

"North Carolina Public Library Reference Services And The State Library"

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Reference work as we know it today is a comparatively new thing; librarians have been helping readers locate materials in one way or another ever since there have been libraries but not the way we do it. There was no mention of reader's assistance or reference work as late as 1853 when the Conference of Librarians assembled in New York City. But when the first Conference of the American Library Association met in 1876, the librarian of the Worcester Free Public Library, Samuel Green, presented a paper arguing that librarians should begin to establish a closer relationship between themselves and their readers — a more personal contact — in order to give better individual service to the people who used their libraries. His ideas were adapted by others in the library profession and from then on, very slowly, evolved our modern reference services.

Reference work has many definitions. It has been defined as "personal assistance given by the librarian to individual readers in pursuit of information" or simply finding information somebody has asked for. There is a theory that reference work cannot be taught because it is actually an art, and just as in painting or in music, some people have a natural talent for it. True or not, a good reference librarian must know where to go for information in every part of the library and out of it.

At the State Library, North Carolina has one of the best Genealogy Research Collections in the Southeastern United States. Mrs. Margaret Price, a specialist in genealogical research, maintains the collection and answers all genealogy reference questions we receive by mail or by telephone or by the people who come to the library. Answers to telephone and mail requests have to be limited to a cursory search for

information because of the nature of this type of research. You can't trace a family history while a patron waits on the telephone and you should not be expected to give a complete answer by letter to a question which may take months of research. Some people, many of them from other states, come to Raleigh and spend their entire vacations doing genealogical research in the State Library and Archives. The summer months are Mrs. Price's busiest of the whole year.

This collection is made up of printed genealogical materials predominately of the Southern States, strong in North Carolina family and county histories. Original records in manuscript form are preserved by the State Department of Archives and History — but these records are only for North Carolina counties. We also have microfilm of all the available U. S. Census records from 1790 to 1880 for 23 Eastern Seaboard States.

None of the genealogy collection, including microfilm, is available for interlibrary loan — standard procedures for most libraries — but anyone is welcome to come to the library to use the material and services provided for their research.

The State Library is a selective depository for federal documents and the official depository for all North Carolina state documents — that is, the *Official* publications of all the state agencies. Mrs. Josephine Walker and her staff are responsible for providing information requested by other state agencies and for legislators every two years when the legislature is in session in Raleigh. Very often this includes making bibliographies of current documents on a particular subject — like "drug abuse." Usually these must be done quickly if they are to be of use when debates on the sub-

ject are already in progress over at the State House.

In addition to serving state agencies and legislators many of our reference questions from IN-WATS are referred to the documents librarians for an answer. We have a very liberal policy for loaning documents and mail them to the libraries whenever possible.

The State Library Documents Department is also responsible for publishing the *North Carolina Publications; a Checklist of Official State Publications*, a bibliography of state documents arranged by the issuing agency. This is mailed out to libraries in the state as well as our Selective List of Federal and state documents.

Microfilm and microfiche readers are located in our documents area and our newspapers on microfilm are checked out through this department. The State Library is one of a few libraries in the state which will lend North Carolina Newspapers on microfilm so we receive many requests from libraries all over the United States for these. We do not own all of the microfilm for those North Carolina newspapers which were microfilmed by the Department of Archives and History but we do keep adding those which are requested the most often. One exception to this lending policy is the *Raleigh News and Observer* which is a part of the genealogy collection and used at the library all the time. Articles from this newspaper, or any of the others, are available by a printout from our microfilm reader for just 10c a print. This process is more expensive than xerox so we do not give the 5 free prints which we would do by xeroxing.

Our general reference department is responsible for helping personnel of other state agencies with their research problems and state employees may check out materials directly from the library. Anyone may use our reference services and our book collection but the general public in Raleigh and the students who use the library can only check out materials through an interlibrary loan request from their public library or their school library.

In addition to these services, Mrs.

Ophelia Irving and her staff maintain the reference collection by keeping up with new material being published and ordering new editions of older materials. They supervise the indexing of the *Raleigh News and Observer* and the addition of clippings to our verticle file of North Caroliniana.

Mr. David Bevan is the head of the Reference Department. We have 19 people working in the department, 9 of these are Professional Librarians.

Interlibrary loans used to be processed by personnel in the General Reference Department. But after we added IN-WATS Reference, and since these two are so closely related, we combined IN-WATS and Interlibrary Loans to form another branch of our reference services, of which I am the head. We take care of all the interlibrary loan requests which are mailed to us on the printed forms and we also borrow books for state employees from other libraries. Last year we borrowed over 200 books for other state agencies and personnel.

