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

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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
OHIO STATE LIBRARY
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STATE LIBRARY
REFERENCE

George Elliott McCormick,
Ohio State Librarian.

OHIO STATE LIBRARY

Annual Report of State Librarian George Elliott McCormick.

November 15, 1929

When the State Librarian assumed office on February 1 of this year, he was faced with a problem somewhat like the physician who takes over the case of a patient after a long illness. Rebuilding and rejuvenating the whole system was found to be necessary. Plans were made and a skeleton organization formed with enough elasticity for expansion in future months and years. Immediate operation was begun. Divisions and departments were organized step by step.

Every effort has been made to correlate the activities in an efficient manner. Activities of each division follow:

1. ADMINISTRATION DIVISION.

The Administration Division supervises and co-ordinates the different activities of the several divisions and departments of the library. All division chiefs have advisory powers only, and are directly responsible to the State Librarian for the conduct of the divisions. All instructions, rules and regulations are issued by the librarian through the Administration Division.

The division also controls the finances, places orders for books and supplies, pays all bills and salaries. Keeping personnel records, preparing library publicity and statistics, and issuing bulletins and circulars are additional duties.

This division is also the message center. All incoming mail is distributed to the proper division for necessary action.

The work of this division for the past nine months has largely been related to the organization of the other divisions and departments of the library. The following are some of the outstanding features:

Organization and operation of the Main Division including the Reference Department, State Circulation Department, City Circulation Department, United States Document Department.

New registration of patrons

Removal of obsolete books from the main reading room to another part of the library.

Organization and operation of the Accession Division.

Merging the cataloging departments of the Main Division and Traveling Library.

Consolidation of book replacements for all departments.

Uniting all records pertaining to additions to the library.

Formerly, magazines were received in one place, books in another, U.S. Documents in another and State Documents in another. They are now all taken care of together.

Binding of current magazines that were stored for several years past.

Organization of the Legislative Reference Division into two departments, the Special Library Department and the Bill Drafting Department. State Documents have been transferred to this department.

Removal of duplicate state documents from the shelves to other quarters has relieved the crowded condition somewhat.

Reorganization of the Traveling Library Division and Organization Division and the union of these divisions into the Extension Division under one head.

Repair and rebinding some 20,000 books which had been allowed to accumulate for years in the Traveling Library.

Removal of the Traveling Library Department to new quarters making possible better working conditions, better service and greater economy.

Organization of the Administration Division with the view to co-ordinating the activities of the entire library service.

Formation of rules and regulations, budgeting and financial control.

The physical condition of the library has had a great deal of attention. Dirt and dust accumulation of years has been removed; the beautiful original tables, ink-stained and with torn covers, have been taken from out-of-the-way places, recovered, and placed in the main reading and reference room where they belong.

Reference books have been washed, relabeled and shellacked. New shelving has been made and the books rearranged in harmony with the room.

Rare and obsolete books have been removed to relieve the crowded condition and to make place for those dumped on floors and for new ones; books so taken from the regular shelves are placed elsewhere in order, where they may be had for occasional calls and for research work.

All books in the general collection are in process of being washed, thoroughly cleaned, relabeled and shellacked.

II. ACCESSION DIVISION.

Under this division is the Order Department which selects the books, places the orders with the Administration Division, checks the books with bills as received and accessions them.

The Catalog Department which has charge of classifying and cataloging the books, the mechanical preparation of them, and their distribution to the various departments of the library.

III MAIN DIVISION.

The Main Division includes work of the following departments:

The State Circulation Department co-operates with libraries, schools, clubs and other organizations, in filling mail requests for books to supplement their work. It makes loans to libraries of such books as they need to supplement their collections in meeting the needs of borrowers, and makes loans, direct by mail to individuals living where there are no public library facilities.

The mail service has increased at an unusual and remarkable rate, due to the splendid co-operation of the press in letting people know about the State Library and its facilities which may be had for the asking.

The City Circulation Department makes direct loans to persons coming directly to the Main Library, gives information, acts as reader's adviser when desired, provides a guide to the books needed, and instructs in the use of the catalog and other reference material.

The Reference Department takes care of general reference work, assists in compiling personal genealogies, makes bibliographies and reading lists on desired subjects.

