

Arthur E. Bostwick and Chinese Library Development: A Chapter in International Cooperation

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The first quarter of the twentieth century was a tumultuous period in Chinese history. With democratic impulses growing, civil strife rampant, educational reforms underway, and interest in libraries mounting—the opportunity to support the establishment of public libraries for large numbers of the populace seemed at hand. When the Boxer Indemnity Fund resources became available for public library development, the American Library Association sent Arthur E. Bostwick of the St. Louis Public Library to visit China for six weeks in the late spring of 1925. Building on previous efforts to encourage library development, Bostwick traveled the country promoting public libraries. His visit coincided with the founding of the Library Association of China and resulted in several demonstration projects in the following years, though not in the form he had hoped. His visit occurred during a critical episode in the modern story of Chinese library history.

For the better part of the past two decades, Chinese and American librarians have been rediscovering the circumstances in the past century or so that have brought them together into meaningful relationships. Several Chinese and American scholars have written about these themes from a variety of perspectives.¹

One of the events that gripped American and Chinese librarianship briefly during the mid-1920s was the seven-week visit of Arthur E. Bostwick to China in mid-1925 to encourage expenditure of public funds in the development of public libraries when a unique opportunity seemed to present itself. Drawing on research and original investigation, this brief study seeks to describe the contemporary library environment in China, to place in context the background of the visit and the personalities involved, and to offer a tentative assessment of the immediate and lasting effect of the initiative. To the extent that it is successful, this study will shed historical insight on the renewed cooperation between the library professions of both countries that is currently underway.

In order to better understand the context of the Bostwick mission, one must grasp the environment in which it was undertaken. While such a treatment of this brief, though complex, phenomenon cannot be exhaustive, it can suggest a number of elements that contributed to a very complex situation.

China in the 1920s

Years of infrastructural decline, frustration with foreign hegemony and concessions in trade and port facilities, and rising aspirations of energetic citizens took a toll on the Qing, or Manchu Dynasty, which had been in power since 1644. Although this non-Chinese governing class had introduced some reforms at the end of the nineteenth century, popular uprisings from midcentury on—from those of Taiping (1850–1864) to the Boxers (1900)—provided evidence that all was not well with the masses. The influx of foreign educators and the movement of Chinese students to Western colleges provided external political and cultural stimuli for change as well.²

The proclamation of the Republic in 1911 began a long period of transition in Chinese life that, during the course of the century, transformed some aspects more than others. Beginning with high hopes and promise, the new government that began in 1912 was faced with a nearly insurmountable task. Despite some successes achieved by Sun Yat-sen (1867–1925) and others, the fragmentation of Chinese society prevented the kind of unity that fosters stable cultural advances. The first president's attempt to establish a monarchy failed, as did an attempt in 1917 to restore the Manchu rule. The civil war among various warlords and political factions that ensued consumed a great deal of energy and resources for the next dozen or so years. The struggle of the Kuomintang under Chiang Kai-shek (1887–1975) to control the government in opposition to the Communists under Mao Tse-tung (1893–1976) was held in abeyance for only a few years and was interrupted during the Japanese invasion and occupation (1937–1945). The period of the 1920s was a complex age of civil strife and Western “gunboat diplomacy” along China's harbors and major rivers that put altruistic missions in an even more fragile position.

Status of Libraries in China

The public library movement was at its height during 1917–1926. Three factors contributed to this: (1) the Literary Revolution and Renaissance Movement, which occurred during 1917 when “*pei hua*” or the colloquial language was introduced as a medium of literary expression;

(2) the May 4th Movement of 1919, which aroused the common people to a new awareness; and (3) the Mass Education Movement of 1920, which was organized to teach illiterates to read and write using one thousand characters. These initiatives influenced the development of the official national libraries in China as well as popular public libraries.

From these three movements emerged an outpouring of popular books and magazines in easy-to-read *pei-hua* style. In 1921, 921 periodicals were officially registered in the post office; by 1925 there were 1,323 magazines registered—an increase of 44 percent in four years.³ To accommodate all these publications, buildings such as old palaces, closed academies, and abandoned temples were turned over by the authorities to be used free of charge as libraries and reading rooms.⁴

In 1909 the first law concerning the establishment of public libraries was promulgated. Provision was made for the establishment of the National (Metropolitan) Library in Beijing and a provincial library in the capital of each province. It also provided for public libraries in the prefectures and counties. Later, in 1910, the Ministry of Education issued a proclamation on the promotion, organization, and administration of popular libraries throughout China. Included was the provision that all provinces and all counties should establish free public libraries for the people. Self-governing areas smaller than counties were also encouraged to establish popular libraries. Together with this law regarding popular libraries, another law on the establishment of other kinds of libraries was passed. These two laws in 1910 formed the basis for the establishment of many libraries. In 1928 new laws replaced the old when the national government was established in Nanjing.

