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Division of State Library

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

The fourth year of the Division's existence as part of the Department of Education was marked by the development of many new services to the offices of state government and to the libraries and schools of New Jersey. Of outstanding interest in the Bureau of Library Services was the appointment of a Public Library Consultant to serve in an advisory capacity to the public libraries of the state, and the passage of legislation authorizing the establishment of a central storage library. When finally constructed this storage facility will be used by all the publicly supported libraries of the state for the storage of little-used books. Another forward step was recorded with the establishment of the new centralized microfilm unit in the Archives and History Bureau. Each of these developments is described in some detail in this report and it is necessary here only to point out the basic philosophy of the Division upon which these developments have been made.

The Division of the State Library, Archives and History may be said to have three main purposes. In the first place, it is designed to serve as a reference and research agency for the Legislature, the Executive Office, the Courts, and the various departments of state government. As society becomes more complex there is an ever increasing need to provide accurate and adequate information for all divisions of government. The resources of the Law Library and the General Reference Library have been and are being developed in response to these needs. Secondly, as the custodial office for historical papers of public interest, the Archives and History Bureau serves a useful purpose in helping to prevent the destruction of valuable papers that should be permanently preserved and in encouraging the destruction of wasteful accumulations of useless records in offices of state government. Finally, as the state agency charged with the task of promoting the growth and development of strong municipal li-

braries as basic adjuncts to our school system, the Division, through its Bureau of Library Services, is performing a most important service in helping to provide more and better books for every New Jersey community.

ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

The outstanding development in the Bureau of Archives and History was the establishment of a Microfilm Unit to serve all the departments of state government. This action represents a logical extension of the work of the Bureau in authorizing the destruction of public records under the provisions of 47:3-1 to 6. For many years the Bureau (formerly the Public Records Office) has been charged with the responsibility of establishing and maintaining standards for the effective preservation and disposal of public records in all state, county and municipal offices in New Jersey. In carrying out these duties it has become increasingly clear that some means must be found to reduce the bulk of records that must be preserved by the State for legal, administrative, or historical purposes. The report of the Hoover Commission Task Force which examined this problem at the Federal level, dramatically sets forth the enormous cost of maintaining official records in expensive filing cases in still more expensive office buildings. The problem is no less serious at the state level and accordingly New Jersey has turned to micro-filming as a partial solution to the problem of reducing the bulk of existing records.

In setting up the Microfilm Unit, the Bureau of Archives and History had the technical assistance of Dr. Vernon Tate, a recognized authority on micro-photography who, as Director of Libraries of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and as former Head of the Department of Photographic Processes of the National Archives in Washington, has done outstanding work in this field. Dr. Tate came to Trenton in August 1948 and in collaboration with Mr. Sidney Goldmann, Head of the Bureau of Archives and History, and Mr. Roger McDonough,

Director of the Division, made a survey of existing state records and microfilm facilities to determine how the new unit could best be established. This survey was highlighted by a conference attended by representatives of all state departments and the Budget Director at which common problems in records keeping and microfilming were discussed in detail. Dr. Tate's conclusions and recommendations were embodied in a 26-page memorandum that was used as the basis in setting up the unit that was finally developed with the advice and approval of the Budget Director.

In keeping with the Budget Director's recommendations that the new unit should serve as a central clearing-house for all information and activities involving microfilming at the state level, the new office was set up with a small compact staff, consisting of one Microfilm Supervisor and two operators. As Supervisor, the Bureau was fortunate in securing the services of Mr. James Birch, who for many years had been in charge of microfilming the current case records of the former Chancery Court. Actual operations on the Microfilm Unit began in March 1949 when, under Mr. Birch's direction, work was begun on three projects of considerable magnitude in the Departments of Health, Treasury and the Division of Motor Vehicles. These three projects were selected because the survey had demonstrated them to be both economically sound and technically feasible.

