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STATE LIBRARY OF OHIO  
65 SOUTH FRONT STREET  
COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215

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OHIO STATE LIBRARY

ANNUAL REPORT

1955

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**REFERENCE**



Ohio State Library  
Annual Report of the Librarian  
1955

"Millions have changed their lives because the right sentence confronted them at the right moment. As great literature probably is as great as any single force in the world for the building and rebuilding of human souls."

January 31, 1956

To members of the Ohio State Library Board:

Herewith is a report of activities and proceedings of the State Library for the calendar year 1955. In accordance with Section 1149.01, Revised Code of Ohio, copies of the report have been filed with the Governor's office and that of the Secretary of State.

The compilation of statistics and information concerning the operation of public libraries in the state, required by Sec. 3375.02, is now in process and will be submitted as a separate part of this report later in the year.

Respectfully submitted,

Walter Brahm  
State Librarian



Ohio State Library  
Annual Report of the Librarian  
1955

"Millions have changed their lives because the right sentence confronted them at the right moment, so that literature probably is as great as any single force in the world for the building and rebuilding of human ideals."

What They Read in Fifty-Five

Eighteen per cent of all books borrowed from the State Library were fiction, 82% non-fiction. This is normal for the State Library but unusual for most public libraries. Fiction reading usually equals or exceeds non-fiction. The State Library buys little fiction for circulation (except in Traveling Library) which accounts for the small percentage of fiction circulated. Excluding Traveling Library, use of the library is practically one hundred per cent adult. Here again State Library differs from most public libraries where juvenile use consistently exceeds adult.

That television and the movies increase rather than decrease the use of books and libraries is clearly shown in two experiences of the library. A popular TV program, interviewing a young archaeologist, showed a copy of the book he had written although it had not yet been released by the publishers. The title, "Quataban to Sheba" by Young. The library was swamped with calls for the book the next day. Most could remember only that the title began with "Q". Although not yet published people could not understand why it wasn't available, since they had seen it on the program. Similarly, "A Many Splendored Thing" by Han, published several years ago, came out of retirement in a hurry when the recent movie by the same name appeared. It has had a long waiting list ever since.

Oddly enough several fiction titles which were in great demand this year were holdovers from other years. Frank Yerby's book "The Devil's Laughter" published in 1953 set an all-time record here. "Not as a Stranger" by Thompson



and "View From Pompey's Head" by Basso, both issued in 1954, were very popular throughout this year. There have been several other very popular fiction titles, as: "Bonjour Tristesse" by Quoiriez, "Great Man" by Morgan, "Something of Value" by Ruark, "Marjorie Morningstar" by Wouk, "Auntie Mame" by Dennis, "No Time for Sergeants" by Hyman, "Blackboard Jungle" by Hunter and "Cash McCall" by Hawley. These were 1955 books.

Requests for books in the field of sociology led all non-fiction demands with useful arts (how-to-do-it books) a very close second. Outstanding example was "Why Johnny Can't Read" by Flesch which created considerable stir during the year. Other signs of the times from this field were requests for books on real estate and operating on the stock market. Young men waiting for their military service calls also used the library frequently for material to prep for army and navy intelligence tests.

"Gertrude Lawrence as Mrs. A." by Aldrich, with a waiting list most of the year, seemed to set a pattern, for there have been many biographies of stage, radio and television people. All have had a degree of popularity. "Treadmill to Oblivion" by Fred Allen, "Life With Groucho" by his son and "Have Tux, Will Travel" by Bob Hope, have been on "Reserve". Polly Adler's "A House is Not a Home" popular in '54, still had a waiting list on it in September. Pearl Buck, always a favorite, continued in demand with "My Several Worlds".

As in 1954 books appealing to man's high ideals and emotions were high on the list of favorites. "Angel Unaware" by Rogers and "A Man Called Peter" by Marshall are still appearing in the reserve file when all copies are out. "How to Live 365 Days a Year" by Schindler, "The Best Things in Life" by Hepner, and "Gift From the Sea" by Lindbergh are most popular.

Two books on house planning developed long waiting lists, "Living on the Level" by Wills and "The Natural House" by Wright. The "Ladies Home Journal Book of Interior Decoration" led all other books in this field for the year.



Spinfishing, a new sport, hit the country this year and the impact was felt immediately. Even though the library had several books on the subject, they had long reserve lists on them.

