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Nebraska Library Commission



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FOURTH BIENNIAL REPORT

OF THE

NEBRASKA PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMISSION

F. L. HALLER, PRESIDENT,
Omaha Public Library.

E. BENJAMIN ANDREWS,
Chancellor of the University of Nebraska.

J. L. MCBRIEN,
State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

H. C. LINDSAY,
State Librarian.

DR. WALTER K. JEWETT,
Librarian of the University of Nebraska.

CHARLOTTE TEMPLETON, SECRETARY.

GUESS HUMPHREY, LIBRARIAN.

LINCOLN, NOVEMBER 30, 1908.

NEBRASKA PUBLICATIONS
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NEBRASKA LIBRARY COMMISSION
LINCOLN, NEBRASKA 68508

Letter of Transmittal.

Omaha, November 30, 1908.

To His Excellency, George L. Sheldon, Governor of Nebraska:

Complying with the requirement of the law, I have the honor to present herewith the report of the Secretary of the Public Library Commission on the activities of the Commission and on the library conditions and progress in Nebraska for the two years ending Nov. 30, 1908.

Very respectfully yours,

F. L. HALLER,

President.

The Commission.

At the annual meeting of the Commission, held April 13, 1907, F. L. Haller, of Omaha, was re-elected president and Miss Templeton was reappointed secretary. Miss Humphrey's title was changed from that of assistant-secretary to that of librarian. The same officers were re-elected at the annual meeting of 1908.

The secretary has represented the Commission at the meetings of the American Library Association at Asheville, N. C., in 1907, and at Lake Minnetonka in 1908, and at the meeting of the League of Library Commissions held in Chicago in January, 1908. The president also attended the Lake Minnetonka meeting of the A. L. A.

Public Libraries.

A number of new libraries have been established during the biennium. At Aurora, Chadron, Genoa, Madison, North Bend and Randolph libraries have been started by library associations and are maintained free to the public. Subscription libraries have been started at Hardy, Decatur, and Nelson. At Plainview a free public library was established and a levy made for its support. The business men of Bloomfield maintain a free public reading room equipped with all the best papers and magazines. The libraries at Sutton, Louisville, Norfolk, Pawnee City, Shelton, and Superior, established by library associations, have all been made free public libraries, supported by a town tax.

The growth of the public library movement is encouraging. There are now only five towns in Nebraska with a population of over 2000 which are without public libraries. These are Auburn, Alliance, North Platte, Schuyler, and Wahoo. North Platte is not without library facilities, however, having an excellent Y. M. C. A. library. There are twenty-five towns with a population of under 1000 which have public libraries.

The administration of the libraries is improving all the time. The idea seems to be gaining ground that the library is not a charitable institution to provide a living for some incompetent person, who is not able to do any thing else, but that it is an educational institution to be administered by the person best qualified to do the work. The standard of qualifications is constantly being raised. Ten years ago there were, perhaps, three librarians in the state who had had technical training. We now have fifteen librarians who are graduates of library schools, and thirteen who have taken summer school courses, while fifteen have taken the correspondence course given by the Commission.

Many libraries have availed themselves of the services of the Commission in organizing according to the best methods. The new libraries at Aurora, Geneva, and Sutton were organized by the Commission before they were open to the public. At Ashland, Columbus, Fairbury, Holdrege, Humboldt, and Wccd River assistance has been given in classi-

fyng and cataloging the books. Visits were made by the secretary to forty-two of the libraries of the state for the purpose of finding out the library conditions and of giving help to the librarians. A great many letters have been written as to the best methods of organizing and carrying on the affairs of the library. Advice has also been given in the matter of library architecture, suggestive plans have been furnished and architects' plans criticized.

Buildings.

