrade the

¹²⁰⁸ University of Natal, Durban Libraries, *Annual report*, 1980/1981, p. 24.

¹²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹¹ C.E. Dubbeld & M.J. Tait, Personal communication, 9th July, 2008.

service which the Library will receive from the jointly owned machine.”¹²¹² Within a few short years the Durban Library was to regret this decision.

The first module to be installed was cataloguing. In April 1984 the card catalogue was closed for new acquisitions and productive cataloguing began on the new system. From the outset it was decided that the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) module would be used so that library users could consult a catalogue which was updated online in real time. A printed catalogue would be produced on a regular basis as a back-up for times when the system went down. By way of comparison, the Pietermaritzburg Library had a microfiche catalogue.¹²¹³ Musiker reported that, by 1985, the DOBIS/LIBIS system was in use in six South African libraries and was one of the most popular library packages in South Africa, second only to the URICA system.¹²¹⁴

Once the cataloguing module was performing satisfactorily it was intended that the other DOBIS/LIBIS modules of acquisitions, circulation and periodicals control be implemented. However, this was not to be. In spite of the promises made by the University’s Computer Services Division, the needs of other University sections intruded upon service to the Library. By 1988 it had to be accepted that it would no longer be possible to implement any further modules of DOBIS/LIBIS, due firstly to installation problems with the other modules requiring the expertise of “a programmer experienced in working on DOBIS/LIBIS”¹²¹⁵ which the University lacked, and secondly to lack of sufficient disk space on the obsolete IBM mainframe. Durban’s computerisation programme was at a standstill. In August 1988 an analysis of the comparative costs of ownership of the DOBIS/LIBIS and the URICA systems, undertaken by Mr N. Otte of the Computer Services Division in Durban, showed that considerable savings would accrue if the Durban Library’s bibliographic database were migrated to the URICA system.¹²¹⁶ URICA had, by this stage, developed considerably and was in use, not only in South African libraries, but also in Australia, the United Kingdom and West Germany.¹²¹⁷ An Inquiry Committee of the University Planning Committee, convened by Professor J.A.

¹²¹² University of Natal, Durban Libraries, Annual report, 1982/1983, p. 22.

¹²¹³ The Pietermaritzburg Library chose to have a catalogue on microfiche (COM catalogue).

¹²¹⁴ R. Musiker, The new technology in South African libraries, *South African journal of library and information science*, vol. 53, no. 2, 1985, p. 69.

¹²¹⁵ University of Natal, Durban Libraries, *Septennial report for the years 1984/1990*, p. 11.

¹²¹⁶ N.A. Otte, *Comparative costs*, October 1988, p. 1.

¹²¹⁷ Growing use of URICA, *SAILS newsletter*, vol. 4, no. 7, July 1984, p. 5.

Benyon, considered the URICA system “elegant and mature.”¹²¹⁸ They noted that it “has worked effectively during the conversion of the PMB Libraries...”¹²¹⁹ In contrast, the Committee found that the DOBIS/LIBIS system

...presently in operation at the DBN Centre is under intense strain both financially and physically ... support has more or less dried up; and the likely winding down of the mainframe and possible closure seem to signal long-term breakdown in the early 1990s.¹²²⁰

The fate of the DOBIS/LIBIS system in Durban was sealed. In April 1989, once a successful trial conversion of catalogue records from the DOBIS/LIBIS system to URICA had been accomplished, the Durban Library Committee finally confirmed that DOBIS/LIBIS should be abandoned.¹²²¹ An Ultimate 3040 minicomputer was duly purchased, URICA software was installed and library staff were retrained. The sharing of a single system between Durban and Pietermaritzburg had been considered but the idea was abandoned as premature due to the unsatisfactory state of the data links between the two campuses at the time. In order to make up for lost time, the cataloguing, information retrieval and acquisitions modules were installed simultaneously and work commenced on the new system in Durban in January 1990. The two libraries were at last using the same computer system but, even though the initial cost of the DOBIS/LIBIS system had been met by the Durban City Council donation, it had been an expensive exercise in terms of staff time and effort.

The question still remains: why was a different library system selected for the Durban Library when a system was already operating with a measure of success in the Pietermaritzburg Library? It is unlikely that it was simply a wish to be different. Was the Durban section of the University’s Computer Services Division in Durban so keen to acquire a new computer that they persuaded library management to select the library system which would give them what they wanted, that is, a new mainframe computer? Was the decision influenced by the fact that other large research libraries, such as the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, the Human Sciences Research Council and the University of Pretoria, were DOBIS/LIBIS users whereas most libraries using the

¹²¹⁸ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 18th April [1988] to discuss the report of U.P.C. Inquiry-Committee into the Durban Libraries (the Benyon report).*

¹²¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²²⁰ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 18th April [1988]...*

¹²²¹ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 24th April, 1989, p. 2.*

URICA system were smaller libraries? It is likely that the decision was influenced to a certain extent by both these factors. Interestingly, the University of the Witwatersrand Library purchased the DOBIS/LIBIS library system, too, but eventually abandoned it after five years of fruitless attempts to implement it.¹²²²

10.5.3. SABINET

A discussion on the automation of the two libraries would be incomplete without a consideration of the development of SABINET. During the 1980s years of investigation into library co-operation and resource sharing¹²²³ came to fruition when 40 institutions, of which one was the University of Natal, “made a 10-year commitment to establish the South African Bibliographic and Information Network [SABINET].”¹²²⁴ “SABINET,” wrote Hooper, University Librarian at the University of Cape Town from 1980 to the mid 1990s, “represented library co-operation on a grand scale”¹²²⁵ and could be considered “the first and most prominent co-operative venture in the history of South African libraries.”¹²²⁶ Over several years a number of feasibility studies had been carried out under the auspices of the MARC Working Group of the National Library Advisory Council.¹²²⁷ Eventually, acting on the Council’s advice, the Minister of National Education appointed a committee to manage the creation of a national library network. Chaired by Professor J. Willemse, Library Director of Unisa, the newly appointed Committee for a Computerised Cataloguing Network commenced work on the project in 1979 with seed funding provided by the Scientific Advisor to the Prime Minister.

It was planned that SABINET’s central data bank would eventually incorporate the Joint Catalogue,¹²²⁸ South Africa’s national catalogue of monographs, as well as the union catalogue of periodicals holdings, known as *Periodicals in South African Libraries*

¹²²² Musiker & Musiker, *Wits Library*, p. 93.

¹²²³ Internet, an appetite for info, *Financial Mail special report*, 7th March 1997, p. 53. The agreement was signed on 28th February 1983.

¹²²⁴ SABINET gets going! *SALIS newsletter*, vol. 3, no. 4, April 1983, p. 1.

¹²²⁵ Hooper, in *A world too wide*, p. 15.

¹²²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²²⁷ M.C. Boshoff, ‘n Suid-Afrikaanse biblioteeknetwerk (SABNET), *South African libraries*, vol. 48, no. 2, October 1980, p. 58.

¹²²⁸ The Joint Catalogue, administered by the State Library, was converted to microfiche in 1975. A retrospective *Union catalogue of monographs*, on 2,139 fiches, covered the period 1941- 1971. A separate sequence, *SA UNICAT*, covered the period from 1972 onwards. – Musiker, *Companion to South African libraries*, p. 133.

(PISAL).¹²²⁹ The SABINET database went online in November 1983,¹²³⁰ using the Washington Library Network (WLN) system. The original intention had been to develop a unique South African co-operative system based on SAMARC as soon as possible but “Pythia,” as the system was called, eventually had to be scrapped as “too expensive for South African libraries to afford in the new financial climate.”¹²³¹ Both libraries of the University of Natal acquired lines and modems for linking to the SABINET database in Pretoria in 1984 but, probably due to telecommunications problems, the actual links to the database were only established in 1986. It was reported in Pietermaritzburg that a workshop on the use of SABINET, planned by two Pietermaritzburg subject librarians, was “frustrated by the amount of downtime experienced on NU-NET,¹²³² GOV-NET [sic] and SABI-NET [sic].”¹²³³ It was to be some years before the vision which had inspired the founders of SABINET was finally realised and South African libraries were easily able to gain access to a fully functional online union catalogue as well as other databases, such as the *Index to South African Periodicals* (ISAP) and the *Union catalogue of theses and dissertations*, both formerly available only on microfiche. However, it was really the introduction of the Internet in the 1990s which provided the impetus for the development of SABINET into “a respected facilitator of online information,”¹²³⁴ as will be described in the following chapter.

10.6. User services

Williams and Poller claim that the first subject specialists¹²³⁵ in South Africa were “appointed in 1966 to the staff of the University of South Africa (Unisa)...,”¹²³⁶ although the idea of a university library providing a specialised subject reference service was not entirely new. The University of Natal had employed an assistant with a Bachelor of Science degree in the Durban Library eight years before, in 1958, to provide a reference

¹²²⁹ PISAL had been published by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research annually since 1974. – Musiker, *Companion to South African libraries*, p. 133.

¹²³⁰ Sabinet goes online! *SAILIS newsletter*, vol. 3, no. 12, December 1983, p. 4.

¹²³¹ Hooper, in *A world too wide*, p. 16.

¹²³² NU-NET, the University’s computer communications network linked to the SABINET computer by means of GOVNET, the South African government computer communications network.

¹²³³ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian’s 25th annual report*, 1986, p. 25.

¹²³⁴ SABINET forms new company, Sabinet Online, *This is I.T.*, February 1997, p. 1.

¹²³⁵ The term varies in the literature – librarians who specialise in particular subjects are variously called “subject specialists”, “subject reference librarians” or “subject bibliographers”. The preferred term in this study is “subject librarian.”

¹²³⁶ S. Williams & R.M. Poller, Subject specialists at the University of South Africa, *South African libraries*, vol. 39, no. 4, January 1972, p. 264.

service both to academic staff and students and to the newly formed Industrial Information Service.¹²³⁷ The assistant, Mrs C. Perrett, did not, however, possess a qualification in librarianship.

10.6.1. Subject reference services in South African universities

The concept of subject specialists in libraries can be traced back to the German universities of the early 19th century where the primary duty of the “Fachreferenten” was the selection of books for the library in those subjects for which they had academic qualifications.¹²³⁸ The idea spread to university libraries in Britain and the United States of America in the early 20th century. Hay notes that prior to 1940 a few universities in the United States, such as Harvard, employed subject specialists but that the “real impetus for the creation of positions in subject bibliography came as a result of World War II.”¹²³⁹ When the United States Department of Defense realised the strategic importance of maintaining in-depth information on foreign places, an area that had formerly been the exclusive “domain of scholars” became an area of “vital national defense concern.”¹²⁴⁰ The result was the establishment of Area Studies departments at various universities and the concomitant development of library collections and hiring of librarians to support the programmes.

In Britain, according to Hay, subject specialists were introduced at British universities after World War II.¹²⁴¹ At both Oxford and Cambridge librarians were traditionally selected from the ranks of scholars but it was only after the report of the Parry Committee on Higher Education, published in 1967,¹²⁴² recommended that all British universities appoint subject specialists in their libraries, that this became common practice in the United Kingdom.¹²⁴³

The Anglo-American subject specialists differed from their German counterparts in that they were not expected to possess academic qualifications in particular subject fields.

¹²³⁷ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1958, p. 2.

¹²³⁸ Williams & Poller, *South African libraries*, vol. 39, no. 4, January 1972, p. 264.

¹²³⁹ F.J. Hay, The subject specialist in the academic library, *Journal of academic librarianship*, vol. 16, no. 1, March 1990, p. 12.

¹²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴¹ Hay, *Journal of academic librarianship*, vol. 16, no. 1, March, 1990, p. 14.

¹²⁴² D. Stoker, *Editorial: from Parry to Follett*, <http://users.aber.ac.uk/das/texts/foledtrl.htm>

¹²⁴³ F.W. Ratcliffe, The growth of university library collections in the United Kingdom, in *University library history*, edited by J. Thompson, New York: Saur, 1980, p. 31.

Unisa and other South African university libraries followed the Anglo-American pattern. Subject specialists had to have professional library qualifications but were not expected to have specific qualifications in the subject areas they serviced. At Unisa the service started by default when experienced classifiers were asked to take on the extra task of providing “a bibliographic service to postgraduate students and academic staff, in addition to their other duties.¹²⁴⁴ As demand for their services increased their other duties fell away and a separate Subject Reference Department had to be created. Interestingly, the Unisa Senate valued the services of the subject librarians to the extent that, in 1972, it instructed the University Librarian of the time, Mr J. Willemse, to expand the Subject Reference Department.¹²⁴⁵

Other university libraries in South Africa soon followed suit. The Rand Afrikaans University, founded in 1968, introduced the concept of subject reference specialists in the library early in its existence.¹²⁴⁶ In 1975 the University of Pretoria made drastic changes to its staff structure and hired a large number of subject librarians.¹²⁴⁷ In 1978 Kingwill noted, in her review of the literature on subject librarians in Anglo American university libraries, that

Three universities in South Africa have appointed subject librarians and organized their libraries along subject divisional lines – the universities of South Africa (UNISA), Pretoria (UP) and the Rand Afrikaans University (RAU).¹²⁴⁸

Strangely enough, she made no mention of the subject librarian arrangement in Pietermaritzburg. During the early 1980s advertisements for subject librarians began to appear in the *SAILIS newsletter*; for example in 1981 the University of Durban-Westville advertised for a subject librarian to take responsibility “for the planning, initiation and implementation of subject orientated bibliographical user services,¹²⁴⁹ and in 1982 an Assistant Director for Information Services was appointed at the library of the University of the Orange Free State with the specific task of initiating a subject librarian service.¹²⁵⁰

¹²⁴⁴ Williams & Poller, *South African libraries*, vol. 39, no. 4, January 1972, p. 265.

¹²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴⁶ J. Willemse, In diens van die gebruiker, *South African libraries*, vol. 44, no. 2, October 1976, p. 77.

¹²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴⁸ H.F. Kingwill, The subject librarian in Anglo American university libraries, *South African libraries*, vol. 45, no. 3, January 1978, p. 96.

¹²⁴⁹ Advertisement [for a subject librarian at the University of Durban-Westville], *SAILIS newsletter*, vol. 1, no. 11, November 1981, p. 6.

¹²⁵⁰ Hoof by UOVS, *SAILIS newsletter*, vol. 2, no. 7, July 1982, p. 5.

At the University of Natal a subject librarian service was introduced in 1976 in the Pietermaritzburg Library. It was to be 11 years before the Durban library introduced a similar service. It is interesting to note, as has already been mentioned in the previous chapter, that the Pietermaritzburg Library was often the first to implement innovative practices. Schauder was clearly a man of vision with the imagination and the energy to effect the changes necessary to ensure that the Pietermaritzburg Library delivered the best service possible to the academic community.

10.6.2. Subject reference service in Pietermaritzburg

At the University of Natal the idea of a subject librarian service was first mooted under an item entitled “Research” at a meeting of the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee in 1974.¹²⁵¹ The minutes read:

The committee agreed that the University Librarian might defer submission of his memorandum on this matter [research] until a future date. In the light of staff reorganisation and considerations of a new “professional” staffing structure involving subject librarians spanning the whole subject spectrum, research activities would become more justified and integrated into the functions of library staff.

Two years later, in 1976, Schauder boldly took the plunge, completely re-organising the staffing structure of the Library in order to introduce a subject librarian unit. It was initially meant to be an experiment but, in spite of “misgivings” about the viability of the system due to the small staff establishment, it was found that the system worked well.¹²⁵² There were only four subject librarians to begin with, each of whom was assigned a number of subjects. Their tasks included the cataloguing and classification of all new books received in their areas of specialisation as well as the provision of user instruction and guidance in those particular subjects. Not only was this considered a “more professionally satisfying system of staff management than the old functional division of responsibility”¹²⁵³ but it appeared that library users and students in particular, were more inclined to ask the librarians for help. On the minus side it was found that too much time had to be spent on the processing of books to the detriment of liaison with the users¹²⁵⁴ and thus the process of investigating the possibility of automating cataloguing

¹²⁵¹ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 21st August, 1974*, p. 4.

¹²⁵² University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian's 18th annual report, 1979*, p. 6.

¹²⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

processes was begun.¹²⁵⁵ By the end of 1983 there were eight subject librarians serving six Faculties.¹²⁵⁶ It was also recognised fairly early on that subject librarians could provide useful input into academic matters with the result that in 1977 the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee agreed that subject librarians should be “invited to attend meetings of the Boards/Faculties when matters concerning the library were likely to come up.”¹²⁵⁷

The services of the unit were gradually expanded, particularly after the appointment of Merrett as Deputy University Librarian in 1979, whose responsibilities included the co-ordination of the subject librarian unit and the consolidation and development of services to students and academic staff.¹²⁵⁸ Two services in particular experienced considerable growth during this time. The first was the Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) service, launched in April 1980 with the aim of bridging “the gap between the large volume of publications entering the library ... and the limited research time available to the average lecturer at a South African university.”¹²⁵⁹ It was found that the service improved the usage of costly library materials and increased the relevance of the librarian’s role in the academic community. Merrett’s statement in this connection is almost prophetic. He noted that “Subject librarians have thus adopted an unequivocally educational role ... With time the relationship between librarian and academic has become more obviously mutually supportive.”¹²⁶⁰ The experiment, begun in Schauder’s time, had proved successful.

The other service was library instruction, which had had “a modest start in 1977 with library orientation to groups of students, involvement in the Bridging the Gap (BTG) programme and individual instruction”¹²⁶¹ and progressed eventually, as in the case of the Faculty of Agriculture, to a “compulsory, non-credit bearing Information Retrieval

¹²⁵⁵ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian’s 16th annual report*, 1977, p. 10.

¹²⁵⁶ There were six Faculties in Pietermaritzburg at this time. They were: Agriculture, Arts, Commerce, Education, Law and Science. In Durban there were nine: Architecture and Allied Disciplines, Arts, Commerce, Education, Engineering, Law, Medicine, Science and Social Science.

¹²⁵⁷ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 16th March, 1977*, p. 1.

¹²⁵⁸ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian’s 21st annual report*, 1982, p. 3.

¹²⁵⁹ C.E. Merrett, SDI in an academic community, *South African journal of library and information science*, vol. 53, no. 4, 1985, p. 200.

¹²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

¹²⁶¹ M. Sandwith, The evolving role of the subject librarian, *Library bulletin*, [Pietermaritzburg], no. 264, July 1994, p. 1.

Skills course taught by subject librarians ...”¹²⁶² In 1989 Prozesky drew attention to the increasing emphasis placed on library instruction, and noted that a “new dimension” had developed “during the past two years with the increasing bibliographic and academic ill-preparedness of students for autonomous study.¹²⁶³ She pointed out that “Increasingly we find ourselves teaching topic definition and evaluative technique in the process of communicating library skills.¹²⁶⁴ The “ill-prepared” students referred to were a direct result of the relaxation, in 1983, of the “apartheid-linked government restrictions on university admissions”¹²⁶⁵ which led to an increase in the number of black African students enrolling at the University. As a result of inadequate schooling these students were at a considerable disadvantage when it came to making the best use of the University’s library facilities and required special attention as far as library instruction was concerned. As early as 1982 Vietzen had recognised that the library could play a “compensatory role”¹²⁶⁶ in the educational process and had encouraged her staff to address the problem.

The introduction of computerised cataloguing freed the subject librarians from “tedious manual routines”¹²⁶⁷ although, besides taking responsibility for a group of academic departments as regards the provision of a reference service, library instruction and book selection, they were still expected to catalogue and classify the books in their own subject areas. Sandwith, in her historical overview of the subject librarian unit in Pietermaritzburg, considered that the success of the unit was due to “the concentration on a limited number of subject fields, which simplifies both cataloguing and reference work.” She went on to explain that these two processes complemented each other, so that the routines of selection and processing enabled a librarian “to be more effective in reference work, while the reference work leads to more accurate acquisition of library

¹²⁶² University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Further submission to Libraries Task Team*, 1997, unpublished.

¹²⁶³ L. Prozesky, The Library and the under-prepared student, *[Library] bulletin*, [Pietermaritzburg], no. 191, February 1987, p. 1.

¹²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶⁵ G. Dubbeld, A chronology of the University of Natal, [1994], unpublished, p. 18; *see also*: , *The role in society of the University of Natal, 1989 onwards*, [Durban: The University, 1989], p. 1.

¹²⁶⁶ C. Vietzen, University library management and finance at a time of educational change and national crisis, *Wits journal of librarianship and information science*, no. 5, July 1988, p. 58.

¹²⁶⁷ C. E. Merrett and C. Vietzen, Aspects of card catalogue conversion at the University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *South African journal of library and information science*, vol. 53, no. 2, 1985, p. 90.

material through a thorough knowledge of user needs.”¹²⁶⁸ Each also took responsibility for a “functional portfolio”¹²⁶⁹ such as interlibrary loans, displays or the audiovisual collection, thus spreading line management responsibilities evenly across the professional staff in the library. In Durban, on the other hand, the subject librarian service was developed quite differently, as will be seen in the next section.

10.6.3. Subject reference service in Durban

In Durban a Library Instruction Officer was employed in 1976 in order to provide “regular and intensive library instruction”¹²⁷⁰ to students in all faculties but, once it had been decided to introduce a subject librarian unit, the need for this post fell away. In July 1987 a senior librarian was appointed “to investigate the subject librarian system and to make recommendations on which system would be most appropriate to the University of Natal Libraries: Durban.”¹²⁷¹ The investigations into the subject librarian systems which were currently in existence in South African university libraries did not include the Pietermaritzburg Library, which was a “matter of some surprise”¹²⁷² to the staff in the Pietermaritzburg Library. The only correspondence on the subject between library management in the two centres is a memorandum written by Vietzen to Scholtz in response to an enquiry from him in 1977, describing the “subject librarian arrangement”¹²⁷³ in Pietermaritzburg in detail. Apparently no further discussions took place. This is unfortunate in view of the fact that the subject librarian unit had been functioning for several years in the Pietermaritzburg Library. Bell points to a problem with formal contact between the two libraries:

Individuals on both sides have taken initiatives and good working relationships exist such as those between Science/Technology in Durban and Life Sciences in Pietermaritzburg and between the Law Libraries. Informal contact has indicated growing discontent at the lack of communication and exchange of ideas that would widen horizons and benefit the academic community. Increasingly Pietermaritzburg librarians turn to outside sources of information where Durban should be the obvious choice but isn't – and probably the situation is the same in reverse.¹²⁷⁴

¹²⁶⁸ Sandwith, *Library bulletin*, [Pietermaritzburg], no. 264, July 1994, p. 1.

¹²⁶⁹ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian's 28th annual report*, 1989, p. 4.

¹²⁷⁰ C.F. Calvert, Library instruction, *Library news*, [Durban], no. 13, November 1976, p. 8.

¹²⁷¹ C.E.Dubbeld, *E.G. Malherbe Library Subject Librarian Unit*, 30th August 1991, unpublished, p. 1.

¹²⁷² R. Bell, Rationalisation and the libraries, [*Library*] *bulletin*, [Pietermaritzburg], no. 210, March 1989, p. 1

¹²⁷³ C. Vietzen, Memorandum [on subject librarians in Pietermaritzburg] to F.Scholtz, 29th March 1977, unpublished.

¹²⁷⁴ Bell, [*Library*] *bulletin*, [Pietermaritzburg], no. 210, March 1989, p. 1.

The official stance, in keeping with the University's management structure of the time, was that the two libraries operated as completely separate entities. Relationships at the level of library management were, it appears from the historical record, cordial but distant.

The structure of the subject librarian unit in Durban, once it had been agreed upon, was quite different to the unit in Pietermaritzburg. In keeping with a trend discernible in other South African university libraries towards centralised technical processing, "abetted by the advent of the computer,"¹²⁷⁵ the Cataloguing Department was retained and the six subject librarians in Durban had four main responsibilities, namely, the provision of a reference service, library instruction, development of the collections and liaison with academic staff. There was also a head of the subject librarian unit with line management responsibilities for the subject librarians. In Pietermaritzburg, the subject librarians reported to the Deputy University Librarian. At inception of the unit it was planned that the subject librarians would be supported by administrative assistants who would "stay on the floors when the [subject librarians] went out to their departments, and who would provide a basic reference service to the users."¹²⁷⁶ Cash-strapped as it was, the University could never afford to expand the Durban Library staff. It should be stated at this point, however, that the services offered to the University community in Durban provided by the subject librarians were a great improvement on the minimal readers' advisory services offered formerly. Dubbeld reported that liaison activities had proved very successful, "fostering good relations between academic staff members and the library."¹²⁷⁷ In spite of the difficulties experienced, the Durban Library benefited considerably from the more positive image of the Library projected by the subject librarians. The wide-ranging criticisms which had marred the end of the previous decade were all but forgotten.

10.7. The different staffing structures

It would be useful at this point to discuss how the staffing structures in the two libraries were developing along very different lines. These differences became obvious with the inception of subject librarian units in each library. The Pietermaritzburg Library, at

¹²⁷⁵ Musiker, *Companion to South African libraries*, p. 223.

¹²⁷⁶ Dubbeld, *E.G. Malherbe Library Subject Librarian Unit*, 30th August, 1991, p. 2.

¹²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

Schauder's inspiration, had, with a small staff establishment, created a successful, dynamic and sustainable library service. The overhaul of the staffing structure was radical, doing away with functional units and reorganising the library in a way which was more orientated to serving the user. The addition of "functional portfolios" to the subject librarians' tasks ensured that essential services were not neglected and that responsibilities were evenly distributed amongst the professional staff.

In Durban, on the other hand, the staff were organised along functional lines, resulting in a more hierarchical structure. The Benyon report noted that

After having conducted the investigation into the PMB Library first, the difference that struck the Inquiry-Committee most forcibly was the hierarchical, or pyramidal, structure of DBN library organization. Unlike the 'horizontal' system pursued in PMB, there was a much greater stress on 'vertical line-management'. To some extent, this may be unavoidable owing to the somewhat larger scale of the Durban operation ...¹²⁷⁸

The emphasis on line management functions was criticised by Hayes because it "does not contribute to an attention to the overall development of services and collections" but rather "to attention on particular aspects of the library's operation."¹²⁷⁹ She also pointed out that "Strong categorization of staff is a barrier to gaining commitment throughout the library."¹²⁸⁰ Undoubtedly, the Pietermaritzburg library staff organisation allowed for more flexibility in professional development although, as noted in the Benyon report and as Gorman points out, size does count and it is "difficult to create and maintain a 'flat' organization and an organization in which no one has a lot of people reporting to her or him."¹²⁸¹ Nevertheless, the difference between the two staffing structures was to affect job grades in the libraries when the University instituted the Peromnes job evaluation system in the 1990s, as will be seen in the following chapter.

10.8. Online literature searching

In one respect the Durban Library was ahead of the Pietermaritzburg Library. In 1979 the relatively new concept of online literature searching was introduced to the University community in Durban. The service, known as the South African Retrospective

¹²⁷⁸ J.A. Benyon, (Chair), *Report of the U.P.C. Inquiry-Committee into DBN Library*, 21st November 1988, unpublished, p. 7.

¹²⁷⁹ H. Hayes, *University of Natal Libraries benchmarking report*, unpublished, p. 6

¹²⁸⁰ Hayes, *University of Natal Libraries benchmarking report*, p. 6.

¹²⁸¹ M. Gorman, *Our enduring values*, Chicago: American Library Association, 2000, p. 106.

