

**NEWSPAPER LIBRARY
MANUAL: ADAPTED FOR USE
IN NEWSPAPER OFFICES AND
SCHOOLS OF JOURNALISM**

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Newspaper Library Manual: Adapted for Use in Newspaper Offices and Schools of Journalism
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INTRODUCTION.

In journalistic routine it is obviously necessary at times to make use of information gathered from reference works and records of various kinds. For this purpose a newspaper office usually has as its adjunct a library, or reference department, more or less completely equipped, according to the utility expected of the same in each instance. The main purpose of such a library is to furnish readily available and accurate information on any topic subject to publicity. In order to serve these aims properly, peculiar requirements are demanded of a newspaper library, in regard to the selection of books, their cataloguing and arrangement, and also, especially in the office of a large daily newspaper, in regard to the system of managing the service itself by the librarian and his assistants. No matter how complete a library of this kind may be, its value is considerably lessened in cases where the accessibility of the material is hampered, either by lack of convenient service methods, or by a reference system involving too much cumbersome red tape and, consequently, entailing a loss of valuable time.

Since the importance of the library to exhaustive and systematic journalistic production is self-evident and fully recognized in the offices of our modern and enterprising newspapers, the suggestions contained in this manual may be of some practical value, not only to those who already are, or eventually will be, in charge of a newspaper library, but also to students of journalism, in general. The result of many years of actual experience in library and newspaper work is here compiled in concise form and the manual may therefore serve its primary purpose as a ready hand book for newspaper librarians.

NEWSPAPER LIBRARY WORK.

I.

THE LIBRARIAN AND HIS GENERAL DUTIES.

On a daily newspaper the librarian has oftentimes one or more assistants, especially if any extensive indexing is being done. Among these assistants one is assigned to the inquiry desk, where members of the editorial staff apply for information. The inquiry clerk, or librarian, will not only advise questioners about sources from which the desired information may be gained, but will also produce the reference material itself and assist in looking up whatever dates and facts may be wanted. The books, clippings, etc., thus produced, should be consulted in the library, and when the research is finished, the inquiry clerk must be notified, in order that he may restore the material used to proper locations. This is preferable to allowing staff members to attend to shelving of books which they have been consulting. In the latter event, books are easily misplaced, and time—one of the all-important considerations in conveying news to the public—is lost to the editor, or reporter, as the case may be.

As a rule, reference material must not be removed from the library, except under urgent conditions. When it is deemed advisable to permit a staff member to take a book temporarily out of the library to some other department, but not out of the office, he is required to sign a receipt, which is thereupon dated and filed away by the librarian, who will destroy it upon the return of the borrowed material in good condition. Some general reference books, for instance, dictionaries, encyclopedias, gazetteers, maps, etc., are never allowed to be taken out of the library on any pretext.

Record is kept of all inquiries made by staff members, giving names of inquirer and attendant, subject of inquiry, time consumed in research and result obtained. This is done principally to enable the librarian to produce documentary evidence, in case subsequent developments in connection with any article or item should make it

desirable to trace its origin in detail. A day journal is also kept by the librarian, in which he records the presence and hours of duty of the members in his department. The service must be arranged so that it covers every hour of the day and night, when any members of the editorial staff are on duty in the office.

Besides attending to requests from staff members, the librarian, or his assistant, usually answers letters of inquiry from subscribers and other readers of the paper. Such correspondence is, in most instances, addressed to the General Manager, or The Editor, and is forwarded to the librarian for reply. The latter will not answer any inquiries of this sort without the authorization of either of the above officials, or of somebody else who is empowered to give instructions in the matter.

II.

THE LIBRARY.

To equip a newspaper library is rather expensive, if a fairly adequate collection of reference and other useful works is desired. The greater number of such books must be bought, and as some of them appear in new and revised editions annually, or periodically, it is not enough to lay out a considerable amount of money once for all on these costly works, but a regular annual appropriation is needed to keep a newspaper library supplied with up-to-date general reference material.

Quite a few books, however, covering subjects which ought to be represented in a newspaper library, may be selected from those sent in by publishers for review. Others, like public documents, annual reports of institutions and societies, catalogues, etc., may be obtained simply by making request for them.

Two distinct divisions constitute a complete newspaper library. One is the reference department, or library proper. The other is the indexing department, which is of secondary character, supplementing the former in regard to detail information contained in files of contemporary newspapers, or periodical publications. It will be dealt with later on, after due attention has been given to the principal part of the newspaper library, its reference department.

III.

THE REFERENCE DEPARTMENT.

Material in this department can be classified in four principal groups:

General Reference Works.
Biographical Works.
Public Documents.
Portraits and Pictures.

