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Ohio State Library

Books for People 1817-1967

The State Library of Ohio
accepts the challenge of the
"knowledge explosion."

ON CHRISTMAS DAY, December 25, 1817, only one year after Columbus became the seat of state government, Ohio received a Christmas present that has lasted 150 years! On that day John L. Harper began making careful entries in a new ledger. Mr. Harper was not merely recording expenses. He was listing 509 books, which were to be the nucleus of a new state library.

John Harper, as Ohio's first State Librarian, organized what is actually a lasting monument to the vision and leadership of Thomas Worthington, who was then governor of Ohio. Governor Worthington saw a great need for

Reference assistant, Linda Krieg, answers researchers' questions in the main reference room. Barbara Qualls brings and sorts about 75 morning and afternoon newspapers. Suzanne Senn, student library trainee, gathers information.



Books

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Photographed in his office, present State Librarian, Joseph F. Shubert, stands beside a photograph of Charles Burleigh Galbreath, State Librarian from 1896-1911, 1915-1918, 1927-1928. Mr. Galbreath, also a well-known Ohio historian, wrote "History of Ohio," which is held by Mr. Shubert.

Right, the ledger, yellowed with age but legible, in which John Harper entered names of the library's original collection is shown with a letter from the Librarian of Congress, who sent a catalogue of available books to Governor Worthington. Displayed above the ledger is a receipt for the delivery of one of the first books. Far right, one of the newer staff members, Elizabeth Thayer, reference assistant, with one of the oldest volumes in the rare books collection. Linda Krieg checks title of original State Library volume.

bringing books to Ohio where they could serve as invaluable tools in the form of the printed word, stimulating, guiding, and inspiring the people of the frontier. He knew that books were rare treasures in the homes of the early settlers, who, as they literally hewed the state from the wilderness, had little opportunity for anything but work. During an eastern trip to inspect penal institutions, Governor Worthington carefully chose a collection of 509 books to bring back to Ohio, purchasing them in Philadelphia for \$945.67.

Governor Worthington's choices varied greatly, covering many subjects and areas of interest. He included several books that today are acknowledged "great books:" Locke's *Essays*; Smith's *Wealth of Nations*; Burke's *Works*; Plutarch's *Lives*; Milton's *Paradise Lost*; Pope's *Works*; Washington's *Inaugural Addresses*. Biographies of outstanding men (Washington, William Penn, Charles V), travel books, law books, Congressional journals, practical books on sheep raising, guide books for millwrights, an architectural guide book, books of sermons and Bibles were also included in the collection. After the governor arranged for equipping a room above the state auditor's office in the old State Office Building with shelves, tables and chairs, he ordered that the 509 books be placed in this room. The State Library of Ohio was established.

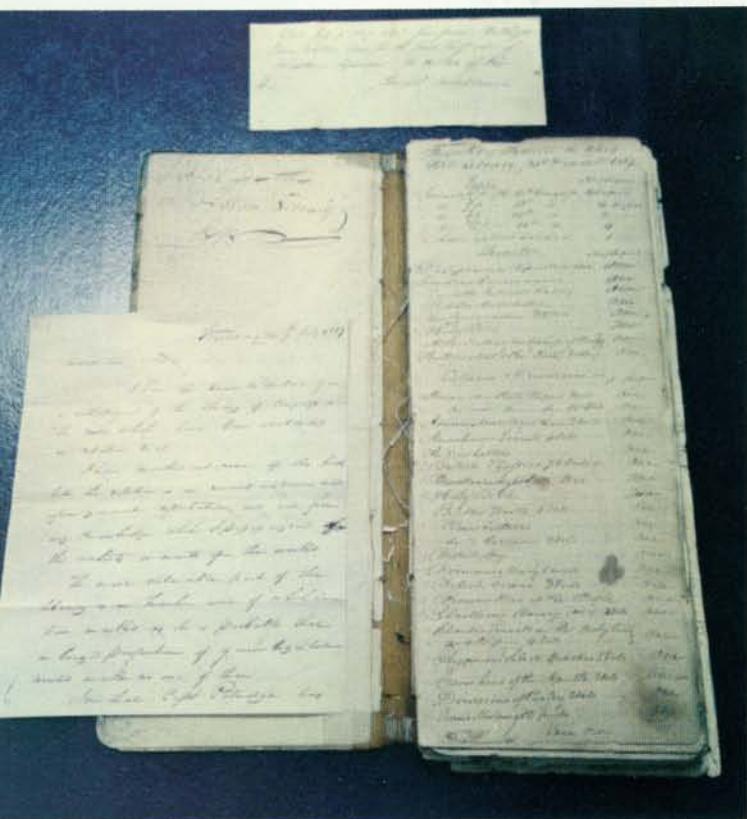
Library Rules of 1818, adopted by the General Assembly, stated that the size of a book determined the

