THE CORY LIBRARY FOR HISTORICAL RESEARCH:
A SHORT HISTORY, 1931 – 2003

by
Michael Berning

Grahamstown
2004
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Introduction

This history of the Cory Library arises from an engagement with Cory which began in the early 1960s. In those years junior history students did not study South African history and so I probably first used the Cory Library in 1962 as a third year. I returned from Cape Town in 1965 as a very inexperienced Cory Librarian. If I succeeded at all it was in part due to the kindness of Dr Frank van der Riet, the University Librarian and, as I now know, one of the main founders of the Cory Library. It was also in part due to those in the UCT Library School - Gerald Quinn, Anthony Lewin Robinson and René Immelman amongst others – who introduced students to government publications, Africana, rare books and even manuscripts in a way that was to prove invaluable in Cory

I have been engaged with the Cory Library in some way ever since which is a reason to write this account and a hindrance in doing so. It is both difficult to keep one’s objectivity when writing about an institution with which one has been closely involved and easy to be come excited by matters which may be of rather lesser interest to others. I have tried to avoid both pitfalls and especially to let the written word tell its story in the way Prof Winnie Maxwell taught in her ‘gobbets’ seminars in the Cory Rare Book Room so many years ago.

I am grateful to Sandra Shell, who appears in this account as Sandra Rowoldt, for her comments and suggestions. She cannot, of course, be blamed for its failings.

I write on a hot summer’s day as new students and their parents make their way through Orientation Week in the University’s Centenary year in the hope that the part played by the Cory Library, and those who founded and promoted, may become a little better known than it has been.

J.M.B

10 February 2004
RINDERFEST

By Proclamation of the Cape Government, passengers' luggage must be fumigated before it is allowed to enter the Unproclaimed Area.

C. G. B.

FUMIGATION.

Passengers are requested to have their luggage ready to be taken to the Fumigating Room before the train reaches Fumigating Station, and to take one of these tickets for each article, and to produce the tickets when reclaiming their luggage after its fumigation.

Monday Jan 25th At Cadell early. Did and eaten breakfast. Due military evening march. Proceeding arrived at Littlefield about 2. Had three hours' hard sport most of the time. On reaching to Robertson Mr. R. Right to the carriage and accompanied us in far as Ormonde. Talked with some maps to the College then back to...

Section 1 - Sir George Cory and the Cory Collection

The career of George Edward Cory (1862-1935) took many unusual turns from his birth in rigorous circumstances and struggle to educate himself, to a Cambridge degree and beyond.1 When he retired as Professor of Chemistry at Rhodes University College in 1925 he was a respected founder professor of the College but even better known as a result of his ‘hobby’ – researching South African history.

Cory had been intrigued by the history of the Eastern Cape from his early days as a schoolmaster in Grahamstown and, to satisfy his curiosity, began to collect information in many forms including oral testimony. These were early pioneering days in local historiography – one of the reasons why Cory had to collect his own material – and his requests for financial backing to aid his information gathering and recording projects led quickly to the suggestion “that I should have to produce something i.e. write a book or something of the kind.” His response was to begin work on a “connected account of the history of the Eastern Province, making use of all the information I had gathered.”

This ‘connected account’ entitled The Rise of South Africa began to appear in 1910 and was still incomplete at his death which occurred while he was working on the sixth and final volume. In mid 1931 Cory, having recently seen his fifth volume through the press, slightly less recently embarked on an autobiography2 and approaching his 70th birthday seems to have been taking stock of his life. From this came a decision to present his “library of historical books” to the Council of Rhodes University College “for the use of the staff and students.”3 The books were to be housed in special locked cases marked ‘The Sir George Cory Bequest.’ As this phrase indicates it is likely that Cory was contemplating leaving his material only after death but in fact a receipt of books and manuscripts was acknowledged immediately. What seems to have happened was that material in Cory’s study in Grahamstown was transferred at once but material which he was using in Cape Town, while working on The Rise, remained in his own hands.

It is not clear who supervised the initial transfer. Cory’s son Dr C G A ‘Chappie’ Cory does not appear to have been aware of it at the time and the material transferred was not entirely in accordance with George Cory’s expressed wishes. Cory had intended to divide his collections between the RUC Library and the older-established Albany Museum, to which he had already presented manuscript material for exhibition purposes.4

His “library of historical books” was to go to Rhodes but “the manuscripts and my own notes of original conversations with the old people, and all the matters not to be found

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2 Recollections of the past was also incomplete at his death and has never been published. It gives a full account of his early struggles. The original manuscript is in the National Library of South Africa (Cape Town) and there are photocopies in the Cory Library.
3 For this donation in 1931 see CL PR4074/5 and the Rhodes University Council Minutes.
4 See letter from Una Long in CL PR 4074/11 on the deposit for material for exhibition.
anywhere but in the Cape Town Archives consisting of some 13 000 pages of notes” were to be “deposited in the Albany Museum for the use of students doing original work in History.” He wrote to the Director of the Museum expressing his desire to hand over “all my notes of African History, and all the original manuscripts which I have, from time to time, collected.” These were to be for the use of students of the University College doing MA essays or original work on South African History. Such students were to have reasonable access for study purposes but also signed permission from the Professor of History or the Registrar.

This deposit in the Albany Museum does not ever seem to have taken place and Cory’s stated intentions were cause a little distress later. Some manuscript material was certainly handed to the College in 1931 though a good deal remained with Cory in Cape Town. A few items did find their way into the Museum collections but these seem to have been either the display material mentioned or individual deposits by George Cory.

There is no clear reason for his proposal to split the Bequest between the Rhodes Library and the Museum but it is possible that Cory felt that the College Library lacked the experience and facilities to handle manuscript materials. In this he would probably have been correct as the Library collections were small – some 18 000 volumes in 1931 – and the staff smaller. The Calendar for 1932 listed only the Honorary Librarian (Prof John Ewing, the Professor of History) and a ‘Library Assistant’ (Mrs M Dick).

Nor were the Cory materials likely to be in heavy campus demand. South African History formed but a small part of the undergraduate courses – one paper out of four in the third year was on ‘History of South Africa from 1652 with special reference to the constitutional developments of the 19th century.’ South Africa’s claims on the MA syllabus were no greater and, if the 50-page typed thesis ‘to show the candidate’s capacity for original research’ was not on a South African topic, they could be avoided altogether. South African history teaching was in the hands of the eccentric I.J. ‘Pip’ Rousseau, which may not have added to its attractions.

The College Library was, however, growing and important donations added to its growth both in size and significance – most notably the collection of rare and valuable but not African books presented by Charles Thomas-Stanford ‘an old Oriel [Oxford] friend’ of CJ Rhodes. Cory’s initial deposit was duly accepted and its conditions adhered to. Special cases were acquired and Prof Winter Moore, the Professor of Fine Arts, engaged to design the inscriptions. Over the succeeding years the Cory donation had to be rehoused several times and both the special cases and Prof Winter Moore’s inscriptions seem to have been victims of this process. It has been many decades since the Cory material has been labelled as its donor required and in that sense his donation has not been the personal memorial for which it, in part at least, was designed.

In April 1935 George Cory died in Cape Town. Early in 1936 his son Dr Chappie Cory wrote to the Registrar of Rhodes University College informing him of the provisions of

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5 For George Cory and the Museum see CL PR 4074/5
6 CL PR 4074/5
Sir George’s Will and indicating that he had sorted and packed the contents of his father’s study at the Archives and wished to make arrangements for the ‘balance of his original notes, books and lantern slides’ to be transported to Grahamstown at Rhodes’ expense. Council agreed to this and the transporting of the material was placed in the hands of Pickfords.

The provisions in Cory’s Will covered the whole collection without distinguishing between the initial deposit and that now being transferred. Chappie Cory merely noted that he understood that ‘his historical books’ had already been handed over from his father’s study in Grahamstown.

Although they referred to the same material, Cory’s intentions as conveyed to the University College in 1931 and those expressed in his Will differed considerably. Most notably the Albany Museum was now only to become a repository for any Cory material if Rhodes declined to accept it under the terms specified. Otherwise the Will was less concerned about conditions of storage and access – the items listed were to be ‘under special care’ and all material save the slides was to be ‘used in the building only’ – and more with listing what the bequest contained: (a) all ‘my printed books’ dealing with South Africa (b) the collection of South African slides (c) ‘my collection of original notes’ comprising 13 big volumes and loose letters.

It is tempting to see George Cory’s 1931 approach to Rhodes University College as something of a test of its willingness to receive such materials with the threat of significant material going elsewhere attached, a test which Rhodes had passed or was passing by 1935 but there is no hard evidence for this. Cory, elderly and with his major energies occupied elsewhere, may merely have become a little confused in detail. The outline of his bequest in his Will is, for example, far from accurate and it is quite possible that no accurate listing existed even in Cory’s mind. In early 1936 the Registrar sent a nine page typed list of the ‘Sir George Cory Bequest’ to the Hon. Librarian (Prof Peter Haworth). This lists books, Blue Books, maps and plans, periodicals, pamphlets, slides, manuscripts and bound newspapers but not Cory’s own manuscript notes and possibly other items.

As the University College quickly realized, receiving such a varied collection was one thing but providing for its safe storage and successful use were others quite. Official minutes over the next few years contain regular decisions to set aside rooms for the Cory Collection, sometimes in conjunction with other special deposits, to purchase specialized equipment like filing drawers for maps and plans and seek the advice and assistance of the official Archives.

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7 Main details of relating to the Cory bequest in 1935-6 are in CL PR 4074/5.
8 The list is in CL MS 1280.
9 See for example Library Committee Minutes 20.4.36, 11.8.36, 26.4.37 to be found in the bound Senate Minutes files in the Cory Library; Finance Committee 26.6.36 and Internal Arrangements Committee in the bound Council minutes.
The advice of C Graham Botha, the Chief Archivist of South Africa, and of the Public Record Office, London, was sought on the conservation of the Cory deposit, in which process the new Professor of History, Prof Michael Roberts, played a significant role. At one stage it was proposed to bind manuscripts in the collection – provided that this did not cost more than £50! Rhodes might have had the guard books used in archives in mind but could also have been following the example of the donor himself. Cory had bound the '13 000' pages of his notes into some 15 volumes. There are indications that this led the Library to try to treat them as monographs and, if this was the example being followed, it seems to have been a happy outcome that no manuscripts were actually bound. Cory’s volumes of mss continued to defy the best efforts of librarians to catalogue them until 1987.

In the beginning, however, there were no librarians available for the task. In April 1936 the Library Committee recommended successfully that H J Chapman be asked to catalogue the Cory Collection and Blue Books10 during the month of October at a fee of £15 – the same rate as Mrs Dick was being offered to help with the backlog of uncatalogued books in the Library.

Hugh Chapman (1911-1982) had graduated from Rhodes with a double first (History & English) and Honours in History. He was now back after two years teaching to undertake a thesis on Lord Charles Somerset. He had training as a teacher but none as a librarian or archivist and seems to have struggled, in the absence of accepted systems for dealing with some, at least, of the Cory material to complete the task in the extremely short time allowed. His situation was complicated in September 1936 when he was appointed to act in place of J J Rousseau from October to the end of the year. He was to catalogue the Cory bequest and arrange 'the Library' in addition to his lecturing work and that without additional pay. By mid 1937 he was being asked to return early from his vacation to complete the cataloguing work but this was never satisfactorily achieved and Chapman left to take up a lecturing post at Fort Hare shortly after.11

Hugh Chapman’s mandate to catalogue the Blue Books is illustrative of a process which began soon after the deposit of the Cory Collection. Housing and cataloguing considerations made it logical to treat similar materials within and outside the Cory material in the same way. In this way the Cory Collection attracted to its own holdings other collections of similar material like bound newspapers, parliamentary papers, rare books and manuscripts. One historian’s working collection was becoming a general historians’ collection and the foundations of a unique library were being laid.

10 The term ‘blue books’ was used to refer to Parliamentary publications – in this case 19th century British and Cape rather than South African in all probability.
11 For Hugh Chapman and the Cory bequest see Library Committee 20.4.46 4.6.37, Finance Committee 19.9.36 and Internal Arrangements Committee 8.5.36 in Senate & Council minutes (Cory Library). For his appointment to Fort Hare see Donovan Williams: A history of the University College of Fort Hare... Lewiston NY, 2001 page 94.
LISTER: Theo. N., St. Clair, 1st Avenue, Kenilworth.

Introduced by: Cape Times per.

Remarks: Has records relating to Andrew Geddes Bain & Joseph Crowe

Interviewed: 1944, 1945*

Result: Listed journals & letters.

* Studied journals more closely.

Gave much help with biographical notes for index.

Introduced her to Mrs. Gordon Brown. She has some good Africans which she may want to use.

Index card from Una Long’s file of people interviewed during her fieldwork visits to holders of unofficial manuscript material.

Cory Library MS 6 309
Section II – Una Long and the formation of the Cory Library

Several factors combined to take the potential offered by the Cory Bequest to more significant achievement.

In 1943 Winifred A Maxwell12 was appointed acting Professor of History in place of Michael Roberts who was away on wartime service. She was an energetic and dedicated teacher of history and saw that the Cory Collection could form the nucleus of a comprehensives collection but, as it stood, was ‘the beginning and not the end of the project.’ As Michael Roberts was to put it in 1949 the Cory Library needed to replace the Archives which the Eastern Cape lacked. Maxwell saw it fulfilling a further role: ‘it is the only approach we have to a seminar library and it is only here that we can hope to give students a practical training in research techniques.’ Her problems were practical as well as theoretical. The University (of South Africa of which Rhodes was still part) had ‘brushed aside’ the idea that Part II of the MA in history should be an examination as Part I was or that a thesis for Part II should be based on published British or European sources only. This meant that thesis topics had to be drawn from South Africa history but in practice 50% of Rhodes students who had completed Part I were failing to go on to submit their theses.13 There was clearly an urgent need for training in and opportunities for research at Rhodes.

