

THE LIBRARY STORY (1833-1953)

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IN 1833 the trustees of the newly chartered Newark College were incubating their plans for the development of that institution. On September 25 the committee "to report a plan of education and by-laws" confidently recommended, "There shall be a library," and at the meeting in December it was resolved that the same committee should have the power to provide "apparatus and library."¹ Thus a hundred and twenty years ago the University Library may be said to have been born. At least from that point an unbroken continuity can be traced. The surviving list of some fifty titles in the Newark Academy about 1771 during the Rev. Mr. MacDowell's regime seems but the echo of things wholly departed.²

By July of 1834, one month after the new college had opened its doors, rules of an amusing complexity had already been framed to govern the library. One wonders upon what model they were devised; in any case, for their quaintness they deserve to be remembered:

The library shall be open on Saturday from 12 to 1 o'clock . . . Students over fourteen years of age may have the privilege of the whole library; those under fourteen of the publications of the Sunday School Union.³

Further:

The time beyond which books shall not be kept out shall be as follows: Duodecimo, one week; octavo, two weeks; quarto or folio, four weeks . . . The fines for keeping books beyond the time shall be, for 12 mo., 12½ cents; 8 vo., 25 cents; for quarto or folio, 50 cents per week; for grease spots 6¼ cents for the smallest, and above that at the discretion of the librarian; for

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¹ Trustees' Minutes, v. 1, p. 7, p. 9.

² A copy of this list exists in the University Library.

³ L. P. Powell, *History of Education in Delaware*, p. 133.

scribbling with pencil, 12½ cents; with ink 25 cents; for tearing or cutting a leaf without removing it, 12½ cents; removing blank leaf, 12½ cents; printed leaf, 50 cents; for tearing or breaking the cover or defacing, from 6¼ to 50 cents, at discretion of librarian. A book lost to be replaced.⁴

For obtaining the books upon which these rules might take effect, Powell declares with his usual generosity that \$1,000 was appropriated, although the minutes of the trustees assign the sum vaguely to library and philosophical equipment.⁵ For a college that was to attain to 80 students and 6 faculty by 1837⁶ such an appropriation would not have been niggardly. One doubts, however, the availability of any such money because at about the same time a trustees' committee was selected "severally to solicit and accept donations of books or money"; which committee later, upon inferable lack of success, was enlarged to contain all the trustees.⁷ Further confirmation comes the following year (1835) when the trustees refused aid to the Athenaeum and Delta Phi literary societies on the ground that the funds of the college were insufficient.⁸ In that same year, in the *United States Gazette*, published in Philadelphia, appeared the following notice, evidently with reference to President Gilbert, who was to resign within a few months:

The estimable president of the new college in the State of Delaware, is anxious to build up a library in his institution, not only of books immediately useful to the general reader, but also for volumes that are less generally esteemed. He would make it a repository for all works that seem to have lost their value to private owners, by the effect of time. The funds of the new college are sufficient only for the purpose of maintaining the professorships, and the library must therefore be left to the liberality of the public. Now as we have reason to believe that very many of our citizens have volumes not useful to themselves, which might go to fill the shelves of the Newark library, we take the liberty of requesting them to send to us, or allow us to send to them, for such books as they can conveniently spare, and we will see them carefully forwarded to the college.⁹

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

⁵ Trustees' Minutes, v. 1, p. 17.

⁶ *Catalogue*, 1837-8.

⁹ *United States Gazette*, Saturday, Feb. 14, 1835, p. 2, col. 1.

⁷ Trustees' Minutes, v. 1, p. 16-17.

⁸ *Ibid.*, v. 1, p. 36, p. 40.

