

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

# THE LIBRARY

The library is as old as the Normal. When the doors were first opened to students, in the spring of 1853, there was available to them "a select Library of Standard Works, amounting to one thousand volumes . . ." <sup>1</sup> This was just prior to the time when the University of Michigan employed its first paid librarian and developed a card catalog, described as one of the first in America, for their library. The American Library Association was not founded until a quarter of a century later.

"The books are intended mainly for reference, as the regular studies of the school leave little time for general reading." Such was the statement in the Normal catalog. But even this limited purpose was frustrated when, in 1859, the Normal building was destroyed by fire, along with all its contents. "We miss," said Acting Principal Sill, "perhaps more than anything else, our small but well selected library, which was totally destroyed." The State Board asked the legislature for \$2,000 to replace it. The Legislature, however, did not lend a sympathetic ear.

The principal then resorted to an appeal to the students who unanimously agreed to pay one dollar over the regular tuition for two consecutive terms. Principal Welch reported:

By the scheme referred to, we have already realized a sum sufficient, if judiciously invested, to supply our most pressing needs, and, as the Board of Education have taken steps for making the first purchase, we are looking forward gladly to the time when we shall no longer feel the pressure of a necessity which is second only to that of good instruction.

Subsequently, the Board added an annual fee to the tuition for the purchase of books. Thus was inaugurated a policy which proved to

be permanent and capable of great expansion, that of imposing a student fee in addition to the tuition charged by the State (and returned to it), the employment of which was entirely at the discretion of the school. As of 1962, this local fee amounted to 40 per cent of the total charge to the students, and was used to support (even to the point of constructing buildings) such student activities and services as the health service, student social center, student newspaper, and laboratory maintenance.

It is worthy of note that the State Board of this time was required to be "library-minded," as one of its legal responsibilities was the purchase of books for the district school libraries throughout the State.

The problems of building an adequate collection and making it accessible to student use were of a continuing nature, and often formidable. They involved such matters as administration and organization of the library, seating space for students, and policies as to the scope of materials to be purchased and degree of availability to students.

As to seating space, for example, as early as 1864 the Michigan Agricultural Society, in its proposal to construct a building for an agricultural museum on the campus, had agreed to provide a room for the Normal's library. This did not materialize. The attempt to solve the problem then took the form of shifting from one room to another in Old Main until, after nearly half a century of pressing the legislature, a separate library building was achieved.<sup>2</sup>

Organization and administration was also a matter of gradual development. In 1873, the Board of Visitors complained of the lack both of professional equipment and professional spirit. "The library," they said, "has given no indication that it is a part of the equipment of a Normal School. It has lacked, with insignificant exceptions, the professional treatises, sets of textbooks in the common school branches, etc., which seem necessary to its best use." The complaint brought results. The legislature made appropriations, the library room was improved, important accessions purchased, and the faculty turned its attention to the organization of the library. They chose Danial Putnam to be in charge, a responsibility that he exercised in addition to his teaching load until 1882 when he was named Acting Principal. During the summer of 1875 he, with members of the faculty and the Ypsilanti resident member of the State Board, devoted much time to devising a cataloging system, based on that

used at the University of Michigan.<sup>3</sup> The next visit by the Board of Visitors brought commendation: “. . . the conveniences for using and handling the books have been so multiplied that the library has come to be used very generally by the pupils, especially in the latter part of their course.”

Availability of books to the students involved questions of policy. Just how freely should the students be permitted to use them? As long as the collection consisted mainly of works of reference, these could be made available without recourse to a charge-out slip, but for use in the library only. Books for general reading, however, were kept in alcoves behind railings and produced only on written request. The report of the Board of Visitors for 1876 contained a radical suggestion. Students should be encouraged to use books, even to take books *from* the library! The report stated:

. . . it seems to us, a far greater amount of reading would be done if pupils were allowed the privilege of taking books from the library. Every proper inducement should be offered to pupils for becoming acquainted with books and for acquiring a taste for library research.

The idea proved to be fruitful, but was very slow in germinating. Some 20 years later, greater freedom was permitted at least within the library room. The railed-in gallery of alcoves was thrown open “somewhat freely” for the first time. Point was made that now one-fourth of the entire library collection was made accessible to students “without the formality of borrowing from the attendants.” As a result, there was better and greater use of the library by both students and faculty, and more of the library entered into the daily lessons.

Policy as to accessions gradually broadened. The transition from the rather exclusive emphasis on general reference items and professional literature to the inclusion of items in the academic areas is difficult to trace, but the trend in this direction must have been greatly encouraged by the arrival of Principal Mac Vicar in 1880 and the consequent abandonment of the attempt begun in 1878 to make the Normal a strictly professional training institution.

