

**NOTICES OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA. SENATE, 31ST
CONGRESS, 1ST SESSION, MISCELLANEOUS,
NO. 120. APPENDIX TO THE REPORT OF THE
BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE SMITHSONIAN
INSTITUTION, CONTAINING A REPORT ON THE
PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

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CHARLES C. JEWETT

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SMITHSONIAN REPORTS.

NOTICES

OF

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

IN THE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Written
BY CHARLES C. JEWETT,
LIBRARIAN OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.

PRINTED BY ORDER OF CONGRESS, AS AN APPENDIX TO THE FOURTH
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.

Robert Tr. Paine
to
Harvard College.



WASHINGTON, D. C.
PRINTED FOR THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.
1851.

31st Congress,
1st Session.

[SENATE.]

MISCELLANEOUS,
No. 120.

APPENDIX

THE REPORT OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS

OF
THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION,

CONTAINING

A REPORT ON THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES

OF

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

JANUARY 1, 1850.

BY CHARLES C. JEWETT,
Librarian of the Smithsonian Institution.

WASHINGTON:
PRINTED FOR THE SENATE.

1850.

The following table shows the results of the experiment. The first column is the number of trials, the second column is the number of correct responses, and the third column is the percentage of correct responses. The data shows that the percentage of correct responses increases as the number of trials increases, indicating that the subjects are learning the task.

Trial	Correct	Percentage
1	1	100%
2	1	100%
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99	1	100%
100	1	100%

APPENDIX.

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION,
Washington, January 1, 1850.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit to you, in compliance with the duty assigned me, the following report upon the public libraries of the United States, prepared in accordance with the plan of rendering the Smithsonian Institution a centre of bibliographical knowledge.

I remain, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

C. C. JEWETT,

Librarian of the Smithsonian Institution.

To JOSEPH HENRY, LL. D.,
Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

Books constitute a large element of the intellectual wealth of a nation. On the shelves of publishers and readers they are an indication of existing demand, and an earnest of usefulness. Nor are they idle even there. The shops of booksellers have, from early times, been the favorite resorts of men of letters. Their contents are, for purposes of reference, more accessible than those of most libraries.

Collections of books for private libraries are also of great public interest. The proprietor of each derives from it his own means of teaching the public. Not only so; private collections are generally made for specific purposes, and are—each in some particular branch of knowledge—as complete as the means of the proprietor will allow. The learning, bibliographical skill, and resources of the collector have been limited to some one object, and that he has pursued to its utmost extent. He has thus formed a complete library in one department. The aggregation of such libraries would constitute a complete universal library. These collections generally become, sooner or later, parts of public collections: such is commonly the wish of the scholars who form them. Therefore, the community may be allowed to watch—so far as they can without intrusiveness—such private accumulations, with interest and satisfaction. In this country, moreover, a narrow and exclusive spirit among book collectors is almost unknown. Gathering for use; and with an appreciating spirit, they are not disposed to debar others from the treasures which they possess. The liberality of proprietors of large collections of books in this country is remarkable, and I believe unparalleled.

But our present object is not to describe private collections. The census board, with an enlightened regard for the interests of letters, have included books, in both public and private libraries exceeding one thousand volumes, among the objects to be enumerated. Mr. John R. Bartlett, before his appointment to the important post which he now holds upon the

Mexican boundary commission, had made considerable progress in procuring from the proprietors of the most valuable private collections such accounts of their literary treasures as would be of public importance, and such as they were willing to have printed. These notes will not be lost, though the publication of them is deferred.

Our immediate concern is with public libraries. It is unnecessary to seek for an exact definition of the word *public* in this connexion. I mean by it libraries which are accessible—either without restriction, or upon conditions with which all can easily comply—to every person who wishes to use them for their appropriate purposes. In this sense I believe it may be said that all libraries in this country, which are not private property, (and indeed many which are private property,) are public libraries.

Of these libraries I have endeavored to collect such historical, statistical, and descriptive notices as would be of general interest; together with such special details as would be beneficial to those who are engaged in the organization and care of similar establishments.

No person who will consider the vast extent of the field to be surveyed, the tedious process by which most of the information is to be collected—namely, by circular letters and private correspondence—the difficulty in this busy land of getting any one to furnish minute information on such subjects, the antiquated statistics, on these matters, which survive all other changes, in gazetteers and geographies, and the fact that there is nowhere in this country a full collection of books and pamphlets relating to the local affairs of the several towns and counties of the different States—no one who will consider these things, and remember that this is but *one* of the topics of inquiry to which I was required to devote my attention, and that, by the other duties of my office, I was prevented from visiting most of the libraries which I wished to describe, will be surprised if he should find that, in some instances, these accounts are not so full nor so accurate as could be desired.

The publication of them, in their present state, is considered a step necessary to their completion and perfection. Copies will be distributed to librarians and others interested in these matters, and all persons who may receive the work are earnestly requested to furnish corrections, additions, and suggestions for a second edition. It is hoped that within a few years materials may be obtained for accurate accounts, embracing all historical facts of importance with reference to every library and every institution possessing a library in this country; and including the history and statistics, with a description of the bibliographical and scientific treasures of each.

The present notices relate almost *exclusively* to libraries. When the library forms but a department (it may be a comparatively small one) of an institution, it has not been the aim to give anything more of the history of such institution than was necessary to illustrate the formation, position or prospects, of the library.