The struggle for an adequate library was renewed by President Richard Sharpe Mason, immediately upon his accession, and persistently engaged in during his five years of office (1835-1840). He forthrightly sent the trustees a list of books he wanted, and was answered by a set of library rules; he then inquired how accrued library funds (more than sixty dollars) should be spent and was told it was a charge of the trustees—with faculty advice.¹⁰ Somehow, however, the *Valpy (Delphine) Latin Classics* got purchased that year (1837) for the sum of \$225; and thus the library secured one of its boasts for many years to come.¹¹ At about the same time, “a grant from Congress, through the agency of Thomas Clayton (Senator) of 21 volumes of folio state papers” was obtained,¹² later to become another item of note. It is interesting that both these acquisitions have survived the vicissitudes of time. The general status of the library is well illustrated in the half-candid statement, “The library, though not so large as in some older institutions, consists of choice and useful publications amounting to nearly 1000 volumes, and is continually increased from annual appropriations.”¹³ One cannot help feeling in terms of all that is known that the qualifying clause is the sounder part of this statement.

Still undiscouraged in his fight for a library, President Mason again petitioned the trustees in words that might reasonably have been repeated any time for a century to come:

The President respectfully presents to the attention of the Board the Library of the College as greatly needing enlargement. He believes that the standard of learning in a College depends much more than is generally supposed on the character of its Library. He would respectfully suggest whether it is not advisable to appropriate at once from the funds of the College for the increase of the Library such a Sum as may at once place it on a respectable footing or such annual amount as shall improve its condition if not rapidly regularly & surely.¹⁴

On this occasion President Mason was rewarded by having his recommendations referred to the executive committee. At this time, too, the faculty timidly joined to suggest their willingness to submit a list of such books as they considered most needed and the

¹⁰ Trustees' Minutes, v. 1, p. 50, p. 64.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, v. 1, p. 67.

¹² *Ibid.*, v. 1, p. 71. *Catalogue*, 1837-8, p. 14-15.

¹³ *Catalogue*, 1837-8, p. 14.

¹⁴ Trustees' Minutes, v. 1, p. 84.

professor of languages, more boldly, sent "a Statement of Books which might constitute a moderate and limited Apparatus for Instruction." This report was tabled.¹⁵

Nevertheless at this moment it looked as though quite substantial aid might arise from another source. In fact, it was a very close thing, and failure therefore no doubt occasioned the greater disappointment. On February 14, 1839, the Senate at Dover rejected the amendment passed by the House on February 11, directing the State Treasurer "to pay to the Trustees of Newark College the sum of \$5,000" from the lottery authorized in 1835, for "the purchase of a library for the said Newark College."¹⁶ So a great hope went fluttering.

In this crisis, after suffering two defeats, President Mason again dared to carry the library issue to the trustees. It is his greatest effort and marks his final overthrow. His solemn reasoned statement is still impressive:

It is believed that there are few Colleges in this country so meagerly provided in this respect as our own, and yet it is obvious no college can rise to a high degree of reputation with an inferior library, while the advantages of a good one are manifold. It acts in the first place on the public. The object of principal notice in a college to visitors [sic] is the library. If this be both extensive and well selected a favorable impression at once is produced. . . The father of at least one student removed from the College has alleged as the cause of this removal the inferiority of our Library. A good library in the next place acts on the student. There will be among the young men of a College some at least [notice the exquisitely tempered optimism here] disposed to resort to the highest and best sources of information, if such are accessible; the improvement of these will necessarily be influenced by the character of the books to which they can have resort, and their example will to a greater or less extent produce its effect on their fellow-students, and a tone be thus given to the literature and science of a college, which all the efforts of its professors, without so powerful an auxiliary might be unable to produce. But it is to the Professors a good library is of the most essential importance. In the sciences he undertakes to teach he should himself be continually improving. But improve he cannot unless supplied with the means of improvement. Besides . . . he must continually refer to the opinions of others, and institute

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, v. 1, p. 94.

¹⁶ University Archives, 1839.

comparisons in his review . . . but it must be evident this cannot be effectually done without an extensive library for reference, and with such a library it cannot be supposed his own means can supply him.