Books collected in provincial public libraries consisted of classical books on Chinese studies; however, during the mid-1920s most provincial libraries started to collect modern works on science and on western cultures. The free or popular public libraries contained newer works and translations of foreign materials in easy *wen yen* (classical Chinese) and *pei-hua* style (vernacular Chinese).⁵ By the second decade of this century libraries in China could be classed into four divisions: public, college, society, and special.

Public Libraries

In the 1920s the majority of public libraries were maintained by the educational funds of the districts and were under the control of the provincial commissioners of education. As for the regulation on borrowing, most of the reading rooms had noncirculating materials. Imposition of a small fee for even in-house use of library materials was common in many public libraries, mainly to keep away vagrants. The amount

charged depended upon the locality and also varied according to the kind of ticket bought. For example, there were six grades of tickets used in the Beijing Public Library: (1) two-penny tickets for ordinary books, (2) one-penny tickets for periodicals and newspapers, (3) one-penny student tickets for ordinary books, (4) free student tickets for periodicals and newspapers, (5) ten-penny tickets for incunabula, and (6) five-penny tickets for the manuscript copy of the famous "Imperial Descriptive Catalogue of the Manchu Dynasty."⁶ The Beijing Public Library, established in 1912, had two branch libraries—the Beijing Branch Public Library (circulating) and the Beijing Free Public Library (noncirculating). By the mid-1920s the traditional idea of charging fees for admission gradually was being discarded, but borrowing books for home use was not yet widely accepted.

It was in the free public libraries that newly published works on various subjects were maintained together with some old Chinese books. Children's reading rooms were also maintained in these libraries, though they were still in their infancy in China. Although the libraries were well patronized, there was much room for improvement. For example, a larger annual budget for books was required to provide circulating collections that would permit the lending of books for home use. Also, the furnishings of the reading rooms, especially the children's areas, were sparse and unattractive. Finally, many of the library buildings themselves were structurally unsuited for library use and, lacking proper inspection for electrical installations, were virtual firetraps.⁷

According to the statistics available in 1922, there were about 51 public libraries and 239 free public libraries for a population of about 433 million people.⁸ Table 1, "Public and Free Public Libraries," illustrates the dispersion among the provinces.

College Libraries

In this class were the best professionally managed libraries in China. Observers reported that academic libraries had, in addition to Chinese classics, not only contemporary books in foreign languages, but also a well-trained staff and the latest in cataloguing rules and equipment.⁹

Several examples illustrate the point. One of the best college libraries was the National Peking University Library, which had a collection, outstanding for its time, of about 80,000 volumes which included Chinese manuscripts and original imperial edicts. It also maintained a liberal budget for the purchase of Western books. Another Beijing library was that of Qinghua College. Over 70,000 volumes of well-selected books in Chinese as well as in foreign languages constituted the collection. The college subscribed to some 310 leading international periodicals and 50

TABLE 1
PUBLIC AND FREE PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN CHINA IN 1922

Name of Province	Number of Public		Number of Free Public	
	Libraries	Volumes	Libraries	Volumes
Peking	2	25,000	1	1,400
Chihli	2	14,160	4	900
Fengtien	4	12,402	35	7,500
Kirin	1	2,200	3	700
Heilungkiang	2	1,830	3	650
Shantung	1	3,000	23	10,000
Shansi	7	10,000	9	2,700
Honan	1	5,500	22	9,000
Kiangsi	1	850	5	1,500
Kiangsu	11	30,000	5	1,600
Anhwei	1	1,100	4	1,200
Fukien	1	1,240	21	600
Chekiang	6	8,000	21	5,350
Hupeh	1	7,310	44	18,000
Hunan	1	4,500	14	3,500
Shensi	1	1,250	1	600
Kansu	2	3,000	2	500
Singkiang	—	—	4	1,200
Szechwan	1	4,500	4	1,600
Kwangtung	1	3,065	6	1,800
Kwangsi	1	6,930	1	300
Yünnan	1	4,740	6	1,500
Kweichow	1	1,880	—	—
Jehol	<u>1</u>	<u>390</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>300</u>
Totals	51	72,400	239	152,847

Source: T. C. Tai, "Library Movement in China," *Bulletins on Chinese Education* 2, no.3 (1923): 7.

newspapers. Reference services were available to faculty and students as well as to alumni and teachers throughout northern China.

The missionary colleges in China also played a role in developing public services for academic and general users. One such well-known institution was Boone University at Wuchang—the first college to offer a regular course in library science, thanks to the efforts of Mary Elizabeth Wood, who founded both the university library and the library school.

The latter extended the concept of public service in three ways: by maintaining public reading rooms, by supporting traveling libraries, and by establishing more than twenty centers for circulating books.¹⁰ Table 2, "College Libraries," lists by province some of the better-known colleges in the 1920s, along with the approximate number of volumes in Chinese and foreign languages.