Since the present organization of the State Library was approved by the General Assembly of 1955, one of the most important functions of the library has been its assistance to public libraries in locating materials for interlibrary loans. The North Carolina Union Catalog at Chapel Hill and the *accessibility* of the catalog through the Interlibrary Center there, makes it much simpler for North Carolina libraries to find books and materials than it is for some other states. Telephone and teletype service between the State Library and the Interlibrary Center make it possible to get the information ever faster. But the communications between the State Library and other libraries in the past had to be written and mailed.

Then, in 1968 the availability of funds under Title 3 of the National Library Services and Construction Act allowed the Library to move another step forward by establishing direct telephone service between the State Library and other libraries all over North Carolina.

We began our Inward Wide Area Telephone Service (IN-WATS) on February the first 1968 when 70 county and regional pub-

lic libraries were given the number. At first some librarians were a little bit hesitant about picking up the telephone to call long distance to Raleigh unless they had a really serious reference problem. We only averaged 15 calls a day that year but we really gave great service because there was time to look through everything in the library to find the answers to questions — or so it seems now. The idea of calling the State Library for reference or for book titles caught on, though and more libraries were given the number and as a result in 1969 we were receiving an average of 32 calls a day, more than double the number for 1968.

In 1969 we added all of the four year colleges and universities in North Carolina to the WATS line. But the increase in our number of calls was *not* due to the fact that these academic libraries were given access to the line, they only used it 274 times while public libraries used it for 5,472 calls. Over 3,000 of these requests were for specific book titles for interlibrary loans and almost that many were requests for reference assistance. Our statistics for 1969 are not accurate because the State Library was in the process of moving to a new building for the whole of February. We actually stopped service only long enough for telephone men to unhook the equipment, move it and hook it up again — an hour or two at the most. But it was impossible to keep account of our transactions and we finally stopped trying.

At first the majority of requests from academic libraries were for locations of materials from the North Carolina Union Catalog. Before, they usually sent typed interlibrary loan requests directly to the University Library at Chapel Hill without being sure that the book was actually located there. But by calling IN-WATS now they know *before* an interlibrary loan request is made where the book is located. Sometimes we even have the books they need in our collection and can send them out immediately. In 1970 calls from colleges and university libraries increased to 452. Many of these were for reference assistance as well as for locations of titles. Some of the academic librarians have not used the

WATS line at all but the majority *have* used it and some of them call in regularly.

Last year 13 special libraries were added to our WATS line. Since then 2 more have asked for the number and have been added to the list. Last year was a busy one; calls increased to an average of 35 a day — over 7,000 from public libraries, almost 500 from academic libraries and 109 from special libraries. We took down 10,748 authors' names and the titles of their books for either an interlibrary loan or for a location if we didn't own the book. We took 3,592 requests for reference information.

In addition to these telephone requests, our department processed over 7,000 interlibrary loan requests received by mail and mailed out a total of 11,278 books.

This brings my report up to date to the first four months of 1971; we've already had almost as many calls as we had for the whole first year the service began and are averaging about 40 calls a day.

The only additional personnel we have had in IN-WATS since 1968 has been one person for half a day to return calls with information to libraries.

It has been said that if you look in just one book to answer a question this is reference, in two books it is search, but if you look in three books its research. If we could use these as the criteria, almost all of our calls could be described as reference, at least, because even requests for authors and titles often have to be checked in one of our bibliographic sources. After we have searched our own catalog for titles, for those which we don't have we must have complete information before we can ask the Union Catalog for locations. If *Books in Print* gives an author's last name but just initials for his first and middle names we have to supply the missing names. It is almost a waste of time to ask for locations on a book by C. Jones or by D. E. Smith, if BIP enters a title under an author's name but the Library of Congress enters it under an association; we must see that the correct entry is sent when locations are needed. The Union Catalog is made up of main entries *only* so if we send them an incorrect entry for locations there is no way to double

check by title entries. This is why we spend time checking and verifying before our list goes to the Union Catalog every day, and this is why we ask librarians to give us as complete information as possible when requesting titles. Not many public libraries have the *Library of Congress Catalogs* to check in, but the majority do have the *Cumulative Book Index* which usually follows the Library of Congress entry. It helps us at IN-WATS if you can give complete author's names, titles, publishers and dates for the titles you request.

What about our reference questions?

Sometimes, it's difficult to extract from a Patron exactly what he does want but every scrap of information you can get helps us, especially since we have no direct contact with the patron. And patrons are not always reliable sources of information. We had a request for a title, *Passim*, by a well-known author. We didn't have it in our collection and had never heard of it; a bibliography of his works didn't help find it either. Suddenly it came to us; we called the librarian to ask if the patron's reference came from a footnote in another book. It did; *Passim* is used to indicate that a word or passage occurred frequently in the work cited.