President Mason concluded by asking, for the library, "from a thousand at the least to two or three thousand dollars."¹⁷

Perhaps the conscience of the trustees was touched by the force of this plea. So, at any rate, one could interpret their setting up a faculty committee on the library and resolving that a committee of themselves "be appointed to select books annually."¹⁸

The 1840's and fifties might be described as a kind of coasting time in the history of the library. President Gilbert, on his return to office, called the library "inadequate,"¹⁹ but did not indulge in any Mason-like exhortations. Even so, he seems to have achieved more, for notations of expenditure—\$200.00, \$75.00, \$103.49—appear, no great sums but monies spent nevertheless; and with these went a small bustle of concomitant activity and apparently a glow of mild satisfaction. In 1841 James S. Bell was appointed librarian.²⁰ Two hundred volumes were set aside for the start of a separate Academy library. The possibilities of cataloguing and better preserving the books were considered. New cases were purchased. In a more responsible mood and friendly frame of mind the trustees were willing to concede that "large and liberal appropriations . . . will be necessary before the library will meet the needs of the institution"; and again, in a balanced view, that "all is in better shape but large additions are yet needed."²¹ By 1843 a printed *Catalogue of the Books Belonging to the Library of Delaware College* had been achieved.²²

At the end of 1854 John Addison Porter, tutor in mathematics, was appointed librarian. By 1853 there were about 7,000 volumes in the library, according to Powell, but this figure, which is re-

¹⁷ Trustees' Minutes, v. 1, p. 106-7.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, v. 1, p. 111.

¹⁹ L. P. Powell, *History of Education in Delaware*, p. 134.

²⁰ Trustees' Minutes, v. 1, p. 131.

²¹ *Ibid.*, v. 1, p. 126, 137.

²² A copy is in the University Library; of the 52 pages only 32 list books of the college; there is a page of "Rules for the government of the library" and a list of thirty-four subscribers of money; the remainder is the catalogue of the library of the academy divided between the old Sunday School books of edification and a *Family Library*, presumably the volumes set aside from the college.

ported in the catalogue for 1855-56,²³ is there interpreted as embracing all the book resources of the institution, i. e., the libraries of the college and the academy, together with those of the literary societies of the college and that of the Adelpian Literary Society of the academy. The total is not great, but it represents as large a collection as the college could muster at any time again before the mid-1890's.

In 1859 the college closed its doors on account of a financial embarrassment caused largely by the failure of its purchased scholarship plan. Confronted by the suspension (which lasted until 1871) the literary societies acted with rare prudence to preserve their property for a happier day. They inventoried their holdings, boxed them, bought bolts and locks and placed the keys with responsible persons. The college library, on the other hand, seems to have been abandoned rather than secured. As a result it suffered pillage over the years, and when the institution reopened, little remained except for a wilderness of documents, theology and superannuated science. Practically, the library's eclipse seems to have continued for a decade after the restoration of the college. Student charges were again levied and a few not very significant gifts were made.²⁴ The names of various persons appear processionally as librarians: J. N. Huston, 1872; O. B. Super, 1874; Theodore R. Wolf, 1877; William H. Purnell, 1879; Frederick D. Chester, 1882.

It is with Professor Chester's librarianship that a new beginning seems modestly to have been made. "The College Library has been greatly improved by the energy of the Librarian," noted the *Delaware College Review*.²⁵ "Several hundred volumes have been added . . . and altogether the Library presents rather a cozy and inviting appearance." Encouraged by such signs of life, the *Review* was soon asking editorially for a reading room. Apparently the faculty had been petitioned but had not responded. In seeming distinction from his torpid fellows, Professor Chester was praised as "our wise and efficient librarian." Somehow he procured a stove, table and chairs. It is in view of these accommodations that the *Review* can exclaim with enthusiasm, "Now many spare moments can be . . . spent among books that hitherto might al-

²³ P. 29.

²⁴ *Catalogue*, 1874, p. 34.

