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DIVISION OF STATE LIBRARY, ARCHIVES & HISTORY

NEW JERSEY STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

1951 - 1952

ANNUAL REPORT
DIVISION OF STATE LIBRARY, ARCHIVES & HISTORY
NEW JERSEY STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
1951-1952

The Theme, "Looking Ahead In New Jersey Education" is particularly appropriate in so far as the library division is concerned. In a number of areas throughout the country, public libraries are passing through a period of intensive analysis and review to enable librarians to evaluate better the services they are rendering; to correct obvious faults and to plan wisely for the broad development of public and school library services in the years ahead. State Library agencies are not exempt from this critical self-examination and the report of the Carnegie sponsored Public Library Inquiry published in 1949 called attention to the fact that the majority of our state libraries are weak links in our "American library system". Since then the strengthening of state library agencies has become a major goal of the library profession and the American Library Association and the National Association of State Libraries are currently seeking funds for a joint survey of state libraries. It may be noted that in comparison with the majority of agencies throughout the country, the New Jersey State Library is regarded as a relatively strong one. There is a modest satisfaction in this fact but it is tempered by the realization that in comparison with the best state libraries, New Jersey cannot be included in the first or leading group. With this preliminary statement in mind, a brief review of the activities of the Division since its inception in 1947 would appear to be useful.

In the five years that the Division has been operating as a unified agency of the State Department of Education, our primary objective has been to transform the somewhat dormant State Library into a vital agency which would stress the service rather than the custodial aspect of library work. When we began in 1947 only five of the thirty people on the Division's staff were professional librarians and several of these were ready for retirement. Clearly our need for strong, professional workers who would provide the dynamic leadership that was needed to carry out the various responsibilities with which the division was entrusted. In this we have been highly successful, and at the present time we have ten professional members on our staff, many of whom enjoy nation-wide professional reputations. The heads of our Law Library and our Bureau of Public and School Library Services are providing strong leadership in their respective fields. Similarly, our School Library Supervisor is helping to improve the quality of our School library services at both secondary and elementary level throughout the state. Our Supervisor of Public Records and our Supervisor of Microfilm are making significant progress in assisting state officials to dispose of useless stocks of old records and to preserve safely those that would represent an irreparable loss if destroyed. Our young Reference Librarians are making steady improvements in our services to state officials and employees. Under the able, vigorous leadership that our professional people are giving, the tempo of state library activities has increased perceptibly in the past few years.

Although the quality of our staff has improved, we lack the strength both in the professional and clerical field to do more than scratch the surface of our library potential. In particular we need additional professional and clerical help to back up the good work that is being done by our field workers. One of our most glaring weaknesses is in the very things for which the State Library should be a model. It is embarrassing, but true, for example, that our cataloging is extremely poor. Our Law Library catalog, for instance, contains almost no cross references so that if a book or report is not asked for by title or author it is frequently difficult for us to locate it under a subject heading. In

addition, thousands of valuable state reports and other materials are unused because they are not cataloged. One of our prime needs therefore is for an additional full-time professional cataloger who will insure that this important index to the library's holdings actually reflects the splendid collections that have been built up over a great many years.

Local Libraries

As we look critically about us in the state, we are distressed at the condition of many of our municipal and county libraries in New Jersey. Of the 289 public libraries a fair number give excellent service. Far too many however, are below standard in the quality of the book stock and in the staff and the buildings available to serve the public. The basic difficulty is that a great many of these libraries are too small and financially undernourished to be able to stand on their own feet. The report of Commissioner Bosshart's Committee, The Professional Education and Training of Library Personnel In New Jersey commented as follows upon this:

Another important element affecting the standard of library service in New Jersey is the lack of sound financial support. The fact that forty of the 289 public libraries in the State operate on budgets of less than \$1,000 annually indicates the extreme weakness of the present structure. Practically speaking, this means that forty communities in New Jersey have token library service only, for it is apparent that with budgets of \$1,000 it is impossible to provide any kind of serious library service for the children and adults of any community. An important step, in turn related to the question of adequate professional training, must be taken in the public library field. This is the creation of regional libraries within the State which would bring the present small, weak, and economically unsound units into a larger system. This regional movement must be accompanied by other, equally important steps.

