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PAUL J. FOIK, C.S.C. - LIBRARIAN AT NOTRE DAME

Seventh Annual Conference  
on the  
History of the Holy Cross Congregations  
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Foik

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### Foik as a person

What sort of man was Paul Foik? He was a Canadian of German ancestry who was a naturalized American citizen; a man who liked Havana cigars; a priest who wrote to many alumni while they were fighting WWI; a librarian who knew his rights and was not afraid to stand up for them whether it be to the Justice Department, members of the Holy Cross community or professors at Notre Dame; a man of insight, creativity and vision.

### Early background and training

Foik came to Notre Dame in 1912 from Washington, D.C. where he had completed his doctorate in history at Catholic University writing on the history of journalism. It was during those years in Washington, that Foik came under the influence of Father James A. Burns who was the superior of Holy Cross College. Holy Cross served as a house of studies both for those pursuing graduate degrees at Catholic University and those completing their theological studies before ordination to the priesthood. It was Father Burns who first recognized the budding librarian in Foik. In a letter to Morrissey, Burns commented that he thought Foik would make a good librarian so he had placed him in charge of the seminary library.<sup>1</sup> There are many of us, including those who have had no direct contact with the Congregations of Holy Cross, who have benefited from Burns' perspicacity in opening the library world to Foik.

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Foik

When Foik arrived at Notre Dame in 1912 to assume his new duties as Director of the Notre Dame Library, it was to a large degree a one man operation. The only regular employees were student assistants. Now, neither Foik nor I would denigrate the contributions that student assistant make to academic libraries, but if Notre Dame was to have a library which matched its intellectual goals for the University, there was a need for full time clerical help and full time professional help, too.

The issue of professional help brings up the question of Father Foik's own training and background in librarianship. Foik did not have a degree in library science although he seems to have received some type of training at Catholic University. Whether this was through formal courses or more in the nature of an apprenticeship is still unclear to me.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to having complete responsibility for the library, Foik was also in charge of the University Archives, which consisted of many boxes of documents which had not received any type of categorization or calendaring. If this were not enough for Foik, he was also in charge of the Notre Dame Historical Museum of artifacts and the Art Museum! He was one man with four jobs each of which would have been more than enough for one individual.

Foik's first priority in his new position was to begin gathering

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the collection which had been stored in various buildings all over campus so that they could be warehoused in the basement of Sorin Hall.<sup>3</sup> Although the University did not have much money and had not yet done much in regard to fundraising, Foik soon began to push for a new library.

### The Library

It was obvious that something needed to be done about the library's quarters which at that time were in the Administration Building. The quarters were cramped with books two deep on the shelves and piled on the floor; the building was too hot in the summer and too cold in the winter.<sup>4</sup> Soon, in addition to his many other hats, Foik began to wear the one of library planner.

Before the formal planning for the library began, Foik worked closely with the head of the Architectural Department at Notre Dame. "He studied the Library Building from the Librarians [sic] standpoint, and I studied it from an Architects [sic] standpoint, consequently we both derived a great deal of benefit from this study."<sup>5</sup> Foik also benefited from consultations with the top academic and public librarians in the country. Mary Eileen Ahern, who was the editor of Public Libraries and who had a young relative at Notre Dame, gave what is probably the best advice possible:

...the library ought to be built from the inside out. The library requirements ought to be planned carefully by library people, and then the problem of encasing this appropriately, substantially and safely ought to be



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left in the hands of an architect, but an architect ought not to plan the inside of the building except under the direction of a librarian.<sup>6</sup>

Ahern was not the only librarian that Foik corresponded with concerning a new library. He also wrote to William C. Lane, Harvard; William M. Hepburn, Purdue; Walter M. Smith, Wisconsin; William Bishop, Superintendent of the Reading Room at the Library of Congress; Theodore Koch, University of Michigan, Henry E. Legler, Chicago Public Library and Earl E. Sperry at Syracuse. Perhaps it was Foik's lack of formal education in librarianship that made him so concerned with doing his homework. Whatever it was, the Notre Dame Library was the better for it.<sup>7</sup>

When the time came to select an architect for the new library, a Library Building Committee was established. The Committee decided to have a standard competition where architects submit their drawings and plans for the building.

