

During the 3 weeks of March 9 to March 31, 1996, thanks to funding provided by the Institute of Latin American Studies, I was able to travel to Mexico City, Caracas, Venezuela, and Quito, Ecuador to acquire research material for the Benson Latin American Collection.

The general purpose was to identify and collect material not available through normal commercial channels. More specifically, I focused efforts on acquiring samples of new serial titles, seeking major government and bank reports, and learning of new music recordings and publications of non-governmental organizations (NGO's).

In total I visited 51 organizations, government offices and book shops, purchased 235 volumes and 12 music recordings, and received 233 volumes as gifts or as part of seven new or renewed exchange arrangements. These acquisitions included samples of 67 worthwhile periodicals apparently not held at Texas (29 of the first or second issues of new serials) and a similar number needed to fill gaps in current holdings. These numbers reflect the lively growth of new and interesting journals in literature and the arts as well as social sciences. In spite of the ongoing freeze in subscriptions, we hope to add a small selection of these titles.

Also collected were about 113 government documents, most from agencies not contacted for several years. Fewer of these are available from vendors than in the past. The Collection is establishing procedures to more regularly acquire at least the annual reports of major agencies.

The 50 GO publications also add to our knowledge of active organizations from which we have received little. Many of those from Ecuador are available from established vendors, but acquiring Mexican and Venezuelan works will require constant special efforts.

The 3 national banks continue their strong publications programs, together providing about 60 volumes this trip. Unfortunately, changes in their distribution policies in the past few years made it necessary to purchase most of their works which previously were donated or sent on exchange.

Finally, recordings of art music by Venezuelan or Ecuadorian composers and authentic folk or indigenous music are few, expensive and difficult to find. This is another area requiring constant monitoring and special efforts to build a useful collection. Still, for most as well as government documents, GO publications, and new serials, the information gathered during this trip and that compiled in preparation of it give us a stronger base for future development in all three countries.

Note: The full text of the report (available from Don or David Block) contains appendixes of organizations visited, gift/exchange publications received, and publications published.

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