In order to provide high quality library service to the citizens of the State, it is necessary to make a vigorous effort to increase salaries paid professionally trained library personnel. Without adequate salaries, it is almost impossible to recruit high quality candidates for professional training. Neither is it possible to hold dynamic personnel unless salary schedules are made attractive. This constitutes a challenge to forward looking citizens, especially the trustees of community libraries.

The provision of an adequate program of library education at professional and sub-professional levels is essential. The Committee feels that the library situation in New Jersey holds promise for a realistic program of library education, built on the present valuable development and profiting from the study of strong and weak points demonstrated in the work of other schools. In particular, it feels that New Jersey, with its wide diversity of public library service--large city, suburban, county--offers a field for a graduate library school which will not only meet the immediate needs of possible students in New Jersey and in other states, but also can be an effective agency in raising the standard qualifications of library personnel and the level of library service throughout the State.

In this latter connection, it is understood that during the coming year an attempt will be made to create, by legislative act, the Graduate Library School which is so desperately needed for the training of librarians in this State. It is hoped that this movement, which has the strong support of the New Jersey Library Association and the New Jersey Library Trustees Association, will receive the solid backing of all educational groups in the State. A program of in-service training is also badly needed for non-professional librarians and volunteer workers in our small public libraries and county branches. This program is independent of the graduate library school and should be established regardless of whether the graduate school is brought into being.

For the past three years a committee of the New Jersey Library Association has been surveying the overall needs of New Jersey libraries. The study agrees with the conclusions expressed in the Bosshart Report with respect to the wide inequality of opportunity for good library service throughout the State. The final report of the Committee has still to be published but the preliminary studies contemplate a state-wide plan for better library service through county or other regional arrangements. Under this plan the small, weak independent library would be joined either through federation or some other arrangement with a larger unit of service. It can be seen that in this thinking the libraries are turning to a principle that has guided our school authorities for many years. Through the gradual elimination of the one-room school in this state, thousands of children have received better instruction in the consolidated district schools. It is apparent that a similar plan is needed for our public libraries.

A fundamental part of the library association's basic plan is the Deposit and Exchange Library Service to provide storage facilities for little-used books of all libraries in the state. The annual budget request for the Division will include items leading to the establishment of this important service in the year ahead. Specifically we are asking for a small staff of professional and clerical assistants to get the Deposit and Exchange plan into actual operation, even on a limited scale. We are convinced that this service, which would provide a central storage facility for little used books of all the public and school libraries, would be of enormous benefit to New Jersey libraries. Thousands of books that would otherwise have out-lived their usefulness would be turned over to smaller libraries and to state penal and correctional institutions thus prolonging the usefulness of the volumes. In addition, the critical shelving situation in many of our libraries would be relieved by the removal of thousands of these volumes. In many cases this would make it unnecessary to build costly additions to existing library buildings.

PUBLIC AND SCHOOL LIBRARY SERVICES

As noted earlier in the report, the Bureau of Library Services has operated under considerable difficulties because of the staff shortages. Turnover in the small clerical staff has made it difficult to maintain an orderly book collection, a factor which seriously impairs our lending services. In spite of this, a fine record of service to New Jersey libraries was made. The Acting Head of the Bureau reports that in addition to her administrative duties, she visited forty-seven libraries, attended thirty-nine meetings, helped arrange six regional institutes and began a survey of library facilities in State institutions. The time consumed in field visits made it possible to cover more than a portion of the libraries during the year, a fact which suggests the possible addition of other field workers in future years.