This has been a period of unusual activity in the building of libraries. During the biennium there have been completed handsome buildings in Albion, DeWitt, Havelock, Holdrege, McCook, Pawnee City, and Tecumseh, and buildings are under construction in Fairbury, Lincoln, Norfolk, and Superior. These are all the gift of Mr. Andrew Carnegie and represent a total cost of \$83,000.00. In addition, he has given \$20,000.00 to Hastings College for a library and science hall. Adding the gifts of the past two years to the gifts of former years, we find ourselves indebted to Mr. Carnegie for buildings valued at \$309,800.00.

Correspondence Course for Librarians.

It occurred to us that the easiest and cheapest way of improving the administration in the small library might be in the form of a correspondence course. Although our library friends told us that library methods could not be taught except by personal instruction, we were willing to try it, and arranged twenty lessons covering the essential points of library economy, adapted to the needs of the small library. With each lesson assignments are made, the work to be sent in to our office for revision. There is, of course, no fee, and the cost of supplies, which is small, is the only expense to the librarian. The plan works admirably; the librarians are doing the work very intelligently, and library administration is being much improved, under our direction, but with slight expenditure of time and energy on our part.

Periodical Exchange.

The Commission maintains a periodical exchange for the public libraries of the state. Libraries and individuals send in magazines which they do not want. These are sorted and are sent free to libraries to fill gaps in their files. During the biennium we have sent out 174 complete volumes and 1291 single numbers.

Traveling Libraries.

During the biennium we have added seven libraries of forty volumes each to our collection of traveling libraries, making 113 libraries altogether. These have been sent out 432 times to 196 different places. The map appended will show how widely these are distributed over the state.

Two years ago the Bohemians of the state asked that books in their own tongue might be added to the traveling library system. The limited funds of the Commission made it impossible to grant their request and the Bohemians took up the matter for themselves. They raised enough money by subscription to purchase about 700 volumes which they presented to the state. Part of these were reserved for a reference collection and have been well used by the students in the Bohemian department of the State University. Of the rest, twenty-one traveling libraries were made up, consisting of thirty volumes each and the demand for these has already exhausted the supply. The great popularity of these libraries makes us wish that our German and Swedish citizens might be served in the same way.

Special Loans.

The secretary is convinced more and more, as she studies the conditions which obtain in Nebraska, that one of the best fields for the Commission is in reference work. Outside of Omaha and Lincoln, there are almost no book collections for the special student and it will be a great many years before his needs can be met by local libraries. Then, too, in an agricultural state like Nebraska, towns are small and scattered and most people do not have even a small local library to draw upon. Where is the student to turn for material on a subject on which he wishes information? It seems that the natural place is a library owned by the state for the use of all its citizens, and we have assumed this work. Requests come in to us with increasing frequency from teachers, club women, high school debaters and students in all lines. We could, with little effort, develop this work tremendously and keep an expert reference librarian constantly busy with it alone. As it is, we have sent out 2789 volumes to 388 places in the past two years; more than double our record for the last biennium. Our own collection of books is quite inadequate for this work, but the other libraries of Lincoln generously lend us their books to be used in this way. No work is better worth the doing than this for here we are meeting the definite needs of the people, and it is a field capable of indefinite extension.

School Libraries.

It has always been the policy of the Commission to work through the schools since there is no other channel through which we can reach so nearly all the people of the state. Many of our traveling libraries are in rural schools; advice is often given by the commission concerning the selection and care of books in school libraries; and talks have been given to the teachers at county institutes, junior normals, and teachers' associations. During the last summer definite instruction was given in book selection and the care of books in six different county institutes under the general direction of the Commission.

When the last legislature passed a school library law providing that the district should spend a certain amount annually for books other than text books, but making no provision for their selection, it seemed wise that the Commission should print at its expense a suggestive list of books for the school library in order to guide the purchase as much as possible in right directions. An edition of 10,000 was printed at a cost of over \$300.00 and copies have been freely distributed to the teachers of the state. There is evidence that considerable buying has been done from the list, but unfortunately there is also evidence of a great deal of unwise and extravagant buying. Definite provision should be made by law for the selection of books for the school library and arrangements made for the compilation and printing of a list to be used for that purpose.