length of time it might be borrowed: the largest book could be loaned for three weeks, the smallest for only seven days. A limit of one "large" and two "small" books could be taken out at any one time. Overdue charges for each book were as high as 25¢ a day. A list of delinquent borrowers was presented to the speakers of both the Senate and House two days before the end of each legislative session.

By establishing these library rules, the Ohio General Assembly assumed the responsibility of providing and maintaining a reference library for its members. As early as 1823, the first full-time State Librarian, Zachariah Mills, had been appointed. From a window of the library in 1838, Mr. Mills watched the first stone for the new state house being hauled onto the grounds. His memorandum describing this activity is the only record of the beginning of our present capitol.

Headquarters for the State Library are now on the 11th floor of the State Office Building. Its staff of 174 people, working in Columbus and five other regional centers of Ohio, includes reference specialists and library consultants who are under the direction of the State Librarian, Joseph F. Shubert. Mr. Shubert is responsible to the State Library Board of five members.

The State Library's collection currently totals over 1,100,000 volumes, an exciting contrast to its meager beginnings. However, one of its basic functions remains what it was when Governor Worthington brought the first



Left, Mrs. Ruth Douthit, chief reference librarian, and Shubert discuss the value of books and documents in the rare book room. Included are: *Register of Books in the Ohio State Library, 25th December 1817*; *Der Erste Teil Der Bucher D. Mart. Luth.*, which was printed in Germany in 1539, and is one of the rarest books in the library's collection.

collection into Ohio. It is a reference library for which books are continually purchased with the informational needs of state departments in mind. When new books arrive at the library, the appropriate departments and state officials are notified. Research personnel are also encouraged to use the reference material to gain information that will give them more knowledge about their ever-changing jobs.

State officials are not limited to resources found on the State Library's shelves. Through a union catalog and interlibrary loan system, additional books are located and brought in from other libraries in the state, from other states and from the Library of Congress. The "switching center" for this network of information is the Union Catalog, located at 5th and Grandview Avenues in Columbus. Here, in one gigantic catalog, cards are on

Books

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file for books owned by 21 of Ohio's largest public libraries. In 1817 there were only a few libraries in Ohio, scattered and isolated from one another. Today, libraries throughout the state share their book resources through the system of interlibrary loan.

"Special collections" of the State Library now, as in 1817, relate specifically to the needs of government. Since the State Library is the officially designated depository of both the state of Ohio and federal government collections, its documents collection is unusually complete. A recent count disclosed more than 57,000 State of Ohio publications and over 340,000 Federal documents. Some of the State reports date back to 1822, and include papers about Ohio's canal days and some early geological surveys.

Genealogy records make up another State Library special research collection that is well-known for its completeness. Because it includes many Ohio county histories and vital records, as well as records of the states from which people came to Ohio, it is visited each year by about 4000 historians and genealogists.

