

**REPORT OF THE LIBRARIAN OF
CONGRESS, 55TH CONGRESS, 2D
SESSION, SENATE, DOCUMENT NO.
13; 3D SESSION, DOCUMENT NO. 24,
REPORT OF THE LIBRARIAN OF
CONGRESS, 1898, 1899, 1900**

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LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

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55TH CONGRESS, }
2d Session. }

SENATE.

{ DOCUMENT
{ No. 13.

REPORT

OF THE

LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS.

DECEMBER 9, 1897.—Referred to the Committee on the Library
and ordered to be printed.

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COLLEGE
MAY 15 1899
LIBRARY.

The University

REPORT.

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS,
December 6, 1897.

SIR: I have the honor to submit my report as Librarian of Congress.

On the 30th of June, 1897, your Librarian was nominated and confirmed to be Librarian of Congress. On the 1st of July he took the oath and entered upon the duties of his office.

The following is a record of the receipts and disbursements for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1897:

RECEIPTS.

Amount of copyright fees reported by Mr. Spofford from July 1, 1896, to April 30, 1897, with receipts for May and June estimated, follows, no accounts therefor having been rendered:

1896:	
July.....	\$4, 440. 00
August.....	4, 083. 50
September.....	4, 001. 50
October.....	4, 549. 50
November.....	3, 964. 00
December.....	5, 290. 50
1897:	
January.....	6, 031. 50
February.....	4, 381. 00
March.....	4, 907. 00
April.....	4, 625. 50
Total.....	46, 276. 00
May and June (estimated).....	9, 100. 00
Total.....	55, 376. 00

EXPENDITURES.

Salaries, Library of Congress.....	\$54, 620. 47
Increase of Library, purchase of books.....	5, 980. 02
Contingent expenses, Library of Congress.....	1, 003. 77
Total.....	61, 604. 26

The Library as transferred is estimated in volumes as follows:

On the shelves	323, 642
Reading room and alcoves	45, 603
Catalogue department	3, 135
Map department	2, 700
Art department	833
Law library	96, 813
Toner collection	23, 384
Washingtoniana	2, 000
Smithsonian collection of publications of learned societies. . . .	46, 000
Rare books	3, 000
At the bindery	2, 500
Books loaned out	1, 865
Uncatalogued books and duplicates	116, 240
Copyright deposits (all duplicates)	120, 000
Total	<u>787, 715</u>
Pamphlets (ascertained by estimate):	
Catalogued and on shelves	43, 340
Uncatalogued	175, 000
Total	<u>218, 340</u>

The larger portion of the books belonging to the Smithsonian collection, consisting of the books and pamphlets not included in that of publications of learned societies, is included in the enumeration of the Library books on the shelves. At the present stage of the library classification, it has been found impossible to arrive at an accurate knowledge of the exact number of books known as the Smithsonian library.

According to this estimate, the Library is composed of 787,715 books and 218,340 pamphlets.

On the 1st of November the number of books reported loaned out "in the hands of readers" was 3,320, of which 1,446 were charged to Senators and Members no longer in Congress, and to others entitled to take out books. A few of the 1,446 may be returned, but from these figures we may estimate our loss during thirty years. The daily average of books in the hands of readers may be placed at 3,000. This, however, varies, the number taken out during the session of Congress being much larger than in the recess. The percentage of books lost in thirty years is about five in a thousand. The privileges of the Library have been mainly abused in the direction of keeping out books longer than the rules allowed rather than failing to return them. It would have been more satisfactory to have given you an exact count rather than an estimate. This was impossible, as the books were stored in the Capitol, and the work of removal and classification, so as in a measure to be ready for the opening of Congress, has made it impossible. This confusion came from the pressure for space, the long-continued congestion so oppressive that the Library collections were only saved from chaos by the energy and vigilance of those in charge. The problem was a library approaching

800,000 volumes and shelf room for 300,000. "There was no packing room," was written in the Librarian's report of 1872, "and the heavy receipt of books from all quarters, by daily mails and otherwise, the binding business, the cataloguing of the books, the correspondence of the Library, the direction of assistants, and the extensive daily labors of the copyright department are all constantly going on in those public parts of the Library which should be kept free for readers. Masses of books, pamphlets, newspapers, engravings, etc., in the course of collation, cataloguing, labeling and stamping in preparation for their proper location in the Library, are necessarily under the eye and almost under the feet of the Members of Congress and other visitors."

A strenuous effort was made during the period of removal to secure an exact enumeration of the Library, not alone the books on the shelves, but the classes of books, their part in the universal scheme of knowledge and, more especially, what were embraced in auxiliary departments, like those of music, the graphic arts, and manuscripts. It is to be hoped that this will be accomplished at an early day. Under the head of books entered for copyright are classified hotel registers, form books, circulars, syndicate articles, and so on—the law providing no other term. Thus, while the reports show an aggregate of receipts from 1870 to 1896 of 416,822 publications from the copyright of "books," the term does not express the character of the entries. And until the copyright and other material now lying in indiscriminate heaps on the Library floors are classified any estimate would be misleading. The strength of the Library, considered as a comprehensive collection in all departments of knowledge, is evidently overestimated when spoken of as 787,715 volumes. We must consider that a large percentage, say from 33 per cent to 40 per cent, are duplicates—and not alone copyright, but from other sources—as in the law department, for instance, with as many as 14 copies of the same work on the shelves.