Information System (SARIS), was established in the Science and Engineering branch library by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in August 1979 and was originally run by a member of the CSIR staff, Dr J.D. Plisko.¹²⁸² In 1981 the service was taken over by the University Library and searches were thereafter performed by library staff. Described as “the modern alternative to searching manually through indexes and abstracts for information,”¹²⁸³ the service made use of a computer terminal which connected via a dial-up telephone link to the DIALOG Information Retrieval Service’s computer centre in California, U.S.A., offering access to over 150 data bases covering the “biomedical, scientific and technological fields, as well as the social sciences, humanities, current affairs and business economics.”¹²⁸⁴ For the first time, comprehensive searches for information could be carried out quite quickly but there was a negative side. Searches were not free, costing anything from R10 for a simple search with few references to over R400. Also, although the activity of searching was quick, results of searches were printed out offline at the DIALOG offices and mailed to the Library and it could take up to two weeks for the researcher to receive his or her search results.¹²⁸⁵ Uptake on the service was therefore slow. Applications to the University for funding to subsidise searches had been unsuccessful. According to Scholtz, “most researchers would rather search by hand than involve themselves in the relatively high expenditure.”¹²⁸⁶ Students, he pointed out, “simply do not have the money.”¹²⁸⁷

In Pietermaritzburg and at the Medical Library in Durban use was made of the subsidised service offered by the Institute of Medical Literature (IML), based at Tygerberg. Founded in 1976, one of the major functions of the IML was to provide an information service to the South African biomedical community.¹²⁸⁸ The IML had access to the MEDLARS data base of the United States National Library of Medicine as well as to a number of other data bases and, although searches could have been carried out via the terminal in the Science and Engineering branch library, the IML service was a more

¹²⁸² M. van der Walt, SARIS/SASDI, *Library news*, [Durban], no. 19, 1979, p. 1.

¹²⁸³ C. Thumbadoo, Online bibliographic searching at the Science/Engineering branch library, *Library news*, [Durban], no. 24, 1982, p. 3.

¹²⁸⁴ Thumbadoo, *Library news*, [Durban], no. 24, 1982, p. 3.

¹²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸⁶ University of Natal, Durban Libraries, *Annual report*, 1980/1981, p. 34.

¹²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸⁸ Musiker, *Companion to South African libraries*, p. 108.

cost-effective method of obtaining references. Library staff in the Pietermaritzburg and Medical Libraries acted as “brokers”¹²⁸⁹ between researchers and the IML staff.

Three years later, in 1984, another online service was introduced in the form of access to the data base of South African press clippings compiled by the Institute for Contemporary History (INCH) at the University of the Orange Free State. The Durban Library purchased an annual subscription which allowed online access to the database via a terminal.¹²⁹⁰ Newspaper clippings, preserved on microfiche, were sent weekly to the Library and the only costs to users, who included Pietermaritzburg staff and students, were those incurred in printing copies of the microfiche articles.¹²⁹¹

Thus University of Natal staff and students were introduced to the concept of online searching, allowing them to take advantage, for the first time, of the massive central databases of information which could be accessed from anywhere in the world.¹²⁹² Unfortunately, during these early years access came at a price which, for many researchers, was unaffordable.

10.9. Summary

The period from the mid-seventies to the end of 1989 was a time of considerable development, both insofar as technological innovations went as well as in the way in which the libraries delivered their services to users. The introduction of the subject librarian concept not only enhanced the assistance the libraries were able to provide to their users but also contributed to the job satisfaction of the librarians themselves. It may also be seen that the two libraries were indeed developing “very different staffing structures.”¹²⁹³ Challenges associated with assisting the “underprepared student, lacking in bibliographic ... literacy, untrained in independent and critical thinking”¹²⁹⁴ had to be faced and overcome. Computerisation of the basic routines of acquisitions, cataloguing and circulation was accomplished against a background of extreme financial austerity.

¹²⁸⁹ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian's 21st annual report*, 1982, p. 12.

¹²⁹⁰ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 21st November 1983*, p. 1.

¹²⁹¹ The “INCH” press cutting service, *Library news*, [Durban], no. 26, 1985, p. 14.

¹²⁹² R. Summit, Reflections on the beginnings of Dialog, *Chronolog*, June 2002, p. 1.

¹²⁹³ [University of Natal. Library Task Team], *A report on the University of Natal Libraries submitted to the Executive Implementation Team*, 1998, unpublished, p. 31.

¹²⁹⁴ Vietzen, *Wits journal of librarianship and information science*, no. 5, July 1988, p. 58.

On the wider front, the dream of a national library network in South Africa became a reality with the founding of SABINET although in this respect a considerable amount of work remained to be done. The last decade of the 20th century brought greater changes and challenges for the University of Natal libraries as will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Eleven

An era of change, 1990 - 2003

“It would be difficult to deny,” wrote Merrett, Pietermaritzburg University Librarian from 1996 to 2002, “that the year 1990 represented a watershed in South African history.”¹²⁹⁵ The 1990s saw change on many fronts, of which the most dramatic was the opening speech delivered by President F.W. de Klerk to Parliament on 2nd February 1990. “Our world had changed overnight”¹²⁹⁶ said Mandela in his autobiography, *Long walk to freedom*. On that historic day De Klerk proclaimed the unbanning of numerous prohibited organizations including the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan African Congress (PAC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP), lifted restrictions imposed by the State of Emergency and announced the freeing of political prisoners. As Mandela commented, “he truly began to dismantle the apartheid system and lay the groundwork for a democratic South Africa.”¹²⁹⁷ The latter came into being with the first democratic elections, held in April 1994.

The tasks facing the new government were enormous, not the least of which was the imperative to transform South Africa’s higher education system. The “historically advantaged” University of Natal was earmarked by the government, along with several other universities and technikons¹²⁹⁸, as an institution which would merge with a neighbouring “historically disadvantaged”¹²⁹⁹ institution, the University of Durban-Westville, founded as the University College for Indians in Durban in 1960. The early years of the 21st century thus saw the University preparing itself for this event and grappling with its role in and response to the enormous changes taking place in South Africa. This chapter will discuss the challenges faced by the University of Natal Libraries

¹²⁹⁵ C.E. Merrett, Human rights, information and libraries in South Africa, in: *A world too wide*, edited by J. Sherman, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand Library, 1993, p. 61.

¹²⁹⁶ N. Mandela, *Long walk to freedom*, London: Abacus, 1994, vol. 2, p. 333.

¹²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹⁸ See Chapter One, footnote no. 11 for an explanation of this term.

¹²⁹⁹ During the period of apartheid, South African universities were divided strictly along racial lines. “Advantaged” universities were intended to serve the white population; “disadvantaged” universities were the institutions that served that section of the population not classified as white. – Darch, Rapp & Underwood, *Library consortium management*, vol. 1, no. 1/2, 1999, p. 25.

during the period 1990 up to the point of merger with the University of Durban-Westville.

11.1. Administration and governance

At the end of June 1991 the Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University, Professor P. de V. Booysen, who had been in office since 1984, retired and a new Principal, Professor J. V. Leatt, took up office. Leatt immediately instituted a review of the University with the objectives of addressing the problems associated with the over-complex administrative and executive structures and streamlining the committee system.¹³⁰⁰ At the outset the review team noted that “universities are a complex and unique form of organisation”¹³⁰¹ and that the “University of Natal ... operating over three campuses¹³⁰² in two cities, at a crucial transitional stage in South Africa’s history ... [is] more complex than most.”¹³⁰³

For the Libraries the review meant a substantial revision of the responsibilities of the library committees under which both libraries had operated for years. Campus library committees were criticised as having terms of reference “which describe what are largely management functions, which should fall under the aegis of the respective Campus Librarians.”¹³⁰⁴ Membership of the committees was also criticised. The reviewers noted that “Faculty representation provides a useful advisory function”¹³⁰⁵ but that it was inappropriate “for the other Campus Principal or the Vice-chancellor to be members of the Campus Library committee.”¹³⁰⁶

An important outcome of the review was that library committees became advisory committees to the University Librarians and, since they were no longer to be sub-committees of Senate, were afforded the licence “to submit items to the Academic Affairs Board should it be necessary to do so.”¹³⁰⁷ The effect of this change was to shift the responsibility of management from the committees to the University Librarians, where it

¹³⁰⁰ University of Natal, *Annual report of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal*, 1991, Part 1, [p. 2].

¹³⁰¹ University of Natal, *Vice-Chancellor’s Review, Report*, December 1991, unpublished, p. 2.

¹³⁰² The Medical School in Umbilo Road, Durban, was regarded as the third campus for the purposes of the review.

¹³⁰³ University of Natal, *Vice-Chancellor’s Review, Report*, December 1991, p. 2.

¹³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

¹³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

belonged. Real changes, however, were effected only once the restructuring of the executive management of the University resulted in a new reporting line for both University Librarians, as described below.

The committees of the Medical Library and the Campbell Collections¹³⁰⁸ were also criticised. The Medical Library Committee was originally a Faculty Library Committee reporting to the Faculty of Medicine but the Review recommended that it become a sub-committee reporting to the Durban Library Committee. Strangely, it was also recommended that the Medical Library “assume the status of a branch library”¹³⁰⁹ although it had functioned as such since its inception.¹³¹⁰

The Muckleneuk Management Committee, originally formed to “facilitate the take-over of the estate of the late Dr Killie Campbell”¹³¹¹ and which later assumed the management of the affairs of the Campbell Collections, was criticised as handling “many matters which could more appropriately be handled by a competent librarian or curator.”¹³¹² It was recommended that the Campbell Collections be considered a branch library as well and “that it fall within the portfolio of the Durban Librarian.”¹³¹³ However, the retirement of the Africana Librarian and the rather incongruous relocation of the Oral Documentation and Research Centre of the Faculty of Humanities to Muckleneuk forced a major review of the Collections with the result that the management structure was completely overhauled. Management of the Collections became the responsibility of a new Academic Director who reported directly to the Durban Campus Executive.¹³¹⁴ The focus of the Campbell Collections changed to that of a graduate research centre and the 31-year association with the University Library in Durban came to an end on 1st January

¹³⁰⁸ The Campbell Collections comprise the Killie Campbell Africana Library, the William Campbell Furniture and Picture Museum and the Mashu Museum of Ethnology.

¹³⁰⁹ University of Natal, Vice-Chancellor’s Review. *Report*, December 1991, p. 112.

¹³¹⁰ The Review Committee may have been under the erroneous impression that, because the Medical Library Committee was a sub-committee of the Faculty of Medicine, the Medical Library itself reported to the Dean of Medicine.

¹³¹¹ P.G. Leeb-du-Toit, Registrar, Letter to Messrs Wm. Palmer & Son, 19th October, 1965, unpublished.

¹³¹² University of Natal, Vice-Chancellor’s Review. *Report*, December 1991, p. 110.

¹³¹³ *Ibid.*

¹³¹⁴ University of Natal, Muckleneuk Review Committee, *Muckleneuk review*, [1995], unpublished, p. 4.

1996.¹³¹⁵ The change seemed to breathe new life into the Campbell Collections. New projects in the area of digitisation of information¹³¹⁶ attracted external funding. Digital Innovation South Africa (DISA), a national collaborative initiative which aimed to build a database of materials of “high socio-political interest,”¹³¹⁷ was accommodated at Muckleneuk and a member of the Campbell Collections staff was seconded to the project.¹³¹⁸ On the negative side there were administrative problems¹³¹⁹ to be overcome but, on the whole, the new arrangement was an example of how a closer relationship with academia can benefit a scholarly library. A question which arises is, however, could a similar partnership have been forged to the mutual benefit of both the Library and the Faculty without such a drastic change in the management structure?

Restructuring within the University Executive in 1997 resulted in a new reporting line for both libraries. It was noted in the *Vice-Chancellor's newsletter* that “The most important feature of this change is that each portfolio operates across all campuses.”¹³²⁰ Whereas previously each centre library had reported to the relevant centre Vice-Principal, from February 1998 both University Librarians reported to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic). This was described by an independent assessor, Ms H. Hayes who, as part of a benchmarking exercise undertaken by the University, visited and wrote a report on both libraries, as “a positive step for developing a single direction for both libraries and for providing strategic support.”¹³²¹ It also meant that both University Librarians met with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor regularly, often by videoconference¹³²², thus facilitating the exchange of information and ideas. It was eventually decided, in line with a recommendation made by Hayes¹³²³ that the two libraries should collaborate on mission and vision statements. The two Deputy University Librarians, Mesdames C. Pretorius and N. Buchanan, were tasked with working on a shared mission and vision.

¹³¹⁵ The Campbell Collections, *[Library] newsletter*, [Durban], no. 24, February, 1996, p. 2. When the University Executive was restructured, the reporting line of the Director of the Campbell Collections was changed to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

¹³¹⁶ Projects included the digitisation of the photographic and ethnographic materials.

¹³¹⁷ Digital Innovation South Africa, *About us*, <http://www.disa.ukzn.ac.za>

¹³¹⁸ P. Liebetrau, Project Manager, DISA, Personal communication, 22nd September 2008.

¹³¹⁹ Due to negligence the Campbell Collections' entire bibliographic database was lost in 1999 when their computer's hard disk crashed. The system had to be restored from scratch and resulted in a loss of 18 months' of data. – P.L. Minnaar, Managing Director, UCS Library Systems (Pty) Ltd., Letter to Professor Y. Seleti, Director, Campbell Collections, 21st January 2000.

¹³²⁰ University of Natal, *Vice-Chancellor's newsletter*, February 1998, p.1.

¹³²¹ H. Hayes, *University of Natal Libraries benchmarking report*, [September 1998], unpublished, p. 2.

¹³²² University of Natal, *Vice-Chancellor's newsletter*, February 1998, p. 1.

¹³²³ Hayes, *University of Natal Libraries benchmarking report*, p. 4.

Following extensive discussions with library staff in both centres, the draft statements were revised several times and finally adopted by both libraries on 16th October 1998.

They read as follows:

Mission: The Libraries of the University of Natal provide resources and information services to support the learning, teaching, research and development endeavours of the University community.

Vision: In support of the University's strategy of Quality with Equity, the Libraries will have balanced collections and access to current information services to encourage excellence in learning, teaching and research, facilitated by innovative and resourceful library staff who are also dedicated to empowering learners to equip themselves for life-long learning.¹³²⁴

While not startlingly innovative, these joint statements were the subtle heralds of a new era of closer co-operation between the Durban and Pietermaritzburg libraries which was to serve them well in the difficult pre-merger times which lay ahead.

This reporting line endured for six years until, at the Senate meeting of 19th March 2003 it was announced that, following a redistribution of tasks amongst the University Executive, the Libraries would, from 1st August 2003, report to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).¹³²⁵ The reasons for this, provided in Appendix A to the Agenda of that meeting, were as follows:

Knowledge management is currently split between the DVC (Research and Development) portfolio and the DVC (Academic) portfolio, which includes information management, largely through the libraries. These responsibilities need to be merged to enhance coherence between information management and the remaining aspects of knowledge management. Re-organising knowledge management into one portfolio will strengthen and harmonize activities in this area to derive synergy.¹³²⁶

It was also stated that, since a concern existed that the merger process would impact negatively on research in the University, a part-time Pro Vice-Chancellor would "work closely with the DVC (Research) to ... maintain the current impetus in research during the merger transition period."¹³²⁷ The Pro Vice-Chancellor was also to have oversight of the libraries. Although both Acting University Librarians reacted with some trepidation

¹³²⁴ Mission and vision of the University of Natal Libraries, *UND Libraries newsletter*, no. 45, December 1999, p. 4.

¹³²⁵ University of Natal Libraries, Durban, *Annual report*, 2003, p. 4.

¹³²⁶ University of Natal, Senate, *Rationalisation of the Research portfolio*, unpublished.

¹³²⁷ *Ibid.*

to this announcement,¹³²⁸ it proved to be advantageous to the libraries, in particular as far as the financing of library materials was concerned, as will be seen in the following section.

Changes in senior library management were also a feature of this period. In Durban, Miss E.M. van der Linde, University Librarian since 1986, retired on the grounds of ill health in November 1990. Van der Linde, Scholtz's deputy, had enjoyed the support of the academic staff in Durban marginally more than Scholtz had.¹³²⁹ However, she was dedicated to her work and very involved in the national professional library association, encouraging her staff to become involved as well.¹³³⁰ She was succeeded by Mr G.H. Haffajee, formerly one of the Deputy University Librarians in Durban. Haffajee, a graduate of the University College for Indians in Durban, and with a Masters degree from the University of Natal, supported concept of participative management,¹³³¹ an approach which stood him in good stead during early years of the decade which were beset by staff problems in the Durban Library. During his term of office he was an active supporter of the various University bodies involved in the issues of transformation.¹³³² It should also be noted here that, Haffajee, upon his appointment as University Librarian, disestablished the post he had vacated, thus aligning the structure of the Durban Library more closely with that of the Pietermaritzburg Library.

After 18 years as University Librarian in Pietermaritzburg, Miss C. Vietzen retired in May 1996. She had defended the interests of the Pietermaritzburg Library through challenging times and was noted for the "supportive environment she had secured for her colleagues."¹³³³ She was succeeded by Mr C.E. Merrett, formerly Deputy University Librarian in Pietermaritzburg since November 1979. Merrett, a graduate of the Universities of Oxford, Sheffield and Natal, had overseen the computerisation of the Pietermaritzburg Library system and had numerous scholarly publications to his

¹³²⁸ University of Natal, Library Merger Task Team (UND & UNP), *Merger update*, p. 3.

¹³²⁹ G.H. Haffajee, Personal communication, 1st February 2002.

¹³³⁰ Haffajee, Personal communication, 1st February 2002.

¹³³¹ N. Buchanan & C.E. Dubbeld, "The boss" retires, *UND Libraries newsletter*, no. 45, December 2002, p. 1.

¹³³² Such bodies included the Broad Transformation Forum and the Equal Opportunities and Affirmative Action Committee.

¹³³³ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian's 34th annual report*, 1996, p. 4.

name.¹³³⁴ An efficient administrator, he was described as bringing the qualities of idealism and practicality to his new position.¹³³⁵

In 2002 Merrett resigned to take up another post in the University and Haffajee retired from office. Due to the impending merger with the University of Durban-Westville the two posts were not filled and consequently the Deputy University Librarians at each centre were appointed in an acting capacity at their respective campuses. This interim arrangement brought its own problems. It was reported in a paper presented to the LIASA Higher Education Interest Group meeting held on 24th September 2003 that,

On the one hand the playing fields had been levelled – now all three campuses¹³³⁶ have acting university librarians – but on the other hand, we are all on a fairly steep learning curve, having to solve new problems on a daily basis and cope with the impending merger and its related tasks.¹³³⁷

The years 1990 to 2003 were thus difficult years, bedevilled by insecurity but also bringing co-operation between the two libraries to a new level.

11.2. Finance

Commenting generally on university finances in post-apartheid¹³³⁸ South Africa, Gultig pointed out that increases in inflation coupled with the declining value of the rand had resulted in “dire consequences for library (and other) parts of university budgets”.¹³³⁹ In November 1989 it had been mentioned in a meeting of the Durban Library Committee that “the book and journal allocation is less than what the library earns via the SAPSE formula”¹³⁴⁰ but no details were provided and no further discussion ensued. However, the observation was clearly borne out by a report prepared by Professor A.D.M. Walker for the University Planning and Resources Committee meeting of 3rd December 2003. The government subsidy to Universities, as calculated by the SAPSE formula, included a component for library books and journals. Walker’s report indicates that in 1997 the University’s allocation for library materials was “6% less than the government

¹³³⁴ C. Brammage, Christopher Merrett moves on, *Library bulletin*, [Pietermaritzburg], no. 342, May 2002, p. 1.

¹³³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³³⁶ The two University of Natal campuses and the University of Durban-Westville campus.

¹³³⁷ University of Natal, Library Merger Task Team (UND & UNP), *Merger update*, p. 3.

¹³³⁸ A phrase generally used to describe the period after the 1994 general elections.

¹³³⁹ J. Gultig, Globalisation and the idea of the university in post-apartheid South Africa, *Journal of education*, no. 25, 2000, p. 79.

¹³⁴⁰ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 6th November 1989*, p. 7.

subsidy”¹³⁴¹ and that, over the following six years, the University’s budget allocation to the libraries had steadily deteriorated until a crisis point was reached in 2002. In this year the ruinous exchange rate, coupled with the escalation of journal subscription rates, forced the University Planning and Resources Committee to come to the rescue with a top-up grant to assist with the payment of journal subscriptions.¹³⁴² The graph below shows that the subsidy from the Department of Education had increased sharply in 2000, from approximately 4% of the total subsidy allocation to the University to nearly 6%, indicating that the government had taken cognisance of the large increases in the costs of library materials and adjusted the subsidy accordingly. The increase was not passed on to the libraries. Walker points out that 18% of the subsidy provided by the government for the libraries was being used “to fund other activities”¹³⁴³ and, notably, no resources from non-subsidy income were allotted to the libraries, either. He commented on the “pattern of *laissez faire* that has simply continued on an historical basis without any regard for circumstances.”¹³⁴⁴

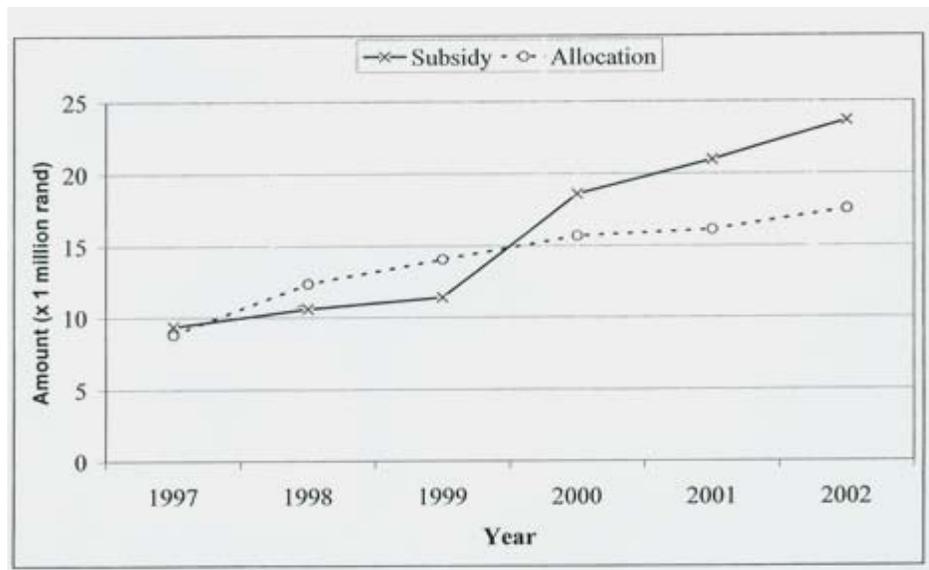


Figure 11.1. Government subsidy to University of Natal for the libraries vs. University’s allocation to the libraries¹³⁴⁵

Walker’s was the first document which spelled out the facts so clearly – the University, in under-funding its libraries, was seriously impeding its own research function. Despite

¹³⁴¹ A.D.M. Walker, *Funding policies in the University Libraries*, unpublished, p. 2.

¹³⁴² Library journal situation, *UND Libraries news*, no. 45, December 2002, [p. 4].

¹³⁴³ Walker, *Funding policies in the University Libraries*, p. 13.

¹³⁴⁴ Walker, *Funding policies in the University Libraries*, p. 2.

¹³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

efforts to rationalise journal subscriptions between the two centres, as described below, a number of journal subscriptions, notably scientific, agricultural and medical titles, used by the most productive faculties in the University, had had to be cancelled in order to balance the libraries' budgets.

The reason for this situation appears to lie in the method adopted for the allocation of library funds. In 1998 a new sub-committee of the University Planning and Resources Committee, the Academic Resource Allocation Committee, was constituted. At the first meeting it was explained that,

In future the budget will not be structured on the basis of devolution to the two centres but rather on the basis of a division ... between the University's academic and support functions. ... the main purpose of this Committee will be to recommend budgets for, and distribute funding, once approved to the different Faculties, Schools and Academic Support Departments.¹³⁴⁶

The libraries were considered "Academic Support Departments" and both University Librarians were members of this committee. The budgeting process worked as follows: every year the University Librarian at each centre would present to ARAC an estimated amount required for library materials for the following year, usually based on the previous year's expenditure.¹³⁴⁷ ARAC would then recommend an agreed budget to the University Planning and Resources Committee for approval.¹³⁴⁸ The University's financial reports from the early 1980s onwards do not show the government subsidy allocation for libraries as a separate amount.¹³⁴⁹ The annual library budget was thus calculated on the previous year's expenditure, not on the amount granted by the State to the University for library purposes; hence Walker's observation on the disregard for changing circumstances.

Walker's arguments for better funding for library materials were successful; the University Planning and Resources Committee resolved to recommend to Council that the "current Government subsidy component of 6% should be regarded as a benchmark

¹³⁴⁶ University of Natal, Academic Resource Allocation Committee, *Constitution of the Academic Resource Allocation Committee (ARAC) as a Sub-committee of the UPRC*, unpublished.

¹³⁴⁷ G.H. Haffajee, Personal communication, 22nd September 2008.

¹³⁴⁸ University of Natal, Academic Resource Allocation Committee, *Constitution of the Academic Resource Allocation Committee (ARAC) as a Sub-committee of the UPRC*.

¹³⁴⁹ University of Natal. *Financial statements, 1982-1990*, unpublished. The statements for 1980 and 1981 are missing from the University Archives' collection; it was therefore not possible to check those years.

indicating the fraction of the total budget that should be devoted to libraries”¹³⁵⁰ although it was noted that it would be impossible for the University to meet this recommendation immediately. The recommendation was in line with Willemse’s recommendations on the percentage of the university budget which should be spent on the library “if excellent service is required.”¹³⁵¹

11.3. Accommodation

Twenty-five years after it was built all possibilities of expanding into existing space in the main library building in Pietermaritzburg had been exhausted. Enclosing the basement area, originally used as an open vehicle parking area had, in the mid-1970s, provided a measure of relief, but the rush of returning students in February 1990 resulted in a complaint of “standing room only”¹³⁵² in parts of the main library. Fortunately, the securing of donor funding¹³⁵³ meant that alterations to the Main Library building could be undertaken. Work commenced in July 1990 and staff and library users alike found themselves in the midst of disruption, dirt and noise. The interior of the building was gutted and completely refurbished, another floor was added and a new front façade was built. Alterations were complete by mid-1991. Total costs of the alterations came to R3,8 million,¹³⁵⁴ more than three times Renaud’s original donation, but as the University Librarian commented, the result was a “slightly enlarged and significantly streamlined building.”¹³⁵⁵ It was unfortunate that, as had originally been planned in the 1960s, a second extra floor could not be added to the main library building as per the original design but an engineer’s report indicates that this would have exceeded the load-bearing capacity of the building.¹³⁵⁶

In Durban the branch libraries, so often ignored where refurbishments were concerned, received attention. A new Medical Library was constructed in 1992 in the old quadrangle

¹³⁵⁰ University of Natal, University Planning and Resources Committee, *Extract from the minutes of a meeting held on 3rd December 2003*, unpublished.

¹³⁵¹ J. Willemse, *Library funding*, Oxford: INASP, 2002, p. 63. Willemse recommended that a university should allocate 6% or more of its total budget for an excellent service, 5% for a generally acceptable library service and 3% for a minimal service.

¹³⁵² Library use, *[Library] Bulletin*, [Pietermaritzburg], no. 220, March 1990, p. 2.

¹³⁵³ Local benefactor Mr C. Renaud donated R1 million; see Chapter Ten, section 10.3.1.

¹³⁵⁴ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian’s 29th report*, 1990/1991, p. 3.

¹³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵⁶ GDB Engineers CC, *Load capacity assessment, Main Library, Pietermaritzburg*, unpublished, 3rd October 2008.

of the Medical School. Building commenced on 20th July 1992 and by 11th January 1993 all 87,000 volumes of stock had been relocated to their new, more spacious abode. In 2002 the G.M.J. Sweeney Law Library was expanded. Due to its situation within the original Howard College building, which is designated a national monument, no external alterations to the building were allowed. A new wing was therefore built incorporating one of the garden courtyards within the building itself. The new wing boasted “state-of-the-art lighting and custom-made tables”¹³⁵⁷ as well as a glass roof which provided plenty of natural light. Seating space was increased considerably as were the numbers of computers available for use by students.