²⁵ Oct. 1882, p. 14.

most as well have been at the bottom of the sea." And further, "Formerly the library ought to have been open once a week. But now under the new management it is open four days out of five and oftener if requested by the students." Chester is "willing to make a few sacrifices" for the students.²⁶ In another number the tale of achievement continues: "The library will be found open almost any hour during the day. Many of the best papers . . . will be found . . . and also many college papers."²⁷

Evidently Professor Chester was a man of both energy and sense of responsibility—one is tempted to call him even a man of vision. Still all was not as it should be; evidently many of the students had not learned fit library conduct. "As all well-governed places have to have certain rules, our library has a few rules, all of which are necessary for the individual interest of those who desire to remain in the library, and should be observed rather than enforced."²⁸ What mysteries of careless behavior lie hidden under these words we shall not know. Nevertheless even President Purnell seems to have been encouraged; he noted that the library had never been in better state; in fact, he had felt the benefits of it in his own courses.²⁹ Chester's good work continued, and he was duly praised. The forward-looking *Review* now ventured to suggest the remodeling of the premises, and the housing of the books Professor Chester was classifying and President Purnell was buying, in memorial alcoves. By 1886, as a result of Professor Chester's alertness, the college catalogue³⁰ could claim for the library "several thousand volumes." That the problem of conduct had not been altogether solved is indicated by the further statement, "Students under strict regulations have daily access."

Now the faculty began to catch fire both in its sense of the library's need and in resolution to use it. Accordingly in 1887 a series of scientific lectures was promoted and the proceeds donated for the purchase of books on the scientific side. With this effort toward self-help President Caldwell seems not to have been altogether pleased.³¹ After 1891, however, money coming to the

²⁶ *Delaware College Review*, March, 1883, p. 52-53.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, April, 1883, p. 60.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ George Evans Papers, 8218.

³⁰ P. 35.

³¹ George Evans Papers, 8244.

college under the Morrill Act began to support the sciences. Ironically it was Professor Chester's distress (he was professor of agriculture) over the loss of scientific material in the new experiment station that led to his resignation of the librarianship in 1889. He was succeeded pro-tempore by Professor Charles S. Conwell.

On the side of the humanities it was Professor George A. Harter, as librarian and later as president, who by his personal interest was largely responsible for the library's progress in the 1890's. He has told us:

I came to Delaware College in September 1885. . . . The faculty at that time usually met in the library. The library occupied a room at the right of the entrance to the second story of what is now Old College. It was about fifteen feet square . . . with shelves on all sides reaching up to the ceiling. These shelves were mainly filled with reports of the various departments of the national government. There were a few books of science and engineering, a very few of history and biography, a good collection of the Latin classics; but an entire absence of books of literary value. These books usually contained the label "Newark College Library." As the title "Newark College" was changed to "Delaware College" in 1843, these books were seemingly bought in the early years of the college.³²

Further he said:

In 1892, at the request of the students, I opened the Library one afternoon a week and it was painful to offer to the students seeking information such meagre equipment as the Library possessed.³³

To assuage this pain Dr. Harter persuaded President Raub to let him purchase about two hundred volumes in the field of the humanities, President Raub's own field. However, since these were placed in the president's office, where they became a kind of cache for faculty use, their benefit to the general community was pretty effectually lessened.³⁴ But Dr. Harter was unforgetting; consequently after 1896 when he became president, he allowed the library a thousand dollars a year for books. Under the librarianship of Professor William H. Bishop and with the active assistance of Edward

³² G. A. Harter, *Statement Concerning the History of the University of Delaware Library*, 1932.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

N. Vollandigham, professor of the English language and literature, books were wisely selected. The accessions books for those years demonstrate the effort that was consistently being made to repair the omissions of the past. Shakespeare, the Elizabethan dramatists, Cervantes, Molière, Thackeray, Trollope, George Eliot, Meredith, the new Kipling and James M. Barrie are representative names among those purchased.