### Legislation

Changes were made in the law governing the organization and appointment of the State Library Board. For the past thirty-five years the procedure set up by law for administering the State Library has been an impractical one. When the Legislature established the present State Library Board in 1921 it placed the Board in the Department of Education with the Director of Education a member and ex-officio chairman. The Board was given specific powers to administer the State Library. At the same time the library was a division of the Department of Education and in its daily functioning came under the direction of the Director of Education. Consequently over the years situations could and did arise where the Library Board would establish a policy or course of action and the Director of Education another. While the Board's decision in the matter was legally the prevailing one, resort to the courts to enforce such action was hardly a desirable or practical way to run a library. Directors of the Department of Education and State Librarians had to be remarkable men to make the system work. Sometimes they haven't been - and sometimes the system hasn't worked. This is no criticism of the present or previous Director of Education for they have been able men who worked in close cooperation with the Library Board. One thing was always certain - in the middle of such situations was the chief administrative officer of the State Library, the State Librarian, trying to please and serve two masters.

The above is just a bit of background for changes made in the law in 1955 which became effective January 3, 1956 with the creation of a State Board of Education. The new law continues the Library Board with members appointed by the State Board of Education in much the same manner as local library boards



are appointed by local boards of education. The Library Board now elects its own officers. While the law no longer states it is in the Department of Education an official ruling has been requested of the Attorney General on this question.

The present method of financing public libraries came under serious attack when the Ohio Municipal League sought to amend the law by limiting the amount libraries could receive from the intangible (classified property) tax. While the proposal was defeated a special committee of the Legislative Service Commission is studying the situation and will report to the Legislature when it meets in 1957.

The budget for the State Library for 1955-57 as adopted by the Legislature was the same for most items as for the previous two years, in some cases even less. With present day costs the library is pinched in two very important items, new books and binding. Both of these are essential to the existence of the library.

#### A New State Library-Archives Building

Efforts of the joint committee of the Ohio Historical Society and State Library Board to secure funds for a new building were continued in 1955. Bills were introduced in each house of the Legislature and discussions were held with the Governor and legislative leaders. The project, along with most construction needs, was held in abeyance by the Legislature pending approval by the voters of a \$150,000,000 building bond issue. With the passage of the issue, the committee filed an application for \$5,000,000 for a combined State Library and Archives Building.

#### Crowded Stacks

That there is a definite need for a new building is quite evident to the library staff this year. In the local history and genealogy rooms we are having to shelve books on top of book cases which puts them out of reach of the public



and staff. It is necessary to use a step-stool which is not only difficult but hazardous. In the periodical and documents stacks we are forced to pile material on the floor for lack of room, and in the book stacks we must discard heavily - and perhaps unwisely - in order to have room for new titles.

#### Staff

Mrs. Edith Rathbun who had served as Reference Librarian for 26 years retired July 1 and is now living in California. Earlier in the year Mrs. Rosemary Kelly, Reference Assistant, left in favor of the stork, and Mrs. Geneva White resigned as Documents Librarian. Mrs. Ruth Douthit was employed as Head of the Reference Department. She is a graduate librarian with reference experience in the Minneapolis and Columbus Public Libraries. Mrs. Phyllis Hamner was secured to replace Mrs. Kelly. Mrs. Hamner too is a library school graduate with previous library experience. Mrs. Virginia Hanson was promoted from Assistant at the Circulation Desk to the documents position and Miss Joan Doler was employed to replace her at the desk. We were short one secretary in the office for six weeks due to illness. As usual there was considerable turnover in our part-time help which changes about every time a school semester begins or ends.

The amount of work required of the library staff has increased each year. Certainly more responsibility has been placed upon the staff and more demands made of them by the public than was the case fifteen years ago, yet the number of staff remains the same. While hard work presumably hurts no one it means in some cases they are unable to give the required service requested or are prevented from doing the most efficient job on the work at hand. The library is staffed by eighteen full-time persons and nine part-time. These people form a highly individual, hard-working and most efficient group. They are held in high respect by other state employees and set an example for them.