During 1942 the South African Public Library, Cape Town14 resolved to encourage the preservation of unofficial manuscripts, which were not protected by law as official papers were, and enlarged its own accommodation for such documents. The suggestion that the SAPL should undertake this work had come from Lord Harlech.15 The Library accepted the task as part of its functions as a national library and was aware that no other body existed whose task was to ensure the preservation and record the whereabouts of unofficial manuscript material on a national scale.

At about the same time Una Long became interested in retelling the story of the 1820 “Settlers” from the perspective of social history and based on their own family papers.16 She was the daughter of the journalist and politician B K Long and recently widowed, her husband Colin Unwin Gill having died in 1940.

In the course of her work Una Long, or ‘Una Long (Mrs Colin Gill)’ as she called herself formally, changed her initial intention and began instead to ‘hunt for old family papers still in private hands – letters, diaries, note-books and business documents’ and to list these ‘for general use.’ This research was funded by a grant from the Leverhulme Research Fellowships, London and was undertaken between September 1943 and August

12 This was Prof Winnie Maxwell’s first appearance at Rhodes. She was to remain to 1945 and return again 1948-1951 before becoming Professor of History in October 1953.
13 See Memorandum by W A Maxwell in CL PR 4047/3
14 The Library was then still known by its original name ‘South African Public Library.’ It was later to become the ‘South African Library’ and is now the National Library of South Africa, Cape Town.
15 See Africana Notes & News vol. 1 no. 4 August 1944 pp. 26-7.
16 See Introduction by H M Robertson to Una Long: An index to authors of unofficial, privately owned manuscripts relating to the history of South Africa... London, 1947.
1945. In the course of this she visited a number of places in the western and eastern halves of the then Cape Province including Grahamstown. This work was to result in her *An index to authors of unofficial, privately-owned manuscripts relating to the history of South Africa 1812-1920*... published in 1947.\(^{17}\)

Una Long’s visit to Grahamstown took place in the mid-year vacation of 1944. She visited the Cory Collection and met Winifred Maxwell.

Although her work was at first independent of the SA Public Library Una Long became aware both of the need to preserve, as well as record, manuscripts in private hands and of the Library’s own programme. She then began to encourage the deposit of material in the SAPL and convinced it that the need for preservation was greater than had been supposed. This led the Library to intensify its efforts to ensure the preservation of material.\(^{18}\)

Part of these intensified efforts was circulars to various newspapers setting out the position of manuscripts in private hands and the efforts of the SAPL to preserve them. A news report on this appeared in *Grocott’s Daily Mail* on 16 August 1944 headed “SA Family Letters and Manuscripts.” The article stressed the importance of family manuscripts such as letters and diaries and the need to know their whereabouts, to preserve them and to make them available to students of South African history. It outlined the work being done by the SA Public Library and the development of its manuscripts department. It also noted that the Trustees of the SAPL were ‘inviting the co-operation of libraries, archives, museums and other institutions likely to be interested’ in the preservation of such documents.

For Prof Winifred Maxwell this article represented both an opportunity and a threat. The SAPL campaign could stimulate the development of manuscript repositories and of the embryo Cory Collection in particular but it might also lead to eastern Cape manuscripts being deposited elsewhere, in SAPL in particular.

She wrote at once (18th August) to *Grocott’s* endorsing the importance of unofficial manuscripts - ‘both national treasures and the raw material of the historian’ – ignoring the South African Public Library while stressing the eastern Cape as an historical entity of importance. Prof Maxwell drew attention to the work of Sir George Cory, to the Cory collection and other significant Grahamstown sources and pleaded with the owners of documents who were prepared to donate them or make them available for copying ‘not to send them out of the very locality whose past they illumine.’ She asked such owners to contact the History Department which was fully trained in paleography and research technique and had the library ‘cataloguing apparatus’ to hand and a safe repository in the Cory collection.

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\(^{17}\) For details of Una Long’s research under the Leverhulme Award see the Introduction by H.M. Robertson mentioned above.

\(^{18}\) For Una Long and the SA Public Library see *Africana Notes & News* Vol. 1 no.3 June 1944 (pp.22-3) and no.4 August 1944 (pp.26-7)
The process of seizing the opportunity offered and negating any possible loss of potential research material was also taken forward within the structures of the University College. It began with the Library Committee's recommendation on 31 August 1944 that Rhodes should inform the SAPL of its willingness 'to receive manuscripts, preserve them and make them available for research.'

The situation within the College Library had changed significantly with the recent appointment of Dr F G van der Riet as the first professional University Librarian, though new professional energy and direction did not entirely compensate for limited staffing. The Library Committee recognised that its proposals could need the appointment, even if only temporary and part-time, of a person able to assess and catalogue manuscripts, the latter task to include the thorough revision of the existing system of cataloguing them.

Three matters of more than passing interest came out of the Library Committee's recommendations: the idea that any fresh acquisition of manuscripts would be for a limited period only and could therefore be dealt with by a temporary staff member, a proposal to circulate lists of acquired documents to other libraries and the suggestion that photographic copies of documents be considered. The idea that temporary staff could deal with manuscript acquisitions was to bedevil Cory Library staffing arrangements for many years and circulated lists of acquisitions to become its major publication.¹⁹

The academic process was taken further at Senate and Council level and this led inter alia to the formation of a ‘Committee re the preservation of documents of historical interest,’ later the ‘Historical Documents Committee,’ consisting initially of Prof Maxwell and other Senate members with the University Librarian as first chairman.

Some problems of how to treat new manuscripts acquired in relation to the Cory Collection had arisen. Library Committee, for example, had recommended adding them to it but Council had rejected this on the advice of its Internal Arrangements Committee. At its first meeting on 18 August 1944 the Historical Documents Committee proposed that 'any extended collection of Eastern Province records in this College be called the Cory Library, the Cory Collection to be kept as a separate entity in this Library.' This was the formal birth charter of the Cory Library – the rider 'for Historical Research' seems to have been added as a customary description rather than by formal decision.

The Historical Documents Committee also considered a variety of other matters including fund-raising efforts, housing of the Cory Library and publishing an appeal for further deposits of material. However its most significant recommendation might well have been to propose that a field worker should be appointed to locate and collect documents – this in addition to the cataloguing staff member proposed by Library Committee who would only, it was thought, be required 'in the near future.'

¹⁹ The first of these Lists of Accessions covered material received between October 1945 and September 1946 and the last to date was no. 32 which appeared in 1994 by which time the title had been changed to Registers of Documents. On-line access to Cory Library catalogues has made these Registers largely redundant in their present form.
separation of the acquisition of documents and the processing of them was also to cause problems later.

The H.D. Committee went further on the subject of the appointment of a field worker and proposed that, if money could be raised to support one for twelve months, Una Long should be asked to undertake the work. The idea of engaging the services of Una Long after her Leverhulme research ended arose out of correspondence and conversations between her and Winnie Maxwell. Una Long had impressed Winnie Maxwell with the contacts she had already made, her business-like ability and her ‘undoubted flair for making discoveries.’

It is possible that her personality and the abilities noted caused people at Rhodes to overlook Una Long’s academic shortcomings. She lacked the ‘necessary degrees’ which would normally have been required for academic life and a number of her historical projects like the social history of the 1820 Settlers, a history of the press in the Eastern Cape and a later work on frontier history never got off the ground, while her editing of the Elizabeth Lees Price documents was to cause problems.

The post of Field Worker in History – ‘to explore the as yet undiscovered historical manuscript resources of the Eastern Province’ – was nevertheless offered to her from 1 August 1945. She was to be employed for one year at a salary of £300 plus £100 expenses to catalogue [that is, list], make a précis of and where possible obtain for deposit in the Cory Library any manuscript material uncovered. Funds to employ Una Long in this way were to come from an application by the Professor of History to the Research Funds of the College and she was to be responsible jointly to the Head of History and the University Librarian. Thus was created a measure of divided control over the field worker which was to pass, or pass potentially, through her to the Cory Library itself.

The Rhodes Council was still aware that there was a need for a person to assess manuscript material received and to catalogue it on receipt but it went no further than noting that it was essential to the working of the whole scheme that an attempt be made to find such a person. This was less than money on the table and would lead to problems.

The whole scheme, at least in Winnie Maxwell’s eyes, went beyond the engaging of a field worker. She hoped to prevent the Eastern Province from being stripped of its private records as it had been of public ones and to counteract the excessive centralization of records. The field worker was one string of the bow and she hoped also to launch a publicity campaign in South Africa, to stimulate interest in Great Britain with possible

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20 For Memorandum by W A Maxwell in support of engaging a field worker and outlining her thinking on the development of the Cory Library and related issues see CL PR 4074/3
21 See Cory Library correspondence files under ‘Long, Una’ for her lack of degrees, CL PR 4074/3 for her proposed book on the press and CL PR 4074/14 for proposed work on frontier history.
22 See Rhodes Council Minutes 18 December 1944. Council was, of course, giving effect to proposals form various other subordinate bodies.
copying of manuscripts there, to pressure the Government to speed up the indexing and
cheapen the copying of Colonial records held in Britain. All in all she felt that Rhodes
University College had an ‘excellent opportunity’ to ‘make serious contributions to the
study of South African history.’

It was not, in several ways, a bad time to take an optimistic view. The war was drawing
to a close and shortly after that happened Rhodes University College could begin to
entertain hopes of becoming an independent university. In such atmosphere an
established reputation for research could do much to aid university status. In a letter to
Council of 25 May 1948 the Master of the University College, Dr John Smeath Thomas,
summarized the ten years of his leadership and the moves towards full university
autonomy and noted the College’s ‘high reputation as a centre for creative work and
research’ in which context he mentioned specifically the establishment of a Research
Fund (which was, as it happened, paying for Una Long), the creation of the research
chairs in Leather Science and Ichthyology and also the ‘Historical Documents section of
the Library which will, under the direction of Mrs [Una] Gill, carry out important
investigations into some aspects of South Africa history.’ He was suggesting a degree of
authority over the Cory Library for Una Long which might have come as a surprise to
some including ‘Mrs Gill’ herself. The Master was, nevertheless, not uninformed of at
least some aspects of the grand scheme as some meetings of the Historical Documents
Committee were under his chairmanship.

The scheme was taken forward in one small and one potentially major way. The small
way was through a mimeographed circular called ‘Discovering History.’ This had first
been planned in detail in late 1945 by the Historical Documents Committee, which
wanted it to go the press and private hands, to outline plans for a documentation centre
and to contain an appeal for documents. It was to be drawn up by Una Long in
collaboration with Frank van der Riet and Winnie Maxwell. In the event ‘Discovering
History’, which made clear that it proposed to ‘press forward in the Eastern Province the
work begun by the Leverhulme Fellowships’ and that it was thinking principally of
‘family’ papers, was not issued until December 1947 when it appeared in English and
Afrikaans. It would seem that ‘Discovering History’ produced no very dramatic results.
Una Long reported to the Historical Documents Committee that ‘the effect of the circular
should not be judged solely on the actual documents presented or loaned to the Cory
Library’

The potentially major way was a proposal which was initially submitted to the Historical
Documents Committee on 7 November 1947 by Michael Roberts, from the war returned,
Frank van der Riet and Una Long. This was a scheme to make microfilm or microprint
copies of material in the Colonial Office section of the Public Record Office from the

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23 For W A Maxwell’s views see CL PR 4074/3.
24 The Commission on the future of Unisa and its constituent colleges began sitting in February 1947 – see
25 See CL PR 4074/2-3 on ‘Discovering History’ including English and Afrikaans texts. Senate approved
the project at its meeting on 12.10.1945.
conclusion of G M Theal’s *Records of the Cape Colony* to 1885 – an estimated 175,000 pages of documents.

The scheme called for a loan of £500 from Rhodes for a year’s copying work. Multiple copies were to be produced which would be sold off to other repositories, locally and abroad, to finance further copying which would in turn lead to further sales. It was estimated that the whole project would take from five to ten years and leave Rhodes with all its costs paid and the master copy from which further copies could be made if required. It was recognised that in promoting this scheme Rhodes would be undertaking work of national importance equivalent to the Johannesburg Public Library’s support of the *Index to South African Periodicals* and the State Library’s support of the Inter-Library Loan scheme.

This ambitious proposal came in the end to nothing. It seems very likely that it fell victim to the severe financial crisis which overtook Rhodes University College in the late 1940s. Dr Thomas Alty, the new Master who arrived in October 1948, and his advisors, were faced with crises which made launching schemes of national importance unreal. It had been hoped to address the problems of libraries in isolated areas and to build a research collection on limited resources and the failure hampered the growth of the Cory Library but it had nevertheless been recognised that Cory was already ‘a collection of great value to the Eastern Province historian’ and had ‘had no exact parallel in any other university in this country.’

Attempts had been made to promote the value of the Cory Library in another direction. Senate at its meeting on 21 November 1945 asked Prof J V L Rennie of Geography to approach the Albany Museum about collaborating with the Cory Library. The ‘Discovery History’ circular was delayed while this was in progress but nothing concrete seems to have come from it though the idea was to surface in later years.

The Cory Library itself was still quite small physically though deposits of material as a result of Una Long’s activities or from other sources and consequent increase in the use of the collections put pressure on its accommodation. In November 1944 it was proposed to move the Cory Library with the *Grahams Town Journal* files to the room in the basement then housing the Battery Stores. The Battery was a wartime campus artillery battery which they Government had decided to disband. Its storeroom was considered fire protected, had an even temperature and subdued lighting though it was not big enough for the permanent housing of the Library and the lighting was not suitable for a study area.

