

THIS IS CENTENNIAL YEAR FOR THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



One of the twin staircases in the main vestibule.

Burning of Capitol by the British and Purchase of Jefferson's 7,000 Volumes in 1815 Marked Its Beginning ... Now Contains 2,000,000 Books, the Third Largest Collection. Housed in Finest Library Building in the World

Facts About the Library of Congress	
Volume	7,000
Began in 1815 with	2,000
Present number	2,000,000
Library of France	3,500,000
British Museum	2,500,000
Present building begun in	1886
Completed in	1897
Area covered	3 1/2 acres
Cost	\$6,932,000
Annual appropriation	\$650,000



The great circular reading room.



The Library of Congress.

ONE HUNDRED years ago the Library of Congress in Washington was born. War brought it into being. The great book collection may be said to have sprung from the burning of the Capitol by the British in 1814.

Congress had possessed a collection of 7,000 volumes for the use of its members, which the fire destroyed. In the following year, 1815, it bought from Thomas Jefferson his private collection of 7,000 volumes, which was the nucleus of the present National Library. Later it published a catalogue of these books, prepared by Jefferson himself.

By 1841 the collection had grown to 55,000 volumes; but in that year another fire, of accidental origin, wiped out all but 2,000 of them. At the close of the civil war the library possessed only 81,000 printed books, whereas at the present time there are over 2,000,000, without reckoning a multitude of manuscripts.

Eventually, it is believed, this national collection will be the greatest in the world. It now stands third in rank, the great library of France (the Bibliothéque Nationale) possessing 2,500,000 volumes and the British Museum 2,500,000. Fourth in some respects comes the library of the Vatican at Rome; but its literary treasures are in such confusion for lack of proper arrangement and cataloguing that the student who endeavors to make search among them is like an explorer who invades territory as yet uncharted.

Speaking of maps by the Librarian of Congress, it is interesting to note that the world so far as America is concerned, is the property of the Library of Congress. It includes numerous curiosities, among which are old time charts showing the peninsula of Lower California as an island. From other early maps one learns the reason why New Yorkers of the present day call the Hudson where it flows past the metropolis the North River. It is because in former days the Delaware was known as the South River, the two streams being thus distinguished, but in the latter case the name has not stuck.

As might be expected, the Librarian's rich beyond all rivals in America, that is, books and other documents relating to this continent, and especially to the United States. But it will be a surprise to most people to learn that it owns more literature relating to Russia than can be found anywhere else outside the Czar's domains.

Not very long ago it bought a collection of some 40,000 volumes concerning the history of Russia from a Siberian lumber merchant named Yudin for \$50,000, the price being so small in proportion to the value of the acquisition that Mr. Putnam, the Librarian of Congress, spoke of it as "practically a gift."

The most interesting part of the collection from an American viewpoint comprises works bearing upon Alaska in early days.

If a person wished to write an account of the development of opera from its earliest beginnings to the present day, there is no place in the world where he could get hold of such valuable material for his purpose as in the Library of Congress. That establishment contains the third greatest store of musical compositions in existence, comprising 600,000 volumes and scores of newspapers dating back to the beginning of a newspaper history in the country, and its collection of American eighteenth century news journals is unrivaled.

The collection of manuscript Americana includes the private and official

papers of Washington, Jefferson, Madison and six other Presidents, as well as many of the papers of Benjamin Franklin, also the records of the Continental Congress and the orderly books of the American army during the revolution. It embraces as an incidental item the early archives of New Mexico and those of California, pertaining to the same period, would be likewise in the library, not for the unfortunate fact that, kept at home for the gratification of State pride, they were destroyed in the fire which followed the great earthquake of a few years ago.

In 1864 Ainsworth R. Spofford was appointed Librarian of Congress. Not without reason was he called the human library index, inasmuch as he always seemed to know the exact place of a fact in a book and the exact place of that book on the shelves. But though he held the office until 1897 he failed to acquire much notion of modern methods and during his incumbency there was not even a proper card catalogue of subjects. Thus it was that Congressmen were accustomed to say, "How shall we be able to find a book or anything we want to know when good old Spofford departs this life?"

Mr. Spofford incidentally was copyright officer. Being interested in books and not at all in copyrights and sufficiently occupied with his duties as Librarian, he would put aside the money orders received from day to day in payment for copyright fees, sometimes in one drawer or another, sometimes between the leaves of odd volumes and sometimes in other haphazard places.