When Principal Willits arrived, in 1884, he gave first attention to the library and reported that he found the collections especially rich in literature, history and science. He noted that there had been 30,000 calls for books during the past year, “exclusive of teachers

and the departmental libraries." By 1893, reviewing his seven years as head of the Normal, Principal Sill could say that the library had increased by 70 per cent in number of volumes. Principal Boone, who certainly possessed a national view of higher education, made a rather lengthy statement in his first report (1894) to the State Board about the library. He said:

From a considerable acquaintance with Normal Schools in the United States, I am persuaded that few of them are so well equipped with general and special library references as is our own. The Normal School library, both in its books and in its management, is something in which we may take legitimate pride.

He stated that the library possessed some 15,000 volumes and 63 periodicals; that all current reading matter plus about 300 volumes of general references were so placed as to give the students unrestricted access to them, and that the other books were "given out upon tickets." From the 800 students enrolled, daily loans aggregated not less than 650 volumes.

A similar statement was made some 42 years later by Edman Low in a survey which noted that as of 1938 the library possessed 90,000 volumes and was equalled by few teachers colleges in the entire country. He found particularly good collections in English literature and the Age of Chaucer, geography, American history, and children's literature. The periodical collection was unique among teachers colleges, containing over 100 complete files of magazines that had been published for a decade or more, some of which were no longer obtainable.<sup>4</sup>

In 1881 the State Board authorized a step that was to be continued until 1952, viz., the creation of libraries in the several departments of instruction in addition to the general library collection.<sup>5</sup> By 1894, nine departments were thus equipped, the books being listed in the regular library accessions book and transferred to the several departments, each of which maintained its own catalog. By 1929, the number had increased to twenty-two. At the dedication of the new library building in 1930, President McKenny indicated that, with the present expanded facilities, some of the departmental libraries were being discontinued and the books returned to the general library. The number diminished in the next few years to four. With the arrival of E. Walfred Erickson as Head Librarian in

1952, the last of these libraries were closed and the policy of a fully centralized library adopted.

Erickson's aversion to departmental libraries was based on considerations of economy, and also on the philosophy of a broad education which seeks to promote awareness in the student of the interrelations of subject matter and the need for their exploration.<sup>6</sup>

There was one type of special library, however, that could show ample and permanent justification, that for the Training School. The development of this library was gradual and natural, its time of origin uncertain. It originated in collections in the several grade rooms. In 1917, Head Librarian Walton described the library as having taken form "several years ago . . . from a miscellaneous group of books culled from the various grade room libraries, which had become too large to be handled easily." To these were added classroom libraries of books accumulated by teachers of the college course in Literature for the Grades.

The functions of the library were defined as (1) a reference library for the training of departmental teachers and student teachers; (2) a laboratory for the classes in literature for the grades; and (3) a lending library for children. The library was so organized that knowledge of how to use it would equip one to use the College library or any other library. Children were encouraged to find their books by using the card catalog, and any child was eligible to draw books who could either print or write his name, no matter how badly, so that it could be "translated."<sup>7</sup>

The modern era of the Normal library may be said to have begun with the coming of Genevieve M. Walton in 1892. Daniel Putnam, as first librarian, had organized the books by departments of instruction, and had been chiefly responsible for a card catalog. In 1881, he had been succeeded by August Lodeman, head of the Modern Languages Department. Lodeman was succeeded in 1884 by the Normal's first paid librarian, Miss Florence Goodison, who, in 1890, was succeeded by William S. Burns. Burns did not take his responsibilities too seriously and, after a year, left on vacation without completing a requested inventory. His vacation never ended, and Miss Walton was employed.

The name of Genevieve Walton represents one of Normal's cherished memories. Her 40 years of service alone is noteworthy. Her professional zeal, breadth of interest, concern for the training of teachers, positive character and personal charm made a lasting

impression on the library profession in Michigan and on the institution that she served.

In her day, professional training for libraries was very limited. Her formal preparation consisted of attendance at a six-week summer institute at the Fletcher School in Amherst, Massachusetts. This she supplemented through the meetings and journals of library associations and personal contacts with other librarians. Problems of book selection, classification and cataloging she met with what limited tools were available, adapting them to her own special situation. Some 13 years after joining the Normal staff, she obtained a master of arts degree from St. Mary's College of South Bend, Indiana.

