Specificity, Syndetic Structure, and Subject Access to Works about Individual Corporate Bodies

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The evolution of subject access to works about individual corporate bodies in Anglo-American subject cataloging practice is presented. Comparison is made to the similar problems of works of individual biography. The lack of comparable levels of subject access for the two classes of works is explored. Automation may have been part of the problem, but through automated maintenance routines, it offers the best hope for a viable solution. Recommendations are made that would restore parity in level of subject access by using syndetic reference structure and preserving the principle of specific entry upon which most subject access systems in Anglo-American libraries are based.

Works about individual corporate bodies are not unlike biographies of individual people. In fact, many are just that: histories treating the birth, life, and death of a particular institution or enterprise. With regard to subject access, a catalog user would probably expect to find a similar level of treatment for works about individual corporate bodies as that provided for biographies of individual persons. However, in catalogs following practices established by the Library of Congress (LC) that has not been the case in more than 10 years. For years the pendulum of subject access favored corporate bodies over individuals. Though using quite different approaches, a sort of equilibrium began to emerge in the late 1970s. By 1986, the pendulum was reversed, leaving works of individual biography with the fuller subject access. In this paper, I will review the evolution of subject cataloging practice for works about individual corporate bodies and suggest changes that would return parity to subject access for the two classes of works.

THE "YELLOW PAGES" DILEMMA

When assigning subject headings for a work about an individual corporate body, without hesitation a cataloger will assign the name of the corporate body in the form in which it is established for author entry, i.e., the form in the name authority record. For example, the cataloger of

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Case Western Reserve: A History of the University, 1826–1976, will first assign the heading **Case Western Reserve University—History**. Thereafter, many catalogers will instinctively think in terms of providing access to the work for those users who want information about colleges or universities in Ohio, but might not happen to know the names of the individual institutions about which a work might exist in the particular database or catalog. The cataloger reasons that such users would approach the catalog through a category or generic heading such as **Universities and colleges—Ohio**.

A paradigm for this type of access is familiar to all who use the yellow pages in a telephone directory. In the yellow pages are found listings of individual members of such categories as banks, credit unions, dry cleaners, hospitals, libraries, schools, museums, etc. within the local dialing domain. Thus it might be reasonable to assume that a user would expect to find listings of books, etc. about individual corporate bodies under a category heading in a library's catalog. A user can find individual biographies of United States presidents under the category heading **Presidents—United States**, even though this treatment for individual biography is a relatively recent phenomenon and will be discussed later. Technically, the cataloger is prevented from providing a subject heading for the category on the record for the work about a particular instance, because of the principle of specific entry. This prohibition is currently manifested in the *Conser Cataloging Manual* (1993–, Module 15, 7–8) in the section on subject headings for serials:

15.2.5. *Assigning headings when a corporate body is the subject.* Material about a corporate body often receives a heading for that corporate body alone.

110 2 W.R. Grace & Co.
245 00 Annual report / $c W.R. Grace & Co.
610 20 W.R. Grace & Co. $x Periodicals.

Note, however, for annual reports of corporate bodies that are responsible for certain activities, it may be appropriate to assign headings for both the individual corporate body and the corresponding activity or field. For example, for the biennial report of the Minnesota State Board of Medical Examiners, the following headings could be assigned:

610 20 Minnesota State Board of Medical Examiners $x Periodicals.
650 0 Medical personnel $x Licenses $z Minnesota $x Statistics $x Periodicals.

However, do not assign a general heading to reflect the type of corporate body when only one body is discussed. For example,

650 0 Health occupations licencing board $zMinnesotat $x Periodicals

is not an appropriate heading for the biennial report of the Minnesota Board.

Similarly, regarding subject headings for works about individual corporate bodies, Chan (1994, 254) states:

The name of the corporate body, as established according to *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules . . .* is assigned as the subject heading for a work about an individual corporate body, even if the subject entry duplicates the main entry or an added entry. Generic headings representing types of corporate bodies are not assigned.

