

What I Learned When My Department Lost Its Land

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Linus A. Sims Memorial Library
Federal Depository 0231A -- Established 1966
Building Erected in 1986



The Morrison Room – Before the Move

Federal and Louisiana documents in all formats were housed together in one room along with public computers and microform reader/printers.



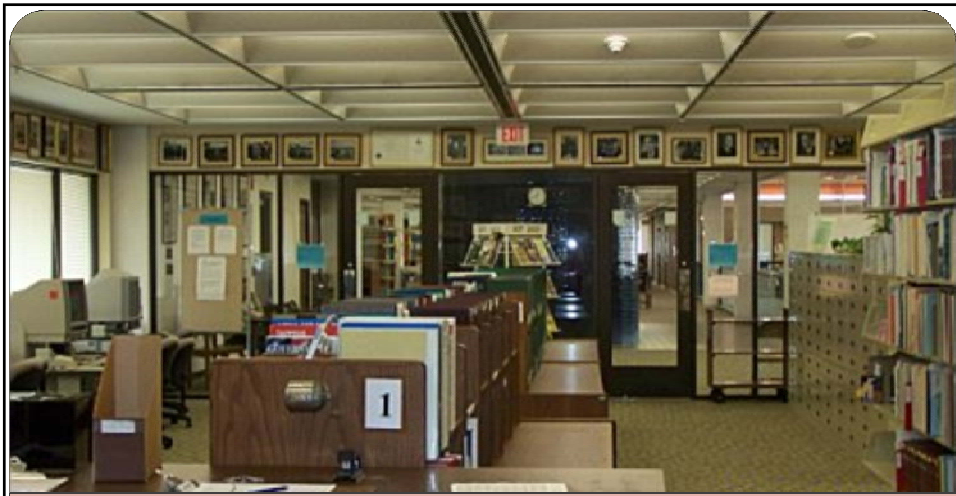
Documents Workroom – Before the Move

We had one librarian, two paraprofessionals, one Graduate Assistant and six student workers with crowded but sufficient workspace for all.



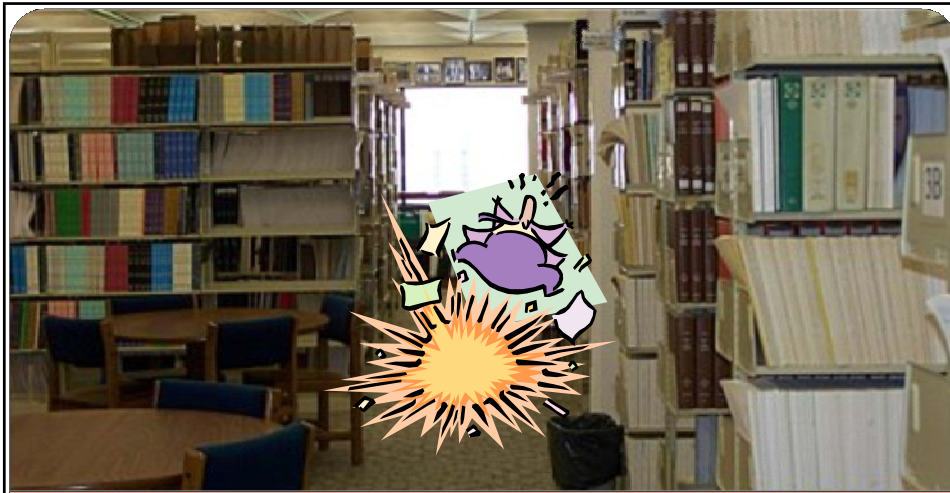
The Morrison Room – Before the Move

We had 17 ranges of stacks in the public service area and were a designated quiet study area.



The Morrison Room – Before the Move

We were located on the third floor along with bound periodicals and a Library Instruction classroom. It was peaceful.



On 9/29/08 our Peaceful Little World was Shattered
We were told by Library Administration that we had to be out of
the room by the end of December to make room for a grant-
funded Math Lab.