Work with School and Young People

The Consultant for these activities visited fifty schools, libraries and institutions in order to help improve library facilities now available for children and young people and also to assist in organizing new school libraries. She delivered thirty-seven talks to children, librarians, teachers and parents giving information about books and library service in order to stimulate reading and encourage more adequate library service for children. Seven of these talks were accompanied by an exhibit of children's books. Thirty professional meetings were attended including conferences, workshops, institutes and county meetings. In most cases the Consultant served as an active participant. Traveling libraries were sent to sixty-four rural schools and small public libraries that were without adequate library service. Each of these collections was carefully selected for the particular school or library requesting it. For the second year a Traveling Exhibit of new children's books was made available for schools and libraries. Five hundred and ninety-three books received from forty-one publishers were used. These books were loaned for thirty-two exhibits at public libraries, county libraries, schools, teachers' colleges, workshops and conferences.

The \$10,000.00 State Aid Funds for the fiscal year, July 1, 1951-June 30, 1952, were exhausted on June 3, 1952. Eighty-five schools applied for State Aid for the first time during this year. Contacts were made with county superintendents, supervising principals, principals and librarians in order that these funds might be used in communities where it was needed.

Adult Education

The work in this section was increased and broadened to include new phases of interest to librarians and adult educators in general. One such activity was the American Heritage Project. Under a gift from the Ford Foundation the Adult Education Fund made a grant to the American Library Association for the promotion of the project chosen to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the American Library Association--The Recognition and Preservation of our American Heritage. With this fund, training courses were given for leaders, and books and films were purchased for the libraries establishing such a program. Two groups were started in New Jersey, one under the direction of the Monmouth County Librarian and the other under the Ocean County Librarian. The initial success of these two projects led to the establishment of a state-wide project under the joint auspices of the New Jersey Library Association and the Bureau. A commission was appointed to head the project and the Adult Education Librarian was named Executive Secretary. A request for funds has been sent to the American Library Association, plans have been formulated and the communities where groups will be started have been selected. The decision of the Adult Education Fund as to how the money shall be allocated will be made in July, 1952.

Twenty-seven book exhibits were shown during the year. Where placed for specific state organization meetings the Adult Education Librarian attended the meeting and usually had a place on the program. In instances where requests were made by smaller groups, the books were selected and sent to the meetings. The books shown covered many subjects--agriculture, home making, family living, child study, plays, recreation, gardening, music, flower arrangement, antique collecting and identification, home decoration, art, health, problems of the aging, education of young adults, labor and management relations, general adult education, our American Heritage, budgets, home economics, etc. Each group of books was selected to meet the specific needs of the group requesting the exhibit.

The Parents' Bookshelves have been so highly successful since we began circulating them in 1948 that it has been necessary to limit our loans to 50 circulating book collections. Only new "subscribers" can be taken on as some library relinquishes a place because it has been able to build its own book collection sufficiently to meet demands without State assistance. This particular activity was developed in cooperation with the New Jersey Congress of Parents and Teachers.

Lending Services and Order Section

An analysis of the work carried on in the Lending Services and Order Section in the past year shows that 30,404 books were circulated from the Bureau, an increase of 2,033 over last year's figures. The increased demand for loans to high schools is of especial note. Undoubtedly the visits of our School Library Consultant were a contributing factor in the increased circulation figure. The Public Libraries Consultant has also stimulated an increased interest in the inter-library loan field. We received 2,469 more requests for individual titles from public libraries than during the previous year.

Catalog Section

Statistically, the work of the section can be embodied in one statement. More than 8,000 volumes were processed during the year and over 4,000 of these represented titles new to the Division. This time-consuming but highly necessary work was hampered by the shortage of professional and clerical help. The efficiency of all our Bureaus will be handicapped until additional staff is provided.

ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

Since its inception in 1949, the microfilming unit of the Bureau of Archives and History has filmed millions of State records to preserve and protect the originals and to save space. The growing demand for general information about records control methods however, soon made it apparent that a broad program of controlled records keeping was essential to regulate the great quantities of records being produced and housed by State agencies. Accordingly, a records specialist was appointed to the Bureau in April of this year to integrate the activities of the microfilming unit with a plan of records retention and disposal schedules based upon a thorough inventory and appraisal of State records. It is contemplated that this plan will serve as a useful guide to the counties and municipalities as well.

