

Ohio State Library  
Annual Report of the Librarian  
1954

STATE LIBRARY OF OHIO  
274 E. FIRST AVE.  
COLUMBUS, OH 43201

NOV 13 2008

DEPOSITORY 0460

"...the public library...is a very economical social contrivance. It gives books a maximum use per volume, enabling every member in a community to have access to hundreds of thousands of books at an average cost per person equal to the price of a single volume if purchased privately."

Robert D. Leigh

1954 was a year of achievement, a year of beginnings, and a year that also had its frustrations. Meeting the daily reading needs of the public, the American Heritage Project grants, the success of the reading certificate program, the new inter-library loan policy, and the micro-card publication of St. Clair letters are some of the things accomplished during the year. The action taken on a proposed State Library and Archives Building represents a beginning. Numbered among our frustrations are the attempt of the Ohio Municipal League to change the intangible tax law, the continued shortage of librarians, and the possibility that small libraries may once again start mushrooming over the state.

Let's look now at these things in greater detail.

What They Read in 1954

Because reading is our business it is not only interesting but necessary to know what books people like to read. Judging from our waiting lists for books here is what was most in demand in 1954.

People want information and they use their libraries for it. This is evidenced by the fact that books telling people how-to-do-it were more in demand than any other field except fiction. Books on every conceivable subject under the sun from pajama-making to atom-splitting were requested.

Books dealing with religion, mental peace, and others which appeal to man's emotions are strong contenders for leading position in the non-fiction field. Peale, "Power of Positive Thinking", a 1952 book, is still in great demand; Overstreet, "Mind Alive" is another; and Rogers, "Angel Unaware", a 1953 holdover is in demand.

DOES NOT CIRCULATE



Biographies are always popular and we believe this year's output to be of better calibre than the fiction. Commercial sex defends itself in a popular biography, Adler, "A House Is Not a Home". In fact this book just about leads the list, fiction notwithstanding. The library's copy has had to be sent to the bindery. Others on waiting lists were: Brody, "Gone With the Windsors"; Holbrook, "Age of the Moguls"; Maurois, "Lelia"; Fowler, "Minutes of the Last Meeting"; Roth, "I'll Cry Tomorrow"; Hecht, "A Child of the Century"; Allen, "Treadmill to Oblivion"; Hagedorn, "Roosevelt Family of Sagamore Hill"; Willoughby, "MacArthur 1941-1951"; and Hunt, "Untold Story of Douglas MacArthur".

In the field of History and Travel, Kimbrough's "Forty Plus and Fancy Free" and Gilbreth, "Inside Nantucket" have held pretty much the top. Catton, "A Stillness at Appomattox" has been very popular with the Civil War readers.

The library has a difficult time deciding whether to classify flying saucer books as fiction or non-fiction, but the public doesn't care how we assign them as long as they get the books to read. Leslie, "The Saucers Have Landed"; Keyhoe, "Flying Saucers From Outer Space"; Wilkins, "Flying Saucers on the Attack"; and Williamson, "The Saucers Speak", are much in demand.

Popular fiction choices were Thompson, "Not as a Stranger"; Stone, "Love is Eternal"; Yerby, "Devil's Laughter"; Kane, "My Lady of Arlington". Effect of the movies is seen also on two older titles beginning to lose popularity but reviving with the showing of the picture: Jones, "From Here to Eternity"; Gann, "The High and Mighty".

#### New Building

Ohio needs a State Library Building; a building which would symbolize the great cultural and service institution the State Library is; a building which would be a mecca for all Ohioans and Ohio visitors when in Columbus; a building for all Ohio to take pride in. At present the State Library is housed on the top floors of the State Office Building. Such space is extremely bad library space. Ohio is lagging



behind many of its sister states such as Tennessee, Indiana, and Oregon in providing State Library housing facilities. The need for such a building came a step nearer fulfillment late in the year when the Trustees of the Ohio Historical Society invited the State Library Board to join with them in proposing a State Library and Archives Building in the downtown area. Because the average person or public official, upon first entering the library, thinks it is beautiful and attractive, it might be well to point out here just why present facilities are inadequate and so unsuitable for library operation:

- 1) Library entrance, reading room, and charging desks are on the 11th floor, books are on 13th and 14th floors. The library is separated from its books by the 12th floor occupied by the Department of Mental Hygiene and Correction.
- 2) The public is poorly served in present quarters. They enter the library on the 11th floor but few books are on this floor. Most of the books requested must be brought down from the 13th and 14th levels making service extremely slow and irksome.
- 3) Library's books which are the property of the state are unprotected from theft. Public elevators in the building stop in the stacks. Anyone so desiring can take an elevator to the 13th floor, take books off the shelves and go out of the building without the library staff being aware of it.
- 4) Space originally assigned the library has been reduced by assigning to other departments, resulting in inadequate shelving and work space. Employees of other divisions occupying space in the stacks also make it impossible for the library to protect its books.
- 5) Shelving space is not sufficient to house new books without discarding valuable old books.



