



Luther Harris Evans. *From the collections of the Library of Congress.*

Luther Harris Evans

Luther Harris Evans, former director of the Historical Records Survey, Librarian of Congress, and director-general of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, died in San Antonio on December 23, 1981. He was 79 years old.

Evans was born in Bastrop County, Texas, on 13 October 1902. By 1927 he had earned bachelor and master of arts degrees from the University of Texas and a doctorate from Stanford University. His academic studies, focusing on political science and history, were

followed by a brief teaching career which included positions at New York University, Dartmouth, and Princeton.

In the Spring of 1934, Evans learned that his contract at Princeton would not be renewed after the 1934-35 academic year, probably as a result of his outspoken support for Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. Through the father of one of his students, Evans was recommended by Raymond Moley to Harry Hopkins, Administrator of the Work Projects Administration. In 1935 Hopkins appointed Evans director of

the Historical Records Survey. As head of the Survey, Evans directed the efforts of a force of as many as 10,000 workers in the most comprehensive inventory of state and local public records ever conducted in the United States. Survey workers were active in every county of every state, in every state capitol, and in thousands of town halls. Under his guidance, the HRS expanded to include an inventory of early American imprints, guides to various manuscript collections, and inventories of church archives. Among the hundreds of volumes published by the HRS were several important manuals on archival functions.

Late in 1939 Evans left the WPA to become director of the Legislative Reference Services of the Library of Congress. Five years later he succeeded Archibald MacLeish as the 10th Librarian of Congress, and he served in that position until 1953. As Librarian, Evans greatly increased the Library's services to Congress and expanded the Library's cooperative role with other libraries both in the United States and abroad. During his tenure the Library's collections grew impressively in quality and quantity from 24,900,000 items in 1945 to 31,600,000 items in 1953.

After leaving the Library, Evans became the third director-general of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. He had been involved with UNESCO since 1945, serving as a member of the U.S. delegation to the London conference that established the organization and as delegate to the General Conference, member of the Executive Board, and member and chairman of the United States National Commission for UNESCO. Under his leadership, UNESCO efforts were focused on long-range planning for major projects such

as Latin American rural education, East-West cultural exchange, protection of cultural property during war, integration of the Soviet Union into UNESCO activities, and establishment of the Universal Copyright Convention. After leaving UNESCO in 1958, Evans continued his interests in education and libraries, serving as director of the international and legal collections at Columbia University from 1962 until his retirement in 1971.

Evans was a man of character with the courage to stand behind his convictions in the face of adverse criticism. Shortly after graduating from the University of Texas, he attended a meeting of the Ku Klux Klan. At the end of the meeting when the audience was invited to make comments, Evans rose to criticize the Klan. Later, as Librarian of Congress, he defended staff members who became the focus of McCarthyism. In 1952 he hired a former UNESCO employee who had been fired only one month earlier because she had appeared on one of McCarthy's lists. In addition, he inspired tenacious loyalty from those who worked with him and was widely admired for his administrative abilities. As a young man with no experience to build upon, he piloted the HRS through the frequently heated political environment of Harry Hopkins' WPA.

Although his achievements as Librarian of Congress and director-general of UNESCO were great, the contribution of Luther Harris Evans to the archival profession should not be ignored. As director of the Historical Records Survey and first vice president of the Society of American Archivists, he was an integral part of the archival awakening of the 1930s.

EDWARD F. BARRESE
National Archives and Records Service