Records Survey

The first evaluative survey of State records was begun in the Department of the Treasury. In three months 17,500 cubic feet of records were inventoried and retention schedules adopted for two of the department's divisions. These schedules were presented to the various bureaus, department and divisional heads as well as to the State auditors for approval. Where advisable, recommendations were made for microfilming and the necessary cost analyses submitted. A promising feature of the program has been the excellent cooperation afforded by the State officials. This cooperation has resulted in rapid progress.

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Microfilm

An examination of the activities of the microfilming unit for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1952 indicates that filming was carried on in eight divisions of the State Government and a total of 7,188,000 documents were placed on film. Five of these projects resulted in the release of 801 file drawers, and in the provision of adequate space for the rapidly accumulating current records. Progress was also made in the following major projects:

(a) Superior Court

In the Superior Court 26,384 complete case histories were microfilmed and the original papers subsequently destroyed. The space recovered from this year's work will take care of the acute problem of housing current records for approximately two years.

(b) Vital Statistics

A complete microfilm record of every birth, death and marriage that occurred during the year was sent to the National Office of Vital Statistics in Washington. A duplicate set of these records was made and is retained in the State Library. Since this work was done under contract the State was reimbursed by the Federal Government at the rate of three cents per document, thus allowing us to obtain a set of these records at no cost to the State in addition to realizing a slight profit. The filming of these records is a permanent project of the microfilming unit.

(c) New Jersey State Highway Department

All records adjudged irreplaceable by the State Highway Department Commissioner and his assistants were microfilmed and a copy stored in the State Library. This project included the filming of blueprints, minutes and many other vital records.

Many other services were performed by the microfilming unit in its overall program. Outstanding among these is the task of making searches for the public from microfilm State Census files. More than 1,800 searches were made for citizens who were seeking to establish a record of their birth. This file seems to be the basic source for this information and the individuals who have sought data have been very appreciative of this service.

Numerous requests were received from State agencies, municipalities and counties for authorization to destroy records. These requests, the majority of which required careful checking and investigation, resulted in the issuance of 169 authorizations. Of major significance in the latter part of the year, has been the study of county records by a judicial committee appointed by Chief Justice Vanderbilt. The Bureau is working in close liaison with the committee and an act providing for definite retention periods for these records is being drafted.

The historical material maintained by the Bureau has provided excellent research data for the many interested scholars who have availed themselves of its use. The survey of the Treasury Department records produced several historically significant documents which were added to the archival collection. These

were a set of State treasury books from the Revolutionary War, and miscellaneous records of military appropriations for the Civil War. Bail bonds from Somerset County for the period 1781 to 1840 were added to those currently on file in the Bureau.

Future Trends and Recommendations

Despite the many advances being made by the Bureau toward a sound records management program one of the great barriers to its ultimate success is the lack of adequate storage facilities. A central storage building is needed to house the inactive administrative and legal records of the State. Such a building would provide storage for tons of records needed by State agencies but not required to be housed in expensive office space and equipment. High rentals are currently being paid for storage spaces and offices are maintaining unnecessary quantities of records for fear of "losing sight" of them once they are pushed into a crowded room or cellar. The condition of some of the State records storage areas is deplorable. Public records deserve proper protection and reference availability. This can only be accomplished when they are uniformly indexed, stored in proper equipment and placed in a functional building. The economies of such a building are becoming more apparent as the program of records appraisal progresses. Such a structure would also provide larger facilities for the operations of the microfilming unit which needs additional space and equipment. The acquisition or construction of such storage facilities will result in efficiency and economy in the handling of public records.

GENERAL REFERENCE LIBRARY

The Reference Library has concentrated its efforts during the year on organizing its collections for more efficient and, in future, more extensive service, while continuing to serve State agencies and the general public during a period of re-organization and change.

