

1-1-1910

Special Libraries, January 1910

Special Libraries Association

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Recommended Citation

Special Libraries Association, "Special Libraries, January 1910" (1910). *Special Libraries, 1910*. 1.
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Special Libraries

Vol. 1

JANUARY, 1910

No. 1

PUBLISHED BY THE

SPECIAL LIBRARIES ASSOCIATION

54 Lafayette Street, New York City

Subscription, - \$2.00 for 10 Numbers
Single Copies, - - - 25 Cents

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Special Libraries is published by the Special Library Association as a means of furthering effective co-operation. It will serve as a medium of intercommunication and to a certain extent will be a clearing house of notes and news

of special interest to the members of the association. It will publish a limited number of papers and short reference lists. It will devote special attention, however, to listing the more important current literature and especially those books, official reports, pamphlets and periodical articles that are not included in the general book lists and periodical indexes. Conforming to the needs of the libraries represented these current lists will relate chiefly to public affairs, social problems, public utilities, technology, insurance and finance. It is believed that such information will be very useful not only to special libraries and institutions but to a very large number of general and public libraries.

The Special Libraries Association, formed at the Bretton Woods meeting of the American Library Association last July, hopes to unite in co-operation all small special libraries throughout the country; financial, commercial, scientific, industrial; and special departments of state, college and general libraries; and, in fact, all libraries devoted to special purposes and serving a limited clientele.

Such libraries, because of their isolated and unique positions and confined problems, have had little in common. Much can be accomplished if they unite along co-operative lines, by interchange of ideas, by publication of bibliographies, by circulation of bulletins, and in short by establishing in this new association a clearing house for answering inquiries arising among the various members.



It is expected that the **members of the Association** will communicate to the secretary for notice in **Special Libraries**, news, items, and references to important publications. Short notes in relation to new methods of work will be particularly helpful. Send to the secretary also a copy of each reference list prepared, whether printed or in manuscript, and state how additional copies may be obtained by librarians desiring them. Put your ideas and work at the disposal of others and you will help build up a clearing house of ideas and information that will repay you seven fold.

A Directory of Special Libraries will be published in our next issue. Kindly send to the secretary, if you have not already done so, information in relation to your library, giving special subjects covered, number of volumes, name of librarian and address.

The Work of Committees

Legislative and Municipal Reference Libraries Committee

JOHN A. LAPP, Chairman

The purpose of the Special Libraries Association is to promote effective co-operation among hitherto isolated libraries doing special work. The committee on legislative and municipal reference libraries desire to work to that end. It is apparent to all that much extensive work is unnecessarily duplicated and that much valuable material is lost to most of the libraries because there is no effective method in operation by which each library is kept in touch with the work being done by other special libraries.

The plans here suggested are necessarily tentative and more in the nature of an outline of possible action than as specific recommendations. An interchange of opinion is desired before anything definite is decided upon and the committee will submit to all librarians in its particular field within a short time specific plans of co-operation for

their criticisms and suggestions. By this method it is hoped to evolve some plans acceptable to all and effective for the end in view. The legislative and municipal reference libraries are the most general libraries of the Special Libraries Association. Their purpose is to have close co-operation not only among themselves, but with all the libraries in the association in so far as those libraries touch matters which become in any way subjects of public interest or action. Thus when the Stone & Webster library, for example, secures material or publishes bibliographies on phases of public utilities such as "depreciation," all legislative and municipal libraries would want to know about it, while the more technical material on hydro-electrics would not be of use to all.

The means possible to be used are: First, an interchange of references to important material which form its nature is not likely to be found in general bibliographies or which may have been prepared but not published; Second, provision for the preparation of bibliographies of special collections which have been made by libraries upon special topics; Third, an interchange of want lists when special collections are being made; Fourth, the publication in the bulletin of the Special Libraries Association of selected lists and references based upon the references interchanged by all the special libraries; Fifth, the promotion of plans for the development eventually of a central clearing house of information and material through the Library of Congress, the Special Libraries Association or the American Library Association. In each case it should be borne in mind that the work of the Special Libraries Association is merely supplementary in covering a field of material and bibliography which is not now covered.

The operation of the plans suggested, supplemented as experience may dictate, will, we believe, make more efficient the work of every special library.