Society Libraries

Society libraries were mainly scattered in Beijing and cities along the coast. Their annual income was derived from donations or funds contributed by their respective societies. For example, the Royal Asiatic Society at Shanghai, founded in 1860, focused its collection mainly on works on China, including both foreign and Chinese texts. It adopted the Dewey decimal classification in 1907, was open daily for members to borrow books, and provided a mail lending service for out-of-town members. The Science Society Library at Nanjing, covering the various fields of science, concentrated on Chinese materials and library practices.

Another society was the Chinese Social and Political Science Association in Beijing. Started by a group of "Returned Students," its primary support came from the United States, the late Imperial Manchu family, and the Carnegie Endowment Corporation. Its library received from the United States money set aside from the remitted funds of the Boxer Indemnity for initial and maintenance expenses, from the Manchu family a centrally located site for erecting a building, and from the Carnegie Corporation an annual contribution of about a thousand volumes dealing with history as well as social and political science. This was a first for the Carnegie Corporation.

Special Libraries

Special libraries were founded to further the knowledge of organizations and bureaus in China and were most prevalent, again, in the big cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Canton. In the capital, there were four special libraries of note: the library of the Bureau of Geological Survey under the Ministry of Agriculture, the library of the Railway Association under the Ministry of Communications, the library of the Ministry of Education, and the library of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Only those associated with these ministries could use the libraries.¹¹

This brief survey indicates that libraries in China at the time of Arthur Bostwick's visit in 1925 had improved vastly in comparison to imperial times when libraries were accessible to only a privileged few. Already libraries had begun to be more open and more readily available to the

TABLE 2
COLLEGE LIBRARIES IN CHINA IN THE 1920s

	Volumes in Chinese*	Volumes in Foreign Languages*
Peking:		
Peking National University Library	65,000	15,000
Peking Teachers College Library	10,000	8,000
Tsing Hua College Library	50,000	25,000
Union Medical College Library	500	9,000
Yen Ching University Library	1,000	3,000
Chihli:		
Nankai College Library, Tientsin	6,000	7,000
Pei Yang University Library, Tientsin	25,000	12,000
Shantung:		
Shantung Christian University Library, Tsinan	10,000	9,000
Shansi:		
Shansi University Library, Taiyuan	(?)	(?)
Kiangsu:		
Fu Tan University Library, Shanghai	(?)	(?)
Nanking University Library, Nanking	4,000	10,000
St. John's University Library, Shanghai	3,500	17,000
Nang Yang University Library, Shanghia	20,000	5,000
Shanghai Baptist College Library, Shanghai	1,500	3,500
Soochow University Library, Soochow	2,500	9,000
National Southeastern University Library, Nanking	10,000	7,000
Hupeh:		
Boone University Library, Wuchang	15,000	12,000
Wuchang Teachers College Library, Wuchang	21,000	3,000
Wesley College Library, Wuchang	2,000	3,500
Hunan:		
Yale College Library, Changsha	1,000	3,500
Kwangtung:		
Canton Christian College Library, Canton	5,000	9,000
Canton Teachers' College Library, Canton	(?)	(?)
Fukien:		
Amoy University Library, Amoy	(?)	(?)
Chekiang:		
Chekiang College Library, Hangchow	(?)	(?)
Kiangse:		
William Nest College Library, Kiukiang	3,000	3,000

Source: T. C. Tai, "Library Movement in China," *Bulletins on Chinese Education* 2, no.3 (1923): 8-10.

*The numbers of volumes in each library are approximate.

public. This dynamic movement no doubt prompted the Chinese Association for the Advancement of Education to request that the American Library Association send a knowledgeable delegate to China to provide further insight, advice, and guidance about introducing a modern library system into China. Why Bostwick came to China at this juncture, what he found, how he was received, and what were the results of his visit are questions to which we now turn.

The Boxer Indemnity Fund and Mary Elizabeth Wood

Although many forces were at work to encourage more effective library service in China, two influences came together in the first two decades of this century that greatly affected the possible direction of libraries in China, particularly public, or “popular,” libraries. These were, first, the availability of funds remitted from the Boxer indemnity payments and, second, the tireless efforts of an American library pioneer, Mary Elizabeth Wood, to secure broadly based popular libraries.

The Boxer Indemnity Fund

The last among several movements and crises in the Chinese struggle for national integrity in the nineteenth century, the so-called Boxer Rebellion (1898–1900) proved to be one of the most costly for China. Led by militia units in northern China and encouraged for various reasons by the empress dowager, the popular campaign against Western commercial and religious interests resulted in violence directed not only at foreigners but also at Chinese who had associated with them. Following the lifting of the siege of foreign embassies in Beijing in August 1900, the international partners secured additional concessions in the settlement of 1901 as well as indemnities that ultimately amounted to more than three quarters of a billion U.S. dollars of principal and interest for the specified forty-year period.¹²

As some reforms occurred within the Chinese Empire, the United States, the first among other nations to do the same, reduced its original capital share of nearly \$24.5 million dollars to a little more than \$13.5 million dollars in 1908 with the understanding that the Chinese would use the funds for educational purposes. Throughout the years following World War I, sentiment began to grow in China among resident Americans and their Chinese colleagues to seek a further, if not complete remission of required payments to the U.S. government and to secure a portion of those funds specifically for library development.¹³ Thus the National Association for the Advancement of Education (NAAE) at its second conference in Peking in August 1923 resolved that it “request

the United States Government and our Government that one-third of the balance of the Boxer Indemnity Moneys when returned by the former to China be used for the establishment and maintenance of 'public libraries' in China."¹⁴ In addition, two petitions to the U.S. president, signed respectively by 150 prominent Chinese citizens and 65 leading Americans resident in China, were forwarded to Washington, D.C.