Accordingly, it is not surprising that the library, riding an unprecedented but tiny tide of prosperity and fostering care, should quickly have outgrown the north room on the second floor of Recitation Hall to which it had been removed in 1896. The attic of that building was added to its domain, and there the first essays at a card catalogue were made. In 1898 the Library added a thousand volumes during the year to achieve ten thousand and so definitely to better the standing from which it had fallen away a generation before.³⁵ Unhappily this cheerful picture was marred by "intolerable robberies" so that the library "formerly crowded from noon to dewy eve" was shut up except for two hours daily, 1 to 3 P. M., as a safeguard against future depredations.³⁶

After Professor Bishop, Professor Edgar Dawson and Professor Vollandigham in turn presided as librarian before Professor Wilbur O. Sypherd assumed the charge in 1906, which he kept until 1921. Professor Sypherd, more fortunate than his predecessors, was able in 1909 to carry the Library out of Recitation Hall into the John Watson Evans House (now Purnell Hall), the first building on the campus dedicated wholly to library use. Even so, documents taken from hiding places in Old College had to be stored away afresh in the top of Recitation Hall. Also, Professor Sypherd had the advantage of deputies: Miss Mary Kerr who presided in "the new library" from 8:45 A. M. to 10 P. M., and two student helpers. The success of the new arrangement was signalized by the use of the library by 546 men during the September to January term; or an average of about 15 visitors per day.³⁷

In 1916 the college library was moved to the building on the southeast corner of Main Street and Depot Road (College Avenue) known variously as the Johnson Building and the Delaware House.

³⁵ *Catalogue*, 1897-8, p. 59.

³⁶ *Delaware College Review*, Nov. 1902, p. 11-12.

³⁷ W. O. Sypherd, Report on the Library, Jan. 23, 1911.

Under one name it had housed the printing plant of Everett C. Johnson, trustee of the college and proprietor of the Kells Press; under the other and earlier name it had served as gin shop and caravansary and had entertained, among others, E. A. Poe on his whilom visit here. It had descended from inn to tin shop to livery stable and for it in its last stage no good word was ever spoken: "gloomy spectacle," "eyesore," "almost a disgrace" were among the epithets. Miss Dorothy Hawkins, our first professional librarian, who succeeded Dr. Sypherd in 1921, described it as "poorly planned for library use," adding: "The danger of losing the entire collection by fire was always threatening, and the walls and floors were not properly reinforced to support a load of more than thirty thousand books."³⁸

Meanwhile the old literary societies, which had done such good service in the life of the college, had perished: the Athenaeum in 1914; Delta Phi in 1916. The rise of fraternities and the growth of athletics had done for them. The time had arrived when Dr. Sypherd's fine tribute to them could be merely historical, a swan song:

Whatever reading went on was done in the rooms of the Athenaeum and Delta Phi Literary Societies. To those societies we owe much; within their walls, many of us made our first acquaintance with good books.³⁹

Not again, however, as in 1859, did they carefully preserve their collections. This time they went into the quiet of the Evans barn, to molder there until 1923. In their hiding they were joining several thousand other books from the college library stored away in the attic of Wolf Hall and other campus crannies.

In 1914, with the foundation of the Women's College, another library began to gather at the south end of the campus. For it Dr. G. N. Twitmyer's library of education and psychology, a gift, formed the nucleus. In its short term of being it grew to more than five thousand volumes, with a subscription list of more than seventy-five periodicals. In several ways it was fortunate: in its pleasant room on the second floor of Science (Robinson) Hall, fur-

³⁸ D. L. Hawkins, "The New University Library," *Equitable Trust Monthly*, v. 5, no. 11, June, 1925.

³⁹ W. O. Sypherd, "Why the University Library is Needed," *Alumni News*, Sept. 1922, p. 16.

nished from the beginning with a card catalogue; in its browsing room given by friends; in its trained librarian and its inter-library borrowing arrangement with the Wilmington Institute. Inevitably, however, its destiny was to draw it toward the larger library a half mile away. The needs of the two were common, duplications would have been wantonly wasteful and in any case financially impossible. Accordingly, began the rapprochement, sometimes painful, which was completed in 1925 in the bringing together of all the book resources of the university in the new central building at half way point between the twin colleges already united since 1921, by title at least, in a common university.