Public Utility Libraries Committee

GEORGE W. LEE, Chairman

As to the work of the Public Utility Libraries Committee, I offer the following tentative plans:

1. That the Committee collect and prepare references of interest to public utility undertakings (railway, lighting, water, etc.).

2. Offer itself as a clearing house of information, prepared to suggest ways and means of getting at the information needed.

3. Accordingly, and incidental to this function, prepare and maintain to date a list of books and magazines bearing upon public utilities and consider the starting of a clipping bureau or induce some agency already interested in work of this kind to become the bureau that represents the Association for this purpose.

4. Bring about a method of keeping in touch with public utility statutes or ordinances, court and commission decisions, etc.

5. Prepare and maintain a classified list of public utilities libraries or sources of information, and encourage specialization in each center in directions in which each is already strong or has special facilities, so as to effect a clearing house system that will avoid duplication of work as far as practicable and tend to strengthen specialists in their specialties.

6. Prepare a classification system for public utility libraries.

Technology Libraries Committee

JOSEPH L. WHEELER, Chairman

The class of libraries and literature with which the Technology Libraries Committee will deal are:

1. The libraries maintained in engineering and manufacturing establishments for the use of members of the firm, containing specialized works relating to the firm's activities, or, in addition, a reference collection of general works to help as a bureau of information.

2. Industrial and technical departments of public libraries.

3. Special libraries connected with colleges and technical societies.

4. Literature on trades, manufactures, engineering, and what is classed under the head of technology.

The movement for technical libraries and departments comes from three main influences: 1. The present widespread interest in technical education, in which as yet public libraries have taken little part, but are now beginning to co-operate; 2. The results which have been attained in industrial departments of public libraries; 3. The dependence placed on shop and office libraries by managers, foremen and specialists in the cases where these private libraries have been correctly organized and administered.

This rather large field of work outlined for the committee is one of great interest and usefulness. The divisions of activity which immediately suggest themselves are:

1. Preparation of articles for technical and library publications describing what has been done in the way of technology libraries.

2. Compiling a list of large firms and libraries which might well have technical literature departments, and sending them copies of articles and circulars describing work which is being done.

3. Uniting the similar interests of members by discussions and articles on methods of classification, cataloging and indexing technical literature.

4. Co-operation of public libraries and industrial firms in preparation of bibliographies and indexes.

5. Co-operation of the Special Libraries Association in the movement for industrial progress, by increasing the number and usefulness of industrial departments in large public libraries, inducing firms to maintain small libraries of general and trade literature for workmen and their families, either at the firm's expense or as substations of the local public library;

direct connection of industrial libraries with technical and night schools, labor unions and engineering organizations in their study work.

Insurance Libraries Committee

D. N. HANDY, Chairman

I should say that the work of the Insurance Committee, during its initial year, would be largely preliminary and preparatory. It will be advisable to find out what libraries exist; what material they possess; how they got it; what they are doing with it and what they propose to do with it in the future; how far private and quasi-public insurance libraries are duplicating work which, in combination, they could do much more effectively; how far public libraries have gone in the collection of insurance literature, to what use their collections are being put, and what principle, if any, governs them in their additions to these collections; how far cataloging and classification of insurance literature has been carried and what attempts, if any, have been made to unify such efforts as may have been made; and, finally, if there is any data upon which to base a judgment, what branches of insurance occupy a foremost place in insurance interest, at the present time, and what particular phases of each branch may be most helped by the publication of sources of information thereon.

First Meeting of Special Libraries Association

The Special Libraries Association held its first meeting on November 5th, in the assembly room of the Merchants' Association of New York City. About forty members were present. Mr. Dana, president, called the meeting to order, drew attention to the importance of special libraries, to their rapid increase in number, and to the fact that they indicate that the habit is growing among men of affairs to look to books and periodicals and printed materials in general for direct help in the solution of the questions that are continually confronting them. Mr. Mead,

secretary of the Merchants' Association, welcomed the Association and spoke briefly of the value to his Association of its special library. The program was as follows:

Development of special libraries, by Dr. Robert H. Whitten, librarian Public Service Commission, first district, New York

Some aspects of a financial library, by Beatrice Carr, statistician, Fisk & Robinson, New York.

Co-operation between special libraries, by Herbert O. Grigham, librarian, Rhode Island State Library, Providence.