These instructions are unequivocal; the cataloger does not assign a category or generic subject heading in these situations. This principle dates back at least as far as Cutter (1904, 66–67). Until 1986, in the case of works about individual corporate bodies, the syndetic structure of the catalog supplied directional assistance to the user through a subject-to-name "See Also" reference from the broader category heading to the individually named instance. Since 1986, LC has ceased to make such references and in fact prescribes the elimination of them from older authority records where some still reside. Therein lies the dilemma: the cataloger is prevented from making the category heading in the bibliographic record because of the principle of specific entry and is also prevented from making the reference by current national level instructions. However, evidence

abounds in records in the national utilities that many catalogers elect to provide the broader subject access by adding category subject headings, either in ignorance of, or perhaps in spite of, the prohibition against them.

Inconsistent, and perhaps confusing to catalogers, is the manner in which precisely the same problem is addressed if the work is about an individual person rather than an individual corporate body. In LC subject cataloging practice, subject heading for a class of persons is assigned in the bibliographic record, a practice clearly in opposition to the principle of specific entry. How did this variation in approach come about?

HISTORY

Cutter (1904) recognized that there would be a tendency to want to assign headings at two levels of hierarchy. In his discussion of rule 161 for specific entry, he noted that difficulty would arise when the public, accustomed to using a classed catalog in his time, approached a dictionary catalog thinking of certain subjects in connection with their including classes. He stated (67):

> . . . there is a temptation to enter certain books doubly, once under the specific heading to satisfy the rule, and once under the class to satisfy the public. The dictionary principle does not forbid this. If room can be spared, the cataloger may put the less comprehensive works also under their respective specific headings. The objection to this is that, if all the specifics are thus entered, the bulk of the catalog is enormously increased; and that, if a selection is made, it must depend entirely upon the "judgement," i.e., the prepossessions and accidental associations, of the cataloger, and there will be an end to all uniformity, and probably the public will not be better satisfied, not understanding why they do not find class-entry in all cases.

For Cutter, guiding users from the category to the instance was the role of syndetic reference structure in the catalog. In rule 187 Cutter (1904, 79) stated:

> Make references from general subjects to their various subordinate subjects and also to coordinate and illustrative subjects. Cross-references should be made by Full from classes of persons (Merchants, Lawyers, Artists, Quakers, etc.) to individuals belonging to those classes. . . .

Note that when Cutter used the term "by Full," he was merely indicating the size of the catalog. He stated (1904, 11): "to avoid the constant repetition of such phrases as 'the full catalog of a large library' and 'a concise finding-list', I shall use the three words Short, Medium, and Full as proper names. . . ."

Haykin (1951, 16) echoed the syndetic approach for individual biography, stating:

> Such references to names of individuals are indicated from headings designating occupations, for example:
>
> Architects, British
>   see also
> Wren, Sir Christopher, 1632–1723
> * * *
>
> Economists, American
>   see also
> Veblen, Thorstein, 1857–1929
> Walker, Francis Amasa, 1840–1897
>
> Painters, French
>   see also
> Bonheur, Rosa, 1822–1899
> Matisse, Henri, 1869–
> Meissonier, Jean Louis Ernest, 1815–1891

Haykin (1951, 17) was just as explicit regarding the recommended technique for works about individual corporate bodies:

> A reference from the subject heading for a particular kind of society or institution should be made to the names of individual societies of that kind as a guide to such of their publications as describe their purposes, activities, history, and proceedings. This obviates the necessity of using the subject heading designating the kind of society or institution for every entry of this character. It is exactly parallel with the use of the reference from the name of the occupation to the names of individuals who follow that

occupation for the purpose of guiding the reader to autobiographical material.

> Medicine—Societies
> see also
> Academy of Medicine of Cincinnati
> Colorado State Medical Society
> Medical Women's International Association . . .

For both Haykin and Cutter, the principle was to assign the most specific subject, either the name of the person or corporate body, and make references from the generic category to the individual instance. For works about individual corporate bodies, the "See Also" reference technique was employed fairly consistently by catalogers at LC over a period of years. There were instructions (H 390, canceled in 1985) in *Subject Cataloging Manual: Subject Headings* (*SCM:SH* 1984) that detailed LC procedures for cataloging a work about an individual corporate body that would result in the addition of subject-to-name references to the existing name authority record for the body. In *Cataloging Service* (*CS* 1975, 28–29), the practice of making references whenever the name of a corporate body was first assigned as a subject heading is described:

> Such references are of value since they represent to the catalog user the key link between the discipline of interest and the specific organizations represented in the catalog active in that discipline. Without them pertinent information may be overlooked. LC provides for such references for all corporate bodies except commercial firms and geographic jurisdictions, e.g., . . .