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26 For the microfilming project see Rhodes Council Minutes CL MS 12 244/4 p.484 and related entries and CL PR 4074/5.
27 See R F Currey: *Rhodes University*... page 104f.
28 CL MS 12 244/4.
29 See Historical Documents Committee 9 November and Internal Arrangements Committee 10 November 1944.
In 1947 following reports from Una Long on increased holdings and usage Council agreed to enclose an area 10 feet by 10 feet between two flights of stairs leading from the quadrangle to the basement to provide a small room for Library staff. An inventory drawn up in July 1948 gives a vivid picture of that the Cory Library looked like at this time. There was the ‘work room’ which contained three tables of various kinds with three chairs, a four-drawer filing cabinet, an Imperial 55 typewriter, a wastepaper basket and a heater. As it contained no curtains this was presumably the 10’ x 10’ space between the stairs and had no external windows. The ‘library’ held another four tables of various kinds with four chairs, 5 bookcases, two with wire mesh doors (the Cory Collection?), four newspaper shelves and a cupboard, ten catalogue card drawers (two metal), 22 metal and 26 cardboard document boxes, another Imperial 55, a step ladder, heater and wastepaper basket and three pairs of curtains which suggest three outside windows.30

The existence of the stepladder indicates where material was being stored and shortly after this the Cory Library was moved to three rooms on the middle floor of the north wing of the Main Block, two of which were to be linked by a connecting door.31 This, however, only increased the number of students who could work at any one time to six and History classes had to be staggered.32

Despite financial crises and the accommodation problems in the Cory Library Una Long had been carrying on her work to general satisfaction. In April 1946 the Historical Documents Committee congratulated her on the job she had done and on the material which had been secured for Cory either as permanent deposit or loan. The Committee proposed that when her appointment lapsed she should be offered a three-year contract to continue her work. Senate agreed but Council, on the advice of its Finance Committee, only agreed to a further year on the same terms with further extensions to be considered later,33

Una Long had been able to report that the Grahamstown City Council had sought advice on arranging its archives, that Miss M K Jeffreys of the Archives had proposed that accessions to the Cory Library be listed in the Archives Year Books along with accessions to the Archives and that both the Archives and the South African Public Library had withdrawn their claims to Brownlee letters in favour of the Cory Library as the ‘right repository’ for them.34 Her work was being noticed on a wide scale. She herself took this further in March 1947 when she proposed a national scheme of regional research and document collecting libraries to the Council for Sociological, Humanistic and Educational Research. This would have placed the Cory Library as the Eastern Province segment of the whole. This plan was never taken further but Una Long’s proposal raised important issues. It recognised clearly that unofficial records could be corporate (church, business, professional body etc) as well as family, discussed the thorny issues of

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30 This inventory is in CL PR 4074/7
31 Senate Minutes 9.8.1948 and Exco Minutes 21.10.1948
32 CL PR 4074/10
33 See HDC Minutes 5.4.1946 and Council Minutes 18.4.1946
34 CL PR 4074/3
centralization or decentralisation of documents in South Africa and of a 'suitable code' for cataloguing them.\textsuperscript{35}

 Una Long was still being employed from year to year though her salary had been increased from £300 to £360 from 1947 – this was less advantageous than it might sound as she had neither been informed of the increase nor paid the money.\textsuperscript{36} When she did get her money she was earning rather less than the Janitor (£390), more than the Night watchman (£264) and rather more than a senior professor on pension (A S Kidd - £282)\textsuperscript{37}

Steps were taken to end her undefined position and Senate at its meeting of 6 September 1948 recommended that Una Long be appointed to the permanent staff ‘with the status of lecturer.’ Council approved this - she was to be called Research Officer and Field Worker in South African History - subject to Ministerial authorization which was received at the end of June of 1949. By that stage Una Long was about to depart on leave for the remainder of the year and seems not to have noted her changed status.

As Una Long continued successfully with her work the problem of cataloguing existing and new material became more acute. Library Committee at its meeting on 3 May 1946 had recognised that it needed urgent attention. At much the same time Una Long herself had reported on how a query by the author Francis Brett Young had taken her two days to answer “as the Cory Library is not catalogued.”\textsuperscript{38} This was not a period at which it was easy for the Library Committee to recommend the employment of additional staff. It tried to solve the problem by asking the University Librarian to ‘request various members of the staff to assist with the work of cataloguing and indexing documents on a voluntary basis.’ Surprisingly, perhaps, Frank van der Riet was able to report that seven members of the Library staff were willing to co-operate ‘in their free time’ in a project of cataloguing the manuscripts in the Cory Library. This somewhat alarming prospect became more alarming still given that there were only some eight members of staff in all.\textsuperscript{39}

In the end this rainbow of voluntary assistance was not required. In the course of her activities Una Long had made contact with a Mr Henry Cooper of Port Elizabeth who offered to donate £200 towards the salary of a cataloguer for the Cory Library for one or two years if Rhodes would defray her board and lodging. As a result of this donation, which was known as the Cory Memorial Grant at the donor’s request, Miss Helen Barker, one of the Library’s Grade II Assistants was transferred to the Cory Library with a

\textsuperscript{35} Una Long’s 19-page memorandum is in CL PR 4074/4.
\textsuperscript{36} The Registrar’s report on Una Long’s salary is in the Minutes of the Research Committee 6.7.1948.
\textsuperscript{37} Finance Committee Minutes 13.6.1947.
\textsuperscript{38} CL PR 4074/3
\textsuperscript{39} See Library Committee minutes 3 May 1946 and 6 June 1946 and the Librarian’s report to Senate 9 October 1946 which lists the staff of the Library as The Librarian, 2 Grade II Assistants, 2 student assistants, 1 part-time clerical assistant and 2 ‘natives.’
particular mandate to catalogue the Cory Collection itself. She was the first professionally trained librarian to be employed in the Cory Library.40

An increased and better catalogued collection brought with it more users and here another problem arose. There were no staff detailed to keep the Cory Library open and to assist users. This could lead to very limited access. For example the Historical Documents Committee recommended on 5 June 1947 that the Cory Library be normally open in the mornings only (8:30-12:45) and accessible to researchers at the discretion of the University Librarian and students, normally only third years and above, at the discretion of the Head of Department.

Interestingly this particular attempt to define the parameters of access to the Cory Library raised the problem of whether or not the new conditions were in accord with Sir George Cory’s provisions for his Collection and whether or not Senate could make regulations which breached the agreement with Sir George. The Registrar raised the issue with the University Librarian in June 1947 but was satisfied that a distinction was being maintained between the Cory Collection and the Library as a whole and that no provisions relating to the Collection were being breached. It seems likely that Dr Frank van der Riet saw all of George Cory’s statements on his collection for the first time on this occasion as he became alarmed that Cory appeared to hold Cory’s notebooks and manuscripts which should have gone to the Albany Museum. Was the College holding material is shouldn’t or had Sir George changed his mind he wanted to know? The Registrar was unable to solve the puzzle.41

Cory Library could only open to any users when there were staff to take charge of it. During Helen Barker’s tenure of the Cory Memorial Grant she took charge with assistance from Una Long when she was in Grahamstown. In both cases though these were seen as voluntary additions to their ‘proper duties’ - cataloging and fieldwork - and no-one was held to be officially in charge of the day to day operations of Cory.42

Being in charge was in any case seen in rather limited terms when it came to assisting readers. Michael Roberts, commenting to Una Long on 6 March 1949, put things with characteristic force: what she needed in the Cory Library to help her as fieldworker was a sort of cross between a lab boy and a technical assistant who would do ‘a great deal of purely clerical work’ and ‘act as a sort of verger to the casual visitor.’ Such a person would be useful to the History Department because of his ability to catalogue and index and by his ‘ability to offer some sort of guide to the available materials in the absence of any printed guide.’43 The History Department really wanted somebody able to give advanced seminars on South African History and to give instruction on historical method based on local materials – a first class historian dividing his time between research and

40 The minimum qualification for a Grade II Assistant was the Intermediate Certificate of the South African Library Association and two years experience. Helen Barker’s appointment in Cory specifically allowed her opportunities to study further with the SALA.
41 The exchanges between the Registrar and Librarian are in CL PR 4074/5.
42 See CL PR 4074/10.
43 CL PR 4074/10.
seminars. A Cory staff member of this sort was probably not very likely but lesser staff would still have been necessary to keep Cory Library open to students especially at times like afternoons when they were not in lectures and it was accepted that 'a busy archivist did not have time for browsing students.' The idea of a reference librarian, much less one specialized in the subject field had not yet been born.

Although Una Long regarded fieldwork as her major work she did not spend all her time in the field and when she was in the Library did carry on duties similar to those which a librarian might have undertaken. There is evidence of her ordering books and stationary, selecting Africana items from Rose's Bookshop and even ordering catalogue cards - a batch of 10 000 which must have been for the whole library. She nevertheless rejected the idea that she was 'in charge of the Library' and held that her work in Cory was being 'seriously interrupted' by visitors and students.

She was rather happier to be involved in library professional work of a different kind. The proper methods of handing unofficial manuscripts had been in debate for some time. They had formed a major focus of a meeting at South African Public Library in September 1947 of concerned delegates to the South African Library Association conference at which Frank van der Riet was appointed part of an investigation into the principles guiding the collecting of documents and the techniques for making the information they contained available. Una Long herself had outlined the methods which the Cory Library was using in a Memorandum of July 1946. This is slightly confused and perhaps indicates that she was not archivist, librarian or historian. It is not clear, for example, what 'the work of the historian is to transform chronicled fact into historical fact' really means and the assertion that 'the immediate need in the Cory Library is to handle the raw material with the technique of the librarian, not the art of the historian' probably fails to recognise that both are required.

In July 1949 Frank van der Riet, Helen Barker and Una Long drew up a document entitled Cory Library for Historical Research: methods and procedures in the organization of research materials. This fifteen page mimeographed document was intended to codify the procedures in use in the Cory Library in an attempt to ensure continuity in the face of staff changes but was also to be available to others needing to organize collections of documents and so contribute to solving a longstanding problem. According to Helen Barker the Methods and procedures flowed out of her work in the Cory Library and was 'based on or modified library practice as far as possible' and hoped to be a 'workable substitute for the accepted professional codes.' To a modern librarian it seems to be based rather more on archival procedures than library - Muller, Feith and Fruin: Manual for the arrangement and description of archives... (New York: 1940) is cited several times. As current library 'accepted professional codes' gave little attention

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44 CL PR 4074/9 and 4074/10.
45 See CL PR 4074/6
46 Cory Library correspondence files: Una Long
47 CL PR 4074/2
48 CL PR 4074/3
49 There are copies of this document and information on it in CL PR 4074/11.
to the cataloguing of manuscripts it is possible that *Methods and procedures* was feeling towards a library approach.

As it stood it caused problems by attempting to treat individual manuscript items as catalogue entries rather than attempting to group them into more meaningful units - for example a collection of 50 letters from A to B as a single catalogue unit rather than 50 individual entries. It also proposed a limited subject approach and inadequate descriptions of manuscripts. It must, however, be remembered that the physical form of current Cory indexes and catalogues was complex and the manuscript collection small. It was accepted Cory Library practice, and *Methods and procedures* endorses this, to prepare full typed transcriptions of manuscripts which were then indexed in detail. It had been a significant part of Helen Barker’s work under the Cory Memorial Grant to make these full copies with indexes which allowed for one set to be bound and put on the shelves like books, another to be available for loan and preserved the original manuscript from handling.

As it happened *Methods and procedures* appeared at the very time that Helen Barker was forced by pressure of work to suspend the system of making typed copies. A dozen foolscap volumes of typed copies occupying half a library shelf were produced with two volumes of indexes. The copying project was never resumed. Helen Barker had also abandoned an attempt to include subject headings in addition to personal and place names in the indexes because of the problems of devising a suitable system of subject headings. It seems likely that *Methods and procedures* appeared at just the time when the system which had given rise to it was having to change but it appearance was also forced by changes to Cory Library staffing which could not be avoided.

Una Long decided to apply for extended leave from July 1949 to the end of 1950. Part of this was to be paid leave (July-September 1949) and the remainder unpaid. She had applied for – and received – an Overseas Bursary from the National Council for Social Research to carry out a year’s fieldwork in the British Isles. This had been an idea in the plans which she and Winnie Maxwell had discussed at the beginning of her involvement with Rhodes. It is possible that she also had a less academic reason for wishing to visit England. One of the researchers to visit the Cory Library had been the English novelist, playwright and journalist James Lansdale Hodson (1891-1956) who was working on a film about the Voortrekkers. Early in 1950 Una Long married him while on leave.

Her extended leave created a staffing crisis in the Cory Library; as Helen Barker’s Cory Memorial Grant was due to expire at the end of 1949 which would leave no staff directly involved in the running of Cory.