The money order division of the Post Office Department wrote him time and time again that numerous orders addressed to him had never been cashed. He always replied correctly that he would attend to the matter, and then forgot. At length a formal inquiry was made, and Spofford, though held guiltless of any intended wrong, was required to make good missing funds to the extent of \$30,000. The management of the library and copyright business passing soon afterward into other hands, nearly all of the missing money orders turned up, being discovered a few at a

time in pigeonholes and other unexplored spots, and the bulk of the cash was returned eventually to the absent-minded man of books.

Meanwhile the quarters long occupied by the library in the Capitol were a cause of much complaint, being so cramped that thousands of books were piled in heaps on the floor. "Old Man Spofford" did not care particularly; he knew in what pile every book was. But there were other persons who thought the arrangement unsuitable for the national book collection. The subject came up for serious discussion in Congress and the apshot of the matter was that an appropriation was made to erect the beautiful library building which to-day is one of the principal architectural ornaments of Washington.

The cornerstone was laid in 1886 and the structure was completed in 1897 at a cost of \$6,932,000. It covers three and a half acres. The bookshelves, which are independent of the building itself, though embraced

within it, provide accommodations for 3,500,000 volumes, and when required this capacity can be extended to 7,000,000 volumes. The shelves now available for use, if placed end to end, would extend from Philadelphia to New York and ten miles beyond.

It is pronounced the finest building for library uses existing anywhere in the world. The bookshelves are of iron, the shelves of the same material polished and lacquered to render them rustproof, being of a gridiron pattern, to help ventilation. Books, like human beings, need fresh air and deprived of it they are liable to be attacked by mold. It is desirable also that they shall be kept cool, because heat affects them injuriously. They will not catch fire and cannot be burned, unless surrounded by very active combustibles—a condition impossible in metal racks in a building of brick and marble.

A rather curious circumstance in relation to the library is the jealousy which Congress—not so much of late

as formerly—has shown in regard to it. Originally it was understood to be distinctively the Library of Congress. As it has grown, Congress has accepted with much reluctance the idea that it was to be looked upon as belonging to the public.

Members have protested time and time again against any such development of its history, asserting that it must be considered as possessing no other important function than that of a collection for the use of Representatives and Senators. Only within very recent years, indeed, has Congress come to realize that the development of this great book collection along modern lines must depend upon the recognition of it as a national institution, for the benefit and use of the people at large.

The people's money pays for it. Congress makes an annual appropriation of about \$650,000, of the amount approximately \$100,000 is spent for the purchase of new books. But the net expenditure is not much over half a

million dollars yearly, inasmuch as the Copyright Office turns in more than \$100,000 a year, derived from fees, and the profits yielded by the card section run up beyond \$55,000 in a twelve-month. From the Congressmen's point of view, may be derived from the fact that they, and nobody else, have a right under the law to borrow books from the library, though volumes may be lent at the discretion of the Librarian or other people. Furthermore, extra library means are used to place the collection conveniently at their disposal, a tunnel for the purpose, 1,200 feet long, having been made to connect the library building with the Capitol.

At the Capitol end, in a room adjoining the old House of Representatives, there is a receiving and delivery station for books. When a member wants a book he need only write the title of it on a scrap of paper and it is shot in a fifty through a pneumatic tube to the reading desk at the library, whereupon the volume is promptly ferried through the tunnel on a tray swung from an endless cable and placed on the member's desk by a messenger. The process of transport-

ation requires only three minutes. Perhaps the most striking feature of the Library of Congress today is the automatic character of the service it affords. Everything possible is relegated to machinery. Thus, for example, the books are delivered to readers and returned to the bookshelves almost wholly by mechanical means. An endless chain, carrying a series of wire mesh transports from the stacks and dumps at the reading desk, in the center of the great circular reading room, the volumes that are called for.

When a book is to be returned to its shelf the attendant utilizes the same mechanism, adjusting a pointer at a number on a dial corresponding with the book in the bookshelf for which it is destined. The machine drops it off quietly at that book. All of this work is accomplished noiselessly and as if through operation of magic by concealed electric motors.

The Library of Congress now makes a business of lending its books to other libraries all over the country. This is a new feature of great practical usefulness. Only as far as the Department of Agriculture books are even mailed to them direct under certain conditions.

Given power and promising indefinite future extension is a system of inter-library loans, books being now ferried to the national library of other countries. When this work has been fully developed it will be possible to avoid himself of information existing in any great library of the world without having to understand, being reciprocal among all the national libraries.

The Library of Congress, as at present conducted, regards itself not merely as a center of research, but as an institution for the diffusion of knowledge on the widest possible scale. One of its functions is the furnishing of information, and in this capacity it is always ready to respond by mail to inquiries as to what printed material exists on a given subject and where this material may be found.