The genealogical work is steadily increasing because of the growing interest in the hereditary and patriotic societies, and the consequent desire for membership in some one of these organizations, which require the history of each individual ancestor and his achievements.

A "Mayflower" Society for Ohio is just being formed and in consequence the demand is great for historical facts regarding the twenty-three names of passengers whose descendants still live. Both men and women are eligible to the Mayflower Society, as well as to the "Founders and Patriots," whose members must still bear the surname of the "Founder" or "Patriot" ancestor.

Requests for biographies of the Knights of Runnymede, the fourteen Lords who compelled King John to sign the Magna Carta, are coming in for membership in the two English societies, the "Magna Carta" and "Runnymede."

One day's personal service, that of October 29, 1929, is typical of what is being done in genealogical work from day to day.

First: A local woman wanting Vital Records of Massachusetts, but not knowing where her people lived in that state.

Second: A lady asking for Pennsylvania Archives for Revolutionary service of a soldier whose Christian name was unknown.

Third: Two from Detroit, attending Missionary Convention, wanted "all you have on New Jersey." They described as being "wonderful," the genealogical department of the Public Library of Detroit, but found one book not in their library.

Fourth: Two Dayton women asked for Futey's "History of Chester County, Pennsylvania," or Rupp's "Lancaster County" in that state. They were supplied with the latter, but were disappointed that the other was not in our collection.

Fifth: One man was searching for an ancestor who lived at one time in either Maryland or Pennsylvania and paid tax in the Keystone State.

Sixth: Another man, one of the "regulars," was hunting elusive ancestors of his wife. In addition to these there were minor questions that could be answered at once, while lying on the desk waiting for information were letters from Greenfield, Newark, Montpelier and Blanchester, Ohio; one from Jasper, Indiana, another from the Historical Society of Illinois and one asking for the service record of her father in the Civil War.

Requests too numerous to mention for material other than genealogical, come daily to the Reference desk.

The Document Department has charge of all U.S. Documents and publications.

IV. The LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE DIVISION.

The Legislative Reference division has two main activities:

The Special Library Department includes the collection of books, pamphlets and other material pertaining to the state, distributes information desired about the state, makes up and sends out questionnaires, consults authorities on subjects of interest to legislators and others, compiles statistics, co-operates with libraries and commissions in various services, collects and compiles the duties of state officials, develops the legislative history of any department, and collects and compares the laws of other states with those of Ohio.

It classifies and indexes the documents of the collection and exchanges documents with other states. It publishes a monthly check list of Ohio publications released for the month. This list is cumulated and sent to libraries throughout the state every three months. It is preparing a check list of duplicate documents now on hand and will distribute copies to libraries as requested. Their files may thus be checked for missing numbers which will be filled.

The Bill Drafting department prepares the bills or resolutions as requested by the State Legislature.

V. EXTENSION DIVISION.

On March 1 the first step was taken for proper control and co-ordination of activities by creation of the Extension Division, representing a consolidation of the Organization Division and the Traveling Library Division. Briefly, the function of this division is to organize new libraries, collect information about existing libraries through visits, questionnaires and yearly reports, aid public libraries by instruction and suggestions in better personnel, building up book collections, better interior organization, establishment of branches, publicity and library technique, and building and equipment.

The Library Organizing Department organizes new libraries, collects information about existing libraries and makes it available.

There is every indication of a library revival over the state.

New Libraries are starting, building projects are under way, both in towns and large cities; many old buildings have been renovated and redecorated; great interest is manifested in developing county libraries, and librarians generally are awakening to renewed activity.

In starting new libraries, effort is made to get the largest territory unit possible in order that more people may be served and that funds may be large enough to assure the best possible service.

Wherever feasible, also, existing libraries are urged to change to a larger territory unit in order to afford better facilities and increased service.

Special requests for help have been answered in turn and as many nearby libraries as possible visited when answering such calls. A large part of the state has been covered by these visits and all existing libraries will have been visited soon. Splendid co-operation is manifest in everything that makes for library progress.

Four district library meetings were held in June at Columbus, Dayton, Warren and Norwalk, respectively. Every library in the state was invited to be represented at one of them and 319 persons were in attendance. The morning programs consisted of discussion of the special activities of the libraries represented and the afternoon sessions were devoted to book talks.

At least 40 librarians and assistants attended summer library school at Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, Columbia University, and Chautauqua, New York.