Nebraska Library Association.

During the biennium there have been three meetings of the State Library Association owing to a change in the time of meeting from December to October. In December, 1906, a meeting was held in Lincoln; in October, 1907, a joint meeting with the Iowa Library Association was held at Omaha, South Omaha, and Council Bluffs; in October, 1908, the meeting was held at Hastings. In no other way is the growth of the library movement more evident than in the attendance at the annual meetings of the State Association. At Hastings twenty-five libraries were represented, the librarians traveling from all parts of the state to attend. The interest in these meetings is keen; new and better methods of work are eagerly sought, and the enthusiasm displayed is boundless. When one considers that the librarians of the state get almost nothing in the way of salaries; that they come to the meetings at an expense often equal to a month's salary, in order that they may still better administer the affairs of the libraries to which they are practically giving their services, one comes to realize something of the meaning of the oft-quoted term "library spirit" which seems synonymous with disinterested and devoted service.

Lincoln Library Club.

In the fall of 1907 a club was organized to bring together all the persons engaged in library work in and about the city of Lincoln, for a closer acquaintance and a wider knowledge of each others' fields. The club now has a membership of about thirty, representing eight libraries of widely different character. Meetings are held once a month and topics of professional interest are discussed.

Library Legislation Needed in Nebraska.

Higher Maximum Tax for Public Libraries.

We are just coming to realize the place which the public library should have in our educational system and to see that it should have

the same sort of support which the public school does. The two mill levy which is now the maximum library levy is not enough in our smaller towns to support a library which will fulfill all the requirements of the modern library. Other states have found this same thing true, and our neighboring states, with conditions similar to ours, have found it necessary to raise the levy for small towns. Iowa in 1906, passed a law allowing cities or towns with a population of 6000 or less to levy a tax of 3 mills on the dollar for the support of the public library. Kansas also found it necessary to raise the limit and in 1905 passed a law allowing a 3 mill levy in cities of the third and second class.

Selection of Books for School Libraries.

Mention has already been made of the unsatisfactory state of the school library law. This provides that every district shall set aside annually for the purchase of books other than text books, a sum made up at the rate of ten cents for every child of school age in the district. The law is all right as far as it goes, but it should go farther and specify how these books are to be selected. All other states having school library laws make some such provision. As it is now the selection is left to the directors, who know nothing of children's books and still less of the business side of book buying. They are at the mercy of the book-agent—and this sort of book buying is the most unsatisfactory and expensive method known—or they order by title from the catalog of a mail order house, getting cheap binding, poor paper and mutilated texts. There has been found but one satisfactory method and that is a provision by law compelling the districts to buy from an authorized list, carefully compiled by someone who knows, not only children's books, but something of the subject of book buying, and who is in a position to get advantageous prices for the schools. In some states this list is printed annually by the state superintendent of public instruction, and in some is compiled by the state library commission. The benefits of such a law are, of course, obvious: it gives the school the benefit of expert knowledge of books, and insures them of getting the best returns for the money expended.

Country Extension of Library Privileges.

What we need more than anything else in library legislation is some law which will permit the extension of library privileges to persons living beyond town limits; a law which will allow contracts to be made between town, township or county officers and library boards, whereby, for a consideration agreed upon, the residents of the town, township, or county are given full privileges of the library. Several of our western states have passed such laws recently. The Minnesota law is particularly good, reading as follows: "And the board of directors in the chapter provided for, shall have the power to admit to

the benefit of such library persons not residing within the corporate limits of the city or village, under such regulations and conditions as it may prescribe. Said board may also contract with the board of county commissioners of the county in which the library is situated or of adjacent counties, with the village trustees or governing body of any neighboring town, city, or village, to loan books of said library either singly or in traveling libraries to the residents of said county, town, or village upon such terms as shall be agreed upon in such contract. All such boards or officers are hereby empowered to make contracts for such purposes and to pay the consideration agreed upon out of the county, town or village treasury." The Wisconsin law goes a step further and allows the library board to make contracts with district school boards.