Initial attempts to solve this crisis centred on a proposal to appoint an Assistant Research Officer to take over Helen Barker’s duties. The History Department still wanted a person who could take charge of Cory under the University Librarian and organize research under the Professor of History while the Library’s aims were more modest and

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50 For Helen Barker’s report on *Methods and procedures* and related issues see CL PR 4074/11.
involved adding responsibility for opening the Cory Library and ‘advising and guiding
students’ to Helen Barker’s duties.\textsuperscript{51}

The Historical Documents Committee proposed a permanent archival assistant on these
latter lines to work 40 hours a week and Michael Roberts mused on whether or not
anybody else could carry out Una Long’s fieldwork successfully. Senate was not
prepared to go as far as that and only approved a temporary post to the end of 1950 – the
minimum qualification to be a BA and the holder to be on the staff of the Library. This
if the National Council for Social Research would make a grant towards the salary.\textsuperscript{52}

About the time that the NCSR turned down this idea Rhodes proposed that, since it was
apparent that one person could not be both fieldworker and in charge of the Cory Library,
the post of Research Officer be converted to Assistant-in-charge of the Cory Library to
whom a part-time assistant should be appointed to take on much of the fieldwork. The
Assistant-in-charge would be a graduate librarian.\textsuperscript{53}

In turning Rhodes down the NCSR had indicated that it would consider applications from
supervisors of work for grants towards the appointment of assistants for a year at a time.
This was the route was taken to replace Helen Barker. Frank van der Riet applied for
assistance in organizing the material in the Cory Library for 1950 and June Hobson, a
MA candidate, was appointed as this ‘assistant,’ with special arrangements made to
accommodate her research commitments.\textsuperscript{54}

Una Long in the meanwhile continued her extended leave in England. She carried out
fieldwork there as intended\textsuperscript{55} but is seems unlikely that, after her marriage at least, she
intended returning permanently to Rhodes. She still regarded her post as temporary from
year to year and without the benefits or obligations of a permanent appointment. She
also had no desire to hold the post of Research Officer if the emphasis was to be on
taking charge of Cory rather than fieldwork as she believed she was not the right person
for that job and did not have the right qualifications. Rhodes on the other hand held that
she was expected to return to her post unless her appointment was terminated by
Council\textsuperscript{56}.

What Una Long wanted was to be able to continue in her post for another year after her
leave had ended during which she wanted to work on editing the Elizabeth Lees Prices
papers, at least partly from England. At no stage did she offer her marriage as a reason
for wanting to remain in England though, as it delayed her eventual return to Rhodes, it
was clearly a factor.\textsuperscript{57}

\textsuperscript{51} CL PR 4074/9
\textsuperscript{52} CL PR 4074/10 and Senate Minutes 5 May 1949 & 2. June 1949
\textsuperscript{53} CL PR 4074/10
\textsuperscript{54} CL PR 4074/12-13 and Historical Documents Committee minutes 29 September 1949
\textsuperscript{55} See CL MS 6240-1 for her correspondence files 1949-1951.
\textsuperscript{56} See Cory Library correspondence files: Una Long.
\textsuperscript{57} Cory Library correspondence files: Una Long.
In the course of her fieldwork Una Long had made contact with Miss C W Price, a retired headmistress, about the papers of her mother Elizabeth Lees Price which Miss Price wished to have published and towards which publication she offered £1000. Miss Price wished to edit these papers with Una Long, acting as 'a full-time employee of Rhodes University College,' and to have them published by Rhodes.

The saga of the editing of the Price papers was to be a long and complex one but at quite an early stage Rhodes agreed that while Una Long would return to her post in 1951 her main duty would be editing the Price papers and she would have no responsibility for the 'normal routines' of the Cory Library. Arrangements could be made for her to work in England. This was, in many ways, a strange decision - as Michael Roberts pointed out she was being reappointed to her former post on the express understanding that she neglected the duties of that post in favour of editing Price - but once it was taken it effectively ended Una Long's connection with the Cory Library.

She resigned her post from May 1952, a year after resuming it - a period during which she had spent time in Botswana and England working on Price. When in Grahamstown she seems to have worked mainly at home. Thereafter she was based in London.

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58 See Historical Documents Committee minutes of 28 October 1948 in CL PR 4074/7 and the copy of these minutes attached to the Senate minutes. Una Long's editing of the papers 'for Rhodes University' was published by Edward Arnold in 1956 as *The Journals of Elizabeth Lees Price*...
60 CL PR 4074/14
"A man should rejoice, presented by his daughter Barbara Bee.

Cory Library MS 7 309
Section III – Barbara Bee and the coming of the Cory Librarian

While the questions of whether and when Una Long would return to duties connected to the Cory Library were still in the air, the work of the Library itself had to be carried forward. June Hobson, appointed to succeed Helen Barker as Archival Assistant from the beginning of 1950, only remained until August of that year when she left to continue her studies at Oxford. Her time in the Cory Library was too brief to make much impact but she did find it necessary, and it is interesting that she was herself a postgraduate researcher, to ‘make a very superficial subject index on an informal basis’ to the manuscript collections in order to facilitate research.\(^{61}\)

June Hobson was succeeded by Margaret Kannemeyer, who took over the remainder of her year. She was then re-appointed for a year at a time as a research assistant to Dr Frank van der Riet and largely paid by grants from the National Council for Social Research. Margaret Kannemeyer held an MA degree (in English though on Lady Anne Barnard) awarded in 1942, had no training as librarian or archivist but was nevertheless described as ‘Assistant-in-Charge’ of the Cory Library.

She saw her job initially as leaving her little time for her own work but freeing her ‘from the tangle of good works and social obligations arising from living in Grahamstown without an outward and visible job’ and found some of the ordinary students now using Cory in greater numbers ‘just a pest’ though several were ‘to their confessed surprise’ becoming quite interested to South African history.\(^{62}\)

By the end of her tenure, however, she could record ‘I cannot resign myself to treating the whole thing just as a “job” from which one can walk off without a backward look.’ She was aware too of the level of responsibility of working in the Cory Library – ‘the conditions under which one works are so entirely unrestricted that one can make of the work what one will; and if one made a mess of it, it would be a long while before anyone in authority became aware of it, and endless damage might have been done.’\(^{63}\)

Margaret Kannemeyer’s role as Assistant-in-Charge of the Cory Library came to an end in November 1952 when the grants from the NCSR to allow Frank van der Riet to employ research assistants to organize the Cory manuscripts could no longer be renewed. With Una Long having resigned in May the staffing of the Cory Library was now an open question again and it was by no means clear that there would again be a field worker linked to it. Margaret Kannemeyer had carried out some activities which she felt constituted fieldwork but from her position within the Cory Library. No real work in the field had been done, in South Africa at any rate, since Una Long had gone on leave in 1949.

\(^{61}\) CL PR 4074/13
\(^{62}\) Margaret Kannemeyer to Helen Barker 15 May 1951 in CL PR 4074/14
\(^{62}\) Margaret Kannemeyer to Ron Brown, future Deputy University Librarian, 22 October 1952 in CL PR 4074/15
Should a new field worker be appointed? Michael Roberts, despite his initial doubts, felt in 1951 that one could be found and a bilingual one at that. The situation at Rhodes had changed very considerably though. Early in 1951 it had become an independent university and the future staffing an activities of the Cory Library had to be viewed in the light of the priorities of the new University. On 7 April 1952 Library Committee noted that Council had asked the Senate to reconsider the post of field worker in the light of these priorities.

On 8th August Library Committee set out its view that a full-time member of the Library staff needed to be in charge of the Cory Library. This was despite the interest in the Cory Library of the new Assistant [University] Librarian Mr Ron Brown who had considered applying for Margaret Kannemeyer’s job and had hoped to be in a position to exercise ‘general supervision’ of Cory as Assistant Librarian. Library Committee now proposed, and Senate accepted, that the existing post of full-time field worker be converted to a part-time one to be filled later. A new full-time post of Grade I Library Assistant ‘to be in charge of the Cory Library’ should be created.

It was realized later in the year that the necessary Ministerial approval for these changes could not be obtained before the middle of 1953 and the Committee recommended that the new Library Assistant should be appointed against the existing field worker post and advertised as a permanent position pending Ministerial approval. And so the grand experiment of the field worker in historical research ended, as the part-time field worker was never to be appointed.

The new post of ‘Assistant-in-charge of the Cory Library for Historical Research’ was advertised in late December 1952. Candidates were expected to hold a university degree while familiarity with the literature of South African history and experience of archival materials would be recommendations. The new Assistant would be expected to work a 40 hour week (35 hours in vacations) for a salary of £425-£575 plus cost of living and be required to sort, list and index manuscripts ‘according to a special code of practice’, render assistance to readers and control issues of loan stock, maintain contact by correspondence and occasional visit with owners of manuscripts, and conduct general correspondence including responding to reference queries. It was particularly emphasized that assistance to readers and researchers and contacts outside Rhodes University formed an important part of the duties. This hardworking soul would ideally also be able to type and speak Afrikaans.

In the gap between Margaret Kannemeyer’s departure and this appointment John Gordon Sprigg took charge of the Cory Library. A grandson of the Cape Premier, he was a retired farmer being employed by Frank van der Riet from another National Council for Social Research grant this time to compile a biographical notices index to the Grahams Town Journal. Van der Riet expected the index, running from 1831 to 1920, to take six months to complete. This was a significant under estimate and Gordon Sprigg only

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64 CL PR 4074/14
65 Correspondence between Margaret Kannemeyer and Ron Brown in CL PR 4074/15
66 CL PR 4074/15
completed it to 1876. After leaving the Cory Library he became Librarian of the Grahamstown Public Library for a period. The ‘Sprigg Index’ was subsequently extended to the closure of the Journal in 1920 by members the Cory staff, Librarianship students and others. It remains a major and unique source of local biographical information. Gordon Sprigg’s own work was accurate and comprehensive to a very high degree.67

Miss Barbara M A Bee, BA (SA), Dip.Lib. (Cape Town), FSALA was appointed Assistant-in-charge of the Cory Library from 7 April 1953. She had come from the Johannesburg Public Library. On 20 July the Minister of Education, Arts and Science approved the existing post of Research Officer and Field Worker but withheld judgment on the proposed part-time post – permanently as it turned out. The new Assistant was to be a member of the senior administrative staff.68 She was also not to remain an ‘assistant’ for very long. On 8 March 1954 Library Committee recommended changes in Library staff titles as proposed by the South African Library Association: ‘Librarian’ became ‘University Librarian’, ‘Assistant Librarian’ changed to ‘Deputy University Librarian. And the Cory post became ‘Librarian, Cory Library’ or ‘Cory Librarian’ for short.

The Library itself continued to grow, both by new acquisitions and by changes of policy. During 1951 the heirs of Dr James Greathead had presented 200 Africana titles described as ‘the most notable acquisition’ since the re-organisation of the Cory Library as a research centre and books ‘which could not have been acquired by purchase.’ Early in the same year the decision had been taken to transfer all South African history books to the Cory Library.69 This helped to complete the unique character of a Library offering both primary and secondary sources though this approach was not universally supported. Michael Roberts had sought in 1949 to establish the principle that ‘rare Africana’ bought from funds allocated to the History Department could be housed in Cory but other history books should be in the main library. In part at least he had in mind ease of access by students and others.70

The transfer of history books in 1951 was occasioned by shortages of space in the main library, the need to protect valuable Africana titles and the belief that teaching and research would be best served by the integrating the Library’s resources. This arrangement certainly seemed to suite researchers and Prof Alan Hattersley was the first of many to comment on its convenience.71

Increasing the range of holdings of the Cory Library raised questions of the scope and functions of the Library. As the Vice-Chancellor, Dr Tom Alty, wrote to Acting University Librarian Ron Brown in 1955 ‘There seems to be some lack of definition of

67 For Sprigg, the Cory Library and the index see CL PR 4074/15-6. Information on the index after Sprigg is from the writer’s personal involvement. For Sprigg himself see Grocott’s Mail 2 November 1965.
68 Library Committee minutes 17 August 1953.
69 CL PR 4074/14
70 CL PR 4074/11
71 CL PR 4074/16
the aims of the Cory Library and I shall be glad if you will invite the Cory Library Committee... to consider the question of the real purpose of the library and to take any steps it may consider necessary to further that purpose. It is said to contain some of the Library’s most valuable books and to be a research library to be built up to cover work in various fields. That is the justification for a Cory Library grant. At the same time it is said to be an institution vital to the work of undergraduates and other students of history. Can a library the size of the Cory serve both these purposes? If it can ought it to do so? 72

There were issues of various kinds here. Could the structures and staff cope with so wide a mandate for example? Prof Winifred Maxwell, who had been appointed Professor of History in October 1953, feared they would not be able to in a memorandum presented to Library Committee in April 1955. She believed that the Cory Library was breaking away from the ‘established conventions of the organisation of historical material in this country and elsewhere’ and was widening its scope to the extent that it was departing from the purposes for which it had originally been established. The concept of trying to be a both research library and to serve undergraduates was part of this general problem and might have to eased by moving the general South African history books out. The fundamental problems of the Cory Library were ‘staffing, space and equipment for research’ within the limits of University resources.

On another level the problems were practical: providing housing for the materials in the Cory Library so that they could be used rationally and accessed at times when users had to a right to expect access. A single Cory staff member, however qualified or able, could not be present in the Library at all times. Either assistance had to be found to keep the Cory open at times similar to the main library or materials housed there had to be limited to those of interest to researchers who were not tied to lecture programmes.

Housing the Cory Library was an on-going problem and Margaret Kannemeyer had been asked to look at Olive Schreiner House as a possible location in 1952 but did not think it was suitable. 73 This scheme was still alive in 1955 but was never put into effect. Barbara Bee described the existing accommodation problems graphically in 1954. Some books were being stored 10 feet above the floor, some blue books up to 13 feet and these heights necessitated borrowing a ladder from the janitor which was difficult to use in the cramped space. She herself was having to use the floor for material she was working on. The catalogue cabinet was full and cards were being stored in shoeboxes – there was in any case no room for an additional cabinet, nor, probably, for the required map cabinet. 74 Only four to five readers could be accommodated at any one time. Despite this position no major extensions to the accommodation for the Cory Library seem to have happened before the construction of a new Library Building.

This meant that it was difficult to plan the use of the Cory Library in terms of closed and open access areas which could have been open at different times and any extension, or

72 Documents on this issue are in CL PR 4074/16
73 CL PR 4074/15
74 CL PR 4074/16
perceived extension, of the ‘mission’ of the Library would increase this problem. In essence it was the problem raised by Dr Alty in another form – could the Cory Library house both research and undergraduate materials? If it couldn’t it might have to be reorganized as a research library only and circulating books, say, returned to the Main Library. At a meeting of 5 August 1955 the Cory Committee found itself in a catch-22 situation: it had to propose aims and objectives for the Library which were possible in the space available but uncertainty about how much space would be available prevented it from deciding on aims and objectives. When it was consequently not able to reach agreement on the functions of the Cory Library the Committee was abolished by Senate and its functions reverted to the Library Committee.