It was at first intended to limit these notices to the answers obtained to the questions of a circular letter.* Many of the circulars have, however,

*The following is a copy of the circular letter:

The following questions have been prepared in order to collect as accurate statistics as possible of the various public libraries in the United States:

1. By what name is the library legally designated? 2. When was it founded? 3. What number

remained to this time unanswered; others were filled up hastily, and gave but a meagre account of the collections; others, again, simply referred to some sources from which authentic details might be gathered. In order to give anything like completeness or uniformity to the notices, it was found necessary to re-write them, and to seek additional information from all available sources. When the librarian's name is given in connexion with an article, it is an indication that the principal facts were derived from his answers to the queries. When the facts have been gathered from other sources, the authorities have, for the most part, been named.

It is to be regretted that these statistics do not all refer to exactly the same date. They were intended to represent the condition of the libraries at the middle of the year 1849; but when returns were not made, and it was necessary to take the best accounts at hand, these frequently related to a time several years past.

Doubtless many libraries, more important than some which are mentioned in these notices, have been overlooked. The omission is unintentional. It has been utterly impossible to collect, at once, full and reliable accounts of all the libraries, small and large, in the country. This publication will make known our wish to gather all facts worthy of record respecting every one of them; and, in conformity with this plan, we would respectfully and earnestly solicit from the guardians of libraries not mentioned here, or of which the accounts are incorrect or in any way unsatisfactory, to furnish us with the means of improving the work for a second edition. We would direct attention particularly to the following points:

1. The number of volumes of printed books as they stand upon the shelves; the number of pamphlets; the number of manuscripts, in the form of works intended for publication, or of letters, &c.; the number of maps and charts; of loose engravings; of sheets of music unbound, and of bound books of music; the number of coins and medals, pictures, busts, &c., possessed by the institution on the 1st of January, 1851.
2. The expenditure for books, and the number of books purchased, during the year ending December 31, 1850.
3. The number of books lent out, also the number used in the library rooms, during the same period.
4. Important facts not already given with reference to the history of the

of volumes does it contain? 4. Has it collections of manuscripts, maps and charts, music, engravings, medals, coins, etc.? If so, please to state the number of articles of each description. 5. Are the numbers, given in reply to the last two questions, ascertained by actually counting the volumes and articles, or are they from a conjectural estimate? 6. What has been the yearly average number of volumes added to the library for the last ten years? 7. What has been the yearly average expenditure for the purchase of books? 8. Is there a permanent fund for the increase of the library? If so, how large is it, and what sum does it yield annually? 9. How many and what officers are employed? What are the names and address of the present officers? 10. Has a building been erected expressly for the library? If so, when, of what material, and at what expense? 11. What are the dimensions, and what is the ground plan, of the library building or rooms? 12. Are the books arranged on the shelves according to subjects, or on some other system? 13. Is there a printed catalogue of the library? If so, when was it printed, and what is its size, and the number of pages? If more than one, what is the date of each? 14. How often is the library opened, and how long is it kept open each time? 15. Who are entitled to the use of the library, and on what terms? 16. Are books lent out to read? If so, how many are taken out annually? 17. What is the yearly average number of persons consulting the library without taking away books? 18. Have the books been injured at any time by insects? 19. Is there any regulation by which books may be lent by courtesy to persons at a distance? If so, what is it?

library, and the institution with which the library is connected. In this place we would also beg leave, on behalf of the Smithsonian Institution, to solicit for its library the gift of books, pamphlets, or articles, printed or written, relative to the history, condition, or prospects of every literary, scientific, and educational establishment in the country; with catalogues (old as well as new) of all libraries; annual and triennial catalogues of colleges and high schools; and documents relating to common schools, Sunday schools, &c. It is highly important to have upon our shelves the means of tracing the progress of education in this country in the history of schools, colleges, and libraries, from their foundation to the present time. Such a collection would be peculiarly appropriate in a central institution like this. Nothing pertaining to the subject should be thought too insignificant to be sent. Everything will find its place, and, we may safely say, will one day be useful.

5. It would be interesting to have a description, or at least a list, of all remarkably rare and curious books or manuscripts which the library may possess; and we would ask particularly for an account, as minute as may be convenient, of all manuscripts relating to the early history of this country.

To those who have contributed information for this work I beg leave to present my sincere thanks. I have heretofore spoken of the articles contained in the "Serapeum" for 1846, from the pen of Hermann E. Ludwig, esq., of New York, on the libraries of America, as the fullest and most correct account of them that had been published. His was the work of a pioneer. It was faithfully done, and I most cheerfully acknowledge my obligations to him for the assistance which I have derived from his researches.*

MAINE.

AUGUSTA.

State Library—about 9,000 vols.—Founded 1836. The average yearly increase is about 500 volumes. From 1840 to 1847, the annual appropriation for the purchase of books was \$300; for 1848, \$400; for 1849, \$400. One of the rooms of the State House (50 feet by 30) is appropriated to the library. It is fitted up with alcoves on two sides—twelve in all. Three catalogues have been printed—the first (60 pages 8vo.) in 1839; the second (105 pages 8vo.) in 1843; the third (120 pages 8vo.) in 1846. Another is in preparation. During the sessions of the legislature the library is open from 8 a. m. to 6 p. m. Books may be taken from the library by the governor, members of the council, senate, house of representatives, heads of departments, judges of the courts, secretary and members of the board of education, and the superintendent of the Insane

* These notices were brought up to January, 1850, at which time they were presented to the Regents of the Smithsonian Institution. As the printing has been delayed for a year, I have added to them such facts as during the interval have come to my knowledge. These additions improve the notices in fullness and accuracy; but they give them a fragmentary character, which could only be avoided by rewriting many of them—a task which was not consistent with my other duties.