- 6) Present library space is expensive space for two reasons:
  - a. A library, at least its public areas, should be on ground level. We have no facts to prove it but we believe more people come into the State Office Building to use the library than any other division (employees excepted).
  - b. It is better office space than library space and should be so utilized for that purpose.
- 7) Rare books, such as the letters of St. Clair, George Washington, and several of the early Ohio Governors, are not protected from dust and other atmospheric conditions and are slowly deteriorating.
- 8) There is not adequate space where the public can make full use of the library's fine genealogical and local history collections.
- 9) There is no space where the many mechanical devices which the library now uses - microfilms, microcards, photographic reproductions from books - can be used in an efficient manner.
- 10) The catalog staff which processes all the new books must do its work on the 14th floor while the catalog (card index) is down on the 11th floor.
- 11) There are no offices or workroom facilities in the documents area (housing publications of the various states and federal government) or in state circulation division. Neither are there such facilities for the circulation and reference divisions on the 11th floor.
- 12) Maps of Ohio and its counties from the beginnings of Ohio history are lacking proper equipment and housing. At present most are merely rolled and placed in a pile. These too need atmospheric protection.



Intangible Tax (classified property tax)

No doubt the most serious problem facing library service in Ohio in 1954 is developing from the efforts of the Ohio Municipal League, representing city and village officials, to remove the priority which libraries now have in the allocation and distribution of the classified property tax. A brief history of the law since its enactment in 1931 will show how it has reached its present place on the law books.

Sec. 5638 of the Ohio General Code, enacted by the 89th General Assembly in July 1931, levied a tax on intangible property on the grand classified tax list and duplicate of the state. Section 6 of this act provided for distribution of such taxes for the years 1932 and 1933 only, to municipal corporations, schools, park districts, sanitary districts, and public libraries. Each was to receive in some relation to its income or rate of taxation during 1930.

Sec. 5638 was amended in an act passed in July 1933 and restricted to intangible property on the county auditors' tax list. The same act (Sec. 5639) provided for permanent distribution to each of the following in the order named: to the state for administration, to public libraries, to municipal corporations including park districts, and to the county.

Schools were omitted from the above except for any residue. (Residue at one time could also be used for poor relief.) However Sec. 5638-1 of the Ohio General Code was enacted in the same act levying the same rate of tax on intangibles on the tax list in the state auditor's office. This was distributed to schools on the basis of average daily attendance.

Since then, various court decisions and legislative changes have affected these two intangible tax funds. The significant changes are listed below:

Sec. 5638 ("County" Intangibles)

1935 Supreme Court ruled public libraries have priority in distribution of funds. (129 O. S. 201)

1936 Supreme Court reaffirmed (131 O. S. 380)



1940 Supreme Court rules libraries have no priority in allotment of funds.  
1949 Legislature amended distribution section permitting residue to go to libraries as well as schools.

1951 Legislature amended law for allocation on basis of library needs.

1953 Supreme Court ruled libraries have priority in allocation for demonstrated needs.

Sec. 5638-1 ("State" Intangibles)

1933-39 Tax collected went to schools.

1939-47 Tax collected went to state's general revenue fund.

1947 to date - Tax is returned to municipalities, counties and townships through local government fund, so what originally was enacted for schools is now going to cities and other local government units.

It is my personal opinion that the present basis of tax support for public libraries is a reasonable one. While the tax in a number of counties is inadequate, no other tax appears at the moment to be able to do better. A change in the law would merely create problems not solve them. Were most of the money going to libraries from this tax transferred to municipal governments it would not solve the latter's financial difficulties but it would create a grave problem for libraries. In one of the first test cases of this law in 1935, Chief Justice Weygandt said:

"A mere superficial examination of the statute might lead to a conclusion that the preference allowed the public libraries is unreasonable and discriminatory, thereby raising a serious question as to whether such a construction can be justified. However, this difficulty disappears when it is remembered that the Legislature has completely deprived the public libraries of their former revenue from other sources, and they are now compelled to rely solely upon the proceeds of classified property taxes, while the municipal corporations, the county and the school districts still derive their principal income from various other taxes." (129 O. S. 201)

While this opinion was rendered in regard to the distribution of the classified property tax, its logic and reasoning is just as applicable to the libraries' present priority in its allocation.



### Small Libraries

Seven years ago in order to prevent the establishment of very small libraries, the Legislature prohibited all subdivisions except the county from establishing independent library units. This was a logical step forward in library service. Of course a private association, such as a club or woman's group, can incorporate and call itself a library. While there is no way of preventing that, it has always been our belief such organizations could not receive tax funds. Recently some private funds were left to Pleasant Hill, a small community in Miami County, for a library building. Although the Troy Library gives county service to this community and is the proper library to carry out the provisions of the gift, a private group wants to establish a library, accept the gift, and receive operating funds from the county intangible tax. The county prosecutor, hesitating to say no to the group, thinks such a library can legally receive tax funds. Admittedly this is Miami County's problem, but it becomes a very serious problem statewide. If he is correct it means we would have many libraries of this type mushrooming over the state. We would soon be going back to the "little red school house" stage of library development. An Attorney-General's opinion on this issue will be requested.