Book lists have been made and distributed and articles prepared on "What a County Library does for a Community," "The Work of a State Library Organizer," and "Suggestions for Good Book Week."

The Publicity Section.

The purpose of this section is to make personal contacts with the public. Field workers and representatives give lectures and addresses on the service of the State Library, thus making known its resources and activities, and letting people know how they may obtain service in the most effective way.

The various calls for lectures and addresses before clubs, Parent-Teacher Associations, schools, granges and other organizations have been duly met.

An exhibit of books at the State Fair showing the various activities of the State Library was so popular that it was asked to be sent to different county fairs, which included Marion, Richwood, Millersburg and Coshocton. Persons were in charge of each exhibit to answer questions and distribute literature relating to the State Library.

Two special exhibits were made up later and used in like manner at district conferences of the Ohio Federation of Women's Clubs held at Sidney, Kenton, Eaton, Ravenna, Cadiz and Portsmouth.

An exhibit also was on display at the Ohio Parent-Teacher Association Convention in Springfield. The Warder Library in Springfield co-operated by exhibiting an additional collection of books relating to the work of parents and teachers.

The Traveling Library Department gives state-wide book service to rural districts including schools, granges, state institutions, bureaus, clubs and other organizations and lends books to new libraries until their own collections are large enough to meet the local needs.

An exhaustive survey was made of the Traveling Library for the purpose of determining what steps could be taken to extend this service to the thousands of people in the state without library service. Operation of the system in use was found to be cumbersome and antiquated. There was no fixed policy as to the distribution of books. Duplication of service of both the Main Division and Traveling Library with already established public libraries in the state was found.

A complete reorganization has recently been effected with the resultant saving of time, labor and expense through the use of modern business methods and practices. The following policy was adopted as a guide:

1. To furnish books to groups of citizens and children in territories where public libraries do not exist, until such time as local service is established. The collections to be placed according to the judgment of the Chief of the Extension Division where they will serve as forerunners of libraries and where applicants guarantee that they will be at the disposal of the entire community. Through the local press, schools, churches and clubs full publicity must be given to the fact that these collections are for everybody's use.

2. To furnish books and material to local libraries whose resources are weak, especially:

- a. Books for adults. The small library often fails to hold its adult readers because it can not provide a sufficient variety of fresh and attractive material.

- b. Books on special topics desired by clubs or schools.

- c. Exhibits of pictures of flowers, etc.

No accurate statistics can be given until the new plan has had sufficient time to demonstrate its worthiness. Its effectiveness, however, is apparent from day to day observations and comparisons. Formerly, only three to four libraries were packed and shipped a day. Books were neither cleaned nor repaired when shipped.

Under the new plan of operation from ten to twelve libraries are cleaned, repaired, packed and shipped every day.

Under the old plan schools, organizations, clubs and others requesting libraries did not receive them for a week, two weeks or longer. Next year, under the new plan, forty-eight hour service to any part of Ohio will be put into effect.

Finally let us summarize the various functions of the State Library as they now exist for the purpose of serving the people of the state of Ohio:

The function of the State Library is state-wide library service through the organizing of new libraries and improvement of existing libraries, the supplementing of service of existing libraries, and rendering of direct service to individuals and communities throughout the state until such time as local service is established and adequately carried on.

It conducts a general reference and circulating library for the entire state, aiming to supply books by direct mail to any of the two million people of the state not having local library service.

It acts as a central source of supply for every public, school and college library in the state, furnishing through inter-library loans the more unusual and expensive books not to be found in the smaller collections.

It acts as a central agency to find and secure for any reader in the state any wanted book not in its own collections.

It sends small collections of books known as Traveling Libraries to rural groups, small communities and rural schools, furnishing usually the sole available book resources for general reading.

It conducts a library organization division to visit public and school libraries, collects information about them, and furnishes advice and information for their administration and betterment.

It conducts a legislative reference division which collects information on public affairs useful to legislators, drafts bills on request, and compiles, edits and indexes laws and compilations on special subjects.

It conducts a document division for the service of those wishing information from state and national government publications.

With an eye single to the goal of improved service for the greatest number, we are sure beneficial results will follow the simple application of sane business methods combined with library technique and vision.

George Elliott McCormick,

State Librarian.