1. *General Reference Works.*—Under this caption come, generally speaking, such books as are commonly found on the "open shelves" in the public libraries, *i. e.*, works containing standard information, of one kind or another, systematized in a way to make it easily available to the average searcher.

For the sake of more expediency, the group may be subdivided in several sections:

(a) Dictionaries of English and Other Languages.—It is needless to assert that an English dictionary of highest quality is the first requisite in a newspaper library. If the appropriation at the disposal of the librarian will allow it, copies of the same dictionary should be placed also in the reporters' room, on the copy desk, and with the proofreaders. To insure uniformity in spelling, all these copies must be of one edition.

As to dictionaries of foreign languages, it would be well to have as many of them as may be found practicable. French and German dictionaries are highly desirable, and one of the Latin language is almost indispensable, at least one containing the expressions and phrases used in common legal and medical parlance. A Spanish dictionary will prove a valuable asset, in view of the extensive field for news presented in the Spanish-speaking possessions of the United States and the Latin-American countries.

(b) Encyclopedias.—At least one general work of this character must be found in the library of a newspaper office. Then there are encyclopedic works in special branches of science and knowledge which are very serviceable and time-saving and supply more detail information on account of being confined within their own specific ranges of subjects. To this class of reference

books belong dictionaries of architecture, art, law, literature, medicine, music, mythology, painting, poetry, quotations, religion, statistics etc. Among them may also be grouped Concordance of the Bible, Dictionary of Days, historical dictionaries, books of facts and the like.

(c) *Annuals*.—This group comprises publications of many different kinds, such as almanacs, year-books of societies, churches and other institutions, university and college catalogues, etc. Much of this material comes unsolicited to a newspaper office and should always be submitted to the librarian, that he may select from it what seems to be worth keeping for future reference. Almanacs are always handy to have in a newspaper library, because they usually contain much local information as well as election tables, records, digests and reviews of many kinds.

(d) *Atlases and Gazetteers*.—One good atlas of the world on a fairly large scale is absolutely necessary, and so are detail maps of the states, territories and extraneous possessions of the United States. The state maps should show county divisions very plainly, and those of the locality where the newspaper concerned has its headquarters and principal circulation must be as perfect in detail as possible. Gazetteers are often appended to atlases, but it is advisable also to have a complete work of that kind. Of great assistance for geographical purposes are a United States Post Office Guide and a Railroad Guide, the latter having outline maps of the various railway systems.

(e) *Directories of Addresses*.—Local address and business directories must be accessible at all times in a newspaper office. If only one copy of each is supplied, it would almost be better to place the address directory, at least, with the City Editor, or his assistant, who gives assignments to the reporters, than in the library. However, copies ought to be kept also there and in the business office of the establishment. Address directories of other localities, including foreign capitals, are not exactly needed, but may on occasion be of great service, especially the foreign ones with their valuable miscellaneous information, much of which can be used to good advantage as supplementary matter to short cable despatches, in offices making a feature of their foreign news.

2. *Biographical Works*.—This is probably the most important section of a newspaper library and one to which cannot be given too much care and attention. The material must not only be kept up to date in order to be of real value, but should also be constantly increased from the numerous sources which are available to a watchful librarian. As with the general reference works, the scope of the biographical section will be best comprehended by discussing its several component parts each for itself.

(a) *Biographical Dictionaries and Encyclopedias*.—Of such there is a vast number in the book market from which it will be sufficient to select a couple of the most complete general works, one covering all nationalities and ages, and the other persons of mark in American history, political and social.

(b) *Who's Who Series*.—In all likelihood no books, possibly with the exception of the English dictionaries, are more frequently consulted in a newspaper library than the collections of short personal sketches which commenced to be published some years ago under the title *Who's Who*. At present, quite a number of these publications are being issued at regular intervals. Thus there are an *International Who's Who*, a biennial *Who's Who in America*, another biennial *Who's Who in New York State*, and an annual *English Who's Who*. Corresponding to these the Germans have their "*Wer Ist's*," and the French their "*Qui Etes-Vous*," both of which should have places alongside of the English books of the same class. Still another foreign biographical work which should not be lacking in a newspaper library is the *Almanach de Gotha*, and to this might even be added nobility calendars of the European countries. Of course, these foreign books are not required in small newspaper offices, which have no direct cable service, but those that have such cannot very well be without them. Want of equal means for establishing the identity of persons who are only briefly mentioned in cable messages is many times the cause of regrettable mistakes, which should never be permitted to occur in a newspaper of quality. The misspelling of foreign names may once in a while be excused on some pretext, but other blunders of more serious nature are apt to creep into the foreign news, if