11.4. From collections to information resources

In the past a library’s collection had been confined to “what the library physically owned.”¹³⁵⁸ Increasingly as the millennium approached, the University libraries began to augment their traditional print collections with new, digital resources and the usage of library collections began to change. Professor D. Schauder, former Pietermaritzburg University Librarian and now Emeritus Professor at Monash University in Australia,¹³⁵⁹ provided a glimpse of how radically new digital information formats would change information delivery when he wrote, in his tribute to Professor R. Musiker, that:

With the approach of the 21st century, the dichotomy between library and faculties is being transformed into a continuum through an ever-widening range of information resources which can be used in more than one place simultaneously.”¹³⁶⁰

The introduction of online storage of large digital text files and microcomputers played a decisive role in this trend. The first CD-ROMs¹³⁶¹ containing data began to appear in the early 1980s and the medium rapidly gained in popularity, particularly as a means of storing abstracts and indexes. CD-ROMs were hailed by librarians as “a technology with

¹³⁵⁷ The new-look Law library, *UND Libraries newsletter*, no. 45, December 2002, p. 4.

¹³⁵⁸ D.A. Troll, How and why libraries are changing, *Libraries and the academy* 2.1, 2002, p. 100.

¹³⁵⁹ Monash University, Faculty of Information Technology, *Staff profiles: Emeritus Professor Donald Schauder*, <http://www.infotech.monash.edu.au/about/staff/> .

¹³⁶⁰ D. Schauder, A gentle transformation, in *A world too wide*, edited by J. Sherman, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand Library, 1993, p. 77.

¹³⁶¹ Compact Disc-Read Only Memory. A CD-ROM is a hard, thin plastic disc, 12 cm. in diameter with the capacity to store over 250,000 typewritten pages of information. Data is read by means of a laser beam. - *Harrod's librarian's glossary and reference book*, 9th edition.

tremendous potential in sub-Saharan Africa”¹³⁶² since they exhibited all the advantages of online searches, such as speed and comprehensiveness, but did not require reliable telecommunications links nor incur large costs for individual searches. The demands made upon librarians began to change. Kaniki points out that traditionally it was expected of librarians that they “should and will conduct required searches on behalf of end users ... rather than end users perform these searches themselves.”¹³⁶³ The new technology afforded end users the opportunity to carry out their own searches “without the constraints of telecommunication or subject-ignorant intermediaries ...”¹³⁶⁴ For librarians this meant a shift in focus, from performing searches on behalf of users to “skilling end-users of information.”¹³⁶⁵ This shift at the University of Natal was documented by Sandwith in her 1994 article on the evolving role of the subject librarian. She notes that, with the advent of CD ROMs, subject librarians in Pietermaritzburg were no longer required to act as the “go-between for staff and students who wished to conduct a computerised literature search with a broker.”¹³⁶⁶ Instead, in line with Hunter’s observation that “Literature searches are only as good as the person who performs them,”¹³⁶⁷ it was found that would-be searchers required instruction in literature searching in the new medium. A brief, amusing article in the Pietermaritzburg *Library Bulletin* indicated that databases on CD-ROM were heavily used but that “many users seem to be woefully misinformed and/or ignorant about information in this format.”¹³⁶⁸

Both libraries at the University of Natal acquired their first databases in the new format in November 1989.¹³⁶⁹ For purposes of access each acquired a single workstation, consisting of a microcomputer and a CD-ROM player. As subscriptions to databases on CD-ROM tended to be more expensive than their print counterparts, the uptake by both libraries was slow at first. Another drawback, according to Vietzen, was the cost of the

¹³⁶² *Marketing CD-ROM services*, Washington, D.C.: Sub-Saharan Africa Program, American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1993, p. vii.

¹³⁶³ A.M. Kaniki, *Information for all*, [Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal, 1996], p. 14.

¹³⁶⁴ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian’s 29th annual report*, 1990/1991, p. 15.

¹³⁶⁵ Kaniki, *Information for all*, p. 5.

¹³⁶⁶ M. Sandwith, The evolving role of the subject librarian, [*Library*] *bulletin*, [Pietermaritzburg], no. 264, July 1994, p. 2.

¹³⁶⁷ Producing first-rate literature searches, in *Marketing CD-ROM services*, Washington, D.C.: Sub-Saharan Africa Program, 1993, p. V-1.

¹³⁶⁸ I want that CD-ROM thing, *Library bulletin*, [Pietermaritzburg], no. 261, April 1994, p. 2.

¹³⁶⁹ Durban’s first subscription was to *ERIC*, the database of the United States-based Educational Resources Information Center, and Pietermaritzburg’s first subscription was to Global books in print, followed by the *Abstracts* of the Commonwealth Agricultural Bureau.

necessary hardware and its “apparent built-in obsolescence.”¹³⁷⁰ Nevertheless, as more databases became available and user demand grew, both libraries increased their subscriptions so that, by 1996, they subscribed to 33 databases between them, of which only three were duplicated. A shared subscription to the Science, Social Sciences and Humanities citation indices on CD-ROM, published by the Institute for Scientific Information, was also acquired in 1996, made possible by a grant awarded by the University Research Committee.¹³⁷¹ The Pietermaritzburg Library had subscribed to the hard copy versions of these indices for many years but this meant that Durban researchers who wished to consult the indices were either obliged to travel to Pietermaritzburg or to telephone one of the Pietermaritzburg subject librarians to conduct the search for them. The award of the grant was regarded as a minor triumph and evidence of the University’s commitment to information technology and computer literacy. It is interesting to note that at this time, during the mid-1990s, the University of Natal libraries envisaged that developments in access to electronic information would take place “within the ambit of the Eastern Seaboard Association of Tertiary Institutions (esATI)”¹³⁷² but an application for funding for a regional CD-ROM server which could be shared between the member libraries never amounted to anything.

11.4.1. The advent of the Internet

Once the University community acquired access to the Internet¹³⁷³, selecting and funding the appropriate balance of digital and traditional information sources exercised the minds of those tasked with the management of the libraries and the provision of information to the University community. In 1995 the Pietermaritzburg University Librarian stated that “The Internet, World Wide Web¹³⁷⁴ and the ‘virtual’ library have attained such totemic significance that social anthropologists should be alerted to a new

¹³⁷⁰ C. Vietzen, ROMancing the tome, *Innovation*, no. 5, December 1992, p. 21.

¹³⁷¹ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 14th April 1997*, p. 1-2.

¹³⁷² C. Merrett, Computerisation and cargo cults, *Library bulletin*, [Pietermaritzburg], no. 279, February 1996, p. 1.

¹³⁷³ The Internet originated with the ARPANET network set up by the U.S. Department of Defence in 1969. Its success and that of the U.S. National Science Foundation led to the appearance of a standard Internet Protocol (IP) which allowed one network of computers to be linked to another. – J.E. Straw, From magicians to teachers, *The reference librarian*, no. 74, 2001, p. 8.

¹³⁷⁴ The World Wide Web (www) is a hypertext interface that assists in accessing information across the Internet. In 1995 it became the dominant interface for retrieving information over the Internet. – Straw, *The reference librarian*, no.74, 2001, p. 8.

cargo¹³⁷⁵ cult”.¹³⁷⁶ Despite these comments, demand for access to the electronic resources rapidly becoming available on the Internet continued to expand. In 1997 both libraries introduced their own web sites, providing, in a fairly rudimentary fashion at first, guides to the use of the libraries. Eventually the web sites became the means whereby it was possible to provide an integrated overview of all aspects of library service.

The Medical Library’s web site, in particular, was designed by the library staff as a useful tool to assist them in delivering relevant user education as part of the problem-based learning approach which had been adopted at Medical School in 2001.¹³⁷⁷ A problem-based learning (PBL) programme integrated the different disciplines which form the basis of the medical curriculum into 30 themed modules, covering five years of study.¹³⁷⁸ For example, the first year students of 2001 were required to cover the following six modules:

- Introduction/Diabetes mellitus;
- Nutrition;
- Growth and Development;
- Infection/Inflammation;
- Reproductive Health, and lastly;
- Trauma and Emergency Care.¹³⁷⁹

The Medical Library, as a partner in the PBL learning programme, played an important role. As Ngcobo explains, “PBL is an instructional methodology used where librarians can work together with lecturers to develop a seamless approach to integrating information retrieval directly into the curriculum.”¹³⁸⁰ The medical students, working together on these themes in small groups, were required to make use of a wide selection of books and journal articles. The Medical Library thus became a “learning laboratory,”¹³⁸¹ the librarians were required to develop instructional programmes to meet

¹³⁷⁵ In the early 20th century in certain parts of Melanesia it was believed that “European trade goods would arrive in large quantities and transform lives” – Merrett, [*Pietermaritzburg*] *Library bulletin*, no. 279, February 1996, p. 1.

¹³⁷⁶ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian’s 33rd annual report*, 1995, p. 21.

¹³⁷⁷ University of Natal Libraries, Durban, *Annual report*, 2003, p. 10.

¹³⁷⁸ University of Natal. Faculty of Health Sciences, *Handbook for 2001*, p. N9.

¹³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸⁰ E.N. Ngcobo, *Effect of problem-based learning on medical libraries in South Africa*, M.I.S. thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 2008, p. 3.

¹³⁸¹ [University of Natal, Medical Library], *Medical Library report 1998*, unpublished.

the different needs of the students and the Library's web site had to be developed to support the PBL programme. The involvement of the Medical Library in the PBL programme is a good example of how a change in a Faculty's approach to teaching and learning can have a direct and quite considerable impact upon the functioning of an academic library.

In 1999, as a result of the national Electronic Information for Libraries (EIFL) Direct Initiative initiative, both libraries acquired access to a number of web-based partial and full text databases. EIFL Direct, a joint project of the philanthropic Open Society Institute and a commercial publisher, Ebsco Publishing, provided access to numerous journals, newspapers and reference books, mainly in the Social Sciences and Humanities but also including the medical database, Medline.¹³⁸² Statistics showed that the service was well-used. Gradually, access to more online databases was acquired. Subtly but inexorably the libraries were moving away from print-based collections towards electronic formats. In Pather's survey of academic staff and student use of electronic journals at the University of Natal in Durban, undertaken from 2002 to 2004, both groups indicated a preference for full-text articles in electronic format because they were easier to search for and retrieve,¹³⁸³ although they also indicated that they preferred the higher quality of text and figures in print periodicals.¹³⁸⁴ Her findings are significant in that they show the gradual shift from dependence on print-based materials to electronic texts. At the time that Pather conducted her survey there was support for providing both print and electronic versions of periodicals, although there were also those who favoured the cancellation of print titles duplicated in electronic format.¹³⁸⁵

SABINET too, from simply hosting the country's national union catalogue, the *Union catalogue of theses and dissertations* and the *Index to South African periodicals*, re-engineered itself to become a facilitator of access to online information. In order to ensure economic viability, SABINET sold its operational activities to a new, private

¹³⁸² University of Natal Libraries, Durban, *Annual report*, 1999/2000, p. 10.

¹³⁸³ R. Pather, *A comparative study of the costs and benefits of journal ownership versus full-text electronic access in the Faculty of Science at the University of Natal, Durban Libraries*, M.A. – Information Studies thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 2004, p. 194.

¹³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

¹³⁸⁵ Pather, *A comparative study of the costs and benefits of journal ownership versus full-text electronic access...*, p. 194.

company named Sabinet Online¹³⁸⁶ in January 1997.¹³⁸⁷ The end of international economic sanctions against South Africa meant that it became possible for Sabinet to “build relationships with a number of international partners”¹³⁸⁸ such as the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) in the United States and the British Library as well as with CD-ROM Information in South Africa. The conclusion of agreements with such partners enabled Sabinet to expand its technical infrastructure and build upon these relationships in order to provide better support for its client base. Sabinet’s vision, stated Malan in an article published in *Innovation* in 1998, was to build “a national information infrastructure” which could interface with the various library systems in use in South African libraries to serve “the needs of the wider SABINET [sic] user population throughout Southern Africa ...”¹³⁸⁹ That usage of Sabinet had already spread beyond the borders of South Africa by 1997 is affirmed by Rosenberg who noted that, although interlibrary loans within Africa were rare, countries bordering South Africa, such as Botswana and Zimbabwe, “were able to benefit from SABINET.”¹³⁹⁰

For the University of Natal Libraries the availability of the Ariel software, which worked in conjunction with the interlibrary loans service, at an affordable price through Sabinet Online meant that the delivery of information “to users’ desktops”¹³⁹¹ became a reality.

Within a few years changes in the University’s teaching environment meant that access to electronic databases and journals had become increasingly important.¹³⁹² The changes were subtle but inexorable, as could be seen from the alterations in usage patterns of the reserved (or short loan) collections detailed below.

11.4.2. Declining use of reserved collections

For many years the size and usage of the reserved collections had been increasing. In Pietermaritzburg the reserved book collection started out as a small collection which was

¹³⁸⁶ The new company trades as Sabinet and should not to be confused with its forerunner, SABINET, which no longer exists. – G. Kemp, Managing Director, Sabinet Online Ltd., Talk delivered at the Annual general meeting held at the Wild Coast sun on 3rd September 2008.

¹³⁸⁷ Libraries without walls, *Financial mail special report*, 7th March 1997, p. 54.

¹³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸⁹ P. Malan, A new national catalogue for southern African libraries, *Innovation*, no. 17, December 1998, p. 6.

¹³⁹⁰ D. Rosenberg, *University libraries in Africa*, London: International African Institute, 1997, vol. 1, p. 32.

¹³⁹¹ University of Natal Libraries, Durban, *Annual report* 2001, p. 7.

¹³⁹² Electronic journals, *UND Libraries newsletter*, no. 44, October 2002, p. 3.

kept behind the issue desk but increases in both size and usage necessitated a move of the collection in 1973 to its own separate section. The same situation arose in the Main Library in Durban. The first floor reading room in the Memorial Tower building had to be “partitioned off as a reserved book space in which students would have to use books placed on reserve.”¹³⁹³ The excessive growth of these reserved collections was attributed to the methods of teaching employed by academic staff at the time and the phenomenon was not confined to the University of Natal. In an article on the reserved collection at the University of Cape Town, Cragg notes that “they [the reserved collections] are the direct result of the teaching methods currently in vogue in the arts and social sciences which emphasize consultation by students of a wide variety of recommended reading.”¹³⁹⁴

In 1998 a new pattern began to emerge. Usage statistics of the reserved collections began to decrease so noticeably that in 1999 Merrett commented that, “At Main Library the decline was nearly 34% [for 1999], suggesting a fundamental change in the way students are accessing information.”¹³⁹⁵ It should also be explained here that in the late 1990s the University, in company with most other South African universities, had finally taken cognisance of the fact that, for many years, copyright law had been flouted by lecturers placing large numbers of photocopied articles in the reserved collections for use and further copying by students. A Copyright Officer, whose task it was, *inter alia*, to ensure that lecturers placing photocopies of articles in the reserved collections had obtained copyright clearance to do so, was employed in 1999. The effect of the enforcement of copyright law was to reduce considerably the collections of photocopied articles held in the libraries. Yet Merrett was of the opinion that this still could not account for the large annual decreases in usage. In 2001 he noted that

Most spectacular ... was the continued decline of Short Loan [print reserve collection]... issues were a mere 47% of those experienced as recently as 1998, indicating a fundamental shift in the expectations of lecturers and the work habits of students. Strict copyright compliance can account for only a small fraction of this change.¹³⁹⁶

Loan statistics in the reserved collection in the E G Malherbe Library exhibited a similar pattern, as did statistics from the Universities of Cape Town (UCT) and the

¹³⁹³ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a special meeting held on 4th July 1973*, unpublished, p. 1.

¹³⁹⁴ J. Cragg, Good hope for an old problem, *South African libraries*, vol. 46, no. 2, October 1978, p. 61.

¹³⁹⁵ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian's 37th annual report*, 1999, p. 3.

¹³⁹⁶ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian's 39th annual report*, 2001, p. 3.

Witwatersrand (Wits), as indicated in Table 11. 1. below. In fact, it appears that declining usage patterns of print reserved materials are an international trend. According to Troll,

The circulation of print reserves appears to be declining rapidly, even in institutions that do not offer electronic reserves... In some institutions faculty are putting fewer materials on reserve. The availability of full-text resources on the Web – provided by the library or by other entities - may account for the decline in traditional reserve items and usage. Faculty may be providing pre-printed course packs or mounting full-text materials in course management software ... thereby eliminating use of the library but accomplishing the same purpose. The decline in reserve use could also simply reflect the behavior of current students.¹³⁹⁷

Year	EG Malherbe Library, DBN	Cecil Renaud Library, PMB	UCT	WITS
1995	159303	98450	190921	45334
1996	151454	103941	164248	41120
1997	317457	107003	148489	30518
1998	94971	96237	123423	24804
1999	79484	72013	129454	25995
2000	73038	51521	No valid data	29324
2001	66117	29817	118092	29816
2002	63638	No valid data	131042	35159
2003	55475	No valid data	113493	17752
Percentage decrease	65%	70% (1995 to 2001)	40.5%	61%

*Table. 11.1. Comparative print reserve loan statistics: Universities of Natal, Cape Town and the Witwatersrand (main Libraries only)*¹³⁹⁸

The figures show that usage of reserved collections, which had, in the past, supported undergraduate teaching methods, had declined drastically. It may also be seen that the percentage decline at the Universities of Natal (both campuses) and the Witwatersrand are similar. In contrast, the percentage decline at the University of Cape Town is far less. The reasons behind these changes at the University of Natal have yet to be explored. The declining statistics do coincide with an increase in the acquisition of online resources by

¹³⁹⁷ Troll, *Libraries and the academy*, 2.1, 2002, p. 108.

¹³⁹⁸ N. Buchanan, *How libraries are changing: a comparative survey of the circulation statistics of print reserves at four South African universities*, June 2006, unpublished.

both libraries¹³⁹⁹ but could also be due to different teaching methods used by the academic staff in the undergraduate programmes and the reliance by some academic programmes on printed course-packs for students.

Conversely, the introduction of the Problem Based Learning curriculum at the Medical School in Durban in 2001 had the opposite effect. As explained above, the curriculum required students to work in groups, researching a particular topic and making use of recommended readings to assist the learning process. There was a heavy reliance on the library and a large number of new medical books had to be purchased. Special funding had to be provided by the Faculty for this purpose¹⁴⁰⁰ as the Medical Library's entire budget was given over to the maintenance of periodical subscriptions.

11.4.3. Rationalisation of journal subscriptions

A letter to Professor D. Pudifin, Chair of the Durban Library Committee, from the Director of Academic Planning, Dr M.S. Muir, indicated that the University Planning Committee had recommended that "The rationalization of library holdings be considered along with the various investigations into academic rationalization. Such rationalization of library holdings may be feasible both at a single Centre and across Centres ..."¹⁴⁰¹ The letter was discussed at the Durban Library Committee meeting of 6th November 1989 where it was noted that rationalization of journal holdings had been attempted previously without success.¹⁴⁰² Similarly, there was a comment by the editor of the April 1990 issue of the Pietermaritzburg Library *Bulletin* that:

Several studies in the possibility of regional rationalization in Natal have been executed; the results are always the same. The academic community has made it abundantly clear that rationalization within the level of core material is untenable. It is simply not helpful to know that a title is available at the University of Zululand for browsing between lectures! Or, indeed, Durban...¹⁴⁰³

¹³⁹⁹ As discussed in section 11.4.1. above, both libraries were acquiring and making available more information in electronic format. In 2003 the Durban Library purchased 100 prescribed and recommended books in electronic form through netLibrary, a division of Online Computer Library Center (OCLC). netLibrary is an electronic library service which hosts and manages books in electronic format – *Library e-book agreement*, unpublished, p. 1. The books were also made available to students and staff on the Pietermaritzburg campus.

¹⁴⁰⁰ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 22nd August 2000*, unpublished, p. 3.

¹⁴⁰¹ M.S. Muir, Letter to D. Pudifin, 14th September 1989, unpublished.

¹⁴⁰² University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 6th November 1989*, unpublished, p. 2.

¹⁴⁰³ A. Andersson, Is rationalization rational? [*Library*] *bulletin*, [Pietermaritzburg], no. 221, April 1990, p. 1.

Nevertheless, the rapidly increasing costs of maintaining journal collections eventually forced the issue. In 1993 the Pietermaritzburg Library initiated discussions with Durban regarding the sharing of journal subscriptions. Merrett, in a document drawn up in November 1993, noted that “It has become very clear in the context of two factors that the libraries of the University of Natal will have ... to ‘rationalise’ their holdings and share resources.”¹⁴⁰⁴ The two factors he referred to were the “squeeze on library funds by a budget which has declined in real buying power each year for over a decade,” and “the requirement of outside funders that tertiary institutions collaborate and share their library holdings.”¹⁴⁰⁵ It was the former which was the deciding factor. The Pietermaritzburg Library had, over a number of years, attempted to promote a “50:50 expenditure ratio on periodicals and books”¹⁴⁰⁶ but was finding it increasingly difficult to protect its book vote against the encroachment of rising subscription costs. Durban, on the other hand, had exhibited a tendency to protect its journal subscriptions to the detriment of its book vote, as noted in a document prepared for the Library Review Group in 1997 in which it is stated that:

The average book price has increased [from 1991 to 1997] by 39% while the average journal price has increased by a whopping 136%. It is easy to see that the materials budget has not kept pace with price rises in journals ... this has, of course, affected the [Durban] Library’s purchasing of books.¹⁴⁰⁷

The first phase of the journals rationalisation exercise targeted subscriptions which had cost more than R2, 000 in 1992, the majority of which were scientific, medical and agricultural titles. Negotiations between the two centres took some time as academic departments in both centres had to be consulted and practical details around the sharing of subscriptions had to be worked out. The difficulties inherent in such an exercise, including dependence on inter-library loans, were spelled out in by Merrett in *Library viewpoints* which also pointed to the heart of the problem:

In the University of Natal there are two campuses 80 kilometres apart which duplicate the teaching and research of a large number of subjects. Without rationalisation of departments there will inevitably be overlap in their respective

¹⁴⁰⁴ C. Merrett, *Cooperative purchasing of periodicals by the libraries of the University of Natal*, November 1993, unpublished.

¹⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰⁶ Periodicals and the library budget, *Library viewpoints*, [Pietermaritzburg], no. 2, June 1993, unpublished.

¹⁴⁰⁷ N. Buchanan, *Decline in the Library’s purchasing power from 1991 to 1996*, 3rd June 1997, unpublished.

libraries. Using the libraries as a soft target and squeezing them dry will not solve the fundamental problem but will simply devalue academic standards.¹⁴⁰⁸

In retrospect, and in the light of Walker's discovery that, from 1997 at least, the University had been appropriating part of the government library subsidy, Merrett was right. The libraries had been used as a "soft target." Nevertheless, by the year 2000, 144 duplicate titles had been cancelled, achieving considerable savings for the University despite the understandable unpopularity of the exercise with the academic staff in both centres.

The moves by publishers to offer "free" access to the electronic versions of print titles should have eased the situation but it was discovered that, more often than not, the geographic distance between the two libraries presented difficulties with licensing arrangements.¹⁴⁰⁹ Negotiations with publishers to allow multi-campus access met with little success at first but participation in the South African Site Licensing Initiative (SASLI), described below, brought added benefits in the form of multi-site licenses. For the University of Natal this meant that, for the first time, a single shared subscription to a periodical title could be accessed with ease from both centres simultaneously.

Another joint initiative in 2003 also benefitted both libraries. A temporary researcher, Dr N. Geslin, was employed to identify and list "free scholarly information resources available on the World Wide Web."¹⁴¹⁰ She also approached selected organisations to arrange access to free and discounted resources. Her efforts resulted in the libraries being made aware of the large amount of useful information available on the Internet, in particular specialised medical information.¹⁴¹¹ Most of the free electronic journals and other resources Geslin identified were added to both libraries' websites so that by the end of 2003 the libraries were able to list links on their websites to over 600 free electronic journals on the Internet as well as to other subject-related and general interest websites.¹⁴¹²

¹⁴⁰⁸ Co-operative acquisition. *Library viewpoints*, [Pietermaritzburg], no. 4, June 1994, unpublished, [p. 2].

¹⁴⁰⁹ V. Langley, The rocky road to e-journal access, *Library bulletin*, [Pietermaritzburg], no. 323, June 2000, p. 1.

¹⁴¹⁰ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, [*Librarian's*] 40th annual report, 2002/2003, p. 14.

¹⁴¹¹ A.M. Kaniki, *The library budget 2002 and the "journals crisis," 2002*, unpublished, p. 5.

¹⁴¹² University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, [*Librarian's*] 40th annual report, 2002/2003, p. 14.

11.4.4. Closure of the banned collections

A discussion on library collections during this era would be incomplete without mentioning the banned collections, instituted during Malan's time as Library Director. De Klerk's announcement in Parliament on 2nd February 1990 that the prohibition on a number of banned organisations had been rescinded marked the end of decades of intellectual repression and "set the ball rolling for the withdrawal of a large number of works that had been banned for years."¹⁴¹³ Nevertheless, as Merrett pointed out, publications control was "still in place to complement statutory censorship,"¹⁴¹⁴ and there were still a substantial number of works affected by the Publications Act of 1974 which meant that they were, in effect, still banned. However, in August 1990 the University of Natal at last took a firm stand "to defy the government and refuse to acknowledge any longer the existence of censorship regulations,"¹⁴¹⁵ a decision which contrasted with the Vice-Chancellor's ambiguous announcement made two years previously, that:

It remains the policy of this University that all available information should be freely accessible to all. However, government legislation prevents the Librarians from fully implementing this policy. I have requested them ... to make these [banned materials] available wherever possible ...¹⁴¹⁶

This placed the two University Librarians in the invidious position of having to decide what was "possible" or "not possible," although they did have recourse to the Vice-Chancellor's Library Materials Accessibility Committee.

The 1990 decision meant that a "point of conflict"¹⁴¹⁷ which had existed since Malan's time between the academic staff and library management, particularly in the Durban centre, at last ceased to exist.

11.5. Library staff

The early years of the 1990s were beset with staffing difficulties. The introduction of a new system of job evaluation for "non-academic" staff, an increase granted by the

¹⁴¹³ T. Xala, Banned literature withdrawals since 2 February 1990, *Library news*, [Durban], no. 31, 1990, p. 6.

¹⁴¹⁴ C. Merrett, Human rights, information and libraries in South Africa, in *A world too wide*, edited by J. Sherman, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand Library, 1993, p. 61.

¹⁴¹⁵ C. Merrett, *A culture of censorship*, Cape Town, David Philip, 1994, p. 199.

¹⁴¹⁶ Censorship and the library, *NU digest*, vol. 9, no. 3, April 1988, p. 1.

¹⁴¹⁷ University of Natal, Durban Libraries, *Septennial report*, 1984-1990, p. 7.

Government to “educators”¹⁴¹⁸ only, which did not include library staff, and an announcement by the University, in the face of mounting financial difficulties, that 600 staff posts would have to be disestablished all took their toll.