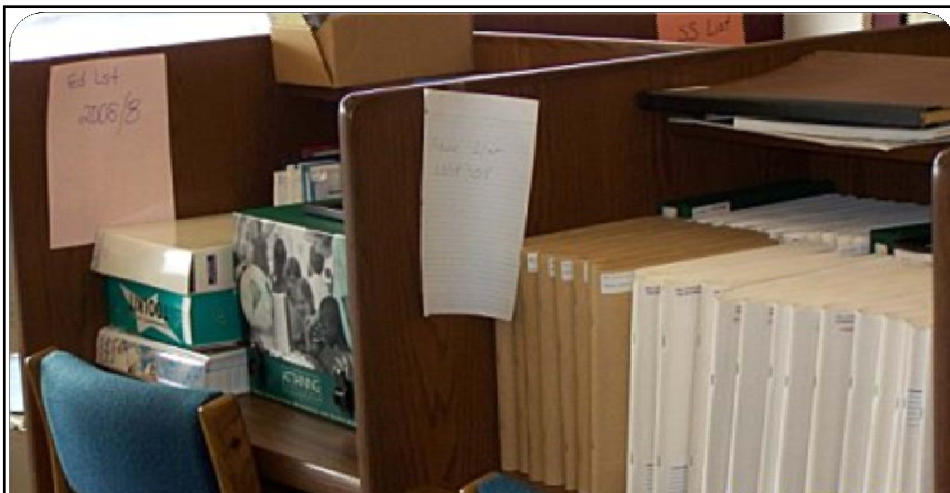
Our New Home?

We were given until mid-December to weed half of the print collection so
the remainder could be housed in the Technical Services area on the
first floor. This would have made Documents a closed-stack collection.



4th Floor Instead

We had just completed a weeding project in the main circulating collection on the 4th floor and it was eventually decided the print documents would go there instead. The Circulation folks rapidly did a major shift.



Let the Weeding Commence!

Despite the change in location, we still needed to weed half of our federal print collection to fit into our new space. We began compiling emergency exchange lists and pulling materials from the stacks.



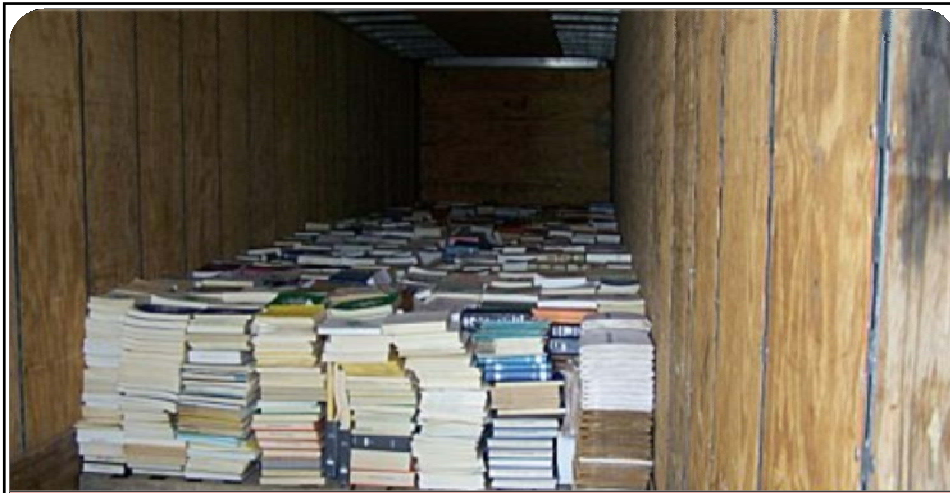
Weeding – Stage Two

We quickly ran out of places to put materials approved for weeding, so we started leaving them in the stacks, marking them as withdrawn there, and positioning them on their spines.



Where Did It All Go?

Our campus recycling coordinator arranged for this trailer to take our weeded materials to a recycling center. Once things were all the way through the offers process, we loaded them in the trailer.



Loading the Trailer

Documents staff, Serials staff, and Cataloging staff each loaded the materials that were weeded from their own collections. Student workers from all over helped when they could.