One member of the committee, Father Quinlan had two brothers-in-law named Kelley who had joined some other architects in founding a firm. Foik described the the Kelleys as commercial rather than professional architects and their background seems to have been in construction rather than design.

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Father Quinlan interested his two brothers-in-law in the project and seems to have revealed to them information that should have

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been confidential. After seven different plans had been submitted Father Foik asked William Kelley to make a presentation. When Foik asked him questions about his plan, he could not answer even the simple ones. All this activity with the Kelleys happened during the summer vacation when Foik and Quinlan were the only committee members on campus. Foik complained to Father John W. Cavanaugh, University President, and when the committee members returned, he brought the issue before them. They, too, were indignant, but because Father Cavanaugh was in Ohio, nothing further could be done.

At this point Father Quinlan tried an end run. Claiming that the dispute was a personal one between himself and Foik, Quinlan gave that as the reason that the Kelleys had withdrawn their plans from the competition. Quinlan went on to request that the Kelleys' plans be presented to the executives of the University without further involvement of the committee. Foik was able to prevent this since he had kept the community advised of the procedures for the competition. When the Kelley's plans were brought before the Library Building Committee, Quinlan was absent and the plans were unanimously rejected.

Quinlan, however, was not finished. He had had his brothers-in-law show their plans to various professional librarians such as M.E. Ahern, a good friend of Foik's. In this way he hoped to further the argument that it was a personal

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quarrel rather than one based on merit. He did not prevail. The Library Building Committee and the Executive Committee of the University unanimously chose Edward Tilton as the architect for the new library Building.<sup>8</sup>

In November of 1915 Foik wrote to Burns, who was still at Holy Cross College, that he was ready to say that ground was broken for the new quarter of a million dollar library. Foik was proud to tell Burns that the architect would be the famous Edward Tilton. Foik also reported how he had checked the plans and the architect with his many friends and contacts among professional librarians.

During the past week, I attended the meeting of the Indiana Library Association and received for Mr. Tilton's plan the hearty approval of experienced librarians. Mr. Utley, permanent Secretary of the American Library Association and Miss M.E. Ahern, another one of the executives of the American Library Association and President of the Illinois Library Association and Editor of "Public Libraries" [sic] think a great deal of the plan as drawn up. Miss Ahern has asked me to give her the first opportunity to discuss the plan in her magazine.

The library, which was to be built of Bedford stone was to be large enough to hold 618,000 volumes, the Catholic Archives of America, the Art Museum and the Bishops Memorial Hall. With such a large capacity, Foik thought that it would take 75 years to fill it. Instead, it had to be replaced in 1963 and, in fact, there is some danger that the present Hesburgh Library will exhaust its space before Foik's original 75 years is up!<sup>9</sup>

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Foik's problems as far as the design were over, but his problems regarding construction were only beginning! Once again the reality of community politics caused problems. Brother Irenaous received a subcontract for installing the heating system for the library. Problems with the heating system were almost continuous. In one letter to Tilton, Foik had evidently had his full of the misnamed Brother Irenaous and referred to him as the "Enfant Terrible."<sup>10</sup>

While Foik had only the library problems to contend with, Tilton was also the architect on the chemistry building which gave him no end of troubles. He confided in Foik that Brother Irenaous was again causing trouble as was Father Maguire who kept changing the plans even after construction had begun. In addition Father Morrissey, the Provincial of the Indiana Province, had made contracts with a local concerns of dubious standards (who still do work for the University, let us hope with higher standards) and then expected Tilton to make them do good work.<sup>11</sup> It is no wonder that Foik later wrote Tilton that

much as I esteem the high qualities of both of the higher superiors, yet there is no reason to feel at all dismayed that at some future date the same intimate relations as existed between yourself and several here may be again resumed. The time may not be very long distant when we may not have these men to deal with, but others.<sup>12</sup>

He was, of course, referring to the changes in Canon Law which would mean a change in the presidency of the University and the

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Provincial.