11.5.1. Job evaluation and the issue of “non-academic” staff

Job evaluation, defined as “a technique that systematically compares jobs with each other to produce a rank order on which pay differentials can be based”¹⁴¹⁹ was introduced at the University of Natal in the 1970s, when the University authorities decided that it was necessary to adopt a method of evaluating “non-academic” jobs.¹⁴²⁰ Initially, a modified version of the Institute of Office Management’s Clerical Job Grade Scheme, in use at the University of London at the time, was used.¹⁴²¹ However, the method proved unsuitable for the University of Natal and consequently the University authorities cast around for another job evaluation method. They eventually chose the Peromnes¹⁴²² system of job evaluation. The advantage to the University of using this particular system was that the University would be able to “participate in salary surveys providing up-to-date information on market rates of pay”¹⁴²³ which, as a result, would enable the University to “compare its pay rates with those of other organisations.”¹⁴²⁴ The decision was communicated to University staff in March 1988.¹⁴²⁵

Implementation of the system began with the training of a number of University staff in Peromnes evaluation methods.¹⁴²⁶ There were to be six committees, comprising five

¹⁴¹⁸ Salary adjustments, *NU digest*, vol. 9, no. 6, July 1988, p. 5.

¹⁴¹⁹ *The IEBM handbook of human resource management*, edited by M. Poole & M. Warner, London: International Thomson Business Press, 1998, p. 544.

¹⁴²⁰ R. Raju, *A case study of the application of the Peromnes method of job evaluation to the University of Natal, Durban*, M.I.S. thesis, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1995, p. 124.

¹⁴²¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴²² From the Latin “per omnes” meaning “on account of all men” – *Cassell’s new Latin-English, English-Latin dictionary*, London: Cassell, 1959. The system had been developed in South Africa in the 1960s by a company called FSA Contract. – R. Laloo, Senior Consultant, Deloitte, Personal communication, 7th November 2008.

¹⁴²³ Job evaluation non-academics, *NU digest*, vol. 9, no. 2, March 1988, p. 3.

¹⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴²⁶ C.N. Chaplin, Deputy Registrar (Personnel), Circular letter to all heads of University departments, 14th July 1988, unpublished.

members each and including a “Core member from the Personnel section.”¹⁴²⁷ From the outset there were difficulties. The introduction of any job evaluation system is a time-consuming and exhausting process,¹⁴²⁸ as the University was to find out. In an attempt to make the exercise manageable, heads of University departments were invited to “submit a 20% representative sample of non-academic jobs for evaluation,”¹⁴²⁹ but the task of evaluating even this small sample was onerous. The Durban University Librarian voiced her misgivings about the system in a letter to the Deputy Registrar (Personnel), stating that she had “severe doubts about the wisdom of further participation of [sic] any form of Peromnes because of the problems it has caused throughout the University ...”¹⁴³⁰ In Pietermaritzburg in March 1990, the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee noted “anxieties expressed about Peromnes”¹⁴³¹ and it was mentioned that library staff had received “incomprehensible letters about Peromnes scales.”¹⁴³²

Staff dissatisfaction was compounded by an extra Government grant made to all universities in March 1990 for the purpose of increasing salaries paid to “educators”¹⁴³³ only. The resultant differential salary increases understandably infuriated staff not classed as “educators,” namely, all University staff not classed as “academic.” Merrett called it a “piece of typical apartheid behaviour on the part of the Department of National Education [which] divided university staff between ‘educators’ and ‘non-educators’.”¹⁴³⁴ The discriminatory salary increases added to staff dissatisfaction and were, as far as the staff of the Pietermaritzburg Library was concerned, the last straw. On 28th and 29th May 1990 they staged a general stay-away from work. The decision, according to an editorial in the June 1990 Pietermaritzburg Library *Bulletin*, “was not made in haste, nor was it reached without considerable unease amongst library staff,” but the staff “felt that avenues of communication had been tried and had failed,” and they could not simply “sit

¹⁴²⁷ Peromnes job evaluation, *NU digest*, August 1988, vol. 9, no. 7, p. 7.

¹⁴²⁸ *The IEBM handbook of human resource management*, p. 550.

¹⁴²⁹ C.N. Chaplin, Deputy Registrar (Personnel), Circular letter to all heads of University departments, 8th March 1989, unpublished.

¹⁴³⁰ E.M. van der Linde, University Librarian, Durban, Letter to the Deputy Registrar (Personnel), 20th February 1990, unpublished.

¹⁴³¹ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 26th March, 1990*, p. 2.

¹⁴³² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³³ Salary adjustments, *NU digest*, vol. 9, no. 6, July 1988, p. 5.

¹⁴³⁴ C. Merrett, Educator status and the library, [*Library*] *bulletin*, [Pietermaritzburg], no. 225, August 1990, p. 1.

back and accept what the ruling bodies of the university were doing to 'non-academic' staff.¹⁴³⁵

In Durban, on the other hand, the library staff would not participate in the Peromnes grading exercise, their refusal taking the form of "non-voluntary participation" due, according to Raju, to the fact that they perceived the system as being "inadequate in fully measuring the complex functions and duties of library staff."¹⁴³⁶ Furthermore, library staff were of the opinion that the evaluators "had very limited knowledge of the functions and responsibilities of library staff."¹⁴³⁷ It should be noted here that although the Pietermaritzburg University Librarian, the Durban Deputy University Librarian and a member of the Pietermaritzburg library staff had been trained as evaluators, they were not necessarily members of the committees which evaluated library jobs. Hence a job could be evaluated by a team of people who had no specialised knowledge of that particular job. A point of contention was the fact that the Pietermaritzburg subject librarians had been graded at a higher level than the Durban subject librarians, in spite of the fact that, according to Raju, the job descriptions were similar.¹⁴³⁸ Although this seems like an anomaly, it should be noted that the staffing structures in the two libraries were different. As explained in the previous chapter,¹⁴³⁹ the Pietermaritzburg subject librarians not only carried out a greater variety of tasks but also bore responsibility for various "functional portfolios."¹⁴⁴⁰ The Durban Library's more hierarchical structure undoubtedly contributed to the lower grade of the Durban subject librarians.

Dissatisfaction in the Durban Libraries mounted and, as in Pietermaritzburg, the differential salary increases caused resentment. At the Durban Library Committee meeting of 23rd April 1990 it was reported that, although the University's Staffing and Salaries Committee had stated that the Peromnes exercise would 'address the question of differences in salary scales of qualified library staff between the University of Natal and the Technikons'¹⁴⁴¹ the Peromnes system had in actual fact not done so. Library staff in

¹⁴³⁵ M. Shaw, Library stay-away of 28-29 May 1990, [*Library*] *bulletin*, [Pietermaritzburg], no. 223, June 1990, p. 1.

¹⁴³⁶ Raju, *A case study of the application of the Peromnes method* ...p. 121.

¹⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴³⁹ See section 10.7.

¹⁴⁴⁰ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian's 28th annual report*, 1989, p. 4.

¹⁴⁴¹ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 23rd April 1990*, p. 2.

Durban formed a staff organisation called the University of Natal Durban Library Workers' Association (UNDLWA) which was committed, *inter alia*, to “the principles of democracy, anti-racism, anti-sexism and anti-elitism, in order to ensure that the rights and interests of all our members are addressed fairly at all times, and to foster a spirit of unity amongst members.”¹⁴⁴² The Association’s membership excluded heads of library departments, branch librarians and the library’s executive management, which inevitably led to an unhealthy “us” and “them” situation.¹⁴⁴³ At the heart of the dissatisfaction of the staff lay the issue of salaries. Ms C. Wyley, an office-bearer in UNDLWA¹⁴⁴⁴ and a subject librarian in the E G Malherbe Library, wrote a detailed memorandum to the Durban Vice-Principal, Professor P. Booysen, arguing the case for the inclusion of library staff “who are in contact with library users,” in particular subject librarians, under the term “educators.”¹⁴⁴⁵ Her words echo the gist of an article by Merrett which appeared in the Pietermaritzburg Library *Bulletin* in August 1989.¹⁴⁴⁶ Merrett drew attention to the sense of “growing frustration” amongst professional staff in the University which had been “exacerbated by the reluctance of Administration to communicate and implement the findings of the Peromnes evaluation.”¹⁴⁴⁷ He also took issue against the use of the “pejorative term ‘non-academic’ for highly qualified staff”¹⁴⁴⁸ although, unlike Wyley, whose focus was on the salaries issue, the particular thrust of Merrett’s article was the fact that professional people in the University who were classed as “non-academic” staff could not enjoy the same privileges as academic staff.

In the meantime, as had been promised, the University commissioned the Registrar, Professor B.X. de Wet,¹⁴⁴⁹ to conduct an inquiry into the salary scales of “non-academic” staff, a particular objective being to “make a special study of salary scales of professional

¹⁴⁴² University of Natal Durban Library Workers' Association (UNDLWA), *Constitution*, undated, unpublished, p. 1.

¹⁴⁴³ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 23rd April, 1990*, p. 2.

¹⁴⁴⁴ Although Wyley had claimed in her memorandum that she had a mandate from UNDLWA to speak on their behalf, a subsequent communication from Mr R. Raju to Booysen stated that she had not received the Association’s mandate. Possibly Wyley had not discussed the matter with her colleagues before writing to Booysen.

¹⁴⁴⁵ C.H. Wyley, Memorandum to Professor P. Booysen, Vice Principal, Durban, 3rd July 1990, unpublished, p. 2.

¹⁴⁴⁶ C. Merrett, Professional staff in the University, [*Library*] *bulletin*, [Pietermaritzburg], no. 215, August 1989, p. 1.

¹⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴⁹ This was the Committee on University Salaries for Non-Academic Staff or, in short, the De Wet Committee.

Library staff.”¹⁴⁵⁰ The Durban Library Committee was optimistic but, in the opinion of the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, the Commission was “unlikely to re-examine the status of professional librarians even though both the Pietermaritzburg and Durban Arts Boards now formally recognise the “educator” function they perform.”¹⁴⁵¹

The multiple staffing problems on top of the change in computer system combined to place considerable strain on the University Librarian. Van der Linde’s announcement that she would be retiring on grounds of ill health at the end of November 1990 was sudden but, given the circumstances, not entirely unexpected. A formidable task lay ahead of Deputy University Librarian, Haffajee, who was appointed Acting University Librarian on 1st December 1990 and who would have to lead the Durban Library through the staffing crisis.

Finally, in April 1991, a sub-committee of the De Wet Commission met with library staff in both Durban and Pietermaritzburg to discuss salary issues. In Durban they met with representatives of the UNDLWA but the meeting was a difficult one.¹⁴⁵² In Pietermaritzburg, staff dissatisfaction revolved around individual concerns which, in the opinion of the sub-committee, could be addressed through a re-evaluation of the jobs through the Peromnes system. However, in one respect the library staff in both centres was in agreement – the University did not appear to appreciate or recognise their teaching role or the research they carried out.¹⁴⁵³

In February 1992 an appeal drawn up by representatives of the library staff was made to the Durban Library Committee regarding librarians’ salaries at the University of Natal. An accompanying table, comparing the salaries of library staff at five educational institutions in the greater Durban area revealed that the salaries paid to professionally qualified librarians as well as library assistants (who did not possess professional library

¹⁴⁵⁰ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 5th November 1990*, p. 2.

¹⁴⁵¹ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 2nd August, 1990*, p. 2.

¹⁴⁵² B.X. De Wet, *et al*, [Report of the] *Committee on University Salaries for Non-Academic staff*, [1991], unpublished, p.2.

¹⁴⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

qualifications) were indeed approximately 30% lower at the University of Natal.¹⁴⁵⁴ Although its terms of reference did not give it the right to intervene in salary matters, the Durban Library Committee considered the matter sufficiently serious to warrant its intervention and submitted a memorandum to the University's Staffing and Salaries Committee.¹⁴⁵⁵ A further report issued by the De Wet Committee¹⁴⁵⁶ indicated that there were other areas of concern in the University. An address to library staff by the Registrar in July 1992, and the University's acceptance of certain conditions imposed by the staff, finally resolved the stalemate and the process of grading the Durban Library staff proceeded.

Throughout this difficult period there is little evidence of formal communication between the senior management of both libraries. This is unfortunate as a closer collaboration could have benefitted both the University and the libraries. Although there was nothing to be done about the "educator" status of librarians, an investigation of the structure of the subject librarian unit in Pietermaritzburg and the tasks performed by subject librarians might have expedited a solution to the staff problems in the Durban library.

11.5.2. Rationalisation of staff

Staffing problems in the libraries were by no means over. An article in *The Witness* newspaper in June 1997 stated that the University's government subsidy had been "cut by R8 million this year."¹⁴⁵⁷ A letter to University alumni from the Principal, Professor B. Gourley, in August 1997, highlighted the financial crisis in which the University found itself, stating that, "funding to the higher education sector from the government has been drastically reduced. It is anticipated that further cuts will be made in 1998 and successive years."¹⁴⁵⁸

¹⁴⁵⁴ University of Natal Durban Library Workers' Association. *Memorandum on salary disparities between the University of Natal (Durban) Libraries and other libraries at tertiary education institutions in the region*. [February 1992], unpublished.

¹⁴⁵⁵ The memorandum summarised the contents of the appeal document and urged the Staffing and Salaries Committee to "consider the accompanying document, and address the discrepancies in our Library staff salaries as a matter of urgency." – University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, [*Memorandum to Staffing and Salaries Committee*], 24th February 1992, unpublished.

¹⁴⁵⁶ B.X. De Wet, *et al*, [*Report of the*] *Committee on University Salaries for Non-Academic Staff*, 1992, unpublished.

¹⁴⁵⁷ P. Pillay, Varsity cuts to hit jobs, courses, *The Witness*, 6th June, 1997.

¹⁴⁵⁸ B. Gourley, *Changes at the University of Natal*, Letter to Alumni of the University of Natal, August 1997, unpublished.

The University's Planning and Resources Committee immediately appointed a Task Group to "review the university's academic, administrative and management structures"¹⁴⁵⁹ and to make recommendations which would assist the University to overcome the financial crisis. This Group pointed out that the government subsidy to the University of Natal had "fluctuated wildly"¹⁴⁶⁰ over the years, and that, from 1988 to 1996, the "real subsidy per FTE [student]"¹⁴⁶¹ had fallen. Examining the historical pattern of government subsidies over the years to the University, they concluded that "the subsidy has a cyclical pattern related to political bargaining."¹⁴⁶² In keeping with the vision of the National Commission on Higher Education, that is, the transformation of higher education and historical redress, the Task Group was of the view that the University of Natal, in keeping with other formerly "White" universities in South Africa would, in the future, almost certainly suffer a considerable reduction in government subsidy funding.¹⁴⁶³

In order to ensure the financial viability of the University, it was calculated that it needed to reduce the staffing compensation budget by 22% which translated into a reduction of 645 posts over the following five years.¹⁴⁶⁴ If this was not done, then the University would be threatened with rising student fees, the retardation of affirmative action, reductions in the purchase of library books as well as library, laboratory and computer equipment, the shelving of building plans and refurbishments and, possibly worst of all, no further salary increases.¹⁴⁶⁵

Against this background, a Library Task Team was formed at the behest of the Executive Implementation Team to carry out an investigation into the functioning of both libraries.¹⁴⁶⁶ Their brief included the following:

- To gather information from the libraries on matters such as staffing structures and budgets;

¹⁴⁵⁹ University of Natal, Planning and Resources Committee Task Group, *Structures and funding*, May 1997, unpublished, p. 1.

¹⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 1.

¹⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Executive summary.

¹⁴⁶⁶ [University of Natal, Library Task Team], *A report on the University of Natal Libraries submitted to the Executive Implementation Team*, February 1998, unpublished, p. 5.

- To consider whether there was merit in centralising library management and library functions;
- To consider future planning for the libraries; and
- To consider how the staff compensation budget of the libraries could be reduced by 22% over a period of five years.¹⁴⁶⁷

The process lasted for many months. There were numerous meetings and many hours were spent negotiating. In Durban a Library Review Committee, comprising members of the Durban Library staff, submitted a report to the Libraries' Task Team which pointed out that library staff numbers in Durban had already dropped from a total of 113 in 1990 to only 91 in 1996, representing a drop of almost 20%.¹⁴⁶⁸ The Durban University Librarian submitted a report indicating that a further eight posts could be disestablished. On the other hand, the submission by the Pietermaritzburg University Librarian proposed that, in a staff establishment of 61 posts, 19 posts could be dispensed with, representing a saving of 31%, which was far more than the 22% reduction required by the University. By 1999 the library staff establishment in both centres had been reduced by 12 posts and Haffajee commented in the *UND Libraries newsletter* that:

The restructuring process in the Library has been a protracted one with its fair share of staff protests, the stress that comes with the threat of job uncertainty, the consequent decisions of some staff to seek job opportunities elsewhere and ... the dedication and enthusiasm of those members of staff who accepted that transformation was inevitable ...¹⁴⁶⁹

The downsizing of the staff complement left its mark on both libraries. An article in the Pietermaritzburg *Library bulletin* in February 1998 warned that library users would have to "exercise more patience over a service that could become less speedy ..."¹⁴⁷⁰

In 2003 an external consultant commented on the staffing situation in the libraries. She noted that "UND is a library under stress from extremely reduced headcount, and increased demand from a bigger pool of users",¹⁴⁷¹ and that in Pietermaritzburg,

It is a matter of concern ... that there does not appear to be any extra capacity for special projects such as the merger ... Library survival and maintenance rather than growth and development become the norm under these stringent conditions.¹⁴⁷²

¹⁴⁶⁷ [University of Natal, Library Task Team], *A report on the University of Natal Libraries ...*, February 1998, p. 5.

¹⁴⁶⁸ University of Natal, Library Review Group, [Durban], *Report*, 7th July 1997, unpublished, p. 1.

¹⁴⁶⁹ G.H. Haffajee, Library restructuring, *UND Libraries newsletter*, no. 31, June 1999, p. 1.

¹⁴⁷⁰ P. Sukram, The way ahead, *Library bulletin*, [Pietermaritzburg], no. 299, February 1998, p. 1.

¹⁴⁷¹ C. Barraclough, *The esAL software evaluation: final report*, May 2003, unpublished, p. 117.

¹⁴⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 121.

Pointedly, she declared that “Ultimately the university as a whole is the loser ...”¹⁴⁷³ Her concerns were echoed in Walker’s document, *Funding policies in the University Libraries* prepared for the University’s Planning and Resources Committee meeting of 3rd December 2003.¹⁴⁷⁴ It was a matter of grave concern that that the library service would “crumble to a level that is not viable for a University supporting research”.¹⁴⁷⁵ It was hoped that the merger with the University of Durban-Westville would provide some relief in that existing library staff could be rationalised between the two merging universities.

11.5.3. South African library associations

Library staff at the University of Natal were active in the broader arena of librarianship in South Africa at this time and a history of the University of Natal libraries would not be complete without briefly reviewing changes which were taking place in South African library associations during this period. It was a time of transition - reconciliation, transformation and unification became the library buzz words of the time. In 1980 the whites-only South African Library Association (SALA) had been disbanded and the South African Institute for Librarianship and Information Science (SAILIS) took its place. The idea behind the establishment of SAILIS was that it should be “a graduate professional institute with membership open to any person who fulfilled those professional or associate criteria.”¹⁴⁷⁶ Unsurprisingly, many perceived this organisation as “elitist”¹⁴⁷⁷ and a further attempt to perpetuate racial segregation in the library profession. A number of University library staff were members of SAILIS, and some, such as Durban University Librarians Van der Linde and Haffajee, became office bearers in the Natal Branch. Others, including Pietermaritzburg University Librarian Merrett, were highly critical of a professional organization which tended to be more interested in promoting the “image” of the profession and in technological matters than in the pressing social and political problems of the day.¹⁴⁷⁸

¹⁴⁷³ Barraclough, *The esAL software evaluation: final report*, May 2003, p. 117.

¹⁴⁷⁴ Walker, *Funding policies in the University Libraries*, p. 13-14.

¹⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁴⁷⁶ C. Walker, Can we get there from here, or is our future the prisoner of our past? in SAILIS Natal Branch Seminar (Durban : 27th July 1991), *Libraries*, p. 29.

¹⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷⁸ M.-L. Suttie, The University of South Africa Library, *Mousaion*, vol. 24, no. 2, 2006, p. 305.

Members of the African Library Association of South Africa (ALASA), which was established when SALA took the decision in 1962 to implement racial separation¹⁴⁷⁹, were also to be found amongst professional staff in the Durban Library. As Walker wryly commented, “despite many vigorous attempts, SAILIS will not easily exorcise this ghost of segregated membership that was born in 1962.”¹⁴⁸⁰ Although a few professional black African librarians had joined SAILIS, most saw “their home remaining in ALASA”.¹⁴⁸¹

Walker also notes that from the late 1980s onwards “new, more politically radical ... library and information workers formed new organisations”¹⁴⁸² such as the Resource Centres’ Forums, and the Library and Information Workers Organisation (LIWO), which was launched on 14th July 1990 in Durban. Dick describes LIWO as “anti-apartheid, anti-establishment and progressive but there was great emphasis on being an independent professional body.”¹⁴⁸³ The organisation posed a “major challenge to the library establishment in South Africa,¹⁴⁸⁴ criticising the latter as having operated a “conservative and unquestioning policy supportive of the government’s need of the moment.”¹⁴⁸⁵ Members of the University library staff, particularly in Pietermaritzburg but also in Durban, were initiators in this movement. Sadly, LIWO did not prosper after the 1994 elections. A special general meeting of LIWO was held on 17th April 2000 when it was proposed that LIWO be dissolved due to “lack of activity among LIWO members countrywide.”¹⁴⁸⁶ The meeting agreed that a postal ballot would be held and Ms F. Bell, Chair of the Pietermaritzburg Branch, was mandated to “take the process further”¹⁴⁸⁷ but the lack of response from other LIWO branches frustrated her efforts. Eventually it appears that only the Pietermaritzburg branch of the organisation was officially closed and the remaining monies donated to a worthy cause.¹⁴⁸⁸ The other branches seemed to

¹⁴⁷⁹ South African Library Association, *Annual report, 1962-1963*, Potchefstroom: SALA, [1963], p. 9.

¹⁴⁸⁰ Walker, in SAILIS Natal Branch Seminar (Durban : 27th July 1991), *Libraries*, p. 29.

¹⁴⁸¹ C. Walker, Library associations in South Africa, 1930-2005, *Library management*, vol. 27, no. 1/2, 2006, p. 29.

¹⁴⁸² Walker, *Library management*, vol. 27, no. 1/2, 2006, p. 29.

¹⁴⁸³ A.L. Dick, *Innovation*, speech delivered at the launch of the new format of *Innovation*, 19th October [2006?], <http://www.innovation.ukzn.ac.za/innovationlaunch.htm>.

¹⁴⁸⁴ LIWO Executive (Natal), Library and Information Workers Organisation, *Innovation*, no. 4, June 1992, p. 30.

¹⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸⁶ LIWO, *Minutes of a special general meeting held on 17th April 2000 at the Riverside Hotel, Durban*, unpublished.

¹⁴⁸⁷ F. Bell, E-mail to C. Merrett, 16th March 2001, unpublished.

¹⁴⁸⁸ S. Desmond, *Family Literacy Project*, e-mail to F. Bell, 16th February 2006, unpublished.

fade into oblivion. Nevertheless, despite its short existence, LIWO had made itself heard as a tireless “alternative, independent voice for ... the marginalized”.¹⁴⁸⁹

It was at the historic Libraries and Information Services for a Democratic South Africa (LISDESA) conference held on 23-26 January 1995 on the Durban campus of the University of Natal that the foundations for a unified, non-racial library association were laid. A joint SAILIS-ALASA initiative, LISDESA is remembered by participants as an “overwhelming success”¹⁴⁹⁰ Two years of intense discussion and negotiation followed, culminating in the launch of the new Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA) at the University of Pretoria on 10th July 1997.

The new Association’s constitution stated that it was “determined to build a united and democratic association to take its rightful place in the broader family of international LIS organizations”, affirmed that “equitable and unrestricted access” to information was a fundamental right for all in a democratic society, and committed itself to “the redress of past imbalances and the provision of quality library and information services.”¹⁴⁹¹ The International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) welcomed LIASA officially at its World Library and Information Congress in Denmark in 1997, thereby marking the end of decades of isolation from international library circles for South African librarians and the beginning of a new era in co-operation with libraries and librarians in the global forum. Stilwell, too, endorses the “crucial role of a strong professional body”¹⁴⁹² but, in spite of LIASA’s “strong national and international profile” and “actively engaged membership” Walker notes that there is an apparent reluctance on the part of individual members to pay the modest annual membership fees.¹⁴⁹³ A glance at the current (2008) membership list of the KwaZulu-Natal Branch shows that a disappointing 7% of the library staff of the University of KwaZulu-Natal Libraries are LIASA members.

¹⁴⁸⁹ J. Millward, Transforming library service in the new South Africa, *American libraries*, vol. 26, no. 9, October 1995, p. 878.

¹⁴⁹⁰ Walker, *Library management*, vol. 27, no. 1/2, 2006, p. 31.

¹⁴⁹¹ Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA), *Constitution*, p. 1.

¹⁴⁹² C. Stilwell, South African LIS futures and the Tale of the fisherman’s wife, in World Library and Information Congress (Durban : 19-23 August 2007), *Libraries for the future*, Pretoria: Library and Information Association of South Africa, 2007, p. 215.

¹⁴⁹³ Walker, *Library management*, vol. 27, no. 1/2, 2006, p. 35.

11.6. Regional and national library co-operation

The early 1990s saw the expansion of co-operative activities between tertiary education institutions in South Africa. The concept of the library consortium, according to Darch, Rapp and Underwood, “came late to South Africa, delayed by the decades of apartheid in higher education, as in all other areas of South African society.”¹⁴⁹⁴ The first of these co-operative projects was the Western Cape project initiated in 1993. Assisted by funding from the Ford Foundation of the United States of America, it included the five major tertiary institutions in the area and had as its aims the sharing of resources and the reduction of costs.¹⁴⁹⁵ The project became known as the Cape Library Consortium (CALICO) and was in time joined by other regional library projects such as the Gauteng and Environs Library Consortium (GAELIC), which consisted of all the large university and technikon libraries as well as a few smaller ones in the Gauteng region,¹⁴⁹⁶ the South Eastern Seaboard Library System (SEALS) in the Eastern Cape and Natal’s own project, the eastern seaboard Association of Libraries (esAL). A feature of all these consortia at the time was the mix of different tertiary education libraries which made up the membership. As Darch, Rapp and Underwood explain, “South Africa’s academic institutions are divided in two ways.”¹⁴⁹⁷ The first division was by race – institutions were intended to serve either the white population and were thus well-resourced or the black¹⁴⁹⁸ population and were not so well-resourced. The second divide was between universities (which granted degrees) and technikons (which granted higher diplomas in technical and vocational disciplines).¹⁴⁹⁹ In 1993 the latter division became blurred when technikons began to offer a “limited range of bachelor, masters and doctoral degrees”¹⁵⁰⁰

¹⁴⁹⁴ C. Darch, J. Rapp & P. Underwood, Academic library consortia in contemporary South Africa, *Library consortium management*, vol. 1, no. 1/2, 1999, p. 26.

¹⁴⁹⁵ J.H. Viljoen, Background to the Western Cape library co-operative project, *SAILIS newsletter*, vol. 13, no. 4, May 1993, p. 1.

¹⁴⁹⁶ H. Edwards, Fourteen parts make a whole, *Innovation*, no. 17, December 1998, p. 15.

GAELIC’s members now include the libraries of the Universities of Botswana and Namibia and the National University of Lesotho. – GAELIC, *Member libraries*, <http://www.gaelic.ac.za/members.aspx>

¹⁴⁹⁷ Darch, Rapp & Underwood, *Library consortium management*, vol. 1, no. 1/2, 1999, p. 26.

¹⁴⁹⁸ That is, the African, Coloured and Indian sectors of the population.

¹⁴⁹⁹ Darch, Rapp & Underwood, *Library consortium management*, vol. 1, no. 1/2, 1999, p. 26.

