After World War II, the Geography and Map Division at the Library of Congress acquired large quantities of military-related maps through the U.S. Army Map Service and similar military agencies, as well as from traditional domestic and foreign sources. The Division found itself in possession of many duplicates or otherwise expendable cartographic materials. The Division managed the surplus with its Special Map Processing Project. It recruited from the ranks of students, faculty, and librarians to secure hands-on staffing assistance with a kaleidoscopic variety of frontline projects. The Project served as a conduit to redistribute maps and other cartographic materials from their surplus “duplicates” collection. As the Division enjoyed the benefits of this arrangement – such as gaining control of their collections – many university, college, and other libraries benefited from acquiring LC’s duplicate materials, which strengthened, enlarged, and sometimes “seeded” map collections. The authors explore the Special Project's¹ roots and founding; its structure, staffing, impacts, and outcomes; and important changes.

Keywords: Library of Congress Geography and Map Division; maps; summer projects; librarian education and training; library technical services; gifts; provenance; acquisitions

¹ A Note on Terminology

We describe the Special Map Processing Project on the macro level – the programmatic arc of its full existence, from the 1950s into the 21st century – as well as on a more granular level, examining individual iterations of the Project, known colloquially as “summer projects”. Throughout the paper we primarily refer to these individual events as summer projects (or a specific “summer project” as needed) but also refer to the formal overall Project by its name or in abbreviated form as the “Special Project” or just “the Project”.
Introduction

From 1951 to 2003, the Library of Congress Geography and Map Division (G&M) hosted a summer project, primarily intended to assist the division in processing maps and cartographic resources either for inclusion into the collection or to disperse as duplicates to other libraries. While some articles have been written about the various summer projects and participants, no comprehensive history of this program exists. Few individuals, either former Division staff or project participants, are still around to tell the story. Ironically, the author of a 1971 article noted that G&M’s summer projects were little known across map librarianship, and practically unknown outside of the field throughout its first twenty years or so of life (Otness 1971). Now some 17 years after the conclusion of the Project, we find ourselves in a similar situation. It is our goal, therefore, not only to paint a complete picture of the history of the Program but also to explore its accomplishments and impacts.

[FIGURE 1]

History of Library of Congress Summer Project

Reasons behind the Division’s Special Map Processing Project

The reason why the Special Map Processing Project was launched was a practical one: too many map sheets and not enough staff to organize and manage them. Generally, the work was known as “summer projects” because of when they were carried out. The first was convened in 1951 under the auspices of newly arrived Chief Arch C. Gerlach, who successfully pitched the idea to the Library of Congress administration in 1950. The goal was to have program attendees assist with processing a backlog of maps estimated from 750 thousand to a million items. The backlog comprised new receipts coupled with transferred items from other government entities, including federal agencies.
disbanded at the end of World War II (Ristow 1983, 14). “The staff of 17, in what was then the Map Division, was unable to accession or process more than a fraction of the transfer material and the bulk of it was backlogged and stored in the unfinished fourth floor of the Annex Building [since renamed the Adams Building]” (“Geography and Map Division 25th Map Processing Project” 1975, A197). Chief Gerlach received funding for a summer project, which enabled him to hire geography students as temporary employees. He offered several institutions to sponsor unpaid participants in exchange for duplicate maps from the G&M arrearage.

As described in the Annual Report of the Librarian of Congress (1952, 89):

“A summer project was set up for the sorting and processing of maps held in dead storage. Eight graduate students were employed for 90 days and help was obtained from the American Geographical Society of New York, Columbia University, the University of Illinois, and the University of Wisconsin in exchange for duplicate maps. With this aid 9,612 new maps were accessioned, 7,807 sheets were indexed, 2,960 new maps were filed, and 7,004 duplicate maps were stockpiled for exchange distribution.”

This paragraph, buried in a much longer report, provides the core reason for launching a formal project – i.e., “the sorting and processing of maps held in dead storage”; who was involved from outside the organization and where they came from; the types of specific tasks involved; and a hint at the number of maps to be reckoned with. And most important in terms of the continuing success of these programs, as Larsgaard succinctly put it, “a trade of labor for maps” (1998, 108).

We questioned whether these summer projects were intended to be ongoing versus a “one-shot” attempt to whittle the overwhelming mountain of maps. While no definitive answer appeared during our research, there is evidence that the intent was to
continue until the arrearages were eliminated: “Because of the progress made in the 1951 Project, in accessioning and sorting maps and charts from the backlog in the Annex, administrative approval was granted to sponsor a second Project in 1952. This pattern has been repeated annually over the past quarter century to the mutual benefit of the Library and the participating institutions” (“G&M Map Project Under Way” 1972).

This comment does not necessarily answer the question of original intent but does specify that approval for each project had to be obtained from the LC administration, through requests by the Division. We feel confident that when Chief Gerlach set up the project he was thinking "if successful this should continue." If LC administrators had said "no" along the way, then the projects would have ceased long before they did.

**Recruitment of participants**

The process for recruiting participants initially ran through Chief Gerlach’s office. His experience with university geography departments before coming to LC laid the groundwork for hiring student employees. While direct communication with heads of geography departments was a successful approach, the recruitment process evolved. The Division instituted a more open, systematic search for participants in addition to (and ultimately instead of) the word-of-mouth, by-invitation recruitment practice.

The decision timeline for each summer project began in the previous fall, with an internal review of potential projects and the availability of duplicate materials to offer. As described by David Carrington, a member of the G&M staff, “the number of participants is based on the quality and quantity of the available duplicates” (Dalrymple and Snyder 1994, 418). Upon a positive decision from LC administration, the Division mailed invitation letters to between 100 and 160 colleges and libraries in the United States and Canada. In later years, emails were sent and applicants were asked to
complete a questionnaire with information about their skills, such as foreign language expertise, knowledge of cataloging, and so on. The final selection of participants was a function of the skills that were needed, the amount of project work and duplicate maps available, whether the institution would be participating for the first time, and the size of the institution (Dalrymple and Snyder 1994, 419).