We don't keep a record of the exact number of reference questions we answer but it is amazing sometimes to look back through our work sheets. I took one week for a sampling and found that we answered 98% of the reference questions which were called in to us. In just one of those days we had 49 calls; 23 of them were reference calls. Just to see how we answered them and what resources we used, I listed them like this:

- 5 were referred to our documents librarians and answered by them
- 2 had to be answered by calling other state agencies in Raleigh
- 2 were answered by calls to other libraries in the state. One to Duke reference department and the other to Asheboro to inquire about a recording
- 2 were requests for certain articles from a newspaper and a periodical — these had to be searched and photocopied

1 was a personal answer from a staff member in Archives and History. None of us could translate a Latin Motto from a coat of arms. The Latin dictionary wasn't any help — Mr. Bloom in Archives majored in Latin studies and he translated it for us immediately.

3 requests were for criticisms of works on authors, books and articles from periodicals (term paper time)

1 was for an address

1 was a medical request to be sent to Duke Medical Library and

5 were for any books we happened to have in our own collection on various subjects

1 was a request from a businessman and was sent over to the D. H. Hill Library to their Technical Information Center for an answer.

This gives you an idea of some of the resources we can use to help answer your reference questions. Until now we have hesitated before calling the University libraries for detailed reference work for our public libraries. They are all very cooperative when we do call, but their first priority is to their own students and it is not fair to overload them with our problems. We will feel free to call on them in the near future, however.

Some of the questions we were *not* able to answer in that week's sampling were:

How do you build a ski-kite? Skiing is fairly new to North Carolina and even though we have bought many books on the subject recently, none of them gave us an answer — neither did *Popular Mechanics* or our indexes to handicrafts.

We never did really find a good answer to the question: what materials do you use for a drape and just what procedure is used in unveiling a portrait? The Art Museum Library didn't know either.

There wasn't any information in any of our material and the Public Health Library wasn't able to locate anything about a "new disease" which had just come out according to someone's patron.

Sometimes it's hard to tell where reference work ends and research begins but

(Continued on page 141)

E. H. Little Gives Second \$500,000 For Davidson's New \$4 Million Library

E. H. Little of New York, a native of Mecklenburg County, N. C., and former president and board chairman of Colgate-Palmolive, has given Davidson College a second \$500,000 challenge contribution for the college's new \$4 million library named in his honor.

In 1969 the college claimed Little's first challenge gift of \$500,000 after raising \$1,-500,000 in matching funds. Now the college will be seeking to raise that amount again to match Little's second challenge gift by the time the library is completed in 1974.

"Initially Davidson was thinking in terms of a library of 60,000 square feet at a cost of \$2 million," explained College President Samuel R. Spencer, Jr. "As long-range plans for the college developed, it became clear that future needs demanded a structure of 100,000 square square feet, estimated to cost about \$4 million.

"The E. H. Little Library (pictured on page 112) will be our most important building since Chambers (the main classroom building) was constructed in the late 1920's," the president continued.

"Mr. Little's gracious willingness to start us so magnificently on the final phase of fund-raising is thoroughly characteristic of him. Because of his vision and generosity, Davidson will have a library second to none."

Spencer announced the gift at a joint meeting on campus of trustees, faculty, staff and students October 21, 1971. The group had gathered to hear the presentations of the library planning committee, architects and a landscape designer concerning the appearance and functions of the new library.

Plans call for the building to extend 276 feet from north to south and to contain 100,000 square feet of floor space. It will be located east of the main classroom building, Chambers, on the site presently occupied by the College Union. The two buildings will thus form an academic center for the campus.

The library will be three stories high, with

the top two stories visible from the front and all three visible from the rear. It will be built on land sloping eastward so that the main floor will be in the center, on ground level when entered from the main entrance on the side nearest Chambers Building.

The brick exterior will have both Georgian and neoclassical architectural features, described by library officials as "simple but elegant, and entirely harmonious with other campus buildings."

A prominent feature of the front will be an arcade along the main floor, formed by an extension of the top floor 15 feet further forward.

On each half of the front side will be five arches, each revealing a window 15 feet behind it on the main floor. The top floor will have a matching row of windows, but they will not be recessed. The far ends of the front will be extended slightly forward, each with a covered porch and columns on the ground level.

Reference Services

(Continued from page 126)

with our limited time and staff we are not able to handle detailed research questions. We *do* always try to find books and periodicals which will help your patrons with their subjects without actually doing the research for them. I'm sure we haven't always satisfied all of your people with our answers, but we have tried. Mrs. Doris Frazier and Mrs. Becky Danninger are our two professional reference librarians who work full time at the IN-WATS; I am their substitute at lunch break and fill in when either of them is absent. But we all work together when its necessary and sometimes three heads are better than one.