> Societies International Kart Foundation
> xx Karting—Societies, etc.

> Otago Home Economics Association
> xx Home economics—New Zealand—Societies, etc.

> Agencies Manitoba Water Services Board
> xx Water-supply—Manitoba. . .

> Institutions Art Museum of South Texas
> xx Art—Corpus Christi, Tex.—Galleries and museums
> Corpus Christi, Tex.—Museums
> Museums—Texas

> Dom, Fulda, Ger.
> xx Cathedrals—Germany, West
> Fulda, Ger.—Churches

From the examples given above, it is clear that only some of the references were from category headings. Many were topical subjects made into category headings with the addition of the subdivision "Societies, etc.," and some represented a field of activity. It will also be noted that the form of many would have been affected by the "city flip" in which many subjects formerly constructed as [geographic name]—[topical subdivision] were flipped to [topical heading]—[geographic subdivision] forms. Examples of class of corporate body headings above would be Museums—Texas and Cathedrals—Germany, West.

INDIVIDUAL BIOGRAPHY

In 1976, LC announced changes in practice related to biography that included assigning an array of appropriate topical subject headings to a work of individual biography, one of which was for the class of persons (*CS* 1976). Before 1976, it is apparent that some, if not most, of Haykin's class of persons See Also references were not made in LC's manual file. El-Hoshy (1998) indicated that only on the manual authority card for Christopher Wren was "xx Architects—Great Britain" pencilled in. The other Haykin references did not appear on LC's manual authority cards for the other names he used as examples, and so it is clear that Haykin's recommendations were not frequently followed. In 1976, LC rationalized its new practice by saying that up to that time, topical information in individual biographies had been ignored and that by changing the practice, it was enabling a user to retrieve by form [biography] "in his particular field of interest." "Field or discipline" would be manifested by a heading of the type: **[class of persons]—[place]—Biography.** Later, LC provided extensive new instructions to include the basic provisions above to include headings for events or wars and sometimes ethnic and gender affiliations (*CSB*

1983). With regard to the class of persons heading, *SCM:SH* (1996–, H1330, 2) includes instructions that now state:

> Note: This heading is assigned to individual biographies primarily for the benefit of public library users who are seeking biographies of a particular type of person rather than a particular individual. The heading should be selected with that in mind. If the biographee belongs to no discernable class of persons of the type judged likely to be sought by the typical public library user, it may be omitted.

It is not immediately clear what it is about the technique of assigning a subject heading for the class of person to each biography of Abraham Lincoln that is inherently superior to the practice of making a single See Also reference from **Presidents—United States** to **Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865** on Lincoln's name authority record. The answer, however, lies in catalog maintenance issues from the card catalog era to today's automated library systems. The general-to-specific or subject-to-name reference technique only works when the references are made and maintained in catalogs. Palmer (1986, 71) noted in a study of subject heading practices in card catalogs that many libraries never employed See Also references: "not even the largest libraries were able to provide the 'See Also' references upon which LC assignment of subject headings is based." Thus a major component of the subject access system was omitted in actual practice, throwing the efficacy of the entire system into question.

If libraries were unable to supply See Also references explicitly listed in the *Library of Congress Subject Headings* (*LCSH*), then they were even less likely to provide the subject-to-name references, because only institutions purchasing or receiving depository LC authority cards would even have had knowledge of their existence. Furthermore, the need for such references is institution-specific, depending solely on the local collections and the occurrence therein of works about individual persons or corporate bodies.

Only the most meticulous librarians ever provided complete arrays of even the explicitly listed See Also references within their catalogs. They were much less likely to make and maintain ones that they would have had to create and for which only the sketchiest guidelines were available. Instead, and as a substitute for syndetic structure in the catalog itself, the volumes of *LCSH* were placed strategically near the catalog for the benefit of the users and the librarians who helped them navigate subject terminology. Until automation, syndetic structure never had much of a chance to perform.

