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And They Were There

Reports of Meetings — Trends and Traditions featured at SALALM, 2002

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47th Annual SALALM, 2002 — “Trends and Traditions in Latin American and Caribbean History”
Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, June 1-4, 2002
Report by Christine Mueller and Sharon Moynahen (University of New Mexico)

“Trends and Traditions in Latin American and Caribbean History” was the theme of the Forty-seventh meeting of the Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials (SALALM), June 1-4, 2002. Sponsored by the Latin American Studies Program and the University Libraries of Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, the conference was the annual opportunity for members to meet, share ideas and to socialize in the beautiful green rolling splendor of upstate New York. The Statler Hotel, part of Cornell’s School of Hotel Administration, proved an excellent venue, and Cornell librarians David Block and Cecilia Sercan are to be congratulated for their excellent local arrangements and a conference which was as enjoyable as it was informative.

An initial full day of meetings provided committees and regional consortia opportunities to plan and complete projects and explore new opportunities. Further committee meetings throughout the conference punctuated an excellent program of panels and discussions planned by this year’s president, Denise A. Hibay of the New York Public Library. At the Opening Session, after a gracious welcome by University Librarian Sarah E. Thomas and Debra A. Castillo of the Latin American Studies Program, the José Toribio Medina Award for excellence in bibliography was awarded to Gayle Ann Williams of the University of Georgia. This year’s Enlace participants, recipients of travel awards to encourage participation by Latin American librarians, were introduced. They were Elda Mulholland from the Pontificia Universidade Catolica do Rio de Janeiro who spoke about a library network in Brazil and Victor J. Cid Carmona from El Colegio de Mexico who discussed digital libraries in Mexico. Also introduced was the President’s first time attendee travel grant winner, John Storm of Brigham Young University. The participants were then thoroughly entertained by a fascinating and scholarly keynote address. George Reid Andrews, a University of Pittsburgh historian, explored “Black History in Latin America, 1900-2000.” After focusing on the themes of racial democracy, effective mobilization and what it means to be Black or to try to be Black in society, he ended his presentation with the sound of callimbas, the rhythmic drumming of Uruguay. The audience was rocking by the time they left for the opening of the book exhibits.

Salaínticas look forward to the extensive exhibits which feature SALALM members and visitors. The conference provides an opportunity for the face-to-face contact that keeps materials, purchases and blanket order plans functioning smoothly. Exhibitors came from all over Latin America (Mexico, Argentina, Uruguay, Bolivia, Peru, Brazil, Chile, and more), Europe and the United States. Book dealers are active members in the organization and serve on various committees and the executive board.

Many panels addressed the concerns of today’s Latin American librarians, and future librarians. Pamela Graham’s (Columbia University) panel “New Traditions and Old, Innovations in the Training of Latin Americanists” featured presentations by Anne C. Barnhart-Park of Lafayette College who has initiated a program of online research journals and searching exercises. Cesar Rodriguez of Yale University spoke of the inadequacies of funding for Yale’s extensive manuscript collections and the need for personnel with the skills to reorganize and provide better finding aids. Walter Brem of the University of California, Berkeley, discussed professionalization of Mexican history, including the roles of the research institutes which prepared scholars and researchers.

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Digital imaging, databases, and preservation were explored on several panels. Fernando Acosta-Rodriguez of the New York Public Library led the discussion “Capturing History,” which included a history of the contributions of renowned Latin American librarian Marietta Daniels Shepard and her role in the development of SALALM. Rhonda Neugebauer of the University of California, Riverside, moderated a panel that focused on the Digital Library. Victor Cid Carmona (El Colegio de Mexico) shared the results of his recent research on digitization projects in Mexico. The “Effectiveness of the Internet v. the Library as a Cultural Resource for the Foreign Language Classroom” was discussed by John Storm of Brigham Young University and Elsa Barbarena and Maricela Jimenez of Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico presented “Mexicore: an alternative electronica para conocer la historia de arte de Mexico.”

Next year’s SALALM president, Darlene Waller of the University of Connecticut, brought together speakers from Cuba, Mexico, and the United States to share perspectives on the panel, “Cuban History in Word and Image.” The utilization of illustrations in Cuban biographical studies was discussed by Eliades Acosta, Biblioteca Nacional José Martí and Enrique Camacho Navarro of Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico shared insights into pictorial representations of Fidel Castro in publications. Projects which will provide Web access to digitized images of Cuban political posters and Cuban book covers were explained and demonstrated by Sharon Moyahan, Christine Mueller and Wendy Pedersen, all from the University of New Mexico General Library.

Joseph Holub’s (University of Pennsylvania) workshop on “International Governmental Organization Resources” focused on resources available from the Inter-American Development Bank, the Organization of American States, and The United Nations. A workshop presented by Don Panzera and David Williamson of the Library of Congress explored how vendors can increase the visibility of the publications which they offer by supplying a richer bibliographic record, enhanced with table of contents information. The three current Library of Congress Table of Contents (TOC) projects: Electronic Cataloging In Publication, D-TOC (scanning of TOC information) and ONIX (XML metadata): were demonstrated and energetically discussed by vendors and interested librarians. Additional themes and issues explored in panels included Latin American feminism, approaches to Latin American history, history of the book, library cooperation, pamphlets in research collections, Latin American film clips and collection building and management.

Of particular interest to catalogers and those who utilize the OCLC database was the discussion in the Subcommittee on Cataloging and Bibliographic Technology concerning the creation of non-English bibliographic records by libraries outside the United States and what it means for a U.S. library to enhance and recatalog these records into English following the guidelines of OCLC. At issue is how, in a shared international bibliographic database, libraries can contribute and utilize records in the language of their local catalog and whether a single record, with data in multiple languages, or separate records for each cataloging language, best serves the needs of libraries and their patrons. 

Salalstas always find time for fun, and this year was no exception. After the cordial opening of the Book Exhibits, participants were treated to a reception at Cornell’s Olin Library Sunday evening. Monday night found conference attendees dancing to a Latin beat at the annual Libreros reception. Excellent food, good company and the annual raffle to raise funds for Enlace travel funds highlighted the event. Lieb Adelson, of Books from Mexico was the master of ceremonies.

At its forty-seventh meeting, SALALM paused to consider what it might look like at age fifty. Plans were made to hold the 2005, fiftieth anniversary, meeting in Gainesville at the University of Florida which was host to the first SALALM held at Chisegut Hill, in Brooksville, Florida. The celebration will include pictures and remembrances of conferences past, early participants, and memorable events.

Next year’s meeting will be held in Cartagena, Colombia, May 23-27, 2003 with the theme “Celebrating Culture: Space, Symbols, and Tradition in Latin America and the Caribbean.” A preconference focusing on MARC 21 for Latin American librarians will be sponsored by SALALM and organized by the Subcommittee on Cataloging and Bibliographic Technology under the direction of its in-coming Chair, Ana Cristin of the Library of Congress, and Ageo Garcia of Tulane University.