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Report of

Division of the State Library, Archives and History

Division of State Library  
Archives and History  
Trenton, N. J.

1949 - 1950

During the fiscal year 1949-50, the Division of the State Library made important gains in strengthening its services to the State by the addition of new staff specialists. Of outstanding importance was the appointment of a trained lawyer-librarian as Head of the Law Library Bureau and the appointment of a Supervisor of School Library Services in the Public and School Library Services Bureau. The addition of these highly trained librarians to key positions materially strengthens the Division's staff and makes possible the provision of services, the need for which has been recognized for many years.

These key appointments are part of the long-range plan which has for its goal the development of a strong and highly effective state library agency. Eventually it is hoped, we shall have a State Library which will serve as an information nerve center for all agencies of State government, including the Legislature, the Courts and the Executive Departments. Already a splendid beginning has been made toward the creation of a first-rate reference and research library and an excellent core staff is now busily engaged in organizing the library's splendid collections for more effective use. As an example of the tangible results already being achieved in this direction, attention is invited to the improved legislative reference service now being provided. Increasingly the Library is serving the Legislature by performing basic research for legislative committees appointed to study and report on a given subject and further gains in this service area are anticipated in the coming year. As far back as 1914 (chap. 29, N. J. Law, 1914) the State Library was designated as the source of research aid to the Legislature but until the present time, no great amount of research was done for the Legislators. Because of staff limitations the service was confined largely to collecting and distributing legislative bills, etc., "keeping a legislative history of the bills and compiling and distributing the "Descriptive List of Laws and Joint Resolutions." It is believed that the Legislative Reference work will increase measurably during the years ahead and all preparations are being made to meet the needs of the Legislature by acquiring new materials and organizing them for most effective use. A special Legislative Reference Alcove has been established with separate sections set aside for materials gathered for committees, commissions or individual legislators upon request. The goal of providing the best possible kind of library service to the Legislature occupies a top priority among the Division's long-term objectives.

The work of each of our Bureaus is hampered by lack of staff and the Library cannot hope to achieve its maximum usefulness until additional personnel is made available. At the present time our most serious lack is in the clerical and stenographic field. It was anticipated that such a situation would develop following the appointment of additional staff specialists but the pronounced increase in both the volume and the tempo of the work of each of the four bureaus has exceeded our highest estimates. We have now reached the point where our clerical-stenographic staff is unable to keep up with the daily work load. As a result, professional librarians frequently are forced to perform clerical tasks -- an obvious waste of expensive manpower. It is



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recommended that additional clerical assistance be added at the earliest possible date to relieve this situation.

#### LAW LIBRARY BUREAU

The appointment of a trained lawyer-librarian as Head of the Law Library Bureau has materially strengthened this important component of the Division. Miss Margaret E. Coonan brings to the post a rich background of experience which includes many years' service in the following posts: Associate Librarian, Baltimore Bar Library; Assistant Librarian, Legislative Reference Library, Baltimore, Maryland; and Law Librarian, Railroad Retirement Board, Chicago, Illinois. Miss Coonan did not begin her new duties until late June 1950 and therefore a full report of developments in the Law Library field will not be made until next year. However, a brief statistical review covering the period from September to June 1950 makes it clear that the Law Library is a very active agency serving a wide clientele. During this ten months period, the Law Library Bureau served 90 Judges and 50 Legislators as well as 4288 lawyers and 1026 employees of the executive departments.

#### Advisory Committee on Law Library

An important step in strengthening the relationship between the Judiciary and the Library Division was the appointment by Chief Justice Arthur T. Vanderbilt of an Advisory Committee on the Law Library. This committee consisting of Justice Heher and Justice Oliphant will serve as a liaison advisory group on such matters as book purchases, hours of opening, borrowing privileges, etc. The formation of this committee is particularly opportune, coming as it does in the middle of the reform of the State's judicial system. The Supreme Court has laid great emphasis on the importance of lawyers submitting good briefs and has decided to reject those which do not meet the standards of the Court. This decision makes it more important than ever that lawyers, as well as judges have access to first-rate law libraries in which they can do significant research.

To insure that the State Law Library secures all necessary basic materials from other states, we have improved the system of exchange with other state libraries. In this way it is hoped to obtain State Codes, Session Laws, Pamphlet Laws, and Court Reports. Where the latest annotated State Codes are not available by exchange they will be obtained by direct purchase. In addition, bibliographies, publishers' lists, and book reviews have been checked to keep abreast of the latest Law Texts and purchases are made after careful consideration of needs and costs. Subscriptions to additional legal periodicals have been placed to improve the Law Library's collection in this important field for current legal research.

#### ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

Although the lack of a trained full-time Archivist is sorely felt, considerable progress was made by the Bureau, particularly in the microfilming



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of State records. Over 5,000,000 records were placed on film during this period releasing approximately 7000 cubic feet of storage space. The amount of filing equipment thus made available has resulted in considerable savings to the State by making it unnecessary to purchase additional filing cabinets. Perhaps the most important savings of all, however, have come from those microfilming projects which have not been approved. In some instances where requests to microfilm certain blocks of records resulted in a detailed examination of the types of records involved, projects have been disapproved because the incidence of use of the records did not justify either filming or retaining. In such cases the records were simply destroyed after a proper authorization had been prepared under the provisions of R.S. 47:3-1 governing the destruction of public records. As successor to the former Public Record Office, the Bureau of Archives and History exercises general supervision over the making, preservation and destruction of all public records at state, county and local levels. Much significant work is being done in this field but the Division is hampered by the lack of a trained Archivist to devote full-time to this important task. Similarly, the present laws governing the destruction of records, particularly those which have been microfilmed, are in need of revision. It is hoped that a new and more effective statute covering this important project will be introduced at the next session of the Legislature.

#### GENERAL REFERENCE BUREAU

During the past year, the General Reference Library has sought to accomplish two definite objectives: (1) to make the library an invaluable research and bibliographic adjunct of State government and (2) to make the unique resources of the library available to every citizen of the State. The methods employed in order to accomplish the first objective were; (1) to seek a closer working relationship with the various executive departments; (2) to prepare bibliographies and collections with reference to legislative problems; and (3) to attempt to keep the various agencies informed about the various government documents which might be of special interest to them. Operating in concert with the Bureau of Library Services, the Reference Library has brought closer to reality its objective of becoming the central reference reservoir of the State. In conformance with this effort, most of the materials in the Library, with the general exception of genealogy and Jerseyana, are now available for inter-library loan. Letters broaching problems or inquiries are answered with research commensurate with the importance of the subject. As an indication that this major objective is being achieved, it may be noted that almost 5000 persons received reference assistance during the year. More than 3,000 of these were served in person with telephone and mail inquiries accounting for the remainder. Over 12,000 items -- books, pamphlets, state and federal documents -- were added to the Library's collections in the twelve month period. The General Reference Library has thus striven to make its services truly state-wide in character - with the departments of state government and the citizens of the state equally sharing its resources.

One major personnel change occurred in the Reference Library during the year. Miss Katherine B. Rogers, who had served for more than 35 years as reference librarian, retired, and was succeeded by the Senior Assistant, Mr. Abner J. Gaines.

It is hoped that the new personnel will continue the excellent work of the former librarian and that the library will continue to be a valuable resource to the citizens of the state.



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The lack of sufficient staff has for the past several years been an acute problem for the library. Lacking at the present time, are a page, who could devote his entire attention to shelving and maintaining the stacks in proper condition, and a senior librarian, to assist the Reference Librarian.

In order to cope with the overcrowded condition of the alcoves, it is recommended that magazine racks be purchased. The removal of the periodicals from the alcove in which they are at present located will permit one half of this crowded alcove to be used for the highly compressed New Jersey material. A rack will also facilitate the use and display of the periodicals.

#### PUBLIC AND SCHOOL LIBRARY SERVICES BUREAU

September 1, 1949 brought two significant additions to the professional staff of the Public and School Library Services Bureau. On that date Mrs. Jane Hobson began her duties as the State's first Children and Young People's Library Consultant, making New Jersey the twenty fourth State to establish such a position. Although her appointment became effective on July 1st, 1949, Mrs. Hobson was permitted to carry out her commitment to teach at Trenton State Teachers College for the summer session and thus did not begin her field work until September. Joining the staff at this time also was Miss Martha H. Davis, formerly Librarian, Tenafly High School. Miss Davis succeeded Miss Ethel S. Brown (retired June 30, 1949) as Lending Services Librarian. Two other significant staff changes were made at this same time. Mrs. Janet Zimmerman McKinlay, who had been serving as Public Library Supervisor, was assigned as Acting Head of the Bureau, in addition to her other duties. This arrangement, placing the management of the extension agency under the direct supervision of a skilled administrator is paying dividends in the form of better management of the Bureau's varied operations. Among the significant improvements made have been the re-allocation of duties of all members of the Bureau staff, including the establishment of a stenographic pool under the supervision of Mrs. Marjorie Van Ness. Unfortunately Mrs. Van Ness' prolonged illness has delayed the completion of this worthwhile project. To further strengthen the Bureau's field services, Mrs. Kabel Niemeyer, who had been serving as assistant to the Public Library Supervisor, was assigned as Adult Education Librarian. In her new capacity Mrs. Niemeyer will have charge of work with special groups such as the P.T.A. and the State Federation of Women's Clubs.