Another branch of its work is the supplying of printed catalogues, cards to local libraries everywhere in the country. The local library sends a list of its own books, furnishing in each case the title, the name of the author and the edition. In return it receives printed cards, which are copies of the national collection's own cards, covering the same books and which furnish all sorts of details, including the contents of the volumes, a few biographical words about the author in each instance, etc. These cards, which may be consulted at any time, are the most valuable part of the national library's service.

Such is the work of the Library of Congress, setting them on a fraction of a cent.

A collection of books, bound on slipcase in Scotland, came during the civil war for lack of more suitable material is one of the curiosities of the Library of Congress. Among the heaviest volumes on its shelves are Bibles printed in the Middle Ages with brass clasps and wooden covers, an inch thick. Contrasting with these are dwarfs 3 to 4 inches in size, such as vest pocket editions of Horace and other classics.

RAISING THE STANDARDS FOR HEALTH OFFICERS

Medical Colleges Plan to Train Students by Special Courses to Enable Them to Comply With New Law

HEALTH officers of cities and villages in various parts of the State of New York are preparing to comply with the new health law which goes into effect in November, 1916, and establishes a standard of knowledge and efficiency in sanitary science. Up to the present time almost any practicing physician of average ability has been supposed to possess qualifications fitting him for the position of health officer. But a revolution has taken place in this respect.

It is now understood that to fit a medical man to shoulder the responsibilities and perform the duties of health officer special instruction of highly technical order must be given as a general thing. For this reason several important schools of medicine either have established special courses of study or are preparing to do so, and it is expected that a considerable proportion of physicians who now serve as health officers will avail themselves of the opportunities offered and receive a post-graduate degree, doctor of public health.

New York University has the distinction of being first in the field. In fact it offered a special course of six weeks in its summer sessions, recently concluded, and granted certificates to fifteen local health officers. In addition it provided special instruction in several branches of sanitary science to some twenty other health officers who did not need to take the full health course.

Since then Syracuse University has announced a similar course, while the Cornell, Albany and Buffalo medical schools are understood to be well along in their own preparations for giving instruction in the same subjects. Thus centers of special graduate work will be distributed throughout the State.

The new law is regarded as a great step forward in the work of guarding the physical well being of the people of New York state. The quick appreciation of its value to all concerned is a matter of satisfaction to Commissioner Herman M. Biggs and his staff in the State Health Department. Already the plan has commanded special attention elsewhere and Commissioner Biggs is constantly

receiving inquiries from State authorities all over the country.

It is said that Massachusetts is very much alive to the situation and Commissioner is expected to follow suit in the near future. Yale University has just established a chair of public health, and has called to it one of Commissioner Biggs's associates, Prof. C. E. Amory Winslow.

In referring to this new departure another of the Commissioner's staff, Dr. W. J. Donno, explained some phases of the undertaking which are of interest to the general public.

"For some time," he said, "the New York State Department of Health has been carrying on an extraordinary campaign, seeking to educate the public to the fact that good health is largely a commodity which is purchasable by intelligence, care and compliance with well known rules of living. Much has been accomplished, very much, but much still remains to be done, and because the department realizes that success or failure of the campaign rests on the local health officer it is taking all possible steps to aid in this new movement for special courses of study in sanitary science."

There are at present between 1,100 and 1,200 local health officers in the State, and almost all of those residing in small communities are so busily engaged in general practice that they have not had the time to keep abreast with recent striking developments in sanitary science. It simply has been impossible for men immersed day and night in their unceasing work as family physicians to enter with thoroughness into such a special field. Furthermore, it should be remembered that the developments in sanitary science have taken place practically within the last ten or a dozen years, and for that reason alone the general practitioners of longer experience could not be supposed to be informed in the many details of this special field.

"Among the larger problems which face the local health officer are those

of water supply, sewage disposal and insect borne diseases. And to handle properly any one of these three means that a man must possess a wide variety of knowledge which medical schools have not furnished until quite recently.

"If you stop to think for a moment what it means to any community to have an alert, able, well informed health officer, the importance of the new law may be understood. For example, one of the things the State department is constantly urging on local physicians is the danger of taking chances with sore throats. That may seem a somewhat trivial detail, yet it may have momentous results, results of life and death, to a large number of men and women and children. We have been striving for a long time to educate physicians in general practice not to run risks in cases of sore throats, but to take detail, yet it may have momentous results, results of life and death, to a large number of men and women and children. We have been striving for a long time to educate physicians in general practice not to run risks in cases of sore throats, but to take detail, yet it may have momentous results, results of life and death, to a large number of men and women and children. 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