The Cory Library Committee had come into existence in 1951 after Rhodes became independent. The old Historical Documents Committee, which had not been meeting, was abolished and a Cory Committee formed as a sub-committee of a newly enlarged Library Committee. Its abolition lead to the Cory Library dropping down the agenda at a time when the new library building was being planned.

It seems possible that some of the problems which had divided the Cory Committee stemmed from the Cory Librarian herself. Barbara Bee had not been involved in the formative processes of the Cory Library and was an orthodox professional librarian who tended to see Cory in terms of her training. For her Cory was the ‘Africana branch of the Rhodes University Library’ and she bemoaned the fact that it held only the Africana books on history and geography and a few others and wanted all ‘reference books’ on Africa transferred to Cory plus at least one copy of all Africana books even novels. She thought of the Cory Library as divided into an Africana library or ‘Library proper’ and an ‘Archival Section’ and seems herself to have been more comfortable in the ‘library proper’ as she referred more than once to the need to give priority to re-organising the books at the expense of the manuscripts. The ‘library proper’ was the more immediate purpose which had to be served first in her view. Barbara Bee noted that this left little money for the purchase of documents.

This attitude towards the purposes of the Cory Library can only have contributed to the problems of the Cory Committee trying to balance functions and accommodation and is hardly likely to have endeared her to one of the pioneers of the Cory Library – Winifred Maxwell. In September 1955 Maxwell was once more publicizing the collecting of local documents and the role of the Cory Library in this. Her fears about the overextension of Cory’s mandate and the need to return to the original bases have been noted – these were triggered in part after suggestions in the Cory Committee that the name of the Library should be changed to reflect a ‘wider scope.’

Some animosity certainly existed between Barbara Bee and Winifred Maxwell. In 1974 Bee wrote to Frank van der Riet that Maxwell would not let her write a book on Thomas Stubbs ‘long years ago’ and commented to the present writer ‘If you are more intrepid

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75 See Senate Advisory Committee of 28 March 1951.
76 For Barbara Bee’s vision of the Cory Library see CL PR 4074/16-17
77 CL PR 4074/16
than ever I was when I was Cory Librarian I suggest that you tell Professor Maxwell, with my compliments, that Thomas Stubbs needs very little editing... This animosity cannot have made for an easy relationship between Cory Library and History Department and may therefore have contributed to Barbara Bee's relatively short stay. She resigned in April 1957 having spent May to October 1956 on extended leave. It is also possible that she found it difficult to strike a balance between user-friendly public library attitudes and the needs of an archival collection.

Not that such problems were always of Barbara Bee's making. Dr Tom Alty had already raised the question of uncontrolled access, particularly by students, in his queries about the nature and purposes of the Cory Library. On 25 April 1955, however, Ron Brown had instructed her in terms of a Cory Committee decision to allow Prof Maxwell and Mr A K Fryer of the History Department and three research students Basil le Cordeur, A H Duminy and Graham Dodds to use the Cory Library after normal hours - the first three had been given their own keys. Such decisions were prompted by the problem of opening Cory for the hours they required even with student assistants to supplement the hours the Cory Librarian herself worked.

Miss Bee was told that it was her 'responsibility to ensure that all the above are acquainted with the regulations for the removal of books and other material ... and all precautions necessary.' This in effect made the after hours users responsible for their own activities and those of others who might be in the Library with them. What could happen is illustrated by the case of a student, M Clarence, who in August of 1955 was reported to his Professor (Maxwell) for removing books from the Cory Collection for a second time and taking them to Rhodesia! Clarence's defence was that he had removed the books while Barbara Bee was on leave and Mr Fryer was in the Cory Library. Fryer does not seem to have given permission for the removal of the books though the student seems to have felt that he had not stopped it either.

After Barbara Bee's resignation it proved difficult to fill her post. The Library Committee meeting on 1 March 1957 seems to have been little impressed with the three applications received and recommended that the post should be re-advertised or a temporary appointment made. The latter course was chosen and Mrs Brenda Williams-Wynn was appointed until the end of the year as the Cory Library went into a period of uncertainty.

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78 Cory Library correspondence files under Barbara Bee.
79 See her comments in CL PR 4074/16-17
80 CL PR 4074/16
Lovedale, Jan 14, 1859

My dear Wife,

I have been

longing exceedingly to hear

from you - especially

as I have heard that

you were ailing last

week. Let me hear by

Mr. Green how you are.

I left Piner on Monday

morning. John was ill last

week, but was better before

I left. Charles wasn't

quite so well as Robert.

I saw the Doctor as I
Section IV – Sheila Speedy and a period of transition

It continued to be difficult to fill the post of Cory Librarian and a series of temporary appointments were made. Brenda Williams-Wynn was succeeded for 1958 by Miss N Fowler, the Lady Warden of Oriel Hall, and for 1959 by Mrs M D ‘Dottie’ Ewan. Neither had professional library qualifications though Mrs Ewan was a history graduate.

Mrs Ewan found the conditions of work frustrating. The range of activities was large: dealing with requests for information, supervision of collections and assistance to readers, cataloguing and the revision of existing catalogues and indexes. Student numbers in both History and Ecclesiastical History had increased putting pressure \textit{inter alia} on the circulation system and student assistance had dropped from eight hours a week to three. In the absence of any clerical assistance she was finding that, rather than being able to devote her time to carrying out investigations on behalf of researchers and to making archival material available to them, she was spending a great deal of time behind a typewriter - ‘it does not make for contentment in a post, in a troubled country, to be expected to do work for which one has neither the training nor the inclination.’ Library Committee agreed on a part-time assistant but its proposals seem to have been lost in the Staffing Committee. The proposal on Cory staffing was part of a general survey of Library staffing once a new building had been taken into use though the Cory proposals rather addressed old problems - volume of work, problems when the Cory Librarian went on leave and inability of main Library staff to help out due to unfamiliarity with Cory work – rather than any caused by a new building in itself.

Apart from the regular need to fill the post of Cory Librarian the Cory Library did not feature very largely on the agendas of the Library Committee at this period. The plans and visions of the remaining founders of the Cory Library had, it seems, become caught up in the demands of academic life, the Cory Committee was abolished and there was nobody within the Cory Library with the standing of a Una Long who could push its case.

One of those founders, Frank van der Riet, had a good deal on his plate in the later part of the 1950s as plans for the new library building were developed and it was this building, finally taken into use at the beginning of 1961, that largely occupied the Library Committee at this time as well. The year 1961 also saw the opening of the University’s branch in Port Elizabeth for which a library service had also to be planned.

The accommodation for the Cory Library provided in the new building reflected the lack of a special vision for Cory which might have been generated by an established Cory Librarian. No attempt was made to provide archival conditions for the Cory Library: lighting, temperature and humidity, fire, pest and dust precautions were all as in the general library. The attempts in the early days to seek the advice of the Archives were not repeated, nor was any provision made to ensure even temperature or subdued lighting though, in the days of the Battery Store, there had been awareness of such issues. The

\footnote{A memorandum by the Cory Librarian in CL PR 4074/17 is dated to about April 1959 and is therefore presumed to be by Mrs Ewan. It is a response to proposals in the Library Committee meeting of 20 April about the staffing of the Cory Library in the new library building.}
Methods and procedures produced by Frank van der Riet, Una Long and Helen Barker in July 1949 had indicated that original documents should be kept locked away ‘in the nearest possible approach to strong-room accommodation. Special attention is paid to fire-proofing etc.’ In the new location original documents were stored in rather flimsy wooden cupboards in the general stack and reading area.

No special precautions for the Cory Library appear to have been taken because of what was seen as the general high quality of the library accommodation. Fire was, for example, considered unlikely in a concrete building with very limited use of wood.

A perhaps more immediate problem was that the new housing of the Cory Library was inadequate in size. There was, it must be admitted, a great deal more reader seating than in the old rooms and this was seldom full except during exam periods. In addition the Rare Book Room also served as the seminar room which the History Department had long wanted and it was regularly used for this purpose for a number of years though student numbers lead to documents used in seminars being typed and duplicated rather than read in the original.

Staff accommodation was less adequate and limited to a smallish wood and glass partitioned office in a corner of the general stack/reading area for the Cory Librarian. There was no provision for any additional Cory staff and the office was cramped if the Cory Librarian was working on a collection of documents and lacked privacy.

Nor could all Cory materials be held in the Cory Library proper. Uncatalogued documents were kept in the ‘lift store’ – a floored-in lift shaft for a public lift which was never installed. Certain materials which had been associated with the Cory Collection since its earliest days were also stored outside – the files of the Grahams Town Journal across the middle floor landing in what was intended to become an additional toilet and the Cape Parliamentary Papers (or ‘Blue Books’) on open shelves in the Library basement where they were accessible to all members of the Library staff and anyone else admitted to the area by them.

In the course of the new library building scheme a proposal was raised which would have had a dramatic effect on the future of the Cory Library and the hopes which had been held for it since its inception. The Library Committee meeting of 3 March 1959 was informed that the Chief Archivist was investigating the possibility of establishing an archives depot for the Eastern Cape area and wanted to know if the University would consider offering it accommodation in the new library. The Chief Archivist seems to have had in mind that the depot in the Library would be a temporary one prior to the eventual construction of a building owned by the Archives. His proposals seem to have arisen from space shortages in the Cape Archives Depot and pressure from the Rhodes History Department which was still keenly aware of its distance from an Archives Depot, a distance which had not been lessened by the slower than planned growth of the Cory Library.
Library Committee welcomed the idea and the University offered accommodation in the Library basement followed by a proposal to add the top floor, planned for a later stage of the building, when the basement area was found to be inadequate. The whole idea died in 1960 when the responsible Minister withdrew his consent for a Depot in Grahamstown. The Cory Library could only have benefited from being housed in close proximity to an Archives Depot.

In December 1959 Mrs Dottie Ewan resigned as Cory Librarian and the post was advertised drawing four applicants. The position was offered to Mr J Hutton, BA, LLB (SA), Dip in Lib (UCT) but had to be offered to him at the top of the existing scale (£1050 p.a.) and he declined. Miss S M Speedy then accepted the post. Sheila Speedy was a recent (1959) Honours graduate in history and held a University Education Diploma but had no library or archival experience. She took office in June 1960 and remained in Cory until the end of August 1965. During that period she acquired a BEd (1964) and spent a year from August 1963 in Michigan on a scholarship studying towards a masters in library science.

There is evidence that Sheila Speedy was not committed to a long-term appointment in the Cory Library and while she was at Michigan the possibility that she would not return to Cory was already being discussed. Her academic qualifications may, however, have contributed to the decision of the Staffing Committee in May 1964 to upgrade the status of her post to that of lecturer. Senate had approved a part-time assistant for the Cory Library from 1962 so that by mid 1964 Cory staffing was in a stronger position than it had been for some time. The assistant was to work 20 hours a week in terms and full-time for a month each year while the Cory Librarian was on leave.

While Sheila Speedy was still in the United States Council and Senate accepted the deposit of the Methodist Church Archives in the University Library. The agreement between the University and the Methodist Church as based on that between the University of the Witwatersrand and the Anglican Church. Rev Leslie Hewson, who was Church Archivist and Warden of Livingstone House, had built the Methodist Archives collection at Livingstone since 1948. The possibility of some form of connection with the Cory Library had been considered from early days.

It is possible the Methodist decision to transfer its Archives was influenced by an earlier decision by the Mission Council of the Church of Scotland to transfer its records held at Lovedale to the Cory Library. This transfer was arranged through Dr R H W Shepherd in 1961. These two important collections influenced the documentary acquisitions of the Cory Library away from the personal papers which had formed almost the sole the focus of Una Long’s collecting and of others influenced by her and towards institutional records though personal papers continued, of course, to be acquired. In addition the Methodist Collection was a national one and placed no particular emphasis on the Eastern

82 See Library Committee meeting of 29 April 1964. She told the present writer when he succeed her that he should he should not plan to leave in less than five years.
83 Advisory Committee minutes 6 June 1961.
84 Library Committee meeting 16 March 1964.
Cape. The Lovedale Collection was of deep significance but finite while the Methodist Archives was intended to be an archival one which would be added to over time. It was also, even initially, much larger than most deposits and the Library Committee realized that this would cause considerable problems of re-organisation in the Cory Library and formed a special sub-committee to resolve these. That this should have been necessary so early in the life of the rehoused Cory Library is an indication that its limits had indeed been drawn too narrow. The sub-committee consisted of the University Librarian and his Deputy, Prof Winnie Maxwell and Rev Leslie Hewson but not the acting Cory Librarian Mrs Alice Barry.

The solution proposed was to divide the Methodist Archives in two. The extensive book collection constituted a sort of Methodist library rather than an archive and a significant proportion was not related to Africa. These books were to be added to the Divinity shelves in the main library. Valuable research items were to be placed in special cases in the Cory rare book room - cases with tinted glass as they would be too close to the windows to avoid direct sunlight. Larger volumes would be placed in cases to be constructed around the walls of the Cory reading room which would also hold other larger items and the files of the *Grahams Town Journal* when pressures for a second female toilet in the Library building could no longer be resisted. In fact none of this actually took place and the Methodist Archives were, immediately, largely housed in the basement though later special glass-fronted cases were accommodated on the middle floor close to the Cory Library for portions of it. Later still, and in more generous storage conditions, the Archives was incorporated into the Cory Library.