¹⁵⁰⁰ A. Kraak, “Academic drift” in South African universities of technology, *Perspectives in education*, vol. 24, no. 3, September 2006, p. 137.

and in October 2003 the Minister of Education approved a change of name from “Technikons” to “Universities of Technology.”¹⁵⁰¹

In Natal, shortly before the formation of the esAL consortium, an organisation called RELINAT (Regional Libraries in Natal) enjoyed a brief life span after Haffajee, Acting University Librarian in Durban, invited all heads of libraries in Natal to “get together and discuss matters of common interest.”¹⁵⁰² Attendees at the first meeting included the heads of university and technikon libraries as well as public libraries and discussion centred on a number of matters of common interest. A variety of projects, such as an investigation into shared storage facilities and co-operative purchasing of CD-ROM databases were enthusiastically begun but unfortunately as the first rush of enthusiasm waned, the frequency of meetings declined and RELINAT itself faded away some time after 1993.

11.6.1. eastern seaboard Association of Libraries (esAL)

Although, according to Merrett, the stimulus to set up esAL was provided by “a misguided attempt from an administrator to secure donor funds to set up a ‘virtual’ library, the exact nature of which was predictably vague,”¹⁵⁰³ esAL actually began as a project of a new initiative called the Regional Institutional Co-operation Project (RICP). Funded by the Ford Foundation, the RICP, later renamed the eastern seaboard Association of Tertiary Institutions (esATI), was set up to “actively support” the redress of existing inequities, to restructure the system of higher education and to ensure “coordinated regional planning and quality provision.”¹⁵⁰⁴ In order to realise these aims the Association undertook to support a series of projects which included, amongst others, a Central Applications Office intended to streamline student applications for all institutions in the region, an International Partnerships Office, a Research Cluster Programme and a Library Programme. The Registrar of the University of Natal had informed the two University of Natal Librarians, Haffajee and Vietzen, of the existence of

¹⁵⁰¹ Kraak, *Perspectives in education*, vol. 24, no. 3, September 2006, p. 145.

¹⁵⁰² G.H. Haffajee, Letter of invitation [to discuss matter of common interest] to heads of libraries in Natal, 26th September, 1991, unpublished.

¹⁵⁰³ C. Merrett, Tertiary library co-operation on the eastern seaboard, *Innovation*, no. 17, December 1998, p. 27.

¹⁵⁰⁴ *esATI project info update*, [Durban]: esATI, August 1998, unpublished.

this initiative and, at the Committee on Library Co-operation (COLCIN)¹⁵⁰⁵ meeting of 19th April 1995, it was announced that a committee was shortly to be formed for the purpose of facilitating “better library co-operation in Natal.”¹⁵⁰⁶ The committee was to consist of two representatives from each of the following institutions: University of Natal, Durban, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, University of Durban Westville, University of Zululand, Unisa (Durban Branch), M L Sultan Technikon, Mangosuthu Technikon and Technikon Natal.¹⁵⁰⁷

Committee members of COLCIN reacted with caution, agreeing that it would be best to wait and see if the RICP would be a “useful forum for co-operation.”¹⁵⁰⁸ COLCIN continued to hold biannual meetings during 1996 and to report to the Inter University Library Committee (IULC) but once the library project of the RICP had been established it was agreed, at the 8th May 1997 meeting, that COLCIN should disband.¹⁵⁰⁹

The first “substantial meeting”¹⁵¹⁰ in October 1995 of representatives of seven libraries - the UNISA branch library in Durban did not send a representative, probably because the Unisa library in Pretoria was involved in the GAELIC initiative in Gauteng – resulted in a list being drawn up of “co-operative achievements and common concerns”,¹⁵¹¹ and three areas of possible co-operation - user education standards, electronic information and copyright matters - were identified.¹⁵¹² However, Merrett notes that it was obvious that there was “profound ignorance amongst bureaucrat proponents of regional co-operation about the degree of interlinking already achieved by libraries.”¹⁵¹³ esAL was able to build upon the co-operative relationships which had been forged through COLCIN but was also able to expand these to include the libraries of the three technikons in the region.

¹⁵⁰⁵ As mentioned previously, COLCIN members were the Universities of Durban-Westville, Natal – Durban and Pietermaritzburg – and Zululand.

¹⁵⁰⁶ Committee on Library Co-operation in Natal (COLCIN), *Minutes of a meeting held on 19th April 1995*, unpublished, p. 1.

¹⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁵⁰⁹ Committee on Library Co-operation in Natal (COLCIN), *Minutes of a meeting held on 8th May 1997*, p. 3.

¹⁵¹⁰ C. Merrett, *Brief report on esAL and the issue of electronic information*, 18th February 1997, unpublished.

¹⁵¹¹ Associated Tertiary Institutions, KwaZulu/Natal Library Forum (Augmented COLCIN meeting), [Minutes of a meeting held on 18th October 1995].

¹⁵¹² Merrett, *Innovation*, no. 17, December 1998, p. 27.

¹⁵¹³ *Ibid.*

The purpose of esAL, according to the agreement signed by the Vice-Chancellors of the institutions was to

... co-ordinate the resources of all the academic libraries on the eastern seaboard in order to develop a single resource base (SRB) that will underpin teaching, learning and research in the area and contribute in turn to the national bibliographic network.¹⁵¹⁴

The envisaged benefits which would accrue to the libraries included a dedicated interlibrary loan courier service, cross-institutional membership to all the libraries for staff and post-graduate students, cost-savings through shared journal holdings and other initiatives designed to advance “the aim of wider accessibility and more efficient dissemination of knowledge and information.”¹⁵¹⁵ In order to ensure closer collaboration amongst library staff in the institutions, a series of task groups were set up to work together on user education, networking and cataloguing, to name but a few. However, a pertinent criticism levelled at the esAL set-up was voiced by Merrett, who pointed out that there was danger in emphasising regional co-operation to the neglect of national co-operation. He opined that the libraries involved could become “self-absorbed with our immediate neighbours ignoring institutions elsewhere in the country who might be more appropriate partners in problem-solving.”¹⁵¹⁶

Donor funding was also sought to create a “virtual” catalogue in the region. As Merrett noted, the means of doing this “was readily available through the z39.50 shareware search engines already installed at some libraries.”¹⁵¹⁷ Only one member, the Technikon Natal Library, was not using the URICA library software, and other member libraries required various infrastructural enhancements. A proposal was thus put forward to the Mellon Foundation in the United States and, after several revisions, was finally accepted. Once the Technikon Natal Library’s bibliographic database had been converted to URICA and enhancements had been made to the URICA software of all the other libraries to facilitate seamless searching across all seven library catalogues, the “virtual catalogue” was, theoretically at least, operational. Unfortunately networks between the institutions proved infuriatingly slow and unreliable and persistent problems with most

¹⁵¹⁴ Eastern Seaboard Association of Libraries, *Agreement*, [1996], unpublished.

¹⁵¹⁵ *esATI project info update*, [Durban]: esATI, August 1998.

¹⁵¹⁶ C. Merrett, The Eastern Seaboard Association of Libraries, *Library bulletin*, [Pietermaritzburg], no. 306, September 1998, p. 1.

¹⁵¹⁷ Merrett, *Innovation*, no. 17, December 1998, p. 29.

of the institutions' z39.50 servers resulted in frustration for anyone attempting to search across the bibliographic databases of all institutions.

By 2002 all esAL member libraries were expressing “varying degrees of frustration”¹⁵¹⁸ with the URICA library system which was, by this stage, in use at all seven libraries. It was decided that a consultant should be appointed to “review Urica in the region.”¹⁵¹⁹ An external consultant, Ms C. Barraclough, was contracted to conduct a review of the usage of URICA in all five libraries.¹⁵²⁰ Interestingly, the libraries most satisfied with the URICA system and which had developed the best working relationships with the software company, Universal Knowledge Systems (UKS), were the two University of Natal Libraries. Of Durban, the consultant commented that “They are making very good use of URICA, and are beneficiaries of a quietly efficient interaction between the software vendor and the system support person”¹⁵²¹ and of Pietermaritzburg, “The library at this institution is well supported by URICA ... Levels of satisfaction are high ...”¹⁵²² Notwithstanding these positive comments, the Steering Committee agreed that the time had come to upgrade the commonly-used library system. One of the major disadvantages of URICA was the fact that its programs were over 20 years old and, in spite of enhancements made from time to time, had not been updated. It was an “old technology system”¹⁵²³ and, as the consultant pointed out, “Universities and Technikons – and their libraries – have an obligation to meet the high tech needs of the global economy.”¹⁵²⁴ Although the vendor, UKS, was considering developing a new library system, this was still very much in the planning stages and thus the esAL Steering Committee agreed, in May 2003 that “libraries will be forced to change systems, regardless of their preference for URICA”.¹⁵²⁵ The remainder of 2003 was spent planning for this major step. For the Universities of Natal and Durban-Westville matters were complicated by the certain knowledge that, once their merger took place they would have to plan for a single, integrated catalogue and borrower database.

¹⁵¹⁸ University of Natal Libraries, Durban, *Annual report*, 2002, p. 11.

¹⁵¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵²⁰ By this time the M.L. Sultan and Natal Technikons had merged to form the Durban Institute of Technology which later became the Durban University of Technology.

¹⁵²¹ Barraclough, *The esAL software evaluation*, p. 117.

¹⁵²² Barraclough, *The esAL software evaluation*, p. 121.

¹⁵²³ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁵²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

¹⁵²⁵ eastern seaboard Association of Libraries, Steering Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 19th May, 2003*, unpublished, p. 1.

The benefits of esAL membership did not relate only to library systems. A major benefit for all esAL members was access to the South African Site Licensing Initiative (SASLI), a project of the newly formed Committee of South African Library Consortia (COSALC). Co-operative acquisition, particularly of expensive journal subscriptions, had been an early goal of esAL although at that stage it was confined to the region. The establishment of the SASLI office in 2002 meant that co-operative acquisitions of library materials, specifically electronic resources, could be effected. The result was considerable savings on subscriptions, mainly to electronic databases, for academic libraries in South Africa. The University of Natal acquired access to seven databases through SASLI in 2003. The table below shows the benefits that accrued through consortial negotiations with publishers and vendors. Merrett's fears of self-absorption with "our immediate neighbours" to the detriment of national partnerships¹⁵²⁶ proved to be unfounded. Total savings of R783, 832.00 were effected; in this case the savings were more than the total cost of the database subscriptions.

Database	Market value in Rands	Consortium pricing
<i>ATLA Religion database +</i>	R58,832	R15,904
<i>Beilstein/Gmelin</i>	R94,142	R37,411
<i>EbscoHost</i>	R600,000	R114,285
<i>Global books in print</i>	R27,438	R12,438
<i>INSPEC</i>	R133,720	R127,576
<i>Oxford English dictionary</i>	R14,936	R3,736
<i>Web of Science</i>	R449,350	R283,236
Total	R1,378,418	R594,586

Table 11.2. University of Natal: participation in SASLI projects, 2003¹⁵²⁷

A further benefit of the regional consortium for the University of Natal Libraries in particular was noted by the consultant, Barraclough, in her report. In her opinion, membership of esAL had allowed the future merger partners to become familiar with each other, although she also pointed out that "UNs [sic] scale of operations means that

¹⁵²⁶ Merrett, *Library bulletin*, [Pietermaritzburg], no. 306, September 1998, p. 1.

¹⁵²⁷ South African Site Licensing Initiative, *Consortium esATI/esAL 2003 participation in SASLI projects*, [5th April 2005], unpublished.

there is a natural affinity toward the other big universities elsewhere in SA, such as Wits and UCT.”¹⁵²⁸

11.6.2. IULC, FULSA and CHELSA

In spite of the growing number of regional library consortia the Inter University Library Committee (IULC), which, over the 25 years of its existence had contributed so much to the higher education library scene in South Africa,¹⁵²⁹ continued to function until 1999, when it was summarily disbanded by the South African Universities Vice Chancellors’ Association (SAUVCA), successor to the Committee of University Principals (CUP), because SAUVCA had decided that there should be fewer committees. However, the university librarians as a group rightly felt that the relationships and goodwill built up over the years should not be cast aside. It was therefore decided to establish the Forum of University Librarians of South Africa (FULSA) with the express purpose of identifying “forces affecting the future of University Libraries”¹⁵³⁰ and articulating their concerns. The Forum was to be an independent entity but it was hoped that strategic relationships could be formed with both SAUVCA and the Council for Higher Education.¹⁵³¹ FULSA as an entity had an extremely short life but one of its major achievements was the foundations it laid for the unification of the inter-university and –technikon library committees. In May 1999 the first joint meeting of FULSA and the Inter-Technikon Library Committee (ITLC) was held “to discuss matters of mutual interest.”¹⁵³² Other joint meetings followed and at last, at a workshop held on 22nd May 2003, it was proposed that a single new body be formed. The proposal was accepted and by 24th September 2003 a joint interim committee had been elected and tasked with the drafting of proposals for the name, structure, objectives and projects of the new body. Names for the new body were discussed at a meeting held on 1st June 2004 and attendees voted for CHELSA, an acronym for Committee for Higher Education Librarians of South Africa.¹⁵³³ Co-operation between libraries in the tertiary education sector thus entered a new phase.

¹⁵²⁸ Barraclough *The esAL software evaluation*, p. 115.

¹⁵²⁹ Forum of University Librarians of South Africa (FULSA), *Strategic framework*, 5th April 2001, revised 19th May 2001, unpublished, p. 1.

¹⁵³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁵³² Forum of University Librarians of South Africa/Inter-Technikon Library Committee, *[Minutes of the] business meeting*, 1st June 2004, unpublished, p. 1.

¹⁵³³ *Ibid.*

11.6.3. Cataloguing Network in Pietermaritzburg (CATNIP)

A short article in the Pietermaritzburg Library *Bulletin* of June 1992 informed readers that:

Agreement was reached in principle some weeks ago between the [Theological] Cluster and the University Library to use the latter's computer system to create a central bibliographical database for Pietermaritzburg's main theological libraries... the University Library looks upon this development with considerable anticipation as it involves a double sharing of resources; firstly, existing computer hardware, software and system expertise; and secondly, library material.¹⁵³⁴

Thus began a long-standing collaborative relationship between several libraries in the greater Pietermaritzburg area with the University Library as co-ordinator. The Natal Society Library, which, although originally a private subscription library has performed the function of a municipal library for many years, and is also one of South Africa's original legal deposit libraries, began adding its holdings online to the Cataloguing Network in Pietermaritzburg (CATNIP) database in 1993. The significance of the CATNIP initiative lay in the creation of a central online database which documented the collections of member libraries, most of which would not have had the human or financial resources to create their own networked bibliographic databases. This "unorthodox example of regional library co-operation"¹⁵³⁵ showed that there was no need to spend vast sums of money on documenting collections in order to share resources for the purposes of facilitating research and teaching.

11.7. Library automation

In Durban, apart from teething problems experienced with the hardware and a faulty operating system, which had to be replaced, the conversion of the bibliographic database from DOBIS/LIBIS to URICA was deemed to be very successful. The Durban Library's automation programme could at last be put into place and staff set to work with a will to make up for lost time. At the first Durban Library Committee meeting of 1990 it was reported that "the Cataloguing module was working well with a marked increase in the number of books being catalogued"¹⁵³⁶ Cataloguing statistics for the following year bore this out. The number of items catalogued in 1991 topped 20,000, the "highest number of

¹⁵³⁴ Theological cluster, *Library Bulletin*, [Pietermaritzburg], no. 243, June 1992, p. 2.

¹⁵³⁵ C. Merrett, From the grassroots upwards, *Innovation*, no. 17, December 1998, p. 21.

¹⁵³⁶ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 23rd April, 1990*, p. 2.

items ever to be processed by this department”, it was noted with delight.¹⁵³⁷ However, the introduction of the URICA system in Durban attracted negative comments in the Pietermaritzburg Library’s annual report for 1990/1991, wherein it was said that:

The practice of making comparisons within the university is not a popular one. However ...the fact that both libraries are now using the URICA system, makes such comparisons both inevitable and intellectually honest. There is a sense of frustration in Pietermaritzburg that in spite of rapid and economical progress in the area of computerization ... it is not properly served when more equipment or enhancements are required. There seems to be a lack of understanding within the university as to how far the University Library, Pietermaritzburg has progressed; and that planning has been precise and responsible. Consequently the Durban library with a much smaller database and fewer facilities to date appears to receive a larger fraction of the available resources.¹⁵³⁸

It is to the discredit of the University authorities that the Pietermaritzburg University Librarian felt impelled to make this ungenerous remark. Essentially, the real source of the irritation seems to have been the hardware problems being experienced with the Pietermaritzburg minicomputer and the reluctance of the University to agree to a disc upgrade. Expenditure on this necessary item had apparently resulted in a “barrage of complaints” from various people on the Pietermaritzburg campus.¹⁵³⁹

Nevertheless, once the Durban Library had acquired a functional system, automation of library processes proceeded swiftly. Within two years the Acquisitions, Circulation and Short Loans modules had been implemented. As part of the retrospective catalogue conversion project, 27,348 bibliographic records in digital format were acquired from the Library of Congress in 1993 and uploaded, leaving only 10% of the Durban Library’s card catalogue to be converted.¹⁵⁴⁰ The decision to convert to the URICA system had been vindicated.

In 1994 both libraries’ minicomputers had outlasted their usefulness and two new, modern Unix¹⁵⁴¹ servers were purchased, one for each library.¹⁵⁴² The new computers in both libraries provided many years of trouble-free access, only requiring disc upgrades to

¹⁵³⁷ University of Natal Libraries, Durban, *Annual report*, 1991-1996, p. 1.

¹⁵³⁸ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian’s 29th annual report*, 1990/1991, p. 23.

¹⁵³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

¹⁵⁴⁰ University of Natal Libraries, Durban, *Annual report*, 1991-1996, p. 2.

¹⁵⁴¹ A computer operating system in wide use, particularly by educational institutions. – *The Cambridge encyclopedia*, edited by D. Crystal, 2nd edition, London: BCA, 1994.

¹⁵⁴² University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 12th April 1994*, p. 3, and University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian’s 33rd annual report*, 1995, p. 3.

ensure their viability until after the merger with the University of Durban-Westville when the necessity of providing a unified catalogue for the merged University forced a change of systems.

11.8. Edgewood College of Education

The report of the National Commission on Higher Education recommended that colleges of education be incorporated into existing universities and technikons.¹⁵⁴³ Once this recommendation was effected, the number of providers of teacher education was reduced from 17 to three only, that is, the Universities of Natal and Zululand and the Technikon Natal.¹⁵⁴⁴ The University of Natal absorbed the Edgewood College of Education on 1st February 2001 and the Edminson Library became a branch library reporting to the University Librarian in Durban.

The incorporation of this small library into the Durban library system was quite easy. The existing nine staff posts were reduced to three as the student body at that time numbered under 1,000 students.¹⁵⁴⁵ Two major challenges to be faced were the incorporation of the College's catalogue, fortunately already computerised, into the catalogue of the Durban Library and the removal of books, journals, theses and reference works on education from the E.G. Malherbe Library to the Edminson Library. There were several difficulties. The library system in use at the Edminson Library was not based upon MARC standards and conversion of the bibliographic records turned out to be problematic. A year later the Librarian in charge of the Edminson Library complained that there was still a large amount of "corrective cataloguing"¹⁵⁴⁶ to be done. Moving a medium-sized collection of books and journals and integrating them into an existing collection also brought its own set of difficulties, including requirements for extra shelf space and the confusion of users when books on the same subject were discovered to have different call numbers.

¹⁵⁴³ South Africa, National Commission on Higher Education, *A framework for transformation*, [Pretoria: Government Printer], 1996, p. 150.

¹⁵⁴⁴ Edgewood College becomes a campus of the University, *Heritage*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2001, p. 1.

¹⁵⁴⁵ In 2002, 670 students were registered at Edgewood – University of Natal, *Newsletter from the Acting Vice-Chancellor's Office*, April 2002, p. 3.

¹⁵⁴⁶ University of Natal Libraries, Durban, *Report to the Library Merger Committee: UND libraries*, unpublished, p. 28.

11.9. A merger is announced

The absorption of the Edgewood College of Education into the University of Natal was a dress rehearsal for the more complex merger of the two universities, Natal and Durban-Westville. By the time the Minister of Education gazetted his intention, at the end of June 2002, to merge the Universities of Natal and Durban-Westville,¹⁵⁴⁷ preparations at Natal had already begun. On a University-wide level two internal task teams - a "Vision Task Team" and a "Governance Task Team", whose task it would be to help "formulate the University's position with respect to important aspects of the merger,"¹⁵⁴⁸ had been set up. The libraries, too, had their own team, made up of ten library staff drawn from both Durban and Pietermaritzburg. Their first task was to prepare a report on "how library procedures work in each library, with a view to recommending best practice in preparation for the first Library meeting with our colleagues at the University of Durban-Westville".¹⁵⁴⁹

The University of Durban-Westville, formerly the University College for Indians, was established under the South African government's *apartheid* policy in November 1960¹⁵⁵⁰ specifically to provide university education to the Indian community in South Africa. It therefore offered many courses pertaining specifically to Indian history and culture¹⁵⁵¹ but, as had happened at the University of Natal, the relaxation of government restrictions on university admissions in 1983¹⁵⁵², had led to the enrolment of ever-increasing numbers of black African students. In terms of organisational culture and ethos the two universities were quite different. The University of Natal, correctly or not, "was perceived as white, elitist and colonial" while the University of Durban-Westville "lobbied from the moral stance of disadvantaged champion of the masses."¹⁵⁵³ The academic cultures of the two universities were perceived as "distinct."¹⁵⁵⁴ There were differences in respect of the libraries, too. The University of Durban-Westville was a single-campus institution with one main library and two small branch libraries. As far as

¹⁵⁴⁷ Higher Education Act 1997 (Act no. 101 of 1997), South Africa, *Government gazette* no. 23550, government notice no. 867, 24th June 2002, p. 35.

¹⁵⁴⁸ University of Natal, *Newsletter from the Acting Vice-Chancellor's Office*, April 2002, p. 2.

¹⁵⁴⁹ Library merger initiatives, *UND Libraries' newsletter*, no. 45, December 2002, [p. 4].

¹⁵⁵⁰ *Challenge to a South African university*, chief editor G.C. Oosthuizen, Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1981, p. 32.

¹⁵⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

¹⁵⁵² G. Dubbeld, A chronology of the University of Natal, [1994], unpublished, p. 18.

¹⁵⁵³ M.W. Makgoba, *Merger report 2007*, [Durban]: University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2007, p. 8.

¹⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

size of collection was concerned, it had approximately 310,000 volumes while the University of Natal Libraries possessed over 1 million volumes, of which 650,000 volumes were in Durban and 420,000 volumes were in Pietermaritzburg Library.¹⁵⁵⁵

Regrettably, the pre-merger year was dogged by issues which were outside both the libraries' spheres of influence but which had the effect of slowing down negotiations between them. The first joint meeting with the University of Durban-Westville Library Merger Task Team was scheduled for January 2003 but, due to circumstances beyond the libraries' control, was postponed until June 2003. However, in a paper prepared for the LIASA Higher Education Interest Group on merger progress it was noted that the Durban and Pietermaritzburg libraries were at last co-operating on "a new level"¹⁵⁵⁶

11.10. Summary

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times ..." ¹⁵⁵⁷ - the opening lines of Dickens's *A tale of two cities* could well be applied to this period in the history of the University libraries. It was both a difficult and an exciting time. It is a feature of libraries in general that they react to change fairly slowly and changes tend to be incremental. The demise of apartheid and the transition to the "new South Africa", changes in almost every area of public life and in the higher education landscape, severe financial difficulties and staffing issues combined to accelerate the pace of change at the University of Natal libraries. The trend towards greater usage of the Internet for information traditionally housed in libraries continued to escalate. Merger issues were also a reminder of the days of Coblans, the first University Librarian, who had to try to integrate five separate libraries in two different centres into a unitary system although, in his case, without the conveniences of modern information and communications technology. On 31st December 2003 the University of Natal ceased to exist. The library system planned for the new University of KwaZulu-Natal was to be a unitary one; five geographically separate campus libraries were to report to a Director of Libraries. The wheel, it seemed, had turned full circle.

¹⁵⁵⁵ S.S. Abdool Karim, *Stresses in the University library system*, Memorandum to Professor M.W. Makgoba and the University Executive, 10th September 2004, unpublished, p. 1.

¹⁵⁵⁶ University of Natal, Library Merger Task Team (UND & UNP), *Merger update*, paper presented to the LIASA Higher Education Interest Group, 24th September 2003, unpublished.

¹⁵⁵⁷ C. Dickens, *A tale of two cities*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/98/98.txt>

Chapter Twelve

Conclusion

The research problem central to the study was to document the historical development of the University of Natal Libraries in order to arrive at an understanding of how the libraries in the two centres, Durban and Pietermaritzburg, developed. Linked to this central problem were two sub-problems. These were, firstly, to discover whether the two libraries did “develop too independently,”¹⁵⁵⁸ as had been concluded by a highly placed University Task Team, and if so, why, and secondly, whether the personalities of the University librarians played a significant role in the development of the libraries. To address the central research problem as well as the two sub-problems and to guide the structure of the chapters, four research questions were posed:

- What administrative problems were encountered as the libraries expanded and how did the dual-centred nature of the University affect their development?
- What level of financial support did the University provide to the libraries and was this sufficient?
- What impact did the introduction of information and communications technology (ICT) have on the development of the libraries? and lastly;
- What services were offered to users of the libraries and how did these differ between the two centres?

This concluding chapter will first present the conclusions reached about the four research questions. Secondly, the conclusions reached about the research problem will be discussed, followed by a discussion on the implications this study may have for policy and practice in academic librarianship in South Africa. The limitations of the study will be enumerated and, lastly, areas of possible future research will be suggested.

¹⁵⁵⁸ [University of Natal. Library Task Team], *A report on the University of Natal Libraries submitted to the Executive Implementation Team*, 1998, unpublished, p. 31.

12.1. Conclusions about the research questions

The conclusions reached on each of the four research questions are discussed and summarised in this section.

12.1.1. Administration

As far as it has been possible to ascertain from the records, the introduction of classes in Durban in 1922 had no impact at all on the fledgling Library in Pietermaritzburg until the regularity of requests for monies to purchase books for Durban forced a recommendation by the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee that not only should the Durban section of the College receive a separate grant “for the purchase of books”¹⁵⁵⁹ but also that a Committee be formed to administer the grant. Their recommendation preceded the opening of the Howard College building by a few months and it is probable that the Committee members anticipated, correctly, as it turned out, the establishment of a library at Howard College. Thereafter contact between the two libraries was apparently minimal until the appointment in 1946 of the newly qualified Dr H. Coblans, the first University Librarian, whose task it would be to form a single, unitary library system at the Natal University College.¹⁵⁶⁰

It is of interest to pause at this point to consider why the University authorities were of the opinion that a unitary library system would be best for the fledgling College. The answer lies in the offer made by the Carnegie Corporation of New York in 1938 to the Natal University College for a one-year fellowship to enable a librarian to be trained in the United States.¹⁵⁶¹ It was too good an opportunity to miss and the College lost no time in accepting the offer and selecting a candidate – Coblans – for both the Fellowship and the newly-created post of Chief Librarian, Natal University College.¹⁵⁶² Would the College library system have developed differently if this offer had not been made? We shall never know. Once the decision was taken and the candidate selected, it was hoped that the appointment of the Chief Librarian would result in “immediate developments in

¹⁵⁵⁹ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 20th April, 1931*.

¹⁵⁶⁰ H. Coblans, *Memorandum by Librarian on the University of Natal Library*, 2nd April, 1951, unpublished, p. 1.

¹⁵⁶¹ See Chapter Four, section 4.3.2. As already noted, the same offer was apparently made to other South African universities as well; see Currey, *Rhodes University, 1904-1970*, p. 81-82.