**Types of participants**

Participants in the program were either paid, compensated with maps, or both. A majority of the work-for-maps participants, called “cooperative” or “co-op,” received financial support from their home institutions rather than from LC. Often this was in the form of internal grants (Kidd 1977, 28) or funding reallocated from acquisitions (Rockwell 1994, 11), but G&M records show that some participants received outside support. For example, in 1971 “a Ghanian (sic) student, recently awarded an M.A. degree in geography at the University of Iowa, participated for nine weeks supported by a grant from the Afro-American Foundation” (G&M Division 1971, D1). The other category of participants was temporary employees on the Library of Congress payroll, mostly geography students, referred to as “paid” research and sometimes as “LC-supported participants.”

Participant lists in the 1964 and 1968 *Special Map Processing Project Report* included people who received part of their support from LC and part from their home institutions. However, “due to Library-wide budgetary curtailment” (G&M Division 1970, D1), no temporary processing assistants could be hired for the 1970 Project, leaving it staffed by cooperative participants. Furthermore, LC discontinued all direct financial contributions to participants by 1973. According to Wolter et al. (1979) and confirmed by the authors’ examination of G&M records, the 1972 summer project invited the last of the paid participants; from 1973 forward participants were all from
the co-op labor pool. Thus, the initial carrot that Chief Gerlach used for labor – paid internships – morphed over time into the exchange of work for maps.

During the first years, participants were graduate students, and on occasion undergraduates, usually from geography departments at universities and colleges. Geography faculty also participated. An article in the September 1955 *LC Information Bulletin* described “9 graduate students from outstanding departments of Geography and Cartography, employed for an average period of 9 weeks, plus map librarians and graduate students (avg. 5 weeks each) paid by 8 universities to process maps in exchange for surplus duplicates which accumulated as a by-product of their work” (“Summer Project for Map Processing” 1955, 11).

**Participant changes over time**

A change in participant-type cohorts shifted from students to library professionals. By the mid-1960s, the ratio of student to librarian was about equal. “Emphasis on the first decade was on processing the large backlog of transfers in storage … The majority [of participants] were occupied with sorting, arranging, indexing, and filing sheets of set maps and charts” (“Geography and Map Division 25th Map Processing Project” 1975, A198). Therefore, the early use of paid participants was warranted, while later, “an increasing number of professionally-trained librarians on the Projects have resulted in more varied objectives and work assignments in recent years.” (1975, A198).

The Special Project section in the 1969 G&M Annual Report stated that in 1968, “For the first time since the Projects were established contributed labor (67 man-weeks) exceeded that of LC-supported temporary Library Technicians (54 man-weeks). This was related to the large number of institutions who wished to participate on the cooperative plan and receive duplicate maps, and to various external constraints (e.g.,
modification of the selective service policy relative to college graduates) that limited the number of applicants for LC-supported positions” (G&M Division 1969, D1). Finally, in 1972 the shift from paid to co-op participants was complete (Wolter et al. 1979); thus, from this point on, participation in the program depended not only on one’s ability to take time out of normal job responsibilities but also on the ease of travel to Washington, D.C., as well as the home institution’s ability to cover the person’s travel-related costs.

This non-student population in particular brought skills with them that allowed Division staff to do less project preparation, on-site training, and supervision. With experienced recruits on board, the Division placed them in specialized projects beyond (but often still including) the normal tasks, such as sorting and filing of maps or cards. The map librarians and Division staff became partners and focused on completing high-level tasks, rather than a supervisor-employee arrangement. The Division completed major projects related to rare materials collections and internal bibliographic control, produced research-level resources for internal and external use, and moved from the physical to the digital world in terms of cataloging and finished associated tasks that would have been difficult for Division staff alone to accomplish on time.

Summer projects varied in duration and cohort size, and eventually in frequency. The inaugural project in 1951 lasted 90 days, or just short of 13 weeks. Except for the budget-constrained 1970 Project, which was six weeks of co-op work, the 1963-1971 summer projects were 12 weeks in length, with co-op participation limited by an individual’s choice of sessions of either six- or four-week duration. In 1972, the project duration time frame was reduced to ten weeks, and from 1973-1996 it was shortened to six weeks, again with each individual able to choose lesser amounts of involvement, most often four weeks. An outlier was the final summer project in 2003, which was a
five-week project. Depending on personal circumstances, some individuals participated for a shorter period.

It was not uncommon for Project recruits to either back out or go home early; the 1973 G&M Project Report noted that “There was, happily, no attrition due to early departures or other reasons” (G&M Division 1973, D1), suggesting that this might have been a fairly regular occurrence. In 1968, for example, “because of the various personal considerations, several temporary employees terminated their services prior to the close of the Project” (G&M Division 1969, D1). In 1976, one co-op participant dropped out after a week for unstated reasons; the replacement worked four weeks (G&M Division 1976, D1).

Over the Special Map Processing Project’s run, it had both an average and median size of 11 participants per year (for those years with known attendance figures). According to the 1975 LC Information Bulletin article, up to that point “annual participation has varied from 6 to 21” (“Geography and Map Division 25th Map Processing Project” 1975, A198). Project cohort sizes varied; the reasons included: availability of duplicate maps and atlases for selection, the ability of home institutions to financially support co-op participants, staff availability to manage the projects, and the ability of LC to pay participants. In 1963, the largest known summer project had 21 participants, 14 of whom were cooperative. The last large project was in 1976 with 19, all co-op participants. After 1976, cohort sizes hovered near the overall average, then tapered down in the last few years. The smallest project was in 1998 when only two individuals participated.

[FIGURE 2]

The summer projects were run as an annual event from their 1951 inception until the mid-1980s, with one exception: no project was held in 1980 as G&M was busy moving
its collections from the Pickett Street location in suburban Alexandria, Virginia, to the new James Madison Memorial Building in Washington, D.C. (G&M Division 1981, D1). At the ALA Midwinter Meeting in 1984, Chief Ralph Ehrenberg announced that they would once again skip that year’s summer project due to a lack of sufficient maps and atlases for cooperative exchange but expected to resume the following year (Walsh 1984, 9). The Project returned in 1985; thereafter, it recurred every two to three years for the rest of its existence, concluding in 2003 (see Figure 2). Reasons for the decreasing frequency are not clear, though a lack of sufficient duplicate maps has been cited (Dalrymple and Snyder 1994, 418). Another possible contributing factor was the Division’s inability to spare the staff time required to organize annual summer project tasks.