In 1919 James A. Burns began a three year term as president of the University and Father Charles O'Donnell became the new Provincial. The change in presidents proved to be fortuitous for the library and Foik for a number of reason, one of which was the resolution of some of the problems left over from Brother Irenaous's subcontracting. In January of 1921 Foik wrote Burns about a problem of water from the heating system flooding the basement classrooms. Even in the less informal Notre Dame of 1921, the president was not ordinarily consulted about water problems. Foik was forced to bring this to Burns because those concerned with correcting the work, which had not been done correctly in the first place, had ignored Foik's previous 16 complaints.<sup>13</sup> Burns, however, was a president of action and soon Foik was able to write about the visit of a repairman who solved all of the problems.<sup>14</sup>

#### Library collections

In September of 1919 Foik shared with Burns his idea of how the growth of Notre Dame should be measured: in the richness of the collections in the library. Foik optimistically proposed to use the faculty to achieve this goal by submitting recommendations for supplementary materials needed for their courses use. In the terminology used by Collection Development Librarians today, Foik was beginning with the most basic level of collecting, course



support.<sup>15</sup>

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The faculty members, as is often their wont today, were not always cooperative. A case in point is Mr. Scheib, Dean of the Agriculture Department. Foik seems to have had a running battle with Dean Scheib for a number of years. The first instance that I could find correspondence on concerns a student who reported to Scheib that he could find nothing in the library on clover. Foik investigation and discovered that the student had not consulted the Agricultural Index as he was instructed, but instead had looked in another reference work. Finding nothing, he did not consult the reference librarian, but instead told the circulation librarian that he could find nothing and left. As you no doubt expect, there was a lot of material in the correct index. In writing this explanation, Foik went on to chide Scheib for his lack of cooperation with the library in regard to student assignments.<sup>16</sup>

Foik's letter seemed to have little effect for the very next semester Dean Scheib gave his students five special assignments in such esoteric topics as: Chinese Gardens, Landscape Design in France at the Time of Napoleon, Japanese Gardens in America, Landscape Gardening During the Reformation and Landscape Design at the Time of Caesar! In asking for Mr. Scheib's cooperation in building up a collection capable of handling such questions, Foik referred to the study of the Notre Dame Library which Frank K.

Walter had completed in 1922. In his report, Walter pointed out the necessity for faculty cooperation in the improvement of reference service. "Reasonable advance notice of topics to be discussed should be given." Foik further pointed out that "to send students to the library when a little forethought might have suggested to you that some of these items are lacking is unfair to the students, and unfair and inconsiderate towards ourselves. We are just as anxious as you are to keep up a high appreciation of our efforts."<sup>17</sup>

One of Foik's most noteworthy achievements in collection building was convincing Father John A. Zahm to donate his personal Dante collection to the University. It forms the basis of what is today considered the third best collection in the United States.<sup>18</sup> Not content with just acquiring it, Foik worked to continue its growth and had much correspondence with a London rare book dealer and Baker and Taylor, a major company who helped libraries obtain books and other materials. When donors inquired about what books would be of the most value as gifts, Foik mentioned books by or about Dante.<sup>19</sup> Foik also worked with a variety of people and groups to get donations: judges, businessmen, union leaders. Because of Foik, it was Notre Dame rather than Cornell or Princeton that received the personal library of Frank Duffy, the General Secretary of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners. Nor did Foik overlook the valuable local materials on Notre Dame.<sup>20</sup> In 1923 he began collecting materials for the Notre

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Dame collection and had Paul Byrne, the Reference Librarian, begin to make a record of all the Notre Dame thesis then on file.<sup>21</sup>

A good source of information for Foik about collection were the Notre Dame alumni who alerted him when potential collections might come on the market. One example is a letter from Paul R. Martin about the library of Rt. Rev. T.F. O'Gara described as one of the best libraries of Irish literature in the country.<sup>22</sup> Another was the Irish collection of Captain O'Neil who had been brought to Foik's attention by P.T. Sullivan the father of a Notre Dame student. "I would also like to obtain for future reference the address of Captain O'Neil in order that I might keep him interested in Notre Dame. Do you think that it is about time that you were getting the latter gentleman interested in a visit to the University?"<sup>23</sup> Although it took a number of years Captain O'Neil did eventually donate his collection to the University Libraries.