More expeditious and efficient methods of handling printed material have been introduced into all main collections in the Library, with the exception of the genealogy collection. The Reference Librarian feels that any major extension of services in the latter field would involve time-consuming projects (e.g. extensive indexing) not now feasible with so limited a staff.

The general reference collection has been strengthened by the purchase of the latest editions of important reference works in all fields. A special effort has been made to complete the up-to-date reference collection of biographical directories, educational directories, directories of organizations and special subject bibliographies. Many of these works have already demonstrated their usefulness. The general reference facilities have also been strengthened by the purchase of new editions of several encyclopedias, including the Britannica and Americana. New services added during the year were Keising's Contemporary Archives, Facts on File, and the Art Index.

The Reference Library is concentrating its non-reference book purchases in the general fields of government and public administration. It is attempting to add every worthwhile book in these fields, excepting, of course, school texts. Many studies by university bureaus of governmental research are being acquired, as well as official publications of state and local governments. Tools such as the Public Affairs Information Service and the Vertical File Service are checked regularly for pamphlet material which is being used to build an up-to-date pamphlet file.

The New Jersey material, the most valuable and most used collection in the Reference Library, has received special attention. Because the State Library is the official repository for this material, the Reference Librarian feels that every reasonable effort should be made to make this collection complete, well housed and readily available. Several procedures have been instituted with these goals in mind. In order to complete the file of current New Jersey periodicals, subscriptions were entered for those titles we were not receiving. Orders are also being regularly placed for three copies of all magazines which contain an article on New Jersey.

A major change has been instituted in the handling of Jerseyana ephemera (Newspaper clippings, brochures, mimeographed material, information compiled by the staff, correspondence, etc.) This material is now kept together in steel filing cases under special subject headings. Although this file is still in its infancy, it has already proved invaluable in answering requests for material not found in the standard sources.

The major "bottleneck" in making available New Jersey material remains the large backlog of cataloging. Requests are often received for a publication the same week it is published, and the staff is greatly handicapped in answering them because of the slow cataloging. Because of the urgency of making this important material available, the Reference Librarian feels that any future additions to the cataloging staff should take into consideration the special needs of this collection and the amount of time and specialized professional attention it will need to make it of maximum use.

Plans and recommendations

Our plans for improving the services of the Reference Library are largely contingent upon obtaining the necessary staff and equipment. The problem of equipment is particularly pressing, since modern library procedures require efficient equipment, and the saving in personnel time by its use is tremendous. In view of the Reference Library's goal of more and better service to more people in the future, the Reference Librarian respectfully submits the following recommendations:

1. Page help - Part-time page help is needed for the shelving of books and other routine chores. Because of the diversity of the collections and their special nature, a page is needed who will have time to become thoroughly familiar with them.

2. Genealogical requests - The large number of vaguely-worded letters that we receive requesting genealogical information makes it impractical for the staff to do research on each one. A great many of these requests are so indefinite as to preclude a definite answer to all, and a general search through all the Library's sources sometimes takes hours, or even days. Since genealogical research, by its very nature, requires time-consuming research to ascertain many minor facts, it is best left to paid specialists. To do this work adequately and in the necessary detail, the Reference Staff would need to neglect its other services. The Reference Librarian recommends, therefore, that all such requests not asking for a specific fact to which a definite answer can be given without a reasonable length of time be referred to professional genealogists.

3. Overcrowding - The chronic ill of overflowing stacks, common to most libraries, is particularly acute in the Reference Library. There appears to be

no permanent cure for this problem. However, if the collection is to continue to grow, plans for some relief of present overcrowding must be made. When some of the stack area now used by the Library Bureau is made available, long sets like the Congressional Record should be stored there. A list of holdings of United States documents which are dated and useless for the State Library's purposes is presently being compiled. When completed, permission should be requested of the Superintendent of Documents for their disposal. It is hoped their removal will alleviate somewhat the present overcrowding.