To sum up then, we should have:

1. A law allowing small towns to levy annually 3 mills on the dollar for the support of the public library.
2. Provision made in the school library law for the selection of books from an authorized list.
3. A law allowing a library to extend its privileges to persons residing outside the corporate limits for a proper consideration.

Summary of Statistics, Nov. 30, 1906- Nov. 30, 1908.

Books added in biennium:

By gift	1042
By purchase	906
	<hr/>
	1948

Total number of books accessioned to date.....	7501
Total number of books withdrawn to date.....	417
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Total number of volumes now in library.....	7084

Traveling libraries:

English	113
Bohemian	21
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Total	134

Number of traveling libraries sent out in biennium.....	432
Number of places to which libraries were sent.....	196

Special loans:

Number of volumes sent out in biennium.....	2789
Number of places to which books were sent.....	388

Periodical exchange:

Number of complete volumes sent out in biennium.....	174
Number of single numbers sent out.....	1291

Expenditures, Nov. 30, 1906- Nov. 30, 1908.

Secretary	\$2333.34
Librarian	1366.67
Books	823.73
Travel	410.46
Printing	520.04
Binding	319.70
Office	981.44
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Total	\$6755.38

PUBLIC LIBRARIES OF NEBRASKA

PLACE	POP.	Year est.	INCOME			EXPENDITURES			No. of Vols.	No. of borrowers	Circulation for Past Year	LIBRARIAN
			TAX	Other Sources	TOTAL	Salaries	Books	Other Expenses				
Albion	1369	1900	\$ 694.63	\$ 23.50	\$ 718.13	\$ 250.00	\$ 121.84	\$ 116.80	1550	450	3500	Mrs. Jennie Graden
Ashland	1477	1902	108.65	58.00	166.65	65.00	20.00	25.65	1024	500	3031	Elizabeth Scott
*Aurora	1921	1908		265.00	265.00		200.00		900	400		Lillian Moore
Beatrice	7875	1893	2229.75	478.76	2708.51	1,210.45	537.70	962.36	10545	3000	31840	Florence Smith
**Blair	2970	1880							1200			
Bloomfield	678											
Carroll	252	1906	100.00	3.06	103.06	25.00	65.00	25.00	375	150	3500	Mrs. L. G. Crosby
Central City	1571	1882	100.00	100.00	200.00	144.00	157.29	23.37	1417	821	6452	Mrs. J. H. Melick
*Chadron	1665	1908							550	111		Margaret Anderson
aCollege View	865				100.00				400			Mrs. Eliz. Smith
Columbus	3522	1901	897.49		897.49	415.00	124.81	411.32	2406	1568	8237	Mrs. Libbie Collins
Crete	2199	1878	354.25		354.25	126.00	115.91		3275		14000	Fanny Geer
David City	1845	1901	413.05	18.00	431.05	74.00	340.42	42.30	3100	391	7158	Margaret Dick
**Decatur	800	1908		154.00	154.00				85	30		May McCoy
DeWitt	662	1902	350.00		350.00	50.00	200.00	100.00	1000	200	2600	Edith Gentz
Douglas	253	1901			20.00				140			Marie Carmichael
aEdgar	1040								650			Mrs. H. C. Walker
Fairbury	3140	1900							2634	786	12619	Mrs. W. W. Watson
**Fairfield	1203	1905		163.99	163.99		57.83	69.40	708	88	1408	
Falls City	3022	1902	1723.47	149.57	1873.04	382.00	344.42	676.12	4037	726	19444	Lois Spencer
Freomont	7241	1901	1500.00	491.19	1991.19	1010.60	527.44	389.37	5738	2000	29135	Marian Parker
Geneva	1534	1907	521.00	310.60	831.60	240.00	118.00	393.00	1975	613	6020	Nellie Williams
*Genoa	913	1907		496.20	496.20	84.00	368.79	12.00	425	112	2807	Grace Willard
Grand Island	7554	1887	2000.00		2000.00	1000.00	200.00	800.00	10000	1650	23800	F. Cunningham
**Hardy	345	1907					50.00	30.00	300	25		
Hastings	7188	1904	1525.69	166.28	1691.97	856.67	409.85	556.53	4221	2261	21996	Emma Nowlan
Havelock	1480	1907	600.00	113.00	713.00	469.00	82.26	205.00	1050	575	9493	Clara Howard