It has been an exceptionally busy year for the State Librarian. Supervision of eighteen persons is normally enough to keep a man supplied with sufficient



problems and decisions to occupy his day and a few nights. The task of finding capable people to fill vacancies in these days of labor shortages takes considerable time and effort. The complicated problems of local librarians and trustees in financing and operating their libraries has brought a tremendous increase in requests for advice and consultative services. Along this line extensive surveys have been made and reports written for libraries in Fairfield and Lorain Counties. Similar studies are under way in two more counties, Tuscarawas and Wood. New library buildings have brought requests for advice and consultation in financing and planning such buildings. Added to this were library problems arising in the very hectic legislative session throughout the first six months of the year. The State Librarian also was elected and is serving as President of the National Association of State Libraries for 1955-56.

Within the past year salaries of all staff members except the librarian have been increased. While still inadequate they are better. It might be well to point out here the salary of the State Librarian has not been increased during the past three years. While there is nothing the Library Board can do about it at the moment members may wish to know that the present salary scale for the librarian is considerably below that paid the librarians of local Ohio libraries such as Akron, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo and Youngstown.

#### Library School Visits

The shortage of trained librarians continues. While the library profession does not differ from other professions in its need for qualified people we have tried to do something about it by setting up a program to bring librarians to Ohio. Continuing the procedure begun in 1954, Mrs. Stoughton and I visited nine library schools, interviewed students for various positions, talked to classes about Ohio's library system and why they should work in it. We believe such visits have brought a considerable number of librarians into the state. No other state does this. Because the results are so beneficial to local



librarians and trustees the Ohio Library Association and Ohio Library Trustees Association pay the travel expense for such visits.

#### American Heritage Program

The American Library Association continued its grants for the development of American Heritage discussion groups in local libraries for a second year but on a smaller scale. \$4000 was given and groups were organized in the following communities by their libraries: Akron (3), Athens, Bryan, Cambridge, Chillicothe, Cincinnati, Cleveland (2), Dayton (starting January 1956), Delaware, Elyria, Fremont, Mansfield, Marietta, Nelsonville, North Canton, Tipp City (2), and Woodsfield.

#### Union Catalog

This file of 3,000,000 cards locating a book anywhere in Ohio libraries is a tremendously useful tool, but it requires more attention than the State Library has been able to afford. The library now maintains it with one librarian but it takes more than one person to keep it up-to-date. If not up-to-date it immediately loses its indexing value. So we asked a number of local libraries to contribute toward the cost of filing cards in it. For 1956 we have secured pledges totaling \$1100 for this purpose.

#### Clermont County

In August 1955 Clermont County's first tax supported public library began operation. Its beginning is a modest one, consisting entirely of bookmobile service. This represents years of persistent effort on the part of state and local library officials. It has been the only county in the state without some type of public library service.



Appreciation

May I express my appreciation and that of the staff to all the members of the State Library Board for their interest in the library, their willingness to come considerable distances to attend board meetings, and for their understanding and support, which keeps the library running. I believe the State Library provides the leadership and commands the respect of the library profession of the state. This is due to the Library Board for it establishes the policies and sets the course of library service.

Walter Brahm  
State Librarian



# Statistical Supplement

## Book Circulation

	1954	1955
Books issued at desk	34,396	33,692
" " by mail	11,139	10,526
Loaned to local libraries	<u>46,626</u>	<u>45,639</u>
Total	92,161	89,857

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### Reference questions:

Reference Room	--	5,577
Documents	<u>--</u>	<u>770</u>
Total	7,391	6,347*

\*incomplete for July and August.

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Books added to library	10,440	10,409
Government publications received	8,888	7,206

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## Appropriation

	Fiscal year ending in 1956	1957
Personal Service		
A-1 Salaries	\$ 66,648.00	\$ 69,504.00
A-2 Wages	<u>7,000.00</u>	<u>7,000.00</u>
Total Personal Service	73,648.00	76,504.00
Maintenance		
Supplies		
C-4 Office	1,500.00	1,500.00
C-4a Postage	1,000.00	1,000.00
Equipment		
E-1 Office	4,460.00	
E-8a New Books	20,000.00	20,000.00
Contract and Open Order Service		
F-1a Repairs	200.00	200.00
F-5 Express	100.00	100.00
F-6 Travel	1,700.00	1,700.00
F-7 Communication	1,100.00	1,100.00
F-8 Printing & Binding	4,000.00	4,500.00
F-9 Other	<u>150.00</u>	<u>150.00</u>
	34,210.00	30,250.00
Total Personal Service and Maintenance	107,858.00	106,754.00
Subsidy		
H-8 Library Aid	160,000.00	160,000.00