As to classification and cataloging, for some time the books were grouped on the shelves according to extremely broad titles—history, general literature, classical languages, mathematics and science. The books were marked for a particular shelf, and particular place on the shelf, the newest book placed at the end of the group. Later, the Dewey classification system was adopted, modified to meet the need of the moment.

When the Cutter system of identifying authors came into vogue, Miss Walton rejected it. She had a reason for this. The student assistants must perform more than the mechanical task of securing the book. They must become acquainted with the collection. Absence of marking on the backs of the books forced the student to look inside where he would find title and author as well as classification number. Miss Walton also insisted that works must be identified with their authors, authors with their works. Hence, biographies of the authors were placed ahead of their respective works. Other liberties with the Dewey classification system were taken. Frederick Cleveringa, a student assistant after World War I and eventually the Reference Librarian at the Normal, related:

Miss Walton neglected the 400's completely, saying that there was no sense in talking about philology here—let's combine everything with the 800's on the score. With regard to the 914's which are the travel number in the Dewey system, she said, let's forget that and put travel and history together where they belong. If you are interested in a country, you are interested in its history also, and its scenery.<sup>8</sup>

As for book selection, purchases were based on requests from the departments. Periodical lists consisted of important professional

journals and current literary magazines. There was very little money for expansion of the library; the acquisition of rare books was out of the question. Little or no initiative on the part of the librarian was possible until, beginning with the McKenny administration, the library had an annual budget.

The training of student assistants to work in the library was considered to be of particular importance as a part of their teacher training. On this matter Miss Walton said:

The libraries of our four Normal schools, as they are still familiarly called, are interesting in our library development in having been among the earlier forces to accustom a large body of students to depend upon the intelligent use of books in teaching. A large percentage of these students have always come from the country, or from small towns with no libraries. They have returned as teachers to other small towns feeling the necessity of books in the schools, and have long been active in starting school libraries, which . . . have been a strong factor in the present school library movement.

She noted that the use of student assistants in the Ypsilanti Normal began in the early 1870's. They received no pay for years, but were given special privileges in the stacks. From the turn of the century, hourly rates were paid. Still later, a progressive system was installed whereby a student would be given the privilege of using the stacks for the first term or two, if proficient, he would be hired at an hourly rate.

Systematic instruction of student assistants began under Miss Walton in 1894, this taking the form of Saturday morning lectures, open to all who were interested in learning about libraries. These lectures were the forerunner of the present course known as "Use of Books and Library," which all student assistants must take.

As an aid to her administration Miss Walton prepared a Library Staff Manual which was revised and reprinted from time to time. In this she defined her staff, and assumed that the full-time members were members of the faculty. One of her instructions read:

All full members of the Library Staff are required to attend Faculty meetings. The spirit of the Normal College assumes that all its members will attend the professional meetings of the several departments, and a strong effort should be made to attend Library and Educational meetings.<sup>9</sup>

The culmination of Miss Walton's career was, of course, the acquisition of a separate library building. She worked indefatigably on plans, procuring them from all over the country. She finally adopted as a model the plan of the McGregor Public Library of Highland Park, Michigan. In October of 1928, the State Board, noting that the plans had been approved by Governor Green and Budget Director Thompson, moved for the advertising for bids.

On Sunday, January 30, 1930, the formal opening took place. The building had cost a quarter of a million dollars and was, for the time, sumptuous. Seating facilities were provided for 400 students; shelving for 150,000 volumes. Special features included a reading room "for special study," special chairs and tables "for short people," tables and chairs placed throughout the bookstacks for faculty, a study room for student assistants, and a "fire-proof room for books of special value."

Completion of the building came at a fortunate time for Genevieve Walton. Two years later she died. Her influence had extended beyond the campus, throughout the State. She was a co-founder of the Michigan Library Association and became its first woman president. Known for her love of books, she was described as "a woman who can discuss books so that you can hardly wait to read the ones she talks about." In a paper she read at a meeting of the American Library Association at Kaaterskill, New York, in 1913, she commented, using a strong word for those times, as to Fitzgerald, "I am sorry so many people know Fitzgerald only because of the 'Rubaiyat.' I confess myself to be rather likeminded with

That certain old person of Ham,  
Who grew weary of Omar Khayyam,  
Fitzgerald, said he,  
Is as right as can be,  
But this cult, and these versions,  
O, Damn!"

For the 50th Anniversary of the American Library Association, in 1926, she wrote a "History of Michigan Libraries." Her home in Ypsilanti was a center for visiting librarians, and it was later said that in this home were planned those first round-table meetings that meant so much to the State. The State Association issued a special

number of the Michigan Library Bulletin in her honor on the occasion of the dedication of the new library building.