From the beginning the new centralized microfilm unit has demonstrated its value in helping to reduce the enormous volume of state records, and it would appear that consideration should now be given to the possibility of setting up an overall records management program to be worked out in collaboration with the Executive Department (or the Budget Director) and the Department of Law. It is anticipated that recommendations to this effect will be submitted after additional experience has been obtained in the actual administration of the microfilm program.

Resignation of Archivist

The Division suffered a severe loss in March 1949 when Mr. Sidney Goldmann resigned his position as Head of the Bureau of Archives and History to accept the post of Standing Master of the Superior Court. Pending the appointment of a successor, the Director of the Division has assumed the active direction of the Bureau, in addition to his other duties. The loss of Mr. Goldmann is severely felt and it is apparent that it will be difficult to find a replacement who combines his expert knowledge of archival practices with his broad background in all phases of state government. However, it is hoped that a capable person can be appointed at the earliest possible date in order that the important work of the Bureau be continued uninterrupted. In particular the task of visiting the county and municipal records offices should be resumed on a regular basis at the earliest possible date. From the number of inquiries which come to the Bureau from the municipalities it is evident that such visits are necessary if county and local records are to be properly maintained.

THE LAW AND GENERAL REFERENCE LIBRARIES

Because the activities of the Law and Reference libraries are so closely related, it is easier to discuss them jointly rather than separately. This interrelationship of activities is particularly marked in the field of legislative reference service, and it is in this field that the most significant advances have been made during the year. The endeavour to increase the Library's services to the Courts and to the Legislature has met with considerable success and an ever-increasing number of state officials are becoming familiar with the library's resources. The revolutionary changes that have been made in the structure of New Jersey's courts and administrative agencies have been reflected in the increased demands for information concerning the new order of things in state government. This development has placed additional burdens upon our small staff but every effort has been made to acquire

needed materials and make them available to all who need them.

One of the principal tasks of the General Reference Bureau is to collect, preserve and make available for general state use all official New Jersey reports including those produced by legislative commissions, departments of government, special commissions, etc. In addition the Bureau is charged with the responsibility of giving general reference and research assistance to all individuals connected with the state service. During the many years it has been in existence the Library has built up a carefully selected collection of basic reference materials which are widely used by various state offices. To cite only a few examples, such federal government publications as the President's Budget Message, the Treasury Tax Reports, and other statistical publications are used regularly by the State Department of the Treasury. Similarly, the publications of the Federal Bureau of Roads are used by the Highway Department while such general reports as those of the Census Bureau are used by almost all state agencies. The proper indexing, cataloging and filing of these valuable materials is an exacting task that requires the full energies of the small professional staff charged with this responsibility. It is believed that the resources of this extremely valuable collection will not be fully utilized until additional personnel is made available for this purpose. Experience in both industry and government has demonstrated that a reference library of information is essential to efficient management. It is the considered aim of this Division to make the General Reference Library the most efficient instrument possible to achieve this necessary end.

One important step in this direction was taken during the past year when the reference work of the General Reference Library was combined with that of the Bureau of Public and School Library Services. This agency (formerly known as the Public Library Commission) has built up a strong

and well rounded collection of technical books and other materials which are used to answer reference questions coming to the Bureau from local libraries and schools that have exhausted their own reference resources. The physical integration of the two former separate and distinct book collections has begun, and eventually they will be combined to form one strong central collection. In addition the Assistant Reference Librarian has been assigned to work half time each day in the present separate collections as a means of achieving a higher degree of coordination between these agencies than has hitherto been possible.

BUREAU OF PUBLIC AND SCHOOL LIBRARY SERVICES

One of the principal functions of the Bureau of Library Services is to augment the book resources of local communities by making additional books available through the interlibrary loan service. The ultimate objective of this service is that, through its use, the books of any one library in New Jersey may be made available to every other library. Various libraries, including public, county and university now cooperate in this interlibrary loan arrangement and efforts are now being made to broaden the scope of this activity by asking additional large libraries to cooperate with the Bureau in the interchange of books.

