



HOME OF COURT LIBRARY—The Justice Building in Raleigh houses the Supreme Court Library on the entire top floor. Offices of the State Supreme Court and attorney general are also located in this building. (Photo supplied by Travel and Information Division, N. C. Department of Conservation & Development).

SUPREME COURT LIBRARY SERVES JURISTS

by

RAYMOND M. TAYLOR¹

If government is to be “of laws and not of men,” its laws must be recorded and preserved in an orderly manner that will make them accessible to all who are concerned with government.

It could have been such a realization in 1812 that caused the General Assembly of North Carolina then to adopt the law that resulted in the establishment of what today is the 63,000 volume North Carolina Supreme Court Library.

1. This is an amended condensation of an article which appeared in the March, 1967, issue of **Popular Government**. Mr. Taylor is Marshal-Librarian, North Carolina Supreme Court, Raleigh

That library became and has remained especially important because of its position as North Carolina's only official repository of the printed legislative acts, codes, and court decisions of the Federal government and the governments of each of the individual states of the United States.

Although relatively few people other than lawyers and State officials ever have heard of the Supreme Court Library, the results of its users' work have great influence upon the lives of all Tar Heel citizens.

Foremost among the users of the library are the judges of the highest level of the State's judicial structure, the Appellate Division of the General Court of Justice. That division consists of the Supreme Court, which was established in 1819, and the Court of Appeals, which was established earlier this year.

The Supreme Court appoints the librarian of the Supreme Court Library, and a 1967 law provides for two Supreme Court justices and one Court of Appeals judge to serve as a library committee to pass upon the library's rules, regulations, and fees.

Other official users of the Supreme Court Library include the governor and his staff, members of the General Assembly and their staffs, the attorney general and his staff, and representatives of many other areas of State government.

Although full utilization of the library's facilities is difficult for persons not trained in the use of law books, the library frequently is used by students, newsmen, and laymen who are interested in various aspects of the law.

The 1967 General Assembly stated the Library's functions as follows:

The primary function of the Supreme Court Library is to serve the Appellate Division of the General Court of Justice, but it may render service to the trial divisions . . . to State agencies, and to the general public . . . The library shall be maintained in the city of Raleigh, except that if the Court of Appeals sits regularly in locations other than the city of Raleigh, branch libraries may be established at such locations for the use of the Court of Appeals.

Both the present Supreme Court Library and the present North Carolina State Library had their beginning with the 1812 law that placed upon the Secretary of State the duty to collect books and documents received from the executive and the Congress of the United States and the executives and legislatures of the several states, and to bind, catalog, and keep those documents "for the use of the members of the General Assembly, heads of departments, and judges of the supreme courts only."

Responsibility for that library collection from 1812 to 1871 was shifted back and forth between the Secretary of State and a librarian, and during at least the latter years of that period the law books apparently were separated from the non-law materials.

February 15, 1871, marked the formal separation of the law books from the non-law materials, the law collection being called the "law library of the supreme court" and the remainder of the collection being called the "state library."

The Supreme Court Library, which formerly had been housed in the State Capitol and in various other buildings on and around Capitol Square, was moved in July, 1940, into the six-story Justice Building.

The library's collection then consisted of approximately 39,000 volumes. The count as of April 1, 1967, was 63,712.

The Library occupies approximately two miles of shelving spread over the entire fifth floor and located also in more than 20 rooms on the other five floors of the Justice Building.

The collection is especially valuable not only because of the near completeness of its holdings of original state and Federal session laws, codes, and reported cases, but also because of the unique nature of many of its volumes.

Oldest among the volumes is a book written in Law French and printed in 1576. Also in the collection is *A Booke of Entries* containing a preface by Sir Edward Coke. It was printed in 1614.

The Supreme Court Library has two copies of *A Collection of All the Public Acts of Assembly, of the Province of North-Carolina: Now in Force and Use*. They bear the date 1752 and were printed in New Bern by the State's first printer, James Davis.

Not only does the library have hundreds of books more than a century old, but new books arrive daily. The library receives the latest court cases and laws from state and national capitals and from private publishers as soon as they are printed.

In addition, the library maintains a collection of the codes of ordinances of almost 50 North Carolina municipalities, complete sets of more than 100 legal periodicals, and several thousand law treatises, textbooks, encyclopedias, dictionaries, and digests.

The 1871 law that separated the "law library" from the "state library" made it "the duty of the clerk of the supreme court to take charge of the law library of the supreme court." Robert Henry Bradley in 1883 became the Supreme Court's first librarian, and he served until 1918. His successors have been Marshall DeLancey Haywood, who served 1918-1930; John A. Livingstone, who served 1930-1937; Dillard Scott Gardner, who served 1937-1964; and this writer, who took office July 1, 1964.

Significant developments in the Supreme Court Library's history during this writer's tenure have been as follows:

1. *Increased Appropriations* — Although the Library's average annual appropriation for books and binding for the years 1950-1964 was only \$6,342, additional funds have been allotted from the State's Contingency and Emergency Fund and the General Assembly has increased the library's regular appropriation. The appropriation for the 1966-1967 fiscal year is \$15,073.

2. *Code Collection* — The best available annotated code of each state of the United States and the municipal codes of almost 50 North Carolina municipalities have been obtained.

3. *Textbooks* — The library's treatise and textbook section has been up-dated by the purchase of later editions and the latest supplements of books already in the collection and by the addition of new volumes in important areas of the law.

4. *Tax Service* — The library's first complete loose-leaf tax service was acquired in 1965.

5. *Rare Book Room* — Work is being completed on a room for the storage of rare books. Special equipment will keep the room's temperature and humidity at a constant level at all times.

6. *Ground Floor Addition* — Additional space on the ground floor has been acquired and equipped with new shelving adequate for the storage of approximately 10,000 books.

7. *Professional Librarian* — On October 1, 1965, Miss Alice Cameron Reaves began work as assistant librarian. She received her M. S. L. S. degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and has the distinction of being the first formally-trained librarian to be a member of the Supreme Court Library staff.

8. *Staff Addition* — A Contingency and Emergency Fund allotment and a legislative appropriation have made possible the employment of a secretary to the Marshal-Librarian. Miss Diane June Jackson first held that position and was succeeded by Mrs. Gayle H. Pshyk.

9. *Copying Service* — A copying service has been put into operation as a result of an appropriation by the 1965 General Assembly, and a 1967 law provides for the librarian to furnish certified copies as well as uncertified copies. This service enables persons throughout the state to obtain copies of library material easily and quickly. Because the library has no reference or research service, it can fill copy requests only when they include full, exact, and complete citations of the material being sought. The copy charge is twenty cents per page, but members of the General Assembly may obtain copies without charge when such material is for their official use as legislators.

The copying service is particularly important because the library's collection is non-circulating, and books may be borrowed or removed only in exceptional cases provided for by Supreme Court Rule.

In addition to the Marshal-Librarian, assistant librarian, secretary, and janitor-messenger, the library sometimes is staffed by the seven research assistants to the justices of the Supreme Court. Library hours Monday through Friday are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and the library is open each Saturday from 9 a.m. until noon. Night use is by special permit as provided by law.