From its pioneer beginning, the State Library has been a leader in national library activities, often pointing the way for other state libraries. When, in 1896, a growing professional group needed and demanded reference services, the General Assembly passed the Garfield Law open-

ing State Library doors to "every reliable and trustworthy citizen in the State." As part of the state's effort to assist in educational development, the "Traveling Library" was organized, shortly before 1900, to provide books to clubs, schools and public libraries and to establish reading rooms and book lending services in rural areas and communities of all sizes.

As years passed, state encouragement of public library development broadened. After a thorough study of the status of Ohio's public libraries in 1933, Ohio gained national attention by establishing a system of financial aid to public libraries "to improve and equalize library service to the people of the whole state." Ohio's county library programs have since earned national recognition.

Enactment of the federal Library Services Act of 1956 marked the start of a new era of responsibility for the State Library, and enabled it to carry out broad-based programs affecting citizens throughout Ohio. Its varied programs of assistance to public libraries and other libraries now include: provision of consultant and in-service training programs; contractual operations, under which costs of bookmobiles and other services are shared with local libraries, plus continuing efforts to put "the right book into the hands of readers." Under the State Library's newest program, books are provided to patients

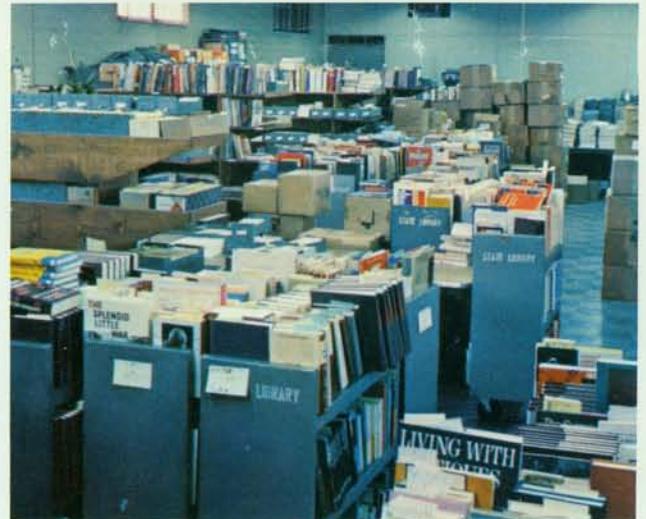
Left, Virginia MacLean, who is in charge of the Traveling Library, shows a new picture book for youngsters, to Joanne Wolford, children's consultant. It will soon be available to libraries throughout the state. Below left, Yvonne Simpson, library page, operates a duplicating machine that helps to provide current management

information for state departments. Below, right, Margaret Higgins, administrative specialist with the Library Service and Construction Section, displays pictures and blueprints of some of the 34 public libraries in 21 counties constructed since 1964, with the aid of federal funds.



and inmates of Ohio's hospitals and custodial institutions. State Library funds are shared with the Cleveland and Cincinnati Public Libraries to enable them to provide talking books for the blind and physically handicapped.

Vitally involved in the great surge of changes in American life and the "knowledge explosion" of today, the State Library stands at another threshold. Library personnel recognize that a new kind of library service is required to meet tomorrow's social and technological changes. A comprehensive survey of Ohio libraries and State Library services has been completed this year and the library's board, its staff, library leaders and citizens are working to develop a statewide master plan for improvement of library services. The State Library will be expected to take a leading role in carrying out this plan, by assuming added responsibilities. A multitude of the sophisticated information needs of a complex industrial state must be met. More coordination of all library services will be required. Developments in electronics and data handling offer even greater possibilities for the future. Governor Worthington and John Harper might not recognize the State Library of 1967; but, after a century and a half, they would have no difficulty understanding that its aim of providing books and information to the officials and people of Ohio is no different than on that Christmas Day, long ago, in 1817.



At the Catalogue Center, new books are prepared for placement on library shelves under the direction of Mr. C. Edwin Dowlin, librarian in charge of the Catalogue Center.