This interest in things Celtic was of some duration. In 1917 the Indiana Ancient Order of Hibernians and Ladies Auxiliary donated to the University \$2,000 to be used in building up an Irish Library and establishing a Celtic museum. Shortly after that Foik established the Irish National Library Foundation as the vehicle for obtaining books and money.

The first large addition to that collection was the O'Kelleher philosophical collection which Foik obtained in 1921.<sup>24</sup> But even

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before that Foik was engaged in fund raising for the Irish National Library Foundation, and it is this activity that brought him to the attention of the Justice Department. Foik had composed a fund raising form letter for the Foundation which was mailed March 15, 1919. In this letter Foik appealed to Irish nationalism and hatred of England and her censorship as a reason for subscribing to the Foundation. Some of the rhetoric was emotional:

The time has come when Ireland is determined to break forever the chains of English oppression, which have so long bound her....Break up this English censorship of the press; combat English propaganda and opposition to Irish freedom by subscribing or making a donation to the Irish National Library Foundation.<sup>25</sup>

A copy of this letter, which was sent to Rev. Barnard Feeney in County Roscommon, Ireland, came to the attention of the Acting Chief of the Department of Justice in Washington. Acting Chief Allen addressed a letter to George Green in Fort Wayne, Indiana in which he opined that Foik might be involved in Sinn Fein activities.<sup>26</sup> You notice that I say he wrote the letter to Mr. Green of Fort Wayne. For some reason it was mailed to Mr. Green at Notre Dame, Indiana who naturally enough brought it to Father Foik! As far as I can ascertain the Department of Justice never realized its error and Father Foik, seemingly unperturbed, continued to solicit funds and monies for the Irish collection with his fervor and language undamaged and uncensored.<sup>27</sup> By 1923 they had \$1500 for the purchase of Irish Books.<sup>28</sup>



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**Censorship**

While Catholic librarians at this time had a higher tolerance for censorship activities than their non-Catholic colleagues, they generally acted to protect the materials in their collections. This attitude brought Foik into conflict with Father John O'Hara. For those of you who are not familiar with Father O'Hara, the ideal position for him would have been as an official censor. Although that was never part of his official duties in any capacity at the University, he acted as a censor on a regular basis. His view of library collections was that they needed frequent and thorough weeding so that the students' minds would remain untouched by anything which he considered immoral, unorthodox or unworthy. O'Hara had no qualms about his ability to determine such materials or in destroying them.

In the fall of 1922 a student named Sachs told Paul Fenelon, then working as a library employee, that his professor has assigned a work of Dumas. Fenelon gave Sachs the book which was on the Index with the intent of bringing the case to Father O'Hara, the Prefect of Religion. When the case came to O'Hara's attention, he destroyed the book without consulting Foik. Although Foik's letter to O'Hara is couched in almost subservient terms, he still makes clear that books belonging to the library should not be destroyed without his authorization.

I hope you will pardon me in questioning the action which you took in the case of Mr. Sachs, and the work of Dumas. I do not think that the property of the University for which I am responsible should be destroyed without my authori-



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ization. I do not wish to make this an issue but am merely questioning the prudence of your action....I question ...[your] right to destroy [library materials] without at least, an interview with the Librarian on the matter in question....Please do not take these remarks in hostile attitude because they are not intended in that way.<sup>29</sup>

Building up collections, however, involved more than simply working with the professors, donor and alumni or defending them against Father O'Hara. From the beginning Foik was handicapped by the mechanics of ordering and paying for library materials. For example, the President of the University approved every order and could also order materials against library funds. It is only in 1922 that Foik writes to then President Matthew Walsh asking for some discretionary funds so that he could obtain needed books immediately and purchase second hand books at good prices.<sup>30</sup>

## Journals

Even worse problems were encountered in dealing with journals. For some reason the journal subscriptions at times went through the University Bookstore which was under the Secretary for the University. In 1916 Foik wrote to Father Burke, University Secretary, about the problems of subscriptions renewals. Foik wanted to take the renewals from the Bookstore and turn them over to a subscription agency or vendor.<sup>31</sup> Finally by 1922 Foik was dealing with both domestic and international vendors with generally much better results.<sup>32</sup>

Despite having vendors take care of most subscriptions, some

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periodicals were not available except through direct order to the publisher. One periodical of that nature was the Extension Magazine. This was a particularly vexing subscription because the business manager, Mr. Kauffman sent numerous duning letters to Foik.