LAW AND LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE LIBRARY

The efficiency of the Law Library has been increased by the installation of a new book charging system which provides better records and consumes less time than the old method. Form letters have been drafted to take care of certain types of inquiries and for requests and acknowledgments of free materials. An Accessions List of the Law Library with an accompanying supplementary list of related materials in the General Reference Library is now being issued quarterly. Copies are distributed to all members of the Judiciary throughout the state, to all state departments, New Jersey law libraries, other state libraries and to a selected number of law libraries throughout the country.

The close interrelationship between the Law and General Reference Bureaus makes good team work between the two small staffs a necessity. Improved coordination of these staffs' research activities in recent months has resulted in more efficient response to reference inquiries. Through this cooperative effort, prompt answers were given to such questions as the judicial ethics in the Hiss trial, ownership rights in the Delaware River, and many others. In addition, better book selection is being accomplished through joint staff conferences. These discussions prevent unnecessary duplication and help to build mutually complementary collections in the respective fields.

Accomplishments in Legislative Reference And Research

In the past year, the Head of the Law Library acted as secretary to two legislative study committees and as assistant secretary to a third. In each case, the Library representative was responsible for the basic research and for drafting the committee's report. An interesting outgrowth of the work carried on for the Committee to study Motor Vehicle Financial Responsibility was the interstate meeting on the subject held in Newark on June 26th. The arrangements for this meeting which was called at the invitation of the chairman of the New Jersey Committee, were made by the library and representatives from New York, Maryland, Delaware and Pennsylvania met with the New Jersey group for what proved to be a highly useful discussion of this important topic. The chairman of the New Jersey Committee expressed warm appreciation of the State Library's part in inaugurating and planning this meeting and voiced the hope that it would serve as a precedent for future legislative committees of this state.

Plans for Implementing Legislative Reference and Research

The need for a more adequate staff to help the Law Library perform its various functions was recognized when the Legislature granted the Director's request for additional personnel in the Bureau. When the new legislative research analyst and a clerk-stenographer are added to the Law Library staff, the following projects should be undertaken as promptly as work loads permit:

1. Liaison with Legislature - Close liaison must be maintained with the legislative leaders in order that the library may have a clear understanding of the topics that are most likely to become matters of future legislative concern. Appropriate materials, including reports from legislative committees of other states, should be acquired and bibliographies prepared for the use of New Jersey's legislators.
2. Cumulative Index of Legislative Committees - A cumulative card index with information on legislative committees should be maintained. Only our shortage of staff has prevented an earlier compilation of this too. Beginning with the next legislative session a card will be prepared for each new committee, legislative or otherwise. This card will show the origin, membership, date of report and location of report in the State Library. Cards with similar information for committees of previous years should be added to this file as staff time permits.
3. Cumulative Subject Index of Legislative Bills - This valuable index will be started in the current legislative session, with earlier sessions added as time permits. The Index will contain a card for each bill introduced in the Legislature. The cards will be filed alphabetically by subject headings descriptive of the bill and will contain the legislative history of the measure indexed. This Index, kept up-to-date session by session, will provide ready answers to questions on past legislation that now require detailed search through many annual volumes of the Legislative Index. For example, cards for all bills pertaining to the use of school buses will be indexed under Schools: Buses. In a matter of moments, the inquirer can see the entire legislative history of school bus measures over a period of years.

Under the provision of RS 40:33-14 most of the counties in the State have established law libraries. These "court house libraries" seldom have trained librarians and there is an apparent need for some professional assistance to help the person in charge organize the collections for effective use. A series of field visits by the Law Librarian followed by a clinic or institute held under the auspices of the State Library would make a useful beginning in this sadly neglected field. This function is a logical one for a state library. The field is completely undeveloped in the United States although some Canadian provinces provide this type of aid. Here is an opportunity for New Jersey to do some effective pioneering when the Law Library staff becomes large enough to justify our looking for new worlds to conquer.