Mary Elizabeth Wood

Armed with these documents and the support from friends in the United States, during the academic year 1923–1924 Mary Elizabeth Wood, who headed the Boone University Library and Library School in Wuchang, made a determined effort to gain support among members of the U.S. Congress for remission of the balance of the Boxer Indemnity Fund for educational purposes.¹⁵ The campaign was effective, and a Congressional joint resolution passed on 21 May 1924 to authorize use of the funds for the

development of scientific knowledge and the application of such knowledge to the conditions in China through the promotion of technical training of scientific research, experimentation and demonstration, and training in science teaching, and to the advancement of cultural enterprises of a permanent character, such as libraries and the like.¹⁶

The following months were critical because the mechanism for appropriate administration of the funds in China and for the establishment of priorities for the various proposed projects was being debated. Appearing at the second general session of the American Library Association (ALA) annual conference on 1 July 1924 at Saratoga Springs, New York, Wood spoke on "Recent Library Development in China." After a succinct review of developments to the present, she urged her American colleagues to support sending an expert in library service to China who could demonstrate why a proposed project of model public libraries should be given priority.¹⁷ Her effective plea did not go unheeded, and the ALA Executive Board, in response to a request from the Chinese NAAE, invited Arthur E. Bostwick, distinguished director of the St. Louis Public Library, to undertake the mission.¹⁸ Although no association funds were to be used for the project, the indomitable Wood organized a committee to solicit contributions to underwrite the expenses of the trip. The committee coincided with a group that sought to support library outreach activities at Boone University.¹⁹

During the fall of 1924, the China Foundation for the Promotion of Education and Culture, composed of ten prominent Chinese and five prominent American persons of educational stature, was established. (The funds, potentially between six and fifteen million dollars, were actually released to the new body after its first formal meeting scheduled for July 1925.)²⁰ Throughout the 1924–25 conference and school year, the American committee raised funds in anticipation of Bostwick's visit to China in the late spring and the first meeting of the foundation board on 1 June 1925.²¹

A succinct statement prepared by Bostwick appeared in the June 1925 issue of *Public Libraries*, outlining his mission, intent, and possible results. He anticipated that his tour and report to the new commission would prompt the

opening of one or more experimental or demonstration libraries in the principal cities, to be financed from [commission] funds for a time, in the hope that these may ultimately become a public charge and the funds of the commission thereby released to extend the experiment to other cities until there are modern public libraries in all parts of the country.

He further suggested three conditions that would need to be met for this to occur: (1) the “spread of literacy throughout the country,” (2) the “placing in existing libraries of books in the vernacular languages,” and (3) the “adoption of modern library methods, including storage, cataloguing and distribution.” Unwilling to speculate about the outcome of the initiative, Bostwick nevertheless had high expectations of his assignment. “At present the mission is peculiarly interesting as being almost the only instance of a semi-official delegate sent from one country to another regarding a matter of intellectual development and without any ulterior purpose whatever.”²² Thus, the stage was set.

The Bostwick Trip

Arthur E. Bostwick (1860–1942) was admirably suited to the challenge before him. Born in Litchfield, Connecticut, and educated through the Ph.D. degree in physics at Yale University, Bostwick moved from an early interest in high school teaching to editorial positions with various reference works, including *Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (1894–1900) and *A Standard Dictionary of the English Language* (1893). Bostwick directed public libraries in the New York area from 1895 onward and from 1901–1909 was chief of the circulation department (the far-flung

branch system) of the newly created New York Public Library. He was president of the ALA during 1907–1908. However, for most of his professional life, he was associated with the St. Louis Public Library, where he served as director and librarian from 1909 till his death. Here he oversaw construction of a new building, directed an expanding public library service, participated in professional activities, and continued his writing. The work for which he became best known in the library world was *The American Public Library*, which appeared in four editions between 1910 and 1929. Not only did his academic, intellectual, and professional stature make him an excellent ambassador to China, but it also resulted in his being an ALA delegate to the International Library Conference held in Rome in 1929.²³