You have received several courteous requests from us asking for payment of your past due account....One of the largest items of expense in modern business, [sic] is the cost of carrying outstanding book accounts,...<sup>33</sup>

After Foik had his staff determine the account had long since been paid and the check cashed, a pointed letter was sent to Mr. Kauffman. "I am at a loss to know what business methods that you employ, and especially when we have taken the pains which will enable you to check up and set things aright."<sup>34</sup> This is just one example of the many problems that arise with journal subscriptions.

For some areas of study the best support the library can give is to buy as many good books in the subject area as possible, but for other areas, such as the sciences, the need is for journals rather than books. Immediately after World War I there was a sharp increase in journal prices due to the world economic situations. And as is true today, publishers charged libraries higher prices for subscriptions than they did individuals. With funds ever short, Foik attempted to partially resolve the situation by having the University pay for professor's subscriptions which were then sent to the library for its collections. Many publishers did



agree to this arrangement although not all. The American Physical Society wrote that they would be happy to have the University renew Father Irving's membership, but they could only send the journal to the professor.<sup>35</sup>

This problem with the increased cost of subscriptions was, of course, not unique to Notre Dame and in 1923 Foik met with a group of librarians in Chicago in order to get a better understanding of the German trade situation. Most of the librarians felt that the charges of some German publishers, particularly Springer, were exorbitant. There was even some talk of boycott.<sup>36</sup>

### Personnel

As I mentioned earlier, when Foik came to Notre Dame his only assistants were students. This situation prevailed until after Frank Walter's report on the Library in 1921. The student personnel, who were so desperately needed, were not an unmixed blessing, and Foik struggled throughout his tenure at Notre Dame to obtain good student workers. Perhaps it was Foik's previous experiences which caused him to react so strongly to the rumor that Father Burke, Director of Studies, planned to transfer one of his student assistants to Father Galligan. Seemingly without any prior investigation, Foik fired a letter of complaint to Burns.

I would endeavor to overlook the matter if such occurred but once in a long experience, but it is aggravating to have this arbitrary action repeated with such frequency. . . . I cannot perform my work efficiently if this sort of treatment is persisted in.<sup>37</sup>



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When Burns asked Burke to respond to Foik's letter, he was incredulous. Burke denied ever removing any students from the library and pointed out that Father O'Hara had given Father Galligan his stenographer.<sup>38</sup> One result of Foik's complaints to Burns on the student assistant question was that Foik could hire some full time staff, but he was told to go slowly on cutting student employment.<sup>39</sup>

In 1923 Foik was again writing to the President, in this case, Walsh. This time his complaint was about Mr. Casey who was now in charge of student employment. When disciplinary action resulted in the removal of a student assistant, it took two months to find a replacement. The time would have been even longer if Foik had not been approached by Mr. Gallagher, a student employed in the dining hall who wished to switch to the library. Foik's woes included loosing another student to disciplinary action who was replaced by one with high absenteeism. Another student who had lost his father had to go home for an extended period.

To bolster his argument Foik quoted from Walter's Survey of the Library and Foik's previous reports to President Burns in which he had requested more staff positions. One category of staff position would be for young men who would receive part tuition and part cash for their work.<sup>40</sup> If Walsh answered this request, no written record remains.

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Need I remark, that Foik's problems remain with us today including students assigned to the dining hall making contact with the library in order to get a better position.