Types of institutions involved

The 135 institutions with students and employees who participated in the Special Map Processing Project included research facilities (e.g., Scripps Institution of Oceanography, American Geographical Society of New York), a public library (Los Angeles) and even a museum (the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum or “Bishop Museum,” now called the Hawaii State Museum of Natural and Cultural History); the majority, however, were colleges and universities. Thus, academic institutions across the United States and Canada reaped most of the benefits of the Project.

In our tabulation of participants and their home institutions, we found that the summer projects in the 1950s and early 1960s drew their participants heavily from institutions along the mid-to-upper East coast and in the upper Midwest of the United States, with a small number of participants coming from West Coast institutions. During the late 1960s and 1970s, the Project included more institutions from the West Coast and the South, while still welcoming new participants from the existing recruitment
hotbed in the nation’s upper eastern quadrant. However, participation remained most heavily concentrated in the upper East and Midwest, as shown in Figure 3.

[FIGURE 3]

It must be noted that our list of participants and home institutions is known to be incomplete. For example, the 1970 Special Map Processing Report mentions that at that point participants in the 20 summer projects already “represented 82 institutions in 29 states and four Canadian provinces” (G&M Division 1970, D2). However, McGill University in Montreal is the only Canadian institution named in the materials we consulted. Nevertheless, our study shows unevenness in the Project’s reach – a criticism lodged by Carlos Hagen (1970, 37), then Director of the Map Library at the University of California – Los Angeles, who on behalf of libraries in the West decried “the natural inequality of transportation costs” borne by participating institutions.

A review of the “big picture” shows that Pennsylvania State University had the most participants at 15. The University of Kansas and Indiana University were next, with 12 each, and the University of Illinois sent ten participants to the Project. Fifty-four institutions participated once. Although most California institutions participated once or twice (only San Diego State University sent three participants over the years), this distributed participation was 17 in total, California is the state with the fourth-most participants in the Project (behind Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Indiana). Furthermore, California and its 13 participating institutions top the list of most organizational participants by state, with New York a distant second at seven. Ten states are not known to have sent participants to the Project: Alaska, Idaho, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, West Virginia, and Wyoming.
Selection of maps from the participants’ points of view

The method of “payment” to co-op attendees was the weekly opportunity to select up to 1,000 maps or a combination of maps and other materials from the Division’s duplicates collection to benefit their sponsoring library. For many years, participants took turns weekly by drawing lots for a four-hour time slot to select maps. The first-come, first-served process was inefficient and challenging. Otness lamented that it was “virtually impossible to gather together entire sets” and that the process favored those with “the strength and endurance to move mountains of maps;” he further suggested that “a mean-mannered middle line-backer with map training would be ideal for this part of the project” (1971, 17). In response, the Division made some adjustments to how the materials were organized for selecting. Dan Seldin participated in the 1977 summer project, while he was still somewhat critical of the process, he noted that “if a college or university participates more than once, this problem tends to even itself out” (Seldin 1978, 54). Though not all libraries participated at a sufficient rate to make this possible.

To select maps, participants pulled materials from the duplicate shelves (Figure 4), which were arranged by general region, and placed them on carts that would then be processed and packed by Division staff. Many participants, including Seldin (1978), remarked how quickly the piles of duplicate maps became chaotic, making selection difficult.

[FIGURE 4]

One specific change made to the selection process to alleviate the “unfairness” aspect dealt with selecting atlases. At some point, the Division prepared lists of available atlases in advance to allow equitable selection (Ristow 1968, 1). Seldin (1978, 53) indicated this became standardized practice: “Before the project begins each year, each
participating university is sent a list of duplicate atlases from which they make their selection. This list is returned to the Geography and Map Division, and the atlases are divided as equitably as possible since more than one institution may request the same copy of an atlas.” Otness (1971, 19) confirmed Seldin’s account: “This year choice atlases were put on a list which was mailed to participants for checking before the project began.” In later years, all participants had an hour at the end of each day to select materials, but otherwise, the selection process was largely unchanged.

**Planning ahead: use of “pick lists”**

Many participants brought to the project lists of regions and/or topics of interest and tried to select maps accordingly, though the process was hit and miss. For example, Rockwell (1994, 11) noted that “I was the only one from west of the Mississippi [in that year’s group], so I had easy pickings for maps from the West; also the only one with a Middle East specialty.” Some participants selected the maximum number of maps allowed, while other participants chose only material needed by his or her institution.

A very detailed description of how a participant tackled this process comes from Muriel Strickland, then Head of the Map Section at the San Diego State University Social Science Research Laboratory. She recounted her selection process and her acquisitions from the 1978 Project:

> In Washington, during the five four-hour periods (one a week) when I was free to pick out and box whatever I wanted from the available thousands of maps, I chose almost exactly 3000. I was selective, very selective, at this time rather than having to cull when I got back. As a rule, I avoided large-scale series for areas where even hundreds of sheets give only partial coverage; the exceptions were European countries, and Mexico. I found that I could recognize on sight
most of the series I wanted, and so I could concentrate on avoiding duplicates. Anything thematic I pounced on, including those in Russian which looked useful (Strickland 1978, 67).

In his 1979 Special Project Report, Chief John Wolter noted that significantly fewer duplicate items had been selected than in previous years; he described the decrease as “directly attributable to the growing sophistication of the major university map collections and the care with which items are selected by their representatives” (G&M Division 1979, 4), Strickland being a case in point.

Summer projects as a means of collection development

The value of the summer projects as a collection development mechanism was an issue for debate given both the haphazard nature of the materials available from year to year and the knowledge levels of the participants. Several sources acknowledged that not everything selected would be useful at the home institution. However, unneeded maps were often traded or redistributed. Paul Stout, a multi-year participant from Ball State University, described dealing with unwanted items and duplicates by using them to trade with other libraries. He not only helped prevent the excess items from languishing or possibly being destroyed but also extended the reach of the G&M duplicates exchange (Dalrymple and Snyder 1994, 419). Thus, while some maps inevitably were discarded (as was the destined fate for many LC duplicate maps), the vast majority found homes in library collections. Lack of timely processing was an issue for many receiving libraries, of course, given the quantities of materials acquired. As Hagen described the issue: “I know of libraries where the shipments from the Library of Congress Summer Project have been received and stored unpacked in basements for eight or ten years,” rendering them “for all practical purposes… non-existent” (1970,
In his article on collection development for government map collections, Charles Seavey, Head of Government Publications and Maps at the University of New Mexico General Library, summarized these concerns:

Just because a map, or a lot of maps, are free, does not always mean one should grab them. A great deal has been said about the collection building benefits of attending the annual Library of Congress (LC) ‘Summer Project.’ Basically one’s institution pays them to go to LC to work for a specified number of weeks, and LC repays that institution by letting those in attendance take maps from the duplicates stacks. There are some institutions who center their whole collection building effort on the summer project. There are some advantages, it is true. But remember, there are rejects and random sets or partial sets of duplicates here. Does one’s institution need a 1:50,000 set of 1930 Japanese language maps of Honshu? The same principles should be applied to this source that are applied to every other source. Although many good maps come out of the LC summer project, there is also much of limited value. The four or five mammoth academic collections are probably justified in collecting everything they can. Everybody else should be more careful in their selection process. (1981, 25–27)

Despite the criticisms, various authors cited the program as an avenue for acquisitions (Rugg 1967; Seavey 1981; Larsgaard 1998). For map-poor libraries, the summer programs offered a means to accelerate the building of their map collections. As described by Otness (1971), larger schools, particularly those with extensive graduate programs in geography, would find the program beneficial for acquiring specialized maps. While smaller schools could benefit by selecting more general maps and popular map series.” Ristow (1955, 129) asserted that the summer projects constituted “a
significant acquisition source for non-current and out-of-print items,” and Seldin (1978, 54) agreed that almost all the maps he obtained were useful. Paul Stout assessed the impact of the Project on Ball State University’s map library: “the materials he brought back have made all the difference in the collection. The foreign materials, especially, gave it a depth that is not possible to get through the government depository program” (Dalrymple and Snyder 1994, 419).

**Provenance: G&M Division stamps**

Materials distributed from the G&M stockpile of excess maps were stamped as duplicate (or triplicate) as shown in Figure 5. These stamps have subsequently helped libraries trace the provenance of maps acquired from G&M’s duplicates stockpile (through summer projects and other avenues), including some rich paths of ownership. For example, the T. R. Smith Map Collection at the University of Kansas (a 12-time participant in the Program) counts several WWII-era German military maps in its holdings, as well as maps captured by Germany from their original owners in France, Greece, and the Soviet Union. These maps were then captured by U.S. forces, and ownership stamps show them passing through the hands of various U.S. agencies; for some maps, this includes the G&M Division (McEathron 2005).

[FIGURE 5]

Ownership stamps such as these have played an important evidentiary role in tracing the journeys of individual maps and lead to a better understanding of the history of collections and collection-building. Additionally, they provide clues for future researchers and historians to follow.
**Quantities of materials distributed**

The number of materials available for selection could vary greatly every year depending on recent gifts, acquisitions, and exchanges. According to the data, shown in Figure 6, the average compensation for co-op participants throughout the Special Map Processing Project was about 5,700 items per person. A typically large share for an institution – larger than average and perhaps worthy of mention, but not so large as to constitute an outlier – was about 20,000 items in a year. The 1983 Special Project Report notes a large increase in the number of duplicate items distributed over the previous year’s numbers, attributed “primarily to the large number of set maps of China selected by the University of Kansas which is building a Chinese area study program, the University of Illinois which collects for a number of other institutions in Illinois, and Scripps, which selected some 6,000 nautical charts for its oceanographic library” (G&M Division 1983, C3). That year, these institutions took 18,576 (Kansas), 10,301 (Illinois), and 7,472 items (Scripps) (1983, C4). The smallest single acquisition of duplicate maps we saw was Appalachian State’s 586 items in 1983, while the largest was the University of Maryland with 69,540 items in 1988. Detailed selection data, primarily available in the internal Special Project reports, reveal other small points of interest, such as the fact that 1974 was a big year for globes: 18 globes overall were distributed, with the University of Illinois taking six of them (G&M Division 1974, D5).

[FIGURE 6]

The available formats were print maps and nautical charts, many from sets and series, but also included map indexes, atlases, globes, books on cartographic and related topics, guidebooks, gazetteers, and in later years even CD-ROMs. The subjects mapped also varied from topography and bathymetry to fire insurance, geology, and others. Geographic coverage spanned the globe (and the planets!) as did the language of the
resource. While many of the duplicate items had already been cataloged by G&M, i.e., had MARC records describing them, a significant number still awaited processing by the Cataloging unit. The evidence, however, does not show that the existence of bibliographic records for individual titles was a factor in selection choices.

**Descriptions of summer project tasks over the years**

During its first decade of existence, summer project tasks were only focused on organizing and sorting, i.e., “processing” huge quantities of maps, charts, and atlases estimated at nearly one million items (Kearns 2001), that continued to arrive in the Division as federal agency castoffs; through exchange with foreign governments; as the requirement of two copies of individual items that arrive in the copyright office; as gifts; and through other sources. “Processing” meant hands-on physical work related to assessing (determining what were duplicates of current Division holdings, what were not, and where these would end up in the larger workflow), sorting, searching, and moving and storing mountains of maps. To accomplish this, participants were, with few exceptions, assigned to G&M’s Processing Section. “The majority were occupied with sorting, arranging, indexing, and filing sheets of set maps and charts” (“Geography and Map Division 25th Map Processing Project” 1975, A-198). In some cases where participants had foreign language expertise, particularly in languages with non-Roman scripts, their skills were utilized for tasks such as creating indexes and translating titles, scales, and legends.

For a more detailed example of tasks involved, the 1963 project’s list of accomplishments included:

(1) “Further processing of some 150,000 sheets of set maps, including collating newly accessioned sheets with older semi-processed material, arranging sheets...”
by name or number, removing duplicates, checking index maps, and integrating and filing sheets into the collections…

(2) A backlog of some 15,000 unfiled, recently titled maps was reduced.

(3) Some 120,000 unprocessed single maps (from the former Fourth Floor backlog) were sorted by country and arranged on tops of map cases….

(4) The relief model collection was organized and the individual models suspended on hooks and wires….

(5) The index map collection was placed in order.

(6) Catalog cards were arranged and filed into the Main Shelflists and the Dictionary Catalog.

(7) Clerical assistance was provided to the atlas cataloger.