THE REMOVAL OF THE BOOKS.

The act providing for the removal of the Library from the Capitol was passed under the impression that Congress, according to custom, would adjourn March 4. As the new building was completed in February, it was believed that the transfer of the books would be over by July 1, and the law as affecting the new Library could go into operation. The extra session, however, made this impossible, except as to the removal of a large amount of miscellaneous matter in the way of duplicates. The main Library was kept intact in the Capitol until Congress adjourned. In the meantime, the plans for transferring and housing the books on the new shelves were under consideration by the Library authorities. This required study, involving, as it did, problems of delicacy. It was necessary that each volume should be carried from its place in the Capitol to a corresponding place in the new building, and so carefully done as to be

at once accessible to the readers. The question of transfer, the care of valuable properties, the chances of weather, the renovation of the books, pamphlets, and manuscripts, from the consequences of dust and other accretions of time, were parts of the problem.

On July 31, 1897, the old Library was closed to all except those having business with the copyright department. Then came the preparation of the books for the transit, which began August 2. All Library work was suspended in every department except what was necessary for the transfer of the books. Every assistant was assigned to this duty. Few leaves of absence were granted, and those for emergency. We were fortunate so far as the weather was concerned; and, as a result of the care, foresight, and industry of the staff, the whole Library, with its manifold and various treasures, was removed in ten weeks. As an engineering feat this would merit high praise; but apart from that, we should realize the skill and tact which transferred this vast mass without the loss or apparent misplacement of a volume.

The books were arranged in the new Library with regard to convenience of access and speedy service. Books which experience had shown to be most sought for were placed on shelves near the reading room. Other subjects, such as geology and chemistry, were grouped together, and, to allow for a growth in each section, only one-half of each shelf was occupied.

The arrangement of the various sections is as follows:

NORTH BOOK STACK.

First story from top.—Publications of foreign governments; pamphlet collections (bound and unbound); United States Patent Office Gazette; commercial directories.

Second story.—Document publications of the States of the Union; space for the arrangement of duplicates.

Third story.—Mathematics, astronomy, geology, chemistry, physics, botany, medicine, natural history, and zoology.

Fourth story.—Agriculture, technology, ecclesiastical history, and theology.

Fifth story.—Architecture, fine arts, music, poetry, drama, correspondence, rhetoric, essays, ana, and humor.

Sixth story.—General history and modern; history, biography, and description of all countries except the United States and Great Britain; Great Britain (history, biography).

Seventh story.—Americana (in part) polygraphy, literature, bibliography, and language.

Eighth story.—International law, statistics, politics, philosophy, education, sociology, mythology, geography.

Ninth story.—Uncatalogued books; duplicates.

SOUTH BOOK STACK.

First to fifth story from top.—Bound newspapers and works on art.

Sixth story.—Bound periodicals.

Seventh story.—Directories, fiction (in part), orientalia; Shakespeare, Homer, Dante, Virgil, Goethe.

Eighth story.—Bound periodicals.

Ninth story.—Copyright duplicates.

EAST BOOK STACK.

Library (in part) of the Smithsonian Institution.

Reading room.—Gallery: United States documents. Alcoves on floor: Americana (in part); genealogy, biography, local history, reference books, fiction (in part).

The Library closed on July 31; was opened to the public on November 1. This meant the adjustment of over 400,000 books so that they might be available. Since then the reading room has been in use daily except on Sunday. While the public has therefore the advantages of a splendid reading library the work of classification still goes forward, and in a short time we hope to have every volume and pamphlet even of the miscellaneous matter in its appropriate place.

As a part of the present system, there is a pneumatic tube, a tunnel, and electric machinery for the transmission of books from the Library to the Capitol. It would be impossible to overestimate the importance of this ingenious work in the practical efficiency of Library administration. A test was made of its operations on October 27 by the Library officials. The telephone was not yet in operation, and therefore the experiment was under imperfect conditions. Without any prearrangement or forewarning a request for books was conveyed through the pneumatic tube from the Capitol to the reading desk in the new Library. In ten minutes and five seconds the volume asked for reached the Capitol. The second request was for four books—one in English, the other three in Italian, German, and French, respectively. Three of them, the Italian, German, and English, came within eight minutes and eleven seconds. The French volume, *Les Châtiments*, arrived two minutes later. The third was a request for *The London Times* containing an account of the battle of Waterloo. The *Times*, the volume of 1815, was promptly found on its appropriate shelf in the upper part of the Library Building, but owing to a little delay at the reading desk was twelve minutes in reaching the Capitol.

The test was notable as demonstrating the practical convenience of the Library in the service of Congress and the Supreme Court. Under the old system the Library was so congested, books were heaped up in so many crevices and out-of-the-way corners, down in the crypt, hidden in darkness from access of observation, that obtaining a volume, and especially, one out of the range of general reading, was a question of time and