Specialized municipal libraries, by Milo R. Maltbie, commissioner, Public Service Commission, first district, New York.

Maps and atlases, by Miss Sarah Ball, librarian, Business Men's Branch, Free Public Library, Newark.

Co-operation in the publication of lists, by George W. Lee, librarian, Stone & Webster, Boston.

The general discussion which followed the formal program was of great interest, and showed that many of those present were heartily in sympathy with the plan of greater co-operation between special libraries. Mr. Whitten's paper is published in the January issue of the **Library Journal**, and that of Miss Ball in the January issue of **Public Libraries**. The following is an abstract of other papers presented:

The President's Opening Remarks

JOHN COTTON DANA

The special library, in that meaning of the phrase which we have had in mind in organizing this Association of special libraries, is an institution of very recent development. We may venture to define it as "the library of a modern man of affairs." This definition is not sufficiently inclusive, however; as is shown by my own experience in the matter. I have had the wish, for nearly all of the twenty years that I have been engaged in library work, to establish in the business center of the city in which the library I was managing was situated, a business men's branch; located on the ground floor, opening on the busiest office

street of the city, not the busiest shopping street, large, well lighted and fully equipped with all the books which experience should prove to be of interest to men engaged in commerce, manufacture, finance and kindred matters. In Newark I have had at last the opportunity to carry out in a small way this idea, and to see a modest business men's branch in the center of the town. This branch is fairly successful along the business line, and its success in this direction has something to do with the existence of this Association.

But you will say at once that while a business branch of a public library may prove to be of great value, first, to the main library as a bond between men of affairs in the city and the main library's great storehouse of books; next, as a useful tool for business firms of all kinds in the city; it still is very far from being a typical special library of men of affairs, such as this Association has been formed to aid and promote. For, as the brief investigation already made into the development of the special library in this country shows that these special collections of books, reports and other printed material are so varied in their character and in the use made of them, that no definition will any longer satisfactorily include them all.

A glance at our Program including libraries of a public service commission, of a financial firm, and of an engineering firm, shows how wide is the range of thought and action in which the small special collection of books and other printed material has already found a place. . . .

The rapid development of this institution for bringing to the aid of modern industry whatever the student or the practitioner may have thought fit to put into type is very significant. It means that here in the opening years of the Twentieth Century, 550 years after the invention of printing, men of affairs are for the first time beginning to see clearly that collections of books

and printed materials are not, as they were long held to be by most, for the use simply of the scholar, the student, the reader, and the devotee of belles-lettres, but are useful tools, needing only the care and skill of a curator, of a kind of living index thereto, as it were, to be of the greatest possible help in promoting business efficiency.

To say this again in a little different way:

The man of affairs has just begun to realize how important and helpful to him may be the material found in books, proceedings and periodicals and how readily it may be brought to his hand.

The library idea has always been more or less academic, monastic, classic. The impression has prevailed that the library appeals first of all to the reader of polite literature, to the student, the philosopher, the man of letters. This modern rapid development of special libraries managed by experts who endeavor from day to day to gather together the latest things on the topic to which his library is devoted, to present to the firm and employees, is simply an outward manifestation of the fact that the man of affairs has come to realize that printed things form the most useful and most important tools of his business, no matter what that business may be.

We may look to see very wide and rapid development of libraries of all kinds in the next few years.

Co-operation in the Publication of Lists

GEORGE W. LEE

In the scientific world, if Smith of New York is studying butterfly wings. Brown of New Zealand soon knows of it and they co-operate, so that each may specialize the more; Smith henceforth confining himself principally to their color, Brown to their shape. In the business world, also, it is fast becoming true, that if Jones of New Jersey is studying railroad accidents, Robin-

son of New Hampshire straightway knows of it, and they, likewise co-operate; Jones henceforth confining himself principally to steam railroad accidents, Robinson to electric railroad accidents. To further such industrial co-operation through publicity will, I take it, be a function of the Special Libraries Association. . . .

Lists should be annotated, classified and cross-referenced and not issued as mere check lists. It is easy enough to get the title, cost and general makeup, for such information is contained in publishers' lists—they should represent the opinion, not of one person or business house, but of several, so far as practicable, the opinions of persons from different parts of the country.