Traveling Libraries and Parents' Bookshelves

Supplementing the important interlibrary loan service are Traveling Libraries which are collections of books numbering from 50 to 200, loaned for periods of six months to a school year. Approximately 100 of these special collections were circulated to small public libraries, rural schools and county libraries during the past year.

An interesting variation in the Traveling Library Service was introduced last year, when for the first time, Parents' Bookshelves were made available to those local libraries wishing to cooperate with the local Parent-Teacher

Association in providing special reading on child study and homemaking. Because many of these small libraries operate on very modest book budgets, the Bureau offered to supply a limited number of "Bookshelves" of not more than 25 books each to libraries or Parent-Teacher groups requesting them. The fact that the bookshelves were available was announced at the annual conference of the state Parent-Teacher Association and immediately the Bureau received more requests for them than it could handle. As a result, a priority list was established for the 20 bookshelves available and these are being rotated around to various communities of the state as needed.

Personnel

One of the most important events of the year was the appointment of Miss Janet K. Zimmerman as Supervisor of Public Library Services. Authority to create this important position had been obtained in the previous fiscal year but a number of unforeseen delays made it impossible to fill the post until December 1948. In this newly created position Miss Zimmerman will be principally concerned with serving in an advisory and consultative capacity to the public and county libraries of New Jersey. Thus, one of her first tasks was to plan a series of four regional institutes to provide in-service training for librarians in all parts of the State. (These institutes are described in another section of this report.) As Chairman of the Personnel Committee of the New Jersey Library Association, the new field worker also directed the compilation of an important report: "Personnel Administration in New Jersey Libraries; a Survey of Position Classification and Pay Plans, Salaries, Internship and Pensions."

A second important step in building a highly qualified professional staff in the Bureau of Library Services was the establishment of the companion field worker position of School Library Services Supervisor. New Jersey is the 24th state to create such a position, and the first incumbent in this

new position, Mrs. Jane B. Hobson, will assume her new duties on July 1, 1949. The creation of this position fills a need long felt by educators and school librarians for the appointment of a specialist who will assist in the establishment and administration of school libraries. The Supervisor will encourage the development of strong and well-rounded book collections; stimulate the appointment of professionally trained librarians and make every effort to increase the number of schools with centrally organized school libraries. As a result of these efforts it is anticipated that significant advances will be made in the progress, growth and quality of school libraries.

Regrettably, the retirement of Miss Ethel S. Brown as Assistant Head of the Bureau is announced. For many years Miss Brown served as Miss Sarah B. Askew's chief assistant and in this capacity she achieved national recognition for her administration of the Interlibrary Loan Service and for her pioneer work in the establishment of many of the present libraries in the State's institutions by use of the Matching Fund Plan.

In the replacement position as of 1 September 1949, directing the Interlibrary Loan Service, will be Miss Martha H. Davis, whose title will be Lending Services Librarian.

Storage Library Bill

Of outstanding interest was the passage by the Legislature of Assembly Bill Number 325 authorizing the establishment of the Deposit and Exchange Library Service in the Bureau of Library Services. The bill was passed without appropriation but it is planned to ask for a small sum in the 1950-1951 budget to purchase a bookmobile and other equipment in order to put the plan into operation.

The main purpose of this deposit and exchange library service is to provide a central storage facility to which local libraries can send, for permanent safe-keeping, books that are too valuable to destroy but which are used too

infrequently to justify retaining in every library. Almost all the libraries in the State have more books than they can conveniently handle and which should be placed in some central warehouse. The storage plan will freshen the book-stocks of local libraries by permitting the removal of little-used books to safe storage and will make these latter books available when needed through the inter-library loan system.

Professional Training

The Certification Law passed by the 1947 Legislature which makes it permissive for public library boards of trustees to require their librarians to hold certificates granted by the State Board of Examiners has made it necessary to provide additional training in order that librarians in service may be able to obtain the credits needed to obtain permanent state certificates. In cooperation with the Committee on Education for Librarianship of the State Association, arrangements were made to admit public librarians to the library science courses being given for school librarians at the Trenton State Teachers College. It is hoped that additional courses can be scheduled in conjunction with the winter extension program of Rutgers University.