Planning and Preparation

During the spring of 1925, preparations for the forthcoming trip continued on both sides of the Pacific. A news release provided details for library and general media. The NAAE was to be responsible for the trip, with Wood cooperating. Since the serious internal conflicts in China were of concern to all, it was suggested that Bostwick travel by foreign steamers for the sake of safety, sailing from Seattle on 9 April and arriving in Shanghai on 28 April and sailing home from Hong Kong on 9 June in time to report to the ALA annual conference in Seattle, scheduled for 6–11 July. Noting the unstable conditions in China, Woods was quoted as saying, “We are trusting that this last outbreak is the *last* and that conflicts will be over for a year anyway. The skies look brighter. We cannot wait for China to become quiet before going forward with these plans.”²⁴ Concluding with a list of cities on Bostwick’s tentative itinerary, the release stated that he would “visit libraries and talk with librarians, university and college presidents, and give occasional lectures on the American library movement.”²⁵

Meanwhile in China, in response to a 1923 initiative by the Educational Improvement Society of China (CEIS), local provincial and municipal library associations began to form in greater numbers. As these grew in stature and as the time drew near for greater activity on behalf of public libraries in preparation for the China Foundation’s formative meeting, the Beijing Library Association and the Shanghai Library Association called for the formation of a nationwide library association. The first such gathering, consisting of some forty representatives, met to plan such an organization on 25 April in Shanghai and approved the organizational structure for the new Library Association of China (CLA).²⁶ Once this was done, the Chinese librarians welcomed Bostwick upon his arrival the next day—two days earlier than anticipated.

The Journey

While details of the trip are somewhat sketchy in the official reports, Bostwick's personal correspondence provides the color expected from one so well-read and well-traveled. Early plans called for visits to several cities in east central China after the initial days in Shanghai—Hangchow (Hanzhou), Soochow (Suzhou), and Nanking (Nanjing). Then, following stops in Changsha, Wuchang, and Hankow (modern Wuhan), he was to proceed to Peking (Beijing) via Kaifeng and Taian (Taiyuan). From there he was to go to Tientsin (Tianjin) and Tsianan (Jinan), making his way eventually to Canton (Guangzhou), from which he would travel to Hong Kong for departure to the United States.²⁷

In fact, though Bostwick's itinerary changed somewhat as a result of circumstances that he encountered, he maintained throughout the venture that he would visit or had visited fourteen cities and fifty libraries—and would or had made as many addresses.²⁸ Letters home to his wife and staff tell of many official ceremonies, receptions, dinners, and sightseeing trips, interspersed among library visits.²⁹ At Shanghai Bostwick was met and received by representatives of fifteen provinces who had gathered for the formation of the CLA, and there was at least one dinner for forty persons hosted, according to him, by a Dr. Fearn. In Hanzhou (30 April–4 May) Bostwick had an audience with the Panchan Lama who had been attracting much attention. Sensitive to the burden of socializing, Bostwick's hosts arranged a boat trip from the mouth of the Yangtze River to its headwaters 820 miles upstream. Centered in Wuchang for several days, around 14 May, Bostwick traveled to Changsa in the private car of the governor of Hubei province, who also brought him across the river in his personal launch, escorted by a general. While in Changsa the governor of Hunan province gave a banquet that Bostwick described as "like a chapter out of the Arabian Nights."³⁰

About one-third finished with his trip, Bostwick was much impressed, as he wrote home, "Everyone seems interested in my trip. I am welcomed by delegates with banners and strings of firecrackers, escorted about and dined and lunched to such an extent that I'm getting fatter instead of losing, as I ought."³¹ From 28 May to 3 June, Bostwick was in Beijing for meetings with several committees that he later described. He also addressed the Chinese Social and Political Science Association and received as a gift of the Library Association of China the miniature oxcart used for transporting books in the sixth century that is still on display in the Chicago headquarters of the American Library Association.³² Before his departure for the United States, Bostwick took an unplanned trip to Mukden (Shenyang) before stops in Tianjin and Tsinan on his

way to the port of departure which, because of severe fighting among the warlords, was not Hong Kong as originally planned.³³

Trailed by threats of civil war and social disruption in China, Bostwick nevertheless returned home in time to participate in the ALA conference convening in Seattle, 6–11 July 1925. He made a report to the executive board and presented an illustrated lecture to the association at a special evening meeting. Bostwick stressed the importance of free access to materials and circulating collections for home use as well as the distinctions in housing and cataloguing to be made between collections of old Chinese classic volumes and the newer vernacular and foreign language works.³⁴ The combination of professional purpose and the exotic descriptions of Chinese life and culture, then very much in the news because of civil unrest, provoked a great deal of interest.