(8) A number of duplicate charts and second copyright maps, held in dead storage for many years were removed from the Vault… and added to the surplus duplicate files” (Library of Congress Map Division 1963, 23–24).

**Evolving task types**

G&M units outside of Processing became involved in the late 1960s and early 1970s, according to the Chief’s reports. The earliest indication that a summer project participant was assigned to tasks outside of the Processing unit was in 1968: “Beverly Drouillard, whose qualifications included geography and library science specializations, was assigned to assist the senior map cataloger for 8 weeks and to the atlas catalogers for 2 weeks” (G&M Division 1969, D2). The 1973 Chief’s Report indicated that a participant worked in a different unit in 1972: “As during the 1972 Project, James Weeks was assigned to the Acquisitions Section” (G&M Division 1973, D2). By 1973 most of the unprocessed backlog had been eliminated, and participants for that
year were assigned to the Cataloging Unit, Atlas Unit, and Data Preparation and File Maintenance Unit as well as the Acquisitions Section (G&M Division 1974, D2–5).

The 25th-anniversary cohort in 1975 seems to mark the complete transition to participant tasks requiring more depth of knowledge and therefore being assigned specifically to a variety of units within the Division. For instance, the MARC Map project noted below was within the Division’s Cataloging Unit, Technical Services Section, but the Acquisitions Section, Reference and Bibliography Section, and Data Preparation and Files Maintenance Section all needed and welcomed help from participants on specialized projects. One such example, completed over multiple years, resulted in “[a] checklist of the [Sanborn fire insurance] maps... compiled between 1974 and 1978 by staff members of the Reference and Bibliography Section of the Geography and Map Division, with the assistance of several summer employees assigned to the section in 1976 and 1977” (Fire Insurance Maps Checklist 1981, ix). This work ultimately led to the published comprehensive guide to Sanborn maps of U.S. cities, an important resource for researchers to this day.

Some of these specialized tasks also contributed to resources that staff used to maintain control of acquisitions or other processes, while others became reference sources for general use. Still other publications are used by both groups. A sampling of the most impactful of these includes:

- A cartobibliography of items in the Vault’s “Benton-Jones Collection” of sixteenth to nineteenth century atlases
- Preparing descriptions of individual duplicate maps that went to the “priced exchange” collection that the Division used for acquiring maps by exchange with outside agencies (a tool used by staff members of the Acquisitions unit)
● Inventorying and creating an accessions database for the Johann Georg Kohl Collection housed in the Vault (G&M Division 1988)

● Establishing, organizing, and assisting with cataloging maps from the Congressional Serial Set Project (G&M Division 1985; 1991)

● Creation of an online database of “Rarities” in the Vault collections: “The Acquisitions Unit was assisted by the development of a database to track and control the rare and unique materials acquired by the Division over the past 25 years. These efforts built on the incomplete hard-copy manual control system that was initiated in 1978” (G&M Division 1994, E2)

● Numerous examples of work done to make additions and improvements to various shelflists, assisting in the preparation or upgrading of Division staff manuals, record-keeping tasks for different Section’s needs, and similar.

● Geographic Cutters (originally published as microfiche in 1989 covering only places in the United States; later became the online tool Classification Web with cutter lists international in scope) (Library of Congress Geography and Map Division 1989)


How computerization impacted task types

A major factor in the change of types of tasks that participants were asked to accomplish involves the rising use of computers in libraries, especially from the 1970s and beyond. “Development of MARC Map, G&M’s computer-assisted cataloging
procedures … have resulted in more varied objectives and work assignments in recent years” (“G&M Map Project Under Way” 1972).

By the 1980s and 1990s tasks most often involved focused objectives, such as Paige Andrew (editor’s note: one of this paper’s authors) reviewing hundreds of pages of a database of geographic area codes for alphabetical/numerical/symbols accuracy and correcting misspelled place names (precursory work on the database that is now part of Classification Web, an online tool map catalogers use to assign unique alphanumeric codes representing individual places) (G&M Division 1996, I2–3). Ken Rockwell (1994, 11) was assigned to assess the “hit rate” of a sampling of bibliographic records in OCLC against the Division’s map holdings: “My own assignment was to search OCLC for contributed copy for items in the Division’s cataloging backlog, downloading them to G&M’s processing file when found and attaching a Library of Congress Call Number (MARC field 010). By tallying the hit rate vs. titles not found (as well as duplicates of DLC records already in OCLC), I thus generated statistics which will be used to determine whether G&M will search for contributed copy on a regular basis.”

Similarly, during the 2001 summer project, Kristi Jensen tackled two complex tasks: “One assignment involved creating a database for a recently acquired collection of road maps...The database, which will eventually be accessible to the public through the Library’s website, will enable users to search for maps by year, title or geographic area. Her second assignment was to research and compile a list of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) web sites, which will be used as a Web resource to link people to all of the sites” (Kearns 2001).

Even though tasks assigned to individual participants evolved over the decades according to the Division’s needs, whether related to the initial and ongoing goal of identifying duplicate maps and atlases, assessing and re-organizing stored materials in
anticipation for physical moves, or working on special projects, the core work involved did not change. Someone still needed to look at what maps had arrived, put them in order, ascertain which were new to the existing collections, which were duplicates that could later be shared, and so forth. Lifting, moving, packing and shelving, cleaning, updating indexes, and filing continued to be the work of both Division staff and summer project participants, as noted in many of the Division Chief’s reports.

**Educational aspects of the Project**

A contentious point of the Project was whether these summer projects constituted a source of education for map librarians. Initially, pointed out as part of a broader look at education and map librarianship, Carlos Hagen’s “Education and Training in Map Librarianship” (1969, 6) criticized the summer project “internships” as falling short of educational opportunities for students or map librarians. Then-Division Chief Walter Ristow (1969, 39) responded in the next issue of the SLA G&M Bulletin:

> Since their inception, the Projects have also served to introduce the participants (most of whom have been majors in geography) to the operations of a large map library, and to the Federal publishing agencies. The beneficial results of this incidental aspect of the Projects is evident from many commendatory letters we have received from former participants, some of whom subsequently became professional map librarians.

This view is supported by participants’ comments citing "the educational value of the tasks assigned" (Seldin 1978, 53) and those who reported that "the working environment is highly conducive to learning" (Otness 1971, 38).