Perhaps because of problems of this kind the Vice Chancellor Dr J M Hyslop now proposed the re-establishment of a Cory Library sub-committee. This was to consist of Prof W D Maxwell, who was the chair of the Library Committee, the University Librarian and Prof Winifred Maxwell with power to co-opt.

Sheila Speedy indicated a wish to resign at the end of June 1965 as she had been appointed to the Killie Campbell Library at the University of Natal. The Cory post was advertised extensively without, it would seem, satisfactory results which led to Sheila Speedy remaining until the end of August. Amongst those who did not apply initially was the present writer, a recent (1964) Honours graduate in history and diplomat of the UCT Library School. My reason for not applying for a highly attractive post was that I had only been appointed to the Africana Department of the South African Library at the beginning of the year. After some persuasion I did submit an application and was appointed from the beginning of September 1965.

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85 Library Committee meeting 2 June 1964.
86 This account rests on my own recollections. I experience some difficulty in writing about myself in these pages.
VOORSTELLINGEN
VAN
DE DELVERS VAN JAGERSFONTEIN
AAN
de Leden van den H.Ed. Volksraad,
TOT STAYING VAN HUNNE MEMOREN DEN RAAD TE-WORDEREN VOORGELEGD BIJ DE SPECIALE ZITTING VAN
1884.

GEDRUKT DOOR C. CULLINGWORTH, JAGERSFONTEIN, O.V.S.
Section V – Cory in the Berning years

When I became Cory Librarian in 1965 it was with experience of the Cory Library as a student user but very little experience of any sort as a librarian. This perhaps influenced me to put a great emphasis on user-friendly service and on service which reacted to the expressed needs of users. The Cory Library existed, as Dottie Ewan had pointed out half a dozen years before, in a ‘troubled country’ but it was in many ways remote from those troubles. In that context I took what I believed to be a meaningless private decision and determined that there would be no apartheid in the Cory Library. As this did not even include a toilet to try to throw open it did not seem to mean very much but does in fact seem to have affected attitudes in Cory in a way which could be noticed over time.

A user-friendly approach was probably one of the causes of an on-going problem of these years: who were the users whom Cory was serving or ought to be serving? The problem was the range of people who were actually using the Library - undergraduate students, research students and staff, university researchers from outside Rhodes, members of the general public and many queries received by post.87

This problem was, partly at least, a Grahamstown one in that there were no other large libraries which could serve as sources of information on local history and on southern Africa similar to those in larger centres. It was also partly one of attitude, of people being encouraged to feel able to approach the Cory Library for information without prior academic credentials. There were advantages in encouraging such use in that the users so served often acted as unofficial field workers for the locating and deposit of documents but there were also disadvantages.

In essence the Cory Library was trying to be a historical research library, an information centre on southern Africa and a local history library simultaneously and finding it difficult to be all three.88 At the most basic level this could mean that an ‘ad hoc response to needs,’ as Winifred Maxwell phrased it, could replace a planned development of the Library.

Part of the achievement of the Cory Library was in fact that it was reactive. This could range from adjusting circulation routines to the ‘particular needs of the History class at any given time’ to developing ‘personal contact with ... researchers and knowledge of their fields of work’ and to cataloguing which took into account ‘the sort of query which will be directed at Cory, and for which the means of providing an answer must exit.’ However it could also lead to trying to serve too many masters or the wrong master.

In August 1974, for example, the Cory Sub-Committee queried the expenditure of the grant allocated to the Cory Library from Library funds for the purchase of books and periodicals. This grant stood at a princely R650-00 p.a. at the time. The grant was seen

87 For a statement of this pattern of usage covering 1965-68 see Cory Library Sub-Committee files in Cory Library.
88 Memo on the scope of the Cory Library 19 June 1970 in the Cory Sub-Committee files.
as being spent by the Cory staff in reaction to the perceived needs of users and consequently as being used in part for 'general Africana' rather than 'research materials.' The Committee wanted a say in what the grant was used for. In Prof Maxwell's view it ought to have been used to acquire rare items, new publications and for the planned acquisition of research materials; and a planned portion of the grant should be earmarked for the purchase of rare materials only. Such an approach would have tended favour the development of Cory as a purely research library at the expense of its wider commitments. In practice it proved difficult to distinguish between general and research publications in a field like South African history and the Cory Grant remained too small in itself to purchase research materials to any significant extent and additional funds had to be sought for this purpose.

The discussions about acquiring research materials were not wholly about directing acquisitions policy to particular users but reflected an on-going concern for developing the Cory Library as an alternative to an Eastern Cape Archives - there were even calls to revive the idea of housing an archives depot in the Library building at this time. The Cory Sub-Committee of 8 October 1974, for example, divided the Cory grant, which was now R750-00, into R250 for research materials and R500 for general acquisitions. The research proportion was to be used to 'fill gaps and consolidate holdings.' The idea was that Cory held incomplete sets of government publications, almanacs, newspapers and similar primary materials which could be made up in microfilm or photocopy form or acquired in such forms where no holdings existed. This policy enjoyed significant success over several years though there were never sufficient funds to carry it out at its widest scope.

Whether or not the range of Cory users influenced what was acquired or how it was processed, it certainly occupied staff time. In 1965 the Cory Library staff had consisted of the Cory Librarian and a part-time secretary, Yvonne Harris. Pressure on this staffing saw Sandra Rowoldt move from part-time secretary (February 1972) to de facto and later de jure Deputy Cory Librarian. Further professional assistance arrived as a result of the deposit of the large Gold Fields Collection in 1976. By 1986 staffing had increased to three full-time professional librarians, two part-time assistant librarians (these latter being two Cory Library stalwarts Sally Poole and Jackson Zweliyanyikima Vena who remain in office at the time of writing) and a part-time secretary.

Pressure on staffing came, in fact, from two directions. The increasing requirements of users being one of these, the steadily increasing backlog of unprocessed documentary material being the other.

The requirements of users are perhaps best illustrated by the growth in genealogical research. The Report on activities in the Cory Library 1965-1968 had referred casually to 'non-academic visitors tend to be interested in 1820 Settler and family history.' By 1977 the Cory staff were discussing how to circumscribe genealogical

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89 Minutes of the Cory Library Sub-Committee 21 August 1974 in the Cory Sub-Committee files.
90 Report by the Cory Librarian 2 October 1986 in Cory Sub-Committee files
91 See footnote 87 above.
queries, postal or personal, in some way or how to cope with them in a time of tight staffing if this was not possible. By 1987 the Cory sub-committee was recommending 'charging a set rate per hour in line with the fees charged at the Albany Museum' for genealogical work though such work by Cory staff differed only in volume from many local and general history queries. Charging was introduced partly to offset the staff costs involved and partly to discourage frivolous queries. It was necessary because of the sheer volume of queries received. They resulted in part from the popularity of genealogy as a hobby and even religious obligation and in part from the nature of Cory Library holdings. The archives of the Methodist Church and of the Diocesan of Grahamstown in particular had contributed to a very large collection of church registers which, though immensely valuable for demographic and other research, were the lifeblood of much genealogical work.

Such growth in non-academic use of the Cory Library did affect service towards academic researchers from within and outside Rhodes University but not, it would seem, to their immediate serious disadvantage. In about 1970 Dr Shula Marks reported to the School of Oriental and African Studies, London on 'the Cory Library where an exceptionally efficient librarian and catalogue enabled me to work through hundreds of documents in two days ...' and in 1985 Prof Richard Elphick commented that the staff 'in the Cory Library are the best sort of professionals, knowledgeable, flexible and fast... Similar close working relationships with Rhodes postgraduate students and academic staff are perhaps best symbolized in the group of research students of the late 1970s and early 1980s who worked in the Cory Library, partied with its staff and were known as the 'Cory Circle.'

The range and number of users did, nevertheless, contribute to the growing backlog of unprocessed documentary material which was not ultimately good for researchers. Several attempts were made to counter this backlog. From 1977 professional staff duties were divided between time spent on cataloguing and time spent at public service points. By 1980 it was estimated that 60% of each librarian's time was devoted to cataloguing.

When this was only partially successful the drastic step was taken of closing the Cory Library to users at certain times to allow staff to work behind closed doors. These closures were introduced in 1983 and took various forms e.g. closure on Fridays and Saturday mornings. It has to be said that they produced a certain amount of unhappiness and at least one nasty incident when an American professor arrived unannounced shortly before closing on a Thursday to discover that the Cory Library would be closed to him during his proposed stay. The experiment was ended during the

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92 Minutes of a meeting of Cory staff (Mike Berning, Sandy Rowoldt and Julie Parolis) on 12 July 1977 in the Cory Sub-Committee files.
93 Meeting of 29 April 1987 in Cory Sub-Committee files
94 CL PR 4074/18
95 Minutes of the Library Committee of 4 March 1985.
96 The theses which resulted from this work include those of M Gibbens, JCS Lancaster, AGK Brown, R-M Sellick and MM Goedhals.
97 Minutes of Library Committee meeting 24 May 1978.
98 See Library Committee minutes of 8.8.1983 and 5.8.1985 for some of the details.
general Library staffing crisis of 1985/6 when reductions in casual staff meant that Cory would not be staffed at night in addition to the closed days. There was some relief in the Cory Library over this as it had been neither a comfortable arrangement nor really in the spirit in which Cory had tried to operate.

User demand for service was in any case not the only reason for the cataloguing backlog. A major cause was the change in material being acquired from largely personal papers to deposits including the records of organisations and which has been noted above. These deposits tended to be considerably larger than personal papers and some of the bigger collections, such as the Methodist Church Archives are archival in the sense that the original deposit is added to at regular intervals.

Though the trend probably began with the receipt of the Lovedale Collection of missionary records in 1961, there had been one or two deposits of institutional records before then. In subsequent years deposits of this kind formed a major proportion of new material in the Cory Library. The largest single accessions being the records of Gold Fields of South Africa in 1976. This collection was so large that a special sub-committee was set up to plan taking it over and Cory gained a part-time cataloguer, Julie Parolis, to help process the Africana books. There have been several subsequent Gold Fields deposits.

A growing cataloguing backlog was one of the problems of increasing usage and increasingly large acquisitions of documents. Another was shortage of space in the Cory Library from quite an early stage of its occupation of part of the Main Library's middle floor. Need to address space shortages led to a gradual take over of further sections of the Middle Floor. The process began in August 1969, less than nine years after Cory had moved there. The University Librarian outlined his plans for cutting a door through from the Cory reading room to the adjacent area of the Middle Floor to the Library Committee on 11th August. This extension was necessary (a) to take the ‘overflow from the Cory Library itself, (b) to accommodate bound volumes of newspapers which were being moved from a temporary store now needed for its original purpose as an additional toilet, (c) to accommodate government publications from elsewhere in the Library and (d) to allow for at least ten 'study cubicles' or carrels for researchers. A by-product of this extension was that it contained the potential for two distinct sections of the Cory Library which would allow the area containing the more valuable materials to be open only when trained staff were on duty.

There were further extensions in December 1977 and January 1978 largely to ease control and staff accommodation problems and to take forward the idea of an open public access area and a closed access one. This division was not complete as the Rare Book Room in the 'closed' section served also as the Graduate Reading Room – the home of the ‘Cory Circle’ postgraduate students. Document storage problems remained.

99 The Cory List of Accessions no 15 of 1962 was devoted entirely to the Lovedale Collection which was the first time that this had occurred for a single deposit. Earlier deposits of institutional records included those of the Eastern Province Guardian Company and records of the Municipality of Grahamstown which had later to be transferred to the Cape Archives in terms of archival legislation.
Work in late 1979 and early 1980 saw the construction in the ‘open’ part of the Cory Library of a special document storage area with fireproofed walls, blackened windows, dehumidifier and temperature and humidity monitoring. This area, known affectionately by users and staff as ‘the fort’ from its fireproof Chubb safe door, was the most serious attempt to provide archival storage since the move to the new Library building. It was calculated that it would take about five years to fill it with documents but this life had to be extended by increasing the density of storage and extending the ‘fort’ itself. At the time of the construction of the original ‘fort’ there were five main rooms in the Cory Library and six outside storage areas which was not any easy configuration to staff.

During 1983 the Graduate Reading Room was moved adjacent to the general reading room completing the division of the Cory Library into open access and closed access sections.100

The provision of accommodation which would meet the needs of the materials housed, the users served and the staff who worked in the Cory Library was one of the driving forces behind proposals which had major effect on how Cory was viewed at this time.

The process seems to have begun about 1970, which was the 150th anniversary of the landing of the 1820 Settlers and much celebrated in the Eastern Cape, and with Prof Guy Butler who was involved in those celebrations. Guy Butler’s own interests embraced both history and English literature. He had looked at Grahamstown and seen a number of separate collections whose ‘interests and activities overlap’ and was suggesting the ‘foundation of a library that would embrace all the existing collections and form a future repository for contemporary documents of archival significance.’101 Prof Butler was thinking at this stage of the Cory Library, the Settlers Museum documentary collections, the Grahamstown Public Library Africana collections and, more curiously, the Archives of the Diocese of Grahamstown102.

The particular challenge to the Cory Library’s independent existence was seen at this time as coming from the Settlers Museum and the 1820 Settlers National Monument Foundation, both the then riding the crest of the wave of the 150th celebrations. There were clearly advantages to be had from unifying the work of the various bodies and avoiding duplication but also a fear that the future prospects and reputation of the Cory Library might be dimmed if more glamorous repositories deprived it of ‘obtaining its fair share of material, financial support, and consequent limelight’ as Prof Desmond Hobart Houghton, chairman of the Library Committee and Cory Sub-Committee put it.