¹⁵⁶² Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 14th March 1939*.

all branches of the Natal University College library” and that the library would play “a more vital role ...in the educational life of the College ...”¹⁵⁶³

As it turned out, the Committee’s aspirations were a little naive. Although by the time he left in 1952, Coblans had made headway with the unification of the College libraries, a considerable amount of work was left undone. Coblans’s article published in *South African libraries* shows his perception of the enormous task which faced him. He noted:

The Library difficulties that arise are many and often very frustrating. They are, however, interesting as they represent in microcosm what is met in trying to integrate the library resources of a region: such matters as local union catalogues, centralized cataloguing and co-operative sharing of subject fields.¹⁵⁶⁴

His comments on the maintenance of a union catalogue indicate that he understood the need for consistency in the library system “without sacrificing local flexibility.”¹⁵⁶⁵ This phrase is significant in that it shows that he was well aware of the difficulties inherent in an attempt at unification of the University’s library services. It is a measure of his success that he was successful in his pioneering efforts despite the administrative complexities,¹⁵⁶⁶ the clumsy system of governance whereby a joint library committee was subordinate to the local committees, and serious shortages of both staff and funds.

Perry, who succeeded Coblans in 1954, built upon the good work of his predecessor. Under his enthusiastic and energetic leadership the University Library thrived despite continued financial hardships and an ongoing critical shortage of qualified staff. The two libraries were at this time managed by a trio of well-educated, professionally qualified and experienced men. They formed a team under whose guidance and leadership the libraries in the two centres prospered. Perry, in the same manner as he was to do years later at the University of the Witwatersrand,¹⁵⁶⁷ built up the loanable book collections and played a major role in increasing collections of “rare or highly specialised material.”¹⁵⁶⁸

¹⁵⁶³ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Report of the Library Committee to the Investigation Committee on Present and Future Needs of the Natal University College*, [March 1941], unpublished.

¹⁵⁶⁴ H. Coblans, Some problems of a multi-centred library, *South African libraries*, vol. 17, no. 1, July 1949, p. 35.

¹⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

¹⁵⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

¹⁵⁶⁷ R. Musiker & N. Musiker, *Wits Library*, Johannesburg: Scarecrow Books, 1998, p. 60.

¹⁵⁶⁸ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1954, p. 3.

Trouble began with the appointment of Mr S.I. Malan, the first (and only) Director of Libraries at the University of Natal. His autocratic style of management¹⁵⁶⁹ led to repeated clashes with Pietermaritzburg Librarian, Mr R. Brown, and with the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee. Was Brown and, to a lesser extent, the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, simply being obstructive? Or did they have valid concerns? Unlike Coblans, Malan did not seem to recognise or accept the need for “local flexibility.”¹⁵⁷⁰ Brown did not appreciate Malan’s management style, while Malan took exception to Brown’s apparently independent spirit. This clash of personalities was surely at the root of the various administrative problems experienced during Malan’s term of office. As was pointed out, a system in which the management and supervision of a library service is vested in two different standing committees, and whose members have differing priorities and different agendas, was bound to encounter many difficulties. However, the system not only survived but had apparently thrived during the tenures of both Coblans and Perry.

Malan’s resignation in June 1967 precipitated the end of the unitary library system at the University. Although the Joint Library Committee survived the demise of the unitary system, it proved quite unequal to solving a contentious issue which arose in 1971 around the division of funds between the two libraries. Having outlived its usefulness it eventually became defunct. From 1972 onwards the two Librarians were responsible to their respective centre’s Vice-Principal and the Chairs of the local library committees reported directly to Senate. In 1973 the separation of the academic activities of the two centres meant that the two libraries thereafter developed in quite different directions.

It is interesting to note that the Pietermaritzburg Library often led the way in innovation, for example, subject specialists were introduced in Pietermaritzburg more than a decade before Durban started its own subject librarian unit. In 1951 the Botha-Duminy Commission noted that “Maritzburg [sic] is an established centre which has attained a stage of smooth functioning and of stability in organisation,”¹⁵⁷¹ a description which could equally have been applied to the Pietermaritzburg campus and to its Library in

¹⁵⁶⁹ E.W.O. Pugsley, Personal communication, 2nd April, 2008.

¹⁵⁷⁰ Coblans, *South African libraries*, vol. 17, no. 1, July 1949, p. 38.

¹⁵⁷¹ M.C. Botha & J.P. Duminy, (Chairs), *Report of the Commission of Enquiry [into the University of Natal]*, 5th May 1951, unpublished, p. 5.

later years as well. A stable, secure organisation, it may be argued, is a prerequisite for a well-run, innovative library service.

The Durban centre, in contrast and due to its multi-campus nature, had many administrative problems - the “dispersion of effort and activity”¹⁵⁷² first noted by the Botha-Duminy Commission - which, by their very nature, affected the Durban Library. Student numbers had also increased too rapidly on the Durban campus. Within a space of 18 years the Durban student complement had overtaken that of Pietermaritzburg.¹⁵⁷³ The complaint voiced at Senate about the alleged “chaotic”¹⁵⁷⁴ state of the Durban Library was, as Scholtz noted, a “classic example of inadequate library facilities ... being blamed on those providing the service.”¹⁵⁷⁵

A question which still needs to be answered is why the two libraries chose different library systems in spite of the original insistence by the University’s Academic Planning and Policy Committee that there should be a “joint approach.”¹⁵⁷⁶ Why did the University authorities allow this to happen? It is apparent that the decision in Durban, unlike in Pietermaritzburg, was not taken by library management alone. Other parties which assisted in the decision-making process were the Durban City Council (which donated funds) and the Durban centre’s Computer Services Division. It is likely that other interests were also served by this decision although it could be argued that, if library management had objected strongly to using the DOBIS/LIBIS system, then the installation would not have gone ahead. However, as the system was found to be acceptable and the requisite technical assistance was promised to the Library, a costly mistake was made which had to be rectified barely five years later.

In the mid-1990s the rapidly increasing costs of journal subscriptions forced a reconsideration of the policy of duplicating subscriptions between the two centres. A positive result of this was the collaborative purchasing project aimed at rationalising

¹⁵⁷² Botha & Duminy, *Report of the Commission of Enquiry [into the University of Natal]*, 5th May 1951, p. 8.

¹⁵⁷³ See Chapter Ten, Table 10.1. and Appendix 3.

¹⁵⁷⁴ I.K. Allan, *Report of the Chairman of the Durban Library Committee on the operation of the Durban Library*, 1978, unpublished, p. 1.

¹⁵⁷⁵ University of Natal, Durban Libraries, *Report for the years 1978/1979 [Annual report]*, p. 4.

¹⁵⁷⁶ University of Natal, *Minutes of a meeting in the Frank Bush Committee Room [Pietermaritzburg] ... to discuss library mechanisation*, 15th December 1975, unpublished, p. 1.

subscriptions between the two campuses which resulted in a closer working relationship between the two libraries. This collaboration was reinforced in 1998 when, as a result of changes in the University Executive management portfolios, the reporting lines of the two University Librarians were altered so that they reported to the same Deputy Vice-Chancellor. In the words of independent assessor Hayes, this was “a positive step for developing a single direction for both libraries ...”¹⁵⁷⁷

To summarise, the historical record has shown that there are many difficulties involved in the administration of a dual-centred library system, as pointed out many years ago by Coblans himself. In order to be sustainable, it requires institutional support and commitment, not only with respect to adequate funding and sufficient staff but also as far as institutional goals and strategies are concerned.

12.1.2. Financial support

“The Natal University College began its history ... under the most stringent financial limitations,”¹⁵⁷⁸ notes Brookes. As a consequence, the Library, too, was plagued by severe financial constraints from the beginning, as Brookes again points out:

In its earlier years the Natal University College suffered cruelly from lack of funds to buy books – with results which can still be felt [in 1965] – and even in later years higher salaries versus more books have formed a kind of pull-devil-pull-baker struggle.¹⁵⁷⁹

The parlous state of the library grant was a particular cause for concern for the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee during the early years of the College. It is also apparent that, when classes were started in Durban, no provision had been made for purchasing library books, probably because students were encouraged to make use of the Natal Technical College Library. From 1927 requests began to be made for monies to purchase books for Durban students. An attempt made by the Library Committee in 1933 to swell the coffers by requesting the Principal to make an appeal for funds at the graduation ceremony that year was unsuccessful. In contrast, the Durban Library Committee experienced limited success in raising funds from a bridge drive, adding £30 6s 4d to the book grant for 1933.

¹⁵⁷⁷ H. Hayes, *University of Natal Libraries benchmarking report*, [September 1998], p. 2.

¹⁵⁷⁸ E. H. Brookes, *A history of the University of Natal*, Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1966, p. 118.

¹⁵⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

The establishment of the “Non-European” Library in Durban, housed in separate premises and therefore requiring its own book stock, not to mention furniture and staff, constituted a further drain on the meagre financial resources. The Durban Library Committee’s insistence in 1936 that “the principle of lending books from the Main Library to Non-European students should not be established,”¹⁵⁸⁰ which it reiterated in 1955¹⁵⁸¹ was not only deplorable but impractical and expensive as well. Why did the University of Natal struggle to maintain a separate library which it could ill afford? According to Malherbe, classes were kept separate for pedagogical reasons. “Non-European” students needed “special attention, and an adaptation of methods of instruction,”¹⁵⁸² he argued. This separation of classes was, however, no reason to maintain a segregated library system. The answer almost certainly lies in the social mores of conservative Natal which dictated that the different races did not mix, even when it came to making use of the same books.¹⁵⁸³ Political considerations were obviously allowed to outweigh economic considerations, to the detriment of the Durban Library as a whole.

Coblans was fiercely critical of the way in which both the University and the Ministry of Education treated the Library insofar as funds were concerned. It was Coblans who drew attention to the relationship between university and library expenditure, noting in his submission to the Holloway Commission of 1951 that library expenditure as a percentage of total University expenditure fell below the minimum 3.5% recommended by both British and American authorities.¹⁵⁸⁴

Disappointingly, the new arrangements for the government subsidy resulting from the outcomes of the Holloway Commission did not bring financial relief to the Library because the Commission did not consider that the demands of a multi-centred Library

¹⁵⁸⁰ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of the Library Committee meeting of 22nd April, 1936*.

¹⁵⁸¹ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 23rd May 1955*.

¹⁵⁸² E.G. Malherbe, Higher education of non-Europeans in South Africa, *Optima*, March 1956, p. 5 [reprint].

¹⁵⁸³ Bonner has spoken of the fear of white South Africans of “racial swamping,” a core political issue during the time of the Smuts government in South Africa. – P. Bonner, *Racial understandings and racial practice in 20th century South Africa*, Talk delivered at the Carnegie Donor Equity Symposium held at the University of the Witwatersrand, 28th November 2007.

¹⁵⁸⁴ H. Coblans, *Some considerations in drafting a memorandum for the Holloway Commission*, 17th May 1951, unpublished.

warranted a “higher State grant.”¹⁵⁸⁵ Over the years the University also displayed a tendency to appropriate the portion of the State subsidy earmarked for library needs. This tendency was first pointed out by Perry in 1959 when he noted that during 1958 and 1959 the University had appropriated £2 and £6 per student respectively, to repay itself for the financial burden that it had borne ‘to a disproportionate extent’¹⁵⁸⁶ in previous years.

Malan, like his predecessors, found it difficult to operate a university library in two centres on funding which was adequate for only one. On comparing expenditure on library materials per student between seven South African university libraries in 1962 he found that only two universities, the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education and the University of the Orange Free State, spent more on library materials per student than did the University of Natal. However, Natal’s expenditure was artificially inflated due to the necessity of purchasing duplicate materials for two main centres, which meant that in real terms each library received less. Kennedy’s recommendations for improving the University of Natal’s book stock by increasing the annual book vote and providing for an extra *ad hoc* grant to improve deficiencies in stock¹⁵⁸⁷ would have brought some relief if implemented but both recommendations were ignored by the University authorities.

During the 1970s the University of Natal, in company with most other South African university libraries, felt the twin effects of an unfavourable foreign exchange rate and inflation. Attempts to reduce duplication of titles between the two centres as well as between university libraries in the region met with limited success. Schauder noted that “in most cases of duplication, journals were needed locally”¹⁵⁸⁸ and could not be cancelled. Yet the success of an exercise in the rationalisation of journal subscriptions carried out two decades later proved that, with some effort, it was quite possible to share subscriptions across the two centres.

¹⁵⁸⁵ J.E. Holloway, (Chair), *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into University Finances and Salaries*, [Pretoria: Government Printer], 1951, p. 93.

¹⁵⁸⁶ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1959, p. 1.

¹⁵⁸⁷ R.F. Kennedy, *Books for study and research*, Potchefstroom: Potchefstroom University for C.H.E., 1962, p. 83.

¹⁵⁸⁸ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 17th March, 1976*, p. 2.

Due to South Africa's worsening economic situation, government subsidies to the universities were cut drastically in 1984.¹⁵⁸⁹ Sanctions, the declining value of the rand and increases in the prices of academic publications all contributed to the slowing down of the growth of many university libraries in South Africa with the lone exception of Unisa, whose "bulging budgets"¹⁵⁹⁰ made it, Du Preez claims, the fastest growing university library on the African continent.¹⁵⁹¹ However, Suttie claims that by the late 1980s, when "South Africa's political woes ... weighed heavily on the economy ... even Unisa's privileged position could not cushion the blow."¹⁵⁹² Due to the government's policy of "separate education" for the different racial groups, the number of universities in South Africa had swollen to 22 by the end of the 1980s, too many for the economy to support. In order to balance the budgets, both the Pietermaritzburg and Durban Libraries were forced to cancel journal subscriptions and to follow an extremely conservative policy when it came to placing new subscriptions.

The 1990s saw little improvement in the University's grant to the libraries. Walker noted that "the libraries have been meticulous in avoiding over-expenditure."¹⁵⁹³ In 2003 a startling discovery was made. Walker's investigation into library funding revealed that for at least six years the University's allocation for library books and journals had "steadily deteriorated"¹⁵⁹⁴ to the extent that, by 2002 the libraries were facing a large deficit in their periodicals budgets in 2002 and were facing an enforced large-scale cancellation of journal subscriptions.¹⁵⁹⁵ By perennially underfunding them, the University had indeed used the libraries as a "soft target."¹⁵⁹⁶ The crisis was avoided by a special *ad hoc* grant made by the Natal University Development Foundation to the libraries to cover the shortfall on journal subscriptions.¹⁵⁹⁷

¹⁵⁸⁹ University of Natal, *The role in society of the University of Natal, 1989 onwards*, [Durban: University of Natal, 1989], p. 1.

¹⁵⁹⁰ M.-L. Suttie, *The University of South Africa Library, Mousaion*, vol. 24, no. 2, 2006, p. 285.

¹⁵⁹¹ M.H.C. Du Preez, *Huidige stand van en tendense in die groei van die versamelings van Suid-Afrikaanse biblioteke, South African journal of library and information science*, vol. 58, no. 4, 1990, p. 352.

¹⁵⁹² Suttie, *Mousaion*, vol. 24, no. 2, 2006, p. 304.

¹⁵⁹³ A.D.M. Walker, *Funding policies in the University Libraries*, unpublished, p. 4.

¹⁵⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁵⁹⁵ A.M. Kaniki, *The library budget and the "journals crisis": motivation for bridging funds*, report tabled at the Durban Library Committee meeting of 2nd September 2002, unpublished, p. 1.

¹⁵⁹⁶ Co-operative acquisition. *Library viewpoints*, [Pietermaritzburg], no. 4, June 1994, unpublished, [p. 2].

¹⁵⁹⁷ Walker, *Funding policies in the University libraries*, p. 12.

A sub-theme which runs throughout the study is the increasing cost of journal subscriptions and the libraries' struggle to maintain them. As the number of subscriptions, considered by Perry an essential stimulus to research and scholarship,¹⁵⁹⁸ increased so, naturally, did the proportion of library expenditure on subscriptions. In 1958 the first reported survey of journals was undertaken with the aim of cancelling lesser used titles.

In 1975 both Schauder and Scholtz noted that the overall increase in the cost of periodical subscriptions had exceeded 50%,¹⁵⁹⁹ negating the advantages of the larger library allocation granted to the two libraries that year. Over the next 20 years cancellations of periodical subscriptions were carried out sporadically in an attempt to control expenditure. A partial solution was eventually found in a collaborative purchasing project between the two libraries which was initiated in 1996. The elimination of several expensive duplicate subscriptions between the Durban and Pietermaritzburg libraries achieved considerable savings for the University. Further savings accrued when, licensing restrictions permitting, electronic journals could be purchased and shared between the two libraries.

Of course the battle against the rising costs of journal subscriptions was not confined to the University or to South Africa only. Data provided by American Research Libraries (ARL) show that, between the years 1986 to 2000, library expenditure on journal subscriptions increased by 192% as against expenditure on monographs (48%), operating expenses (78%) and salaries (92%).¹⁶⁰⁰ Comparable figures are not available for South African university libraries but it is likely that they would be equally alarming.¹⁶⁰¹ The real issue, as Merrett and others have pointed out, is the greed of commercial publishers who, cleverly understanding the "nature of the fissures and faults in academic life"¹⁶⁰² have exploited this to their advantage, taking "donated

¹⁵⁹⁸ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report, 1960*, p. 1.

¹⁵⁹⁹ University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian's 14th annual report, 1975*, p. 6 and University of Natal, Durban Libraries, *Annual report, 1974/1975*, p. 16.

¹⁶⁰⁰ Association of Research Libraries, *Expenditure trends in ARL libraries, 1986-2000*, <http://www.arl.org/stats/arlstat/graphs/2000t4.html>.

¹⁶⁰¹ A study by R. Hoskins entitled *The effect of the crisis in scholarly communication on university libraries in South Africa*, which will address this hiatus, is currently underway.

¹⁶⁰² C. Merrett, Robber barons of the information age, *The indexer*, vol. 23, no. 4, October 2003, p. 210.

knowledge”¹⁶⁰³ from academics and selling it back to university libraries at enormous profit to themselves. Chodorow and Lyman concur, stating that “scholarly communication is a gift culture – one in which information is a free good, freely exchanged, to sustain a sense of academic community”¹⁶⁰⁴ but the entry of commercial publishers into the information market has led not only to inflationary subscription prices but also to the proliferation of new titles. Libraries are fairly powerless in the face of such profiteering. Merrett contends that the answer lies in universities themselves claiming “rights to the knowledge they produce” and finding “a means to disseminate it in an economical way ...”¹⁶⁰⁵ Until this is done, inflationary journal subscription prices will continue to dog the efforts of university libraries to provide journals to support the academic endeavour.

How does the above discussion relate to the research question regarding the level of financial support provided by the University to the libraries? It shows that the problem of insufficient funds was an ongoing problem and was related to a far bigger problem, namely, that of the economics of information provision, as argued by Merrett and others. As Chodorow and Lyman point out, “the price of information has risen at hyper-inflationary rates ... so that universities have not been able to pay for what their faculties and students need.”¹⁶⁰⁶

12.1.3. Information and communications technology

The discussion centering on the impact of information and communications technology on the University Libraries has two aspects. The first is the automation of collection management which, by the early 1990s, was almost complete. Brown had predicted as early as 1968 that computers would “probably cause a complete reassessment of the philosophy of librarianship.”¹⁶⁰⁷ He was right, not only in the sense that the automation of processes such as the acquisition and cataloguing of new materials and the procedures for lending library materials removed much of the drudgery attached to these tasks but also in the sense that the time of professional librarians was freed up to improve service

¹⁶⁰³ Merrett, *The indexer*, vol. 23, no. 4, October 2003, p. 210.

¹⁶⁰⁴ S. Chodorow & P. Lyman, The responsibilities of universities in the new information environment, in *The mirage of continuity*, edited by Brian L. Hawkins & Patricia Battin, Washington, D.C.: Council on Library Information Resources, 1998, p. 73.

¹⁶⁰⁵ Merrett, *The indexer*, vol 23, no. 4, October 2003, p. 213.

¹⁶⁰⁶ Chodorow & Lyman, in: *The mirage of continuity*, p. 69.

¹⁶⁰⁷ R.A. Brown, *University Library, Pietermaritzburg*, 1968, unpublished, p. 11.

to users. As Gorman points out, “Librarianship is a profession defined by service. Every aspect of librarianship, every action that we take as librarians can and should be measured in terms of service.”¹⁶⁰⁸ Schauder, and later Vietzen, made full use of the advantages automation brought to the Pietermaritzburg Library.

The introduction of an alternative to print-based information retrieval, the link to the DIALOG database in the United States of America, established in the Science and Engineering branch library in Durban in 1979, foreshadowed changes in the way researchers – scholars and academic staff – sought information. Cryptic search protocols,¹⁶⁰⁹ which required the intervention of a librarian, and high costs, meant that the service was not very popular but, within a decade new developments, in the form of Compact Disc-Read Only Memory (CD-ROM) technology, required librarians to think seriously about how they provided access to information. CD-ROMs were an ideal medium for the storage of very large indexing and abstracting databases and their convenience of use, requiring only a microcomputer and an optical disc reader, meant that they gained rapidly in popularity with library users. As user demand increased, the libraries began to replace printed abstracting and indexing publications with CD-ROMs. The new medium required different interventions from subject librarians. Not only were they required to be familiar with the databases but they also needed to have knowledge of operating systems and “general computer troubleshooting.”¹⁶¹⁰

The second contact with the outside world through telecommunications was the installation of a link on both campuses to SABINET, the national bibliographic database. By 1990 telecommunications links between the two campuses made it possible for library users in Pietermaritzburg to search the Durban Library’s online catalogue and vice versa. Although it was not quite what Coblans had envisaged when he began the process of creating a union catalogue for the University of Natal libraries, the end result was similar. The only problem at this stage, due to the fact that the catalogues were loaded onto two separate computers, one on each campus, was the necessity of juggling between the two bibliographic databases if a searcher wanted to search both catalogues.

¹⁶⁰⁸ M. Gorman, *Our enduring values*, Chicago: American Library Association, 2000, p. 75.

¹⁶⁰⁹ J.E. Straw, From magicians to teachers, *The reference librarian*, no. 74, 2001, p. 5.

¹⁶¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

The University of Natal acquired Internet access at about the same time that the “digital revolution”¹⁶¹¹ in libraries began - in the mid-1990s. In the beginning use of the new networked electronic environment was limited to staff and postgraduate students but, once it was opened to all, usage increased exponentially as staff and students alike found that, at the click of a button, they were able to access vast amounts of information. The libraries were cautious in their approach to the new medium of information delivery. CD-ROM databases were preferred over remote databases accessible via the Internet due to insufficient bandwidth and unreliable response times, particularly on the Pietermaritzburg campus, until the introduction of a “premium” telecommunications service by the University’s Information Technology Division. This increased the speed at which information could be retrieved from databases and also improved access to electronic journals, most of which were paid for as part of print subscriptions and which, up to this time, were seldom used due to difficulties of access.

In summary, by the end of 2003 users of the University libraries had access not only to substantial print collections but also to a growing number of electronic resources, including databases and electronic journals. Although in no way replacing traditional library collections, electronic resources had, for many, enhanced their access to information.

12.1.4. User services

It is interesting to chart the changing nature of the context in which the University Library operated as far as the users, both students and staff, were concerned. The first librarian, Captain D.A. Henry, ran the library on quasi-military lines, maintaining discipline and insisting upon total silence.¹⁶¹² The earliest library orientation sessions focused on rules and regulations.¹⁶¹³ When students required guidance on the use of books this was provided by the academic staff, while library staff simply instructed students “on technicalities.”¹⁶¹⁴

¹⁶¹¹ M. Breeding, Knitting systems together, *Computers in libraries*, vol. 26, no. 9, October 2006, p. 2.

¹⁶¹² R. A. Brown, *History of the Library*, part 3, Supplement no. 10 to *[Library] bulletin*, [Pietermaritzburg], June 1973.

¹⁶¹³ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 19th April 1934*.

¹⁶¹⁴ Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 19th April 1934 and Minutes of a meeting held on 20th March 1945*, p. 3.

Coblans, on the other hand, believed firmly that the Library had a “formal teaching function”¹⁶¹⁵ which should be adapted to the level of the student, from a general orientation for first year students to a “narrower subject approach”¹⁶¹⁶ for post-graduates. He met with resistance from lecturers, however, when he tried to introduce a series of weekly lectures for M.Sc. and fourth year Engineering students. It was the same problem as that articulated by Vietzen in 1973, namely, reluctance on the part of academic staff to allocate time for the purposes of library instruction. The attitude of academic staff to the library had not, it seems, changed since the 1930s.

Perry, successor to Coblans, was well aware that the Library staff was not doing enough to bring students and academic staff into contact with the Library’s resources but the amount of time spent on processing books left little time for other activities.¹⁶¹⁷ In 1957 the practice of lecturing to Engineering students on information sources pertaining to their courses was resumed and in 1958 a library assistant with a Bachelor of Science degree was employed in the Main Library in Durban to handle queries in the science and technical fields.¹⁶¹⁸ In a manner of speaking she was the first subject librarian, albeit unqualified, to be employed at the University of Natal although the concept had yet to be introduced to South African libraries. During Perry’s term of office the Medical Librarian introduced a library user education programme in which second year medical students were set tasks and required to find articles in journals and to write a short paper thereon. It was similar to the programme initiated many years later in the Faculty of Agriculture by the Life Sciences subject librarians in Pietermaritzburg.

During the 1960s, in keeping with international trends,¹⁶¹⁹ more attention began to be paid to library orientation and user instruction although the cataloguing of materials remained a primary task for the qualified library staff. However, it is clear that Malan was considering automation in order to free staff time for the important task of assisting library users.¹⁶²⁰ Brown, too, listed as one of the projects for 1968 the development of an instruction programme for students. In 1969 Durban Librarian Scholtz and Deputy

¹⁶¹⁵ Coblans, *South African libraries*, vol. 17, 1949, p. 40.

¹⁶¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹⁷ University of Natal Libraries, *Annual report*, 1958, p. 2

¹⁶¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹⁹ A.T. Hamlin, *The university library in the United States*, Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981, p. 145.

¹⁶²⁰ University of Natal Library, *Annual report*, 1966, p. 10.

Librarian Pugsley compiled a report on the problems relating to user guidance and assistance, even suggesting that there was a possible connection between student failures and ignorance of library resources.¹⁶²¹ During these years qualified staff were still fully occupied with carrying out routine chores and coping with the volume of work and it was to take newcomer Schauder, who joined the staff in 1974 as University Librarian in Pietermaritzburg, to implement a radical re-organisation of staff so that the emphasis fell on user services rather than routine housekeeping duties.

At first the Pietermaritzburg subject librarians were expected to catalogue and classify library materials as well as providing a subject specialist service to academic staff and students. However, as noted above, the introduction of automated cataloguing in the early 1980s relieved them of many manual routines, allowing them to concentrate on rendering specialist services to library users. The time thus saved was put to effective use, particularly in the development of user education programmes. Gentil records that at the Life Sciences Library in Pietermaritzburg it was persistence on the part of the subject librarians that resulted in the incorporation of library instruction into the curriculum.¹⁶²²

In Durban user services developed differently. In 1976 a Library Instruction Officer was employed to provide “regular and intensive library instruction,”¹⁶²³ but the need for this post fell away in 1987 when a subject librarian service was introduced. The subject librarian unit in Durban was organised on different lines to that in Pietermaritzburg. In keeping with general trends in South African university libraries towards centralised technical processing it was decided to retain a separate Cataloguing department but, in retrospect, the decision did not suit a cash-strapped institution such as the University of Natal. While this arrangement relieved the subject librarians of routine processing duties, allowing them time to carry out their duties, the Durban Libraries, unlike the Pietermaritzburg Library which was able to increase the complement of subject librarians from four to ten, were unable to do the same. In the late 1990s, when the University embarked upon its staff reduction exercise, the Durban Library managed to

¹⁶²¹ F. Scholtz & E.W.O. Pugsley, *Commission of Inquiry into Universities*, 6th June 1969, unpublished, p. 1.