Perhaps this early conversation spurred the Division to take the educational aspect more seriously; the unpublished Chief’s reports and later the *LC Information*
Bulletin articles consistently highlighted activities beyond assigned tasks, such as tours and lectures that supported education and training for participants.

Informal education via seminars and tours

The practical experiences students gained by working in the 1950s summer projects might not be a true equivalent to an education in map librarianship, but there is evidence that this level of “education” benefited some who did go on to become map librarians both within G&M and even at other institutions. Most certainly learning how map series and sets are arranged; who produces and publishes maps; issues relating to the lack of storage space; and holistic observation of the operations of a map library can be considered an educational experience. But as the educational component of the summer projects moved from “unintended” to becoming a serious part of each project, the summer projects developed into “an unofficial training ground for the neophyte map librarian” (Larsgaard 1981, 509).

Beginning in the 1960s Division staff members, from the Chief down to heads of units, made time to organize and deliver regular presentations to further educate attendees. Lectures for the 1976 project included:

- Acquisitions in the Geography and Map Division – Mr. Wise
- MARC Map: its History and Development – Mr. Carrington
- The Hauslab-Liechtenstein Cartographic Accession – Dr. Ristow
- History of American Cartography – Mr. Stephenson (G&M Division 1976, D6).

As described by former Chief Ralph Ehrenberg, the seminar series “deals with specialized aspects of map librarianship and introduces participants to distinctive segments of the cartographic collection” (1984). Seldin observed that “[a] great deal of
knowledge can be obtained from these experts in the field of map librarianship” (1978, 53). The many positive comments from other participants attest to the value of these seminars, one noting that the Project “is a commendable attempt to advance map librarianship” (Otness 1971, 19).

The Chief of the Division also arranged formal tours of federal mapping and related agencies. For example, the 1976 Chief’s Report noted that:

Project participants were also conducted on an all-day tour of the U.S. Geological Survey facilities in Reston, Virginia. Visits were also arranged for individuals and groups to the libraries of the National Geographic Society and the Smithsonian Institution. For the first time this year, Project participants received a special lecture on preservation of cartographic materials, presented by Ms. Shelley Fletcher and Ms. Margaret Hey of the Library’s Restoration Office. This was particularly well received by the participants (G&M Division 1976, D6).

While fewer of the seminars and tours were provided as time went on, owing to shorter summer project durations they were never completely stopped.

The end of the Project

We have not found an official declaration of an end to the Special Project. But gauging by measurements of frequency, cohort size, and numbers of duplicate maps distributed, the Project appears to have begun tapering off by the 1990s and concluded by the early 2000s, with the last iteration occurring in 2003. G&M Cartographic Acquisitions Specialist Robert Morris (2020) noted in email correspondence with the authors that the 2003 Project “was the 2nd project in a row where few analog materials were selected.”
Post-project exit interviews revealed that participants had been instructed to limit their selection of paper materials to their home state and its surrounding region. From these same interviews, G&M staff also learned that the Project as a source for cataloging training no longer held importance for participants. Thus, “the founding reasons the Summer Project was developed – disseminating duplicate cartographic materials to map libraries across the United States, and training librarians in what originally was the emerging discipline of map librarianship – were no longer valid” (Morris and Andrew 2020).

Changing leadership priorities in the Division may also have played a role, as was previously noted. In 2011, when Ralph Ehrenberg (2020) returned as Chief, the Division “discussed holding a LC Summer Project, but did not for three basic reasons.” First, a Summer Project would have competed with the Library of Congress Junior Fellows program, which offers paid summer internships for college undergraduates. Founded in 1991 (“Junior Fellows Summer Internships Available at the Library of Congress” 2005), by the mid-2000s the Junior Fellows program supported internship programs for divisions across the Library, including G&M (Allen 2006). In the aftermath of budget cuts, the Division lacked sufficient staffing to provide project guidance for both programs and so the LC-wide program took priority. Second, the Division was no longer amassing large stockpiles of duplicates as in the past; and third, in agreement with Morris’ observations above, “many college and university libraries were shifting their focus from analogue to digital maps” (2020).

Summary of the Project’s impacts

Impact on the Geography and Map Division

The primary impact of these summer projects for the Division was accomplishing more in a given year than would have been possible with Division staff alone, with the
secondary benefit of finding homes for duplicates from the collection. As noted in the 1966 Annual Report, over the first 15 years of the program, the unprocessed backlog of one million maps was reduced by an astounding 97%, to less than 50,000 sheets remaining to be processed (G&M Division 1966, 68). Approximately half a million sheets were added to the Library of Congress collections over the same period and “nearly a million duplicate maps and atlases have been supplied (in exchange for contributed labor) to libraries and geography departments throughout the United States” (G&M Division 1965, 4).

While the receiving libraries enjoyed the benefit of duplicates, the wider availability of distributed materials also helped alleviate reference pressures on the Division (Library of Congress Map Division 1964, 5): rather than relying on LC, researchers across the country could consult local collections. In addition, preservation and access is one of LC’s core missions; making duplicate materials available elsewhere helped fulfill that mission (Ristow 1955, 128). This fact was highlighted in the FY-1953 Annual Report of the Librarian of Congress (1954, 41), which stated that “such distribution helps to build up decentralized collections of maps, which would be strategically valuable in the event of damage to collections in Washington, and encourages the development of cartographic research and of training centers throughout the United States.”

The Division reaped other benefits from the program. While the backlog of unprocessed materials shrank and the mix of participants shifted from a majority of students to a majority of librarians, the projects became more diverse and more complex. Participants were assigned to various units within the Division to take advantage of individual expertise and help move special projects forward, such as content for the development of the checklist of Sanborn fire insurance maps. Almost
every unit within the Division benefitted from the contributions of summer project participants.

Although the Special Map Processing Project itself was not well-known, the inclusion of hundreds of geography students, faculty, and map librarians in the daily operations of the Division also served to raise the profile of LC and awareness of its collections. The summer projects had the happy side effect of being a recruitment tool as well. More than a dozen participants were later hired into permanent positions within the Division (Dalrymple and Snyder 1994, 419). Both Division staff and participants cited the professional connections as one of the benefits of the summer projects. Chief John Hébert described the value by stating that “the program cements the relationships between the Library and the nation’s map libraries” (Kearns 2001). Several participants noted the high value of working alongside and building relationships with Division staff.