Reporting and Response

The effect of Bostwick's mission was not really known until later in the year when word came that the China Foundation had granted \$500,000 for a new Metropolitan Library in Beijing, with the Chinese government providing the site, incorporating the collections in the existing Beijing Library, and agreeing to underwrite half the administrative cost for ten years. The foundation further agreed to establish six other libraries in various parts of the country that would include books in Chinese, vernacular languages, and English.³⁵ Later reports indicated that by 1929 the new Metropolitan Library and the Beijing Library, allegedly "two of the most important libraries in China," were in fact united to form "The National Library of Peking."³⁶ The future of the model libraries planned for other parts of the country was less certain. In 1926 Wellington Koo noted that a public library building for Shanghai along the lines of the Metropolitan Library was planned at the cost of \$400,000 in donated funds. Two other public libraries, also gifts of a Chinese merchant, seemed probable. The official national libraries also underwent a period of development.³⁷

In fact, with the notable exceptions above, very little progress was reported because of the continuing struggle of China, even after the relative peace and accommodation among warring factions around 1930. The Boone Library School used a small grant from the commission of \$5,000 for scholarships for three years to launch an appeal for matching supplementary funds from American donors to provide books and periodicals, equipment, translations, and special speakers. However, the social situation proved difficult, and the school's anniversary celebrations, planned for 1930, had to be postponed because of the civil war in central

China described as “growing more serious each day.”³⁸ The events leading to the Long March of 1935–1937 and the invasion of the Japanese beginning in the middle of 1937 brought a halt to organized library development—a movement that had received great impetus from the enthusiasms of a mere decade earlier.

Conclusion—Effect of American Librarianship in China

Fascinating as the story of the unique journey of Arthur E. Bostwick during the formative period of the modern Chinese library movement is, the critical question remains: what difference did Bostwick’s trip make? The evidence is not easy to gather, let alone analyze, but within these limitations, some conclusions are possible and will suggest topics for further research.

Though Arthur Bostwick was in China for only two months, he clearly made his mark as part of the New Library Movement. His visit augmented the work that Elizabeth Wood initiated—that is, promoting the improvements of Western library practices in modern China. The New Library Movement promoted American librarianship, advocated the creation of more public libraries and was highly critical of the old feudal library tradition in which the library was confined to the preservation of records only for the privileged few.³⁹

The period from 1925–1937 was one marked by the beginning of political consolidation and economic and social reconstruction. The national government in the 1930s directed its attention to the development of modern libraries in China. Mass education was capturing the attention of the educational authorities. The government launched a program to make the library an indispensable agency in the reconstruction of new China. In spite of insufficient funds to perpetuate the movement, Chinese libraries continued to grow in size. According to a survey conducted by the Library Association of China in 1935, there were 933 public libraries and 1,002 popular libraries in the nation,⁴⁰ as compared to 1922 when there were only 51 public libraries and 239 free public libraries.⁴¹

Notwithstanding the continuous conflicts caused by the warlords and foreign powers during the 1920s and 1930s, the modern library movement did progress.⁴² Bostwick clearly set off a new wave of interest in American-style librarianship; he advocated that Chinese public libraries provide access freely to their readers by providing open-shelf access and thereby promoting the circulation of books for home use.⁴³ From 1925 onward the open-shelf system became increasingly widespread. Modern library practices began to appear in other types of libraries as well.⁴⁴

The impact of Arthur E. Bostwick's visit to China was made possible by Elizabeth Wood who headed the Boone University Library and Library School and who had earlier proposed a project of model public libraries in China. Though Wood's contribution has been acknowledged widely, the record leaves no doubt that their joint imprint set in motion an ideal for library development that reached a high point between 1925 and 1937. During this period, many promising modern ideas of professional library practice were adapted to the Chinese culture that came from the influences of Elizabeth Wood and Arthur Bostwick. However, because of wars and social turmoil—for example, the Sino-Japanese conflict of 1937–1945, the civil war and the establishment of the new Marxist national government in the period 1948–1950, and the Cultural Revolution of 1966–1976—the progress of modern librarianship was interrupted periodically.

In the years since 1976, Chinese librarianship has adapted slowly to many of the modern and new American ideas of library science and technology. What is needed most at the end of the twentieth century is a convention that will keep the doors open for exchange among librarians from both countries so that China can continue to advance in the modern age of library and information science.

Notes

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1. Examples of these include Lee-shia Hsu Ting, "Chinese Libraries during and after the Cultural Revolution," *Journal of Library History* 16 (1981): 417–34, and "Library Services in the People's Republic of China: A Historical Overview," *Library Quarterly* 53 (1983): 134–60; Sharon Chien Lin, "Historical Development of Library Education in China," *Journal of Library History* 20 (1985): 368–86; and Huan Wen Cheng, "The Impact of American Librarianship on Chinese Librarianship in Modern Times (1840–1949)," *Libraries & Culture* 26 (1991): 372–87.

2. L. Carrington Goodrich, *A Short History of the Chinese People*, 4th ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 230–1. For a helpful background treatment for this period, see Jean Chesnaux, Françoise Le Barbier, and Marie-Claire Bergere, *China from the 1911 Revolution to Liberation*, trans. by Paul Auster, Lydia Davis, and Anne Destenay (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), especially "Conclusion: 1885–1921," 98–103.

3. A. Kaiming Chiu, "Modern Library Movement in China," in *Libraries in China: Papers Prepared on the Occasion of the Tenth Anniversary of the Library Association of China* (Peiping: Library Association of China, 1935), 5.

