THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN AUSTRALIAN ACADEMIC LIBRARY: DIXSON LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND, 1938 - 1973

KARL G. SCHMUDE

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of History as part of the requirement for the Degree of Bachelor of Letters

January 1983

Frontispiece: Aerial View of University of New England Campus in the 1960s, Showing Successive Locations of Dixson Library - *Booloominbah*[1], Marshall Building[2], and Permanent Building - Stage I[3].

CONTENTS

		Page
Introduction	.. ..	v
CHAPTER ONE	Foundations of a Rural University Library, 1938 - 1946	1
CHAPTER TWO	Growth and Constraint, 1947 - 1955	25
CHAPTER THREE	Rapid Development and New Demands, 1956 - 1962	48
CHAPTER FOUR	Changing Needs, Changing Technology, 1963 - 1973 ..	77
Conclusion	.. ..	100
APPENDIX 1	Provision of Funds to Dixson Library, 1939 - 1973	102
APPENDIX 2	Dixson Library Holdings, 1938 - 1973	103
APPENDIX 3	Dixson Library Staff Numbers, 1938 - 1973	104
Bibliography	.. ..	105

A B B R E V I A T I O N S

A.A.R.L.	*Australian Academic & Research Libraries*
A.D.B.	*Australian Dictionary of Biography*
A.L.J.	*Australian Library Journal*
D.L.A.	Dixson Library Archives, State Library of New South Wales
L.A.A.	Library Association of Australia
L.A.A.U.L.S.	Library Association of Australia, University Libraries Section
N.E.U.C.	New England University College
S.U.A.	Sydney University Archives, Fisher Library
U.N.E.	University of New England
U.N.E.A.	University of New England Archives, Dixson Library

ILLUSTRATIONS

		Facing Page
Frontispiece	Aerial View of University Campus, Showing Successive Locations of Dixson Library	
FIGURE 1	Original Room in *Booloominbah* Housing the Dixson Library	15
FIGURE 2	Lecture Room Provided for Library	15
FIGURE 3	Lecturer's Study Room and Verandah Added to Library	16
FIGURE 4	Lecturer's Common Room (described as 'Warden's Office' in Plan) Proposed for Library Use and 'Dungeon' Room Adopted by Library	32
FIGURE 5	Hall and Dining Room Annexe Incorporated into Library	50
FIGURE 6	Drawing of Lamont Library, Harvard University	63
FIGURE 7	Drawing of Dixson Library [Stage I], University of New England	63
FIGURE 8	Rooms on Library's First Floor Vacated by the Department of Adult Education	80

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to trace the origins and development of the Dixson Library of the New England University College (1938 - 1954) and later of the University of New England (1954 - 1973).

The history of university libraries has been claimed to hold greater interest than that of other libraries because it reflects the history of higher education 'like the impression struck from a coin, the exact image revealed with inexorable precision' [1] In the case of the Dixson Library, influences outside the domain of higher education - associated, for example, with the regional location of the University - have played an important role, but the Library's history is nonetheless revealed most fully in the context of university developments. The Library was established to serve the educational programme of the University of New England, and it has been, to a significant extent, a microcosm of the University. Its fortunes, like those of university libraries in general, have been intimately related to the problems and changes which confronted its parent institution.

Among the forces which have shaped the development of the Dixson Library, it is important to identify those which are distinctive to the University of New England, as well as those which are common to Australian universities as a whole, from the 1930s to the 1970s. The

---

[1] Germain Calmette, 'Des Collections Universitaires de l'Ancien Régime aux Bibliothèques Universitaires Françaises Contemporaines', *Archives, Bibliothèques et Musées de Belgique*, vol. 26, 1955, p. 18. Quoted by John F. Camp, 'Libraries and the Organization of Universities in France, 1789 - 1881', *Library Quarterly*, vol. 51, April 1981, p. 189.

major distinctive factors have been the existence of the institution in a rural environment, the enrolment of a relatively small and residentially based internal student population, and the availability of external study. At the same time, the Library has formed part of a wider context and been affected by common social and political influences. The social influences have been various, including demographic changes in Australia, shifts in educational philosophy and practice, technological innovations, and professional developments in librarianship. The political impact has been twofold - financial and advisory - and, in the period 1938 - 1973, has involved a transition from a two-tiered system of funding and advice (State and Commonwealth) to a centralisation of provision at the national level.[2]

The main focus of this study is the interplay between the Dixson Library and the various forces, both within the University of New England and outside, which have affected its role and development. Such an approach has minimized consideration of such topics as the internal administrative procedures of the Library or the occupational contributions of individual staff members. It has also involved certain assumptions about the University - such as the centrality of library service to all academic pursuits - which may yield to different perspectives in any comprehensive history of the institution.

On account of the significance and pace of changes from the 1930s to the 1970s, the Dixson Library affords a case study of developments during this period in Australian university libraries in general. Issues which loomed large in the history of the Dixson Library also

---

2 See A.L. Moore, 'The History, Machinery, and Scope of Direct Grants by the Commonwealth Government to Australian Universities, 1935 - 1964', *The Australian University*, vol. 3, November 1965, pp. 225 - 234.

figured importantly in other institutions - for example, the recurrent pressure on building space caused by rapid growth; the problem of reconciling service for undergraduates with provision for researchers (and, on a cross-axis, of reconciling the varied needs of students and staff in Arts and Science); and the gradual shift of the library from a collecting agency with a bibliographical orientation and quasi-academic character to a service agency emphasising educative and management skills and manifesting a distinctive professional identity.

Hence the history of the Dixson Library is of broader interest than the history of one university library. Not only was it affected by forces at work in Australian society and education, but it in turn sheds light on the nature of those forces and the impact which they registered on the society at large - and, in particular, on its educational sector.

The preparation of this thesis depended greatly on the advice and assistance of various people. The sources available to me were written and oral. I am grateful for the co-operation of those who gave me ready access to archival records: Tom Lamble, Pat Chapman, Tom Cavanagh, and Allan Wilkes (University of New England); Ken Smith (Archivist, Sydney University); and Dianne Rhodes (Acting Dixson Librarian, the State Library of New South Wales). Since my chosen subject is of recent history, I gained particular value from interviews with participants. These included former staff members of the Library, Edna Belshaw and Frank Rogers, as well as - and most especially - Edith Tattersall who gave most generously of her time and knowledge; and, in addition, former staff members of the University, Jim Belshaw and Arch Nelson. I am also indebted to existing members of the Library's staff

who afforded me the benefit of their memories - Smith Richardson, Peter Beaton, Ron Ray, Russell Farrant, and Peggy McClenaghan. Finally, I would like to record my gratitude to Bruce Mitchell, whose guidance and criticism as my academic supervisor were invaluable, and to Alison Kent, who typed the manuscript with unfailing competence and cheer.