The Division bore costs for the Project via direct monetary payments to participants as well as indirect and in-kind costs. Throughout the Project, preparation for the summer projects required dedicated time and effort on the part of Division staff to organize each year’s tasks, conducting the mundane aspects of recruiting participants such as writing and publishing formal invitations, receiving and sorting applications, and making choices as to who would ultimately be invited; and later, matching invitees to specific Unit tasks. Division staff also spent time mentoring and supervising the work of the participants. As projects moved to a greater percentage of co-op participants, staff involvement further intensified with the increased focus on education.

**Impact on the libraries who sponsored participants**

Evidence shows that the receipt of duplicate G&M maps and other materials helped to grow, enrich, and fill gaps in collections of the institutions that sponsored participants.
In turn, these more robust collections supported reference and research services at their home institutions, enabling librarians around the country to address inquiries that previously would have needed referral to LC, the project is a means of sharing its surpluses in a way which benefits the entire field … the maps made available are of such a wide variety that they can enrich all kinds of library collections” (Otness 1971, 17).

While the Special Map Processing Project was not the sole mechanism used by the Division to distribute duplicates, it was a significant one. Ristow (1955, 129) noted that “Between fifty and one hundred thousand surplus map sheets have been distributed annually by the Library of Congress during the past five years.” By the 25th project, “more than 1,250,000 duplicate maps and atlases have been selected by participants…” (“Geography and Map Division 25th Map Processing Project” 1975, A129) and at the 50th year of the Project it was noted that “To date, the Library has provided more than 2 million duplicate maps and atlases to 438 participants from 135 colleges and universities from across the country” (Kearns 2001) (see Figures 3, 6 and 7).

[FIGURE 7]

Duplicates from the Division constituted a major acquisition source for many. For example, Seldin (1978, 54) estimated the value of materials selected at an average summer project to be approximately $10,000, but it could be much higher depending on the materials available. He further estimated that over half of the maps in the Indiana University collection were acquired via participation in the summer projects: “Due to the lack of available records, I do not know how many maps Indiana University has obtained by its participation in the summer project. However, I estimate that between 100,000 and 125,000 of the estimated 185,000 map sheets in the Geography and Map Library at Indiana University have been obtained in this manner. I also estimate that we
have obtained 600 to 700 atlases from this source.”

Seldin also noted that some specific acquisitions from the summer projects greatly enhanced the usefulness of his collection for researchers: “However, in 1976, I estimate that my selection was worth about $50,000 when I obtained a great many outdated Russian and Eastern European maps. Most of them are probably the best coverage available to the general public;” additionally, “Indiana University probably has one of the best non-depository collections of Canadian topographic maps, most of which were obtained at the summer project” (Seldin 1978, 54). His selection of Russian and Eastern European maps later formed the basis of Indiana University Library’s online “Russian Military Topographic Map Collection,” and an article about this collection notes that “Seldin chose the Russian military maps to complement IU’s academic and disciplinary strengths” (Quill and Dalmau 2019, 66).

**Duplicate maps: unexpected benefits and creative uses**

In some cases, the materials chosen from summer projects became the basis of an individual library’s digital online collection or other projects that could not have been envisioned at the time of acquisition. Authors Theresa Quill and Michelle Dalmau described a unique digital map collection in their article “Capture and Release: The Story of the Russian Military Topographic Map Collection” (2019). Although Seldin knew the strengths of his collection, when he made his selections he would likely not have suspected that some 4,000 maps would eventually be scanned and mounted as a website that researchers could use to delve deeply into Soviet military initiatives of World War II.

Another case concerns G&M’s Sanborn fire insurance maps from the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries covering cities from across the United States. “The Sanborn collection includes some fifty thousand editions of fire insurance maps
comprising an estimated seven hundred thousand individual sheets. The Library of Congress holdings represent the largest extant collection of maps produced by the Sanborn Map Company” (Fire Insurance Maps Checklist 1981, ix). As the Division’s holdings included many duplicates, some of these were distributed through participants to their home libraries. These became a rich resource for researchers in many disciplines including architecture, urban planning, and transportation as well as for genealogists.

Today at least two dozen or more research libraries have scanned and made accessible their out-of-copyright copies of Sanborn maps for their state or city via publicly searchable websites. A sampling includes Pennsylvania State University (https://libraries.psu.edu/about/collections/sanborn-fire-insurance-maps), Brigham Young University (https://collections.lib.utah.edu/search?q=sanborn+maps) and University of Georgia (https://dlg.usg.edu/collection/dlg_sanb).

For the sponsoring libraries participation in a summer project also meant that institutions incurred both indirect and direct costs. Indirect costs included loss of personnel during the summer project period while the participant was away, and the administrative costs related to participation. The direct costs to the sponsoring institutions included subsidies for participants’ housing, food, and transportation, as well as shipping expenses. For many years, a congressional representative of one’s state would use the U.S. Postal Service franking method, with the fees charged to their congressional account; but later the individuals’ home library or university picked up the cost. These costs were not insignificant and, notably, more than 100 libraries felt that the investment was worthwhile.

Another benefit was the professional development opportunity for personnel and many participants reflected positively on their experience(s) in the Summer Project. Christopher Mixon, who participated in the 2001 Summer Project, shared that
sentiment: “I had a great project to work on, but I would have come to mop floors for the chance to work in the Library’s Geography and Map Division” (Kearns 2001).

**What did individual participants gain?**

Initially, participant benefits seemed limited to students garnering a temporary summer job at a major institution, i.e., paid internships that allowed them to continue their education or fulfil basic necessities. However, after the first decade, the Division devoted more time to providing lectures and tours for the participants to enhance their summer experiences, which reflected the increase in involvement by library professionals. Time was also afforded for browsing and research using the collections (Otness 1971; Anderson 1996). Participants reported benefitting from the change of pace in their daily work and enjoyed the opportunities to explore the nation’s capital. Long-term career impacts are difficult to measure; however, a significant number of participants were hired by LC, so familiarity with the Division’s organization and its personnel may have been a factor.