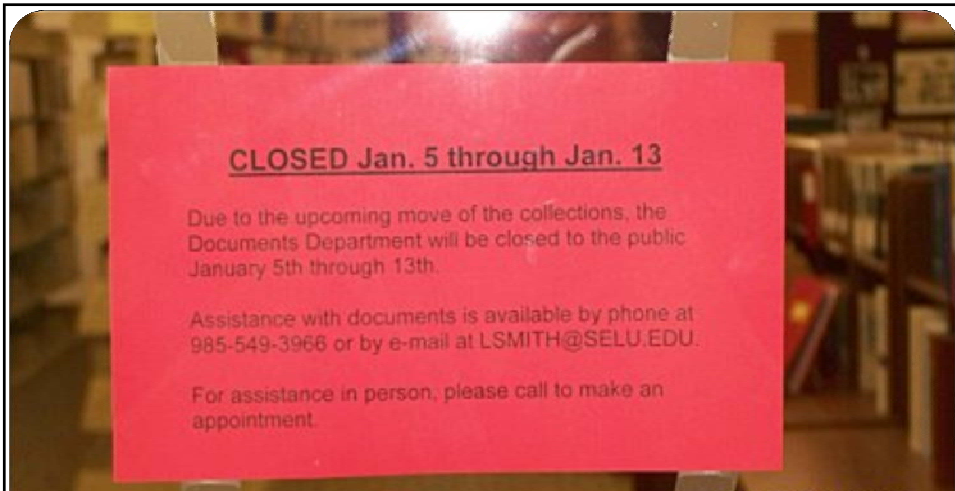
23 Tons!

Approximately 11.5 tons of documents (10,157 pieces) and 11.5 tons of other books and bound periodicals were weeded from Library collections to accomplish the move.



Load 23 Tons and This is What You Get

Expect a few injuries if you're called upon to move massive quantities of materials. These bruises were caused by crawling around on top of the books in the trailer. We also had a staff member fall off a stool in the stacks while marking materials withdrawn.



Alert the Public (and GPO)

We remained open during the weeding, but the day before the movers came we closed to the public so that last-minute packing could be done. GPO was kept informed about the move and about the restrictions to public access.



During the Move

The movers supplied their own large, wooden book trucks and they moved both the collections and the furniture.



Oops

The movers did drop a thing or two along the way. This was a drawer of ERIC microfiche.



Bigger Oops

The entire cabinet full of ERIC microfiche on the far right was dropped during the move. The bottom four drawers are no longer usable.



After the Move – 1st Floor

Documents staff are now located on the first floor in Technical Services. (In the area where our print collections were originally supposed to go.) We now have one librarian, one paraprofessional, one GA, and three student workers.



After the Move – 1st Floor

The back door of my new office opens into the Technical Services area and the front door opens into the Reference Room. We have one range of federal and state reference materials in the Reference Room.



After the Move – 2nd Floor

Microfilm and Microfiche from Documents, along with our reader/printers, ended up in the Serials Department on the 2nd Floor.



After the Move – 2nd Floor

CDs (data and music), DVDs (data and video), videotapes, and our lone audiotape ended up in the Media Department on the 2nd floor. Video materials were reclassified into LC and interfiled with commercial videos.



After the Move – 3rd Floor

Bound periodicals from Documents were reclassified into LC and interfiled with the main collection on the 3rd floor. The index tables you see were also relocated here from Documents.



After the Move – 4th Floor

Our federal and state print collections fit into 9 ranges of stacks on the 4th floor. The shelves weren't the right height for documents so a lot of things ended up being shelved on their spines.



Finally, It's All Gone!

The entire move took approximately four days—1/6/09 through 1/9/09.



Collapse!

Sadly, there was no time to collapse after the move. There was still a lot to be done.

Lessons We Learned

- **EMOTIONAL IMPACT**
- If something like this happens to you, don't be surprised if you go through the traditional five stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance.
- **WEEDING**
- If time is critical, you'll have to weed more meat from your collection than fat. Weeding large sets and long runs of bound serials will create the most room.
- If possible, create a "just in case" list of such items to be targeted for weeding so you'll be ready to start ASAP should the need arise.
- As you go through the stacks to create a list of titles to be weeded, keep track of the holdings to be kept as well as the holdings to be offered for each title. The list can then be used to correct the holdings in the online catalog.
- You will need the cooperation and permission of your regional(s) to accelerate the normal offers process to accommodate your emergency. Some regional librarians can be softened up with chocolate.
- You will need somewhere to put the materials weeded from your collection. If your institution has a recycling coordinator, that person may be able to help.