As early as 1918 relief of the university's mounting library crisis was suggested through a University War Memorial.⁴⁰ But it was not until four years later, two years after the initiation of President Hullihen's administration, that the dramatic plan for a State War Memorial to do the library's business was unveiled. This revelation was made in the *Alumni News* for September, 1922.

The library [wrote Dr. Hullihen] the most fundamental of all the elements entering into the making of a University, has been sorely neglected. . . . We now find ourselves in a position where effective teaching, research, productive activity, and high scholarship are all seriously impeded by this deficiency.

A plan clear and challenging had been prepared. There would be a drive, state-wide, October 20 to 27, 1922, for \$300,000: \$230,000 for the building; \$20,000 for books; and \$50,000 for endowment. It would be a "colossal undertaking," but as a "living memorial to the sons of Delaware who fell in the Great War" the appeal could not fail. Delaware had exceeded its quota for every purpose put to it during the war; it would not fail to memorialize its 262 dead in a building "useful as well as beautiful, a place in which the soul will be ennobled and the mind enlarged."⁴¹ By the generosity of a trustee and a graduate the expense of engaging a firm of fund-raising specialists had been entirely underwritten. Appeals were carefully planned: "Every citizen will want the privilege of having some part"; "the glory of Delaware must not be tarnished by ingratitude." Fraternal orders and civic groups were enlisted; the clergy

⁴⁰ W. J. Robinson, "History of the Women's College of the University of Delaware," *Delaware Notes*, 1947, p. 63.

⁴¹ *Library and War Memorial Campaign*, University of Delaware, 1922.

and the schools were addressed. Honor rolls for the schools to bear the autographs of nickel-subscribing children, "the younger brothers and sisters of them to whom the building will be erected," were distributed. The worker in the plant, the banker at his desk and the citizen at home were alike to be approached. Events were ordered from the great dinner in the Hotel DuPont to a children's rally on Dover Green. Would people give a dollar a month for twenty months? Would each alumnus or alumna give five dollars a month? One hundred per-cent alumni-alumnae participation was implored.

The campaign was brief, energetic and, one gathers, rather hectic toward its close. If it did not succeed magnificently neither did it fail. A few large subscriptions rather than many small ones saved the day; in Wilmington, outside the school children, not many more than 1,500 subscribed. Nevertheless, Delaware secured its library, not quite the library Day and Klauder, distinguished Philadelphia architects, had first sketched, low, Italianate, with a six-pillared front and an interesting cupola, but one quite satisfactory, growing out of the meadow sod, quite lonely there and seemingly impossibly vast.⁴²

In 1925 the building was dedicated with appropriate pomp, civic and military, and some 40,000 volumes were moved into it. By 1926 there were 50,000 volumes. The library had its new house but had not found Utopia. Miss Hawkins praised the "light and airy basement [where] are located the main collection and book stacks"—she who had feared fire in the Delaware House did not foresee the flooded stack of 1937! The seminars in the west wing were used as faculty offices and created difficult problems. The famous rule for the segregation of the sexes was promulgated "as an unwritten law" but was difficult of enforcement. In fact, student behavior was often untoward, in keeping with the mood of the roaring '20s. The problem of smoking admitted of no easy answer, nor did the "flapper menace," noise and vandalism. Large matters, such as the adjustment of claims and practices between the coordinate colleges and of allocations between departments, proved even more refractory. Some very promising suggestions, such as that for using the library as a place for cultural talks and that of merging the collection of the Historical Society of Delaware with that of the university, were unhappily lost in the whirlpool.

⁴² There is a large collection of the material of this campaign in the University Library—pamphlets, broadsides, letters of appeal.

After its first spread in the new building the library was presently reduced to an annual book budget of from \$500 to \$600 and it was dissatisfaction with this stringency that led to Miss Hawkins' resignation. Then followed a rapid succession of librarians: Donald Coney, 1927; Elliot Moses, 1928; William D. Lewis, 1930. By this time the library had been put on an annual allowance of \$3600 for new books and periodicals, an amount that continued unchanged, except for diminution to a mere \$2400 in 1942, until 1947. The library participated in the Centenary of the college in 1934 with an exhibition and was rewarded by the acquisition of some Delawareana and other memorabilia, plus about \$1500. The Carnegie, Trebor and DuPont gifts helped at about this time.