The business world, after the manner of the scientific world, is ready for a clearing house of information. To this end the Special Libraries Association can help by the publishing of reference lists. The completeness of these lists must be determined by good business judgment, but special attention should be given to their annotation, which calls for co-operation in order to insure thoroughness and impartiality. Comparisons may be needed, and even should they prove odious to some authors and publishers, they might lead to the Association's becoming an authority. As to loaning and selling, as to form, as to taking advantage of existing lists, these, among other things, call for consideration.

Co-operation Between Special Libraries

H. O. BRIGHAM

"Co-ordination, which might be a sub-title to this paper, may be attained by attempting to harmonize the widely varying types which compose this Association. In other words, the various libraries may be divided into groups. For example, the technical libraries may be made responsible for all information on that line; the commercial libraries for facts relating to their field and the municipal organiza-

tions for the data which would naturally come from them; the highly specialized libraries such as insurance, agriculture and banking would contribute researches which would appear to be of general interest to all in the Association; the legislative reference departments would set forth the progress of legislation which affected the several classes represented in the organization and the public libraries and college libraries would bring their share from the greater sources of supply which make them, as it were, the department stores of the library world.

This sub-division of labor will be of great value, it will furnish a means for the expenditure of co-operative energy, it will correlate the highly differentiated parts of our complex organization and it will place in reciprocal relation these unrelated and widely scattered institutions. We shall attain our object only by such harmonious co-ordination and we are apt to secure satisfactory results. Reciprocity must be our watchword and helpfulness to others our aim.

The suggested research must be specific and confined as far as possible to the special group or class. It would be better if there were an absolute avoidance of detailed research by librarians of another class.

A special list on agricultural education should emanate from the agriculture library and not from the engineering library. Insurance investigations might be the subject of study by either the insurance library or the legislative reference department and both might contribute to the subject. When you arrange your scheme you must devise some method of intercommunication. The valuable list compiled by the X Library, the bibliography by the Y Library should be available for all. Each library could be responsible for the copying of these lists or essays and they could be filed with our secretary. All of us stumble on bits of information which are valuable for the entire body. Send them to the secretary.

Let us help one another and by so doing help ourselves.

In conclusion, I urge upon you to give this Association your hearty support. Go away from this meeting with some definite line of action formulated. Do your part, aye, do more than your part. Give us your counsel and your suggestion. Help to make this Association, which is entering onto untrodden paths, a strong factor in the library movement. Preach the doctrine of enthusiasm. Not the type that like some forms of emotional religion has a deleterious effect, but the hearty, sincere enthusiasm that cheerily accepts a duty, that in spite of harping criticism performs an allotted task and firm in the belief of work well done faces the future. This is true co-operation.

Some Aspects of a Financial Library

BEATRICE CARR

The financial library of the present day is a comparatively recent institution, and many causes have contributed to its development. Chief among these may be noted the constantly increasing numbers of the investing public; the desire of such investors for prompt and accurate information regarding prospective or actual purchases, and the unprecedented growth of the United States in wealth and world-wide influence—all such contributory causes rendering necessary the establishment of some bureau of information for the collection and recording of data bearing not only upon specific securities, but treating also of industrial and financial statistics in general, and dealing with the fundamental principles underlying all economics. More especially, the building of many new railroads—and the receiverships and reorganizations of many older ones—brought an element of complexity into the financial situation. New investment problems had to be faced; promising but untried fields for the employment of capital to be scrutinized and turned to account. To meet this situation; to provide the

means for dealing prudently and at the same time effectively with the great possibilities opening up for bankers and investors alike, are, I think, the chief reasons for the financial library as it exists to-day.

Concrete facts are more likely to be helpful than vague generalizations. It is in order, therefore, briefly to enumerate the various data contained in the library entrusted to my charge, to explain the methods adopted for obtaining material, and, finally, to show how it is classified, catalogued and filed.

Summarized, the material on file in the library of Fisk & Robinson consists of books, pamphlets, reports—printed or in manuscript—and newspaper clippings—either specific or general—on:

- Steam and electric railroad companies;
- Industrial corporations;
- Public service undertakings;
- Banks—national, state and savings;
- Insurance and trust companies;
- State and municipal finances and general development;
- U. S. Government — securities, finance and general records;
- Miscellaneous books and pamphlets on banking, money, financial history, railroads, industrial statistics and other matters likely to be of interest;
- Information of a general character not included in these classifications.