4. Arthur E. Bostwick, "China's Libraries," *The Nation* 124 (23 February 1927): 208.
5. Chiu, "Modern Library Movement in China," 3-4, 13; Arthur E. Bostwick, "The Library Situation in China," *Public Libraries* 30 (1925): 319.
6. T. C. Tai, "Library Movement in China," *Bulletins on Chinese Education* 2, no. 3 (1923): 4.
7. *Ibid.*, 6; see also Bostwick, "China's Libraries."
8. Chen Changheng, *On the Population of China*, 7th ed. (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1926), 53 (in Chinese).
9. Arthur E. Bostwick, "Second Report to the Library Association of China and the Chinese Association for the Advancement of Education," *Journal of the Chinese Library Association* 1, no. 3 (1925): 3 (in Chinese); English version, Arthur E. Bostwick, "Reports of Arthur E. Bostwick's Mission to China as A.L.A. Delegate," *Bulletin of the American Library Association* 20 (1926): 41.
10. Tai, "Library Movement in China," 11-13. For more on the Boone University Library and Library School and American-Chinese cooperation, see Cheryl Boettcher, "Samuel T. Y. Seng and the Boone Library School," *Libraries & Culture* 24 (1989): 271-94.
11. Tai, "Library Movement in China," 14-16.
12. Goodrich, "Short History," 225.
13. "The Desire of the Chinese for Public Libraries" (typewritten manuscript), 1924? University Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. American Library Association Archives, hereafter cited as ALA Archives.
14. National Association for the Advancement of Education, "Resolution passed . . . Peking, China, on August 20-26, 1923" (mimeographed manuscript), ALA Archives.
15. Wood described this initiative and its implications for library development in her presentation to the 1924 American Library Association annual conference, "Recent Library Development in China," *ALA Bulletin* 18 (1924): 178-82. For a full biographical sketch of Wood, see John H. Winkelman, "Mary Elizabeth Wood (1861-1931): American Missionary-Librarian to Modern China," *Journal of Library and Information Science* (Taiwan) 9 (April 1982): 62-76.
16. *New York Times*, 21 July 1925.
17. Wood, "Recent Library Development in China," 181-2. See also account in *Library Journal* 49 (1924): 630.
18. "A.L.A. News," *ALA Bulletin*, 18 (1924): A3.
19. "A.L.A. Representative in China," *Public Libraries* 30 (1925): 260; "In the Interest of China" (brochure), 1926 and "China's First Library School: The Boone Library and Its Forward Movements" (brochure), 1927?, both ALA Archives.
20. News Release (typewritten manuscript) 1925?, ALA Archives.
21. *ALA Bulletin* 18 (1924): A3; *Public Libraries* 30 (1925): 260.
22. Arthur E. Bostwick, "The Library Situation in China," *Public Libraries* 30 (1925): 318-9. This statement was the "official" brief purpose statement of Bostwick's mission. Arthur E. Bostwick to Carl H. Milam, March 1925 (typewritten letter, signed), ALA Archives, in which Bostwick offers additional commentary on his projected trip "in the form of an interview." The attached two-page typewritten document, designed as a public relations piece and entitled "An Ambassador of the Intellect," reveals clearly the American attitude of the steps needed to take Chinese libraries from a state "much like our own in Medieval Europe."
23. For a succinct biographical sketch of Bostwick, see Donald G. Davis Jr., "Bostwick, Arthur Elmore (1860-1942)," in *Dictionary of American Library Biography*,

edited by Bohdan S. Wynar (Littleton, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited, 1978), 47–50. For his literary career, see “Librarian Authors,” *Library Journal* 50 (1930): 959.

24. Wood is quoted in news release (typewritten manuscript) 1925?, ALA Archives.

25. Ibid.

26. Cheng, “Impact . . . on Chinese Librarianship,” 380–1. For a Chinese comment on Bostwick’s role in the formation of the Association, see Kong Min-zhong, “Dr. Bostwick’s Visit to Our Library,” *Morning Paper* (in Chinese) 26 April 1925 and Gao Ren-shan, “Comments on Dr. Bostwick’s Visit to Beijing,” *Morning Paper* (in Chinese) 28 May 1925. A statement of Chinese library philosophy is embodied in Liang Qi-chao, “Speech at the Opening Ceremony of the Library Association of China,” *Journal of the Chinese Library Association* (in Chinese) 1 (1925).

27. The record of this itinerary is drawn from several sources, among them, a news release (typewritten manuscript) 1925?, ALA Archives; Cheng, “Impact . . . on Chinese Librarianship,” 381; and Bostwick’s numerous reports and letter found in the ALA Archives and Special Collections, St. Louis Public Library. Arthur E. Bostwick Papers.