In-Service Training

A highly successful Three Day Institute on Library Service for Children and Young People was held in June at Trenton State Teachers College under the joint sponsorship of the Children's Section of the New Jersey Library Association and the Bureau of Library Services. The enthusiastic participation of the more than 80 librarians who attended the Institute is indicative of the desire and need of New Jersey librarians for this type of in-service training. It is expected that the papers presented during the 3-day session will be published and made available for general distribution.

The first of four Regional Institutes organized in collaboration with the

County Librarians was held at Haddonfield on May 12th for Burlington, Camden and Gloucester Counties. More than 100 persons attended this initial institute and the audience included county library commissioners, members of public library boards of trustees, helping teachers, school supervisors and principals.

Service to Correctional Institutions

For many years the library has cooperated with the Department of Institutions and Agencies in providing library service to our correctional institutions. Two conferences were held during the year to determine how the Bureau's institutional services might be improved and enlarged. At each conference all eight institutions were represented by those individuals responsible for library service within their institutions. The conferees testified unanimously as to the importance of reading for inmates and urged the continuation of the Matching Fund Plan as it has been developed in recent years. By means of this plan each institution states the amount it will spend for library books during the fiscal year and the Bureau then matches the amount and, if desired, cooperates further in preparing book orders for the institution concerned. When properly conceived and carried out in terms of the particular institution's needs, the library program for inmates can be an essential part of the rehabilitation program of every institution. As a result of the inmate's interest in the library, he has one more desirable contact in his community life following his release.

New Jersey Federation of Womens Club Teen Age Corners

In an effort to stimulate young peoples interest in libraries, the New Jersey State Federation of Womens Clubs collected funds to establish Teen Age Corners in two public libraries selected by the Bureau and a Committee of the State Federation. The Federation is giving \$250.00 each to the Womens Clubs of two communities for the purpose of purchasing attractive and comfortable furniture and equipment for the Teen Age Corners. It is expected that the first "Corner" will

be dedicated in the fall of 1949 and as a "Pilot Project" will stimulate other Womens Clubs throughout the state to make similar arrangements.

Trends and Recommendations

The end of war-time shortages of material has been accompanied by a wide surge of interest in the building of public libraries. At the present time many of our public libraries are overcrowded and their lack of suitable quarters and equipment prevents them from giving the proper kind of library service to their respective communities. It has been the pleasant task of the Bureau's staff to assist in planning several new buildings or modernizing existing structures, but it is apparent that a great many libraries are still handicapped by the cramped and inadequate quarters in which they are forced to operate. This situation is particularly noticeable in the children's rooms, many of which are badly overcrowded because of the expanding elementary school populations. Unless better facilities and book collections are provided, our public libraries will fail in their basic mission of providing the good books with which to nourish the minds and hearts of our children.

The current findings of national surveys, which indicate that many communities are too limited in population and too weak economically to offer proper library service, demonstrate that our New Jersey situation must be studied closely in order to determine what our future policies shall be. The formation of regional library units should be considered and, if necessary, legislation should be introduced to provide for suitable geographical divisions.

Of primary importance is to find a method of equalizing public library service throughout New Jersey by some form of state aid. It has been demonstrated in our public school system that state aid to schools is necessary if our children are to receive equal educational opportunities. It now appears that a similar situation exists with regard to our public libraries and seventeen states now operate effective state aid programs.

As a result, New Jersey, which once enjoyed a reputation for its leadership in the library field, is now failing to hold its own in competition with other states that have adopted state aid programs. The New Jersey Library Association and the New Jersey Library Trustees Association are deeply aware of this problem and a joint committee of the two groups is now making an intensive study of this situation. It is anticipated that the group studies will be completed during the fiscal year 1950-1951 and that a formal request will be made to the Legislature for funds to implement the proposed program.