#### In-Service Training

Four One-Day Regional Institutes were held during the year, three of which were in the nature of general training and one specializing in adult education. The programs, which were especially planned for the benefit of the smaller libraries included demonstrations and discussions of modern methods and techniques. The excellent attendance at these Institutes and regional meetings makes it clear that they furnish one of the most satisfactory ways of reaching librarians and trustees in the smaller communities. While it is recognized that extension courses and other formal programs of study are needed, there are many individuals who do not possess the fundamental

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education which permit them to study for a degree in library science. For these individuals, institutes, workshops and clinics offer the best means by which this large group can become more professionally adept and effective in their own libraries. Further activities along this line are planned for the coming year.

### Adult Education

Another means utilized to carry education to the people are book exhibits placed at selected meetings of state groups and organizations. This year 27 exhibits were shown, ranging in size from 25 to 450 books and pamphlets, and in subject interest from agriculture and labor management to homemaking, family life, arts for leisure, health, safety and numerous other timely subjects. One of the most important developments along this line were the Parents' Bookshelves which were sent to more than 20 libraries or parent teachers organizations for the use of parent education study groups. The Bureau also cooperated with the New Jersey Tuberculosis League and the State Department of Education by supplying books for a Health Workshop conducted at the Trenton State Teachers College for a selected group of New Jersey teachers and helping teachers.

### Work with School and Young People

Better educational opportunities for every child in New Jersey are being made possible by the work of the new consultant. Every effort is being made to encourage the wider use of books as a means of enriching the lives of children in our schools. In this connection, 35 talks were made to teachers, librarians, parents and children and 62 visits were made to schools, libraries and other institutions. Eleven special exhibits were prepared and displayed in various points throughout the state.

In an attempt to improve educational opportunities for New Jersey children, in the less populous areas, 57 traveling libraries were placed throughout the State. These consist of collections of 50 to 200 books sent to rural schools that do not have adequate library service. Titles are carefully selected according to the ages, reading ability, reading interests and location of the school or library concerned. These traveling libraries are eagerly welcomed by children in the rural areas. A teacher from a rural school in Cumberland County wrote "The traveling library was used by 48 pupils. Each book was read by an average of 6 children. Of the 48 enrolled, only 4 had ever had the opportunity of going to a library. To have so many books available was a wonderful experience for our classes."

Through the generous cooperation of the State Federation of Women's Clubs, "Teen-Age Corners" were established in libraries of two New Jersey communities. These attractively decorated "corners", especially planned to attract and interest readers of the high-school age, were furnished through a project sponsored by the Educational Division of the New Jersey

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State Federation of Women's Clubs. The first was established in the Woodbury Public Library, the second in the Bound Brook Public Library. These two demonstrations have aroused great interest throughout the State and other libraries have been encouraged to establish similar units, frequently with the help of the local women's club.

#### Legislation

Chapter 189, Laws of 1950, a revision of the former county library law, permits greater expansion of county libraries and makes possible multi-county libraries or regions. The Audio Visual Bill, Senate 366 which became Chapter 228, Laws of 1950, is important in that county libraries are authorized to extend their activities to include films and related materials for schools and general use.

#### Regional Library Development

During the year, the New Jersey Library Association appointed a special committee to study and report on the possibilities of strengthening New Jersey's libraries by some sort of regional arrangement. The Bureau of Library Services was asked to assist the committee by lending its fact-finding and research facilities as needed.

While recognizing that New Jersey must develop a plan that is best suited to its own needs, the committee has made an intensive study of activities and developments in other states. At the same time, it has recognized the prime necessity for making a thorough evaluation of New Jersey's resources and requirements with a view to drafting a sound, and economical state aid program for New Jersey libraries. It is hoped that funds for an evaluative survey will be obtained during the coming year and that the resulting recommendations will encourage local libraries to combine into larger units of service. The recently published report of the Carnegie sponsored Public Library Inquiry strongly urges that the present 7,500 public libraries of the country be combined into not more than 1200 for most effective results. If this same ratio were followed in New Jersey, the present 300 separate and distinct libraries would be reduced to approximately 50 in number. This does not mean that certain public libraries would necessarily be eliminated altogether but rather that the very small and weak units would be encouraged to enter into a practical working relationship with larger and more efficient units in the same geographical area. In general, this is similar in concept to the system which now obtains in the public schools and which is recommended for adoption by the local health districts of the state. The committee will continue its intensive study of this problem in the year ahead.

#### Recommendations

Splendid progress has been made in building a professional staff of high quality but it is evident that additional staff of both professionals and clericals is needed if the Bureau of Library Services is to accomplish