Weeding Lessons Continued

- If your recycling coordinator arranges a truck to haul off your materials, make sure you know how high materials can be stacked in the truck. (And if possible, hire movers to put the weeded materials into the truck.)
- Get to know your library's budget for postage and have a system in place for libraries who request items from your exchange lists to reimburse you for postage if necessary.
- You will need a lot of boxes, both for mailing requested materials and for packing. If you're at a university, you may be able to get some from your campus copy center. You'll also need to figure out how to get those empty boxes to the library.
- Have a staff person very carefully go through the stacks to mark items from exchange lists as withdrawn and turn them on their spines. Student workers (or similar employees) can then pull them from the stacks and box them up for withdrawal.
- Once you're through with your emergency exchange lists, have someone create an index to them so you'll know which title was offered on which list. You'll be referring back to your lists a lot as you find bits and pieces in your collection that should have been offered, but weren't, or which were offered but never got pulled.

Lessons about Moving

- If one physical department is being relocated to areas around the building, upper-level administration **must** coordinate the move because more than one department will be impacted.
- If at all possible, do the move during one of the library's slow periods (e.g. between semesters).
- Do a detailed timeline of the steps in the move, but stay flexible. The movers will likely have their own timeline and it will be very different from yours.
- If possible, close the affected department to the public a few days prior to and during the move to give staff time to pack office materials and help with the move.
- Before the movers come, know exactly where every last book, microfiche, and piece of furniture from the department being moved will be going. (Your facilities planning office may have computer-aided design software that will help.)
- If furniture, stacks, etc. from other areas around the building will need to be sent to surplus or to storage in order to make room for items from the department being moved, decide where those things are going and how they're going to get there.

Moving Lessons Continued

- If microform cabinets are being moved, check with an architect to make sure the flooring in the new area is strong enough to support them.
- Tape labels onto all large pieces ahead of time to indicate where they'll be going.
- For collections housed in shelving units, make sure the shelves in the new location are adjusted to the same heights as the shelves in the old location.
- Pre-position bookends on the shelves to save time.
- If shelving units are moved, make absolutely sure the movers know how to reassemble them correctly.
- If you put shelving units into storage, make sure the movers save **all** the pieces. Put the smaller pieces (bolts, washers, etc.) in boxes and label the boxes.
- If at all possible, have library staff move the print collections or at the very least, closely supervise the process.

Moving Lessons Continued

- Supply the movers and the staff of the department being moved with walkie-talkies for easier communication.
- Make sure your freight elevator is in good working order prior to the move.
- If a key is necessary to operate your freight elevator, decide whose key will be used and how it will be given to and retrieved from the movers.
- If the movers will continue working after the library has closed, determine who will stay with them to lock up the building.

Lessons About the Aftermath of the Move

- You'll need to negotiate procedures for handling documents with the heads of the departments in which they're now located. Who will answer reference questions? Who'll do pickups? Who'll keep statistics and what kind? If possible, Documents staff should continue to do shelving and shelfreading of SuDoc-classified collections.
- Once those procedures have been agreed upon, every manual you've ever created for your department will need to be reviewed and updated.
- All of your staff will need to be re-trained in the new procedures and staff in the departments now housing documents will also need to be trained.
- The locations for documents in your online catalog will need to be corrected. You may be able to leave the coding the same and simply change the labels that appear in the OPAC.
- Some documents may need to be physically relabeled as well to reflect their new locations. ("Docs. Ref." rather than "Docs. Index" in our case.)

Aftermath Lessons Continued

- All of your web pages, including online bibliographies, will need to be reviewed and updated.
- Signage within the building will need to be reviewed and updated.
- The public will need to be informed about all the services and collections that have been moved.
- **IMPACT ON USAGE**
- I had thought that usage of documents might increase when people were tripping over them all over the building. I was wrong. Total circulation for federal and Louisiana documents in 2007-08, prior to the move, was 1195. Total circulation in 2008-09 was 1058. The biggest decrease was in external circulation, which dropped by more than 50% (93 items in 2007-08 and 44 items in 2008-2009).
- The total number of documents-related reference questions answered went from 845 in 2007-08 to 723 in 2008-2009.

Any questions?

Thanks for attending my presentation!

(And I hope you never need any of this advice.)

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