Foik had better luck filling his professional positions because the employment was solely in his hands. As was true in the planning for the new library, Foik often wrote to his colleagues in the library profession for their advise and to get leads on prospective employees. By 1922 Foik had been able to add both a professional trained cataloger, Anna Kosek and a professionally trained reference librarian, Paul Byrne to his staff. His vision of what the Notre Dame Library could be was shared in a letter to Grace Hill, a candidate for a library position. "I am full of enthusiasm for this work myself and I hope to have a galaxy of enthusiasts and make this the leading Catholic library in the country."<sup>41</sup> Foik believed that the eyes of the library world were on Notre Dame because no Catholic school had made the advancement that Notre Dame had. "They look to Notre Dame for the initiation of any movement that has its inception in Catholic circles."<sup>42</sup>

### Library Instruction

Of course, it is not enough to have a wonderful new building, good collections and the nucleus of a fine staff. What is needed are patrons who know how to use the collections. Foik was well aware of the Notre Dame students' need for instruction in the use of the library, but to meet this need required the cooperation of their

professors. As is still the case today, professorial cooperation was spotty at best. One young professor George Shuster, later president of Hunter College but then serving as the head of the English Department, pushed his students to use the library. He gave the library one hour a month for each of the Freshman English classes.<sup>43</sup> Foik used these nine classes to acquaint the students with the library. Each class was given a follow-up simple problem and at the end of the semester, the students had to present their English instructors with a theme covering the important points discussed. Class began with an orientation visit to the library itself. The second class was an explanation of the Dewey classification and the arrangement of books on the shelf. Other topics were the card catalog, periodical indexes, the book, reference books in general, reference books for special subjects, government publications and bibliography.<sup>44</sup> At the conclusion of the course, students were asked to respond to a questionnaire which asked, among other things, what books were recommended by their instructors, which they read and which were not available in the Notre Dame Library!<sup>45</sup>

### Library School

In addition to his work as Director of Libraries, Foik began a school of Library Science at Notre Dame. Almost from the time that Foik became director he saw the need for courses in librarianship. The University first listed courses for a School of Library Science in the General catalog for 1916-1917. The

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two-year program required that the applicant had completed two years of college and had a reading knowledge of French, German, Spanish and Italian. Students who completed the course work in three major areas: Bibliography, Cataloging and Administration, would receive a certificate.<sup>46</sup> By 1917 Foik had expanded the listing of the three major areas to reflect specific courses, and it was in 1917 that Miss Gertrude Blanshard from the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh offered the first library science course.

With all the work that Foik had already undertaken, you may wonder why he decided to start a library program. Paul Byrne posed that very same question to Foik who replied that "should I get sufficient students in normal times to take up this work [library science], then I can better claim a couple of assistants to help me in my arduous duties."<sup>48</sup>

The first summer session in 1918 seems to have been a great success and Foik soon had numerous religious writing to inquire about the program.<sup>49</sup> The next session was even better. For many students it was their first opportunity to have formal instruction in librarianship. One of Foik's students wrote him in 1919 still exuberant from his class work:

I have returned to Little Rock filled with enthusiasm over library work. You confirmed my opinion of the position a library should occupy in our Colleges, and I am determined to build up here one that will reflect honor on you and Notre Dame - sources of the inspiration.<sup>50</sup>

It was such word-of-mouth advertising that kept the students

coming.

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Although Walter in his Survey described the courses as suitable for training student assistant and providing preliminary preparation for librarianship, Foik originally envisioned these first courses as evolving into a Ph.B. in Library Science.<sup>51</sup> The summer school continued to experience modest growth and Foik wrote to D. Wilson in November of 1923 that "making all due allowances I can truly say, with the students who enjoyed this course, that the work was decidedly a success....Last year we had six students and this year I personally had seventeen taking classification."<sup>52</sup>

Foik added the establishment of library courses at Notre Dame as another first for Notre Dame since it marked the beginning of formal library training under Catholic auspices in the United States.<sup>53</sup>

#### Contributions to Librarianship

In addition to contributing to librarianship by teaching library science, Foik was involved in a number of other projects which benefited the library world. For some years Foik had been concerned about the inadequacy of the Dewey system of classification as it applied to specialized collections. When Foik was in charge of the theology library at Holy Cross College, he had devised with Mr. Snyder of Catholic University, a classification system based on Dewey but adjusted to Catholic



subjects. Such a system was a necessity in the more specialized theology library of Holy Cross College.<sup>54</sup> In 1915 Foik received a letter from A. Law Voge, a librarian involved in both Dewey and Library of Congress classification systems, announcing a proposed expansion of sections of the Dewey system.<sup>55</sup> Shortly after that Foik wrote to the Executive Board of the American Library Association suggesting an expansion of the religion section to provide for the needs of specialized theological libraries.<sup>56</sup> Even as late as the 1930's theology librarians were requesting his classification system.