One of the clearest descriptions of a project’s impact on a map librarian comes from an article by Ken Rockwell (1994, 12): “A major benefit of participating in the Special Map Project is the opportunity to interact with the librarians and see how they do things—and for a map cataloger like myself that means the chance to ask questions on the finer points of cataloging, such as questionable map dates and inadequate subject cutters. It’s quite a feeling to be doing my work, overhear people around me consulting over something, and realize they’re all talking about maps and map cataloging. Surrounded by my own kind, as it were”.

Connections developed during the Project facilitated communication between map catalogers in the community and map catalogers at LC during the late 1960s-early 1970s. At this time, cataloging underwent a surge in standardization and
computerization, built upon LC-owned MARC and LC-developed cataloging standards. Consequently, some Division members, particularly catalogers, grew active in organizations outside of LC; such collaboration continues. For example, Elizabeth (Betsy) Mangan, long-time head of the Division’s Cataloging and Data Processing Unit, became a key leader in developing the specialized MARC format (MARC Maps) and the fundamental rule interpretation manual (Cartographic Materials 2003) that modern cartographic cataloging depends upon today. Mangan’s (2007) article on the hundred-year history of cartographic cataloging at LC traces the Unit’s transition from an isolated island of map catalogers to a leader and integral part of the map librarianship community.

**Summation**

The Project was originally envisioned to last no more than a few years until a major backlog of duplicate maps had been cleared. However, it lasted a total of 53 years, spanning four Librarians of Congress and five G&M Chiefs. The 40 summer projects conducted over the 50-plus year history of the Project represent an experiment that proved to be successful on many fronts and beneficial for the entities that participated.

The Division gained control over a massive amount of maps and charts, and later including atlases and other cast-off cartographic resources from many federal agencies. Additionally, it completed major projects related to its Vault materials, a massive Sanborn insurance maps collection, the creation of a still-useful inventory of published bibliographies of cartographies that serve researchers to this day, and growing an infant computer-based cataloging system into a widely-used standard.

Participants, who were initially students and later primarily map librarians, gained knowledge about the operations of an enormous, comprehensive, and complex map collection. Those students, hired by LC in the 1950s, garnered basic library
collection organizing experience while getting paid. By the early 1960s, library employees and some university faculty joined the effort. From the 1970s forward, map librarians became the core participants. Individuals strongly benefitted from immersion in the daily activities of the Division, learning skills in areas such as acquisitions, collection development, cataloging and classification, and preservation as they relate to maps and other cartographic resources. Skills such as these translated directly to the work being done in their home libraries. Several former participants were later hired by the Division, including an Assistant Division Chief (“Geography and Map Division 25th Map Processing Project” 1975, A199). As of 2001, LC boasted eight current staff members who had been Project participants: six in G&M, and two in the Anglo-American Acquisitions Division (Kearns 2001) (see Figure 8).

[FIGURE 8]

Libraries acquired tens of thousands of maps, atlases, nautical charts, cartographic publications, and even a few globes for their collections. Some libraries built significant portions of their map collections from the duplicates exchange, and others (or even the same libraries on different occasions) made narrower, deeper selections to fill specific collection and curricular needs.

Chiefs of G&M reiterated benefits gained by both the Division and summer project participants. Key among these were educational aspects, both formal and informal, delivered by Division administrators and staff to the participants, and the birth and growth of professional relationships and activities between the Division and librarians outside of LC.

The Special Map Processing Project was a fruitful collaboration, grown out of the basic need by G&M to gain control over a flood of incoming maps. It became a
dynamic multi-decadal effort that benefited organizations and people on many levels
and shared millions of cartographic resources across North America.
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Additional Sources of Data


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Data for the charts and graphs in this paper were compiled from a variety of sources including the Annual Reports of the Librarian of Congress for fiscal year ending..., the Library of Congress Geography & Map Division Appendices to the Annual Report, issues of the Library of Congress Information Bulletin, and others.
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Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Mr. Ed Redmond, Reference Specialist, for finding and sharing unpublished “Division Chief’s reports” (or, in actuality, appropriate portions thereof) because these provided deep detail of who was involved, what projects were tackled and by whom, the numbers of materials processed, the educational opportunities afforded attendees and the number of duplicate maps and atlases received in trade for work accomplished. These details provided the clearest picture of individual summer project activities, especially regarding the evolving structures and changes that the summer programs underwent.

In addition, project participants Stanley Stevens and John Anderson deserve our thanks for providing us personal level documents that helped provide insights and details into aspects of individual summer projects that we would not otherwise have uncovered elsewhere. We also appreciate all messages from those who shared personal remembrances and potential sources of information for use in the preparation of our manuscript.

And finally, sincere gratitude to former, and now retired, Geography and Map Division Chief Ralph E. Ehrenberg for the several emails in conversation with us to provide knowledge about the Division’s operations and “thinking” as well as for other contacts to reach out to along the way. Gaining perspectives about the inner workings of the Division beyond what had been published was an invaluable service to us.

Figure 2. Participant cohorts in the G&M Summer Project, broken down (when known or determinable) by source of financial support. Years with no Project are omitted; blank bars indicate a Project occurred that year, but no participant count was available.

Figure 3. Map showing the locations of the home institutions, where known, of all Summer Project participants. Color-coding indicates an institution’s first known participation in the Project; circle size corresponds with an institution’s number of known participants.

Figure 4. Duplicates selection area at the G&M Division. Images by Kimberly Kowal (2003, 14–16), used with permission.

Figure 5. Examples of stamps on Library of Congress duplicate (and triplicate) maps from the Penn State University Libraries collection.

Figure 6. Year-by-year totals, where known, of duplicate items in any known formats distributed by the Division via the Summer Project. Years with no summer project are omitted; blank bars indicate a summer project occurred that year, but no count of materials distributed was available.

Figure 7. Cumulative total of duplicate items distributed by the Division via the Special Maps Processing Project. Years with no summer project are omitted; blank bars indicate a summer project occurred that year, but no count of materials distributed was available.

Figure 8. Project participants who later joined the Library of Congress staff: (from left) Allen Wayner, Peter Stark, Ronald Grim, Kathryn Engstrom, Juan-Carlos Vega, and Richard Fox. Wayner and Stark were Anglo-American Acquisitions Division staff; the others (along with James Flatness, not pictured) were in the Geography and Map Division. Photo by Gary Fitzpatrick; originally accompanied Kearns’ (2001) Library of Congress Information Bulletin article.