¹⁶²² B. Gentil, User education, *Innovation*, no. 18, June 1999, p. 31-32.

¹⁶²³ C.F. Calvert, Library instruction, *Library news*, [Durban], no. 13, November 1976, p. 8.

retain the six original subject librarian posts but had to do so at the expense of posts in the Cataloguing and Acquisitions sections.

In 1983 the lifting of government restrictions on university admissions resulted in a steady increase in the number of black African students enrolling at the University. Under the government system of apartheid, state funding of black African education had been low, resulting in poor quality secondary schooling lacking both laboratory and library facilities.¹⁶²⁴ Students from these schools were termed “disadvantaged” as they were entering University lacking the skills required for autonomous study. Librarians found that the disadvantaged students required special attention when it came to learning how to use a library. An unfamiliar environment and tuition in a language which was not their mother tongue contributed to their difficulties and innovative ways of assisting such students had to be developed. However, it was not easy. Bell noted that:

The Apartheid system has left both black and white culturally void with respect to each other and administrators, lecturers and librarians have been thrown into the deep end as regards understanding and knowing the recipients of their teaching efforts ...¹⁶²⁵

The University of Natal was not the only university which was experiencing difficulties assisting library users. Most of the “historically white”¹⁶²⁶ universities were accepting African students in increasing numbers. Many came from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds and arrived at university without ever having set foot in a library before. Suttie, in an article on library support strategies in South African universities, criticised the treatment meted out to such students by university libraries in general. She considered that the “technocratic elitism in academic libraries”¹⁶²⁷ tended to discourage the educationally disadvantaged student and insisted that “University libraries ... must

¹⁶²⁴ M.-L. Suttie, Libraries and their support strategies in South African universities, *South African journal of library and information science*, vol. 58, no. 1, 1990, p. 99.

¹⁶²⁵ R. Bell, Disadvantaged student or disadvantaged librarians – the changing nature of user education at the University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, in SAILIS Natal Branch Conference, (Durban : 21st-23rd July 1989), *Provision of library and information services in the 1980s*, p. 22.

¹⁶²⁶ As explained in Chapter Eleven, one of the ways in which South African academic institutions were divided was by race. Those institutions intended to serve the white population were, on the whole, better resourced. – C. Darch, J. Rapp & P. Underwood, Academic library consortia in contemporary South Africa, *Library Consortium management*, vol. 1, no. 1/2 1999, p. 26.

¹⁶²⁷ Suttie, *South African journal of library and information science*, vol. 58, no. 1, 1990, p. 101.

be stripped of their long-standing elitist mystique” in order to become user-friendly “learning agencies, geared to the changing needs of our society.”¹⁶²⁸

Further changes in the delivery of user services were precipitated by the introduction of Internet access in the mid-1990s and the proliferation of electronic information resources. Both libraries designed websites with the purpose of integrating service delivery and assisting library users to find information. In Pietermaritzburg “modularised training sessions”¹⁶²⁹ on specific topics such as an introduction to journal literature and various “how to” sessions such as using the library’s website were introduced to assist students and staff. In Durban it was noted that “The use of electronic media for user education is steadily increasing”¹⁶³⁰ and the *UND Libraries newsletter* ran a series of articles intended to make “electronic tools in the Library more easily available to library users and to keep them informed of useful sites on the World Wide Web.”¹⁶³¹

The subject librarians in the two centres thus rose to the challenges posed both by new ways of accessing information and a new, more racially mixed student population. Gone were the days of preoccupation with “library mechanics.”¹⁶³² It was noted in a submission to the University’s Libraries Task Team in 1997 that it was obvious that “to adapt to the changing circumstances ... the subject librarian unit will be crucial.”¹⁶³³ Hay’s comment, that subject specialisation in libraries has “definite advantages in coping with change”¹⁶³⁴ bears out the truth of this statement.

12.2. Conclusions about the research problem

The research problem central to this study was to document the development of the libraries of the University of Natal from inception to the point of merger at the end of 2003 in order to arrive at an understanding of how the libraries developed. In documenting their development the intention was also to discover whether the statement made by a highly placed University Task Team, namely that “the two libraries had been

¹⁶²⁸ Suttie, *South African journal of library and information science*, vol. 58, no. 1, 1990, p. 105.

¹⁶²⁹ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian’s 40th annual report*, 2002/2003, p. 11.

¹⁶³⁰ University of Natal Libraries, Durban, *Annual report*, 2001, p. 6.

¹⁶³¹ Using your electronic library, *UND Libraries newsletter*, no. 27, June 1998, p. 1.

¹⁶³² R.F. Kennedy, Library mechanics, in *Libraries and people*, Cape Town: Struik, [1970?], p. 9.

¹⁶³³ C.E. Merrett, *Further submission to Libraries Task Team*, 1997, unpublished.

¹⁶³⁴ F.J. Hay, The subject specialist in the academic library, *Journal of academic librarianship*, vol. 16, no. 10, March 1990, p. 16.

allowed to develop too independently ...”¹⁶³⁵ was true or at least partially true. This statement formed one of the sub-problems which the study attempted to address. The second sub-problem was related to whether the personalities of individual University Librarians played a significant role in the development of the libraries.

The historical record shows that in the early days the two libraries were run as completely separate entities until the appointment of Coblans as University Librarian in 1946. Pietermaritzburg, the older of the two libraries, was better stocked and better staffed. The Durban library, by way of contrast, was accommodated in three different venues. Not only was its structure more complicated than that of the Pietermaritzburg Library but resources were also more thinly spread.

The catalyst for the unification of the two libraries under a single Librarian was, it appears, the offer of the Carnegie Library Fellowship. Thereafter, during the terms of office of both Coblans and Perry the unitary library system thrived despite severe financial problems. Coblans held firm ideas on the integral value of the library as part of the educative function of the university. As he pointed out in his inaugural lecture, “the plethora of print coming into the library and its subsequent distribution has made the library a workshop in an entirely new sense.”¹⁶³⁶

His successor, Perry, together with Deputy Librarians, Maple in Pietermaritzburg and Milburn¹⁶³⁷ in Durban, worked as a cohesive team, expanding the library collections and developing several specialised collections as well as an innovative information service to industry, the Industrial Information Centre.

As has been shown, a change came about with the appointments of Malan and Brown as Library Director and University Librarian, Pietermaritzburg, respectively. The administrative difficulties experienced during these years were due to the differing personalities and management styles of each and finally led to a division of the library services. Undoubtedly, Malan’s resignation precipitated the end of the unitary library system at the University. Thereafter the separation of academic activities between

¹⁶³⁵ [University of Natal, Library Task Team], *A report on the University of Natal Libraries submitted to the Executive Implementation Team*, 1998, p. 31.

¹⁶³⁶ H. Coblans, *The university library*, [S.l.]: Natal University College, 1946, p. 1.

¹⁶³⁷ Milburn was appointed to the post in 1954.

Durban and Pietermaritzburg in 1973 set the seal upon the division of the library service. As has been noted, at this time the recommendations of the University's Academic Planning and Policy Committee, namely that the University should eventually change to a federal structure or even separate into two universities, were under consideration. The two libraries followed the lead of the parent institution and developed independently along separate lines.

However, as the record shows, the envisaged separation between Durban and Pietermaritzburg never took place. Nearly 20 years later it was noted in the report of the the Vice-Chancellor's Review in 1991 that "no strong case was made for the separation of Durban and Pietermaritzburg into two separate universities."¹⁶³⁸ Nevertheless, for some years after the release of this report, the two centres remained functionally separate, each with a Vice-Principal in charge. The restructuring of the University Executive in 1997, forced by economic necessity, resulted in a concerted effort to bring the two libraries together again although this time as a federal rather than a unitary system, each operating independently of the other but with a single reporting line and similar strategic directions.

It may therefore be concluded that the criticism that the "two libraries have been allowed to develop too independently,"¹⁶³⁹ echoed by Hayes's comment that "There is not evidence that a holistic approach to library services is being pursued,"¹⁶⁴⁰ is true and was a reflection on the University itself. Pertinent here is Hattersley's comment on the "acrimonious jealousy" that had "embittered relations between the two towns," and the unspoken fear in Pietermaritzburg that the Durban centre, situated in a bustling seaport, would make such rapid progress that it could eventually claim to be the seat of the undivided university.¹⁶⁴¹ The fear was not unfounded. The Durban centre of the University grew very rapidly and, within the space of 30 years, student numbers in Durban were more than double those in Pietermaritzburg.¹⁶⁴² The rapid growth and, in particular, the dispersed nature of the University in Durban brought its own problems, as has been shown in this study.

¹⁶³⁸ University of Natal, Vice-Chancellor's Review, *Report*, December 1991, p. 3.

¹⁶³⁹ [University of Natal, Library Task Team], *A report on the University of Natal Libraries submitted to the Executive Implementation Team*, 1998, p. 19.

¹⁶⁴⁰ H. Hayes, *University of Natal Libraries benchmarking report*, [September 1998], p. 4.

¹⁶⁴¹ A.F. Hattersley, *The University of Natal, 1909 – 1960*, unpublished manuscript, p. 36.

¹⁶⁴² See Table 10.1.

The two University of Natal libraries also held quite different positions in the wider South African academic library milieu. The Pietermaritzburg Library, the smaller of the two, was comparable in size to libraries such as Rhodes University in Grahamstown whereas in Durban the scale of operations indicated that there was a more natural affinity towards the other big South African universities such as the Universities of Cape Town and the Witwatersrand.¹⁶⁴³

The second issue which this study set out to investigate was whether the personalities of individual University Librarians had a significant influence on the development of the libraries. The historical records show that this was the case, particularly in the earlier years during the existence of the unitary library system. Coblans, the pioneer, who developed the blueprint for the unitary library system struggled against what may, at times, have seemed impossible odds. “No department has been so shabbily treated”¹⁶⁴⁴ he wrote indignantly in an *aide memoire* to himself, preparatory to addressing a meeting of the Joint Library Committee. He was years ahead of his time when he introduced the concept of in-depth subject-oriented library user education to the University community.

Similarly, Perry’s enthusiastic efforts to expand the library services were extremely successful. In fact, it is worth mentioning here that the University’s libraries were, during Perry’s tenure, managed by a trio of very well-qualified and experienced men, including Perry himself, a state of affairs which contributed to the overall success of the library services during this period.

The difficulties experienced during Malan’s term of office which were, to a large extent, attributable to his autocratic personality, tended to overshadow his achievements. He was undoubtedly an efficient administrator under whose direction the library services were considerably expanded and improved. As has been noted, he doubled the numbers of library staff, the Pietermaritzburg Library acquired a new building, the University received Dr Killie Campbell’s magnificent bequest of an invaluable Africana collection, the Industrial Information Centre was placed on a permanent footing and differentiated salary scales for male and female library staff were abolished.

¹⁶⁴³ C. Barraclough, *The esAL software evaluation: final report*, May 2003, unpublished, p. 3.

¹⁶⁴⁴ H. Coblans, [Notes written in preparation for the Joint Library Committee meeting of 20th November 1951], unpublished.

Malan's departure signalled the end of the unitary library system and thereafter the influence of individual personalities on the library services became less marked, the focus tending to shift more towards issues, trends and events. Certain individuals do, however, stand out for various reasons. Firstly, there is Schauder who, although his term of office lasted only three years, had the vision and imagination to establish a subject librarian service in Pietermaritzburg that placed the library on the path to becoming a modern, user-centred library service as well as to lay out plans for the future automation of library functions. There is Scholtz, appointed Durban Librarian in 1968, who, as an Afrikaner, was an outsider at the predominantly English-speaking University of Natal. He never excused his cultural affiliations and never compromised on legal matters, particularly in relation to the laws on censorship.¹⁶⁴⁵ His attitude often led to strained relations between the Library and academic staff and may have been partly to blame for the unprecedented attack upon the Durban Library by certain sectors of the academic staff in 1978. Vietzen, the first woman appointed to a senior position in the University of Natal Libraries, steered the Pietermaritzburg Library efficiently through difficult times and was noted for the "supportive environment she had secured for her colleagues."¹⁶⁴⁶ Haffajee, the first so-called "non-white" person to be employed in a senior post in an historically "white" university library¹⁶⁴⁷ when he took up the post of Senior Librarian in Durban in 1981, became University Librarian in Durban in 1992. His belief in the concept of participative management¹⁶⁴⁸ and his negotiating skills assisted him during the early 1990s which were beset by staff problems. Vietzen's successor, Merrett, is noted for his efficiency as an administrator as well as his prolific publication record.¹⁶⁴⁹ Together, he and Haffajee initiated the process of greater collaboration between the two libraries which was to stand them in good stead when the various thorny issues related to the forthcoming merger began to arise.

Sadly, once the unitary library system was disbanded at the end of the 1960s, it would seem that interaction between senior library management in the two different centres

¹⁶⁴⁵ G.H. Haffajee, Personal communication, 1st February, 2002

¹⁶⁴⁶ University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, *Librarian's 34th annual report*, 1996, p. 4.

¹⁶⁴⁷ G.H. Haffajee, Personal communication, 1st February, 2002.

¹⁶⁴⁸ N. Buchanan & C.E. Dubbeld, "The boss" retires, *UND Libraries newsletter*, no. 45, December 2002, p. 1.

¹⁶⁴⁹ C. Bramage, Christopher Merrett moves on, *Library bulletin*, [Pietermaritzburg], no. 342, May 2002, p. 1.

was less regular than it might have been. With the benefit of hindsight both libraries would have gained from a greater measure of co-operation between them as, for example, when the system of subject specialist librarians was introduced or when the choice of a computerised library system was made. It seems that this lack of interaction was less a function of different personalities than simply a manifestation of the way in which the University itself functioned during these years.

12.3. Implications for policy and practice

The research problem which was central to this study focused on the development of the University of Natal Libraries with particular emphasis on their dual-centred nature. It was found that the criticism that they had been allowed to develop too independently was true and that the lack of evidence of an holistic approach to library services was a reflection on the University itself. A university library does not exist in a vacuum; it is an integral part of the institution which it serves. Thus the University of Natal Libraries mirrored the structure of the University. It has been noted above that the Carnegie Library Fellowship provided the impetus for the formation of a unitary library system and that, for over 22 years, the system worked. It would be unfair to blame the collapse of the unitary system upon Malan alone. The record indicates that much discussion took place around the issue of the post of Director of Library Services but that the Joint Library Committee's deferment of a decision – possibly due to its inability to confront and solve controversial issues - eventually resulted in the tacit acceptance of a library service operating separately in the two centres.¹⁶⁵⁰ The Joint Library Committee, by procrastinating, let an opportunity slip away. Irwin has noted that “If history itself teaches us anything, it is that life is a constant succession of turning points ...”¹⁶⁵¹ The Committee's failure to make a decision was one of those turning points. Would the unitary library system, if it had been allowed to continue, have survived the separation of the academic activities of the two centres in 1973? This, too, is something that we will never know.

¹⁶⁵⁰ See Chapter 9, section 9.1

¹⁶⁵¹ R. Irwin, *The English library*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1966, p. 20.

Despite the fact that this is an history of a university library rooted in a “first world”¹⁶⁵² culture there are lessons to be learnt which could be applied to other institutions, provided that one bears in mind Irwin’s injunction that “such lessons as history can teach are inconclusive, uncertain and double-faced...”¹⁶⁵³ It should be remembered that university library policy is always rooted in the policy of the university itself. Thus a library service in any university is shaped to a large extent by the parent institution. Rosenberg makes a case, in *University libraries in Africa*, for “a strong central library.”¹⁶⁵⁴ The new University of KwaZulu-Natal, in company with other merged institutions in South Africa,¹⁶⁵⁵ is a multi-centred university and thus a library service has to be delivered on several campuses. There cannot be one “central library.”¹⁶⁵⁶ Policies need to take cognisance of this fact and need to ensure that, in spite of the multi-centred nature of the new service, there is strong central co-ordination to prevent the libraries being used as a “soft target”¹⁶⁵⁷ in the future and at the same time allowing for “local flexibility.”¹⁶⁵⁸ In short the University itself must be committed to the idea of a unitary library system with multiple service delivery points.

The technological changes which have taken place over the past two decades and the fact that libraries, in general, are becoming part of an “increasingly interconnected network”¹⁶⁵⁹ simplify service delivery in a dual- or multi-centred library environment. The difficulties Coblans wrestled with such as “local union catalogues, centralized cataloguing and co-operative sharing”¹⁶⁶⁰ become things of the past. An integrated library system shared between campuses allows for a single bibliographic database which can be updated online in real time. The sharing of subscriptions to electronic journals and databases should mean that the obtaining of journal articles by library users is seamless. The user need not even be aware that a particular journal title is subscribed to

¹⁶⁵² C. Darch & P. Underwood, Dirt road or yellow brick superhighway?, *Library hi tech*, vol. 17, no. 3, p. 285.

¹⁶⁵³ Irwin, *The English library*, p.14.

¹⁶⁵⁴ D. Rosenberg, *University libraries in Africa*, London: International African Institute, 1997, vol. 1, p. 4.

¹⁶⁵⁵ Other examples are the University of Limpopo (two campuses), formed from the merger of the University of the North at Turfloop and the Medical University of South Africa (Medunsa) near Pretoria; and North West University (four campuses), formed from the merger of the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education and the University of the North-West.

¹⁶⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵⁷ Co-operative acquisition. *Library viewpoints*, [Pietermaritzburg], no. 4, June 1994, unpublished, [p. 2].

¹⁶⁵⁸ Coblans, *South African libraries*, vol. 17, no. 1, July 1949, p. 38.

¹⁶⁵⁹ Gorman, *Our enduring values*, p. 3.

¹⁶⁶⁰ Coblans, *South African libraries*, vol. 17, no. 1, July 1949, p. 35.

by the library in the other centre. Sufficient funds are, however, required to maintain the system at optimum functionality. As noted, the repositioning of the two University of Natal libraries under the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) benefitted the libraries financially. It ensured that the University's library service was aligned with research, one of the University's major strategic thrusts.

The integration of different libraries, each with its own idiosyncrasies and its own ethos is complex and potentially divisive. However, knowledge of the problems and pitfalls encountered in the creation and maintenance of a unitary library system, gained through a study of the historical record, can be used to advantage in developing future strategic directions.

12.4. Limitations of the study

The study was limited to an investigation of the historical record of the University of Natal Libraries. Comparisons with other South African university libraries were made where relevant and where it was possible to find information. Aucamp's paper, delivered at the South African Library Association Conference held in Johannesburg in 1978 provided a useful overview of university libraries in South Africa up to the late 1970s¹⁶⁶¹ and assisted in tracking down further information on other university libraries. An historical analysis of university libraries on a national scale, along the lines of Hamlin's *The university library in the United States*, lay beyond the scope of this study.

A further limitation of the study is the focus on administrative issues internal to the University of Natal Libraries themselves. An investigation into the relationship between the central University administration and library management also lay beyond the scope of this study. Such an investigation would add to an understanding of the historical development of the University of Natal libraries.

Lastly, an important limitation of the study is that which Wiegand considers the greatest shortcoming of American library history *in toto*, namely the lack of concentration "on the library from the outside in," or, in other words, the lack of sufficient focus "on the people

¹⁶⁶¹ P. Aucamp, *Universiteits- en kollegebiblioteke in Suid-Afrika, 1828–1989* [sic], in: South African Library Association Conference (Johannesburg : 1978), *Papers presented at the Conference, Johannesburg 1978*, Potchefstroom: SALA, 1978, p. 157–184.

who used (or did not use) the institution ...”¹⁶⁶² However, the focus of this study was on the dual-centred nature of the University libraries which required concentration on the institution itself and the administrative difficulties encountered rather than the people who used its services. There is no doubt that an investigation from a different point of view, that is, the user’s point of view, would bring another dimension to an historical investigation of university libraries and that library history itself would be the richer for it.

12.5. An evaluation of the research methodology

As noted in Chapter One, the historical research method was chosen for this study. Given the nature of the research problem it was deemed to be the optimal method of collecting and analysing data. Historical research is defined as the gathering of significant information about an event or a series of events and the analysis and interpretation of the data collected. It is difficult to conceive of any other research methodology that would have suited the purpose better. In order to gain an understanding of the problem, evidence was gathered from both primary and secondary sources of information. These sources took the form of minutes of past library committees, correspondence, reports and oral evidence provided by people who took part in events or who had been eyewitnesses. Relevant information was sorted, cross-checked for validity where necessary and analysed, and conclusions were drawn from the available evidence. It must be borne in mind, as Shiflett points out, that “the nature of historical records only allow, at best, a partial picture of the reality of past events”¹⁶⁶³ and also that, as Webb has stated, “Structured history ... can never be fixed for all time, since structuring depends on interpretation, and interpretation is influenced by the context in which the historian is located.”¹⁶⁶⁴

¹⁶⁶² W. A. Wiegand, American library history literature, 1947-1997, *Libraries & culture*, vol. 35, no. 1, Winter 2000, p. 21.

¹⁶⁶³ O.L. Shiflett, Clio’s claim, *Library trends*, Spring 1984, p. 390.

¹⁶⁶⁴ C. de B. Webb, Preface to second edition, in E.H. Brookes & C.de B. Webb, *A history of Natal*, 2nd edition, Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1987, p. ix.

12.6. Implications for further research

As Ginwala, quoted in the first chapter of this study, stated, “All institutions need to question their inheritance.”¹⁶⁶⁵ It has already been noted that there is a dearth of critical texts available on the history of South African university libraries. Immelman’s statement that the history of South African university libraries is a subject which “awaits further investigation ...”¹⁶⁶⁶, penned more than 50 years ago, is supported by Suttie who also considers that there is a case to be made for the “institutional imperative”¹⁶⁶⁷ of library history due to the tendency of society to “institutionalise education.”¹⁶⁶⁸ She makes a strong case for researching libraries “from the vantage point of social and cultural history,” arguing that such research would likely reveal “ideology and consciousness in library management and practice” and identify “intellectual and political currents.”¹⁶⁶⁹ The numerous articles published in journals such as *Innovation*, *Mousaion*, *South African libraries* and its successor, the *South African journal of libraries and information science*,¹⁶⁷⁰ deal with specific areas which assist collectively in constructing a cumulative picture of trends and developments across the spectrum of South African university libraries. They are, however, no substitute for in-depth, detailed historical analyses. Unfortunately, as a rule, most institutional histories are of little help as they provide at best sketchy details on the development of their libraries. This disappointing fact was also noted by Hamlin who was astonished that “so many otherwise reputable historians can write extensive histories of their alma maters with hardly a reference to the library except possibly that a building was built ...”¹⁶⁷¹

¹⁶⁶⁵ F.N. Ginwala, Remaking the African university, in *Towards African scholarship*, [Durban]: Public Affairs & Corporate Communications, UKZN, p. 6.

¹⁶⁶⁶ R.F.M. Immelman, *University of Cape Town Libraries, 1829 – 1955*, Rondebosch: The University, 1956, p. v.

¹⁶⁶⁷ M.-L. Suttie, The University of South Africa, *Mousaion*, vol. 24, no. 2, 2006, p. 284.

¹⁶⁶⁸ Suttie, *Mousaion*, vol. 24, no. 2, 2006, p. 284.

¹⁶⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷⁰ Title varies: from vol. 49 –51 title was: *South African journal for librarianship and information science*; from vol. 52- 67 title was: *South African journal of library and information science*.

¹⁶⁷¹ Hamlin, *The university library in the United States*, p. x.

Topics covered by the study suggest other possible areas for future research into university libraries in South Africa. As Shiflett argues, “‘Library history’ is a rubric that covers a myriad of topics associated with libraries and other information systems.”¹⁶⁷² One topic which immediately suggests itself is an investigation of the history of the library at the former University of Durban-Westville, the University of Natal’s merger partner. The University of Natal was perceived by some to be “white, elitist and colonial”¹⁶⁷³ while the University of Durban-Westville “lobbied from the moral stance of historically disadvantaged champion of the masses.”¹⁶⁷⁴ Such a study would provide insight into the type of library service offered by one of South Africa’s so-called former “historically disadvantaged”¹⁶⁷⁵ institutions and provide a useful comparison to the history of the University of Natal Libraries. There is also the consideration that, if research is undertaken into the histories of more South African university libraries, a larger project along the lines of Hamlin’s history of university libraries in the United States¹⁶⁷⁶ would be feasible.

As mentioned above, an investigation into the relationship between the central University administration and library management would add considerably to an understanding of the historical development of the University of Natal libraries. Questions which might be asked include such topics as the role played by University “politics” in the appointment of university librarians, the relationship between University administration and the university librarians and how the fund allocation to the libraries reflected the view of University management towards the libraries.

Biographical studies of leading figures in South African university libraries are another area which would be of great interest. Such studies, on the lines of those conducted by Dick on Coetzee and De Vleeschauwer,¹⁶⁷⁷ would provide insights, not only into library history but also into South African social, cultural and intellectual history. Other areas of research which suggest themselves are studies on staff development in university libraries, the architecture of library collections and how these have developed over the

¹⁶⁷² Shiflett, *Library trends*, Spring 1984, p. 402.

¹⁶⁷³ M.W. Makgoba, *Merger report, 2007*, [Durban]: University of Kwazulu-Natal, 2008, p. 8.

¹⁶⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷⁵ See introduction to Chapter Eleven for an explanation of this term.

¹⁶⁷⁶ Hamlin, *The university library in the United States*.

¹⁶⁷⁷ A.L. Dick, Scholarship, identity and lies, *Kleio*, 34, 2002, p. 5-27 [article on H.J. De Vleeschauwer] and, Science for ideology?, *Mousaion*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2001, p. 62-92 [article on P.C. Coetzee].

years and the development of user-orientated subject-specialist services. Lastly, as mentioned above, an historical investigation into university libraries as seen from the users' point of view would be of help in identifying new ways to meet future challenges. As Shiflett quite rightly points out, "The real measure of the success or failure of a library derives from its ability to deliver to the user ..." ¹⁶⁷⁸

This research has endeavoured to document the history and development of the University of Natal libraries and has charted the trends and meaning of specific events in the history of two libraries in one institution. It remains for similar studies to be conducted on other libraries so that a meaningful body of knowledge can be built up on the historical development of university libraries in South Africa.

¹⁶⁷⁸ Shiflett, *Library trends*, Spring 1984, p. 389.

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[Pietermaritzburg]

Library report [Durban] 1936

Report of the librarian [Pietermaritzburg] 1937

Report of the librarian [Durban] 1942

Natal University College Library. *Annual reports, 1946 – 1948:*

1946

1947

1948

University of Natal Library. *Annual reports, 1949 – 1969:*

1949	1951	1952	1953	1954
1955	1956	1957	1958	1959
1960	1961	1962	1963	1964
1965	1966	1967	1968	

University of Natal Library, Durban. *Annual reports, 1970 – 2003:*

1970	1971	1972	1973	1974/1975
1976/1977	Report for the years 1978/1979			1980/1981
1982/1983	Septennial report for the years 1984/1990			1991/1996
1999/2000	2001	2002	2003	

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13 th , 1974	14 th , 1975	15 th , 1976	16 th , 1977	18 th , 1979
20 th , 1981	21 st , 1982	22 nd , 1983	23 rd , 1984	25 th , 1986
28 th , 1989	29 th , 1990/1991		33 rd , 1995	34 th , 1996
37 th , 1999	39 th , 2001	40 th , 2002/2003		

Minutes of meetings of the library committees

The minutes are arranged in date order. Only the minutes of meetings which have been cited in the text are listed.