### American Heritage Project

A grant of \$5000 was made to the library by the American Library Association in 1954 from money provided by the Fund for Adult Education. Purpose of the grant is to organize small discussion groups in a number of public libraries in Ohio, where people may have an opportunity to get together and talk over important issues confronting America today; to study and discuss America's past; to read and discover how previous generations here in America solved their controversial problems; and how America came to be the country it is today. Eleven such groups have been organized and are holding sessions during 1954-55:



Akron (3 groups - 1st, 2nd, 4th years)  
Bellefontaine  
Bryan  
Cincinnati (Mariemont Branch)  
Marietta  
North Canton  
Tipp City  
Toledo  
Woodsfield

A similar grant of \$3000 was also made for organizing young adult discussion groups. Eight such groups have been organized:

Akron  
Cambridge  
Cleveland  
Cleveland (Alta Branch)  
Delaware  
Elyria  
Fremont  
Mansfield

#### Budget

As with all things we must eventually get around to money and the lack of it. This is not the place to wax eloquent but we do want to emphasize the inadequacy of the book budget, the low salaries of the library staff (particularly when compared with salaries paid by other libraries in Franklin County and in the state). Likewise there just isn't the staff needed to do all the work. It's a fine, hard-working, loyal staff but there needs to be more of them.

#### State Library Board

Tentative recommendations of the Ohio School Survey Commission regarding the organization of the new State Board of Education call for abolishment of the State Library Board with its functions assigned to the new Board of Education. It is doubtful that a State Board of Education with its primary responsibilities to the schools could give the same amount of time and attention to library problems as the State Library Board can and does. The State Librarian presented the objections of the State Library Board to the Commission's recommendation at a public hearing in December. Final recommendations of the Commission have not yet been publicly announced.



### Reading Certificates

This program, put into effect in 1953, has been creating considerable interest. 252 Certificates were issued in 1954.

### Inter-library Loans

The policy of paying Ohio libraries for the cost of lending books to other Ohio libraries, adopted by the State Library Board in 1954, has been effective in making available the unusual resources of the larger public libraries to Ohioans in small communities and rural areas.

### Librarians Needed

Shortage of qualified persons to staff Ohio libraries still continues. The same is true for vacancies on the staff of the State Library. Representatives of the State Library visited nine library schools in the spring of 1954 to interview students for Ohio positions. The trips were successful in bringing into Ohio a number of fine people who would not otherwise have come. We hope to make these visits an annual affair for we think that over the years they would go a long way toward putting the finest personnel in Ohio's libraries.

### St. Clair Papers

The letters of Arthur St. Clair - some several thousand - first governor of the Northwest Territory, were microcarded. Fifty sets were made and we have sold about 35. Thus the cost of microcarding has been recovered, the State Library can better preserve the original letters by using the microcard copy, and facsimile copies of the letters are on file in key libraries over the country.

### A Word of Appreciation

Our appreciation goes to State Library Board members for their continued interest in library matters, their willingness to come long distances to attend meetings, their faith in our ability and judgment, and for their backing and support when the going gets rough. It is always a pleasure to work with such a board.

WB:NC  
1/17/55

Walter Brahm  
State Librarian



Statistical Supplement

Circulation	1953	1954
City Circulation - books circulated	32,965	34,396
State Circulation - " "	10,501	11,139
Traveling Library - " "	<u>46,058</u>	<u>46,626</u>
Total	89,524	92,161

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Reference questions	7,060	7,391
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Books added to library	8,621	10,440
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Appropriation

	Fiscal year ending in	
	1954	1955
Personal Service		
A-1 Salaries	61,284.58	62,976.00*
A-2 Wages	<u>7,000.00</u>	<u>7,000.00</u>
Total	68,284.58	69,976.00*
Maintenance		
Supplies		
C-4 Office	1,500.00	1,500.00
C-4a Postage	1,000.00	1,000.00
Equipment		
E-1 Office	2,074.90	1,000.00
E-8a New Books	20,000.00	20,000.00
Contract and Open Order Service		
F-1a Repairs	250.00	200.00
F-5 Express	100.00	100.00
F-6 Travel	1,700.00	1,700.00
F-7 Communication	1,300.00	1,300.00
F-8 Printing-Paper and Binding	4,675.10	4,800.00
F-9 Other	<u>150.00</u>	<u>150.00</u>
Total Maintenance	32,750.00	31,750.00
Total Personal Service and Maintenance	101,034.58	101,726.00*
Subsidy		
H-8 Library Aid	160,000.00	160,000.00

\*approximate