AUTOMATION: THE PROBLEM

Factors contributing to the lower visibility and utilization of subject-to-name references were and are related to automation. The first records coded and distributed in electronic form were bibliographic records, not authority records. A preliminary edition of *Authorities: A MARC Format* was published in 1976, with the first edition appearing in 1981 (*USMARC Format for Authority Data* 1993–). The first authority records began to be distributed through USMARC distribution tapes in 1984 (*CSB* 1983). While the ability to handle authority records and reference structures in systems has improved, further refinements are still needed, especially in the area of automated catalog maintenance. Under pressure to update terminology in *LCSH*, LC was faced with a situation where the limitations of its own system intervened with regard to subject-to-name references. Subject headings residing in name authority records could not be maintained. In October 1986, the Subject Cataloging Division at LC announced it would cease making subject-to-name references in name authority records for corporate bodies. Some time later LC instructed Name Authorities Cooperative (NACO) participants to remove subject-to-name references whenever the authority record was touched for any other reason. This practice is still in effect and is recorded in the *NACO Participant's Manual* (*NPM* 1996,

```
001   n85-4209
010   n  85004209
035   (OCoLC)oca01643926
040   DLC DLC AzTeS
110   College of Idaho (Caldwell, Idaho) {AACR 2}
410   Caldwell, Idaho. College of Idaho {old catalog heading} {do
      not make}
510   Albertson College of Idaho {later heading}
550   Universities and colleges—Idaho
670   Its Alumni directory, 1985: t.p. (College of Idaho,
      Caldwell, Idaho)
670   LC data base, 12-27-85 (hdg.: Caldwell, Idaho. College of
      Idaho)
670   Personal communication from Albertson College library,
      3/20/96 (name changed from College of Idaho to Albertson
      College of Idaho in 1991)
675   Alumni directory, 1995: t.p. (Albertson College of Idaho)
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Figure 1. National Level Authority Record Containing a Subject-to-Name Reference.

81). The author did not find any solicitation for public comment on this issue, nor was there any announcement of the cessation of subject-to-name references in *CSB*. An example that currently remains in the national authority file can be seen in figure 1. The maintenance problem occurs when a change is needed in subject heading terminology (in this example, the heading "Universities and colleges") and the system neither detects nor corrects a matching subject string when it resides in an authority record rather than a bibliographic record.

GENERAL "SEE ALSO" REFERENCES AND THEIR PROBLEMS

Using general See Also references is another sanctioned technique to guide the user from a category heading to works in the catalog about members of the category. Haykin (1951, 15) contrasts the use of specific See Also references with general See Also references:

> Frequently, however, when the headings referred to are obviously individual members of a single class or category, the reference is made not to the individual members but to the class, and several members are added by way of example. . . . It may well be argued that general references defeat the syndetic aspect of an alphabetic subject catalog in that the specific subject headings to which the reference should lead are not all named, but are represented merely by an

example. It is, however, unlikely that any but the occasional reader would seek all the material in the library covered by all the specific headings comprehended by the broad one from which the general reference is made. If he should, he would be wiser to seek his material through bibliographies, or to refer to systematic treatises on the broad subject for the topics for which there would be headings in the catalog should the library possess separate works on them. The purpose of the general reference is primarily suggestive.

In his logic for the efficacy of general See Also references, Haykin doubts that users will want all occurrences, when it seems much more likely that a user searching a category heading will not know specific headings to search and instead needs to see a listing from which to make a selection. The weakness of Haykin's logic can be illustrated by applying it to an entry that might appear in yellow page telephone directories. Most librarians would agree that an entry under "Banks" that advised users to "search white page listings under: First National Bank, etc." would not supply a satisfactory level of guidance to users.

There is some evidence in *SCM:SH* that, for topical subjects, general See Also references for generic class-to-class member (e.g., "Tools See Also Axes, Files and rasps, Hammers . . .") might be fading. In H 371 (*SCM: SH* 1996–, H371, 1) the following is stated:

```
010        sh 93002518
040        DLC $c DLC
005        19930527110126.1
151   0    Euro Disneyland (Marne-la-Vallee, France)
451   0    Euro Disney (Marne-la-Vallee, France)
451   0    Euro Disney Resort (Marne-la-Vallee, France)
451   0    Eurodisneyland (Marne-la-Vallee, France)
550   0    Amusement parks $z France $w g
```

Figure 2. Authority Record for Corporate-Like Entity with Reference from Broader Term.

The practice of making new references of this type has now largely been abandoned in favor of making a specific reference from a broader heading whenever a new heading is established. Existing general See Also references of this type are being retained in the subject authority file until all individual headings that had formerly been covered by the general reference are actually linked to the broader heading by BT/NT references.

This implies a move toward exhaustive listings for topical subject class-to-class member headings. However, H 371 goes on to say that there are other categories of general See Also references that have been made and may still be made. Among these types of general See Also references are those to categories or types of name headings, such as:

Church buildings
SA names of individual churches

In various *SCM:SH* instructions, there are other specific provisions for general See Also references (indicated in USMARC as 360 fields in the authority record for the category) that at best can only suggest a type of heading that might be available to the user, but still require the user to know individual names, such as:

Universities and colleges
SA names of individual institutions

Hospitals
SA names of individual hospitals

Railroads
SA names of individual railroads

Concentration camps
SA names of individual concentration camps

Museums
SA names of individual museums

PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE DIVISION OF THE WORLD

In attempting to assign responsibility for establishing categories of ambiguous entities, LC has engaged in what is commonly known as "the Division of the World." *SCM:SH* H405 provides two lists of entities: those established in the name authority file and governed by descriptive cataloging conventions, and those established in the subject authority file and governed by subject cataloging conventions. Some of these ambiguous entities, when established by subject catalogers, will have a broader term reference provided for the category of entity to the specifically named entity (unless it falls under the provisions for assignment of a general See Also as prescribed by LC above) (see figure 2).

When an entity is moved from the subject file to the names file, as has recently been the case with concentration camps and arboretums, an unfortunate phenomenon takes place. The broader term reference is immediately expunged. Again, this is because NACO guidelines for establishing names forbid the use of subject-to-name references. Individual concentration camps provide a case in point. When concentration camps were established by subject catalogers as geographic names, a broader term reference from **World War, 1939-1945—Concentration camps—[place]** to the individual camp was generally made. The result in a catalog that displayed See Also references was a listing of individual camps similar to that found in figure 3. As these entities migrated to the name authority file, the

```
World War, 1939-1945—Concentration camps—Germany
  Search also
Bergen-Belsen (Germany : Concentration camp)
Buchenwald (Germany : Concentration camp)
Dachau (Germany : Concentration camp)
Ravensbruck (Germany : Concentration camp)
```

Figure 3. Typical Reference Array Before Subject Headings Became Name Headings.

broader term references were eliminated.

A similar phenomenon took place when individual computer software programs migrated from the subjects to the names file as uniform titles. When established according to subject cataloging principles, general-to-specific references were made (see figure 4). After the move from the subjects file to the names file for individual named entities, a user accustomed to finding an exhaustive listing is required to know the names of specific concentration camps or word processing software in order to find individual works about them.

AUTOMATION: THE SOLUTION

The only reason offered by LC for the cessation of subject-to-name references was that they had not been maintained, and the references continue to be removed for the same reason. One of the specific maintenance issues at LC has been that its automated system is unable to perform global changes. Thus, when a heading needs to be changed, as is frequently the case to meet the demand for updated terminology or the recommendations of 1991 Subject Subdivisions Conference, records must be updated manually. Couple this manual editing with the bifurcation of authority files between names and subjects and the division of personnel between descriptive and subject cataloging, and it is easy to see why maintenance is such an issue.

Maintenance in a manual environment is a significant and costly proposition, but in an automated environment it should be much less of an issue, provided that systems include the necessary maintenance routines. Programming based on existing USMARC formats and data elements could and should eliminate the drudgery involved in manual maintenance of headings in both bibliographic and authority records.

Many integrated library systems already have in place some level of validation and error detection routines. Some of the necessary features needed to restore subject-to-name references as an element of syndetic structure of the catalog and to eliminate almost all manual maintenance include the capability:

- To generate a reference from a name authority record 550 to display in the subject index (if separate) when the 550 has a control subfield w that is coded as a broader term, valid for subject reference structure only ("gbnn");
- To detect that such a reference is valid if the name heading to which it points (authority 1xx) has been used as a subject (bibliographic 6xx), with or without further subdivision;
- To set automatically the values in the control subfield w of the authority 550 for nondisplay—that is, broader term, valid for subject reference structure only, do not display ("gbna") if the authority heading has not been used as a bibliographic subject heading (with or without further subdivision);