28. An example of one of these reports is Arthur E. Bostwick, “Libraries in China,” *Library Journal* 50 (1925): 895–8.

29. The primary collection of this material is located in the Arthur E. Bostwick Papers, Special Collections, St. Louis Public Library. A contemporary four-page typewritten document, 1925–1926, ALA Archives, briefly describes the “noteworthy collection of material brought by him from [China] and exhibited at the [St. Louis Public Library].”

30. Arthur E. Bostwick to Charles H. Compton (copy of typewritten letter, originally signed) 14 May 1925, aboard the SS *Siang Kiang* Maru, ALA Archives. This letter, which possibly originated in the records of the St. Louis Public Library, exemplifies many such details that are available but await further research by the authors. An unidentified clipping, 1925?, ALA Archives, provides a photo and details of the arrival and reception in Shanghai. For Bostwick’s extensive reminiscences and personal reflections, see his *A Life with Men and Books* (New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1939), especially “Mission to China,” 233–79.

31. Bostwick to Compton (typewritten letter, originally signed) 14 May 1925, ALA Archives.

32. Arthur E. Bostwick, “The Public Library,” *Chinese Social and Political Science Review* (Beijing) 9 (October, 1925): 1–10; draft news release (typewritten document) 1925?, ALA Archives; T. L. Yuan to Arthur E. Bostwick, Beijing (copy of typewritten letter, originally signed) 29 May 1925, ALA Archives.

33. Arthur E. Bostwick, “[Report to] the National Association for the Advancement of Education and The Library Association of China, Peking” (typewritten document), 7 July 1925, ALA Archives. This fixes the actual dates in China as 26 April to 16 June 1925 and adds several cities not on the original itinerary. Since there is no record of a southern trip in June and the situation in Shanghai and Canton (Guangzhou) was precarious, Bostwick probably departed from the north coast and not from Hong Kong on 9 June, as planned. See Chesneau et al., *China*, 161–2.

34. Report of the American Library Association’s 47th Annual Conference, Seattle, *ALA Bulletin* 19 (1925): 123. The extraordinary session, as reported in *Library Journal* 50 (1925): 594–5, concluded, “He described the cordial reception by the Chinese everywhere and their eagerness to accept American advice and help in the development of libraries.” Bostwick made three formal reports: the

first, "To the Executive Board of the American Library Association," 7 July 1925; the second, "To the Library Association of China and the National Association for the Advancement of Education," 3 June 1925; and the third, "To the National Association for the Advancement of Education and the Library Association of China," 7 July 1925, *ALA Bulletin* 20 (1926): 35–48.

35. "Next Steps in Chinese Library Development," *Library Journal* 50 (1925): 908, laid out some of the specific proposals made to the Chinese and discussed the likelihood of achievement. "Success of Dr. Boswick's Mission to China, *Libraries* 31 (1926): 78. Arthur E. Bostwick's, "Libraries in China," *Library Journal* 50 (1925): 895–8, is typical of the kind of descriptive reports that he made to various audiences. He also wrote other papers on Chinese librarianship, such as "China: Not Literate But Literacy," *Wilson Library Bulletin* 3 (1927): 59–62, and "Liang Chi-Chao, Chinese Librarian," *Library Journal* 54 (1929): 152–3.

36. "Library News from China," *Libraries* 35 (1930): 74. Margaret Chang Fung, *The Evolving Social Mission of the National Central Library in China, 1928–1966* (Taipei, Tiawan: National Institute for Compilation and Translation, 1994), 198–9, 200.

37. Koo, director of the China Foundation and former minister to the United States, is cited in "Chinese Library Progress," *Libraries* 31 (1926): 128. See also P. W. Kuo, "The Evolution of the Chinese Library and Its Relation to Chinese Culture," *ALA Bulletin* 20 (1926): 189–94. Alfred K. Chiu and John C. B. Kwei, "Libraries in China," *ALA Bulletin* 20 (1926): 194–6. Both papers were delivered in the context of the international emphasis of the Fiftieth Anniversary Conference of the American Library Association, Atlantic City, N.J., 1926.

38. "In the Interest of China" (brochure), 1926, ALA Archives; "Library Matters in China," *Libraries* 35 (1930): 306.

39. Cheng, "Impact . . . on Chinese Librarianship," 375–6.

40. K. T. Wu, "Library Progress in China," *Library Journal* 61 (1936): 950.

41. T. C. Tai, "Library Movement in China," *Bulletins on Chinese Education* 2, no. 3 (1923): 7.

42. Lucian W. Pye, *China: An Introduction*, 3d ed. (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1984), 130–4; John C. B. Kwei, "A Short Sketch of Chinese Library Development," *Library Journal* 51 (1926): 1114.

43. Arthur E. Bostwick, "Libraries in China," *Library Journal* 50 (1925): 897.

44. Cheng, "Impact . . . on Chinese Librarianship," 385. Priscilla C. Yu, *Chinese Academic and Research Libraries: Acquisitions, Collections, and Organizations, Foundations in Library and Information Science*, vol. 36 (Greenwich, Conn.: JAI Press, 1997), 101.