Genevieve Walton's influence was strongly felt by Normal's students. She often took a student home with her for lunch, and one in later years stated that the very fine art library which she had acquired in her home inspired in him a life-long interest in art collecting.<sup>10</sup> An anecdote is told of scenes in the library on a winter's night:

Often during the winter during a snow storm, she would prepare a big camp coffee pot at home, hire a cab, and come up to the library in the evening. Along about 8:30 you could see the students in the reading room sniffing and wondering what was going on. When the smell became too tantalizing, she would go out and announce that coffee was ready, and each one was served.

Perhaps the most revealing statement of the character of her impact on students is that of Francis Goodrich, who said:

I owe a great deal to her. Not that the training was formal or systematic, but she encouraged us to read—and, in fact we *had* to read. She would inquire what we were reading and she wanted her staff members to be up to date, not so much with current events but with current literature. That was quite insisted upon. She made me learn to catalog. I didn't want to do that and I didn't have to catalog, but she said I had to learn, so I did. . . . When I went to library school, I found that I knew so much more about library practice than my associates in the class that I did a great deal of personal instructing.<sup>11</sup>

Miss Walton left as her successor in 1932 Miss Elsie Andrews who had been a faithful assistant for many years and who also had an artistic interest as an accomplished pianist. The Andrews period of 20 years felt the full brunt of retrenchment forced by depression and war. The library staff was severely cut, and annual budgets became more and more slender. It was not a good time to serve as college librarian. Miss Andrews inherited, however, an able staff.<sup>12</sup> Two events are noteworthy—a Carnegie grant of \$20,000, which looked large in 1939, and, on the arrival of President Elliott in 1948, confirmation of the professional staff as members of the faculty.

In 1952, Miss Andrews resigned and was replaced by Erickson. A

graduate of a teachers college, former head of the library of a teachers college, and engaged at the time in writing a doctoral dissertation concerned with teachers college libraries, Erickson possessed an exceptional sympathy with and understanding of the needs of that type of institution.

Faced with the problems of a rapidly growing institution and at the same time with an administration that lacked appreciation, he persisted year after year in the effort to increase the library budget from its place at the bottom of the list of comparative libraries in the country. Finally, in 1965, he succeeded in getting the adoption of a progressive program that would lead to a standing share of 6 per cent of the University budget.

Faced with a classification and cataloging situation that derived from earlier years and simpler circumstances but was seriously inadequate for the present, he added the Cutter classification system to the Dewey system, and undertook to reclassify the entire collection.

Faced with an institution that soon began to leap forward in size and scope, increasing from an enrollment of about 2,800 to more than 10,000 in 12 years, he was successful in his quest for a new library building which would meet the increased and more varied demands of what was no longer a teachers college but a developing university.

Meanwhile the accessions policy was expanded to include microfilm acquisitions, particularly in the area of newspapers, which underwent rapid and extensive development.<sup>13</sup> A policy of acquisition of current periodicals to satisfy the Periodical Index was undertaken. And, as resources were available, the library not only encouraged but prodded for departmental requests and assumed considerable initiative itself.

The new building, dedicated in the spring of 1967, was planned to provide seating space for 1,800 students, shelving for 300,000 volumes. Climaxing the tortuously slow, century-long development of the policy of free access to the books, the new arrangement shelves virtually all of the collection in the open so that students can go directly to the books. The library is arranged on a subject divisional basis, each division having its own collection of materials and a staff of subject specialists to serve students and faculty.

Each division features a smoking room (shades of the McKenny era!), a faculty study, a seminar room, and a microfilm reading room. There is a map library and cartography workroom, and a

spacious modern Instructional Materials Center to house the latest materials used in instruction. The Audio-Visual Center has been greatly enlarged and provides facilities for film projection, preview and conference, production of visuals, recording, equipment repair, and record listening facilities whereby taped programs of music or literature can be heard by merely dialing a number. Classrooms and offices for the Library Science division (program for the training of school librarians) are provided. There is provision for a University archives. The cost was nearly eleven times that of the structure that it replaced;<sup>14</sup> the services made possible infinitely greater.

The mind, heart, and soul of an institution of learning is its faculty; the chief and indispensable instrument in its effectiveness is the library. Assurance and great promise for Eastern Michigan University lie in the story of its library. The tempo of increasing demands at the present time is so rapid that within a very few years, it is estimated, library facilities will have to be doubled again and plans have been laid to make this feasible at minimum cost. However that may be, a pattern has been achieved that will serve the institution and society well.