Although Foik had begun his library work without formal training, and at first had to consult with others, soon his natural abilities and talents as well as his contributions began to be recognized. As he wrote Paul Byrne:

Men, whose advice I sought a few years ago on a number of things, I now have the satisfaction of advising with me....Another thing that has added considerably to my prestige in the library field was last year when I was asked to speak before the American Library Association, and again this year before the Indiana Library Association; on the latter occasion there being a far larger crowd for my address than for any of the others throughout the convention.<sup>57</sup>

Another way in which Foik's stature was recognized was his membership on the National Committee of the United States for the Restoration of the University of Louvain. During World War I, the University and its library had been destroyed. In 1918 the National Committee was organized with fifty prominent men such as

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William Howard Taft and Teddy Roosevelt as members; Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia was the chair.<sup>58</sup> Herbert Putnam, the Librarian of Congress was the chair of the Library Committee. Foik's involvement was in two ways. He was the librarian in charge of selecting books for the Louvain from those collected in the Midwest and sent to Notre Dame. These books were then sent to Washington for shipment to the Louvain.<sup>59</sup>

His second involvement was through the address which he presented before the 1919 American Library Institute Meeting. Membership in the American Library Institute was limited to 100 and included the most prominent men in librarianship. Foik's paper, "Louvain of the Past" was given as background before further discussion of the activities of the National Committee. Foik's reported to H.H. Regnet on the reception of his paper:

Mr. R.R. Bowker, the editor of the Library Journal, at the end of my paper rose to his feet and made a resolution expressing to the authorities of Louvain University the mind of the American Library Institute on the subject of cooperation. He insisted that my name should be included with that of...the executive officers and that this resolution should be cabled to Louvain while the conference was still in session.<sup>60</sup>

In addition to the activities which I have already listed, Foik's years at Notre Dame saw him beginning work on a project that lasted for almost the entirety of his life: The Catholic Periodical Index. Although the story of the CPI is interesting, its telling must wait another time. I can, however, sketch for you rather quickly Foik's role in the founding of the Catholic

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Library Association and its primary project the CPI.

During the early 20's there was a widespread movement toward standardization in the field of library education, a typical stage in the development of any profession. As a member of the Catholic Educational Association, Foik wanted to see a library section formed for the improvement of library conditions in Catholic schools. He hoped it would result in stronger libraries and more professionally trained librarians. Although Foik thought the section would eventually join the American Library Association, it evolved later into the Catholic Library Association, a group separate from both the ALA and its parent organization the Catholic Educational Association.

Three short years after its founding in 1921, the Library Section began the work of determining the ways and means of establishing a Catholic Periodical Index which would be a publication comparable to the H.W. Wilson's Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature. In this way Foik hoped to make Catholic intellectual contributions more accessible. This was a huge project and the planning for it had barely begun when Foik was sent to Texas.<sup>61</sup>

### Exile

The story of Foik's "exile" to Texas is not entirely clear. In a 1923 letter to Earl Dickens, a member of the Endowment Drive Staff who was traveling with Father Burns, Foik sent a message to

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Burns that he needed to land an endowment for the library. While monies for books and materials was a priority, there was also a need for more personnel. Foik went on to reiterate his long standing argument of the need for more staff and professional librarians and less or no student assistants. Foik went on, "I wish you to discuss [this]...candidly with Father Burns for I know that he will lend a sympathetic ear, for after all what is my problem is the University's problem." With his next sentence, Foik seems to show some preminition of future events. "Whoever may be destined hereafter to fill my place if such a course is thought to be expedient will face the same situations that I am trying now to solve." <sup>62</sup>

Shortly before the Provincial Council met in 1924 to decide the new obediences, an unusual meeting took place. Father Walsh, the president of Notre Dame, asked Paul Byrne to meet with him to discuss the library. Byrne, who was a Notre Dame alumnus and a professional trained librarian, had served as a reference librarian at Notre Dame since 1922.<sup>63</sup> Within a few days of the meeting, Byrne submitted a letter which detailed what he saw as the problems in the library:

1. lack of supervision in regard to the book and periodical orders;
2. gaps in the bound periodicals;
3. lack of tact with faculty and students;
4. criticisms of the library course;



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5. lack of effort in regard to the Dante and Irish collections;

6. Inattention to the Archives.

Byrne softened these criticisms somewhat:

The desire to have things right had always been present in Father Foik's mind, but the necessary action has often been neglected....In making these statements I do not think that we should lose sight of the many fine things that Father Foik has to his credit. He has very modern ideas on what an efficient University Library should be....The training received by Father Foik did not fit him particularly to be a librarian. Because of his lack of a knowledge of the technical side of library work, he has been greatly handicapped. Until recently he had to run the Library with student help ...[which] is not adequate for running an institution of this kind. I do not think this has been fully realized.<sup>64</sup>

July 7, the Provincial Council announced the new obediences: Father Foik would be leaving Notre Dame for the post of Director of the Library at St. Edward's College in Austin, Texas.<sup>65</sup> Fifty years later when Tom and Wendy Schlereth interviewed Byrne about Foik "exile" to St Ed's, he recalled:

Well, he stepped on some toes....I never did know all of the background of the trouble, but that was part of the basis for it and in those days if you did that, you were sent to Portland or Texas, Austin....I didn't see him that night but when I went to work the next morning he was in his office, at the desk, and I didn't know what to say to him. He practically cried, he was so broken up over it [James] Wesley Donohue, who later was superior general of the order, was a good friend of his. At that time he was superior of Moreau seminary, and Father Foik went over to see him to see if he might do anything with the Provincial to get the thing revoked. He said no, but he tried to cheer him up.<sup>66</sup>

There was no turning back; Foik's years at Notre Dame were over.



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## Conclusions

There is no doubt that the criticisms that Byrne wrote Walsh about the library were to some degree valid. However, they were the same problems that Foik had been struggling with since his arrival in 1912 and which he described to the University administration on a regular basis. In addition, although Foik did not have a library degree, it is doubtful that he was as ignorant of the technical side of library work as Byrne's letter might lead one to conclude. The technical aspects of acquiring material were always hampered by the processes by which the University authorized the expenditure of monies, not by Foik's lack of knowledge. In regard to the other technical aspect of library work, cataloging, a professional cataloger was the first position that Foik had filled. In addition, someone who was able to expand the Dewey Decimal classification system to better reflect the needs of a specialized theological library is not a man who is lacking in technical knowledge, however he may have obtained it.

Why, then, was he exiled? There is no doubt that he stepped on people's toes. But those who strive for high standards often do just that. One of Notre Dame's former librarians opined that the University Administration may have found it easier to control a lay person than a cleric. Certainly a layman would not be writing all the letters of complaint that Foik did; it would be too dangerous to his continuation in his post. Nor, would a lay

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librarian, send letters to Father O'Hara after one of his raids on the collection. And, only a foolish layman would offer unsolicited criticism of the work standards of a members of the community like Brother Irenaous.

My conclusion is that Father Foik was reassigned for the same reason that Father Burns was no longer president: they wanted to move the library and the University too fast into the future with too high standards for the other members of the community to assimilate and support.

What then, are Father Foik's contributions during the twelve year period that he was at Notre Dame? First, there was the new library building which gave Notre Dame the honor of being the first Catholic university in the United States to erect a separate library building.<sup>67</sup> He brought the collections together, worked to strengthen them and make them accessible. He hired the first professionally trained librarians to work at Notre Dame and was constantly seeking to improve his staff. He brought Notre Dame into the larger world of librarianship through his many professional contacts, his work in founding the Catholic Library Association and his founding of the Notre Dame Library School. Some projects that he began at Notre Dame, like the Library School gradually lost their impetus after his reassignment. Others, which were not directly tied to Notre Dame such as the Catholic Periodical Index received his care and attention until it was

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successfully established many years later. Despite his lack of formal training in librarianship, Foik is one of the best library directors Notre Dame has ever had, if not the best.

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