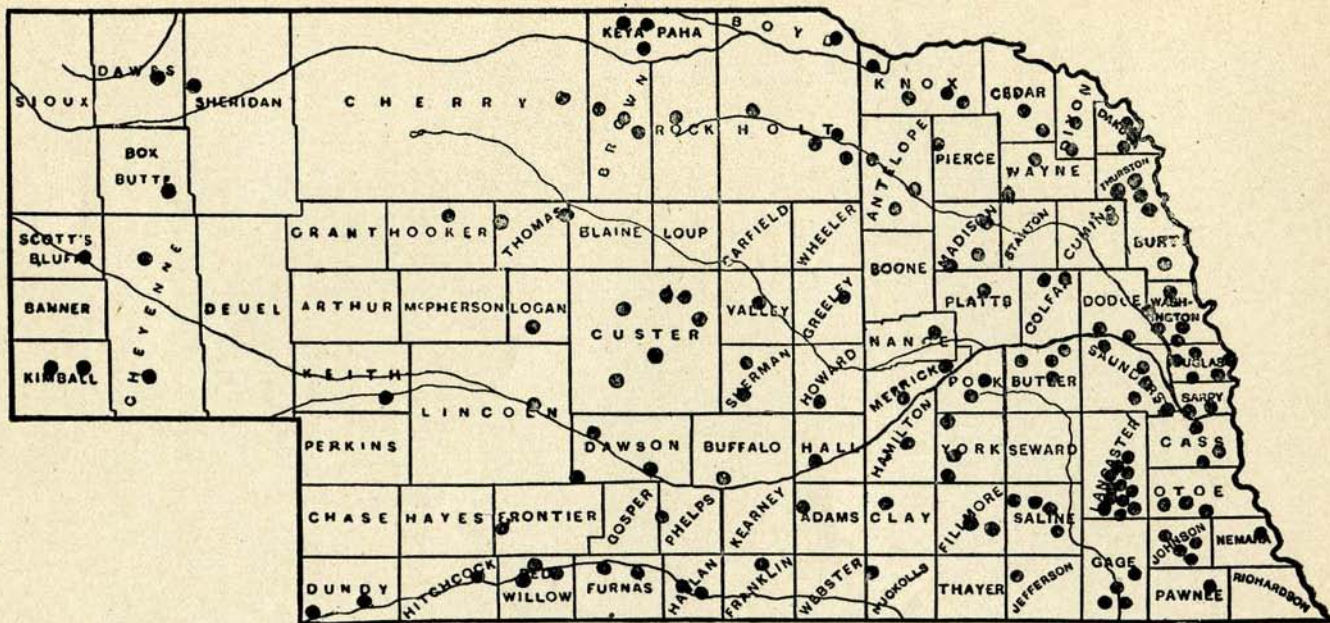
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			TAX	Other Sources	TOTAL	Salaries	Books	Other Expenses				
Holdrege	3007	1895	\$1050.00		\$1050.00	\$ 440.00	\$ 435.00	\$ 117.00	2000	1021	6794	Mrs. H. E. Bush
Humboldt	1218	1890	490.00	10.00	500.00	190.00	260.00	40.00	4000	382	5000	Mrs. C. Crawford
Kearney	5634	1890		60.00		750.00		300.00	6542	2338	23710	Mrs. Pauline Frank
Lincoln	40169	1875	9459.50	1071.46	10530.96	3339.01	3389.06	2866.59	23162	9032	137866	E. Joanna Hagey
Louisville	738	1901				36.00	25.00		350	139		Mrs. S. Mc Leran
McCook	2445	1902	670.14	72.23	742.37	331.05	373.69	37.73	3354	3549	10648	Carrie Budlong
*Madison	1479	1907		441.25	441.25	35.00	73.56	21.40	268	274		Mrs. B. Brannian
*Minden	*1238	1907		275.19	275.19	45.00	91.54		1124	800	8500	Mrs. Helen Slusser
Nebraska City	7380	1906	1469.20	83.65	1852.85	437.50	306.28	462.90	5476	969		Mrs. M. S. Cornutt
Neligh	1135	1904	300.00		300.00	90.00	115.00	15.00	1250	610	5790	Mrs. Carrie Jones
**Nelson	978	1908							531	119		Mrs. H. Thomas
**Norfolk	3883	1906				75.00	100.00	90.00	820	83	2524	Miss V. Mason
*North Bend	1010	1908					125.00		445	226		Hazel Armstead
Omaha	102555	1877	18800.43	1376.85	20177.28	12078.80	4488.00	3646.94	77233	12800	228414	Edith Tobitt
aOrchard	180								350			
*Osceola	882								350			G. T. Ray
Pawnee City	1969	1904	580.00	65.00	645.00	360.00	135.22	122.00	1117	856	11279	May Edwards
Pender	943	1904	75.00		75.00	15.00	60.00		600	125		Olinda Wachter
Plainview	603	1908			324.77	20.00	124.92	8.83	504	173	Mar 1-May 31 1915	Jessie Holley
Plattsmouth	4964	1886	350.00	160.00	510.00	350.00	40.00	120.00	4309	1308	10484	live Jones
aPleasanton	103								220			
*Randolph	850								800	75		Mrs. C. B. Willey
Scribner	871	1900	171.50		171.50	125.00			1013	281	2036	Helen Inches
Seward	1970	1890	390.58	33.61	424.19	137.87	189.98	75.36	2405	825	7525	Dorothy Atwater
Shelton	861		500.00			57.73	42.04	77.05	1557	258		Jessie Smith
So. Omaha	26001	1904	5000.00		5000.00	2015.00	1122.78	1272.01	6763	2693	42314	Mrs. Grace Pinnell
Stanton	1052	1888				60.00	75.00	10.00	1400		2000	Mrs. Sigworth