To go somewhat into detail: We endeavor to obtain all annual reports, mortgages, agreements and official pronouncements of railroads and other corporations, and any circulars or other information dealing with such corporations or their securities; all reports of the bureaus and departments maintained by states and municipalities, such as banking and railroad commissioners' reports; industrial and labor statistics; board of trade and chamber of commerce publications; comp-

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trollers' or other financial reports, and banking, insurance, railroad and general state laws; practically all information issued by any department of the United States Government, and all manuals, magazines, books or other statistical data on the subjects of finance, securities, and general development of the United States which, after investigation, we believe to have any value.

Miss Carr then told of their methods in classifying and arranging their sources of obtaining reports and their system of filing the correspondence.

The **Accountancy Library Association** of Denver, Colorado, has issued an annotated list of the books in the Accountancy Library. The library contains only about 300 books and pamphlets, but the list is very useful to any one interested in accounting or to a library desirous of building up a reference collection in relation to that subject. The list may be obtained from J. B. Geijsbeek, Librarian, 14th and Arapahoe Streets, Denver, Colorado.

Constitution of Special Libraries Association

Name. This Association shall be known as the Special Libraries Association.

Object. The object of this Association is to promote the interests of the commercial, industrial, technical, civic, municipal and legislative reference libraries, the special departments of public libraries, universities, welfare associations and business organizations.

Officers. The officers of the Association shall be a President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer. They shall hold office for one year or until their successors shall have been elected.

Executive Board. The Executive Board shall consist of the President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer and two other members elected by the Association.

Membership. Any person, firm or organization may become a member upon payment of the annual dues.

Dues. The annual dues shall be two (2) dollars.

Meetings. Annual meetings shall be held at the time and place named by the Executive Board, who shall have power to call such other meetings as may be necessary.

Quorum. Eleven members shall constitute a quorum.

Vacancies. The Executive Board shall have power to fill all vacancies.

Amendments. This Constitution may be amended by a three-fourths vote of those present and voting at any meeting of the Association. Notice of proposed amendments shall be sent to each member of the Association at least two weeks before adoption.

Committees

Agricultural libraries: Miss M. F. Warner, Plant Industry Bureau, Washington; Mr. Wm. Trelease, Library of Missouri Botanical Garden.

Commercial associations: Mr. F. B. DeBernard, Merchants' Association of New York; Mr. J. J. McFarlane, Philadelphia Commercial Museum.

Insurance libraries: Mr. D. N. Handy, Insurance Library Society of Boston; Miss Ida M. Thiele, Association of Life Insurance Presidents; Mr. F. L. Hoffman, Prudential Insurance Company.

Legislative and municipal reference libraries: Mr. John A. Lapp, Legislative Reference Librarian, Indiana State Library; Mr. Ernest Bruncken, Library of Congress; Mr. Horace E. Flack, Baltimore Legislative Reference Department; Mr. Samuel H. Ranck, Grand Rapids Public Library.

Membership: Mr. H. O. Brigham, Rhode Island State Library; Mr. C. W. Andrews, John Crerar Library, Chicago; Mr. D. N. Handy, Insurance Library Society of Boston; Mr. J. L. Wheeler, Public Library of District of Columbia.

Public utility libraries: Mr. G. W. Lee, Stone & Webster, Boston; Mrs. K. M. Howze, Commonwealth Edison Company, Chicago; Mr. R. H. Whitten, Public Service Commission of New York City.

Publication: Mr. J. C. Dana, Newark Free Public Library; Miss Anna Sears, Merchants' Association of New York; Mr. R. H. Whitten, New York Public Service Commission for the First District, Mr. H. O. Brigham, Rhode Island State Library.

Publicity: Mr. G. W. Lee, Stone & Webster, Boston; Miss Sarah Ball, Newark Free Library; Mr. C. B. Lester, Legislative Reference Department, New York State Library; Mr. F. O. Stetson, Newton, Massachusetts.

Sociological libraries: Mrs. H. P. Bates, New York School of Philanthropy; Mr. E. L. Burchard, Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy.

Technology libraries: Mr. J. L. Wheeler, Public Library of District of Columbia; Mr. G. E. Marion, A. D. Little, Inc., Boston; Mr. W. F. Stevens, Homestead Carnegie Library; Miss L. E. Howard, United Engineering Society, New York.