Minutes of meetings of the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee

Natal University College. Pietermaritzburg Library Committee. *Minutes of meetings held on:*

11 th October 1921	24 th October 1921	1 st March 1922
27 th April 1922	10 th August 1923	2 nd November 1923
22 nd November 1923	3 rd March 1924	1 st April 1924
23 rd April 1924	27 th April 1924	12 th August 1924
2 nd December 1924	1 st May 1925	14 th August 1925

8 th September 1925	14 th August 1928	14 th March 1929
20 th March 1930	20 th April 1931	10 th November 1931
20 th March 1933	19 th April 1934	28 th June 1934
18 th October 1934	16 th April 1935	8 th August 1935
15 th March 1938	18 th October 1938	14 th March 1939
21 st March 1940	1 st April 1941	3 rd March 1942
20 th October 1942	18 th March 1943	6 th May 1943
28 th February 1944	13 th March 1944	20 th March 1944
26 th June 1944	15 th August 1944	19 th September 1944
27 th November 1944	20 th March 1945	13 th June 1945
11 th September 1945	7 th November 1945	31 st October 1946
27 th March 1947	13 th May 1947	22 nd May 1947
19 th September 1947		

University of Natal. Pietermaritzburg Library Committee.¹⁶⁷⁹ *Minutes of meetings held on:*

2 nd December 1954	20 th November 1957	8 th September 1961
9 th November 1961	15 th February 1962	4 th April 1962
16 th May 1962	13 th September 1962	15 th November 1962
13 th March 1963	30 th August 1967	
<i>Ad hoc</i> meeting held on 11 th October 1967		6 th March 1968
9 th November 1972	21 st March 1973	22 nd March 1974
21 st August 1974	19 th March 1975	23 rd October 1975
15 th December 1975	17 th March 1976	18 th August 1976
23 rd November 1976	16 th March 1977	17 th August 1977
26 th July 1988	26 th March 1990	2 nd August 1990
20 th April 1994		

Minutes of meetings of the Durban Library Committee

Natal University College. Durban Library Committee. *Minutes of meetings held on:*

Emergency meeting held on 26 th March 1934		
28 th March 1934	17 th May 1934	28 th June 1934

¹⁶⁷⁹ From 31st January 1994 the name changed to Pietermaritzburg Library Advisory Committee.

4 th April 1935	6 th June 1935	31 st October 1935
31 st March 1936	22 nd April 1936	28 th August 1936
22 nd April 1937	18 th October 1938	14 th March 1939
30 th November 1939	21 st March 1940	24 th February 1941
5 th March 1941	26 th June 1942	7 th June 1943
28 th February 1944	9 th August 1944	24 th October 1944
9 th April 1945	19 th December 1945	23 rd September 1946
28 th March 1947	20 th June 1947	17 th September 1947
21 st September 1948		

University of Natal. Durban Library Committee. *Minutes of meetings held on:*

28 th February 1951	30 th October 1951	26 th February 1952
26 th June 1952	30 th June 1954	23 rd May 1955
28 th February 1956	23 rd August 1960	2 nd November 1960
1 st November 1961	12 th March 1963	4 th September 1963
3 rd March 1965	7 th September 1966	2 nd November 1966
15 th March 1967	6 th September 1967	
Special meeting held on 16 th April 1968		11 th September 1968
13 th November 1968		
Special meeting held on 4 th December 1968	19 th March 1969	
Special meeting held on 21 st May 1970	21 st June 1971	
27 th September 1971	Special meeting held on 4 th July 1973	
6 th September 1973	6 th September 1982	21 st November 1983
18 th April 1988	24 th April 1989	6 th November 1989
23 rd April 1990	5 th November 1990	12 th April 1994
14 th November 1994	14 th April 1997	22 nd August 2000

Minutes of meetings of the Joint Library Committee

Natal University College. Joint Library Committee. *Minutes of meetings held on:*

21 st August 1947	30 th October 1947	4 TH May 1948
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University of Natal. Joint Library Committee. *Minutes of meetings held on:*

27 th May 1949	20 th November 1951	6 th May 1952
21 st May 1953	10 th September 1953	21 st May 1957

22 nd May 1961	Special meeting held on 23 rd March 1962	
29 th March 1963	13 th April 1964	11 th November 1964
27 th October 1966	18 th October 1967	24 th April 1968
22 nd October 1968	16 th April 1969	19 th October 1970
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Appendix 1

Timeline: University of Natal Libraries

- 1910 ... The Natal University College opens in Pietermaritzburg with 57 students and three professors.
- 1912 ... The first building is opened in Scottsville, Pietermaritzburg. There is a Library and a Reading Room.
- 1916 ... Professor O. Waterhouse is elected Honorary Librarian by the College Senate.
- 1917 ... College Library regulations were published, which set down rules for the borrowing of books and the Library hours of opening.
- 1921 ... The Peter Davis collection, comprising 3,971 books, is donated to the College. A part-time librarian, Captain D.A. Henry, is employed and the first Library Committee meeting is held on 11th October.
- 1922 ... The Library moves into the Main Hall of the Main Building.
- 1924 ... A set of rules for the distribution of the book vote is adopted and Henry's post is made full-time from 1st April.
- 1931 ... The Howard Memorial College building is opened in Durban and the first six books are accessioned for the new library in Durban.
- 1933 ... The Durban Library Committee is constituted by Senate.
- 1934 ... Henry attends the South African Library Association vacation school in Durban in June.
- 1936 ... A new library building is opened in Pietermaritzburg. A 'Non-European' Library is started in a classroom at Sastri College in Durban to serve the College's 'non-European' students. A part-time librarian, Miss B. Fraser, is employed at Howard College Library in Durban.
- 1937 ... A new library building is opened in Pietermaritzburg. Fraser's post is made full-time.
- 1939 ... Dr H. Coblans, a Chemistry lecturer at Howard College, Durban, is selected for the one-year Carnegie Library Fellowship which will enable him to train as a librarian in the United States of America. Once his training is complete, he will become the University Librarian in charge of both the Durban and Pietermaritzburg libraries.
- 1944 ... Henry retires after 23 years' service.

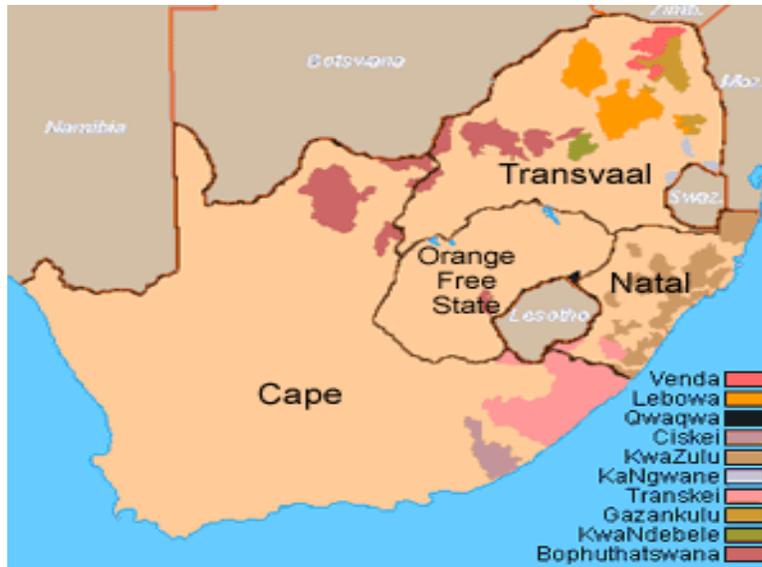
- 1945 ... The University Council releases Coblans for a year to undertake the one-year course in librarianship at the University of Cape Town.
- 1946 ... Coblans take up the post of University Librarian with a mandate to form a unitary library system.
- 1947 ... The Joint Library Committee is constituted by Senate. A deputy librarian, Mr H.L. Maple is appointed in Pietermaritzburg.
- 1948 ... Coblans takes leave from December 1948 to June 1949 to take up the Carnegie Library Fellowship. His leave is later extended to June 1950.
- 1949 ... The Natal University College receives its own charter and becomes the University of Natal.
- 1951 ... The Memorial Tower building is completed in Durban and the Library, formerly housed in a small room in the Howard College building, moves into the Tower. A part-time assistant is hired to begin work on the medical books and journals which have been collected in preparation for the medical library planned for the new Medical School.
- 1952 ... Coblans resigns to take up a post at the Unesco Library in New York.
- 1954 ... Mr J.W. Perry is appointed University Librarian. Mr L. Milburn is appointed deputy librarian in Durban. The Medical Library is opened at the newly built Medical School in Umbilo Road.
- 1956 ... A library bindery is established in Durban.
- 1957 ... The Industrial Information Centre, a joint initiative of the University of Natal Library, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research and the Durban City Library is established.
- 1960 ... The 'Non-European' Library is closed and the collection moved to the City Building Library.
- 1961 ... The University Librarian, Perry resigns and Maple, Deputy Librarian based in Pietermaritzburg, retires. Both posts are regraded to Director of Library Services and Librarian respectively.
- 1962 ... Mr S.I. Malan is appointed Director of Library Services and Mr R.A. Brown is appointed Librarian, Pietermaritzburg.
- 1965 ... A new library building is opened in Pietermaritzburg. The Killie Campbell Africana Library is bequeathed to the University of Natal.
- 1967 ... Malan resigns in June 1967.
- 1968 ... The central organisation of the Library is disbanded. Mr F. Scholtz is appointed Librarian in Durban on Milburn's retirement.

- 1969 ... The Architecture branch library is opened in Durban.
- 1972 ... The Law and the Eleanor Bonnar Music branch libraries are opened in Durban and the Commerce Library in the City Building is closed.
- 1973 ... Classes in librarianship are introduced in Pietermaritzburg. The Science and Engineering branch library is opened in Durban and the library of the Department of Agricultural Technical Services is transferred to the University and becomes a branch library of the Pietermaritzburg Library. Brown, Pietermaritzburg University Librarian, retires.
- 1974 ... Mr D.E. Schauder is appointed University Librarian in Pietermaritzburg.
- 1975 ... A decision is taken in principle to computerise the University libraries. Approximately 360 rare and valuable books are stolen from the Powell Collection of Early Science and Technology in the Durban Library. Some are recovered in Europe but many are never found.
- 1976 ... A subject librarian service is introduced in the Pietermaritzburg Library.
- 1977 ... Schauder, Pietermaritzburg University Librarian, resigns.
- 1978 ... Ms C. Vietzen, formerly Pietermaritzburg Deputy University Librarian, is appointed University Librarian in Pietermaritzburg. A major crisis in the Durban Library results in an investigation being undertaken by Professor R. Musiker, University Librarian at the University of the Witwatersrand.
- 1979 ... Online searching is introduced. The service is first established at the Science and Engineering branch library in Durban under the auspices of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research. The University takes over the service in 1981.
- 1981 ... The Pietermaritzburg Library commences the automation of its catalogue using the URICA library system at the University of Durban-Westville.
- 1982 ... The Pietermaritzburg Library acquires its own minicomputer and URICA library system software.
- 1983 ... The South African Bibliographic and Information Network (SABINET) is established with the support of 40 institutions of which the University of Natal is one. The SABINET database goes online in 1983 and the University acquires a line and a modem for linking to the database but the link is only established in 1986.
- 1984 ... The Durban Library acquires the DOBIS/LIBIS library system and begins the process of automating cataloguing. Scholtz, Durban University Librarian, retires.
- 1986 ... Ms E.M. van der Linde is appointed University Librarian in Durban.

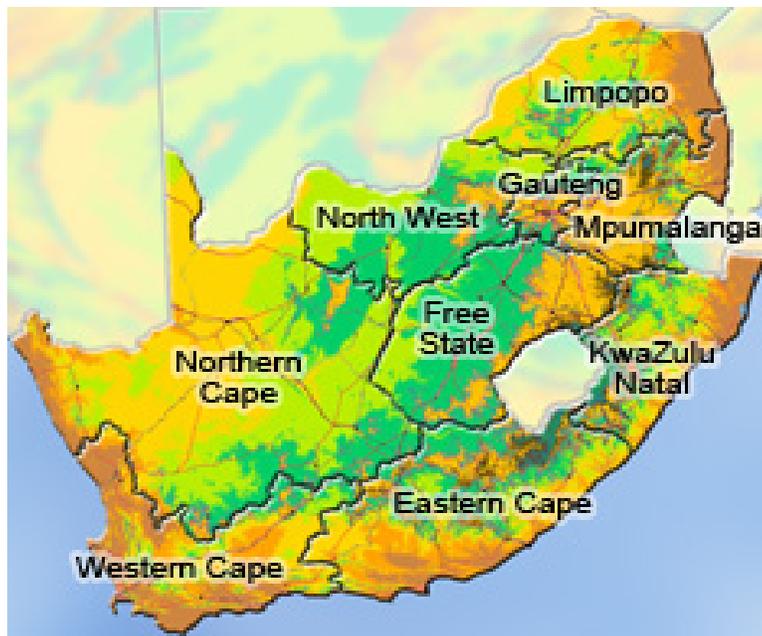
- 1987 ... A subject librarian unit is established in Durban. A new library building, the E. G. Malherbe Library, is completed in Durban and the Main Library in the Memorial Tower building and the Science and Engineering branch library move into the new building.
- 1989 ... The Durban Library converts from the DOBIS/LIBIS library system to the URICA library system.
- 1990 ... Van der Linde, Durban University Librarian, retires. The Main Library in Pietermaritzburg is extended and refurbished. The University takes a decision to disband the collections of banned books and all items previously kept in these locked collections are returned to the shelves.
- 1992 ... The terms of reference of the Library Committees are revised. Their management functions become redundant and they become Library Advisory Committees. Mr G.H. Haffajee becomes University Librarian in Durban.
- 1996 ... Vietzen, Pietermaritzburg University Librarian, retires. Her successor is Mr C.E. Merrett. The Campbell Collections (comprising the Killie Campbell Africana Library, the William Campbell Furniture and Picture Collection and the Mashu Museum of Ethnology) are integrated into the management structure of the Faculty of Humanities and are no longer part of the University of Natal, Durban Libraries' structure.
- 1998 ... Common mission and vision statements are adopted by the Durban and Pietermaritzburg Libraries. The reporting line for both University Librarians is changed to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) when the two campus principal posts become redundant.
- 2002 ... The Minister of Education announces that the Universities of Durban-Westville and Natal are to merge. Merrett, Pietermaritzburg University Librarian resigns and Haffajee, Durban University Librarian, retires.
- 2003 ... The reporting line for both University Librarians is changed to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research). On 31st December 2003 the University of Natal ceases to exist.

Appendix 2

Maps of South Africa and KwaZulu-Natal

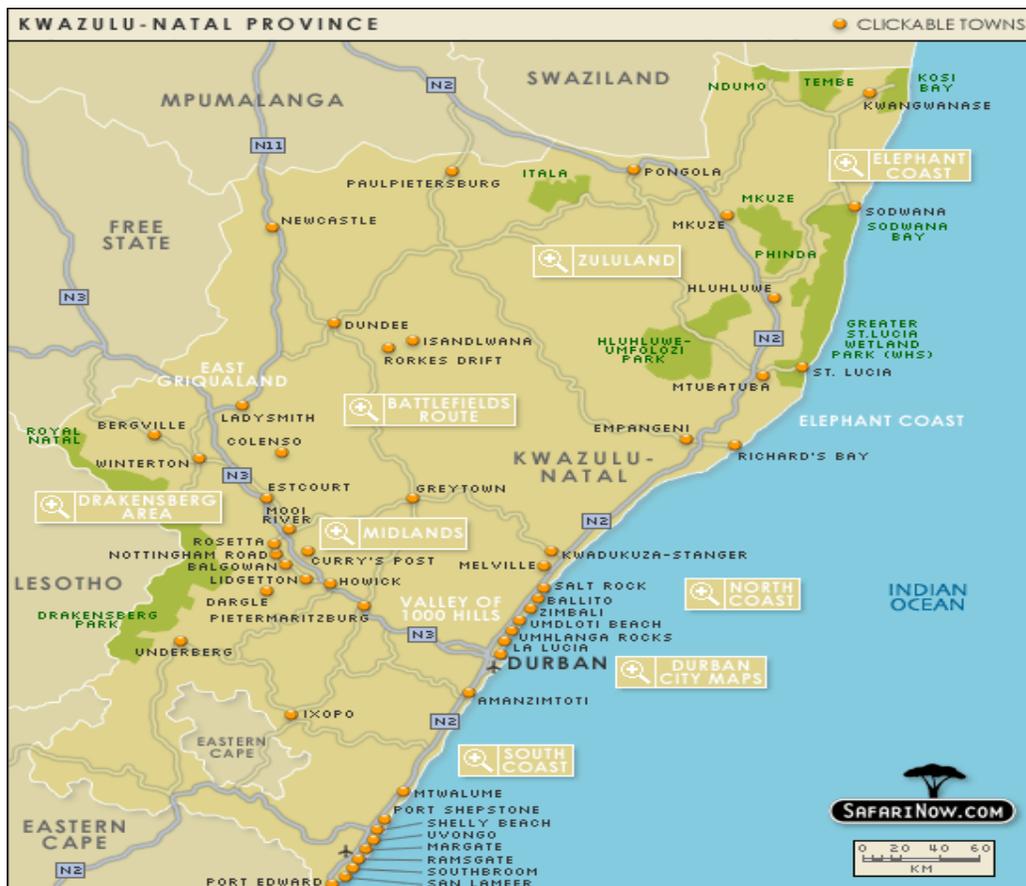


1. Map of South Africa prior to 1994 showing the four provinces and the ten “homelands”



2. Map of South Africa after 1994 showing the nine provinces

Source: South Africa.info, *Gateway to the nation*,
<http://www.southafrica.info/about/geography/provinces.htm>



3. Map of KwaZulu-Natal

Source: SafariNow.com. *KwaZulu-Natal map.*

<http://www.safarinow.com/destinations/kwazulu-natal/map.aspx>

Appendix 3

University of Natal: student enrolment statistics, 1910 – 2003

Year	Pmb	Dbn	Total	Year	Pmb	Dbn	Total	Year	Pmb	Dbn	Total
1910	57	0	57	1943	325	436	761	1976	2320	5642	7962
1911	69	0	69	1944	333	497	830	1977	2555	5800	8355
1912	48	0	48	1945	340	571	911	1978	2749	5727	8476
1913	59	0	59	1946	654	1154	1808	1979	2866	5615	8481
1914	42	0	42	1947	668	1216	1884	1980	3055	5716	8771
1915	41	0	41	1948	660	1371	2031	1981	3123	5835	8958
1916	49	0	49	1949	598	1271	1869	1982	3260	6078	9338
1917	51	0	51	1950	576	1163	1739	1983	3470	6330	9800
1918	87	0	87	1951	647	1232	1869	1984	3548	6931	10479
1919	115	0	115	1952	702	1252	1954	1985	3902	7345	11247
1920	115	0	115	1953	755	1500	2255	1986	3953	7587	11540
1921	152	0	152	1954	728	1525	2253	1987	4216	7952	12168
1922	*	*	194	1955	776	1599	2335	1988	4450	8274	12724
1923	*	*	232	1956	857	1747	2604	1989	4407	8574	12981
1924	*	*	277	1957	954	1910	2864	1990	4673	8957	13630
1925	220	37	257	1958	1056	2066	3122	1991	4988	9177	14165
1926	224	63	287	1959	1079	2326	3405	1992	5137	9345	14482
1927	168	86	254	1960	1202	2657	3859	1993	5475	9559	15034
1928	182	87	269	1961	1231	2606	3837	1994	5514	9680	15194
1929	248	96	344	1962	1258	2656	3914	1995	5715	10525	16240
1930	337	143	480	1963	1396	2758	4154	1996	5983	11006	16989
1931	316	197	513	1964	1404	2907	4311	1997	6346	11807	18153
1932	381	235	616	1965	1448	3122	4570	1998	7228	13660	20888
1933	342	306	648	1966	1634	3608	5242	1999	8230	14243	22473
1934	345	288	633	1967	1644	3711	5355	2000	7923	15203	23126
1935	374	280	654	1968	1769	4098	5867	2001	9157	17069	26226
1936	417	327	744	1969	1774	4311	6085	2002	8826	19779	28605
1937	380	320	700	1970	1849	4409	6258	2003	7681	20610	28291
1938	420	351	771	1971	1866	4785	6651				
1939	418	440	858	1972	2140	5038	7178				
1940	378	506	884	1973	2295	5204	7499				
1941	322	430	752	1974	2380	5520	7900				
1942	335	414	749	1975	2275	5596	7871				

* Separate figures for Durban and Pietermaritzburg not available.

Collated and adapted from the following sources: University of Natal, *Calendar*, 1994, p. 9-10; University of Natal, Division of Management Information, *Enrolments by qualification, 1995 to 2002*, unpublished;

University of KwaZulu-Natal, Division of Management Information, *UKZN management information fact site*, <https://dmi.ukzn.ac.za/ukznstats/ni16vdmihc.asp>

Appendix 4

Library formulae: University of Natal

Formulae, in one guise or another, have been a feature of library budgeting for many years, as has been demonstrated in this study. Martin defines the formula budget as a budget based “on the use of standards and quantitative modes in the allocation of funds.”¹⁶⁸⁰ He also points out that, despite the apparent objectivity of such an approach, the final distribution of funds “requires a good deal of care and involves subjective and intuitive factors.”¹⁶⁸¹

The first formula: Pietermaritzburg, 23rd April 1924¹⁶⁸²

The total amount required for the library as well as the distribution between departments was calculated according to the following formula:

- Each department conducting a major course in an Arts subject in the year under review should be credited with a sum of £15;
- Each department conducting a major course in law or in a Science subject under the above conditions should be credited with a sum of £10;
- Each department conducting a course for the Master’s degree or a minor course for a Bachelor’s degree should be credited in respect of each such course with £5;
- For the purposes of this allotment a major in Geography and the Diploma course in Education should each be defined as an Arts major, a major in pure Mathematics should be defined as a Science major, and the various courses in Secondary school subjects for the Higher diploma should be defined together as the equivalent of two minor courses;
- In addition the Library vote should be credited with a sum of £50 for contingencies from which provision would be made for Library requisites (other than furniture), miscellaneous literature and special departmental grants, the claims of departments with large enrolments and of

¹⁶⁸⁰ M.S. Martin, *Budgetary control in academic libraries*, Greenwich, Conn.: JAI Press, 1978, p. 25.

¹⁶⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

¹⁶⁸² Natal University College, Pietermaritzburg Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 23rd April 1924*.

departments conducting Masters courses receiving first consideration under the last head;

- The allotted but unexpended monies at the end of the financial year, should be carried forward to the credit of the Library Contingencies fund of the year following, provided that the total amount standing to the credit of the fund did not, in any year, exceed the sum of £100 and any surplus over this figure would revert to general college funds.

Durban, 21st March 1940¹⁶⁸³

Factors determining the allocation of monies between departments included statistical details such as the number of courses offered per subject, the number of students, the adequacy of the existing stock and the average cost per volume in the subject. Journals were to be considered separately from books and their consideration included the extent to which research work was done “or is proposed in any department.”¹⁶⁸⁴ This division was an attempt to reconcile the needs of both the individual departments and the needs of the three libraries (Howard College, the Commerce Library and the “Non-European” Library) in Durban.

Joint Library Committee

At the first meeting of the Joint Library Committee it was agreed that the “guiding principles in allocating the amount of the ordinary annual grant”¹⁶⁸⁵ for each academic department should be:

- (a) The number of degree subjects in the department;
- (b) The stage to which teaching and research were advanced in subjects taught in a given department; for example, whether a subject was taught to first year level only or to Bachelor degree level;
- (c) The degree of duplication in the different centres, for example, whether a subject was taught in one centre only or in two centres and whether it was taught to “Non-European” as well as “European” students. Where a

¹⁶⁸³ Natal University College, Durban Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 21st March 1940*, unpublished.

¹⁶⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸⁵ Natal University College, Joint Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 21st August 1947*.

department operated in more than one centre, the relative amounts to be spent at the different centres were to be determined annually by the head of the department in consultation with the Librarian.¹⁶⁸⁶

This practice persisted for years, until the Joint Library Committee requested a revision.¹⁶⁸⁷ The new basis for the appropriation of funds was as follows:

1. Director's fund: 16% of total book fund
2. Basic departments: 70% of total book fund divided according to the number of basic departments in each centre, excluding the Medical Faculty.
3. Subsidy student numbers: 30% of the total book fund according to the number of subsidy student numbers in each centre.¹⁶⁸⁸

A decision taken by the University Council on 20th June 1975 that "an annual allocation per student be adopted for the determination of funds to be allocated to the libraries to cover both staff and students"¹⁶⁸⁹ meant that the above formula was no longer applied to the allocation of library book and journal funds.

The Dunne formula, 1977¹⁶⁹⁰

The Dunne formula was adopted by the Pietermaritzburg Library in 1977 for the allocation of book and journal funds and by the Durban Library in 1980 for the allocation of book funds only. Two initial deductions were made for:

- An amount sufficient to meet the cost of indexing and abstracting tools;
- A basic grant of Rx per department.

The remainder was distributed to individual departments, taking into account the following factors:

- The average price of books and journals;

¹⁶⁸⁶ Natal University College, Joint Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 21st August 1947*, p. 1

¹⁶⁸⁷ University of Natal, Joint Library Committee, *Minutes of a meeting held on 27th October 1966*, p. 1.

¹⁶⁸⁸ *Ibid.* The figures in the minute book have been altered by hand to reflect 56% for departments and 28% for student numbers. It is not clear why this was done.

¹⁶⁸⁹ University of Natal, Durban Libraries, *Annual report 1974/1975*, p. 14.

¹⁶⁹⁰ *Explanation of the Dunne formula, 1977*, unpublished.

- The output of books and journals;
- The number of academic staff;
- The number of students.

A new Pietermaritzburg formula, 1994¹⁶⁹¹:

Six variables were used to determine how monies were allocated between faculties.

They were:

1. Academic staff numbers (full-time equivalents, not headcount);
2. Student numbers (headcount, not full-time equivalents), with appropriate weighting;
3. Average book price (calculated on books purchased by the Pietermaritzburg Library in the preceding year);
4. Average price of journal titles in the preceding year;
5. Research output;
6. Income ratio.

All variables were considered to be “of equal importance.”¹⁶⁹² A seventh variable, that of numbers of departments per faculty, was considered and then discarded because “this reflected on administrative structure.”¹⁶⁹³ This formula remained in use until the merger of the Universities of Natal and Durban-Westville on 1st January 2004.

Durban: the Mulholland formula

On 14th November 1994 it was noted at a meeting of the Durban Library Committee that “... the Library will be considering a new formula for distribution of the library materials budget and in this process will consider the new formula being applied by the Pietermaritzburg Library Committee.”¹⁶⁹⁴ The new formula became known as the

¹⁶⁹¹ Summarised from the report: *Investigation into the development of a formula to divide the book and periodical budget of the University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg, by Faculty*, 20th April 1994, unpublished.

¹⁶⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁶⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹⁴ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, Minutes of a meeting held on 14th November 1994, p. 2.

“Mulholland formula” and was calculated using the following data for every faculty in Durban:

- Staff (full-time equivalents, not headcount);
- Students – 1st years, seniors, Honours, Masters and Doctoral as well as students registered for non-degree purposes (full-time equivalents, not headcount);
- Average book price;
- Average journal price;
- Research output;
- Income (in terms of government subsidy).¹⁶⁹⁵

This formula remained in use until the merger of the Universities of Natal and Durban-Westville on 1st January 2004.

¹⁶⁹⁵ University of Natal, Durban Library Committee, *Formula for division of 1995 library book and periodical budget between faculties: Durban campus.*