The cloudburst which descended upon Newark, July 5, 1937, inundated the basement book-stack to a depth of twelve inches. The low-lying situation of the building assisted by the naturally humid climate had long since given rise to the problem of mold, which had been answered by a variety of tiresome expedients. But now disaster struck in unmistakable fashion. Thousands of books were literally snatched from before the rising waters and thousands more emerged in a sodden condition as the flood subsided. Presently these books were drying in the upper rooms or spread to sun upon the steps of the south porch and upon the contiguous lawns. Some 1500 of the worst-damaged volumes were sent off to Philadelphia for drying and rebinding at no small expense.

It was largely owing to the lesson of the flood that the new additions to the building came so rapidly. The friends of the library now had a talking point: there must be a new stack above ground. The University Survey Commission in 1938 added the weight of its voice; Mr. H. Fletcher Brown made generous gifts; there was federal money available; and the architect, Charles Z. Klauder, sensitive to criticism of the building, made his own gift of the new plans, approved, so the story runs, just the day before his death. In 1939 the enlarged building was occupied—not only more sightly and of greater seating capacity with its reading-room expansions, but generally better adapted for library purposes. In 1941, the advent of the Second World War, which curtailed all university activities, resulted in the closing of part of the building through 1942. Later the flood of post-war students speedily filled it with such life and activity as it had never known and such as perhaps its most sanguine friends had never dreamed of; and this

activity continues today, even amid shiftings in the student body, with ever increasing impetus. In keeping, improvements have kept pace: in 1945, the new circulation desk and catalogue; in 1946, the Evans gift in memory of President Raub; in 1947, the opening and dedication of a room to house the Christopher Ward Collection, the increase of the annual book and periodical budget to \$16,000, and the refitting of the reading-rooms with fluorescent lamps where formerly the lighting had been up to only one sixth of standard specification; in 1948, the granting of a \$20,000 annual book budget; in 1949, the enactment by the trustees of a resolution making the library custodian of all books, papers and documents belonging to the university; in 1951, the adoption of a unitary book budget in accord with the usage in most colleges and universities; in 1952, the establishment of the Friends of the University Library as an organization dedicated to assisting the library in securing further resources, especially such as would ordinarily be beyond its means. By 1953 the staff numbered twenty full-time persons of whom seven are professionally trained librarians.

As of the year 1952-53 the university library has achieved a collection of more than 180,000 (without resort to counting duplicates) and is growing at a rate of well better than 10,000 volumes per year. It subscribes to almost 800 periodical publications, of which approximately 80 per cent are of a specialized sort. It is spending more on books and periodicals than most colleges, and is about in pace with state universities in the states of small population and of a like degree of instructional development. On the other hand, the shadow of its past still lies over it. That past witnessed the endeavor and faith of men like Mason, Chester, Bishop, Harter, Vallandigham and Sypherd. The library has suffered from incomprehension, indifference and slackness on the part of trustees, faculty and students; almost always, too, it has lacked means; it has endured relative disasters attendant upon the suspension of the college, the syncope of wars, the hurts of theft, flood and general decay. One might hope that after such scant and difficult beginnings, so long continued, though not really very different from the progress of the college and university as a whole, the library has at last emerged into a permanent sunlight of prosperity and esteem. Delaware is the kind of state, rich in tradition and full of respect for its own culture and the heritage of the western world, where the State University library ought not to be mediocre but highly dis-

tinguished. Certainly today every enlistment of public support and private beneficence is being sought on its behalf. Its proper future should be to become the largest, the richest, the most varied, the most accessible collection of books in the State of Delaware. As this status grows to achievement the library speaks in increasing measure for itself out of the service of its usefulness; friends it will always need, but there will be little chance again of its slipping into inconspicuousness and mediocrity. The energetic prosecution of its advance for another decade should put it respectably in that place of security and distinction.