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			TAX	Other Sources	TOTAL	Salaries	Books	Other Expenses				
Sterling	782		\$280.00		\$ 97.00	\$ 54.20	\$ 26.00		524	139		Mrs. Rhoda Rice
Superior	1577	1884							3000	150		Mrs. Lucy Conn
Sutton	1365	1908							800	225		Sylvia Creswell
Syracuse	861								1341	256	2114	Ora Diener
Talmage	489	1904			150.00	40.00	21.95	71.00	696	250	2019	Maude Everett
Tecumseh	2005	1887	790.00	63.0		201.54	150.54	383.67	1653		3510	Mary Appelget
Valley	534	1902				52.00			220			
Wakefield	755	1902	125.00		125.00	55.00	51.24	9.36	850	527	3042	Mrs. Alice Witsman
Waterloo	304	1904							225			
Wayne	2119	1903		98.00		40.00			1482	800		Mrs. Eva Davies
Wisner	963	1903	222.31	14.50	236.86	87.14	56.06	9.37	967	328		Jessie Kay
Wood River	589	1906	150.00	229.36	379.36	27.00	78.54	59.40	710	330	4106	Grace E. Brown
York	5132	1894	1365.00	102.59	1467.59	568.00	365.93	533.06	4597	1423	14915	Estella Detrick

*Association library, free; **Subscription library; a no report received.



TRAVELING LIBRARY STATIONS, 1906-1908