```
Word-processing—Computer programs
  Search also
MacWrite (Computer program)
WordPerfect (Computer program)
Wordstar (Computer program)
```

Figure 4. Typical Reference Array Before Subject Headings Became Subject Uniform Titles.

- To set automatically the control subfield w in the authority 550 to broader term valid for subject reference structure, display ("gbnn") if the 1xx in an authority record with a suppressed 550 (control subfield w "gbna") is used as a subject heading (with or without further subdivision);
- To validate the use of the main heading as a subject in the local file and to set automatically the control subfield w to the appropriate value when an authority record enters the local system for the first time, if a 550 is present as mentioned above;
- To change globally a target subject string when it occurs in authority records 550s (specifically in name authority 550s) as well as when it occurs in bibliographic records. This routine is needed in general subject authority work to support the updating of topical subject reference structures. Caution would be needed not to initiate a global change when an old subject term is replaced by two or more new terms.
- To detect and report (not change) strings in name authority 5xx references that match on 4xx strings in subject authorities. This routine would take care of the problem of updating terminology across files when subject headings are changed. Previous terms would be recorded as 4xx references, but because the change is frequently for a heading split, the term in the name authority 5xx will need to be reported for human manipulation.

The routines described above would enable the subject-to-name reference technique to be applied to works of individual biography as well.

It should be recognized that even if maintenance of subject-to-name references can be automated, there will still be some cost associated with the intellectual effort of devising the references. However, there is a similar level of intellectual work to determine the class of persons subject heading for a work of individual biography. Using class of corporate body or class of persons references would offer a savings in

effort over individually assigned subject headings, the current practice with individual biography. It would be minimally more costly to provide a comparable level of access for works about individual corporate bodies, and more importantly, not providing any level of subject access apart from the name itself is patently inconsistent.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The history of subject access in relation to works about individual corporate bodies and also to works of individual biography has been outlined. The principle of specific entry upon which subject access in dictionary catalogs is based requires a subject heading for the named entity and not one for the generic category to which that entity belongs. With other types of subjects, syndetic structure provides the directional cues needed to move from category to instance. In the case of individual biography, the principle of specific entry is violated by assigning subject headings for the class of persons, but at least a form of category access is being provided. In the case of works about individual corporate bodies, those cues have been eliminated, leaving a void in subject access. The only sanctioned remedy, the use of general See Also references, has been shown to be weak, being merely suggestive of possible terms for searching.

To restore comparable levels of access, there are three choices:

1. Follow the path used for individual biography and assign a class of corporate body subject heading to works about individual corporate bodies.
2. Leave individual biography treatment as it is, but restore subject-to-name references on name authority records when works about individual corporate bodies occur in the catalog.
3. Use subject-to-name references for both and cease assigning class of persons subject headings for individual biography.

The path most consistent with principles would be the third option. At the least,

it is recommended that the previous practice of generating subject-to-name references when a corporate body is used as a subject be reinstituted. The specific guidelines in the canceled *SCM:SH* H390 are more developed than those described in *Cataloging Service* (1975) and in Chan (1986, 107–108), and those H390 guidelines could be resurrected. The only provisions that should be reconsidered are those that call for addition of subject-to-name references for headings other than class of corporate body. Specifically, those H390 guidelines that call for subject-to-name references that indicate the field of activity for firms, banks, corporations, government agencies, etc. should be reconsidered according to the guidelines enunciated in *Conser Cataloging Manual.* Those guidelines state that field of activity, if appropriate to the work, should be assigned as a subject heading to the individual record rather than as a subject-to-name reference. The issue of the specificity of geographic subdivision (to the first order geographic name or to the local level) should be opened for discussion.

For NACO contribution and editing, the subject-to-name reference should be allowed when a participant identifies a need for the reference in a local file. In editing older records that have subject-to-name references, the NACO participant should update the heading to current subject cataloging terminology and construction. This practice would be similar to that required when other 4xx and 5xx references need to be evaluated.

LC is on the brink of selecting a new integrated library system, making this an auspicious time to restore these references and to consider their applicability to individual biography. An automated or an automated-assisted solution to the loss of subject-to-name reference structure over the last twelve years should also be explored.

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