Prof Winifred Maxwell saw another broadening of the mandate of the Cory Library through an enforced marriage with organisations of differing aims and holdings. Especially so after the Library Committee added the Dictionary of South African English and Institute for the Study of English in Africa to Guy Butler’s original mix. She

100 These reconstructions of the Cory Library are reported in the minutes of the Library Committee, for example that of 7 March 1983 for the move of the graduate reading room.
101 Minutes of the Cory Library Sub-Committee 18 May 1972.
102 These Archives (to 1952) were deposited in the Cory Library in 1982.
rejected the idea of a common building and wanted Cory to occupy the planned top floor of the Library as ‘the chief documentation and research centre for the Eastern Cape’ as well as reverting to its ‘original role as a library purely for historical research.’ Immediately nothing much happened even on the compilation of a proposed joint catalogue of documentary holdings which was difficult to produce before computerization especially between institutions whose staff belonged to different professions and lacked a common cataloguing language.

By late 1974 the idea was still alive but the institutions which it was proposed should co-operate had changed. There were now two new players and they pushed the ‘Settler’ institutions a little out of the limelight. These were the Thomas Pringle Collection and the National English Documentation Centre. Both were essentially literary collections and by 1976 the Pringle Collection ‘was no longer functioning as a separate unit’ and had ‘become redundant’ and handed over on permanent loan to the Documentation Centre. The Pringle Collection seems to have had parts of its origins in disputes between Winifred Maxwell and Guy Butler over the inclusion of literary material in the Cory Library.

The calls were again for co-operation and avoiding duplication together with guiding researchers to material they needed, which was seen to include some form of joint catalogue. It was even hoped that this joint catalogue could become an Eastern Cape Register of Archives and include material in private hands though that would have required at least a new Una Long.

In actual practice there has been little overlapping of work or sharing of researchers with the National English Documentation Centre, now the National English Literary Museum, which certainly deals in documents but in rather different kinds of documents to historical collections though this has not always been apparent to administrators outside the documentary repository field. Some overlapping between the Cory Library and the Museum collection has occurred, inevitably given its attitude at times to directing material elsewhere but this has caused few practical problems. Radical suggestions such at that in the Cory Sub-Committee meeting of 22 October 1975 that the Cory Library should concentrate on other aspects of its collecting while the ‘Documentation Centre may be expected to concentrate on the acquisition of private papers’ were not really feasible when substantial collections already existed. In 1975 the Cory Library collection of original manuscripts and documents ran to 600 linear feet in size and there were documentary collections in its 200 feet of microforms.

Proposals had become more concrete by mid 1978 when the Cory Sub-Committee recommended that consideration be given to the building of a research centre which

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103 Minutes of the Cory Library Sub-Committee 21 August 1974.
104 Minutes of the Ad hoc liaison committee for documentary collections in Grahamstown 14 May 1976.
106 In 1976 the Museum had indicated that it was unable to agree to ‘direct potential donors of valuable material elsewhere’ (Ad hoc liaison committee).
107 CL PR 4074/18
108 Meeting of 20 April 1978
could be used to house all the special collections in Grahamstown of source material on Africa.’ – essentially the original Butler proposal though the ‘collections’ involved had now grown to include a Speech Archives and possible National Documentation Centre for Xhosa.\footnote{These had resulted from the work of Professors Derek Fivaz and Jeff Opland but did not in practice become major collections though some material and equipment were added to the Cory Library.} Such a ‘federal’ documentation centre, as it became known, would have had practical advantages. The ‘curators’ of the major collections – Jim Heaton of the Settlers Museum, Leonie Prozesky of the Documentation Centre and Michael Berning of the Cory Library – outlined them in a Memorandum of the same year.\footnote{Text in CL PR 4074/18} Lack of space, and of suitable space in particular, for document storage, difficulties of obtaining staff with the training and/or experience to deal with documents, problems of acquiring specialized equipment could all have been eased by sharing in a common building.

A federal centre of this kind was, however, difficult to set up involving as it did collections from a variety of different institutions with different parent bodies. It could perhaps have been arranged if one institution had erected a building and others had occupied sections of it – in August 1981 the Library Committee agreed provisionally to the Cory Library occupying a wing of the proposed National English Literary Museum building. It is doubtful if this proposal would have pleased Winifred Maxwell but that doughty pioneer of the Cory Library story had retired at the end of 1974 and was no longer in the lists. In any event the NELM building did not materialize nor did a federal one.

The most tangible outcome of the discussions around documentary collections in Grahamstown was a period of regular meetings between the senior staff of the various repositories which did not, alas, become permanent. The hopes for a joint catalogue of documentary holdings became possible through the computerized National Register of Manuscripts (NAREM) maintained by the National Archives and to which Cory Library, the Settlers Museum and NELM all contributed. During 1986 Cory Library acquired a Sabinet (S A Bibliographic and Information Network) terminal and became one of the first libraries linked on-line to NAREM.\footnote{Minutes of the Library Committee 21 April 1986.}

The debates around a federal documentation centre occurred at a time when the ‘troubled country’ had not become any less troubled. Cory Library’s stance on the prevailing mores had become considerably more overt through the articulate opposition of the Deputy Cory Librarian Sandra Rowoldt. Her standing is perhaps best symbolized by an incident during a time of campus unrest. She had returned to the Library from outside and found herself not greeted by a main library colleague leaving the building due to the prevailing unrest. When she asked another colleague why this should be the answer was ‘But Sandy don’t you know you are the Library’s communist?’

Such views – ‘communist’ to be taken to refer to outspoken opposition to the Nationalist Government rather than Marxist ideology – attracted radical students, one now a
distinguished judge, to Cory’s casual staff, occasional visits from Lloyd Edwards, Grahamstown’s best known security policeman, and some deposits of illicit documents.

The Transkeian leader K D Matanzima once removed a document almost literally at gunpoint though he claimed the depositor’s consent for this. In curious contrast the ‘Rhodesian’ leader I D Smith deposited papers at the University and consequently in the Cory Library which remain sealed.

Sandy Rowoldt’s role in the normal administration of the Cory Library had increased from early 1978 when the University took the decision to suspend the post of Deputy University Librarian after the incumbent Gerald Quinn was appointed University Librarian. The Deputy’s post was later abolished. To fill the vacancy the Cory Librarian was appointed ‘Cory Librarian/Senior Librarian’ – in effect a part-time deputy librarian. This was an appointment which could really only have worked if the duties of Cory Librarian had been less onerous or specialized and it practice it merely placed additional strain on the University Librarian, the Cory Librarian and the Deputy Cory Librarian. There were a variety of reasons for the move, amongst which saving in salary of R10 000 p.a. must have been one.

The Cory Library’s link to the structures of the University for most of this period was through the Cory Library Sub-Committee as a sub-committee of the Senate Library Committee. The Sub-Committee had been abolished in 1955 but revived in 1964 though by the early 1970s it seems to have been dormant. Early in 1972 it was resuscitated as a larger body and it remained active during the 1970s in changing formats. One of its difficulties was that it was usually made up to a significant extent by senior academics who knew about the Cory Library rather than actually used it which could lead to problematic decisions. Decisions like a request for an estimate of the cost of microfilming the entire manuscript and document holdings in 1978.

In March 1979 Prof Rodney Davenport, who had succeeded Winifred Maxwell in the Chair of History, proposed, with some prompting from the Cory staff, the establishment of a Cory Library Users’ Association (CLUA) which would be open to any permanent staff members who used the Cory Library. The body was to meet with the Cory Library staff and to act in an advisory and supportive role. It would be able to discuss policy and priority questions and replace the Cory Sub-Committee though it would itself not be a sub-committee of the Library Committee.

CLUA did provide a channel for communication between the Cory staff and a section of its users but its lack of ‘official’ standing in University structures told against its ultimate success. On 23 April 1987 the Cory Librarian reported to a Sub-Committee on the

112 See Library Committee minutes 13 August 1978
113 Library Committee minutes 13 March 1972
114 CL PR 4074/18 The cost of in-house filming of 1 000 boxes, or equivalents, was estimated at R14 000-00 though this could only by a rough estimate for 16mm film. The proposal was not taken further.
115 Library Committee minutes 12 March 1979
future of the Cory Library that one of the assumptions on which the Cory Library had operated was a close relationship between it and the relevant academic departments ‘encapsulated in the phrase ‘the History Department’s laboratory.’” He indicated that ‘this relationship has become increasingly remote and the Cory Library Users’ Association has not filled the gap.’\textsuperscript{116} This gap has continued to be a problem for the growth of the Cory Library.

The same report offers a summary of what was expected of the Cory Library staff at this stage in its history which remains the basic expectation

‘In 1987 the Cory Library professional and support staff are called upon to select, acquire, catalogue (for internal and national computerized purposes) and make available manuscripts and documents, rare and modern books, periodicals, maps, government publications, photographs and other graphic materials, microforms, audiotapes, discs and films amongst other library materials. They are required to store and conserve these materials in perpetuity – an increasingly demanding technical field. They are required to be sufficiently familiar with these materials and the broadening field of southern African history to be able to assist users, ranging at present from school children to distinguished scholars of international repute. In addition they must keep abreast of the rapidly developing field of library technology and be able to develop a proficiency in using computer databases relevant to the materials held by Cory and elsewhere to the benefit of the users.’

\textsuperscript{116} Cory Library Committee files – 1987.
The Den Mystery humourous story about nuns from the Community of the Resurrection Archives Cory Library MS (unaccessioned)
Section VI – Sandra Rowoldt and the move to Eden Grove

Specialist librarians in South Africa face the problem that there is no career path open to them. Promotion and higher salaries tend to be dependent on leaving the specialized field and moving into general library administration. The staff of the Cory Library are no exception to this rule. By 1988 I felt that I could no longer resist such pressures and the prospect of ever younger and less experienced librarians being appointed over my head and applied successfully for the vacant post of Deputy University Librarian. Whether or not this was a wise decision is open to question.

My appointment was from October 1988 and the difficulty of leaving a post in which I had been very happy was eased by the fact that in Sandra Rowoldt there was an experienced and able Deputy, and someone who was an old friend, ready to take over. She became Cory Librarian from the beginning of January 1989 after a short interim period. This simple transition remains unique in Cory Library history.

Sandy Rowoldt made clear from the start that the needs of users were close to her heart and that the Cory Library was for all who needed it. In her report for 1989117 she outlined the use of bursary students to do preliminary work on documents in order to ‘maintain a steady or even increased cataloguing pace’ despite shortage of staff118 but also welcomed the increasing numbers of external and internal (ie Rhodes) users. She went on to welcome the increasing numbers of teachers and scholars from local schools using Cory and saw a role for it in introducing library literacy and training in evaluating sources which could benefit the University if these school children chose it for their tertiary studies.

In a report of mid 1991119 she stressed the role of the Cory Library in exposing undergraduates to the use of primary materials and added ‘we also feel strongly that we have a positive role in the greater community and, accordingly, we encourage the use of Cory by less experienced, frequently non-academic users.’

During 1991 an old idea surfaced in a new guise. In essence it was the old ‘federal documentation centre’ reborn with a different emphasis. A review committee was set up by Mr Justice F Kroon, Chairman of the Board of NELM, and Dr D S Henderson, Vice Chancellor of Rhodes University, ‘to consider the advisability of housing the National English Literary Museum and the Cory Library for Historical Research in a single building.’120

The missing element from the proposed federal centre was the Settlers Museum to which the review committee devoted little space – ‘the Albany Museum and the Cory Library

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117 Cory Library report for 1989 in C.L. Library Committee Files
118 Her own replacement on the Cory staff, Cecilia Blight, was not appointed until December
119 Report to the Committee on a NELM/Cory building, 1 June 1991 in Library Committee files
120 Library Committee minutes 7 October 1991
have come to a working arrangement and we understand from the Director of the Albany Museum that when proper facilities become available certain manuscripts will be placed in the Cory Library.' In fact nothing in particular has come of this 'working arrangement' to date (2003) and the Museum remains in the document collecting field though on a small scale outside genealogical material.\textsuperscript{121}

It is probable that the Museum fell outside the review committee's major field of interest which can, perhaps be described as neutral on the NELM side. The committee consisted of Dr Keith Hunt, the Registrar who was chairman of the Library Committee, Mrs Pamela Paton and Professor Lawrence Wright, Director of the Institute for the Study of English in Africa which had been closely involved with NELM from the outset. Dr Hunt had used the Cory Library as research student and History lecturer but Mrs Paton had no connections with it and Prof Wright limited ones. All three members of the committee were present or future members of the NELM Council.

A curious omission from the membership was the University Librarian (Mr Brian Paterson), part of whose Library Service was under discussion. The Chair of History, in a department which had frequently claimed the Cory Library as its laboratory, was regrettably vacant at the time of the committee meetings. The three senior members of the Library staff – the University Librarian, his Deputy and the Cory Librarian and the acting Head of History (Miss Brenda Nicholls) were, however, interviewed.

In general the review committee went over established Butlerian ground on the close links which ought to exist between NELM and Cory. Guy Butler was himself interviewed and is quoted as saying 'that there was no doubt in his mind that an Afrikaner [sic] Collection embraces the whole set of books ... they do not divide it into Literature and History.' This was true but then Cory Library had never tried, despite Barbara Bee, to be an Africana Collection, however that vexed term was defined.

The case for shared specialized facilities such as controlled environments and the avoidance of 'duplicating expensive plant' had already been made in the earlier discussions around a shared building and were not really in dispute before the review committee though, as ever, 'practical details could be discussed later.' What was disputed was where the single custom-designed building was to be located.

The University Library staff interviewed all pointed to the danger of further fragmenting and already fragmented library system by locating the Cory Library at a distance from the Main Library. The University Librarian warned 'that in developing a synergy between NELM and the Cory Library we must be very careful not to destroy the synergy which exists between the Cory Library and ... the rest of the collections in the Main University Library.' Sandy Rowoldt made the case most colourfully and with characteristic concern for users: 'the proposed Corydectomy would not kill Rhodes Library or the Cory Library

\textsuperscript{121} Oral information from Mr William Jervois, genealogist at the Museum.
but both would be disabled to a considerable degree by the operation – and it would be the user who would suffer most.'

What the librarians wanted was for the Cory/NELM co-op to be located in an extension of the Main Library building over the adjacent car park. Such an extension had been proposed and abandoned on cost grounds during the University Librarianship of Gerald Quinn (1978) and would have been in itself significantly larger than the existing building. In Sandra Rowoldt’s view location in such an extension ‘could improve the quality of life of NELM.’

This option was ‘unacceptable to NELM’ and, very largely for this reason, was rejected by the review committee in favour of a building at Eden Grove in the St Peter’s area of the campus and some distance from the Main Library. The committee did note a problem with the proposed site in that it did not belong to the University. It ‘recognised’ that the University could not raise funds for a building on land it did not own and agreed that the University should acquire the land. The possibility existed that the State might grant the land to NELM in which case the committee agreed that it ‘could be passed on to Rhodes University as part of their contribution to the combined building.’ The committee also recognised ‘that it would be feasible for Rhodes to build the building and lease to NELM that part of the building occupied by them.’ These considerations around the site and building seem to have been among the ‘practical details which could be discussed later’ though, as they contained the seeds of future problems, it would probably have been wise to address them sooner.

Of course, the review committee’s views were only the beginning of a process and the Library Committee, for example, was anxious that the needs of the University Library as a whole should not be overlooked in that process. It recommended that a new Library building be erected at Eden Grove ‘to meet the library’s long-term accommodation needs.’ It also recommended that, if it was not possible to erect the whole building initially it should be planned to be built in stages beginning with Cory/NELM.

Several options were in discussion at this time: the Cory/NELM building, a building incorporating also the departmental libraries in the St Peter’s area of the Rhodes campus (Divinity, Education, Law and Music sometimes called DELM), a library building for ‘all the Humanities departments’ if not for the Library as a whole. The process of giving concrete form to any of this was a complex one, made more so by the fact that the general University purposes tail came in the end to wag the archival dog. By March 1997 when the plans had to be passed by seven committees the building under consideration was a multi-purpose one incorporating lecture theatres, seminar rooms, multi media room and other features as well as archival facilities.

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122 Sandra Rowoldt: Submission to the Cory/NELM Committee, 1 June 1991
123 Library Committee minutes 7 October 1991.
124 See for example Library Committee minutes of 5 October 1993, 28 February 1994 and 1 August 1994 and the Strategic Planning Committee of 3 February 1991.
125 Minutes of the Eden Grove Project Committee, 4 March 1997
Unlike some previous schemes this one did have a concrete outcome and one in which the opportunities which had been missed when the new Library building had been planned in the 1950s were seized. Both the University Librarian and the Cory Librarian, particularly the latter, were involved in the planning process and could help to shape the plans along lines which new accommodation for the Cory Library necessitated. Plans for the building were finally approved in August of 1997 – the land having been acquired by the University - and bulldozers moved onto the site before the end of the year.

One of the major players in the Eden Grove plans was, however, to prove an early casualty. Concerns had been expressed as early as 1993 that proposed rentals for the NELM section of the building were too low. During 1998 NELM withdrew from the shared building ‘for financial reasons’ as the Cory Librarian put it in her annual report. These were connected to the rental costs NELM would have had to pay. The Cory Library now remained as the only survivor of the plans to form a combined or ‘federal’ documentation centre in Grahamstown launched in the 1970s and the only surviving archival component of the Eden Grove building as the areas planned for NELM were converted to house the Registrar’s Division and a computer laboratory.

Cory Library now found itself committed to a building on a site it would not have chosen for reasons which largely no longer existed but which, nevertheless, provided opportunities for housing its collections, users and staff which had been sadly lacking. By early 1992 there had been a final expansion of the area occupied by Cory on the middle floor of the Library but despite this temporary relief collections had become scattered across several buildings and the accommodation crisis had become critical.

If major relief of the problem was to be achieved by moving the Cory Library to the Eden Grove building there remained the question of what exactly was meant by the ‘Cory Library for Historical Research’ for purposes of the move. The review committee of 1991 had talked of Cory and NELM together forming centre for southern African studies and the Library Committee had talked of expanding the Cory Library into a southern African studies library. The recommendation from the Library itself was that usage should determine what was moved – the attempt should be made to house together what was used together and to minimize shuttling between buildings.

There were various possibilities such as converting Cory into a rare and research materials only collection leaving circulating books in the Main Library which would have made it difficult for Cory staff to deal with queries and broken the ‘diversity of media in one subject field’ principle, in terms of which George Cory’s original bequest had shaped the Cory Library. The attempt could, by contrast, have been made to turn Cory into a southern African studies library for the move. This was easier said than done and required a definition of what was meant by such a library – presumably it referred to the

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126 See Library Committee minutes of 11 August 1994 for example
127 Cory Library Annual Report for 1997
128 Library Committee Minutes 28 February 1994
129 Minutes of the subcommittee on the definition of the Cory Library to be used in Eden Grove planning, 13 May 1995
southern African aspects of the humanities and social sciences rather than southern African studies in general? Either way academic departments would have to agree to the southern African library materials in their disciplines being excised from general Library holdings and removed to Eden Grove.

On 13 May 1995 the Sub-Committee on the definition of the Cory Library for purposes of Eden Grove planning decided that the Cory Library should be defined as it was at present but with obvious anomalies of location eliminated. In a sense this negated the finding of the review committee of 1991 that ‘one of the errors of the past seems to be that there has been inadequate definition of the parameters of the Cory Library. It was founded as a library for Historical Research. This has been loosely defined.’ The shade of Winifred Maxwell could rest easier.

A major area in which anomalies of location were adjusted was one which had long irritated Sandy Rowoldt – the cut-off date between Cory holdings of Government Publications and those of the Main Library was moved to 1961 from 1910. Cory also took over, illogically in terms of its ‘subject not form’ approach, certain non-Africa collections of rare materials like the Stanford Collection and the Owen Smith Collection of British Pamphlets. This was partly because better accommodation for such materials would exist in at Eden Grove and partly because Cory Library staff were more experienced in handling such material. The decision raised two potential problems. One was that such collections might be neglected in an unusual location and the other that a precedent had been set for housing non-Southern African material in the Cory Library.

As the process of realizing the Eden Grove project proceeded considerable strain was place on the Cory Librarian and her staff. In her report for 1998 Sandy Rowoldt says’ ‘once again planning for Eden Grove absorbed a vast amount of the Cory Librarian’s time but mercifully the end is in sight. Cory experience a relentlessly hectic year on top of the demands of Eden Grove and 1998 was a stressful and exhausting year.’

Planning for the move itself began with 1999 and the move started on 25 October. Cory was immediately affected in an area which had long been important to it – service to its users. Forthcoming problems were publicized in every way possible: notices in Cory and on its webpage, via e-mail lists, newspapers and newsletters and verbal communications. Users were warned that material might be slow to retrieve and would become unavailable at times. Cory Library would be closed completely during December 1999 and January 2000.

The move, from 18-21 locations spread over 5 or 6 buildings was accomplished ‘with only four strong men, their supervisor, a depleted Cory staff, a couple of volunteers and a small red bakkie’ to quote the Cory Librarian’s report on it. The four men, of varied and unbibliographic background, were welded into a team who believed that they could ‘do it’ and did. Their supervisor Phindile Gradwell Moli was a retired Library staff member, the volunteers included a retired Cory Librarian, Louisa Verwey, a Technikon SA

130 Library Committee files in the Cory Library
librarianship student working for the experience and Sally Poole working beyond her paid hours. This team of ‘millennium movers’ succeeded in completing the grand transfer of material and equipment in time for the Cory Library to re-open on schedule during Orientation Week 2000.

Cory’s new home not only provided the extra space which had been desperately needed but was ‘comfortable and congenial’ and had drawn favourable comment, Sandy Rowoldt reported. Most noticeable was her unique contribution to the archival section of the Eden Grove building. The successful ‘air conditioning’ on which people commented was in fact ‘good environmental conditions’ achieved ‘through skilful design, using structural rather than artificial means to control the environment. The successful implementation of these “natural means” to regulate the environment has been even more significant in the archival strongrooms where the target was to meet international preservation standard in terms of both temperature and R[elative] H[umidity]. Of the six strong rooms only one [that housing photographs and film] has artificially cooled air. The other five … use the earth’s mass as the primary thermal insulator against rapid heat transfer...’

The incorporation of such features into Eden Grove was the result of passionate advocacy to architect and in committee of the Cory Librarian’s deeply held professional views. Incorporating them adds to building costs but lowers running costs so parent bodies tend to view them more favourably in retrospect than in prospect.

Eden Grove was nevertheless a hybrid building which brought some problems which would not have been there in a purely archival one. The Cory Library rests at the bottom of an open atrium, overlooked by the Registrar’s Division, an exhibition, meeting and concert area and lecture halls. The noise from these can be excessive in the public areas of the Cory Library though it is less noticeable in reading rooms. As I write (2003) cleaning staff call cheerfully across the atrium and a strong-voiced male conducts a cell phone conversion from an upper floor which I have no wish to hear. An early problem of items dropped from upper floors – most notably a full glass of fruit juice dropped from two floors above and narrowly missing Cory staff completing the Eden Grove move – have fortunately been rare in succeeding years.

Two, perhaps more serious, problems of the building are closely related to one another. No additional staffing was provided for Cory-in-Eden Grove except that Mr Victor Gacula was appointed as Stack Attendant. This limited staffing meant that the Cory Library hours of opening would have to be much shorter than those of the Main Library – in effect office hours on weekdays. In 1994 the Acting University Librarian had estimated that about 12 circulation assistants would be needed to keep Cory-in-Eden

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131 Cory Library report for 2000. These reports are in the Cory Librarian’s files.
132 Cory Librarian’s report for 2001
Grove open for the same hours as the Main Library. The lack of any meant that other staff had to take on these duties. As Cecilia Blight, Acting Cory Librarian, put it 'librarians are now fully occupied with day-to-day tasks that could be done more economically by circulation assistants and library assistants ... and have no time to devote to manuscript cataloguing.'

The position relating to circulation assistance was complicated shortly after the move to Eden Grove though not because of it. The Cory Library had computerized its catalogues and related activities such as circulation as part of general Library computerization in the 1990s. Indeed one of the reasons for choosing the Urica Integrated System was its ability to accommodate Cory manuscript and non-book cataloguing. Cory Library had actually anticipated the adoption of the Urica system by reworking its entire manuscript collections for inclusion in the computerized National Register of Manuscripts (NAREM) in the 1980s. At the time of the move to Eden Grove the Library Service was moving its operations to the Millennium System. As part of this the Cory Library catalogue was separated from the Main Library catalogue to allow for greater freedom of cataloguing in Cory. However the package applied to the Cory Library did not allow for circulation functions and Cory staff have had to operate a somewhat primitive circulation system since the change.

The separation of the Cory catalogue records has meant that users have know or be reminded to check for material which might be in the Cory Library. The Millennium system is, however, web-based and allows access to Cory Library holdings from anywhere in the world.

Having been so deeply involved in the Eden Grove project and the move to Eden Grove Sandy Rowoldt was not to enjoy the fruits of her labours at length. She went on long leave on 7 December 2001 and while on leave took early retirement from Rhodes University. She was to establish herself in Cape Town where husband Prof Robert Shell had been appointed to a post at the University of the Western Cape.

Her loss to the Cory Library was compounded when Cecilia Blight, the incumbent Deputy Cory Librarian, moved to the National English Literary Museum. This prompted a succession crisis not dissimilar to earlier ones. The post was advertised but the process failed to yield a suitable candidate. At the time of writing Mrs Shirley Stewart, an existing Cory staff member, is Acting Cory Librarian pending a final decision.

134 Library Committee minutes 4 October 1994
135 Cory Library Report for 2001
Section VII – Postscript

It is clear from the preceding account that the Cory Library is the child both of the University Library and of the Department of History. One of its problems over the years has been maintaining the proper relationship with both parents. A specialist library will differ from ordinary Library functions but can also not function in a vacuum. It must maintain close contact with the academic departments which will programme its resources into their teaching and research. Yet its services will reach wider than this. The Cape bee may be as much the subject of research as the Cape beekeeper. Further any research library in a university exists to attract researchers from outside that the life of the university may be enriched.

Any research library needs a proper definition of its functions if it is to succeed. It will be obvious that unclarity on the functions of the Cory Library has been an ongoing problem. This has been in part because Cory Library is in many ways unique and cannot be easily compared to other institutions and resists being made like them. It is also in part because the actual functional definition was been so simple. Cory Library exists to contain the materials, in any form, which the student of the past needs to pursue his researches. That ‘student of the past’ may come from a discipline labeled History but he might just as easily not – all disciplines have pasts. George Cory, the ‘founder’ himself practiced history only as a hobby but the collections he built in the pursuit of this hobby have tended to shape the Cory Library ever since.

The classic library cliché posits a trinity of library stock, library users and library staff who form the link between stock and users. Providing suitable staff of the Cory Library has been an on-going problem. Library training and experience in South Africa tends to be general. New professional staff coming to the Cory Library need knowledge of the subject field, imagination and time to come to terms with its varied demands. The ideal for the Cory Librarian and other senior staff is apprenticeship within Cory but it has rarely been possible to provide this – for Cory Librarians anyway.

Many factors go into producing the Cory Library: resources, administrative support, staffing and housing among them. It has been rare for all these factors to combine smoothly but the Cory Library has continued to be one of the most rewarding places to work either as a researcher or staff member or both.

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### Appendix – Growth of the Cory manuscript collections from 1931

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